

lucerna

Roman Finds Group
Newsletter **47**

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Notes for contributors

Contributions are always welcome – particularly on new finds –so please send them to us, and share them with the rest of the Roman Finds Group!

The address for e-mailed contributions is:

emma.durham@reading.ac.uk

Contributions by post should be sent to:
Emma Durham, Department of Archaeology,
University of Reading, Whiteknights Box 227,
Reading RG6 6AB.

Editorial

This newsletter has a large number of contributors thanks to all those who submitted versions of their papers from the Roman Archaeology/Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference held in Reading in April. The Roman Finds Group session was a great success, as were other dedicated finds sessions within the conference. We also have papers on perforated bone spoons and the Artefacts website. Please check the website out as it should be a useful tool for those working on finds. Details of the next two RFG meetings are on page 7, and for those who really like to plan ahead, we are hoping to hold the Autumn 2015 meeting at the British Museum on Friday 6th November. This will be a joint meeting with the Late Prehistoric Finds Group and will coincide with the Celts exhibition at the BM.

Membership

Please remember that membership is due in October. Many thanks to those who have already paid. Membership is still only £8 (for individuals) and £11 for two people at the same address. Standing order is also available, please ask Angela for a form or print one from the website.

In order to reduce costs and keep members better informed, we would be grateful if members could provide an email address. This will only be used to relay up and coming information on events such as the study days and the newsletter will continue to be printed.

Roman Finds Group is now on Twitter!

We regularly post information that may interest people with a passion for Roman objects, as well as sharing up-to-date information on the group, and links to our website. We also interact with other people of interest on Twitter. You can follow live-tweets of our conferences under the hashtags #rfg2014 #rfg2013 #rfg2012. We recently welcomed our 100th follower! Do join us! @RomanFindsGrp

Datasheets

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

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

Gill Dunn
Publications Co-ordinator
Historic Environment Service, 27 Grosvenor Street,
Chester, Cheshire CH1 2DD

e-mail: gill.dunn@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

BRIGANTIAN IMMIGRANTS TO LONDINIUM?: NEW FINDS OF PERFORATED BONE ‘SPOONS’

Stephen Greep and Michael Marshall

Introduction

Over the course of the last 12 months two examples of perforated bone spoons from Roman London have come to light. The type is otherwise only known from Central Britain, the region of northern England and southern Scotland between the Humber and the Forth, with a concentration particularly in Yorkshire. As such their discovery in Londinium is worthy of comment. The first was discovered quite by chance in 2013 while one of the authors was examining finds from the unpublished waterfront site at Thames Exchange (Site code: TEX88) in the London Archaeological Archive (LAARC). Having already noted this as a find of some significance he was surprised to encounter a second example while assessing the finds from a more recent excavation by MOLA at 8–10 Moorgate (Site code: MOQ10). By bringing these finds to a wider audience we hope that any information regarding other southern finds of perforated spoons known to members of the Roman Finds Group will come to light.

The London finds

Catalogue

1. Thames Exchange (Sitecode: TEX88); Accession no. 1337; Context: 1736

Near complete; surviving length 181 mm, width head 24.2 mm, diam handle 5.5 mm, max width terminal 12.5 mm. Perforated spoon, relatively flat teardrop shaped head, curving upwards slightly towards the outer edge. Central perforation with a wear groove, on the upper face only, projecting towards the handle. The handle is circular sectioned and has a rectangular crossbar or panel with grooved decoration before a break at the terminal.

2. 8–10 Moorgate (Sitecode: MOQ10); Accession no. 2440; Context: 7476

Incomplete; surviving length 108 mm, max surviving width head 21 mm, diam handle 6 mm. Perforated spoon. Flat ?oval head, now missing the tip, very slightly convex on reverse, set at a slight angle and battered around the outer edges. It has a central circular or oval perforation with a deep wear groove at the edge projecting towards the handle. The broken handle is circular sectioned and missing the terminal.

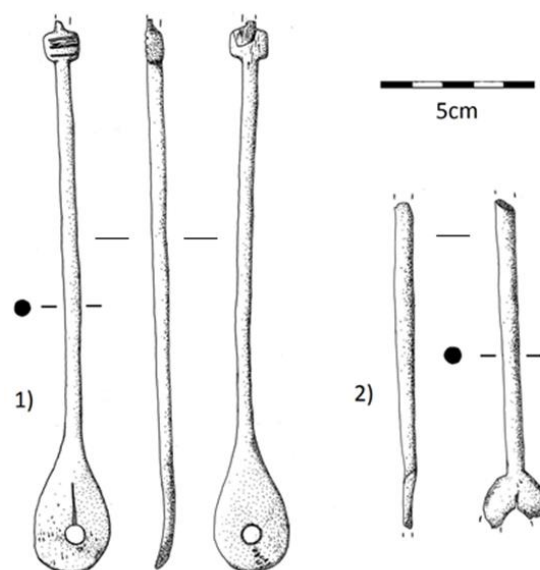


Figure 1. Perforated bone spoons from Roman London: 1) Thames Exchange and 2) 8–10 Moorgate.

