

LUCERNA

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THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE ROMAN FINDS GROUP



LUCERNA: THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROMAN FINDS GROUP

ISSUE 58, JANUARY 2020

Editorial

Welcome to the January 2020 issue of *Lucerna*. We hope that you had a great time over the holiday period and are ready for the next year of Roman finds ahead!

This edition we have plenty to keep your mind occupied during the remaining long nights of winter and into spring. First up is Adam Parker's discussion about a marble relief of the 'All-suffering Eye' in Woburn Abbey. Then, continuing our recent gaming theme, is Roland Cobbett's examination of a Roman dice tower from Colliton Park.

Following this, all those who could not make it in November can read all about the most recent RFG Conference regarding finds from Colchester, after which are a couple of notes on firstly, an interesting mount decorated with a lion and, secondly, an enamelled hexagonal flask, both from Corbridge.

Towards the back readers can get familiar with the range of books, conferences and events upcoming this year.

Finally, as is traditional in January, we'd like to remind you that subscriptions are now due. Please make your payments as usual to Angela Wardle and let her know if you change your name or address, or pay online under a different name than the one we have recorded. We currently have two unidentified online payments so far this year.

Otherwise, thanks as ever to those who have already paid and to everyone who continues to support the RFG.

Matthew Fittock
Lucerna Editor

Emily Blanchard
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The Roman Finds Group Committee

The RFG Committee is as follows, as per the most recent AGM on Wednesday 12th June, King's College London:

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Front cover image: The marble plaque depicting the Evil Eye and its enemies in the collection of Woburn Abbey, no. 5027. Image by Adam Parker. See p. 6.

Membership Benefits

The objectives of the RFG are to promote the study, research, publication, teaching and conservation of the material culture of Roman Britain. Membership of the RFG will entitle individuals to:

- Two copies of our Newsletter, *Lucerna*, each year.
- Access to our Roman finds datasheets.
- Full access to the website (www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk) and twitter feeds, including the members only section which includes access to recent copies of *Lucerna*. The website has been developed to include access to *Lucerna* and Datasheets and to include finds catalogues and other finds-related works which are currently out-of-print as pdfs.
- Reduced fees to our twice-yearly meetings, held in the spring (typically a two day meeting) and autumn of each year.
- Free/reduced entrance to major finds-related exhibitions, where this can be negotiated.
- Discounts on finds-related books, or pre-publication offers, where these can be negotiated.
- Access to small grants to help with small finds research. These grants are available to individual, fully paid-up, members and will be awarded for applications seeking to support our objectives e.g. publication drawings and maps or travel to museums for object research. Special consideration is given to articles offered to *Lucerna*. £1,000 is available each year (reviewable). Details on how to apply are on our website (www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk).
- Access, through the website, to educational films promoting the importance of finds research. Specialists talk about identifying different materials and objects in a series of films that might ultimately be themed around the chapters of Artefacts in Roman Britain or Nina Crummy's object categories.
- Group payment for individual RFG members to Instrumentum, the European bi-annual magazine. Join through RFG to receive four years' worth of Instrumentum membership for three years payment. In addition the RFG will absorb the conversion fee in a bulk payment on your behalf. The cost for Instrumentum membership is currently 90 Euros for 4 years. Members will be notified by email, in *Lucerna* and on the website when the next renewal is due.
- Help us increase the Romano-British presence amongst a wider European small finds community e.g. by the provision of extra entries and links to objects in the Instrumentum/Artefacts website.

Follow the Roman Finds Group Online

Twitter (<https://twitter.com/romanfindsgrp>)

Our Roman Finds Group Twitter feed continues to go from strength to strength. We regularly post photographs, news items and links that may interest people with a passion for Roman objects, as well as

sharing up-to-date information on the group. We post live-tweets from our conferences under the hashtags #rfg2020 #rfg2019 #rfg2018 etc., so that people from across the world can attend 'virtually'. We recently welcomed our 2871st follower! Do join us! @RomanFindsGrp.

Website (www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk)

All of our tweets also appear in a scrolling feed on every page of our website www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk, which contains more information, as well as some beautiful images. Our new website is now fully operational and has been designed to work well on mobile phones, tablets and on desktop browsers. All Members of the Roman Finds Group may log into the new website and view extra resources that are exclusive to Members of RFG. These include the latest four editions of *Lucerna*, the collection of Roman Finds Group Datasheets, and a link to allow Members to download a facsimile of Manning's 1985 *Catalogue of the Romano-British Iron Tools, Fittings and Weapons in the British Museum*, a cornerstone of Roman small finds study, and now out of print. As Jenny Hall wrote in *Lucerna* 48, we have ambitions for this to become the central source for Roman finds; we are working to scan and host out-of-print finds catalogues, and to compile and maintain a detailed bibliography. Watch this space too for news on our forthcoming programme of short films on Roman finds!

Nicola Hembrey, RFG Communications Secretary

RFG Grants

A series of small grants are available from the Roman Finds Group to all fully paid-up members. The annual grant cycle will run from January 1st. Applications may be made at any time, but they will be reviewed and assessed on 1st April, 1st September and 1st December. The RFG has a target annual grant fund of £1,000, although this will be reviewed each year in light of available funds and demand.

Grants will be awarded against any area of the Group's objectives (to promote the study, research, publication, teaching and conservation of the material culture of Roman Britain) but applications must be very clear as to which of these objectives are being applied. Grants may also be awarded to travel and take part in training meetings and conferences where these relate to the study of roman finds. This does not include grants for speakers at non RFG meetings where we expect the hosts to provide costs. This does not RFG does not see its role to commission research and therefore grants will not normally be awarded to pay for applicant's time.

Grants are available for RFG members only. Applicants must have been fully paid-up members of RFG for at least nine months. Unused grants will expire two years after the date of the award (allowing for exceptional circumstances).

There is no specific application form, but the following details are essential:

- Name, address and institution (where applicable) including email address.

- Date of application – we will normally provide assessments and awards of applications within a six week period.

- Amount requested, other grants applied for and total amount of project. It will not be normal for RFG to fund an individual project to 100%.

- Details of the project and how it will meet the objectives of the Roman Finds Group.

- If it is a project leading to a publication, where is the intended publication? Priority will be given to contributions for *Lucerna*.

- Confirmation of RFG membership and year of joining (will be checked!).

- A short citation from at least one referee (who does not need to be a member of RFG).

All applications will be evaluated by a sub-group of three members of the RFG Committee. The committee reserves the right to seek further referee opinion and further information where it feels appropriate. The decision of the grant application ‘subcommittee’ (Stephen Greep, Nicola Hembrey and Sally Worrell) will be final.

Applications should be sent to the chairman of the grants sub-group, Stephen Greep (sgreep@gmail.com).

RFG Bursaries

A series of small bursaries are available from the Roman Finds Group to support attendance at RFG Conferences. Requests may be made for contributions towards funding for conference fees, travel and accommodation. Bursaries may also be awarded to travel and take part in training meetings and conferences where these relate to the study of roman finds. This does not include grants for speakers at non RFG meetings where we expect the hosts to provide costs. Applications for bursaries may be made at any time, but they must normally be made two months before the conference concerned.

They will be made available to:

- Any fully paid-up student members (irrespective of age)

- All fully paid-up members under the age of 25 (at the time of the meeting)

- All fully paid-up members working in a voluntary capacity in an organisation relevant to the aims of RFG (e.g. museum, archaeological unit/trust)

To apply for a bursary, you must have been a member of RFG for at least nine months before the date of the meeting for which a bursary is sought.

Bursaries will normally be for a maximum of £100 per application. Up to ten bursaries will be made available each year.

There is no specific application form, but the following details are essential:

- Name, address and institution (where applicable) including email address.

- Date of application – we will normally provide details of bursary awards within a two week period of receiving the application.

- Amount requested and details of other funds (e.g. university support) available. It will not be normal for RFG to fund individuals to more than 50% of the total cost of attending the meeting.

- Confirmation of RFG membership and year of joining (will be checked!).

- A short citation from at least one referee (who does not need to be a member of RFG) who can confirm your student/voluntary status.

