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The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets (*Tabulae Vindolandenses* IV, Part 2)

By A.K. BOWMAN, J.D. THOMAS and R.S.O. TOMLIN

ABSTRACT

This article contains full editions with commentaries of the second and final instalment of the approximately 37 ink writing-tablets from Vindolanda discovered in the excavation seasons of 2001, 2002 and 2003. The editions are numbered continuously from ***870****, following the sequence in* Tab. Vindol. *IV.1, and are grouped in the following categories: Military Document, Letters, Descripta.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This article is the second of two in which we publish the ink writing-tablets from Vindolanda discovered in the excavation seasons 2001, 2002 and 2003 which contain significant amounts of text, albeit in many cases very meagre and fragmentary.[1] To these editions

[1] For assistance of various kinds we are again very grateful to the archaeologists at Vindolanda, Andrew Birley (now Director of Excavations) and Robin Birley. The tablets have now joined their predecessors at the British Museum, where Ralph Jackson, Marianne Eve and James Peters have kindly facilitated our access to them. Charles Crowther and Ségolène Tarte have at various times captured and processed digital scans of the tablets which have proved invaluable. We have not attempted to give any account of the ink drawings noted by R. Birley (2005, 107; 2009, 57), one of which is illustrated by A.R. Birley (2002, 34) as 'evidently showing a line of helmeted soldiers, and at their feet a severed head' (idem, 2009, 287, fig. 2). The excavations, as previously, also produced a number of stilus tablets which have yielded improved digital scans in an imaging programme undertaken in collaboration with a team at Southampton University led by Dr Graeme Earl and supported by the AHRC (2010/11).

References in bold type are to the texts as numbered in *Tab. Vindol.* II (**118**–**572**), III (**573**–**853**), and IV.1 (**854**–**869**). The following abbreviations are used:

CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (1863–)
ILLPRON	*Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices* (1986)
ILS	H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (1892–1916)
RIB I	R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright, *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, I: *Inscriptions on Stone* (1965)
Tab. Luguval.	R.S.O. Tomlin, 'Roman manuscripts from Carlisle: the ink-written tablets', *Britannia* 29 (1998), 31–84
Tab. Vindol. I	A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: The Latin Writing-Tablets* (1983)
Tab. Vindol. II	A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets (Tabulae Vindolandenses II)* (1994)
Tab. Vindol. III	A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets (Tabulae Vindolandenses III)* (2003)
Tab. Vindol. IV.1	A.K. Bowman, J.D. Thomas and R.S.O. Tomlin, 'The Vindolanda writing-tablets *(Tabulae Vindolandenses* IV, Part 1)', *Britannia* 41 (2010), 187–224

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we add a few brief descriptions of fragments with negligible amounts of writing (Descripta). Since we consider the texts in the present article to be, in effect, their *editio princeps*, we have described the article as *Tab. Vindol.* IV.2, and have numbered the texts continuously from those in *Tab. Vindol.* IV.1, beginning at **870**. We have added a concordance and indexes to all the texts published in IV.1 and 2.

Most of the texts in the present article, like those in the previous instalment, have already been noted by A.R. Birley, who offered transcriptions for some.[2] The caveats about accepting some of these readings which were expressed in the previous article also apply here. We had intended that this article should contain only the remaining letters but, after the publication of the previous instalment, we noticed that there was one document (**870**), probably a military report, associated with a letter (**871**), both of which need to be published under separate numbers.[3]

For details of the image-capture technology and the archaeological context, see *Tab. Vindol.* IV.1, pp. 189–91.

II. THE TEXTS

NB For editorial conventions used in the editions below, see *Tab. Vindol.* III, p. 19. All the texts in this article are written along the grain of the wood.[4] In the headings we record the dimensions in the form '(width) × (height)'.

MILITARY DOCUMENT (NO. **870**)

870

Inv.no. T02.13, Side A. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.55. Dimensions: (i) 56 × 15 mm; (ii) 77 × 28 mm. Period: II/III. Location: V02-19, below Rooms 1 and 2 of a Period IV structure. A.R. Birley 2003, 104; 2009, no. 3.

Under this inventory number there are three fragments which contain on one side lacunose remains of what appears to be a military report, and on the other side the beginning of a letter (**871**). Two of the pieces join; the third does not although it is evidently written by the same hand, which leads us to believe that these pieces all belong to one tablet. We are uncertain about the order of priority of the texts, but think that the fact that the military report is cancelled by being struck through with diagonal lines suggests that this was the first text to be written and that the other side of the tablet was used for a draft of the letter. We, therefore, denote the military report as 'Side A' and the letter as 'Side B', noting also that the letter is written upside-down in relation to the report. Fragment (i) is probably complete at the right only; fragment (ii) only at the foot.

(i)

. . . . . .
]‥ (centuriae) eiusdem *vacat*
].c.[ ]u. . .arios
] *tops of letters*
. . . . . .

'. . . of the same century . . .'

[2] A.R. Birley 2003; 2005; 2009.
[3] **880**, Side A, contains part of the text of an account as well as a draft letter, but we do not publish them separately.
[4] Including **876** (contra A.R. Birley 2003, 102).

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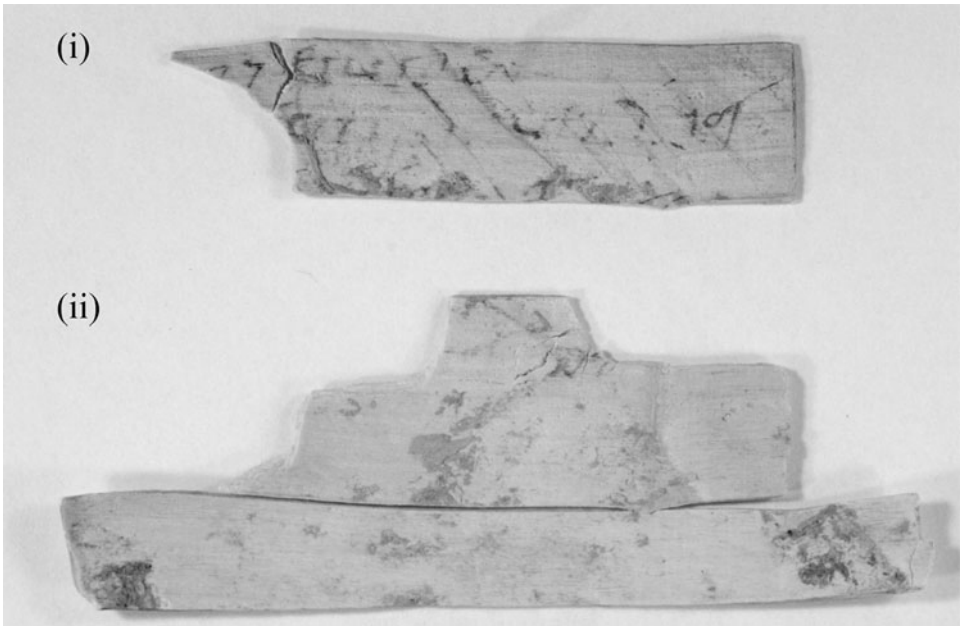


FIG. 1. **870**. (i) 56 × 15 mm; (ii) 77 × 28 mm. Fragments of a military document.

(ii)

. . . .
] ad [
].os . . .[
vacat

i.1. The traces immediately following the break could be read as *ti*, ligatured, whether it is nominative masculine plural (a collective noun) or genitive masculine singular (a soldier's name). The latter is more likely, since line 2 ends in accusative masculine plural, which would hardly have followed a 'heading' in the nominative. The centurial sign following that is clear, and the word *eiusdem* implies that the century has already been mentioned in the document and that there was some text preceding this line.
2. The traces at the right consist of a bold curve for *u*, a few indeterminate letters, then the diagonal of a probable *a*, a generous *r*, and the termination *-ios*. It might be possible to imagine *].ç ṭṛą[ns]uęṛṣąṛios* (cf. **862**.8).
ii.1. The reading seems clear and, if correct, is another indication that this is a report of a military detail of the kind found in **858**.6, 8 and elsewhere.

LETTERS (NOS **871**–**881**)

871

Inv.no. T02.13, Side B. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.55. Dimensions: (i) 77 × 28 mm; (ii) 56 × 15 mm. Period: II/III. Location: V02-19, below Rooms 1 and 2 of a Period IV structure. A.R. Birley 2003, 104; 2009, no. 3.

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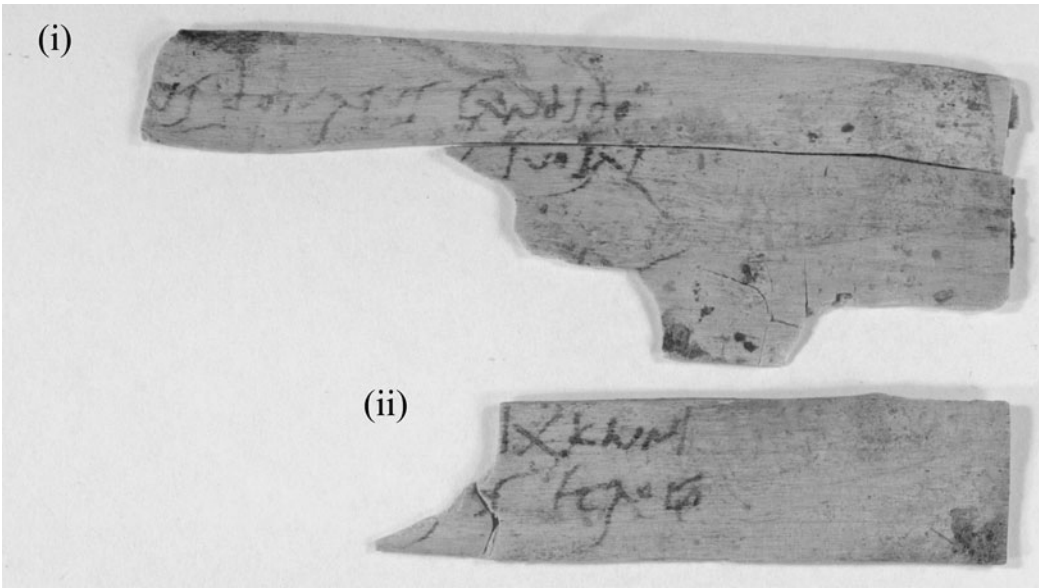


FIG. 2. **871**. (i) 77 × 28 mm; (ii) 56 × 15 mm. Fragments of a letter.