Context and details

The Thames Exchange site was excavated by the Department for Urban Archaeology and lies on the Thames waterfront to the west of the Walbrook. The site is unpublished and only limited information about the stratigraphic context of the spoon was easily accessible, but the context produced medieval pottery and the find is thus likely to be residual or redeposited.

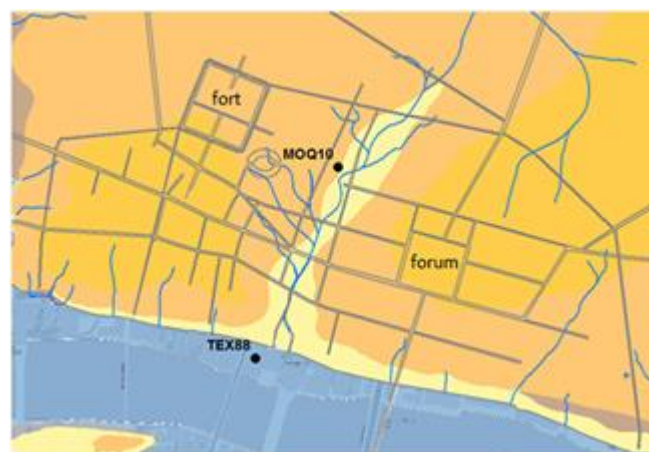


Figure 2. Map of Roman London showing the centre points of the sites at Thames Exchange (TEX88) and 8–10 Moorgate (MOQ10).

8–10 Moorgate lies in the upper-Walbrook valley which was an area of intensive industrial activity during the Roman period and is currently the focus of a programme of post-excavation research by MOLA. The site has produced evidence for pottery production and glass, metal, bone and leatherworking but some structures are also of domestic or mixed character and the spoon came from a levelling layer within an

extensive sequence of well-preserved clay and timber buildings. Initial examination of associated pottery suggests a 2nd-century date, probably AD 120–160 (Amy Thorp pers. comm.) although given its poor condition the spoon could be redeposited from the earlier phases of building.

Perforated bone spoons: the London examples in context

Perforated spoons such as the two London examples, were first recorded during 19th-century excavations at cave sites in Yorkshire (e.g. Denny 1860, pl.1) and that they were a British type was realised long ago by Curle (1911, 388) who recognised their absence on the German *limes*. As a group they have been discussed on a number of occasions (e.g. Croom 2010; Dearne & Lord 1998, 97; Eckardt forthcoming) and have previously been noted in the pages of *Lucerna* (Dearne 1995). A detailed paper on perforated spoons is in the process of being completed (Greep & O'Connor in prep.) which will look in more detail at function (including the results of micro-wear analysis), typology, chronology and distribution.

Perforated spoons are a very diverse group. Where it is possible to determine, they have been manufactured from cattle metapodia and although they are characterised by having a perforated bowl, there is a wide variation in bowl, perforation and terminal forms. Within this broad typological grouping there are over 50 examples recorded — this excludes pieces which may belong to the type, but do not have the bowl surviving.

There is no evidence that they ever functioned as spoons but the term ‘perforated spoon’ has been retained as it is now in common usage. Various uses have been attributed to them, such as hair-pins or clothes fasteners (Curle 1911, 388), brooches (Collinge 1935), toys (Allason-Jones 1996, 196), table spoons (Wilson 2002, 185) or for catching solids in wine (<http://nms.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-100-037-180-C>).

The two examples from London fall well within the current typological range of perforated spoons. Although that from 8–10 Moorgate is broken, the Thames Exchange piece is almost complete and both bowl and terminal shapes can be paralleled elsewhere. In particular the t-shaped terminal (although broken) is a common element on perforated spoons and can be paralleled by a

number of examples such as those from Dowkerbottom Cave (British Museum Accession No. 1896, 5-1.8; fig. 3 below); Castleford (Greep 1998, fig. 120, 130 & 134; Victoria Cave, Settle (Dearne & Lord 1998, fig. 25, 13.28–9) and Dalton Parlours in Yorkshire (Greep 1990, 127–8, fig 93. nos. 19–21).



Figure 3. Perforated Spoon from Dowkerbottom Cave.

