Britannia (2026), 1–32
doi:10.1017/S0068113X26100889

III Inscriptions

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A. Monumental[1]

1. **City of London** (*Londinium*, TQ 318 814), 81 Newgate Street (Fig. 1). Small fragment of a thin white marble slab, 74 by 105 mm, 23 mm thick, found[2] in 2021/22. The left edge is original, and so probably is the top edge.[3] Inscribed between double setting-out lines 22 mm apart, in well-cut capitals: .[...] | AE ▵ T[...] | LIA[...] | A [...] | [...], probably *[D(is) M(anibus) et memori]|ae T[...]|lia[...] | a(nn...) [...]*, 'To the Shades of the Dead and to the memory of T[...] [...]|lia[...], aged ...'[4]

2. **Benwell** (*Condercum* NZ 21 64) Roman fort, Tyne and Wear (Fig. 2). Fragment of a thin buff sandstone slab, 0.264 by 0.143 m, 40–45 mm thick, found[5] in *c.* 2025. Its inscribed

[1] Inscriptions on STONE ('Monumental') have been arranged as in the order followed by R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright in *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* Vol. i (Oxford, 1965) and (slightly modified) by R.S.O. Tomlin, R.P. Wright and M.W.C. Hassall, in *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* Vol. iii (Oxford, 2009), which are henceforth cited respectively as *RIB* (1–2400) and *RIB* III (3001–3550). Citation is by item and not page number. Inscriptions on PERSONAL BELONGINGS and the like (*instrumentum domesticum*) have been arranged alphabetically by site under their counties. For each site they have been ordered as in *RIB*, pp. xiii–xiv. The items of *instrumentum domesticum* published in the eight fascicules of *RIB* II (Gloucester and Stroud, 1990–95), edited by S.S. Frere and R.S.O. Tomlin, are cited by fascicule, by the number of their category (*RIB* 2401–2505) and by their sub-number within it (e.g. *RIB* II.2, 2415.53). Non-literate graffiti and graffiti with fewer than three complete letters have generally been excluded. When measurements are quoted, the width precedes the height. Roman inscriptions found in Britain, including writing-tablets, can be found online at <romaninscriptionsofbritain.org>.

[2] In a medieval rubbish pit during excavation by Pre-Construct Archaeology, and published (sf 44) in the forthcoming final report.

[3] Although now abraded, it runs parallel to the setting-out lines and at right-angles to the left edge, both edges being not quite at right-angles to the face but receding slightly. The reverse face is rough and untooled, but probably original, since there is no sign of its having split off a thicker slab; and other Roman inscribed marble slabs found in London (*RIB* 24, 26, 36) are quite as thin. The marble, probably Italian Carrara, was imported and would have been used sparingly. This is not a free-standing tombstone, but a plaque for insertion into a masonry structure, probably a niche for cremated ashes in a *columbarium*.

[4] Notes line-by-line. 1. Only part of the first letter survives, the edge of a vertical stroke with serifs at top and bottom. It is indented, to mark this line as the heading. It might be *D M* with the name of the deceased carried over into line 2 ending with *–ae*, but neater than this clumsy division would be the formula *DM et memoriae*, as in *RIB* 23 (London). 2. The name would then begin with T, whether an abbreviated praenomen or the nomen. 3. LIA would then be towards the end of the cognomen, for example *–lianus*, *–liaris*, *-liatus*, whether masculine or feminine. 4. There is no letter after A, marking it as an abbreviation for 'years', whether accusative *a(nnos)* after *q(ui) u(ixit)* or similar, or genitive *a(nnorum)*, in either case followed by the numeral.

[5] In the grounds of a house in Grange Road, Fenham, Newcastle, *c.* 0.8 km west of the Roman fort and Vallum crossing. It was donated to the Great North Museum: Hancock, from where Jo Anderson sent details and

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Fig. 1. London, 81 Newgate Street (No. 1), inscribed marble fragment (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

face was defined by a groove incised just inside the edge, of which only the top-left corner survives. Incised capitals: IMP ᵒ ẸẠE, *Imp(erator) Cae(sar)*. 'The Emperor Caesar ...'[6]

3. **High Rochester** (*Bremenium*, NY 83228 98564) Roman fort, Northumberland (Fig. 3). Fragment of a buff sandstone slab, *c.* 0.71 by 0.51 m, found[7] some years ago in the south-west part of the fort. Incised within a recessed panel: [...]ẠẸ[...] | [...]IXIT ᵒ [...] | [...] ᵒ N ᵒ D ᵒ [...], *[...]ae[...] | [... u]ixit [...] | ... d(ies) [...]*. '... lived ... days ...'[8]

photographs. It has since been examined by Nick Hodgson and Lindsay Allason-Jones, whose observations are included here.

[6] The very top of C and the extreme lower right arm of A can still be seen, but to their right, where S would be expected, the surface is smooth and uninscribed. Below this line of letters, except for one or two marks which may only be casual, there is no sign of lettering. It seems therefore that the inscription was never completed. Since it is a thin stone slab like those inserted into turfwork, not a masonry facing-stone, it would seem to have been intended for the Vallum (compare *RIB* 1361–5, all from the Vallum at Benwell), but was left unfinished when it was realised that Vallum slabs should be inscribed in 'centurial' format, not as imperial building-stones or dedications beginning with the Emperor's name and titles.

[7] By the previous owner of the Bastle, High Rochester, where it still is. It came from the western wall of the paddock west of the house, a location quite near that of *RIB* III, 3492, another tombstone fragment, found in a field wall 'immediately south-west of the fort'. Richard Carlton sent details including photographs.

[8] The verb *[u]ixit* would have been followed by the age at death, expressed in years, months and days, the terms abbreviated to their initial letters, and each followed by a numeral. In the bottom line below, D for *d(ies)* is certain, but is preceded by N, not the expected numeral of *m(enses)*. N does not suggest any formula, but perhaps it was a mistake by the stone-cutter for a numeral such as IV.

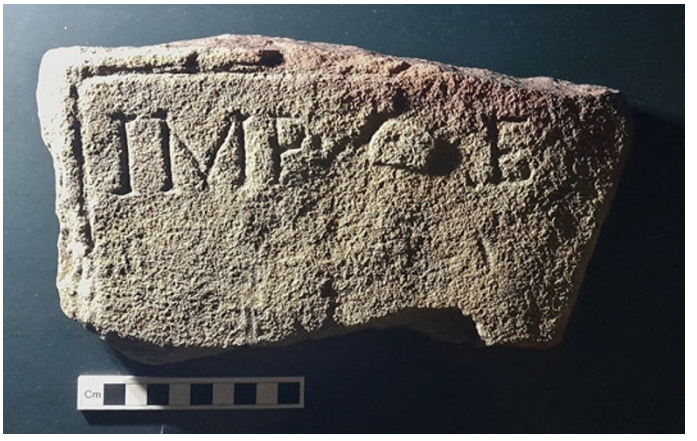


Fig. 2. Benwell, inscribed sandstone fragment (No. 2) (photo: Great North Museum: Hancock).



Fig. 3. High Rochester, tombstone fragment (No. 3) (photo: Richard Carlton).

B. Instrumentum domesticum

Berkshire

4. **Hungerford** (SU 336 682) (Fig. 4). Part of a copper-alloy finger-ring, found[9] in 2023, with half its oval bezel. Incised: ΛṂ[...] | M [...], *am[a] m[e]*. 'Love me.'[10]

5. **Silchester** (*Calleua Atrebatum*, SU 6430 6240), Roman bath-house in Insula XXXIII (Fig. 5). Oval leaden[11] sealing, found[12] in 2018. One face, 16 mm wide, is impressed with a circular die, its reverse a hemispherical projection pierced by the hole left by the binding cord. The inscribed face has an imperial bust facing right, surrounded by four letters in relief to the left, and four to the right. They are almost illegible because the die was withdrawn while the metal was still plastic, allowing it to run and blur the impression; but perhaps: CONS ANVS, as if for *Cons<t>an{u}s*. Constans, emperor 337–50.[13]

6. Ibid. (Fig. 6). Large fragment of a tegula, 205 by 145 mm, with part of an impressed tile stamp, the letters in relief. Within a rectangular die: FR[...], probably *Fr[...]*.[14]

7. Ibid. (Fig. 7). Grey coarseware sherd with rim, from a plate or lid. Incised underneath after firing: [...]TA ṖOL[...], *[...]ta Pol[...]*. Two incomplete names, the first a woman's. The difference in script suggests they are those of different owners.[15]

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[9] By a metal-detectorist, PAS ref. BERK-A1A5EF. Details from Philip Smither, county Finds Liaison Officer, who sent a photograph of the fragmentary bezel from which Fig. 4 is drawn.

[10] The cutter distinguished Λ from M by making the first and third diagonals of M vertical. Visually the first M might be N incomplete, but there would not then be enough room for *an[ima] m[ea]* as in *RIB* II.3, 2423.4. There was apparently a space between the second M and the (lost) E, so as to balance AMA above. They are separated by a broad horizontal line. For the legend *ama me* on a gold ring, see *RIB* II.3, 2422.2, and compare 18 and 48, which are similar. It also occurs in moulded letters on a copper-alloy brooch (*RIB* II.3, 2421.1) and incised on a glass bottle (*RIB* II.2, 2419.73).

[11] It has been analysed by portable X-ray fluorescence, showing it to be 70% lead, 20% tin, 10% other metals (information from Mike Fulford). This accords with the composition of the first two sealings ever analysed, said to be *c.* 70% lead, 30% tin (I.A. Richmond, 'Roman lead sealings from Brough-under-Stainmore', *TCWAAS* n.s. 36 (1936), 104–25, at 122–3). Richmond notes that this is close to that of modern solder, 67% lead, 23% tin, with the advantage of lowering the melting-point and making the alloy harder than pure lead.

[12] With the next two items during excavation by the University of Reading (*Britannia* 50 (2019), 453–4) directed by Mike Fulford, who made them available (sf 790, 545 and 683 respectively). They are published in his forthcoming final report with six other grey coarseware sherds having graffiti made after firing. Only two are literate, the single letter T (sf 198) and part of two letters (sf 989), perhaps [...]NI, the owner's name in the genitive. The others are non-literate: a rim-sherd (sf 239) with three notches, an elaborate 'star' (sf 97), and two plain 'crosses' (sf 531 and 990).

[13] Only the second letter, O, is perfectly legible; but the first is similar in appearance, and can be seen as a closed C; and the last two, V and S, are distorted but still fairly legible. The other four are indistinct but separate from each other, so that something can be guessed from their outlines and the few surface traces. There is a gap at the apex, with no trace of a letter here, but perhaps the remains of a 'swag' or wreath. The letters CO identify the bust as that of a Constantinian emperor, but without the usual accompanying imperial titles of D N and/or (P F) AVG. The die-cutter also omitted T, but ended the name with VS, a regular name-ending. But *Constans* is an easier reading than *Constantinus* or *Constantius*, especially since Constans visited Britain in 342/3. One of his sealings is already known from London (*RIB* II.1, 2411.23), but it is quite different.