A letter written on the other side of the tablet containing a military report (**870**; see the introduction for further detail). There are two joining fragments (i) which come from the start of a letter and a further non-joining fragment (ii) which can be aligned with the others. All are in the same hand: note the v-shaped *u* and the elongated left-hand diagonal of *a*, especially in *sal* (i.2). Fragment (i) has the start of a letter and is complete at the top. Side A (**870**) suggests it was complete at the right, where there is a large blank; so there was no second column, which suggests either a short letter in one column or, more likely, that the draft letter was discarded. To judge from Side A, fragment (ii) is complete at the right, but not at any of the other three edges.

(i)

]us Donatus Candido
] suo sal(utem)
one line blank
].aṣ
].

. . . . . .

‘[ ]us Donatus to his Candidus, greetings …’

(ii)

. . . . . .
]ix k(alendas) Iuni
]as et rogo
. . . . . .

‘… 24 May … and I ask …’

i.1. As Birley notes, the name *Donatus* is well-known but new to the Vindolanda tablets, and *Candidus* is frequent in the tablets.

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2. The trace before *suo*, for which Birley suggests *collega]e*, is surely just the end of a long diagonal from *a* in *Candido*, and should therefore be discounted. Birley notes that it is unusual to find *suo* and *salutem* in the second line of an address, but there are eight examples in *Tab. Vindol.* II alone. He also reads *salutem* in full, commenting that the last four letters are very faint. We think that nothing was written here: the slight traces on the scan do not look like ink. However, the abbreviation of *salutem* is extremely unusual in the tablets, though common enough in MSS. The only other possible example in the tablets seems to be **298**.a.2.

ii.1. It is surely pure coincidence that the extant part of the next line begins *as*. Either *iuni* was completed at the start of line 2 or the month-name was abbreviated. *Kalendas* is here abbreviated (as usual) and several month-names are abbreviated in the tablets, but we would expect the form of the abbreviation to be *Iun* rather than *Iuni*.

872

Inv.no. T01.34. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.33. Dimensions: 81 × 37 mm. Period: IV. Location: V01-42A, mixed debris and timbers from demolition of Period III and IV buildings, directly below the Period V cobbler's workshop. A.R. Birley 2003, 94.

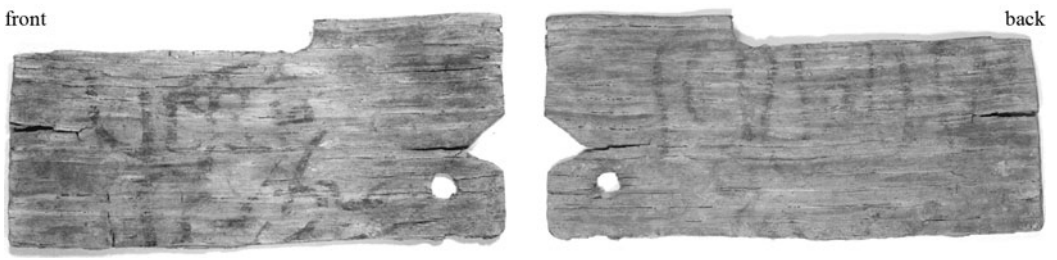


FIG. 3. **872**. 81 × 37 mm. Fragment of a letter, front and back.

Two joining fragments, probably the top-right corner of the right-hand leaf of a diptych, since the top edge is apparently complete but the foot is broken, and the right edge with tie-hole and notch is complete; there is also part of an address on the back. Front and back are by different hands.

Front:

] u. . .io
] Seụero
] *traces*
. . . .

1. Birley reads *a Vettio* (cf. **305.**ii.back 1, *Vettio* | *Seuero*), by interpreting a discoloration to the left mid-way between lines 1 and 2 as *a*, which he then links to 1 by seeing the line as slanting diagonally upwards, with the implication that it carries the sender's name on the back of a letter (for this format see *Tab. Vindol.* II, pp. 42–3). However, he recognises that the address (see below) is actually written on the other side. Moreover, the line does not in fact slant upwards.

We have no better reading to offer. The line ends like 2 with a diminutive *o*, preceded by *i* and possibly *li*, and is thus probably another personal name in the dative or ablative. It begins with *u*, formed like *u* on the back, but the second letter cannot be read as *e*. It resembles *c*, *p* or *t*, written over *s*; and it seems to have been followed by another correction involving *t* or *tt* and a second *s*.

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Back:

Iụlio Vịn[di
ci *vacat*
traces

'To Julius Vindex . . .'

1–2. The cognomen is not uncommon, but the addressee might be the Vindex who is associated with the prefect Cerialis in **260**.7 and **631**.b.2; see also **659**.5 and **802**.

873

Inv.no. T01.42(i) and (ii). BM Registration no. 2004,0501.37. Dimensions: (i) 108 × 13 mm; (ii) 30 × 6 mm. Location: V01-45A, the outermost Period 1 ditch. A.R. Birley 2003, 99.



FIG. 4. **873**. (i) 108 × 13 mm; (ii) 30 × 6 mm. Fragments of a letter.

Two small fragments, found together but not joining. They have only one letter in common, *g*, but since this is much the same in both, it is possible without being certain that they belong together. The larger fragment (i) is incomplete at the top and foot, but complete at both sides. The incomplete tie-hole on the left indicates that it is part of the left-hand leaf of a diptych. The back is blank, as might be expected, since the sender of the letter would have written the address and his name on the back of the other leaf. The smaller fragment (ii) is incomplete on all sides. The back is also blank. They were found with a third fragment (**874**) which is not by the same hand.

(i)

. . . . . .
trace
ṭạmẹṇ tempus esse ẹṭsị
intelleges me magnam
. . . . . .

(ii)

. . . . . .
].o rogo[
. . . . . .

(i) '. . . yet [?I say *or* I think] that it is time, even if you will understand that I [?have *or* fear] a great . . .'
(ii) '. . . I ask . . .'

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i.2. *tamen* and *etsi* are mutually supporting in syntax, but neither reading is certain. The first two letters of the line are obscured by a curving descender from above, but the traces are compatible with *ta*. Then *m* is faint but visible, *e* has lost its top in the break, and *n* having lost its third stroke resembles *a*. So *. . .mea* is a possible reading. At the end of the line, *etsi* has lost the tops of its letters in the break, but the only difficulty is the short horizontal streak at the end, which suggests *e* but is rather low for it; also there is no curve in the downstroke, which is thus unlike *e* elsewhere. But *ipse* (emphasising the person of *intelleges*) is a possible reading.

On the reading adopted, *tamen tempus esse* would have been preceded by a verb of saying or believing in the first-person present indicative: *dico*, *puto*, etc. *magnam* would then qualify an abstract noun (*cunctationem*, *moram*, etc.) followed by a present infinitive (*habere*, *timere*, etc.) in oratio obliqua which expresses the writer's reluctance to act, even though he realises it is full time that he did so.

ii.1. The first letter might be *u*, perhaps for *[den]uo* ('again'), but the tip of a letter followed by *i* is also possible.

874

Inv.no. T01.42(iii). BM Registration no. 2004,0501.37. Dimensions: 41 × 16 mm. Location: V01-45A, the outermost Period I ditch. A.R. Birley 2003, 99.

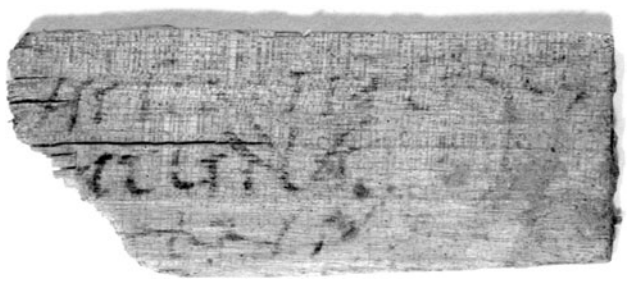


FIG. 5. **874**. 41 × 16 mm. Fragment of a letter.

Small fragment found with **873**, but not in the same hand. Part of the right-hand leaf of a diptych, since the address was written on the back. The right edge is original, but not the top edge (since it cuts the address on the back) nor the foot (since it cuts line 3).

The hand is competent but undistinguished. In 1, note the upward-sloping crossbar of *t*, and the curve at the top of *d*.

Front:

. . . . . .
] est si quid c.ris
]nt uale *vacat*
]mbres *vacat*
. . . . . .

1. It is tempting to read the place-name *Coris* at the end of the line, but the slight remains of the second letter suit *a* better than *o*. Perhaps therefore *caris*/*[sim-]*.

2. *]nt* would suggest a verbal ending in the third-person plural. After it the sequence *uale* is unmistakable, and like Birley we take it to be the letter-ending, in view of the space at the end of lines 2 and 3. The horizontal stroke of *e* apparently extends downwards as if to form a cramped and diminutive *s*, but we take this to be dirt or perhaps a slip of the pen.

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3. Possibly the end of a date below the closing greeting, as apparently in *Tab. Vindol.* III App. **242**. ii.4; the month named would be September, November or December.

Back:
The first five letters of a name in address script, of which only the bottom half survives. Perhaps *Iulio [. . .]*, but the putative *u* looks more like *s*.

875

Inv.no. T01.47. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.40. Dimensions: 176 × 82 mm. Location: V01-45A, the outermost Period I ditch. A.R. Birley 2003, 99.



FIG. 6. **875**. 88 × 82 mm. Letter with list of names, left leaf.