The chronology of perforated spoons remains uncertain. The earliest and most closely dated pieces come from Castleford where examples were dated *c.* AD 71/4-86 (2), *c.* AD 85/90 – 95-100 (Greep, 1998, fig. 120, 131–5) although three others were in later contexts. There is a further Flavian example from Newstead (Curle 1911, 388). That from Great Chesters (Allason-Jones 1996, fig. 13.1) should be Hadrianic at the earliest, while on current dating evidence those from South Shields (Allason-Jones & Miket 1984, 2.95-6) should not be pre-Antonine. The spoon from 8–10 Moorgate appears to be from a context of *c.* AD 120–160, and is entirely within the current chronological range of the type. The overwhelming majority of the perforated spoons are, however, effectively undated within the Roman period. For example, while the balance of material from the Yorkshire caves sites are later rather than earlier Roman, there is sufficient earlier material to make conclusions about dating unreliable.

The most interesting aspect of the London spoons is that these are the most southerly finds of perforated spoons recorded to date. Excepting those from Corbridge, Great Chesters, Hartlepool/Seaton Carew, South Shields and Newstead these are also the first examples recorded outside Yorkshire¹ — although how many of these could be said to be outside Brigantian territory is debatable! Both in terms of chronology and typology there is nothing to suggest that both London spoons do not fall entirely within the typical perforated spoon type. Further, while over 50% of the finds recorded come from cave sites (e.g. Dearne & Lord 1998, 97), examples are also known from villas (e.g. Steer 1937, fig. 5, 7), forts (e.g. Curle 1911, pl. xcii, 21) and those from York (e.g. Home 1924, pl. facing p. 96) show that they are not entirely unexpected finds in major Roman towns in Britain.

Immigrants from northern England living in London?

Study of regionalised distributions of artefacts can tell us a great deal about the organisation of production and variations in lifestyles and identities across the province but the study of how individual sites key into such distributions can also be informative (e.g. Crummy with Pohl 2008 on regional toilet instrument types in Roman London). The London perforated spoons as outliers of the main group can potentially extend our understanding of the social context in which perforated bone spoons were used and extend the range of objects that are likely to have travelled to the city from the north of England (see appendix).²

Dragonesque brooches, a type whose distribution is heavily weighted towards Yorkshire and which were probably made there, are present in London in small numbers. Other relevant finds include examples of boss style metalwork, a style which Hunter (2007) sees as part of a central British tradition of Late Iron Age – Early Roman metalworking. Other possible northern English products include high quality enamelled objects such as vessels and a cockerel statue and objects in similar style are known to have been made at Castleford (Bayley & Budd 1998, 195–222) with another workshop posited for the north-west of England (Breeze 2012).³ However, the implications of these different classes of material for the character of connections with London are probably quite diverse. Given the relatively small quantities involved much of this material is likely to have travelled with individuals coming from the north rather than reflecting trade.

The highly decorative dragonesques would have stood out in London and may have been recognisable as a northern English style of dress but interestingly, like most which circulated in the south, all are enamelled variants. These seem to be more popular in Romanised contexts than the trumpet and boss examples which are comparatively better represented on rural settlements in the north (Hunter 2010; cf. Mackreth 2011, compare distribution of his types 2 and 3). It is possible that this reflects differences in the mobility and identities of rural versus urban/military populations or the fact that enamelled variants may have chimed with wider patterns of Romano-British taste and thus in some sense been more acceptable/fashionable in southern climes. The boss-style metalwork from the city may also have its own social connotations and given the range of objects represented (mostly harness gear)

may be militaria associated with the army. A detailed study of the types and contexts of southern finds of such material would be valuable and help to clarify the degree of military involvement in its dispersal.

The situation of the luxury enamelled products is somewhat different. This is because, although they may have been recognisable as northern products,⁴ their distribution is less focused than the other classes of material and at the level of consumption their interpretation as a specifically northern regional type or tradition cannot necessarily be sustained. There seems to have been a market for such objects in many parts of Roman Britain (and beyond) and while attractive high status goods of this sort could have travelled with immigrants they could equally well have been acquired as souvenirs by visitors to the north or deliberately marketed to areas further afield. They are also perhaps less inherently likely to be incidentally carried by travellers (of whatever sort) than either dress accessories or harness gear.

We now return to perforated spoons a class of object that could be fairly cheaply replicated anywhere there was a demand but is common in Yorkshire and not routinely used elsewhere in the province (see above). Indeed their distribution is more tightly focused than any of the other classes of objects discussed above. To us this suggests that they should probably be associated with some kind of highly specific local cultural practice and that the London examples are therefore best interpreted as reflecting the presence of immigrants or people otherwise culturally linked to northern England and to the tribal/*civitas* regions of the Brigantes and/or the Parisi.