[14] The first letter is a short vertical stroke met by two diagonal strokes joining each other at right-angles. Just enough remains of the original surface to show that the letter ended here, and that its vertical did not extend to the height of R. It is therefore F, not K. Capital F is sometimes written like this, as in a tile graffito also from Silchester (*RIB* II.5, 2491.1). A gap may have followed FR, as if the letters were an abbreviation (compare the tile stamp *RIB* II.5, 2489.42, TIFR), but it is easier to take them as the beginning of the manufacturer's name, the rest of it now lost. The few possibilities include *Fronto* and *Frontinus*, but since the stamp is otherwise unknown, this cannot be certain. In the left part of the tile, much damaged, are the remains of the tile-maker's 'signature', two concentric arcs made in the surface while it was still soft.

[15] The name-ending *[...]ta* indicates a feminine cognomen, not a nomen (which would typically end in *–ia*), so the second name is unlikely to be hers as well, an impression reinforced by the difference in script. The next letter is probably P with its loop unfinished, not an incomplete A (unlikely before O) nor a badly made F, since many



Fig. 4. Hungerford, inscribed ring bezel (No. 4) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin from a photograph).



Fig. 5. Silchester, leaden sealing (No. 5) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).



Fig. 6. Silchester, stamped tile (No. 6) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

names begin with *Pol-*, but *Fol-* is almost unknown. This name is probably that of another owner, but conceivably was a man's name in the genitive, defining her in some way; whether her father, husband or even owner, if she



Fig. 7. Silchester, rim sherd with graffito (No. 7) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

Buckinghamshire

8. **Hambleden**, Yewden Roman villa (SU 784 855) (Fig. 8). Coarseware 'saucer' found[16] in 1912. Shallowly incised underneath after firing: ΛNT | ǪNΛ, probably *Ant⌋on<i>a*.[17]

9. Ibid. (Fig. 9). Coarseware base sherd, inscribed underneath after firing: SIITOMINΛ, *Setomina*.[18]

10. Ibid. (Fig. 10). Wall sherd of a black-burnished platter, inscribed after firing below the rim: [...]ǪRINE, probably *[Vict]orin(a)e*.[19] '(Property) of Victorina.'

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were a slave. The last is unlikely, however, as would be *[... liber]ta Pol[...]* for a freedwoman, since *liberta* is usually abbreviated to L in formal nomenclature, and would be unlikely in this informal context.

[16] With the next three items during the excavations published as Alfred H. Cocks, 'A Romano-British Homestead, in the Hambleden Valley, Bucks', *Archaeologia* 71 (1921), 141–98. These graffiti were read and drawn by Thomas May at pp. 184–5 with figs 18.1–4, but not included in *RIB* II. Only the next item (*Setomina*) is displayed in Discovering Bucks Museum, Aylesbury (acc. no. 1994.57.1753), where it was seen by Scott Vanderbilt. The others are in store, but photographs (Figs 8–10) were sent by Brett Thorn, who confirmed that this item was incised after firing. May says it was 'scratched before baking', but this is true only of the underlying zig-zag pattern. May also notes a samian base sherd (Drag. 27, stamped CVCALI[M]) which is 'scratched' underneath with R. The initial letter of the owner's name.

[17] This reading assumes that the graffito was made symmetrically, with three letters in each line. O is rather slight, just two small incisions not conjoining, and only the second diagonal of final Λ is well marked, but there is just trace of the first. May drew 'T' to the left of the second line, and the final Λ as 'V' followed by the tail of 'S', but the photograph does not support this. His reading was ANT | IOXVVS, which he suggested was a blundered ANTONIVS. The omission of I from ΛNTONIΛ seems more likely.

[18] S is extended downwards to mark it as the initial letter, and II is for E. The reading is certain, but *Setomina*, by its termination a woman's name, is not otherwise attested.

[19] The bowl has been reconstructed from its remaining sherds, and the uninscribed surface to left and right of the inscribed sherd in Fig. 10 is modern infill. The first letter is broken by the edge and might be D, suggesting the name *[Alexan]drina*, but O offers many more possibilities. The name *Victorina* is common, although others are possible, such as *Memorina.* Epitaphs of women called *Victorina* often reduce the genitive/dative name-ending *–ae* to *–e*, a frequent 'Vulgarism'.



Fig. 8. Hambleden, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 8) (photo: Discover Bucks Museum).



Fig. 9. Hambleden, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 9) (photo: Discover Bucks Museum).

11. Ibid. Wall sherd of 'light brown ware', inscribed after firing: VIR[...], *Vir[ilis]*.[20]

[20] May reads VIR..., which like his drawing implies that V is the first letter and that R, although damaged, is acceptable. There is no photograph. The name *Virilis* is very common, here nominative or genitive.



Fig. 10. Hambleden, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 10) (photo: Discover Bucks Museum).

Cumbria

12. **Stanwix** (*Uxelodunum*, NY 399 567) Roman fort and *uicus* (Fig. 11, sf 5813). Leaden sealing found[21] in 2025, impressed on both faces with letters moulded in relief. Obverse: LEG | $\overline{\text{VI}}$, *leg(io) VI*. Reverse: ΛLR Ↄ above a palm branch, *A(ulus) L(...) R(...) (centurio)*. 'Sixth Legion, A(ulus) L(...) R(...), centurion.'[22]

13. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 5562). Leaden sealing impressed on both faces with letters moulded in relief.[23] Obverse: $\widehat{\text{ΛLE}}$ PE, *al(a)e Pe(trianae)*. '(Sealing) of the *ala Petriana*.' Reverse: ANC, *A(ulus) N(...) C(...)*.[24]

14. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 5666). Leaden sealing impressed on both faces with letters moulded in relief. Obverse: $\widehat{\text{ΛLE}}$ PE, *al(a)e Pe(trianae)*. '(Sealing) of the *ala Petriana*.'[25] Reverse: ANC, *A(ulus) N(...) C(...)*.[26]

[21] With the next thirteen items during excavation by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology directed by Frank Giecco, who sent details and photographs. For previous lead sealings from the site, see *Britannia* 54 (2023), 435, Nos. 13 and 14; 56 (2025), Nos. 12–17.

[22] The suprascript bar of the numeral cuts the diagonals of V. On the reverse, despite the odd resemblance of ΛLR to ALP on Nos. 16 and 17 (sf 5736 and 5747 in Fig. 11), the A is 'open' (Λ) and the R has a tail; in any case, a sealing would hardly name both an *ala* and a legion. ΛLR is followed by an arc which can reasonably be understood as an incomplete centurial symbol.

[23] Obverse and reverse dies are the same as those of three other sealings in Fig. 11, sf 5666 (the next item, No. 14), sf 3324 and sf 433. The latter two have been published already as *Britannia* 56 (2025), 501, No. 13; and 521, Add. (*g*), correcting *Britannia* 54 (2023), 435, No. 13. There is a fifth instance of both dies, also from Stanwix: *Britannia* 56 (2025), 500, No. 12.

[24] The three initials of a decurion, not an abbreviated cognomen *Anc(...)*. In this and the next item (No. 14) there would have been a crescent above and a 'star' below, as can be seen in sf 3324 and 433, both in Fig. 11, but they did not register or have worn away.

[25] The letters A, L and E are ligatured together just like those in the other sealings, but P and E have both registered badly. There is also little trace of the 'star' above and below.

[26] As already noted, the initials of the decurion.



Fig. 11. Stanwix, leaden sealings (Nos. 12–20) with small-find numbers (photo: Anna Giecco for Wardell Armstrong Archaeology).

15. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 5778). Leaden sealing impressed on both faces with letters moulded in relief. Obverse: A͡L· PE|T, *al(a) Pet(riana)*. Reverse: FLM | *D below a palm branch, *Fl(avius) M(...) | d(ecurio)*. 'The *ala Petriana*, Flavius M(...) decurion.'[27]

16. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 5736). Leaden sealing impressed on both faces with letters moulded in relief. Obverse: ALP A above a palm branch, *al(a) P(etriana) A(ugusta)*. Reverse: [F]L FEL | + D +, *[F]l(avius) Fel(ix) d(ecurio)*. 'The *ala Petriana Augusta*, Flavius Felix decurion.'[28]

17. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 5747). Leaden sealing impressed on both faces with letters moulded in relief. Obverse: ALP A above a palm branch, *al(a) P(etriana) A(ugusta)*. Reverse: [F]L FEL | + D +, *[F]l(avius) Fel(ix) d(ecurio)*. 'The *ala Petriana Augusta*, Flavius Felix decurion.'[29]

18. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 3833). Leaden sealing, obverse only, but made by impressing a die, the letters moulded in relief: ΛLP, *al(a) P(etriana)*.[30]

[27] Above and below the obverse legend is a 'branch'-like motif. This obverse die is not the same as that of the other *ala Petriana* sealings in Fig. 11. To expand the reverse, there are many possible cognomina in *M–*, but the decurion might well be Flavius Marcellinus, *[F]lavius Marcellinus dec(urio)*, who dedicated an altar at Milecastle 49 (*RIB* 1870).

[28] Both dies are the same as those of the next item (No. 17, sf 5747), so the damaged reverse can be fully restored; it is shared by sf 817 (*Britannia* 54 (2023), 435, No. 14). On the obverse, the second A is separated from ALP by a space, and may be understood as the title *A(ugusta)*. This is not included in the other sealings of the *ala*, but is attested by *RIB* 957 (Carlisle) which records its full titles: this slab is dedicated by one of its prefects, *prae(fectus) alae Augustae Petrianae torq(uatae) m(illiariae) c(iuium) R(omanorum)*.

[29] Both dies are the same as those of the previous item (No. 16, sf 5736).

[30] A is apparently 'open' (Λ), and L has lost its horizontal stroke. The edge of the die can be seen after P, so it was not followed by E or A, unlike the previous items.



Fig. 12. Stanwix, five bone roundels (including Nos. 21–23) with small-find numbers (photo: Anna Giecco for Wardell Armstrong Archaeology).

19. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 5807). Leaden sealing, the obverse with letters moulded in relief: ÇN͡ER above a palm branch, *c(ohors) (II) Ner(viorum)*.[31] Reverse: impressed with the die of a standing bird facing left.[32]

20. Ibid. (Fig. 11, sf 5788). Leaden sealing, reverse only, impressed with letters moulded in relief: CẠH below a palm branch(?), *C(aius) A(...) H(...)*.[33]

21. Ibid. (Fig. 12, sf 5581). Bone roundel[34] incised with two graffiti. (i) COCCVS, *Coccus*.[35] (ii) Five straight lines, three of them made twice, forming a zig-zag. Perhaps the letters ΛVI.[36]

[31] The obverse is damaged in the centre by the binding cord, but is apparently a rather wide N, its second (diagonal) stroke ligatured to the vertical stroke of E. This N is joined above by half a 'star', its horizontal perhaps serving as the suprascript bar of a numeral II below, as if it were combined with N. There are many different sealings of *cohors II Nerviorum* (*RIB* II.1, 2411.106–141), and this would seem to be a variant in which (like 2411.110) the numeral was not explicit.

[32] Another sealing of the cohort (*RIB* II.1, 2411.116) also features a standing bird facing left, but from another die. They would have been impressed by the decurion with his signet.

[33] The middle letter is a composite formed by a vertical stroke joined below by a horizontal stroke and two short diagonals, perhaps an elaborate A extended downward to fill the space. The initials of the decurion.

[34] One of five found (Fig. 12), all neatly lathe-turned with one face dished or countersunk. One of them (sf 5596) is not inscribed, and another (sf 5582) has only a confusing medley of incisions left by successive owners, but the other three (sf 5581, 5580 and 5579), Nos. 21–23, all belonged to the same man, Coccus, as the first or second owner.

[35] This graffito occupies the prime position, suggesting that it names the first owner. The letter-forms are the same as those of COCCVS in the next item (No. 22), and evidently by the same hand.

[36] This reading assumes that the three letters were made after inverting COCCVS, which seems likely, since it would then make the previous owner's name unreadable. The other way up, the letters might be IΛV or even IΛL,



Fig. 13. Stanwix, samian sherd with graffito (No. 24) (photo: Wardell Amstrong Archaeology).

22. Ibid. (Fig. 12, sf 5580). Bone roundel incised with two graffiti. (i) In clumsy capitals: PRIṆ, perhaps *Prin(ceps)*.[37] (ii) COCCVS, *Coccus*.[38]

23. Ibid. (Fig. 12, sf 5579). Bone roundel incised with two graffiti. (i) Horizontal line cut by three vertical lines, but not a letter.[39] (ii) COCCVS, *Coccus*.[40]

24. Ibid. (Fig. 13). Samian base sherd, incised after firing just above the foot-ring: ΛPRILIṢ, *Aprilis*.[41]

25. Ibid. (Fig. 14). Samian wall sherd incised after firing just above the foot-ring, inverted as to the vessel: [...]ṆOBILIṢ, *Nobilis*.[42]

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but ΛVI can be understood as the second owner's name abbreviated: *Avitus* for example, or his three initials, *A(ulus) V(...) I(...)*.

[37] This graffito occupies the prime position, suggesting that it names the first owner. His name is not certain since *princeps*, although frequent as a title or military rank, is comparatively uncommon as a personal name, so perhaps PRIM for *Prim(us)* was intended. There is a short diagonal stroke to the right of N, as if for M, but it seems to underlie it, and be related to another diagonal to its left, as if forming an underlying, unrelated letter.

[38] This graffito was made with PRIN inverted. The letter-forms of COCCVS are the same as in the previous item, and evidently by the same hand. Coccus wrote his name as the second owner, initial C cutting the downstroke of N.

[39] It is not clear from the photograph whether these lines cut into COCCVS, as if to delete a name already there, or were made centrally by the first owner as a mark of identification. But their prime position, and the awkward placing of COCCVS, suggest they were made first.

[40] COCCVS again, so presumably by the same hand, but its letter-forms are somewhat different. O is much the same, two curving strokes not conjoining, but no space was left for S, which distorted it; and CC is also different.

[41] Final S is only a short diagonal stroke. Like the next item, this is the owner's name, whether nominative or genitive, '(the property) of ...'.

[42] N and S are both incomplete, but can be restored with certainty. The beginning of the diagonal second stroke of L is just visible in the broken edge.



Fig. 14. Stanwix, samian sherd with graffito (No. 25) (photo: Wardell Amstrong Archaeology).



Fig. 15. Colchester, iron die with 'M' (No. 26) (photo: Colchester Museum).

Essex

26. **Colchester** (*Camulodunum*, TL 9878 2487), Royal Grammar School (Fig. 15). Iron die, 118.3 mm long but now incomplete, found[43] in 1961 or 1964. The broken octagonal shaft ends in a rectangular striking-head, 22.2 by 16.6 mm, bearing in relief the letter M retrograde, now damaged. *M(...)*.[44]

[43] During excavation, but without note of the exact context. It is now in Colchester Museum (COLEM.2000.166.6348), from where Ben Paites sent a photograph by Douglas Atfield (Fig. 15). It is fully published by O. Humphreys and G.J.C. Davis as 'An iron letter die from Colchester, Essex (UK)', *Instrumentum* 62 (December 2025), 34–6, which was sent by Glynn Davis.

[44] There is no close parallel in *RIB* II.1, 2409 (dies), but Humphreys and Davis (see previous note) discuss many non-British iron letter dies including *CIL* xiii 10023, 26, which also reads 'M'. They suggest that the Colchester die identified a local craftsman or manufacturer like Cintusmus, the coppersmith (*aerarius*) who inscribed *RIB* 194, a bronze plaque found nearby on the playing fields of the Royal Grammar School, Colchester. M would be the initial letter of his name.



Fig. 16. Finchingfield handle with incised numeral (No. 27) (photo: PAS).

North Essex

27. **Finchingfield** (TL 683 327), near Braintree (Fig. 16). Copper-alloy handle for a knife or razor found[45] in 2022, cast in the form of the head and long neck of an open-mouthed imaginary beast. Incised across its top end: XII, '12'.

South Gloucestershire

28. Near **Pilning** (ST 553 843) (Fig. 17). Wall sherd of a samian bowl (Dr. 31R, Trier, dated 140–200), found[46] in 2022. Incised lightly after firing on the wall below the rim, in capitals: [...].TIV[...], perhaps *[...t]tiu[s]*.[47]

Kent

29. **Woodnesborough** (TR 310 568) (Fig. 18). Gold 'keeled' finger-ring, late second- or third-century in date, found[48] in 2023. The oval bezel, 7.83 by 7.35 mm, is incised: SISCI, *Sisci*. '(Property) of Siscus'.[49]

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[45] PAS ref. ESS-0E46ED.

[46] During the same excavation by Worcestershire Archaeology as the altar *Britannia* 54 (2023), 425, No. 1, but in the fill of a fourth-century ditch. Derek Hurst sent a photograph of the sherd identified by Jo Mills.

[47] Only T is complete and certain. There is just the tip of the previous letter, most like another T, which offers more possibilities than E, C or S. F offers none. T is probably followed by I, despite the diagonal stroke below, since TLV would be an impossible sequence. This stroke, if deliberate, was perhaps a first attempt at V. This V is oddly formed, consisting of two detached diagonals, spaced rather wide. There is too little to be certain, but the letters are probably part of the owner's nomen, with many names possible.

[48] By a metal-detectorist, PAS ref. KENT-BCBF20. Details from Richard Hobbs.

[49] C is cut with bold vertical serifs at both ends, like the two I's with their bold horizontal serifs at top and bottom. It is not O made like retrograde D, as in the reading SISOI adopted by PAS. The name *Siscus* is not directly



Fig. 17. Near Pilning, samian sherd with graffito (No. 28) (photo: Worcestershire Archaeology).



Fig. 18. (Woodnesborough), gold ring (No. 29) (photo: PAS).

Lincolnshire

30. **Bracebridge Heath** Roman villa (SK 977 662) (Fig. 19). Black-burnished (BB1) rim sherd found[50] in 2023. Coarsely incised after firing on the wall just below the rim: TAVR.[...], probably *Taur[us]*.[51]

attested, but might be a variant of *Sisgus*, the father's name of *Veiagenus Sisgi f(ilius), miles ex cohorte Raetorum* (*CIL* xiii 6240, Worms); compare also the feminine cognomen *Ulpia Siscia* (*CIL* iii 3272).

[50] During excavation by Oxford Archaeology East. Details from Ian Rowlandson, who made it available.

[51] The elaborate cross-stroke of T is cut by the next two letters, and a space was left between V and R. In the broken edge to the right of R is trace of a fifth letter, its angle suggesting V rather than I, for the nominative



Fig. 19. Bracebridge Heath, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 30) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

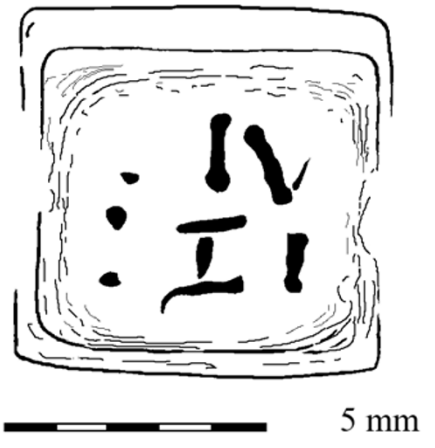


Fig. 20. Scawby, gold ring bezel (No. 31) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin from a photograph).

31. **Scawby** (SE 98 05). Gold finger-ring, weight 5.6 g, found[52] in 2005 (Fig. 20). On its stepped rectangular bezel, 7.1 by 6.9 mm, is incised: IV| ḶI, *Iuli*. '(Property) of Iulius.'[53]

Taur[us] rather than genitive *Taur[i]* or a derivative such as *Taur[inus]*. This name *Taurus* ('bull') is quite a common cognomen, already found in Britain in *RIB* II.5, 2491.124 (a tile with the drawing of a bull) and *Tab. Lond. Bloomberg* 29. The incisions are filled with a hard black deposit, presumably applied by a subsequent owner to 'delete' the name of Taurus.

[52] By a metal-detectorist, PAS ref. DECD8E, and acquired as Treasure by the British Museum (2006,1007.1), from whose photograph Fig. 20 is drawn.

[53] L has an exaggerated top-serif, perhaps to separate it from the line above. This reading differs from that of the British Museum and PAS: '... which appears to read IV / II' perhaps '[V]IV(AS) followed by an abbreviated personal name'. There is space to the left of the four letters, occupied by two or three incised points, but no trace of any lettering. *VIVAS* rings are well attested (see n. 55 below), but this is more easily read as a simple ownership-inscription.



Fig. 21. Thimbleby, gold ring (No. 32) (photo: PAS).