Two facing leaves of a diptych, complete at top and bottom and in the fold, but incomplete symmetrically at outer left and right. As Birley notes (2003, 87), it is unusually thick, at just over 2 mm. Since the beginning of i.8 is preserved, it can be estimated that the width at the foot is more or less original. The hand is strongly right-sloping. There are many dark marks which are not ink, and traces of an address on the back of the right-hand leaf.

In format this is a letter, but unusually it is a list of personal names. The reason was apparently given in the preamble (lines 3–8) which is now largely lost, but cf. *Tab. Luguval.* 16, a letter from a decurion to his prefect listing troopers who have lost weapons. However, this is not a close parallel, since neither writer nor recipient of **875** is identified by rank, and apart from the bureaucratic turn of phrase in 8, there is no sign that the letter was 'official'.

Birley sees traces of five lines in 3–6, not four, so his line-numbering after 6 is one more than ours. In his transcript thereafter 'it is difficult to see any real sense in much of what can be read at present, apart from the closing greeting' (2003, 101), so we have seen little point in contesting it letter by letter. Our own differs almost entirely except in 9, 10, 21 and 22.

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FIG. 7. **875**. 88 × 82 mm. Letter with list of names, right leaf.

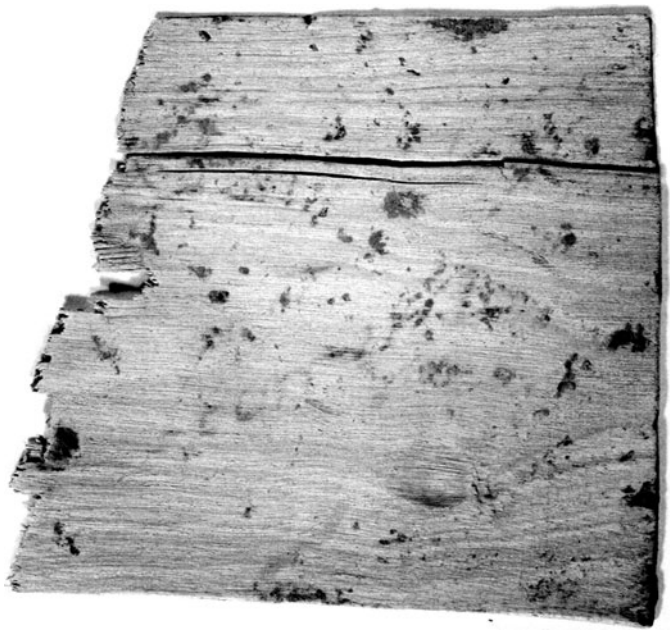


FIG. 8. **875**. 88 × 82 mm. Right leaf, back: part of the sender's name.

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Front:

i

Dec]u̱minus Ṣidoṇị f̣[r]atri ṣụ[o
salutem
traces
traces
traces
traces
n̤e̤c̤essaria *traces*
qui infra ṣc̣ṛipti sụnṭ
vacat Candi̱di̱ Ḥa. . ..
vacat Adventi ..ṛindenṣ
vacat Mada *traces*
vacat Troụ.. Cessaụcius

ii

traces
Ça *traces*
Me *traces*
Fifusius Caraṇṭ . . . .
traces
traces nus *traces*
traces
. . . .us Vedauonis
Neuuassius Minconis

vacat (2–3 lines)

m^2 bene uale mihi Sido f̣r[ater
vacat k̤arissime

Back:
] a Decuminọ

‘Decuminus to his brother Sido, greetings. [. . .] necessary [?names of those] who are written below. Of Candidus . . . of Adventus . . . Cessaucius . . . Fifusius (son) of Carant[. . .] . . . [. . .] us (son) of Vedauo, Neuuassius (son) of Minco. Fare well for my sake, Sido, dearest brother. [Back] . . . from Decuminus.’

1. The first letter is incomplete and visually might also be *i*, but the beginning of the writer’s name is quite well preserved on the back; by collating the two, we are confident of *Decuminus*.

The name of the recipient, Sido, is repeated in the closing greeting (22) and presents a similar but less straightforward problem of collation. In 22 the sequence *sido* is clear, and since it is followed by sufficient remains of the expected *fr[ater]* (see below), we read the name there in the vocative (and thus the nominative) case as *Sido*. This Germanic name is well attested by Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.29, 30; *Hist.* 3.5 and 21) as that of a client-king of the Suebi who fought on the Flavian side in the Battle of Cremona (A.D. 69). Here in line 1, *sido* can still just be read although badly abraded, and it is followed by trace of one or two letters before *f[r]atri*. They suggest *u* or *ci*, but can also be seen as a cramped *ni* for the expected dative **Sidoni*.

After *f[r]atri*, in which *r* has been lost but the last four letters are certain, there is apparently the tail of *s* and the first diagonal stroke of *u. fratri suo* is regular in letter-headings.

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3–8. Decuminus must have explained why he was sending this list of names, presumably *nomina* qualified as 'necessary' (*necessaria*, 7). The phrase in 8, *qui infra scripti sunt*, is the only hint of military bureaucracy, but is not peculiar to it.
9–12 are indented, so as to mark the beginning of a list which continued until the end of the letter. So far as it can be reconstructed, it consisted of two names per line, one of which was in the nominative case, the other in the genitive. This combination is best seen in 20 and 21, but the remains elsewhere are consistent with it, given that in Col. i the sequence was reversed, with the first name in 9 and 10 being genitive, the second name in 10 and 12 being nominative. The persons named were evidently men identified in peregrine fashion by their father's name.
9. There is not enough space for the nominative *Candidus*, and the traces preclude it. The name is frequent at Vindolanda, and no identification is possible.
10. Again, the genitive *Adventi* must be read, not the nominative *Adventus*. In the next name there is quite good evidence of *rindens* (already read by Birley), but this sequence is not found in any known name. Before it, the first letter is indeterminate, but the second looks like *h*, which would suggest an aspirated Germanic name.
12. After *trou* there is trace of two letters and space for a third; the first has a descender and can hardly be *c*, which would exclude *Troucisso* (App. **182**, noting the masculine name *Troucissa* in *CIL* III, 4146), which is also too long. Another possibility is a variant of the Germanic name *Trupo* (*RIB* I, 2063, whence *(centuria) Thruponiana*, *RIB* I, 1556), but the nominative **Troupo* would be precluded by the next name being in the nominative case, while there is not enough room for the genitive **Trouponis*.

The next name, *Cessaucius*, has already occurred at Vindolanda (**312**.back 2), but is otherwise unique. It is likely to be the same man.
16. The name *Fifusius* is unattested, but the reading is good. It is followed by the well-attested Celtic name *Carantus*, in the genitive case presumably, which has already been found at Vindolanda (*Britannia* 39 (2008), 384, No. 19).
20. The name *Vedauo* is unattested, but was presumably formed from the name-element found in *Veda* (*RIB* I, 191), *Ved[. . .]* (*RIB* I, 639), and *Vedian[us]* (*CIL* XIII, 8266), with the suffix *avo-s*.
21. The name *Neuuassius* (already read by Birley) is also unattested, but must belong to the large group of names containing the element *uasso-s*. Its first element is perhaps found in the feminine name *Neuica* (*CIL* V, 453); cf. also *Neuissati[us]* (*CIL* V, 1316).

Birley reads the second name as *minconi*, but the downstroke of the final *s* is quite clear. The name *Minco* (whence the genitive *Minconis*) is found as *Minc[. . .]* in a contemporary graffito from Vindolanda (*Britannia* 36 (2005), 494, No. 62), and is likely to be a variant of the name from which the gentilicium *Minuconius* (*CIL* V, 6953, Turin) was derived; cf. also the Cisalpine river-name *Mincius*, found as a cognomen in *CIL* V, 4908.
22. This is the first instance from Vindolanda of *mihi* being added to *uale* in the closing greeting, but *uale mi* is frequent, and in our note to **635**.3–4 we follow Adams (2003, 547) in regarding *mi* here as the contracted form of *mihi*, a dative of advantage. This identification is now confirmed.

After *Sido* (see above, note to line 1), there is a letter which looks just like *f* in *Fifusius* (16) without its tail, which can easily be read as *f* followed by *r*. This must be *fr[ater]* of which there is no sign in 23, since in the closing greeting at Vindolanda *karissime* is always preceded by *frater* (or *soror* or *domine* where appropriate); in **242**.ii.2–3, the only apparent exception, it was lost when the edge broke away.

Back:
Written on the slant, and thus the name of the sender. Initial *d* shows better in Birley's photo than in our scans, but he reads *decurione*. However, *m* looks better than *rio*, and a rank without a name is most unlikely; moreover, there is a good overlap with the name as transmitted in line 1.

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876

Inv.no. T01.55. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.46. Dimensions: (i) 50 × 28 mm; (ii) 42 × 12 mm. Location: V01-45A, the outermost Period I ditch. A.R. Birley 2003, 102–3.

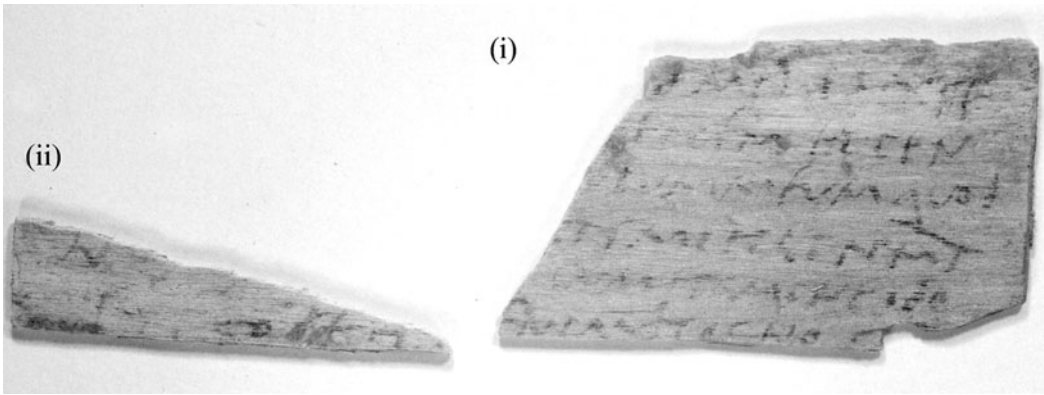


FIG. 9. **876**. (i) 50 × 28 mm; (ii) 42 × 12 mm. Fragments of a letter.