Capital connections

The appearance of these spoons in London demands some explanation. One possibility is that the large size of the settlement and its role in the administration of the province meant that it was a particular draw to economic migration. However, given the contexts of other outliers to the main Yorkshire distribution (see above) a military dimension could also be considered. There was significant military activity in London from an early stage which continued to varying degrees throughout the Roman period. Direct connections between the army stationed in the north of England and in London is reflected by a reference in the Vindolanda writing tablets to members of the garrison posted to or spending time in London (Bowman & Thomas 1994, no. 154). In the 2nd century London was both a major urban centre and one of the few major military sites remaining in the civil zone of the

south-east when most of the army was garrisoned on the frontier and if the spoons are in some sense linked to military personnel (or else members of their households or those involved in military logistics) then this might explain why they appear here in particular as opposed to elsewhere in the south.

Although the spoons are not associated directly with a military installation it is perhaps significant that both lie west of Walbrook (Fig. 2). It has been suggested that activity here was of rather different nature to the main civic area to the east of the valley and in particular that by the 2nd century AD the area around the Cripplegate fort and the amphitheatre may essentially be regarded as a military zone, perhaps even a *vicus*, with the adjacent industrial areas in the upper Walbrook geared to supplying this market as well as the civilian portion of the town (Shepherd & Chettle 2012, 154–6). It is at this time and in this area and social context that the 8–10 Moorgate spoon was found (the site has also produced several pieces of contemporary militaria) but at present this suggestion of a military basis to the link with the north of England is only speculation and our understanding of the site will develop further as post-excavation analysis proceeds. The spoon from a medieval context at TEX88 is less illuminating but given its good condition it is perhaps likely to derive from somewhere nearby.

Conclusions

Without a clearer idea of their function it is difficult to say what the implications of perforated spoons are for everyday life in Roman London. However, they do provide evidence for people moving to London from Yorkshire or elsewhere in the northern frontier zone and bringing with them or reproducing aspects of a distinctive northern English material culture whose use may have been important to their identity. Other objects such as dragonesque brooches may reflect similar processes but their appearance in London is less exceptional and they are present in small quantities in many parts of southern Britain. That people should have travelled from north of the Humber to London is not surprising but that the specific cultural practice represented by these spoons, whatever it is, should have been brought with them to London is of greater interest. We cannot be certain exactly who the individuals who used these spoons were but one possibility discussed above is that they may have had a military connection. Study of the site at 8–10 Moorgate is just beginning and it will be interesting to see if the

material culture is otherwise shows any other signs of northern connections. Perhaps this will help to indicate whether the spoons relate to the survival of aspects of a regional cultural identity in a multi-cultural city or simply reflect a brief intrusion, perhaps possessions of first generation immigrants or individuals visiting or on short term postings.

Notes

¹We feel that some of the non-Yorkshire examples listed as possible perforated spoons by Eckardt, such as those from Gestingthorpe, Essex can be shown not to be a part of the group. See: http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-1223-1/dissemination/pdf/Appendix_7_Perforated_bone_spoons.pdf last accessed May 2014.

²Jet objects are deliberately excluded from the following discussion as they have a later dating emphasis than most of the objects discussed here.

³Although the evidence is strongest in northern England it is possible that objects of this sort may also have been made elsewhere in Britain e.g. a decorated mould fragment from Caerleon (Boon 1986, 218-9, pl. XX.d.) and another mould from Wales with spiral scrolls similar to those found on some enamelled vessels (Adam Gwilt pers. comm; Savory 1976, 104, fig 343.c).

⁴Indeed a related series of vessels famously makes explicit reference to sites on Hadrian's Wall (Holder 2012).

Appendix: Some metalwork of likely central British origin from Roman London

The following list is by no means an exhaustive survey but shows something of the range of relevant material

1. Dragonesque brooch.
Borough High Street Ticket Hall, Sitecode: BGH95 (Wardle 2002, 221–3, fig. 108, <R47>)
Pit /Hearth, Context date AD 60–100
2. Dragonesque brooch
Guildhall Yard, Sitecode GYE92 (Wardle 2008, 61 and 194, fig. 61, <S2>)
Drain fill, Context date AD 120–160
3. Dragonesque brooch
Billingsgate Spoil Heap, (Hattatt 1989, 351, fig. 210, no. 1025)
Unstratified
4. Dragonesque brooch
Museum of London, (Feacham 1951)
Unstratified
5. Enamelled vessel – bowl with pelta decoration
Lloyds Register, Fenchurch Street, Sitecode: FCC95 (Keily 2006, 152, fig. 102, <S16>)
Dump, Context date AD 100–150
6. Enamelled vessel – hexagonal flask with 'Celtic' style decoration