32. **Thimbleby** (TF 235 699) (Fig. 21). Gold finger-ring, found[54] in 2015. On its oval bezel is incised: VIVE | OPTO, 'Long life to you, I pray'.[55]

London

33. **City of London** (*Londinium*, TQ 532549 181002), Bucklersbury/Walbrook, Bloomberg Place (Fig. 22). Iron stylus, 132 mm in length from conical writing-point to wedge-shaped eraser, found[56] in 2013. It is octagonal in section, and alternate facets are inscribed with dot-punched capital letters *c.* 2 mm high, in four lines with spacing between the words thus formed.[57] They read: AB VRBE V.Ṇ[.] ṂVṆVS TIBI GRAṬVṂ ADFḚRO | ACVL[2–3]VM VṬ HABE.S MḚMOR[2–3]M NOSTṚ[.]Ṃ | ROGO SI FORTVNA DAṚ[.]Ṭ QVO POSSEM | LARGIVS VT[.] LONGA VIA CEN[.] SACCVLVS EST [.]ACVVS | This may be restored: *ab urbe u[e]n[i]. munus tibi gratum adfero | acul[eat]um. ut habe[a]s memor[ia]m nostr[a]m | rogo. si fortuna dar[e]t quo possem | largius ut[i]! longa uia Cen[i] sacculus est [u]acuus*. 'I have come from the City. I bring you a welcome gift with a point. I ask that you remember me. If only Fortune would grant what I could use more lavishly! From the long journey Cenus' purse is empty.' The stylus is a present brought from Rome as a memento of the donor Cenus, who apologises

[54] By a metal-detectorist and declared Treasure, PAS ref. LIN-AF94FC.

[55] *opto* with subjunctive *ualeas* ('I pray ... that you are well') is frequent in the closing greetings of letters at Vindolanda and elsewhere, so this ring is not explicitly Christian. Compare other rings with similar legends, but with *uiuas* or *uitam: RIB* II.3, 2422.25, *Iul(ius) Bellator uiuas*; 77, *uita(m) uolo; Britannia* 56 (2025), 499, No. 8, *uir bone uiuas*. But this ring dates from the fourth or early fifth century (Henig 2006, Type III), by which date the legend is likely to be Christian; compare the Christian *uiuas in deo* found on rings (*RIB* II.3, 2422.14, 15 and 70; *Britannia* 45 (2014), 446, No. 28 and perhaps 513, *Britannia* 56 (2025), 499, No. 43. It is the only instance of imperative *uiue* instead of subjunctive *uiuas*.

[56] In a deposit dated *c.* A.D. 62–65/70 during the same excavation by MoLA as the stylus writing-tablets published in R.S.O. Tomlin, *Roman London's First Voices* (2016), but only available after this had gone to press. In 2019 it was in the 'Last Supper at Pompeii' exhibition at the Ashmolean with an online description by MoLA based on the full account written for Sadie Watson, *Archaeology at Bloomberg* (2017), but not published there. A summary account, 'Roman London's First Voices: a stylish postscript', appeared in *Newsletter* 21 (spring 2018) of the Oxford Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents. Both were used by Denis Keyer for his full publication, 'Inscription on a Roman Stylus from London', *Hyperboreus: Studia Classica* 25.2 (2019), 340–50, which improves both reading and interpretation. It is also discussed by Anna Willi, 'Inscriptions for inscribers: texts on Roman writing equipment', *Journal of Epigraphic Studies* 5 (2022), 63–104, which compares it with other inscribed styli, of which it is the most elaborate. Its best parallel now is the bronze stylus from Austria just published as G.E. Thüry, 'Ein Stilus mit Inschrift aus Carnuntum (Niederösterreich)', *Instrumentum* 63 (June 2026), 17–22, which is a *mu[n]us* ('gift') inscribed in similar dot-punched letters with a metrical dedication to the donor's lady-friend (*domina*). In the Bloomberg excavation *c.* 200 iron styli were found, but this is the only one with an inscription.

[57] Making it uncertain sometimes whether a letter has been lost at the beginning or end of a word, and if so, whether it was omitted or (more likely) lost to corrosion. Missing letters have been restored between square brackets.

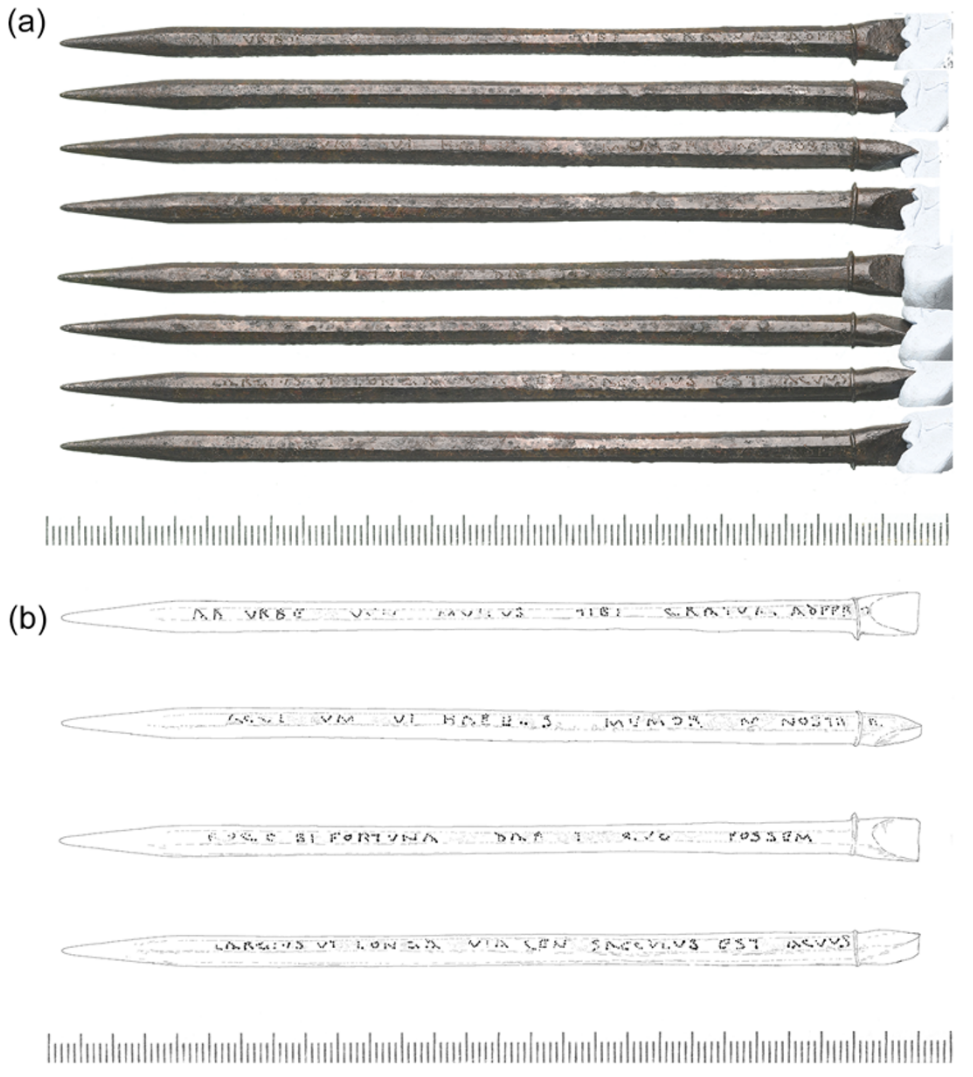


Fig. 22. London, inscribed stylus (No. 33) (photo: MoLA. Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

humorously to the unnamed recipient that it was too far for him to afford anything more expensive.[58]

[58] The text is metrical, a couplet of iambic senarii ending in *rogo* followed by an elegiac couplet, the hexameter beginning with *si fortuna dar[e]t*, the pentameter with *longa*. Keyer notes *CIL* vi 36202 = *Carmina Epigraphica Latina* 1545 as an example of this format. Line-by-line notes. 1, *ab urbe*: the 'city' is not named, so it would have been Rome, *the* city. *adfero* ('I bring'): E is indistinguishable from F, and R is incomplete. 2, *acul[eat]um* ('pointed'): there is only just enough space for the missing –EAT–, the two vowels being scanned as a single syllable by synizesis. 3, *rogo* ('I ask'): metrically this belongs to the iambics, and either governs the preceding clause or is added parenthetically if *ut habe[a]s* is dependent on *adfero*. *si fortuna dar[e]t* ('If only Fortune ...') introduces an exclamatory wish. 4, *longa uia* ('long way'): the metre requires this to be ablative, *uia* being scanned as a single syllable by synizesis. *Cen[i]*: the third letter is certainly N, not V (as first suggested, for *ceu*). The lost letter must be I, with even a hint of the three dots required. *cen[a]* has also been suggested, but there is not enough room for the missing A and the space required before SACCVLVS; and an allusion to 'dinner' (*cena*, ablative) would be quite obscure. *Caenius/Cenius* is attested as

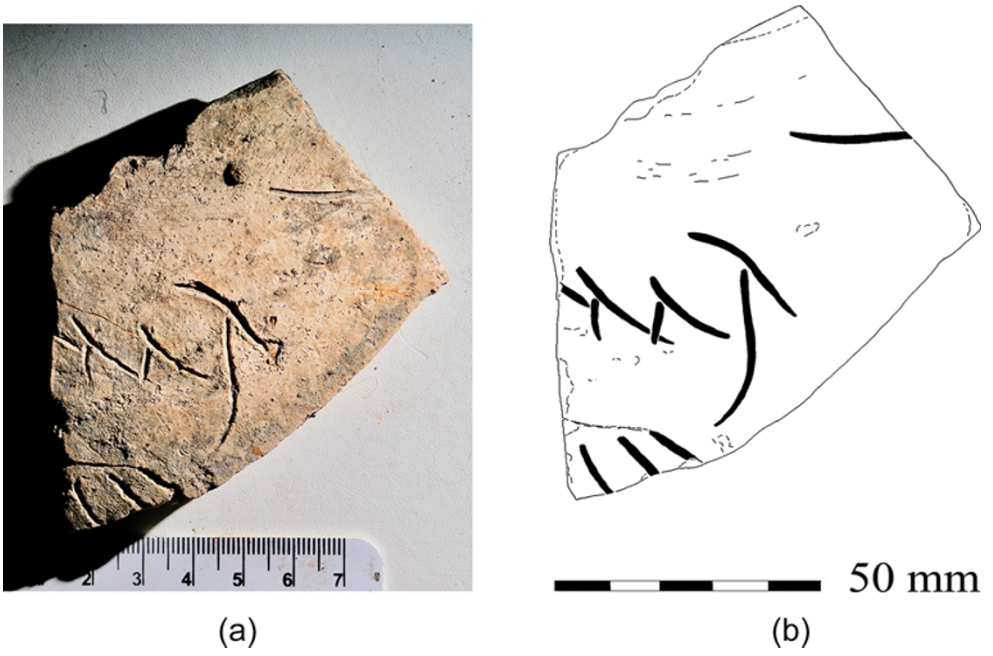


Fig. 23. London, 81 Newgate Street, amphora wall sherd with graffito (No. 34) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

34. Ibid. (TQ 318 814), 81 Newgate Street (Fig. 23). Wall sherd of a south-Spanish oil amphora (Dressel 20), found[59] in 2021/22. Inscribed before firing with two graffiti, (*a*) and (*b*), both incomplete but apparently aligned and made with the same stylus-point, so probably related.[60] (*a*) is the end of a long stroke, most likely the tail of S, extended to mark it as the final letter of a word, probably a personal name in the nominative or genitive: *[...u]s* or *[...i]s*.[61] (*b*) is certainly the end of a word: [...]ṂAR, probably *[...] Mar(tias)* abbreviated, part of a date from mid-February to mid-March.[62] They can be taken together as part of the usual graffito towards the base of a Dressel 20 which recorded the potter's name and date.