Two fragments which appear to be in the same hand and to belong together, but which do not join. Since both have writing on the back, they should both be from the right-hand column of a letter. (i) is complete at the right and (ii) at the left. (i) may also be complete at the top (see below on the back). Part of a tie-hole and a v-shaped cut are preserved at the foot of (i), which suggests that it is the top half of the tablet. The hand is competent but unremarkable, except for the prolonged upper diagonal of *a* (i.4).

Front:
(i)

]d mihi ..x̣ṣe
].ṛc̣em et pen-
].ịum meum quod
].as mihị ịn ma-
] cum homine ido-
] enim hoc nos.[
. . . . . .

1. *h* in *mihi* is made differently from the way it is made in 4 and 6 (which are again different from one another), but it is made in a standard way of writing it in Old Roman Cursive, and *mihi* looks certain. Before it most probably *sed* or *quid*. There are four or five letters after this, the last of which is *e* with a probable *xs* to precede it; the letters between this and *mihi* are difficult. We tentatively suggest the future perfect or perfect subjunctive of *dico*; the spelling is not a problem, but it is far from easy to read *di*.
2. *].ṛc̣em*: after the break perhaps *e*, suggesting *m]ẹṛc̣em*, which might suit the context.
3. The trace of the letter before *ium* might fit *d*, which suggests *stipen]dịum*. In which case we could well have some form of *pendo/penso/pensito* before it, e.g. *et pen*|*[de stipen]dium meum*, but we do not know how much is lost at the left.

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4. *].as*: the reading would appear to be *]cas*, but we would not wish to rule out *]ṭas*. If so, we suggest *quod [rogo (ut) mit]tas mihi*, which makes good sense. *mitto* is also one of the commonest verbs in the tablets. *remittas* is another possibility. *mihi̩*: there is something odd about the last letter which has more at the foot than would be expected in *i. ịn ma-*: this is the obvious reading and looks as though it would construe without difficulty (see below), but we cannot suggest a convincing supplement. Perhaps simply *in ma/[nibus* ('in hand').
5–6. Clearly we must restore *ido[neo*.

If the above suggestions are accepted we might venture the following translation for 2–6: '... and pay my wages, which please send to me in ... along with a suitable person'.
6. *nos.[*: *nostr-* is not probable and the switch from singular to plural is unexpected. Possibly we have some form of *nosco*, perhaps with *tu* before *enim* to precede it.

(ii) A triangular fragment with one line and the start of a preceding line at the left.

. . . . . .
ṇ *traces* [
ṣ.. ego .e..[
. . . . . .

1. If *n* is right, there may well be the tail of a descender from a line above at the left.
2. The line seems to be indented in comparison with the one above. Birley reads *cuị ego de*, which is possible.

Back:
(i) seems to be complete at the top (and left). It has traces of two lines of writing, the second but not the first in address script. We should therefore expect the first line to give the place to which the letter is being sent and the second line the name of the addressee (so Birley).

We might, with some imagination, read the top line as *Vị[n]d[o]lạnd[ae*, with a pronounced curve to the top of *d* (despite Birley).

For the addressee Birley suggests *Cạmmi̩[o* and we agree that it begins *Cam*. After that we suggest *ali̩[*. The names *Camalus* and *Camalius* are well attested in Spain.
(ii) presumably comes from the back of the same column and so must belong below (i), though without joining. We agree with Birley that the last two letters might be *ef*; but this is very uncertain and we would not wish to hazard *pra* for the traces preceding. Another possibility would be to read the last two strokes as *ii*, i.e. as a numeral, with *c]o̩ḥ* at the start of the line.

877

Inv.nos T02.33 = (i); T02.44 = (ii) and (iii). BM Registration nos 2004,0501.67 and 74. Dimensions: (i) 63 × 26 mm; (ii) 80 × 18 mm; (iii) 81 × 14 mm. Location: V02-19A, floor debris of a Period II/III building, probably a barrack room, below the Period IV *praetorium*. A.R. Birley 2003, 108, 113.

Fragments (i) and (ii) + (iii) have separate inventory numbers, but we are certain that both are written in the same hand and think it most probable that they come from the same letter, even though they do not join. (i) is a small fragment from the right-hand leaf of a letter, since part of the address survives on the back. Probably all four edges are incomplete; there is a straight edge at the left, but the writing is very close to the edge and we think it quite likely that we do not have the start of the lines preserved. (ii) and (iii) are two non-joining fragments, written in the same hand and no doubt from the same tablet as one another and probably the same tablet as (i). Each has a line or two of a letter. (ii) is complete at the left and (iii) at the right; both are incomplete on the other three

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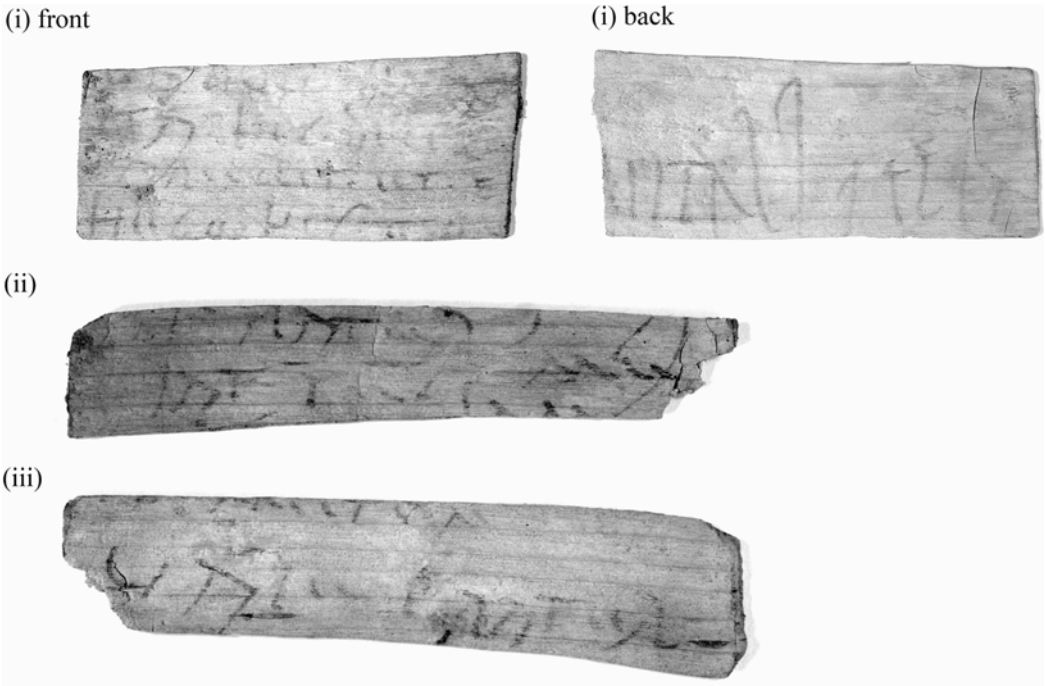


FIG. 10. **877**. (i) 63 × 26 mm; (ii) 80 × 18 mm; (iii) 81 × 14 mm. Fragments of a letter.

sides. (iii) is no doubt from a right-hand column for it contains a closing greeting; it may well belong below (i), but we cannot see any trace of the address on the back. It is very likely from the way the fragments are broken that (ii) is from the corresponding left-hand column.

The hand of the fronts of all the fragments is rather crude (old-fashioned?). It uses the stilus-tablet form of *e* with two backward-slanting strokes (\\); *a* has a third, downward stroke, sometimes exaggerated (see *Tab. Vindol.* I, p. 58, no. 2); *b* and *r* can be 'stunted'.

(i)
Front:

. . . . . .
traces
]ịṭạ h.c *traces* [
].arebiṭ ut .[
].uọ̣o.is..[
. . . . . .

3. The initial sequence is quite well preserved, and precludes reading *u* before the verbal ending *-bit*. The verb might then be *[ap]parebit* or *ọ̣arebit*.

4. The first surviving letter looks most like *h*, in which case we should have to read *huc* or *ad]huc.* In neither case can we then suggest anything plausible for what follows. We have therefore considered the possibility that the line is incomplete at the left (see the introduction) and that the supposed *h* is to be taken as *it*. This points to a personal name, presumably *[T]ituconis*, the genitive of the Celtic name *Tituco* attested in Noricum (*CIL* III, 11646 = *ILLPRON* 75, *Deuignata Tituconis filia*; cf. 105, *Titu[. . .]* and 348, *Tituca*), whence the gentilicium *Tituconius* (*CIL* XIII, 11826, Mainz).

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Back (in address script):

. . . . . .
] Vitali sepla[siario
. . . . . .

'To Vitalis, pharmacist . . .'

If the tablet is complete at the right (see the introduction), *seplasiario* will have been completed on the line below. The addressee can be identified with *Vitali seplasiario* in **586** i.7, where the meaning of this term is discussed. cf. *Britannia* 22 (1991), 299, no. 24 (Carlisle), a stilus writing-tablet addressed *Albano seplasiario*.

(ii)

. . . . . .
traces
ṭrater me[
.at..e ịạm [
traces [
. . . . . .

The writing slopes downwards.
1. Tails of three long descenders at the right.
2. No doubt *me[us*.
3. The first letter seems to be *i*, but it would be very surprising to have a word break such that the line began with *iat. iam*: although the bottoms of the letters are lost, *iam* is certain (not *etiam* for the stroke between *e* and *i* is the tail of *r* from the line above). Perhaps no more than *te iam*.
4. A couple of ascenders are visible.