All applications will be evaluated by a sub group of three members of the RFG Committee. The committee reserves the right to seek further referee opinion and further information where it feels appropriate.

The decision of the ‘subcommittee’ (Stephen Greep, Nicola Hembrey and Sally Worrell) will be final.

Applications should be sent to the chairman of the grants and bursary sub group Stephen Greep (sgreep@romanfinds.com)

RFG Datasheets

A plea to all members to share their expertise and knowledge and contribute a datasheet (or two)! It could be on a particular find type, an industry or an update for ongoing research. They are a valuable resource to students, people just starting off in their finds careers and curators alike.

Gill Dunn is co-ordinating this so please contact her at the address below if you are interested in writing a datasheet.

Gill Dunn, Publications Co-ordinator
gill.c.dunn@outlook.com

Notes for Contributors

Contributions to *Lucerna* from members and non-members are always welcome. Whether you’re an undergraduate or graduate student, seasoned academic or hobbyist, the Roman Finds Group is keen to publish new and continuing research on Roman material culture to help inform others of ongoing work and forge valuable links between fellow members with skills, knowledge and expertise in the same field. As well as fuller research articles, we would be particularly interested to hear about any old or new discoveries anyone is happy to share, as well as any mystery objects that need identifying. On the other hand, perhaps you’re part way through your research and looking for a way to present some preliminary results or a short summary outlining your ongoing studies? Whatever the case, please don’t hesitate - we would be delighted to hear from you!



If you wish to participate, all contributions should be sent as attachments via e-mail to Matthew Fittock (*Lucerna* Editor) at matthewfittock@googlemail.com. Submissions must be word-processed on Microsoft Word or an equivalent. The main article should include text only, with the paper title and author's name at the beginning and a full bibliography followed by contact details at the end, with no images but full reference to figures. The document should be single spaced with a full return in between each paragraph. All images should be provided as individual TIFF files at a minimum of 300 dpi, and all line-art as individual TIFF files at 1200 dpi, with captions in a separate document. Images in colour will appear in black and white in print and colour online. Tables must also be provided in a separate Microsoft Excel file with appropriate captions. There is no strict word limit but longer articles should be no more than 5000 words, excluding the bibliography. Submissions can be made at any time during the year: no later than the end of November for a January release and the end of June for the July edition, but please contact the editor in advance if you wish to discuss scheduling.

Matthew Fittock, Lucerna Editor

Next RFG Conference New Research on Finds from Roman Scotland and the North

Friday 3rd-Saturday 4th April 2020

Our 2020 spring conference is to be held in association with Historic Environment Scotland. It will be a two-day conference from early afternoon on Friday 3rd April until late afternoon on Saturday 4th April in the Kelvin Hall lecture theatre, University of Glasgow. The meeting is being organised jointly by Stephen Greep, Chairman and meetings co-ordinator, Roman Finds Group and Louisa Campbell of the University of Glasgow. RFG are grateful for the support given to arrangements for the meeting by The University of Glasgow and Historic Environment Scotland.

There are five sessions of papers, with seventeen illustrated talks, on various aspects of finds from recent work in Scotland and the north. The Roman Finds Group AGM will be held immediately before lunch on day two. After the Keynote lecture on Day 1 we will make our way to the Hunterian Museum (approx. 15-minute walk) for a private viewing led by Professor Lawrence Keppie, followed by a pre-dinner drinks reception courtesy of Steph Scholten, Director of the Hunterian.

Please note that numbers will be restricted so you are advised to book early. The cost of the meeting is the same as our two day meetings over the last four years: £40 for fully paid up RFG members, £30 for students, £48 non-members and a £25 day rate (students £20). Booking forms can be found at the end of the conference information already emailed to members.

Any questions about the meeting should be made to Stephen Greep (sjgreep@gmail.com) or Louisa Campbell (Louisa.Campbell@glasgow.ac.uk).

The conference schedule is as follows:

Day One

11.00 Pre-Conference Guided tour: Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum
13.00 Registration. Welcome tea/coffee
13.35 Welcome and Introduction, Dr Louisa Campbell, LKAS Fellow in Archaeology, University of Glasgow

Session One: Roman Scotland

Chair: Professor David Breeze
13.40 Dr Louisa Campbell, University of Glasgow: Paints and Pigments in the Past: The Antonine Wall Distance Stones
14.05 Dr Fraser Hunter, National Museum of Scotland: Surprises in the stores: exotic stone vessels from the Antonine Wall zone
14.30 Dr John Reid, Chairman, Trimontium Trust: Roman Missiles from North Britain: New Finds and Recent Observations
14.55 Tea/Coffee – viewing of finds and posters

Session Two: Roman Scotland

Chair: Dr Louisa Campbell, University of Glasgow
15.30 Professor Laurence Keppie, Hunterian Museum: The Roman Collection at the Hunterian Museum
15.55 Professor David Breeze: The distribution of pottery and small finds at Bearsden.
16.20 Keynote lecture: Dr Rebecca Jones, Head of Archaeology and World Heritage Sites for Historic Environment Scotland: Roman Scotland and the Antonine Wall

Reception at the Hunterian Museum

17.30-19.30 Private viewing of “The Antonine Wall: Rome’s Final Frontier” exhibition in the Hunterian Museum after the Museum has closed to the public. Led by Professor Lawrence Keppie, with a pre-dinner drinks reception courtesy of Dr Steph Scholten, Director of the Hunterian Museum.

Evening Social / Conference Meal

20.00 For those who have booked, a meal at Pizza Express, 227 Byres Road, Glasgow, G12 8UD a short stroll away from the University.

Day Two

Session Three: Roman Scotland and the North

09.30 Dr. Tatiana Ivleva, University of Newcastle: Curious case of Scottish glass bangles: re-assessing typology, distribution, manufacture and use
09.55 Douglas Carr, University of Newcastle: Roman coins from Hadrian’s Wall and the Northern Frontier
10.20 Katie Mountain, University of Newcastle: The typology and chronology of Roman disc brooches in Northern Britain
10.55 Dr Mike Bishop, Editor, JRMES: Now the wild had flowed in again: the Trimontium military equipment revisited

11.20 Tea/Coffee – viewing of finds and posters

Session Four: The North

Chair: Mrs Jenny Hall, Treasurer Roman Finds Group
 11.50 Dr James Gerrard , University of Newcastle: The
 1864 Knaresborough Hoard: rediscovery, re-evaluation
 and a probable findspot
 12.15 Lindsay Allason-Jones, University of Newcastle:
 Pillow Talk: evidence for soft furnishings in Roman
 Britain
 12.40 Tim Penn , University of Edinburgh: Gaming
 boards, military communities and the transmissions of
 ideas: the view from Hadrian's Wall
 13.05 Lunch (Roman Finds Group 2020 AGM)

Session Five: Vindolanda

Chair: Dr Stephen Greep, Chairman and meetings co-
 ordinator, Roman Finds Group
 14.45 Rhys Williams, Teesside University: Digitising
 Vindolanda: From Excavation to Museum
 15.10 Barbara Birley, Vindolanda Trust: Stories from the
 Frontier, using digital gameplay to engage children at
 Vindolanda
 15.20 Marta Alberti: Vindolanda Trust Spinning on
 the Frontier: the making, use and discard of female
 identities at Vindolanda and Corbridge
 15.45 Barbara Birley, Vindolanda Trust: Recent finds
 from Vindolanda
 16.20 Conclusions and departure



A Marble Relief of the 'All-Suffering Eye' in Woburn Abbey

Adam Parker

During the course of the author's research into the archaeology of magic in Roman Britain, as part of his PhD in Classical Studies at the Open University, he came across references in recent works (e.g. Faraone 2018, fig. 4.3) to a plaque depicting the Evil Eye from Woburn, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). This white marble relief sculpture is in the collection of Woburn Abbey (Buckinghamshire, UK, no. 5027) and an opportunity to see it in person was gladly taken up. In this note I wish to both highlight this wonderful object, accessible in a British gallery, and to consider it within the wider body of evidence for Evil Eye imagery in the Roman world.