35. Ibid. (Fig. 24). Rim sherd of a south-Spanish oil amphora. Lightly incised after firing: M VII S̶ III, *m(odii) vii (sextarii) iii*. '7 *modii*, 3 *sextarii*.' A note of capacity.[63]

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a nomen, and may have also been used as a cognomen (genitive *Ceni*); otherwise understand *Cenus*, from which it would be derived, and compare the Celtic name-element *–cenus* ('son of'). For the genitive *Ceni* compare the potter's stamp *m(anu) Ceni* (*CIL* vii 1336, 287, Colchester). *Cenus* with *uacuus* ('empty') can then be seen as a learned pun: in Greek the adjective κενός means 'empty'.

[59] With the next three items during the same excavation by Pre-Construct Archaeology as No. 1 above, and published (sf 44) in the forthcoming final report. This includes four non-literate graffiti, such as 'X' (a plain 'cross').

[60] Below them is a third graffito, perhaps unrelated. Part of two diagonal strokes, and probably part of a third coinciding with a crack in the surface, but too damaged to tell if they were made before firing, let alone by the same stylus as (*a*) and (*b*). Perhaps a numeral, but too little remains for a reading.

[61] Compare the long S in the 'signature' of Victor, *Victoris*, found twice on Dressel 20 in Britain (*RIB* II.6, 2493.77 with *Britannia* 55 (2024), 424, fig. 18).

[62] Final R is certain. The preceding letter looks like M, but this would be an impossible sequence, so it is probably A cutting the end of a (now) incomplete M.

[63] sf 141. S with medial line is the symbol for *s(extarii)*, one *sextarius* being equivalent to 0.547 litres, with 16 to the *modius* (equivalent to 8.754 litres). For similar notes of capacity on the rim of a Dressel 20, seven *modii* followed



Fig. 24. London, 81 Newgate Street, amphora rim sherd with graffito (No. 35) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

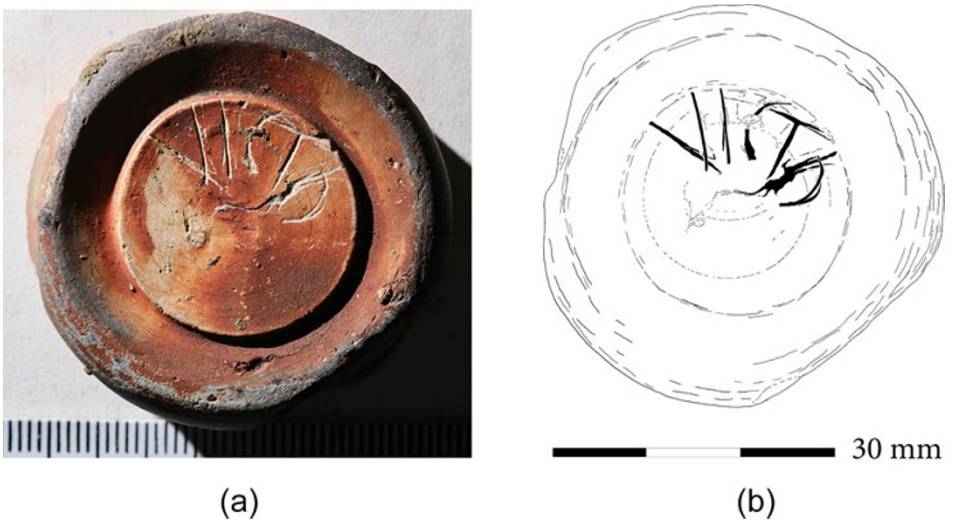


Fig. 25. London, 81 Newgate Street, coarseware base sherd with graffito (No. 36) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

36. Ibid. (Fig. 25). Coarseware base sherd in Nene Valley colour-coated ware, perhaps a cup, incised underneath after firing in capitals: VICTO, *Victo(r)*. The owner's name.[64]

37. Ibid. (Fig. 26). Rim sherd of a black-burnished (BB2) vessel, incised after firing: IVV, probably *Iuu(...)*. The owner's name, abbreviated.[65]

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by the number of *sextarii*, see *RIB* II.6, 2494.44 (South Shields), *m(odii) vii s(emis)*, and 46 (London), *m(odii) vii s(extarii) xii[...]*. Even closer, but without M and S, is 38 (London), *(modii) vii (sextarii) iiii*.

[64] sf 125. The lettering is laboured, with some strokes being made twice, and O made awkwardly with an angular first stroke; perhaps because the writer was cramped for space. This may also be why he did not complete the name by adding R.

[65] sf 129. The graffito is complete, and must have identified the vessel in some way. Straight lines or diagonals are often incised across the width of a rim or foot-ring, their purpose unstated, but probably a numeral or mark of identification. But unlike them, these lines do not extend across the whole width and look more like letters. One

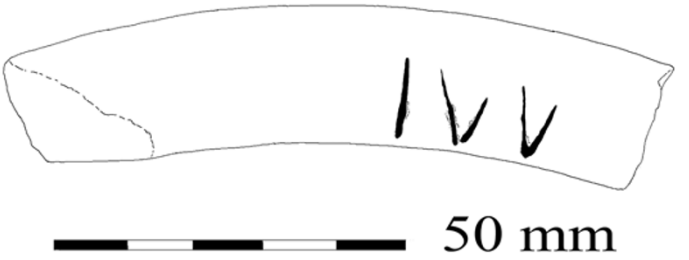


Fig. 26. London, 81 Newgate Street, coarseware rim sherd with graffito (No. 37) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).



Fig. 27. London, Leadenhall Court, belt plate with maker's name (No. 38) (photo: Museum of London).

38. Ibid. (TQ 333 811), Leadenhall Court (Fig. 27). Rectangular copper-alloy belt plate, 35 by 62 mm, found[66] in 1985. Moulded in relief, the figure of a mounted trooper with lance, and in a panel to the left: ṂONT͡ANVṢ, *Montanus (fecit)*. 'Montanus (made this).'[67]

numeral followed by another (as if '4' and '5') is unlikely. Probably an abbreviated personal name, *Iuv(...)*, one of those derived from *iuvenis* ('youth') such as *Iuventius* or *Iuvenalis*.

[66] Now in the Museum of London, and published by F. Grew and N. Griffiths in 'The pre-Flavian military belt: the evidence from Britain', *Archaeologia* 109 (1991), 47–84, at pp. 80–1 with a drawing (No. 198) = *AE* 1996, 944.

[67] This is the only belt-fitting with a maker's mark in Grew and Griffiths (see previous note), and the maker Montanus is otherwise unattested.



Fig. 28. Near Diss (?), copper-alloy ring with inscribed gemstone (No. 39) (photos: Marisa Neel).

Norfolk

39. East Anglian provenance, perhaps near **Diss (**TM 116 802) (Fig. 28). Copper-alloy 'keeled' finger-ring, found[68] perhaps in 1990. It is probably third-century in date, but incorporates a much earlier convex agate gemstone, probably first-century B.C., in the centre of which is incised the composite figure (*gryllos*) of a dolphin with the head of Silenus. Incised in capital letters anti-clockwise from right to left: C · M͡AN | NAI, *C(ai) Manna(i)i.* '(Signet) of Gaius Mannaius.'[69]

40. **Field Dalling** (TG 013 390) (Fig. 29). Silver finger-ring found[70] in 2021. There is a dot-punched inscription in two places. (*a*) on the rectangular bezel: MER | MARTI, *Mer(curio) | Marti.* 'To Mars (and) Mercury'.[71] (*b*) on the hoop below: NI ACI[72]

[68] The provenance is not recorded, but it was bought by an American airman stationed at Mildenhall, Suffolk, in 1987–90, who also bought a copper-alloy statuette of a warrior found at Shuckleburgh, three miles from Diss, during roadworks in 1990. Perhaps the ring was found then as well. It was inherited by his daughter in Texas, who consulted Martin Henig about both items, sending him photographs. His dating of the ring and stone, and other comments, are incorporated here.

[69] The letters are rectograde but must be read anti-clockwise, implying that the gem-cutter intended them to be read clockwise in impression, like a coin legend, but omitted to cut them retrograde. The nomen *Mannaius*, not *Mannaus* (which is unknown), is almost unique; it is attested once, with the same praenomen, as *C(aius) Mannaius C(ai) l(ibertus) [S]phaerus* in a Latin list of names found at Ephesus, probably those of Italian businessmen active there. This stone is now in Oxford and published by Alison Cooley in 'Two Latin inscriptions from Ephesos in the Ashmolean Museum', ch. 23 of *From Document to History* (Brill Studies in Greek and Roman Epigraphy, Vol. 12, 2019), who dates it tentatively to 35 B.C. This would suit the likely date of the gemstone, increasing the possibility that it was originally incised for the Gaius Mannaius who owned and then manumitted a slave called Sphaerus.

[70] PAS ref. NMS-3035FB. Information from the county Finds Liaison Officer, Helen Geake, in whose keeping it now is.

[71] MER is separated from MARTI by the horizontal line which divides the panel in half. A is ligatured within M. Other rings dedicated to Mercury are known from Britain: *RIB* II.3, 2422.29, 30, 51 with *Britannia* 48 (2017), 486, Add. (*c*); *Britannia* 25 (1994), 306, No. 39; 27 (1996), 451, No. 29; 48 (2017), 477, No. 42. But none to Mars, or to Mars *and* Mercury; but two or three of the Uley tablets are addressed to them both (*Tab. Uley* 3, 8 and perhaps 19).

[72] NI, not M, since the two letters are unlike M on the bezel with its four diagonals. They are separated from ACI by an uninscribed gap. The meaning of NI ACI is unclear, whether it is two words abbreviated or a single word strangely spaced out. Since *-aci* suggests a genitive ending, perhaps the five letters represent a personal name, the ring being the property 'of' this owner. **Niacus* is not attested as a name, but perhaps *Nicomachus* was intended, reduced for lack of space and with *–ci* for *–chi.*



Fig. 29. Field Dalling, silver ring with dot-punched inscriptions (No. 40) (photo: PAS).