(iii)

. . . . . .
]. . .ṃet.m *vacat?*
] uale frater
. . . . . .

2. The hand does not appear to change for the closing greeting.

878

Inv.no. T03.3. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.93. Dimensions: 57 × 20 mm. Period: III/IV. Location: 12A, laminated material in the north-west corner of a structure immediately to the south of the Severan *praetorium*. A.R. Birley 2005, 83; 2009, no. 8.

A fragment containing two lines of a letter and a trace of a third. It is almost certainly complete at the top but broken on all the other sides (although this is less certain for the right-hand edge). The apparent remains of a tie-hole at the left are probably misleading: this must be just the way the wood has broken. The fragments must be from a right-hand column (not the left, as in Birley 2009) because of the traces of writing, which we take to be the remains of an address, on the back. Birley's readings are mostly incorrect, as is his understanding of the placing of the fragment as the opening of a letter.

] ạccipịẹs sumsi[
]ṣṣimiṣ ẹṭ ọorn..[
] *traces* [
. . . . . .

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FIG. 11. **878**. 57 × 20 mm. Fragment of a letter.

1. We are reasonably confident of *accipies*, although the second *i* is more curved than one might expect.

The line might continue *sum si* (divided), but the syntax would then be still more difficult. *sumsi* for *sumpsi* is not problematic: the assimilation of *ps* to *s* is a common Vulgarism; *ILS* offers many instances of *p* lost after *m*, including *sumsit* (5040) and other parts of *sumere* and *absumere*. It is not necessarily the whole of the word; if it is right, we suppose that it began a new clause or sentence.

2. The readings are far from certain. If they are on the right lines we imagine, e.g., a reference to *amicis karissimis et Cornelio* . . ., which would be appropriate at the end of a letter. Instead of *et c*, Birley's *fac* is possible, but it is not followed by *iat*.

Back:

Traces of one or two lines of writing, the second very exiguous (including a tall ascender). We should expect this to be the name or title of the addressee, although it does not seem to be in address script. The traces at the left in the upper line seem to include *a* and perhaps *s* or *f*, and might be compatible with *praef*, which is often not written in address script; but although the first of the following traces looks like *c*, it seems impossible to fit them to all or any part of *cohortis*.

879

Inv.no. T03.14(1). BM Registration no. 2004,0501.101. Period: IV. Location: V03-38A. A.R. Birley 2005, 84.

Part of two fragmented leaves of a diptych. The left-hand leaf (Col. i) is represented by three joining fragments; the left edge and probably the foot are original, but the other two edges are incomplete. The right-hand leaf (Col. ii) is represented by two joining fragments; the right edge and probably the foot are original. It is identified by the remains of the closing greeting and the uninscribed space below, and a series of vertical lines scored on the back may be the illegible remains of the address.

Like most of the other fragments (see below), this diptych is inscribed in a good hand with cursive features: note the ligatures in *uikario* (i.4) and *ualeret* (7), and the cursive form of *r* in *uikario*; in *confestim* (6), *s* is made with a downstroke which continued upwards in a loop, and the cross-stroke of *t* does not project beyond the vertical. The hand is similar to and may be the same as the hand responsible for **888**.

There are also eight unplaced fragments, (a) to (h), some of which may not belong to this letter. A small fragment (a), which may belong to the first line of a letter (see below), is probably in the

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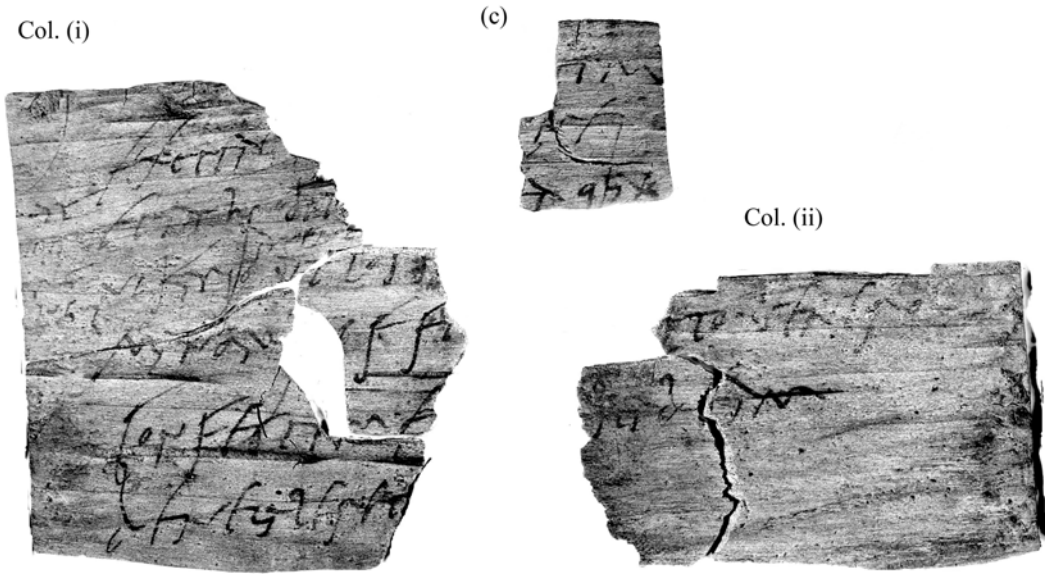


FIG. 12. **879**. Fragments of two leaves of a letter.

same hand. Two larger fragments, (b) and (c), are certainly in the same hand, but cannot be placed with any confidence; all four edges of (b) are broken, but the right edge of (c) seems to be original. Three small fragments, (d), (e) and (f), are too slight to be identified by their hand. (d) is apparently the top right-hand corner of a leaf, and both lines end with an interpunct, of which there is no sure instance in Cols i and ii, which suggests that it belongs to another text. (e) and (f) do not conjoin, but look as if they belong to the top of a leaf. A larger fragment (g) has traces of address script on one side, but is blank on the other, so it can hardly belong to this letter. Finally a small fragment (h) is not inscribed at all.

(i)

. . . . . .
.[
excita [
eṭ ..hi dẹṭ[
4a *vacat* agend[
uikario ut poss[
5 mandaui ẹffị[cere
confestim e[t
bene ualeret[

m^2 in the left margin, traces of four line-endings

(ii)

. . . . . .
o]pto · bene ro
] habeam *vacat*
vacat

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(a)

]s fla[
. . . .

(b)

. . . . . .
]p̣a̤ṛa̤ṭum hab[
. . . . . .

(c)

. . . . .
]ṭẹm
] mei
]ẹa quae
. . . . .

(d)

]as ·
]ạs ·
. . . . .

(e)

]p̣e.[
. . . . .

(f)

]. [
. . . . .

i.1. The tail of a sweeping descender runs from the top edge to the left edge of 2, and probably belongs to the first letter of the sender's name in ekthesis as often.
2. *excita* is apparently complete; a space follows, and the fine upward line from the end of *a* is probably owing to the lifting of the pen. Thus the imperative, 'rouse up'.
3. *hi* is very clear, *i* being made with a long downward sweep to mark the end of a word. Birley reads *et miḥi*, which is what we would like to do, but the putative *m* is quite unlike *m* elsewhere and resembles *a* ligatured to *t* (or *p*). There is not really space for *i* after it. The letter between *d* and *t* is almost certainly *e*, whether for the preposition *de* or part of the next word; it is not *a* as read by Birley.
4a. Between lines 3 and 4, *agend[* was inserted, its position suggesting that it was to be understood after *uikario* (4). It is unclear whether it was the accusative *agend[um]* or *agend[a]*, presumably the object of *effi[cere]* (6), or the genitive *agend[i]* or *agend[orum]* defining *uikario* ('to the deputy responsible for the business to be done').
4. The first letter looks superficially like *n*, but the apparent incomplete descender belongs to the writing in the margin (see below). *uikario* is a variant spelling of *uicario* with medial *k* for *c*, well attested in the epigraphy of imperial slaves described as *uicarius*. This word is occasionally found as a cognomen, but here the sense of 'deputy' or 'agent' (in the dative) is guaranteed by *mandaui* (5, 'I delegated'). It is often used in this general sense, but also in particular of one slave bought by another to be his 'replacement'. In the imperial household this sense was extended into a grade or title often applied to imperial slaves who exercised a delegated financial authority especially in the provinces (Weaver 1972, 200–11). Such a *uicarius* called Vegetus is attested by a

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writing-tablet from London (Tomlin 2003), and we have suggested that after manumission he became the Cocceius Vegetus who receives **352** (see *Tab. Vindol.* III App. **352**). Note also Cocceius Maritimus, the recipient of **645**, a letter which refers to 'business' with the *Caesariani* (imperial slaves and freedmen).

uikario is followed by a final clause, *ut poss[em]* or *ut poss[et]*, 'that I [*or* he] might be able to …'. It is not clear from the immediate context whether this subjunctive was present or imperfect, but the imperfect is required by *ualeret* in 6 (see below). The verb infinitive governed by *poss[em]* or *poss[et]* is evidently *effi[cere]* ('achieve'), with its adverb *confestim* ('immediately') postponed for greater emphasis. The object of *effi[cere]* has been lost, and it is tempting to supply *ea quae* from line 3 of the detached fragment (c), and to read *ut poss[..] ea quae* / *mandaui effi[cere]* / *confestim* ('to achieve immediately what I delegated'). But syntactically it would then be difficult to fit lines 1 and 2 of (c) to Col. i.2–3, and another possibility is *agend[um]* or *agend[a]* (see note above to 3a).

7. The letter before the break is *t*, but Birley reads it tentatively as *d* so as to detach the sequence *bene ualere* as part of a closing greeting; this also requires him to read *te* tentatively at the beginning of the line, but only because he has consistently been unable to locate the left-hand margin of Col. i. However, this is clear in the scans we have used, and there is no doubt that 6 begins with *bene*. Since also there is good evidence of the closing greeting on the other leaf (see below), the subjunctive *ualeret* can be taken as dependent on *ut* in 3: *e[t ?res* / *bene ualeret* ('… and that the business might fare well').