8–10 Moorgate, Sitecode: MOQ10 Accession no. <1448>
(Unpublished MOLA excavation)
Post-Roman context?
7. Enamelled Cockerel
Royal Exchange, British Museum accession
1899,0508.74
Unstratified
8. Petal boss button and loop fastener
Museum of London, LAARC teaching collection.
Unstratified
9. Knobbed terret
Bucklersbury House, Museum of London
Condition suggests Walbrook stream or bank dumps c.
AD 47–150

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the developers Mitsui Fudosan UK and Stanhope who have funded the 8–10 Moorgate excavations and post-excavation. Michael Marshall would like to thank Adam Corsini, Glynn Davis and Dan Nesbitt (LAARC) for making the Thames Exchange spoon available for study and illustration. Ed McSloy (Cotswold Archaeology) kindly answered a query about the Royal Exchange cockerel. At MOLA Louise Fowler and Ken Pitt provided stratigraphic information and permission to publish in advance of the monograph, Amy Thorp commented on pottery, Angela Wardle discussed the ideas presented here with us and Richard Ward prepared the illustrations of the London spoons.

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UPCOMING RFG MEETINGS

Finds from Manchester and the North West Manchester Museum 8th October 2014

The Roman Finds Group is holding its next day meeting at Manchester Museum on Wednesday 8th October 2014. The theme of the conference will be Finds from Manchester and the North West. At the time of writing the speakers will include:

Vanessa Oakden (Portable Antiquities Scheme) – Recent discoveries in the North West
Barbara Birley (Vindolanda Trust) – Wooden combs
Gill Dunn (Chester) – Finds from Chester amphitheatre
Justine Bayley – Roman enamelled objects
Bryan Sitch (Manchester Museum) – Objects from the Manchester Museum's collections

Some details are still to be confirmed but we are hoping to have presentations about the Roman salt-working industry in the region, recent analyses of Roman coins, and finds from excavations in Manchester. If you missed the earlier call for papers and have something you'd like to talk about, get in touch with Bryan Sitch now as it may still be possible to fit you into the programme.

The day will start with registration and coffee from 9.30am and the first talk at 10.00am. A relatively long lunch break is planned so there will be time to see material in the reserve collection as well as exploring the museum and finding something to eat.

For more information and bookings please contact Bryan Sitch, Deputy Head of Collections, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL (bryan.sitch@manchester.ac.uk). All

bookings must be made before 3rd October but as places are limited early booking is advised. Cost: £15 for RFG members and students and £20 for others (includes tea and coffee but not lunch); cheques should be made payable to the Roman Finds Group. The final programme will appear on the RFG website nearer the time, and will then be emailed to all those who have booked for the day.

Finds from the North Newcastle upon Tyne 16–17th March 2015

The meeting in Spring 2015 will be over two days at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne with a theme of 'Finds from the North'. It will be a joint meeting with The Centre for Interdisciplinary Artefact Studies, School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University (www.ncl.ac.uk/historical/about/facilities/cias.htm), Further details will appear in the next issue of Lucerna. For offers of papers or further information contact Stephen Greep (sjgreep@gmail.com) or James Gerrard (james.gerrard@newcastle.ac.uk).

LOOKING FOR PARALLELS FOR YOUR OBJECT? HAVE YOU TRIED THE ARTEFACTS WEBSITE?

French archaeologist, Michel Feugère (CNRS, UMR 5138, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, Lyon), has created Artefacts, a website intended to cover an inventory of form types (<http://artefacts.mom.fr>). Here he describes the site:

With any archaeological database, those using them require different levels of requests and it is certainly difficult for a single project to fulfil every need. Artefacts would like to allow archaeologists, students, as well as collectors and museum people, to find their way around archaeological typology, which can be very complicated nowadays. For those who want to know what a Beaucaire-type situla, an Alesia brooch or an Ephesian lamp is, Artefacts offers an easy way to access this type of information. Some people, however, browse it to see what a Bronze-Age flat axe may look like; others to see various forms of lynch pins of Roman date. We hope — not now, but in the future — to provide easy access to answers to such questions as these.

Artefacts can provide answers at various levels, but it does not pretend to satisfy every need. Some students may only ask 'What are the publications about early-Roman brooches?' They will get a list of publications with links to what is available online. Other people may want, for example, to find out about Roman carpenters' tools and see parallels. Such people can work with Artefacts over time, perhaps proposing a classification and receiving data from other users and colleagues.