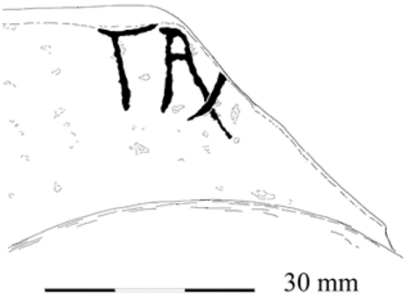


Fig. 30. Towcester, samian sherd with graffito (No. 41) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

Northamptonshire

41. **Towcester** (*Lactodurum*, SP 688 495), Old Tiffield Road (Fig. 30). Wall sherd of a samian bowl (Trier Dr. 31R, *c.* A.D. 160–220/30), found[73] in 2024. Incised after firing on the wall just above the foot-ring, in capitals: TRΛ[...], probably *Tra[nquil-]*. The owner's name, now incomplete.[74]

Nottinghamshire

42. **Stokeham** (SK 78 77) (Fig. 31). Part of a silver finger-ring found[75] in *c.* 2018. Incised on the sub-rectangular bezel: DTO.[...], *d(eo) To(u)[t(ati)]*. 'To the god Toutatis.'[76]

[73] During excavation by Cotswold Archaeology, from where Jo Mills identified the sherd and sent it for examination.

[74] The long tail of R is cut by the end of a curving diagonal stroke curtailed by the broken edge, an incomplete letter which must be a vowel; its angle marks it as A, 'open' A (Λ), since the speck below is damage, not a medial point. This is the second incomplete TRA[...] samian graffito from Britain, the other being *RIB* II.7, 2501.548 (Catterick). The only common name in *Tra-* is *Tranquillus* in its various forms, which is likely here. In Britain compare *Tab. Vindol.* 196.12, *Tranqu[illo]; RIB* 897, *Tranquilae*; 1539, *Tranquila*. The foot-ring is very worn, but has traces of diagonal incisions across its width; not lettering and hardly numerals, but probably marks of identification.

[75] By a metal-detectorist, PAS ref. NLM-7F59DA. Information and photographs from the county Finds Liaison Officer, Martin Foreman.

[76] DTO is followed by 'the very edge of another letter, probably T'. More than seventy TOT rings, mostly of silver, have now been found, but it is very rare for the god's abbreviated name to be preceded by D or DEO, indicating



Fig. 31. Stokeham, silver ring bezel (No. 42) (photo: Martin Foreman).

Somerset

43. **Shepton Mallet** (ST 624 421), Cannard's Grave (Fig. 32). Three conjoining sherds of a samian cup (Dr. 33) stamped SCOPLI · M (Lezoux, mid-second century), found[77] in 1995. Crudely incised after firing on the wall above the foot-ring, when the vessel was inverted: ĢΛMMI SΛḂ[...], probably *Gammi Sab[in...]*. 'Sab[inus *or* –ina], (son *or* daughter) of Gammus.'[78]

Suffolk

44. Near **Bury St Edmunds** (TL 85 64) (Fig. 33). Copper-alloy pan (*trulla*), now incomplete, found[79] in 2024. Stamped within the disc of the handle, letters in relief: ÇẠRATVS Ḟ, *Caratus f(ecit)*. 'Caratus made (this)'.[80]

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that the ring was dedicated to him, rather than used as a signet. Compare the Scredington ring (*Britannia* 56 (2025), 510, No. 38 with note), incised: DEO TOT.

[77] During excavation by Wessex Archaeology (*Britannia* 27 (1996), 435), for which see Vaughan Birbeck, 'Excavations on Iron Age and Romano-British settlements at Cannards Grave, Shepton Mallet', *Somerset Archaeology and Natural History* 144 (2000), 41–116. The graffito is illustrated on p. 88, as fig. 19.2. Kevin Trott made the sherd available.

[78] The first letter is apparently an elaborate G made with at least five strokes. The second name begins with S, its tail very short; then 'open' A (Λ), its first diagonal sinuous and extending well above the second, like the Λ of *Gammi*, which would suggest it was written by the same hand. The two names are thus not those of successive owners, but a patronymic followed by the owner's name. The third letter looks like a narrow O, but the sequence –*ao*–would be impossible; however, cursive B is suggested by the faint trace of a curving line above and a space to the left. The name *Gammus/Gamus* is very rare, but the same sequence occurs a century earlier, in a military diploma from Raetia dated A.D. 64 (*CIL* xvi 5): the recipient's wife is (in the dative) *Sabinae Gammi filiae*; Sabina, daughter of Gammus, described as 'Helvetian' (*Helvetiae*).

[79] PAS ref. SF-204CA6, and fully described in *Britannia* 56 (2025), 476–7. It has now been given to West Stow Museum.

[80] The curving outline of C can just be seen, followed by the first diagonal of A. There is only faint trace of the final F, which is required by the sense. This reading is supported by a *trulla* found in Hungary (*CIL* xiii 12301, 11) which is stamped in just the same way: Fig. 33(*b*), above, shows it drawn in *Archaeologiai értesítõ* 5 (1885), 26, where fig. 1 d reads the final letter as V (followed by *CIL*), but fig. 1 c shows it could well be a damaged F. Both pans are thus by the same maker, Caratus, a third example probably being the fragment published as *CIL* xiii 12301, 12. These parallels are noted by C.N. Moore in 'Roman bronze skillets from the river Witham', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 10 (1975), 59–60, including the long-lost stamped *trulla* read as C.ARAT. This is *RIB* II.2, 2415.12, for which now see Add. (*b*), below.



Fig. 32. Shepton Mallet, samian cup with graffito (No. 43) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

45. **Long Melford** (TL 862 456), Orchard Place, Roman settlement (Fig. 34). Conjoining sherds of an incomplete Colchester colour-coated beaker, found[81] in 2016. Its moulded figures include a man with a whip confronting a long-eared animal, perhaps a *bestiarius* in the arena. Incised on the wall above his head, after firing: ṚΛLṆΛTA, apparently *Ralonata*.[82]

[81] In a pit dated *c.* A.D. 120–50 during excavation by Wessex Archaeology, in whose keeping it is. Rachael Seager Smith sent photographs and other details.

[82] There is just enough space to the left of the first letter to identify it as the first, its vertical stroke extended downward as if to mark this. It is cut by a curving diagonal which meets the broken edge, and would have extended in a leftward curve for R, but this curve has been lost. Visually ΛΛ or M would be possible, but not before L. The next letter is a perfunctory O, two curved strokes not conjoining, which cannot be II (for E) or V, which in this hand would be two diagonals meeting in a 'v'. The final A includes a downward medial stroke, as if to mark it as the final letter. These letters are quite well preserved, but the reading *Ralonata* cannot be certain, since this name, that of the owner, a woman, is otherwise unattested; its etymology is unknown, but perhaps cognate with the unique nomen *Ralonius* (*CIL* vi 741).

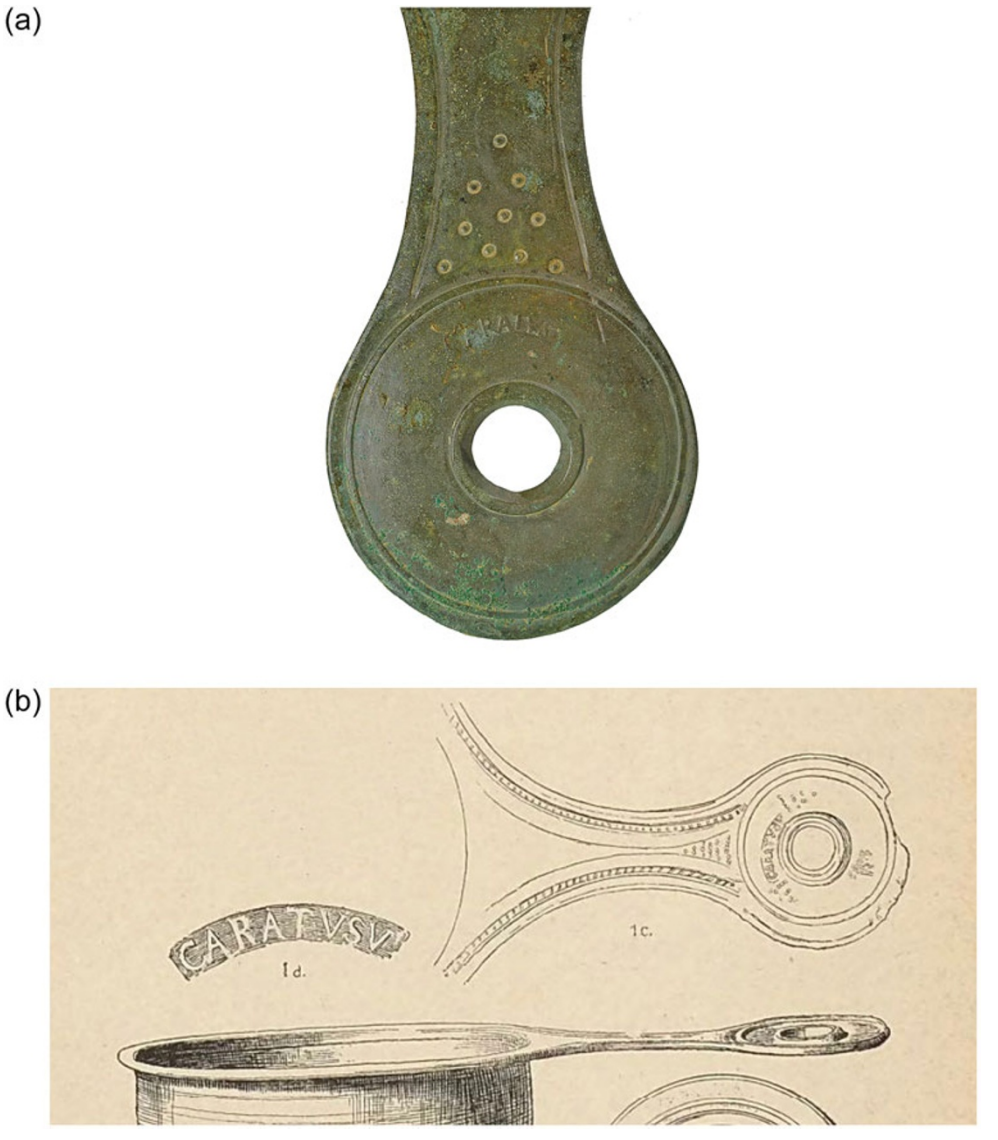


Fig. 33. (*a*). Near Bury St Edmunds, stamped pan handle (No. 44) (photo: PAS); (*b*) *CIL* xiii 12301, 11, the same stamp on another pan handle (*Archaeologiai értesítö* 5 (1885), 26).