In the left margin, from midway between lines 2 and 3 to midway between 4 and 5, there are the ends of four lines of writing cut by the left edge. The first ends in *]at*, a verbal ending; the others consist of 2–3 letters of uncertain reading. Since these letters are somewhat smaller and written by another hand, and the lines are more closely spaced vertically, they cannot belong to the main text. We conjecture that they belong to another diptych from which this leaf was salvaged.

ii.1. The letter *b* is now incomplete, but the upper portion of its loop and the sinuous second stroke survive, so Birley's *f* for *fenero* is not possible. As he points out, however, the space after and below *habeam* shows that the letter ended here. *[o]pto*, like *bene*, is appropriate to a closing greeting, which we would restore here as *[o]pto bene ro*/*[bustum te] habeam* ('I hope that I find you well and hearty'). For this formulation cf. Cicero, *In Q. Caecilium* 48, '*uideo eum esse bene robustum'*.

a. There is a space between *]s* and *Fla[*, which suggests the end of a personal name in the nominative and the beginning of another, conceivably in a letter-heading. *Fla[* naturally suggests the frequent gentilicium *Flauius*, but when one Roman citizen wrote to another, he conventionally suppressed the recipient's gentilicium in the letter-heading (thus, for example, **261**.1, *Hostilius Flauianus Ceriali*); so *Fla[* is probably a cognomen here, whether that of the writer himself or the recipient. Cerialis' correspondent Hostilius Flavianus (ibid., and cf. **714**. b.1n), perhaps to be identified with the prefect(?) Flavianus (**172**), comes to mind.

b. In this hand it can be difficult to distinguish between *a*, *p* and *r*, but Birley's reading *pratum* ('meadow') is not possible, since another letter to the left is ligatured to his putative *p*. The object of the verb *habere* is unclear; it might be the past-participle passive *paratum* ('prepared') or *[com]paratum* ('bought'), making the verb an auxiliary, or simply *[ap]paratum* ('equipment').

c. Since line 1 may well be a word-ending, and 2 and 3 end in complete words, with *quae* significantly cramped into 3, the right-hand edge seems to be original. In 1, the reading *]tem* is not certain, but one of many possibilities would be *[salu]tem*, formulaic at the end of the second line of a letter. This is another reason for hesitating to place this fragment somewhere to the right of i.1–3 (see above).

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880

Inv.no. T03.15(2). BM Registration no. 2004,0501.102. Dimensions: 55 × 36 mm. Period: IV. Location: V03-38A, in a drain at the southern end of Building 2, Room 4, probably the centurion's quarters in a barrack-block. A.R. Birley 2005, 90; 2009, no. 9.



FIG. 13. **880**. 55 × 36 mm. Fragment with two drafts of a letter, front and back.

This fragment has text on both sides and is complete at the left margin of Side A (the back of the right margin of Side B). The relationship between the texts on the two sides is difficult to elucidate, as are the texts themselves. Our readings differ significantly from those of Birley, and we do not see this as 'a fragmentary letter referring to *calli*' (2009, 284).

We think that both sides contain drafts of a letter which have some words in common and are the work of the same hand. The first hand is noticeably cursive; e.g. on Side B in *salutem* the *u* is a tiny hook and *e* is missing its top; in *do]mine* there is a marked serif on *i*, also *nobis* (3) and *in* (5). The side which we have designated A, however, also has the remains of an account written by a different hand. The draft letter on Side B appears to be an improved, though not perfect version of the text on Side A, although it is awkward to accommodate the fact that the latter has part of a phrase which does not occur on Side B. Our working hypothesis is that the account was written first on Side A and that a second writer used that for a first draft of his letter, without erasing the account, and then turned over and wrote a second draft on Side B, perhaps omitting some words which had originally been included on Side A. If this letter is a draft of a request for 'lodgings', the only parallel at Vindolanda is **632** (to Cerialis), where again a special sort of lodging is requested.

This fragment was found with three small fragments (**889**), which are not by the same hand.

Side A:

. . . . . .
traces
m^1 *vacat* x..vi [
m^2 hạbeam uḅ.(.)[
m^1 vḍ. . . cxc ṣ(.)[
5 vi. .r.(.). *vacat* [
m^2 peto domine de bọn[itate
tuá ut mihi con[
họspitiụm quod [
. . . . . .

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Side B:

. . . . . .
m^2] *vacat* salutem
do]mine de bo̱ni̱tate̱
] nobis praestes
4a] accipi. . .
ho]spitium quod est
5]st.. inqu̱.l..um
].n.se̱s̱. *c*.8 be̱
. . . . . .

Side A:
1. One or two descenders only.
2. The numeral may have been deleted. Our preference is to read *xxxvi*, but it is not easy to do so; however, there is too much ink for *xxvi*.
3. *habeam*: *m* is certain and the reading is secure although the first *a* is made by extending the horizontal of *h* downward to form the diagonal downstroke and then writing the second vertical of *h* afterwards at the left. This does seem to be the work of the same hand as lines 6ff. and certainly not the hand of the account. But it is unclear how *habeam* fits and what follows it. After *u*, which is certain, we can only have *b* or *d*; if it is *d*, *udones* would be attractive (cf. **346**.i.2), but the trace of the third letter does not seem compatible with *o*; therefore perhaps *ubi*. The draft of the letter on Side B corresponds to what begins at line 6 on Side A, so *habeam* looks as though it must belong to a draft of a different letter, or to a variant and earlier draft of the same letter. We prefer the latter.
4. There is a horizontal bar over *v* which should mean it is the day of the month, but it is hard to interpret the account as a sequence of dates since the numeral in line 5 (also barred) is *vi.*. At the right we think the numeral must be *cxc* and the first *c* is lighter because after writing it he dipped his pen in the ink again. We are not convinced by Birley's reading of *calli* ('hides') after the barred numeral *v*. It looks most like *d* at the start, and then the \\ form of *e* is a possibility; but we cannot suggest anything convincing. The scan shows a possible faint trace of *s* after the numeral. If the numeral is *vi*, the *l*-shaped letter is this man's way of writing terminal *i*; which suggests that the next word in line 5 also ends in *i*. Even if Birley's *calli* were possible, the numeral would surely have followed.
5. Again a horizontal bar over the numeral *vi.* (see note to line 4). As for what follows, we can see how Birley arrived at *calli*, but think *r* much more likely than *a* for the second letter and, as he points out, if it were right here and in line 4, it is made quite differently in the two places. *pre.* with the \\ form of *e* is possible, but we cannot see how this could yield sense with the final letter as a terminal *i* comparable to the final digit of the numeral; otherwise possibly *prel( )*, a wine- or oil-press (*prelum*).
6. See Side B.2 and note. The large *p* clearly belongs with this line (so Birley). For comparable and contemporary usage of *bonitas*, see Pliny, *Ep.*10.4, 94.2. The fragmentary **719** contains the words *bonitas* and *indulgentia*.
7. There is an apex over *a* (see *Tab. Vindol.* II, pp. 56–61; Adams 1995, 97–8). The differences from what is written on Side B are *mihi* for *nobis* and *con[* for *praestes*. The latter suggests a reference to procuring accommodation and there are several possibilities for restoration, including *conpares* and *constitues*.
8. *o* in *hospitium* is a correction or remade.

Side B:
1. There is presumably a line lost above this. Birley says there is a trace of a letter above this line, perhaps *o*, but we think this is probably dirt or surface damage.

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2. Before *domine* the draft on Side A suggests *peto*, with the subjunctive *praestes* in the next line. Although we have dotted most of the letters we are confident that *de bonitate* is right and makes sense, with *tua* restored at the start of the next line.
3. There is an apparent mark over *o* but it should probably be ignored. Despite Birley, the readings are certain. At the start after *tua* supply *ut* (see Side A).
4a is clearly inserted between the lines, just possibly by a different hand although we have not designated it as such; there ought to be 4–5 letters lost before it. We do not see how we can read Birley's *accipiunt* and we think that the best possibilities are *accipient*, *accipiant*, and *accipi{s}as*. Against the first two is the fact that the third letter from the end looks very much like *s*, is very hard to read as *a*, and is quite unlike the other example of that letter in this word (and it certainly cannot be *u*); also the abrupt plural of *accipiant* is difficult to explain. If we accept *accipi{s}as* we would have to suppose that he wrote *accipis*, then realised he needed the subjunctive, and corrected to *accipias* (cf. *praestes*) without deleting the redundant *s*. *accipias* (like *con[* in A.7) is apparently an alternative for *praestes*: 'if you accept a lodging on our behalf', as being more polite than 'if you provide us with a lodging'.
4. There seems no reasonable alternative to *hospitium*, but unfortunately it is a couple of letters short if the other restorations are right; perhaps therefore preceded by *id* or *hoc*.
5. We think we can plausibly read *stṛạ* here and so presumably have to choose between *castra* and *nostra*. We suggest that *castra* makes good sense, though if this is a draft letter to be sent elsewhere, the fort is not necessarily Vindolanda. (For Vindolanda as '*castra*', see **156**.5; **300**.4–5, *ad castra*; **668**.2.) It presumably locates the *hospitium* close to the *castra*, judging by the likely space. The next word is difficult, but we think *inquilinum* compatible with the traces, given that the sequence undoubtedly begins with *inqu*, has a clear *l*, and ends in *um*. The sense requires a qualification of *[ho]spitium* in relation to *[ca]stra*, meaning 'near' or 'convenient for': e.g. *uicinum*, *contiguum*, *proximum*, *propinquum*. For the sense cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 56.4, a catalogue of the noises which beset his lodgings over a bath-house: '*pono et fabrum inquilinum et serrarium uicinum*', where *inquilinum* is clearly a synonym of *uicinum*, 'including the local *faber* and the neighbourhood *serrarius*'.
6. We cannot read Birley's *uale* though the final traces are compatible with *be* or *le*.