In addition, the site has a more specialised level, which gives access to the complete database. To access it, people need to obtain author status which provides access to three times as much data than that of the average user (15,000 files instead of 5,000). Here the database is a more complete documentation tool, providing access to very large collections and even mapping for some objects. Type in BTS-4, for example, and you will get 198 results, and if you map them with the map icons on the right of the results page, you will get a general map of seal boxes in Europe. Type in PRL-4001, and you will be able to map Roman melon beads and obtain a document which is not available anywhere else in current literature. The great advantage of Artefacts is that such lists are being produced and updated regularly, thanks to the contributions from authors. But all this, of course, depends of what has been registered on the database. Contributors are, therefore, invited to create detailed typologies of the category they are studying and to add their work to the lists, enabling complex maps to be drawn up.

In this way, it is hoped that Artefacts will become a research tool, providing specialists with a venue to share data and ask questions about small finds. I really do think that, in the 'global village', documents should be shared. There is no sense in asking students, or even specialists, to re-invent the wheel by collecting data which has already been collected by other people before them. Scholars' time can be much better used asking good questions of the archaeological data. Were Bronze Age axes used as tools or weapons? Is there any connection between Roman seal boxes and the Roman army or what is implied by the changes in the distribution of early Roman to late Roman lamps in western Europe?

Of course, students and specialists still need to check the catalogues and certainly complete them in order to find out how the data was collected and registered. The database can therefore be improved and careful users will inevitably find some mistakes which will ultimately be corrected. Recently, an

extra field has been added to allow contributors to show the evidence for dating, whether by typology or dated context.

This is a long-term project, but considering the first results after only three or four years work, I am confident that the site will be used more and more and appreciated for the services it can provide to users. Artefacts is by no means a finished product but an evolving programme reflecting the work of a group of researchers. The aim of the project is to offer a survey, as complete as possible, of all forms of artefacts, arranged in wide periods. The Artefacts site aims to produce an inventory of forms (types) and, as far as possible, will include a detailed description, a selected bibliography and a chronology.

Jenny Hall writes:

Michel recognises that the Artefacts site needs is to have feedback from users from various countries to make it work. He set it up for university researchers and archaeologists who work on small finds and wants them to use it. He wants to make it more user-friendly and hopes that people may wish to get involved with the project.

So, has anyone tried using this site? While finding it very useful to see parallels and similar examples of artefacts from across Europe, the English version of the site (with rather archaic and interesting translations!) makes it difficult to follow. Terminologies for European types are also sometimes difficult to equate with those used in the UK and I suspect only those very serious academic researchers understand and use such terms as Siegelkapseln (seal boxes) or Meloneperlen (melon beads)!

The site could, however, provide a platform for new typologies, enabling forms to be compared and organised. It can also sit alongside the PAS site which many students find easily accessible. Publications, such as the Colchester small finds volume, have been included but the number of British entries is limited. So, the RFG Committee would like to hear from any members who have used this site — especially if you have any comments as to how to improve its content and use. And, if you have not used the site yet, take a look at the site and see whether it is of use to you in your research.

In addition, I'm compiling a Top Ten list of online websites and catalogues for Lucerna and would be grateful if members could send me links to any websites they find particularly useful or where publications can be found online so that we can also

publish these links for members to use. EThOS, for example, is the British Library site that promotes UK theses and Hilary Cool's invaluable metal hairpins thesis can be accessed there and the Colchester small finds volume can be found online on the Colchester Archaeological Trust website. Please e-mail me (jenny.m.hall@hotmail.com) with your comments and ideas — we will produce a compilation of these in the next edition of Lucerna.

RAC 11/TRAC 24

University of Reading
27th–30th March, 2014

This year for the first time the RFG sponsored a session at the Roman Archaeology Conference. As we had no idea how many people would attend, and we were up against some heavy hitters – including the zooarchaeologists! – we were assigned one of the slightly smaller rooms with 60 seats. To our surprise and delight the session proved to be extremely popular. Not only was every seat occupied and every inch of standing space taken but we had to turn away a further 20 or more people from the door. This proves that there is an appetite for finds research in the wider community and I very much hope that we can sponsor sessions at future conferences.

Apart from the RFG session, material culture featured heavily in many other parts of the conference. In fact, the conference got off to a great start with the keynote speech on recent work on the Hacksilber from Traprain Law by Fraser Hunter of the National Museum of Scotland. The Study Group for Roman Pottery sponsored a whole day of sessions, including one which concentrated on the deposition of different kinds of materials and it was a wonderful opportunity for the cross-pollination of ideas between people studying small finds, pottery and ecofacts in Britain and abroad. A TRAC session on small finds was also well attended and again tackled a wide range of topics. For those with interests further afield there was an abundance of sessions on Pompeii and finds based talks popped up all around the conference. The engagement with finds throughout the conference was heartening and I would like to thank all the members of the group who spoke at our session and who participated in lively discussions at all of the finds sessions.