East Sussex

46. **Eastbourne** (TV 608 991) (Fig. 35). Copper-alloy finger-ring found[83] in 2025. The bezel is inscribed retrograde: ϘIH, *G(aius) I(...) H(...)*; probably *G(aius) I(ulius) H(...)*.[84]

[83] PAS ref. SUSS-52B6EF.

[84] The three initials of a Roman citizen's *tria nomina*, much the most common nomen in I– being *I(ulius)*. The abbreviated praenomen might be an angular S for *S(extus)*, but looks more like G for *G(aius)*. For such a combination, compare the brick-stamp *RIB* II.5, 2490.1, GIS, probably *G(aius) I(ulius) S(...)*.



Fig. 34. Long Melford, colour-coated beaker with graffito (No. 45) (photo: Wessex Archaeology).



Fig. 35. Eastbourne, inscribed ring (No. 46) (photo: PAS).

Tyne and Wear

47. **Benwell** (*Condercum* NZ 21616 64987) Roman fort (Fig. 36). Rim sherd of a white mortarium found[85] in 2017–19. Incised after firing on the outer edge, three short vertical lines: III, '3'.[86]

48. Ibid. (Fig. 37). Wall sherd of a samian dish (Dr. 31). Coarsely incised after firing just below the rim, inverted as to the vessel: [...].LLINI, probably *[Marce]llini*. '(Property) of Marcellinus.'[87]

49. Ibid. (Fig. 38). Rim sherd of dark grey coarseware, incised after firing on its upper surface with two lines across its width: II, '2'.[88]

[85] With the next five items during excavation by Ecus Archaeology in Grange Road, Fenham, immediately north of the fort. They are published in the final report with fourteen other graffiti made after firing, almost all of them incomplete, and either non-literate (including an elaborate 'star') or only one or two letters.

[86] For the same graffito on a mortarium rim, see *RIB* II.6, 2497.34 (Manchester), and compare the coarseware rim sherds below (Nos. 49 and 50). Such 'numerals', often only one, two or three parallel lines across the width of the rim, are often found on coarseware (*RIB* II.8, 2503.34ff.) but their purpose is never stated: probably they identified the vessel within a set or place of storage, but they may have only been a mark of identification.

[87] Only the lower tip of the first letter survives in the broken edge, but its angle suits E, not A. The cognomen *Marcellinus* is very common, and at a Roman fort is more likely than the much less common Celtic name *Bellinus*.

[88] For the same graffito on coarseware rim sherds, see *RIB* II.8, 2503.36 and 37, and compare the next item (No. 50).

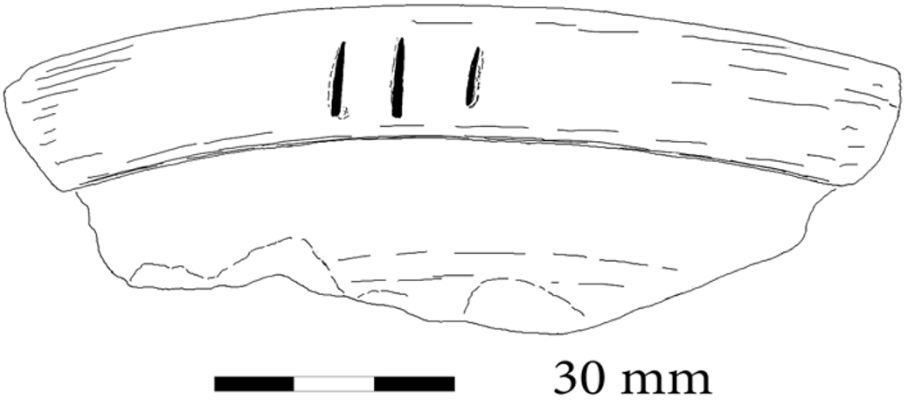


Fig. 36. Benwell, mortarium sherd with graffito (No. 47) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).



Fig. 37. Benwell, samian sherd with graffito (No. 48) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

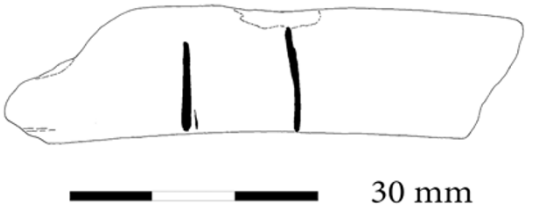


Fig. 38. Benwell, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 49) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

50. Ibid. (Fig. 39). Rim sherd of dark grey coarseware, incised after firing on the outside of the rim with three straight lines: III, '3'.[89]

51. Ibid. (Fig. 40). Rim sherd of dark grey coarseware, incised after firing on its upper surface with four diagonal lines, with a fifth diagonal line to their right apparently enclosing a very short diagonal: ṾV Λ̣[90]

[89] For the same graffito on coarseware rim sherds, see *RIB* II.8, 2503.42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51.

[90] The first 'letter' might be a badly made X, as if for the numeral '15'. But these three figures are not necessarily letters or numerals; perhaps only a series of diagonal notations like the next item (No. 52), or a mark of identification.

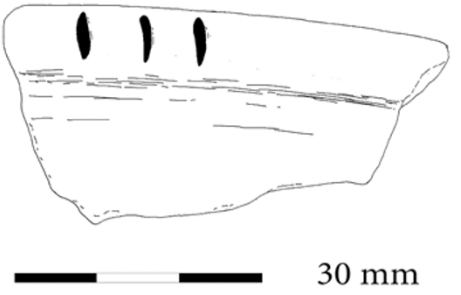


Fig. 39. Benwell, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 50) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).



Fig. 40. Benwell, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 51) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

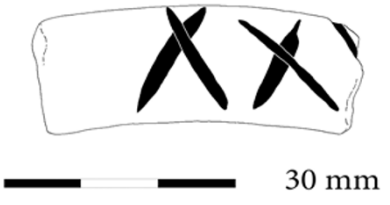


Fig. 41. Benwell, coarseware sherd with graffito (No. 52) (drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

52. Ibid. (Fig. 41). Rim sherd of dark grey coarseware, incised after firing on its upper surface with at least three pairs of crossed lines: XXX̣[...], perhaps '30' or more.[91]

South Yorkshire

53. **Doncaster** (*Danum*, SE 5744 0361) Roman fort (Fig. 42). Fragment of stamped tile, found[92] in 1975, with letters impressed within a rectangular die: LEG[...], *Leg(io) [IX Hisp(ana)]*. 'Ninth Legion *Hispana*'.

[91] Only the upper-left tip remains of the third pair. For similar graffiti on coarseware rim sherds, see *RIB* ii.8, 2503.89, 90, 91. It is uncertain whether they are numerals, or only marks of identification.

[92] During excavation directed by Paul Buckland (*Britannia* 7 (1976), 317, where its discovery is noted), in the Hadrianic destruction levels of a Flavian building and thus from the first fort. Also recorded by Ian Betts, 'A scientific investigation of the brick and tile industry of York to the mid-eighteenth century (University of Bradford thesis, 1985), 131, but not by R.P. Wright in his 'Tile-stamps of the Ninth Legion found in Britain', *Britannia* 9 (1978), 379–82, where it would have been his type 7. It is thus missing from *RIB* II.4, 2462.9B, as seen by Paul Buckland, who sent a photograph (Fig. 42) and other details.



Fig. 42. Doncaster, tile-stamp (No. 53) (photo: Paul Buckland).

North Yorkshire

54. **Aldborough** (*Isurium Brigantum*, SE 40846 66934) (Fig. 43). Fragment of a round leaden sealing with attachment tag, found[93] in 2025, impressed on both faces with letters moulded in relief: (i) DΛNI, *Dani*. (ii) perhaps V[.]. 'At *Danum*, V[...]'.[94]

55. Ibid. (SE 407 668) (Fig. 44). Rim sherd of a south-Spanish oil amphora (Dressel 20), found[95] in 2023. Incised after firing: [...]VIVS VII [...], *[...]uius vii [...]*. '[...]vius, 7 (*modii*) ...'.[96]

Unknown provenance

(a) **No provenance**, but probably British (Fig. 45). Fragment of tile, probably a tegula, 0.11 by 0.16 m, found before 1986.[97] Impressed with a rectangular die, the letters in relief: ṂATIḶL, probably *Mati Fl(auiani)*. '(Stamp) of Matius Flavianus.'[98]

[93] At the eastern margin of the northern extra-mural settlement by the metal-detectorist Tom Shurlock, who has given it to English Heritage at Helmsley. Information and photographs from Martin Millett.

[94] A reference to *Danum* (Doncaster), a fort 40 miles south of Aldborough, is much more likely than the genitive of *Danus*, a personal name almost unknown. But face (ii) is more difficult. Its only surviving letter might be read as either V or Λ ('open' A). Its placing suggests that another letter has been lost beside it, but there is no trace of this in the broken edge. If indeed V, it might be a numeral or the sender's name abbreviated. Two letters would be the initials of his nomen and cognomen. More rewarding is *Dani*, since it is the first epigraphic instance of the place-name *Danum*, in the locative *Dani*, which is otherwise attested only by the Antonine Itinerary and Notitia Dignitatum, in the ablative *Dano*.

[95] During excavation directed by Martin Millett, and made available by Jerry Evans. Also found were three small samian sherds, each with an incomplete letter surviving from a graffito.

[96] S was made with a sinuous downstroke having a short upward return at the foot. These four letters are the end of the owner's name, followed by the numeral '7' recording the amphora's capacity in *modii*. '6' or '7' is usual for Dressel 20, and it was probably followed by a second numeral for *sextarii* (see note to No. 35 above).

[97] When it was bought by Irene Manton from Charles Ede, antiquities dealer in London, and read by David Roberts of the British Museum as 'VITEL or MTIFL' for *Vitellius* or *Ma(...) Ti(...) Fl(...)*. Information from Adam Robinson of the Peter Scott Gallery, Lancaster University, where it now is. He sent a better image (Fig. 45) of its illustration in 'Between science and art: Irene Manton's collection of antiquities' by Anna Reeve in *Journal of the History of Collections* 36.2 (2024), 339–52, fig. 2, which was sent by Raphael Isserlin. The stamp is otherwise unknown.