Proposed reconstruction of lines B.1–5
[A to B] | *salutem.* / *[peto, do]mine, de bonitate* / *[tua ut] nobis praestes 'accipi{s}as'*/ *[id ho]spitium quod est* / *[ad ca]stra inquilinum* / …
'[A to B], greetings. I ask of your goodness, my lord, that you provide [accept] for us that lodging which is local to the fort …'

881

Inv.no. T03.16(1). BM Registration no. 2004,0501.103. Dimensions: 45 × 23 mm. Period: IV. Context: V03-38A. A.R. Birley 2005, 91; 2009, no. 10.

The front has the remains of five lines of a letter, complete at right with part of a semi-circular nick. We do not know how much is missing at the left. The hand has cursive features with some ligatures. As there is an address on the back this will be from a right-hand column. It is probably near the top, since the back is part of the name of the addressee.

Front:

. . . . . .
] *traces*
].(.)eṭ feram mọdo
].mensum agimụṣ

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].ṭe non ceṣ.a.ent
] *traces*
. . . . . .



FIG. 14. **881**. 45 × 23 mm. Fragment of a letter.

1. Traces of some six letters at the left. Birley reads *].ci[*, which is possible but not probable. There is a horizontal line between this line and 2, extending as far as the end of *feram*; we can offer no explanation for it.
2. Birley reads *si* before *feram*, but *e* is certain. If the letter following is *t*, it has a tiny cross-stroke; this seems more likely than *ei. modo*: there appears to be a diagonal through the first *o* which is perhaps a descender from the line above. As a translation perhaps 'I shall soon bring'.
3–4. Birley's readings are not correct and there is no reference to *caduca* ('void', of a legacy).
3. *mensum*: this could be the genitive plural of *mensis*, but the verb which follows immediately, if the reading is right, makes an accusative singular more likely. There are numerous possibilities; we might, for example, have an expression such as *immensum agimus negotium* ('we are engaged in an immense business'). We are confident of *agim*. In which case the only possibility would seem to be *agimus*, although *us* is not obvious.
4. If the reading suggested is correct we presumably have to read *non cesṣaṛent*, but *r* is far from easy.
5 seems to end in *s*, perhaps *es*.

Back:
One line and faint traces of a second.

In the top line there is a clear *o*, which is preceded by the descenders of some seven letters in address script. This must be either the end of the addressee's whole name or of his gentilicium. There are too many strokes for it to be Birley's *flauio*; after it his *p* is possible, but *f* looks better.

The traces of the second line, where Birley reads *praef*, are too scanty for us to venture a reading.

DESCRIPTA (NOS **882**–**889**)

882

Inv.no. T01.51. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.43. Dimensions: 52 × 28 mm.

Small fragment with all sides incomplete. There are traces of three lines of text, but they are too badly preserved and too ambiguous to be transcribed. There may also be traces on the back.

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883

Inv.no. T02.1B. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.87.

Eleven small fragments with traces of writing by at least two hands. There is nothing on the backs.
(i) Only two fragments join: *.abes cum[/ guṃ.[*
There is rather a wide margin to the left, but not an original edge. Only one letter has apparently been lost in line 1, but the slight remains do not support *h* (for *habes*). A third fragment (ii), apparently by the same hand, carries part of three letters, perhaps *]cc.[*
(iii) Fragment of the right leaf of a diptych, judging by what seems to be the lower edge of a binding-notch in the right edge. Inscribed in another hand: traces / *]rmịre* vacat
(iv) Very small fragment: *]ạcoiu[*
Perhaps the end of a place-name, *-aco*, followed by a tense of the verb *iubeo*.
(v) Nothing can be made of the other seven fragments. One preserves the tops or bottoms of 3–4 letters. Two carry illegible traces of 1–2 letters. One carries a fleck of ink. The other three are blank.

884

Inv.no. T02.20. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.60. Dimensions of largest fragment: 36 × 16 mm. Period: II/III. Location: V02-24A (the same as V02-19A), floor debris of a Period II/III building, probably a barrack room, below the Period IV *praetorium*. A.R. Birley 2003, 106.

Front:
One large fragment with 3 lines of writing, complete at right. Two smaller fragments, one placed immediately to the left of the large fragment where it seems to join. One loose fragment with a trace of ink only. Noticeable word division. The ink has faded badly: *].ẹṛ ad uọṣ /]uṃ ḅene .ạ. /]..et tuạṣ*
2. *bene* is very probable and may be followed by *faç.*
3. *tuas* is uncertain and does not fit well with *uos* in line 1; we have also considered *tunç.*

Back:
There seem to be some traces on the main fragment, suggesting part of the address of a letter, but nothing legible.

885

Inv.no. T02.34. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.68. Period: II/III. Location: V02-19A, floor debris of a Period II/III building, probably a barrack room, below the Period IV *praetorium*. A.R. Birley 2003, 109.

Six fragments, of which (i) and (ii) certainly join, and (v) and (vi) may. They may all belong to the same document, which is no doubt a letter.

Front:
(i) + (ii) Complete at the left where there is part of a v-shaped notch: traces / *ç. . .. . .fli. . ...[/ .[*
(iii) Probably blank on both sides.
(iv) Complete at the left with a margin. Three lines of writing with a descender from line 1: traces / *au.no..[. . .eṭ..[/ nunc [*
2. *aut non* may be possible.
(v) + (vi) Part of three lines, again with a possible descender of line 1: perhaps complete at the right: *]*^{2}*ụọ / .eṣ..ạuer[/ su.ṃ.f* traces /^{5}*..ọ.[*
3. Possibly *ita uer[*

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Back:
There is some writing on the back of (i) + (ii) and (v) + (vi), but nothing legible.

886

Inv.no. T02.48. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.78. Dimensions of largest fragment: 43 × 13 mm. Period: II/III. Location: V02-31A, planked floor of a Period II structure below a Period III boarded wall. A.R. Birley 2003, 114.

Four fragments. (i) does not join the others and has writing on the back. (ii), (iii) and (iv) are joined on the scan, but (iv) does not fit where placed. (ii) and (iii), which do join, seem to be blank on the back.

Front:
(i) The right edge is preserved with a margin. Two lines, with possibly a couple of descenders from a line above:]. . . .*ueṣ* vacat / [2]*]* traces of 5–6 letters.
(ii) + (iii) Broken on all four sides: *]..ọs ad me pẹṛṭ. . .t[/ [2]]. . . .deṭis aliquiḍ [*
1. *ad me* is plain, suggesting the tablet is from a letter; perhaps preceded by *q]ụos* and perhaps followed by *pertulit*.
(iv) has just a trace of ink.

Back:
There is writing on the back of (i) and (iv), but no more than the odd letter is legible.

887

Inv.no. T02.52. BM Registration no. 2004,0501.82. Dimensions: 35 × 30 mm.

Small fragment with traces of letters slanting diagonally, perhaps therefore the name of the sender at the foot of an address; but only *u* is legible. The other side is blank.

888

Inv.no. T03.14(2). BM Registration no. 2004, 0501.101. Period: IV. Context: 38A. A.R. Birley 2005, 87–90.

Birley correctly describes this tablet as 'multiple fragments of a letter, written on both sides'. We have found it impossible to fit the fragments together and so impossible to offer any connected sense. Most, probably all, of the fragments which are not blank are written in the same cursive hand on the front; this is similar to and may be the same as the hand responsible for **879**. In the case of some fragments, where the script appears to be the same on both sides, it is not possible to be sure which is the front and which the back. Of the 16 fragments, 11 are either blank or have only slight traces. We offer transcripts of the remaining five, two of which join.

(i) Front:
Four lines, all broken at the right but complete at the left; lines 3–4 are inset with respect to lines 1–2. Lines 2–4 = Birley's **b** 4–6; his lines 1–3 are on a small piece placed below our fragment which he fits to his **b** and which we have not attempted to transcribe: *..ṭ.m[/[2] saṇt..rr[/ ne.[/ iṇp.[*
1. At the start possibly an enlarged *u* or *la*; the letter after *t* appears to be *q* but is not followed by *u*.
2. *t* is raised above the line.
4. If *i* is correct it has a noticeable serif.

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The other side has part of two lines, not in address script. Birley thinks it likely to be in a different hand from the front, but too little remains for any certainty. The second line may read *eḍaṣ*.