Fig. 1. The marble plaque depicting the Evil Eye and its enemies. In the collection of Woburn Abbey, no. 5027. Image by the author

Description

The relief sculpture is rectangular in shape and carved in medium relief. The upper, right, and lower edges appear original. The left is truncated. It measures 300mm in height and 255mm in width. The maximum depth of the exterior edge is 8mm. It is inset into a plaster mount, itself mounted within the wall of the sculpture gallery so a true original depth of the sculpture could not be ascertained.

Eight characters are visible in this narrative:

1. The central figure in the panel is a disembodied human eye, the position of the tear duct showing it to be the left eye. It is carved

realistically, depicting eyelids, iris, and a large pupil which has a shallow, crescentic recess at its upper aspect. A semi-circular band above the eye depicts an eyebrow, with detailing of the hair visible on its left hand side.

2. A figure immediately above the eye is squatting, with the back towards the viewer, wears a Phrygian cap and a loincloth and appears to be defecating on the Eye.
3. To the immediate right of the figure stands a male figure, facing left, wearing a loincloth but otherwise armoured as a *retiarius*; bearing the trident and dagger and wearing the arm-guard (*manica*) on his left arm. He stands in a victorious pose, knee-bent facing towards the Eye with the trident deeply embedded in the upper-right of the eyebrow.
4. Below the *retiarius* is a bird, certainly a corvid and probably a raven. It is stood facing left, with folded wings, and extends its closed beak towards the Eye.
5. To the left of the above is a large bird, probably a crane or stork. It is stood facing left with a strong S-shaped bend in its neck and extends its open beak towards the Eye.
6. Central beneath the Eye is a large scorpion. It has six pairs of legs and a seven-segmented body which flares and curves at its tip to depict a sting. It extends its pincers towards the Eye but is some distance away compared to the surrounding creatures.
7. A coiled snake extends towards the Eye from the bottom-left corner. The corner of the panel is missing, truncating the end of the snake.
8. A big cat pounces into the frame from the left side, though it is unclear how much of its body is truncated by the damaged left side of the frame. The upper torso, front legs and head are visible. An eye and open jaw are visible, though it is particularly worn. Pecking to the surface of the lion may be original rather than weathering and thus depicts a lion's mane.

Historiography

The provenance of the plaque is, unfortunately, entirely lost – the reading of some modern references may suggest it is from Woburn, which is not the case. It is first referenced at being in Walton Abbey in the 1822 catalogue to the collections by Corbould and Russell. The three and a half pages of prose in the catalogue to a 'Mythological Bas-Relief' account for the differing interpretations surrounding it at the time. It references the interpretations of Mr. Millington and Rev. Weston: the former who interpreted it as an Evil-Eye, the latter as Mithraic in nature. The second author of this volume, Russell, is, in fact, John Russell the 6th Duke of Bedford (1766-1839) who purchased the plaque from Mr. Millington. Weston and Millington disagreed over the interpretation in the 1821 issue of *Archaeologia* – Millington's initial interpretation was presented on 8th

January 1818 and disputed by Weston in his paper read on 29th January that year.

Correspondence in the Woburn Abbey Archive dated 28th November 1821 from James Christie (ref: 6D-ART-126) refutes the interpretation published by Millington in *Archaeologia* and instead interprets the animals as being attracted to the Eye, relating it to Christianity, the Epistle to the Galatians, and referencing the Greek ideas of ‘fascination’. These comments are anonymously alluded to in the final paragraph of the entry in Corbould and Russell’s catalogue providing three contemporary interpretations of the scene.

We can thus establish that the plaque was in the collections by at least 1822, with the antiquarian interest surrounding it in the years 1818-21 perhaps alluding to its recent discovery or transportation to Britain. It was included in the more public catalogue for the site in 1831 (Parry 1831, 95, no. 102):

“*A Mithraic Tablet*” In the ‘Marbles’, is a learned disquisition on the doubtful subject of the Mythological Bassorilievo, which has by some, been referred to the symbols of initiation into the mysteries of the Persian Deity Mithas; and by other has been considered simple a representation of the ‘evil eye of fascination’, a baleful superstition, not wholly unknown in more enlightened times and nations. But our limits forbid our pursuing this recondite subject further.”

Discussion

The visual narrative depicted in this panel is the ‘All-suffering Eye’ – an artistic trope which can be found across the ancient world from at least the 2nd century BC. The central design of this scene always shows a disembodied human eye surrounded by and/or under direct attack from its enemies. Given that the Eye is a malignant presence, the objects surrounding it may be regarded as apotropaic.

The Evil Eye is the Roman embodiment of bad luck and was feared and respected. In Virgil’s *Eclogues* (3.1.103) the shepherds Damoetas and Menalcas are lamenting the state of their stock and Menalcas asks ‘What eye is it that has fascinated my tender lambs?’ (*nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinate agnos*). On the power of eyes and gazing, Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist.* 7.2) speaks of the ability of certain African ‘enchanters’ who have ‘the power of fascination with the eyes and can even kill those on whom they fix their gaze for any length of time, more especially if their look denotes anger; the age of puberty is said to be particularly obnoxious to the malign influence of such persons.’ Plutarch (*Quaes. Conv.* 5.7.2) mentions the role of the eye in falling in love and curing disease.

Perhaps the most famous depiction of the Evil Eye and the objects which may be used to dispel its malignant influence is a mosaic from the so-called ‘House of the Evil Eye’ in Antioch. Dating to the 2nd century BC it depicts a central eye surrounded by (clockwise from top left): a corvid, a trident, a sword, a scorpion, a snake, a dog, a centipede, a leopard, and to one side is a macrophallic dwarf playing an instrument (Fig. 2).

The characters used to dispel the Evil Eye were a combination of organic animals, exotic/supernatural characters, and inorganic weapons. Between the Woburn plaque and the Antioch mosaic we may directly parallel the trident, the corvid, the snake, the scorpion,



Fig. 2. Mosaic from Antioch depicting the Evil Eye surrounded by its enemies. ©WolfgangRieger - Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons.

and the big cat as features. In the mosaic, the dog and leopard are mid-leap, propelling themselves towards the Eye. The corvid’s beak is touching the iris, and the tridents and sword are embedded in the eye lid – this is a scene depicting the point of attack.

Whilst the mosaic is probably the most famous example, other scenes depicting paired snakes at either side of the eye are known from mosaics in Dura Europos (Faraone 2018, 108 fig. 4.2) and Tunis (In the Bardo Museum). The most widely distributed examples of this scene were on small gold discs which *may* have functioned as earrings. A full catalogue was not attempted for this brief note, but at least two examples are recorded in Britain through the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS: NMS-B9A004, KENT-DD7BC3; Worrell & Pearce 2014, 419, no.20; Fig 3) and other examples are known from Sicily (IT), Fuveau (FR), and Wien (AT) (see artefact.mom.fr object type AML-4001). Unprovenanced examples are in the Johns Hopkins Museum (FIC.07.225) and in the British Museum (BM, 1814.0704.31172). In stone the ‘all-suffering Eye’ is recorded from two carved stone reliefs at Leptis Magna. Other carvings depict the phallus one-on-one with the Evil eye, but I’ll focus here on the groups.



Fig. 3. Gold disc from Norfolk (LEFT) and Kent (RIGHT), depicting the Evil Eye surrounded by its enemies (PAS: NMS-B9A004 and KENT-DD7BC3). ©Portable Antiquities Scheme.

The Norfolk example depicts (clockwise from top): Lion, phallus, indet., phallus, scorpion, arrow, indet. With the thin, gold discs there are interpretive issues where a symbol may not be clear to the modern viewer. Again there are clear comparisons with the types and number of characters attacking a centralised Eye. At least one example that I am aware of depicts a smaller range of characters attacking an eye, namely a carving from Leptis Magna depicting zoomorphic phallus ejaculating into an eye atop which a scorpion has it in its pincers (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Stone carving from Leptis Magna depicting a left-facing zoomorphic phallus attacking an Evil Eye. ©SaschaCoachman via Wikimedia Commons.