[98] The first letter is probably M with a diminutive first diagonal to save space, rather than N or V. F looks more like E, but the lowest horizontal stroke is shorter than the others and extends left, as if an exaggerated bottom

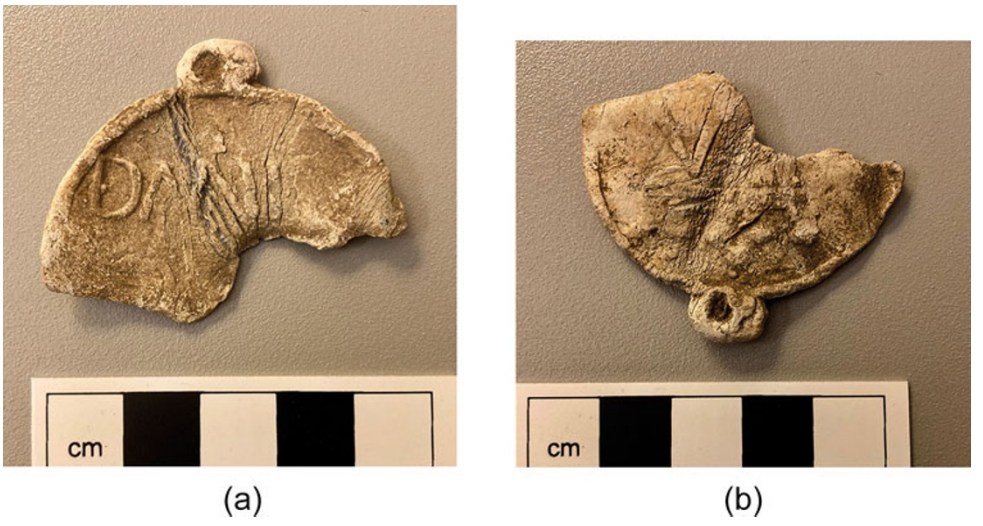


Fig. 43. Aldborough, leaden sealing (No. 54) (photos: Martin Millett).

Addenda et corrigenda

(a) ***RIB* II.1, 2401.6**, Stannington diploma. The date of discovery is April 1761, not 1760.[99]

(b) ***RIB* II.2, 2415.12**, River Witham, Lincolnshire. Bronze pan (*trulla*), now lost, said to be stamped: C.ARAT. A better reading is suggested by the stamped pan found in 2024 near Bury St Edmunds: CARAT[VS F], *Carat[us f(ecit)]*.[100]

(c) ***RIB* II.2, 2419.6**, Carlisle, Annetwell Street. More fragments of this moulded glass chariot-cup have been identified, and fully published.[101] With the help of Continental parallels, the moulded letters identifying the four charioteers can now be read: [OLY]MPEVA [FOENI]XVA [E]VTYCHEVA MV[S]CLO[SAE]. *[Oly)mpe ua(le), [Foeni]x ua(le), [E]utyche ua(le), Mu[s]clo[s(e) a(u)e]*. 'Olympus, farewell. Foenix, farewell. Eutychus, farewell. Musclosus, hail!'[102]

(d) ***RIB* II.4, 2446.32*** alienum, oculist's stamp. The reference to the physician Paccius should be to Paccius Antiochus (*PIR*^{2} vi P 15).

(e) ***Britannia* 56 (2025), 501, No. 15** (Stanwix) (Fig. 11 above, sf 3320). The new photograph suggests a better reading of this leaden sealing. Obverse: $\overline{\text{VEX}}$ | VC*Ↄ, *uex(illatio)*

serif. The nomen *Matius* is not common, unlike the cognomen *Flavianus* (or perhaps *Flavus/Flavinus*) which like *Flavius* is sometimes abbreviated to FL.

[99] Anunciación Carrera de la Red, 'The year of the discovery of the Stannington diploma', *Notes and Queries* 72.2 (2025), 157–9, shows that '1760' was wrongly inferred by *CIL* from the report to the Society of Antiquaries in December 1761 that it was found in 'the preceding spring' or 'last spring'.

[100] See No. 44 above (with note).

[101] Hilary Cool, 'A circus cup from Annetwell Street, Carlisle', *Glass News* 55 (summer 2025), 12–15, with a reconstruction drawing (fig. 2). She notes its well-dated archaeological context (A.D. 83/4–93/4) in a room of the fort's south gate, the implication being that it was used and broken there by soldiers on duty.

[102] Musclosus the winner (his arm raised), and three also-ran. His name should be corrected from 'Muclosus' in the translation of the Caistor St Edmund fragment (*RIB* II.2, 2419.5). VA is easily understood as an abbreviated *ua(le)*, contrasted with AE ligatured for *a(u)e*, the intervening V being represented by the second diagonal of A. The vocative termination *–e* was omitted from *Musclose*, perhaps by confusion with *a(u)e*.

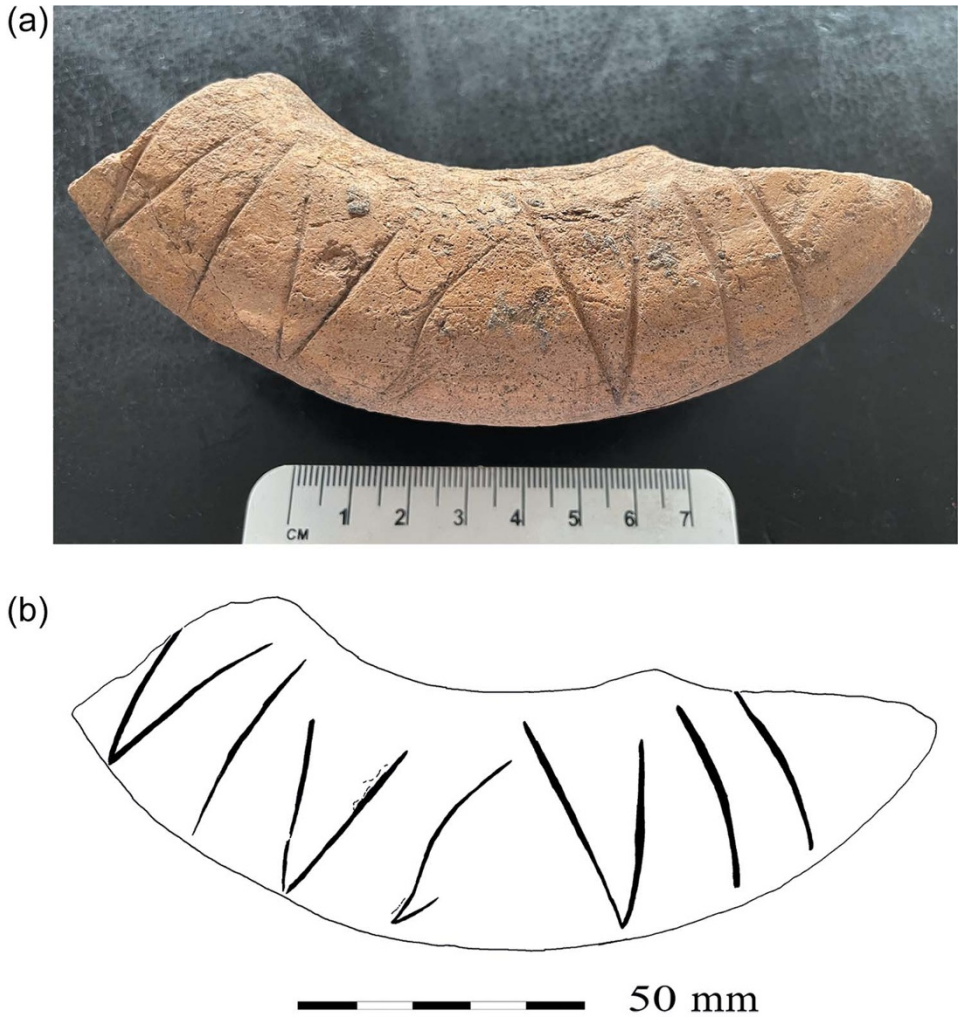


Fig. 44. Aldborough, amphora rim sherd with graffito (No. 55) (photographed and drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin).

V(...) C(...) (centurio). Reverse ḶVI, *l(egionis) VI.* 'Detachment of the Sixth Legion, V(...) C(...) centurion.'[103]

Falsum

(a) ***RIB* III, 3192** (Bardsey), quarry-face graffito at Hetchell Crag read as CRVTC|VS. 'The letters look Roman, but not necessarily so.' In fact, although much weathered, it is

[103] The second line of the obverse was tentatively read as VCO, but is clearly VC followed by a reversed C enclosing a 'star'. This separates Ↄ, the centurial symbol, from VC, which are the initials of the centurion's nomen and cognomen, unless I has been lost to the left for an abbreviated cognomen *Iuc(undus)*. The 'almost illegible' reverse can now be seen as the numeral VI to the right of two verticals, which presumably abbreviate *legionis* in some way. Many of the legionary sealings in *RIB* II.1, 2411 are made from a similar, small rectangular die. This would be the first sealing of a legionary vexillation, but many stone inscriptions record detachments of the Sixth Legion in north-west Britain.

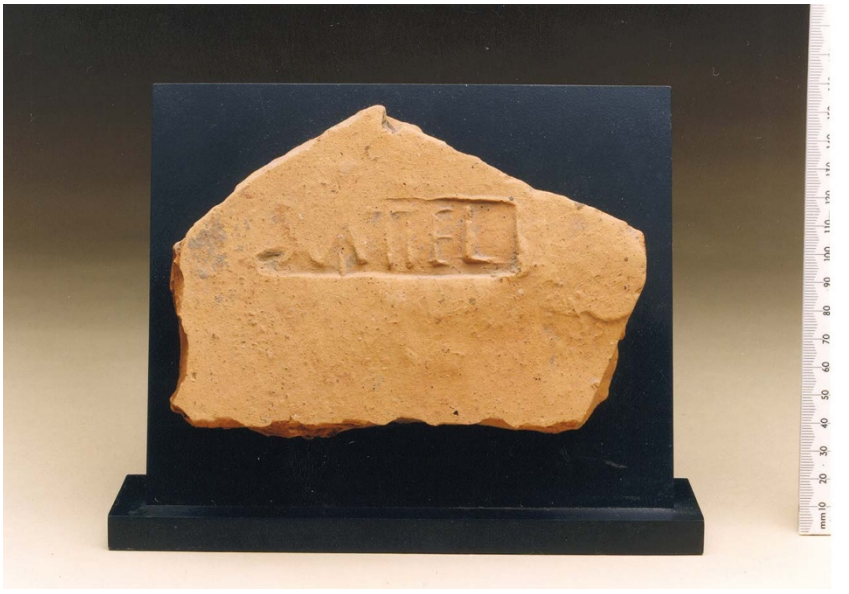


Fig. 45. No provenance (*a*), fragment of stamped tile (photo: Peter Scott Gallery).

modern and refers to 'Crutch', one of the many climbing-routes on this feature, each of which has its own name.[104]

[104] Information from Daniel Holdsworth communicated to the *RIB* website. These routes are listed by the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, *Yorkshire Gritstone* Vol. I (2012) at <ukclimbing.com/logbooks/crags/hetchell-1873>, and include some with Roman names such as 'Caligula', 'Tiberius', 'Tarquin's Terrace', and 'Up Pompeii'.