A special thanks also to Nicola Hembrey for maintaining our Twitter feed. Social media played a

huge role at the conference with delegates posting Tweets and on various forums throughout so it is important for us to have a voice in that arena.

Summaries of sessions and papers are presented below. I hope that they demonstrate the depth and breadth of finds interests in Britain and Europe at the moment and will encourage more of our members to attend further conferences. For me they highlighted the importance of engaging with a variety of material forms within the 'small finds' categories and beyond, including pottery, animal bones or plant remains. It is only then that we can begin to understand the role that the objects that are of particular interest to us played in Roman society.

RFG SESSION: ROMAN METAL SMALL FINDS IN CONTEXT

Ellen Swift

Design, function and everyday social practice: a case study on Roman spoons

Ellen presented a paper exploring the design and function of Roman spoons. In her research she uses both design theory and the empirical study of artefacts to further our understanding of Roman everyday living.



Figure 4. Bone round-bowled spoon with angular wear. From Augst.

Roman texts tell us that cochlear spoons, with a pointed handle, were used for eggs and shellfish, but using the wear marks on the objects, Ellen has been able to demonstrate that they had a much wider range of uses. Some early Roman cochlear spoons have edges worn flat from use on flat surfaces (Fig. 4), while later on, there is an increase in both the size of the spoon bowl, and in the incidence of smoothly curving wear, which suggests everyday use of the spoons in bowls rather than on plates. Late Roman spoons in particular have larger, deeper bowls, more angled handles, and a deeper off-set between the handle and the bowl. All these features make them more suitable for use with liquids, and Ellen suggested that using spoons for the individual consumption of

liquids may have been a new type of dining behaviour in the late Roman period. One spoon, from the Hoxne hoard, was shown to have wear that closely matched the profile of a deep hemispherical silver bowl from the same hoard, suggesting that the spoon and bowl had been habitually used together.

Some features of spoons, such as the bowl shape, did not seem to be related to function, but rather to social display and cultural considerations. Ellen suggested that some types of spoon bowls imitated the form of natural shells such as scallop and mussel shells, in a commentary on the Roman name of the spoon, 'cochlear', which means 'shell'.

Ellen also looked at wear marks on spoons that show left-handed and right-handed use (Fig. 5). Examples of both types of wear exist, but the spoons that show left-handed wear are most interesting. In Roman culture, it was unacceptable to eat with your left hand, as it is in many cultures today. We have, for instance, instructions in written sources saying that children should be discouraged if they start to use the left hand for eating. However, the archaeological examples show us that despite Roman cultural prejudice against left-handedness reflected in the sources, not everyone became habituated to eating using their right hand. The incidence of left-handed wear also tells us that these particular spoons are likely to have been personal possessions, individually owned and used, as use in common would tend to produce either right-handed or mixed wear. Personal use is corroborated by other evidence, too, such as the existence of a number of folding spoons that could be carried on the person, and spoons found individually in late antique burials.



Figure 5. Copper alloy spoon with left-handed wear. From Augst.

The research suggests that valuable insights can be gained from studying design in conjunction with evidence of use.

Ellen's work on spoons was funded by the British Academy's Chittick Fund. It forms one case study from a wider project on the design and function of everyday Roman artefacts funded by the Leverhulme Trust. An extended version of the paper

presented at RAC is forthcoming in *Journal of Roman Archaeology*.

Emma Durham Metropolitan styling. The figurines from London and Colchester

London and Colchester have produced the largest collections of Romano-British metal figurines in Britain. The assemblages contain a wide variety of types, as well a range of styles including highly classical figurines, some probably imported from Italy, to stylised pieces, many of which may have been produced in Britain.

Type	London		Colchester	All figurines
	No.	Uncertain	No.	No.
Apollo	4	2		17
Attis	1			7
Bacchus and satyrs	4		1	24
Cupid	3		2	32
Dioscurus			1	3
Genius	1			18
Harpocrates	4		1	10
Hercules	11	2	5	59
Jupiter	2			22
Lar	1		1	18
Mars	3		1	47
Mercury	8	1	8	116
Diana	1			9
Fortuna			1	13
Isis	1			5
Juno	1			2
Minerva	4	1	2	33
Venus	2		5	29
Victory	1	1		6
Human/uncertain	7	1	4	93
Fragments	8		2	58
Boar			2	25
Cow/boar	1			1
Dog	1		1	30
Goat	2		2	25
Lion	1		1	6
Panther	1			8
Ram			1	11
Snake	1		1	9
Tortoise			1	2
Cockerel	1		3	44
Duck			1	3
Goose	2			3
Peacock	1			2
Uncertain animals			2	4
Sphinx	1		1	6
Total	79	8	50	800

Table 1. Figurines from London, Colchester and all of Britain.