Considering these scenes as a cohesive group (Tab. 1) we can see that the majority depicted 7-9 figures/symbols surrounding the Eye with snakes, scorpions, tridents, and phalli being the most commonly recorded *apotropaia*.

The plaque was, almost certainly, intended for display in the wall of a building, though it is patently unclear whether this was a domestic or public building. There are numerous examples of apotropaic images, particularly carvings of phalli, being used in liminal or transitional spaces – around doors, windows, thresholds, boundary walls (e.g. Parker 2017 and 2018, 65-66; Faraone 2018, ch.5; Wilburn 2018, 108-111) etc. and the Woburn plaque could certainly fit into this wider idea. Where many such examples were used in buildings they were static objects built into the fabric of a building and there was (as far as we can tell) no need to touch, glance at, speak a prayer to, or otherwise interact with the sculpture for the supernatural protection to ‘work’. That said, there is no reason that these sorts of interactions did not happen anyway. The loss of provenance and context for this example is regrettable, so it is through speculation and comparison with other objects that we may build our understanding about where it may have been used.

There has been much modern research looking at pigment analysis of ancient sculptures to reconstruct the original colours. There was no surviving colour immediately apparent on the Woburn plaque, but areas of unusual darkening (e.g. the back of the stork/heron, the shoulder of the squatting figure, the lion’s mane) may allude to past pigmentation and could be an avenue of future research potential.

Dating the plaque is, initially, problematic because it is unprovenanced and devoid of archaeological context. The ‘all-suffering Eye’ narrative is evident from at

least the 2nd century BC. That said, the form is not Hellenistic, or indeed particularly early Roman. The squatting figure bearing a Phrygian cap may be the key to dating this object. The Phrygian cap is particularly associated with religion figures from Eastern ‘mystery cults’ – Mithras, Cautes and Cautopates, Atys etc. which gain prominence in the Roman Empire in the 2nd-3rd Centuries AD. This date may be tentatively suggested.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to Victoria Poulton (Assistant Curator, Woburn Abbey) for access to the plaque in May 2019, her valuable correspondence, and information on the earliest references to the object.

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Parry, J. D. 1831. *A Guide to Woburn Abbey*. London, S. Dodd.

Country of origin	Location	Number of Figures	Trident	Sword	Arrow	Corvid	Stork-like bird	Snake	Dog	Big Cat	Scorpion	Centipede	Elephant	Humanoid figure	Phallus	Thunderbolt
?	Woburn	7	x			x	x	x		x	x			x		
?	Johns Hopkins	9		?	x			x	x		x		x			x
?	British Museum	11	x		?		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x
AT	Wien	9?	x					x	x		x				x	
FR	Fuveau	8	x				x	x	x	x	x					
IT	Sicily	?														
LY	Leptis Magna	2									x				x	
LY	Leptis Magna	4	x			x		x			x			x	x	
SY	Antioch	9	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
SY	Dura-Europos	3						x			x?					
TN	Tunis	3						x								x
UK	Norfolk	8			x		x	x		x	x					x
UK	Kent	9?				x					x		x		?	

Tab. 1. The incidence of figures in this assemblage of All-suffering Eye scenes. The total number of figures and individual figures identified may differ because examples are unclear, or rarely, more than one is present. Human figures with other figures attached count as one in the total but may carry more than one of the symbols.

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The Colliton Park Dice Tower and others Made of Wood and Bone

Roland Cobbett

Introduction

In the course of the 1937-8 excavations of the Roman villa site at Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset, by Drew and Collingwood Selby, several plates of worked bone were found. Two of these plates have subsequently been recognised as belonging to a dice tower, a *turricula* or *pyrgus*, used by the Romans for rolling dice (Durham & Fulford 2014, 304; for dice towers in general, Horn 1989; Schädler 1995, 80; Cobbett 2008; 2013). A reconstruction of the dice tower with its inner staircase plates is given here. There is also a discussion on the other dice towers made of wood and bone so far found.

Context and Remains

The dice tower and other bone plate remains were found on the site of Building 186, a large townhouse lying about 100 metres to the south of the main Colliton Park house, Building 182. The whole site was excavated in a series of 25 foot square boxes, and the bone plates were found in the same excavation box, no. 113SE, covering part of the townhouse building: plate 149 was found in the mosaic room, and the others in two gully locations, 150 and 152 in the south gully and 151 and 153 in the west gully (Building 186, Durham & Fulford 2014, 35; bone plates, 303-4). These bone plates are illustrated in Fig. 6.

The two oblong plates – nos. 149 and 150 (Figs. 5 & 6) – are the only certain surviving parts of the dice tower. These measure 71 x 44 mm and 68 x 48 mm respectively. They are corrugated in profile, each having long parallel transverse grooves and resembling little staircases 9-10 steps long. They would have formed two of the staircase plates set diagonally inside the tower: there would originally have been three of these plates, these two being the upper and middle ones, and a much longer lower one which is now missing, and arranged similarly to the staircase plates on the surviving tower from Qustul (Emery & Kirwan 1938, fig. 111; Cobbett

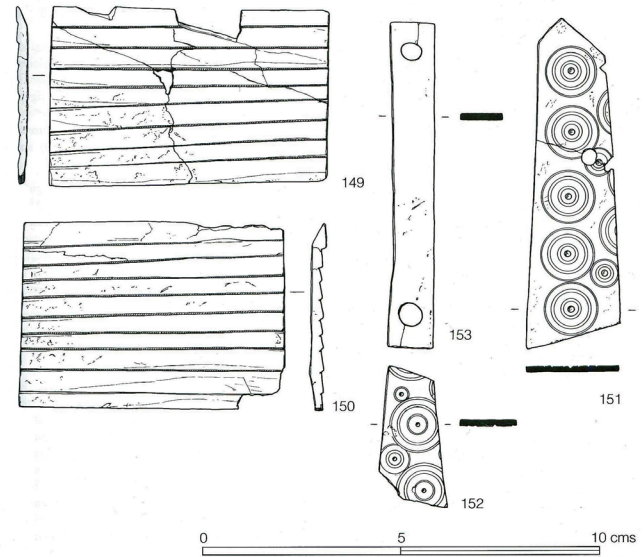


Fig. 6 Bone staircase plates from the dice tower (Photo by the author).

2008, fig. 2b). They would probably have been set inside the tower as shown in Fig. 7a.

The walls of the tower would have been made of wood, and these walls were sometimes covered with pieces of decorative bone plating, as with the example from Richborough (Fig. 7b). It is not known if there was any such plating here. Plates 151 and 152 (Fig. 6) with concentric circle decoration could be for decorating a number of types of object, so it is not impossible that either of them belong to the dice tower. On the other hand, many similar plates survive from boxes, as for example the decorative plates of a box from a late 4th century AD grave at Winchester (Rees *et al.* 2008, 108-111; see also Greep 2015, 135-6). And it is hard to know exactly how close the decorated strips were to the staircase plates, when found. Finally, plate 153, a long plain strip with large holes at each end, appears to be associated with the other plates but may not come from the tower at all.

Dimensions

From the remains themselves and from comparison with the other dice towers found, it is suggested that the dimensions of the tower were around 190 mm in height and 85 mm in depth, from front to back. The width of the tower must have been at least 75mm: the width of the largest staircase plate is 71mm, and, allowing for an extra 2mm or so thickness of plating on either side (if there was any), this would make the width 75mm or more.

Date and Context

Building 186 itself where the Colliton Park dice tower remains were found can be dated to the 4th century AD (Durham & Fulford 2014, 35). It was a building of some importance, with a corridor around a central court, and



Fig. 5 Bone staircase plates from the dice tower (Photo by the author).