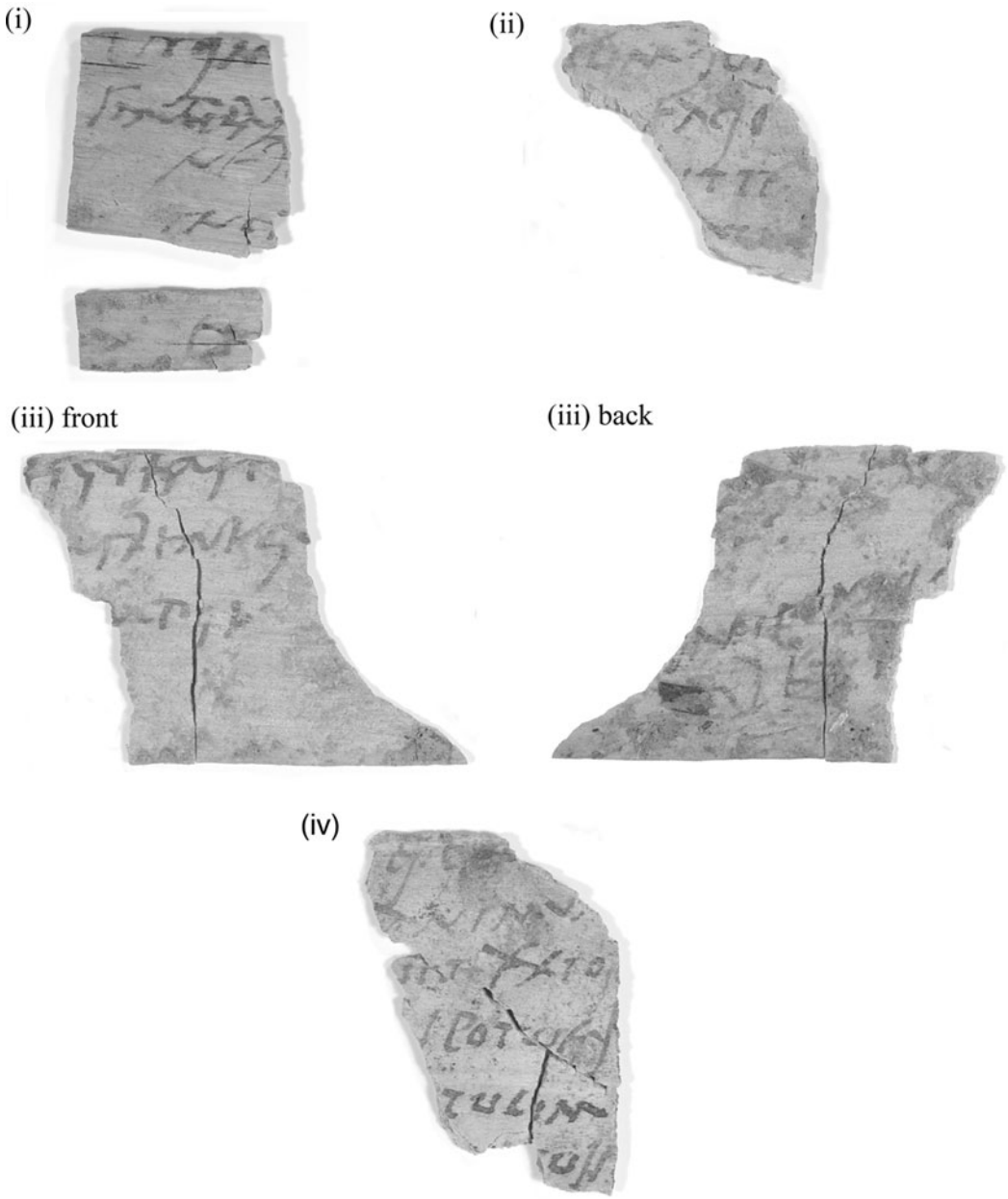


FIG. 15. **888**. Fragments of a letter.

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(ii) Birley's **d**. Front:
Five lines broken on three sides but likely to be partly complete at the right: traces */[2]]çụm . . .[/] facio [/]ịtte /[5]]* traces
2. Birley's *elam* is not possible; *cum* is a good reading. It may be followed by *ṛẹṣ[*, e.g. *cum rescribas*.
4. No doubt *m]itte*, or a compound, unless we divide *-it te*; there seems to be an interpunct after *e*.
The other side has remains of two lines, the first of which reads *mihi*; below the second line the tablet appears to be blank.

(iii) Birley's **c**. Front:
Three lines with a large blank below line 3. This suggests we have the foot of the tablet, especially as the bottom edge is straight; the fragment is incomplete on the other three sides: *].raterf.[/[2]].uṣ bene ụa[/[3]].tụṛe* vacat
1. *frater* is possible; if *er* is correct there has been some correction. After this *fe[* is possible, but not Birley's *fusc[*.
2. *u* after *bene* (which is certain) is a mere hook, as often when followed by *a*. This looks like part of a closing greeting and we are tempted to suggest *opto . . . frater felicissimus bene ualeas*, which is what we have in **260**.4–6.
3. Birley's *m]ature* is possible, but his supposed apex over *e* is the tail of *a* from the line above. If *[m]ature* is correct, we would interpret it as the vocative of the personal name *Maturus*, part of a greeting.
Back:
Traces of one, or possibly two, lines (not transcribed); and then, after a space, two lines on the slant. These are presumably the name and description of the sender, written diagonally as usual. They seem to be in a different hand from the one responsible for the front.
1. Tentatively we suggest *a]ḅ Antṇoniṇọ .[*
2. *]ạleạ.[* Birley reads *ale* for *alae*, suggesting that *dec(urione)* has been lost from 1, but something (not *dec(urione)*) has almost certainly been written before the first *a* in 2; whether just one letter or more it is hard to say. If just one letter, we tentatively suggest *gạleạ[rio]*. Vegetius equates *galiarii* [sic] with *lixae* (I.10) and *calones* (III.6), with the implication that it was the usual colloquial term for soldiers' servants; in general, see Speidel 1989. But if *Antonio* is read in 1, it is difficult to imagine a soldier's servant bearing a gentilicium, unless it was only used as a cognomen, i.e. his servile name, followed by his master's name in the genitive.

(iv) Birley's **f** + **h** (the join is correct). Front:
Remains of six lines broken on all sides: *].i ṗ. . .[/[2]] animuṃ [/].ịt exto.[/]. potueri.[/[5]]tulim [/]..[.]ṭuiṣ [*
1. If *i* is correct, it appears to be followed by an interpunct (so Birley). After it his *pạr* is possible.
3. After *exto* Birley's *l* is possible, as is his suggestion that in that case we may have a form of *extollo*.
4. *potueri* is plain: *u* extends over two fragments which are not quite correctly aligned on the plate and this has led to Birley's erroneous reading. *p* has a noticeable loop. The trace at the right, if it is a trace, could suit *t*, i.e. *potuerit.*
5. *tulim* is a good reading, but cannot be perfect subjunctive as Birley suggests. Either we have *tulim[us* (perfect of *fero* or a compound) or we must divide *tuli m[.*

The back has traces in address script.

889

Inv.no. T03.15(1). BM Registration no. 2004,0501.102. Dimensions: 35 × 15 mm. Period: IV. Location: see **880**.

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Three small fragments, two joining. Found with **880**, but not in the same hand. Traces of two lines, followed by line 3 *ʃ. . .eas*; not likely to be *ualeas*, but more probably *ḥaḥeas*. Tops of letters in address script on the back.

III. CONCORDANCE

This concordance includes all the tablets published in this article and in *Tab. Vindol*. IV.1 (*Britannia* 41, 2010). The attribution of individual tablets to particular periods or structures is complex (see *Britannia* 41 (2010), 189–91). We have cited only the information given in the Vindolanda archaeological reports.

Tablet No.	BM Registration No.	Text No.	Location
01.15	2004,0501.14	857	The outermost Period 1 ditch.
01.19	2004,0501.18	858	The outermost Period 1 ditch.
01.33	2004,0501.32	869	V42, below corridor between Rooms 3 and 4 of Period IV building.
01.34	2004,0501.33	872	V01-42A, mixed debris and timbers from demolition of Period III and IV buildings, directly below the Period V cobbler's workshop.
01.39	2004,0501.35	861	V42, Room 4 of a building adjacent to Period IV *praetorium*.
01.42	2004,0501.37	873, 874	V01-45A, the outermost Period 1 ditch.
01.47	2004,0501.40	875	V01-45A, the outermost Period I ditch.
01.51	2004,0501.43	882	Unknown
01.55	2004,0501.46	876	V01-45A, the outermost Period I ditch.
02.1B	2004,0501.87	883	Unknown
02.13	2004,0501.55	870, 871	V02-19, below Rooms 1 and 2 of a Period IV structure.
02.16	2004,0501.57	864	V02-19A, remains of buildings below Rooms 1 and 2 of Period IV structure.
02.20	2004,0501.60	884	V02-24A, floor debris of a Period II/III building, probably a barrack room, below the Period IV *praetorium*.
02.24	2004,0501.63	863	V02-19A, remains of buildings below Rooms 1 and 2 of Period IV structure.
02.25	2004,0501.64	862	V02-19A, remains of buildings below Rooms 1 and 2 of Period IV structure.
02.33	2004,0501.67	877	V02-19A, floor debris of a Period II/III building, probably a barrack room, below the Period IV *praetorium*.
02.34	2004,0501.68	885	V02-19A, floor debris of a Period II/III building, probably a barrack room, below the Period IV *praetorium*.
02.38	2004,0501.71	854, 855, 856, 867, 868	V02.19, below Rooms 1 and 2 of Period IV structure.
02.41	2004,0501.72	859	V02.19A, remains of buildings below Rooms 1 and 2 of Period IV structure.
02.44	2004,0501.74	877	V02-19A, floor debris of a Period II/III building, probably a barrack room, below the Period IV *praetorium*.
02.45	2004,0501.75	865[5]	V02-27A, dividing wall between Period III structures, below wall and drain to east of Period IV building.
02.48	2004,0501.78	886	V02-31A, planked floor of a Period II structure below a Period III boarded wall.
02.52	2004,0501.82	887	Unknown
02.57	2004,0501.86	866	V02-40A, a ditch cutting through an Antonine causeway.

[5] The BM number was erroneously recorded as '2005,0501.75' in the *editio princeps*.

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03.3	2004,0501.93	878	12A, laminated material in the NW corner of a structure immediately to the south of the Severan *praetorium*.
03.14	2004,0501.101	879, 888	V03-38A
03.15	2004,0501.102	880, 889	V03-38A, in a drain at the southern end of Building 2, Room 4, probably the centurion's quarters in a barrack-block.
03.16	2004,0501.103	860[6], 881	V03-38A, drain below stable-block or workshop.

IV. INDEXES

These indexes include all the texts (except literary and sub-literary fragments) published in this article and in *Tab. Vindol.* IV.1. A line number in square brackets indicates that the word is wholly supplied. Entries of the type '**857**.6n' mean that the word in question is suggested in the relevant note.

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Tagomas **864**.ii.5
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Trou[**875**.i.12
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Vastinus **863**.B

[6] The BM number was erroneously recorded as '2004,0501.57' in the *editio princeps*.

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ego **876**.ii.2
    me **873**.i.2, **886**.ii./iii.1

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mihi **875**.ii.22, **876**.i.1,4, **879**.i.3n, **880**. A.7, **888**.ii.back
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]tulim[**888**.iv.5
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