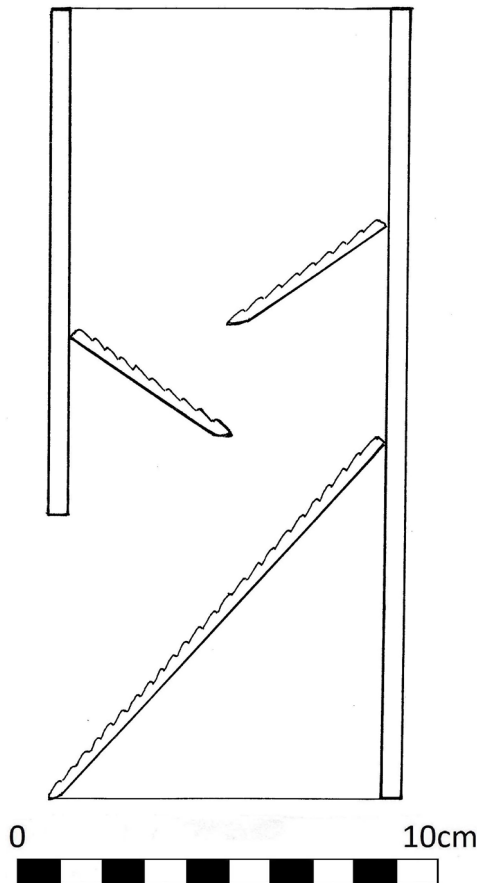


Fig. 7(a) Cut-away of the Colliton Park tower, showing the position of the staircase plates (Drawn by Carole Woodley).

2 mosaics survive from it (*ibid*, 85-6, figs 90-1). Also, two rare silver *miliarenses* coins of the Emperor Constans were found beneath the floor of the building, in square 113SE, the same box square as the dice tower remains. These coins, dating to the period AD 340-350, may represent a donative by Constans to some high-ranking official or army officer (*ibid*, 111 and 376, fig. 102), the presumed owner of the dice tower. And there is also a magnificent blue glass bowl with inscribed figurative decoration that was found in the nearby Pit S. This bowl may have been produced in the mid to later 4th century AD, and may not have been deposited before the end of the 4th century (*ibid*, 144-50, figs. 109-110; date of the bowl 150). The dice tower may similarly have been in use in the mid to later 4th century, and been lost sometime at the end of the century.

Other Towers and Literary References

Other dice towers found so far include ones made of bronze, from Froitzheim in Germany, from Chaves in Portugal, both with inscriptions on their front faces, and a small bronze dice tower fragment with an inscription from a villa in Palencia, Spain (Froitzheim, Horn 1989; Chaves, Carneiro 2019, fig. 4; websites, *O Pirgo de Chaves*; Palencia, Abasolo & Martinez 2017, 1106, fig. 3). A complete tower made of wood and ivory comes from Qustul, Egypt (Emery & Kirwan 1938, 345, pl. 87b). Other ones made of wood and bone include the one from Richborough, as well as smaller fragments from villas at Piddington and Great Casterton.

The Richborough tower consists of several plates of bone and antler, found in the inner ditch on the west side of the Stone Fort, dated to the 4th century AD, previously published (Cobbett 2008). In addition, there are two



Fig. 7 (b) Richborough dice tower reconstruction (Photo by the author).

staircase plates which survive from Richborough (Fig. 8), similar to the Colliton Park examples, the shorter piece measuring 83 x 58 mm, found in the warm room of the 4th century bath house in the north east corner of the fort, and the longer piece 83 x 128 mm, found in 4th century levels between Sections 20 and 46 in the centre of the fort (smaller staircase plate, Greep 1983, fig. 197, no 196; both staircase plates, Cobbett 2013, 49, illustration. Note: the larger staircase plate was only located at the Dover Castle store in 2009, after my 2008 article). Even though these staircase plates are both similar in width, they were clearly found in two different locations on the site, and must be treated as separate items: and along with the main dice tower remains from the Stone Fort ditch, mentioned above, this may mean either that remains from three different dice towers are represented here, or maybe some of the pieces somehow belong to each other.

There are also 2 small bone staircase fragments from the villa at Piddington (Fig. 9), one measuring 63mm long, from Room 19, in rubble overlying the corn drying oven, the other 38mm long, from Room 17, also found in rubble, overlying the working area in front of the corn drier stoke hole, both dating to the 4th century AD: these two pieces actually join up, although found separately (Greep, pers. comm. 18/11/2013). Two other smaller bone pieces, possibly also staircase fragments, come from Great Casterton (Greep 1983, fig. 189, nos C18-19): they were found in the stokehole of the villa, which was destroyed by fire in the late 4th century AD, certainly after AD 392, a date deriving from coins from the stokehole (Corder 1954, 32-33, 45; see also Corder 1961, 13, 76, for a destruction date probably after AD 395). Nothing more of the Piddington tower is currently known, nor of the remains from Great



Fig. 8. Staircase plates from Richborough
(Photo: by the author).

Casterton, though many fragments of bone inlay and veneer survive from the stokehole at the latter site (see Greep 1983, fig. 189, nos. C1-20).

Dice towers made of wood are well attested in ancient literature. Sidonius Apollinaris (*Letters*, 8.12.5) tells of a tower with “ivory steps” (*eboratis .. gradibus*), presumably from a dice tower with a wooden frame; Ausonius (*Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium*, 1.28) describes the “steps cut through the hollow box-wood” (*excisi per cava buxa gradus*); and Agathias (*Palatine Anthology*, 9.482.23-4) has the “hidden staircase of the wooden *pyrgus*” (*πυργου δουρατεου κλιμακι κευθομενη*). From these literary references, it is clear that they were often made of wood, and while examples survive made of bronze from Froitzheim, Chaves and Palencia, perhaps they were more commonly wooden.

The location of a villa seems to fit in with other places where dice towers have been found. As well as at Dorchester, remains of them turn up at the villas at Piddington and Great Casterton, and also at Froitzheim and Palencia. Another location where they have been found is the bath house, another place where games were played: the Chaves example, found in the healing spa baths of *Aquae Flaviae* there that collapsed in an earthquake during the last decade of the 4th or the first

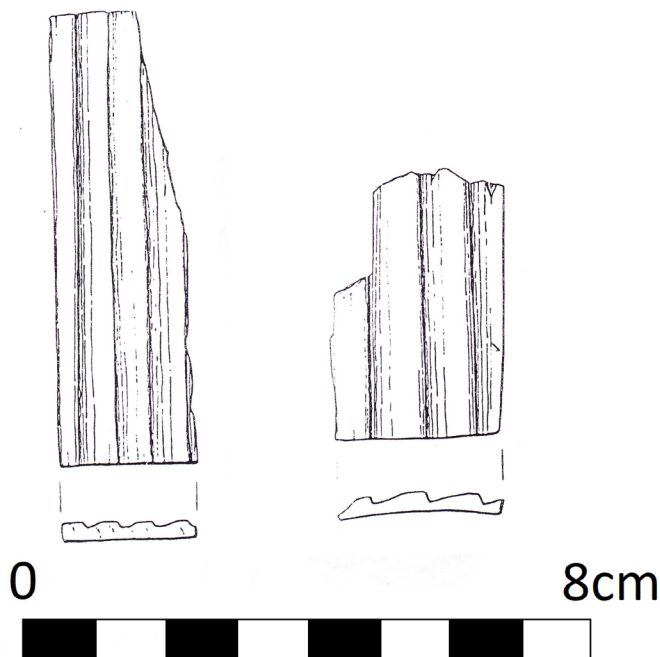


Fig. 9. Bone staircase fragments from Piddington
(Drawn by Roy Friendship Taylor).

decade of the 5th century AD, falls into this category (Carneiro 2019; websites, *O Pirgo de Chaves*). Also, the smaller of the Richborough staircase plates, which was found in the warm room of the bath house there; and the fragment from Palencia was also found in the bathhouse of the villa. Finally, the Qustul tower is a grave gift, and comes from the mound over a tomb (Emery & Kirwan 1938; Cobbett 2013).

Conclusion

The Colliton Park dice tower makes an excellent addition to the collection of these devices from across the Roman world. And as an example made of wood and bone, also a significant part of a small but growing group of this style of dice tower so far found, common in the ancient world, adding more to our knowledge of these fascinating objects and giving us a greater idea of what they looked like. It is hoped that further such fragments will come to light.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Richard Breward and David Ashford at the Dorset County Museum for help in locating the Colliton Park dice tower remains. To Stephen Greep for making me aware of the Piddington and Great Casterton plates. And also to Stuart Watson for making the Richborough dice tower reconstruction and to Carole Woodley for decorating it.

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The Roman Finds Group Autumn Conference 2019 - Finds from Roman Colchester

Colchester Castle Museum

The 2019 RFG Autumn Meeting was held at the Castle Museum in Colchester on Monday 11th November in association with Colchester and Ipswich Museums. We would like to thank Glynn Davis and Ben Paites of Colchester and Ipswich Museums who helped organise the day, as well as Colchester Archaeological Trust for their significant paper contribution and recent excavation finds viewing. We are also grateful to all the speakers who gave papers, summaries of which follow below.



Fig. 10. Philip Crummy, here describing the Roman wall sequence near the Balkerne Gate, guiding attendees on a walk around Roman Colchester the day before the conference.

Session 1

The Early History of Colchester Museum and its Collections Nina Crummy, Independent Researcher

Our first speaker was small finds legend, Nina Crummy. While the Castle Museum now is an innovative structure that allows the visitor to see the collections up close whilst appreciating the surrounding historic building, it has not always been so. By the 18th century the castle was extremely dilapidated and was purchased by Charles Gray who roofed parts of the structure in order to ensure their survival.

It was Charles Gray Round, who first offered the castle as a venue for a local museum in the mid-19th century. The 19th century also saw a huge amount of ground disturbance in the town as the arrival of the railways and the expansion of suburbs brought to light new surrounding sites, particularly the Roman cemeteries. Local antiquarians such as Arthur Jarmin, Henry Vint and William Wire undertook the first systematic excavations around the town, acquiring large collections in the process. William Wire was the first to try to set up a commercial museum in the town using his collection. However, it was not a success and he was soon bankrupt.

Despite false starts and lobbying by the local antiquarians it was not until 1860 that the first museum was opened within the Castle. The first catalogue was issued in the 1870s and a more comprehensive one by Price in the 1880s. Throughout the later 19th century the museum acquired the collections of the local antiquarians that even today form the core of the displays. Artefacts such as the Colchester sphinx, Marcus Flavius Facilis' tombstone and the Colchester vase are a few of the more famous acquisitions from this formative period of the museum's history. Now the collections that were built and acquired during this period are displayed alongside those brought in by modern archaeology in displays that are engaging and informative.

The Pipeclay Figurines of the Colchester Child's Burial

Matt Fittock, FLO Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

Our next speaker, RFG committee member Matt Fittock, built on Nina Crummy's talk by focussing on one particular group of finds that were discovered and acquired during the early years of the Castle Museum. Found in 1866, the Colchester Child's grave was unearthed in the back garden of local antiquarian George Joslin, though some discrepancy over this find spot remains. It was drawn and published by May and Toynbee in 1868 and reconsidered by Eckardt in 1999. This Claudio-Neronian cremation burial contained a large number of pipeclay figurines, all of which were made in Central Gaul. This opulent grave contained a number of other objects also Gaulish in origin and is the earliest use of these figurines in Britain.

Amongst the figurines is the only deity in the group, a figure of Hercules, unique in Britain and a triple horned bull figure, also unique. Four other bulls have been found in Britain, all with the more traditional two horns. There is a child's bust, with no exact parallel, four reclining figures, 2 young and 2 caricatured old men, six comic figures and 10 animal vessels. There are 21 animal vessels in Britain, thus nearly half the provincial assemblage comes from this single grave. They are thought to have contained oils, perfumes or ointments and are in the form of a boar, lions and three monkeys with particularly cheeky grins.

The purpose of these figurines is somewhat a mystery; other examples have been found in graves, rarely in such large numbers suggesting the child buried in Colchester was of quite high status. Were they a part of the burial rite, an act of remembrance or protection in the afterlife? The possibility remains that they were simply used as toys, though wider research has suggested that this is unlikely. Their early date and continental origin might suggest that the grave belongs to a high status immigrant from Roman Gaul coming to the new colonia or a wealthy local with strong connections amongst the Gallic merchants.

The objects from the Colchester Child's grave are displayed today in the Castle Museum.

What's in store: The Mysterious Appearance of an Amber Distaff at Colchester Museum
Glynn Davis, Colchester and Ipswich Museums

Our third speaker was Glynn Davis, who has been doing some fascinating research into Roman amber. Used since the Palaeolithic, amber has been bound up in mythology and magic, with Ovid giving us many of the myths associated with it and Pliny writing about some of its supposed uses, though he dislikes it due to its association with Nero. Martial and Juvenal mention that amber should be rubbed to release its scent and indeed in some places it seems to have been burnt for the same purpose.

The 1st century AD was the height of the amber trade with the much prized Falernian amber being imported from the Baltic. The centre for amber carving was Aquileia, where the raw materials were made into a range of objects before being shipped around the Empire. There also seems to have been a smaller carving centre at Cologne before the amber trade declined in the later 2nd century. While on the continent there is a strong association with female graves; in Britain this connection is less secure.

While a range of amber objects have been found in Britain, from figurative objects such as the gladiator helmet from Bloomberg in London, the most common type from the province are beads. However, during a recent collections move, a new amber object was found in the Colchester Museum collection. Based on comparison to continental objects, it was found to be a distaff - an object used for collecting spun thread. Remedial conservation of the bronze central shaft suggested that at some point a previous curator had been aware of it and its need for conservation, though at what point this had occurred remains a mystery. On the continent these objects are found exclusively in female burials and Glynn postulated they carried a gender related symbolism, perhaps of the ideal Roman matrona. However, the original context of the object is lost and though it is likely from a high status grave, this cannot be confirmed.

The object remains a beautiful if perplexing mystery.

Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder: Roman Brooches of Colchester
Ben Paites, Colchester and Ipswich Museums

Ben Paites of Colchester Museums Service, took us through some of the more spectacular brooches to be found in the museum collection. There are approximately 1083 brooches in the collection, of all types. These objects have been the subject of a great deal of research, being both functional objects, intended to hold clothing together, and also decorative pieces with a range of meanings. Though largely brooches are depicted in Later Roman art, they are a staple feature of every small finds collection from the Iron Age onwards.

When looking at brooches we must consider who the original intended audience for the object was. Some seem designed for the owner to view, others for a wider audience, perhaps to show religious affiliation, similar

to later pilgrim badges or cultural associations. Objects such as the horse and rider brooches have been found concentrated on sites and suggest that they may have been devotional objects or reminders of place for the owner. There are also levels of viewing with some brooches so small and intricate that they were clearly designed only to be seen close up and therefore by the owner and their intimate associates. A number of brooches also have integrally cast loops to allow the attachment of a decorative chain or string of beads.

One of the finest examples from the collection is a brooch that depicts Bacchus riding a panther. These brooches are associated with Roman Gaul and the panther is covered in circular dots filled with enamel. The way that the brooch is oriented suggests that it was designed to be seen only in full by the wearer as any other viewer would have been looking at the object from the top and would not have seen the full design.

A number of the brooches that Ben discussed were to be found in the exhibition 'Adorn', including a small gold example, a gilded crossbow brooch and a polychrome mosaic brooch.

Adorn: An Introduction
Glynn Davis and Ben Paites,
Colchester and Ipswich Museums

Glynn Davis and Ben Paites finished off the first session with a brief introduction to the temporary exhibition 'Adorn'. The 2nd 'Catalytic' exhibition from Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service, it was designed to be more than just an exhibition about jewellery. The exhibition explores themes of identity, the human story behind the 'glitz and glamour' and looks at both the makers and wearers of jewellery. It features over 300 objects from the Bronze Age to the 21st century and sought to engage with the local community, with 30% of the objects displayed being loans from around Essex. Some of the objects displayed were returning to the town for the first time since their discovery, such as the jet Cupid on loan from the British Museum.

The exhibition was designed around a chronological spine flanked by thematic areas such as 'Materials and making', 'Hoop and bezel' and 'The fashions of Empire'. A final section called 'Your Stories' looks at the local community and explores the stories behind items of jewellery lent by the public. The exhibition successfully explores the multiple layers and meanings that even the most humble items of jewellery have and reminds us as archaeologists that while we might be drawn to the gold and gems, every object has a story to tell us.

Highlights of the exhibition include gold ball earrings; one from Colchester, one from Pompeii and depicted on an Egyptian mummy portrait, jet pendants and objects such as the Cupid and Medusa, and a ring with Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus depicted.

Edwin Wood



Session 2

Gosbecks: Iron Age Continuity or Roman Appropriation? The Material Evidence Frank Hargrave, Colchester and Ipswich Museums

The site of Gosbecks shows many of the features of a Roman town, with temples, a theatre, and a fort, but the question remains whether it had an Iron Age predecessor. It used to be assumed that the Roman temple had an Iron Age precursor, but this is now questioned. Two objects from the site may be of significance- a ring with an intaglio depicting Mars, reminiscent of Mars Camulus and a figurine of Mercury, a god also worshipped in the Iron Age. Examination of several other mid-1st century sites showed evidence of considerable wealth and Roman influence. Although Gosbecks had the feel of a Gaulish royal complex, this important site remains a puzzle and requires more excavation.

An Animal Headed Linch Pin from Colchester's Roman Circus Laura Pooley, Colchester Archaeological Trust

In 2015 Colchester Archaeological Trust carried out a series of excavations close to the Roman Circus, the main part of which was excavated in 2004. The decorative head of a Roman linchpin was recovered from a medieval pit. Linchpins, usually made of iron, were passed through the end of an axle on a vehicle to keep the wheel in position. This linchpin is a composite form, the head made of copper alloy with an iron pin socketed into the back. The fluted crescentic head incorporated an animal head, probably a wolf which projected forward along the axle. Laura's research revealed some fifteen published examples of copper-alloy crescentic linchpins across England with a variety of forms, plain, fluted, ribbed, phallic and animal-headed, the animal heads including dog and boar. The Colchester linchpin undoubtedly came from a high status vehicle and although clearly a decorative object, may also have had some protective or apotropaic function. Contexts associated with the Circus produced six more vehicle and harness fittings, in itself a small number, but given the very few similar finds from Colchester, of likely significance.

Lead Coffins from Colchester: an Illustrator's View Emma Holloway, Colchester Archaeological Trust

Large-scale excavations by CAT were undertaken along Balcerne Hill on the site of the former S Mary's Hospital in advance of development from 2001-3. The extra-mural site revealed evidence of extensive Roman occupation, buildings and eighty-six inhumation burials.

Fragments of two Roman lead coffins were recorded during a watching brief stage. Both were badly damaged, consisting of fragments and twisted pieces of varying size. Emma's meticulous post-excavation recording noted several key details that, while following the style of previously recorded examples, seemed to be characteristic of a particular maker or workshop. Tantalisingly two further coffin lids, possibly looted from the site and acquired during investigations by Essex Police also had these style markers.

Emma discussed the decoration, which included shells, beads and reels, familiar on such coffins, but also circles, for which an armband may have been the pattern. A central grille has a distinctive running S pattern, an element common to the excavated fragment and those thought to have been stolen. More research is needed to determine whether these elements are indeed unique to Colchester. The detailed recording of the excavated fragments made comparison with the lids under investigation possible, emphasising the importance of meticulous study and illustration.

Angela Wardle

Session 3

Recent PAS Finds from Colchester and Essex Sophie Flynn, FLO Essex

Each year thousands of artefacts are reported to local FLOs and recorded on the PAS public database at www.finds.org.uk. The database is an invaluable research tool and is used by amateur and professional alike. Sophie focused on recent finds from Colchester and the surrounding areas, in particular west Essex and many from the Chelmsford area. As with most FLO's work, the majority of finds were derived from the activities of metal detectorists. She began looking at objects which could be related to the 'Adorn' exhibition which delegates were able to see over lunch. As expected, coins dominate the recorded find types, together with brooches, then figures and fittings. Sophie ended with an 'honourable mention' of some material from outside the local area.

The Roman Military Equipment from Colchester Edwin Wood, King's College, London

The colonia of Colchester was founded by the army in the decade after the conquest on the site of a former legionary fortress. Most of the military equipment from the early years of the Roman settlement comes from the site of Sheepen to the north west of the Roman town and it was this area that Edwin concentrated on. The original excavators suggested the finds from Sheepen were evidence for the rapid rearming of the veteran colonists at the time of the Boudican rebellion. However it is now clear that the equipment deposits spanned the entire occupation period, not just the Boudican destruction levels.

Drawing on ideas from his ongoing PhD research Edwin looked at the finds from Sheepen, and discussed what they tell us about the nature of veterans living in the colonia; he then broadened this out to look at later periods throughout the area, discussing the difficulty of interpreting 'military' and non 'military' finds. He tentatively concluded that in the first century military finds cluster around Colchester but in the late second/third centuries there was a move away from the colonia with a possible upsurge in horse/cavalry use, covering a wider geographic area. Did this reflect fewer legionary veterans – are the horse fittings 'military'?

Roman Magic: The Camulodunum Case Study Adam Parker, The Open University

Adam looked at the range of objects which may be

classified as 'magical' – a large corpus with over 75 from Colchester alone, by which its inhabitants tried to protect themselves from supernatural harm. These pendants, amulets, charms, and gemstones include both mundane and exotic materials and often represented esoteric knowledge or formed parts of arcane rituals.

Drawing on his ongoing PhD research into the archaeology of magic in Roman Britain, Adam concentrated on three case studies considering them

within their immediate, local contexts as well as their relationship to the wider regional and national picture; this included bone 'fist and phallus' pendants with 6 (out of 33 known in Britain) from Colchester and group of jet animals produced in the Whitby area but with Colchester having the largest number from any site in Britain.

Stephen Greep



Requests for Information

Crouching tiger, hidden tiger.....

Frances McIntosh

In 1992 Lindsay Allason-Jones published a short note in the ARMA newsletter on three unusual mounts with 3D tigers. One from Corbridge, one from Walker in Newcastle and one from Eccles. These are copper-alloy peltate mounts with a 3D tiger set on the front, with stripes of niello on its body. They have confronted griffins' heads meeting at a basket or cantharus at the top. The Walker example is by far the most complete and best preserved. The note was prompted by the discovery of the Corbridge example in the store.

Unfortunately this information did not make it into the catalogue at Corbridge, and so this example remained slightly hidden in the store. In 1992 XRF analysis had been undertaken on the Corbridge example, showing 38% copper, 5% zinc, 34.5% lead and 4.8% tin, which would have given a brassy finish to the surface. When it was re-discovered earlier this year, it was just in time to submit it for pXRF along with other items, which allowed a great comparison between the techniques 20 years apart. The results of 2019 largely agree with the 1992 work, however there was also silver detected, slightly contradicting the 1992 analysis which found no silver in the niello.

Rebecca Adolfsson, an MA student at St. Andrews University has also produced a more detailed illustration which allows the different features to be seen much more clearly than in a photograph, and this is included rather than the photograph (Fig. 11).



*Fig. 11. Illustration of the Corbridge lion mount.
By Rebecca Adolfsson.*

Despite 27 years passing since the note by Allason-Jones, I have not come across further examples. This note is therefore a plea for people to let me know if you have seen other examples. I would also be grateful for thoughts on quite where and how these mounts were used. For the tiger to be 'the right way up', it would need to be set horizontally, so presumably it was a furniture mount rather than a belt mount.

Allason-Jones, L. 1992. 'Tiger, Tiger...', 14-17, *ARMA, Newsletter of the Roman Military Equipment Conference*, Vol.4, No.2. December 1992.

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Enamelled hexagonal flasks

Frances McIntosh and Michael Marshall

Rescue excavations in 1974 underneath the slip road at the Corbridge A69 roundabout discovered part of the northern cremation cemetery of the Roman fort and town (Casey and Hoffman 1995). The most remarkable object excavated was an enamelled copper-alloy flask of composite construction (Figs. 12-13). This object type has previously been brought to the attention of RFG members by Hilary Cool (Cool 1997) who highlighted the Corbridge find and asked that members keep an eye out for fragmentary components. We are renewing this plea.



Fig. 12. Photograph of the Corbridge example, which has been restored by attaching the panels plus fragments of the foot and top to a solid hexagon of unknown material.

The relatively complete vessel from Corbridge has now been joined by another, recently excavated from Moorgate, London. Well-preserved examples from outside Britain include one from excavations at Anapa, Russia on the Black Sea coast and an unprovenanced find in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany.

From the more complete examples it can be determined that these composite vessels were made up of at least nine components (but probably more). They have a narrow neck and a hexagonal body that tapers towards the base (made of six tapering enamelled panels with riveted flanges and an enamelled hexagonal top plate with a central perforation). They can have either domed circular pedestal feet or flaring hexagonal-sectioned pedestal feet. Pairs of holes in the body top plate would have allowed a drop handle for carrying to be attached but these rarely survive. Some related vessels have evidence for a stopper or lid. Most often, all that survives is a single panel, which can be confused with enamelled patera handles (and vice versa) but the panels have distinctive riveted flanges along the edges.

Michael Marshall of MOLA and Frances McIntosh are looking into these beautiful and rare objects. Our searches so far have discovered c. 20 examples of these flasks, or of closely related types with different



Fig. 13. Illustration of the Corbridge example, showing a top and side view. Illustration was produced by the Durham University Archaeology Chief Draftsperson.

decoration. Most of the flasks come from the UK (both from excavations and the PAS) but smaller numbers are known from Continental Europe (Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy) with an outlier in Russia. There is a possible example from Morocco which we are still trying to verify. We would like to make sure that we have tracked down all examples so if readers could provide us with information about other examples known to them it would be much appreciated. Thank you again to all of those who have already sent us information.

We are also very interested in finding out who might have carried out the conservation work on the Corbridge example before it came into the museum as this information has been lost. If anyone has any information on this aspect, please contact Frances.

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Bibliography

- Casey, P. J., & Hoffmann, B. 1995. 'Excavations on the Corbridge Bypass, 1974', *Archaeologia Aeliana Series 5*, Vol. 23, 17-45.
Cool, H E M. 1997. Panelled Enamel Vessels, *Roman Finds Group Newsletter 13*, 2-3.

Recent Publications

Culture and Society at Lullingstone Roman Villa

By Caroline K. Mackenzie. 2019. Archaeopress. Paperback; 205x255 pages; viii+50 pages; 40 figures (colour throughout). Printed ISBN 9781789692907. Epublication ISBN 9781789692914. Printed £14.99 (No VAT). EPublication £9.99 (Exc. UK VAT).

Culture and Society at Lullingstone Roman Villa paints a picture of what life might have been like for the inhabitants of the villa in the late third and fourth centuries AD. The villa today, in the Darent Valley, Kent, has an unusual amount of well-preserved evidence for its interior decoration and architecture. Seventy years on from the commencement of the excavation of the site, this study draws on the original reports but also embraces innovative approaches to examining the archaeological evidence and sheds new light on our understanding of the villa's use. For the first time, the site of Lullingstone Roman Villa is surveyed holistically, developing a plausible argument that the inhabitants used domestic space to assert their status and cultural identity.

An exploration of the landscape setting asks whether property location was as important a factor in the time of Roman Britain as it is today and probes the motives of the villa's architects and their client. Lullingstone's celebrated mosaics are also investigated from a fresh perspective. Why were these scenes chosen and what impact did they have on various visitors to the villa? Comparison with some contemporary Romano-British villas allows us to assess whether Lullingstone is what we would expect, or whether it is exceptional. Examples from the wider Roman world are also introduced to enquire how Lullingstone's residents adopted Roman architecture and potentially the social customs which accompanied it.

Britannia Monographs Now Available Online!

Several Britannia Monographs, one of the many leading publications of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, are now available for free download online via the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). To peruse and download the list of titles visit <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/series.xhtml?recordId=280>. Recent additions include *The Rural Settlement of Roman Britain*. *New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain Vol 1* and *The Rural Economy of Roman Britain*. *New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain Vol. 2*, Britannia Monograph nos. 29 and 30.

Upcoming Publications

50 Roman Finds from the Portable Antiquities Scheme

By Sally Worrell and John Pearce. Amberley Publishing. Paperback. 96 pages. 234 x 165mm. 150 illustrations. ISBN: 9781445686844. £14.99.

Publication Date: 15th February 2020.

50 Roman Finds of the Portable Antiquities Scheme highlights some of the most important and interesting



Roman objects recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) or reported Treasure. It features a wide variety of objects, allowing for a balanced presentation of both well-preserved everyday objects and some of the most spectacular finds to have been recorded by the PAS. Iconic objects featured here include the Crosby Garrett helmet and the Ilam pan. Collectively, the fifty examples featured here exemplify the cosmopolitan culture of the Roman world and help shed further light on a fascinating period of British history.

Conferences and Events

The Ancient Romans and Their Gods

1st February, 10am - 4pm
Roman Baths, Bath

Religious beliefs embraced the 'personality' gods who figure in ancient literature and art, like Jupiter, Mars and Venus, and also all kinds of less visible spirits. These colourful fabulous figures enliven the literature of the Romans. But what of their darker side, those mysterious powers with chilling consequences for mortals who err in some way or who are just in the wrong place at the wrong time? Spend the day learning about them at this day school with George Sharpley. For more information, visit <https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/events/ancient-romans-and-their-gods-%E2%80%93-day-school-george-sharpley> or to book please call 01225 477773.

Live Like a Roman

17th - 21st February
Fishbourne Palace, Chichester

Drop into Fishbourne Roman Palace and find out what it was like to live in Roman Times! Find out what the Romans did for us at this family-friendly event, from pottery-making to dressing up, creating mosaics to spinning and weaving – it's all about getting hands-on. While visiting the largest Roman residence in Britain, discover objects from 2,000 years ago and see how the palace would have looked in its heyday. For more information, visit <https://sussexpast.co.uk/event/live-like-a-roman>

Current Archaeology Live! 2020

28th - 29th February
Senate House, London

Current Archaeology's annual conference will focus on the latest finds and ground-breaking research within archaeology; with the winners of the 2020 Current Archaeology Awards, as voted for by the public, announced at the Friday evening reception. For more information, visit www.archaeologylive.co.uk, or call 020 8819 5580.

Myth in Roman Art and Artefacts in the British Museum

27th March, 5.45pm - 8pm
Roman Empire Gallery 70, British Museum, London

The Roman Empire covered most of Europe, north Africa and Western Asia and lasted many centuries. Run by the London Region Arts Club, this tour will explore how myth varied across time and place, examining high and low status art and artefacts, from vases and mosaics to lamps and coins.

Mind, Body, Magic: Sensory And Emotional Approaches To Magic In The Roman World

Friday 27th March
The Open University Campus, Milton Keynes

A one-day conference focusing on the theme of sensory and emotional approaches to magic in the Roman world will be at The Open University campus in Milton Keynes. For more information and registration details, please visit <https://www.openmaterialreligion.org/events-1/2020/magic>

Work by the Roman Roads Research Association, Royal Archaeological Institute Lectures

8th April, 3 - 5pm
Society of Antiquaries of London,
Burlington House, London

As part of the Royal Archaeological Institute Lectures Programme, the Roman Roads Research Association will be giving the following lectures:

'Changing the Map: how lidar data is transforming our understanding of the Roman road network in North West England' by David Ratledge;
'New light on old roads: Watling Street, Stane Street, and their children' by Rob Entwistle;
'Pushing Forwards: new evidence for pre-Flavian Roman penetration into Brigantia' by Mike Haken.

For more information and abstracts of each lecture, please visit www.royalarchinst.org/2019-2020-lecture-programme

Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference/ Roman Archaeology Conference

16th - 18th April
Split, Croatia

This year, the 30th Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (TRAC) will be held in Split, Croatia, and will run alongside the Roman Archaeology Conference (RAC). The full RAC/TRAC Conference schedule will be announced in December 2019, when registration will open. For more information and to book a place, please visit <http://trac.org.uk/trac-2020/> or <http://www.romansocietyrac.ac.uk/rac-2020/>