Hercules is the most common male deity represented in London, while Mercury is dominant in Colchester. In London, figurines of unusual deities such as Apollo and Harpocrates also form a large part of the assemblage. Meanwhile Mars, a relatively common deity in Britain generally, is scarce in both cities.

The female deities form smaller and less diverse groups. Minerva is the most common in London and Venus in Colchester. Interestingly Venus is rather underrepresented in London.

Both cities have produced other figurine types unique to Britain. While gladiators and barbarians are fairly common characters in the Roman Empire, in Britain they occur only in London. Colchester has produced an unusual priapic figure wearing a mask and a female figure holding a pottery vessel who could be a priestess or possibly Rosmerta, consort of Mercury, or Nantosuelta, consort of Sucellus.

A variety of animals and birds have also been found from both cities. In particular, many of those from Colchester are associated with Mercury including goats, a ram, a tortoise and three cockerels.

The style of the figurines from London includes a high proportion of highly classical figurines, well above the national average, and so the assemblage is dominated by high quality imported pieces and well executed provincial pieces. In contrast the assemblage from Colchester is dominated by moderately well executed provincial pieces.

Many of the figurines from London lack detailed provenance, but many came from within the line of the Roman wall around Londinium north of the Thames, with a further small group from south of the river in Southwark. Outlying pieces tend to occur on the roads leading out of London. While few come from the large finds assemblages recovered from the Walbrook, 16 figurines have been recovered from the Thames and the majority are of high quality. Interestingly, none come from temples in London. This is in contrast to Colchester where a number of figurines have been found at temple sites, either just outside the city at the Balcerne Gate or on roads leading west.

London, and to a lesser extent Colchester, also stand out in Britain as centres for the worship of eastern deities such as Isis and Cybele. Apart from figurines, other objects attributed to the worship of these deities include lamps, weights and finger rings. A comparison of the finds from London with those from selected European cities (Cologne, Mainz, Trier, Bordeaux) shows that the assemblage from London is of the same order as those from these cities.



Figure 6. Isis from the River Thames, London.

Michael Marshall
‘Treasure’, ‘trash’ and taphonomy: Approaches to the excavation and interpretation of Roman finds from the Walbrook valley

The Walbrook is a watercourse that runs through Roman London between the two hills upon which the city sits. Since the early antiquarian observations the valley has been known for spectacular finds including well preserved metalwork and human remains, especially skulls. However, much of this evidence was recovered under less than ideal circumstances by workmen or under very difficult ‘watching brief’ conditions in the post-war period. Based upon this evidence various models for deposition of artefacts in the area have been proposed. One, most clearly stated by Tony Wilmott, is that finds from the Walbrook are a mixture of rubbish brought in from all over the city through a process of dumping and are exceptional only in their preservation. Wilmott sought to demonstrate this by displaying some of the biases inherent in the dataset and showing that many of the finds are from the bank rather than the river channel. A second explanation is that the Walbrook was a focus for ritual deposition of metalwork. This view was championed by Ralph Merrifield who tried to show that the finds were exceptional for their character and completeness and could not simply be rubbish.

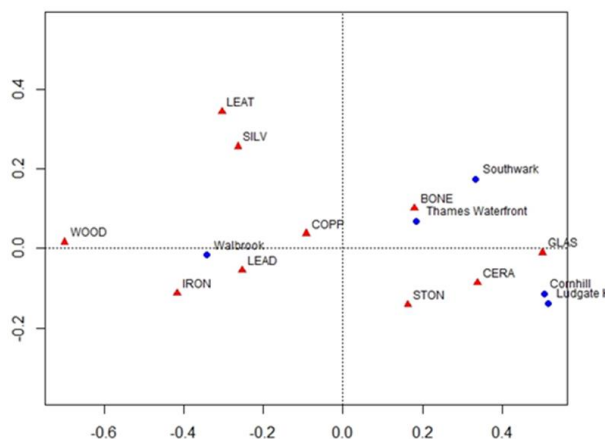


Figure 7. Correspondence analysis plot showing the composition of finds assemblages from different areas of London by material.

Large scale modern excavations by MOLA, especially at No 1 Poultry and Bloomberg London, provide a more reliable body of evidence by which these claims can be judged. A closely documented combination of hand collection, wet sieving and metal detecting has allowed a critical model of finds recovery to be developed which builds on the work of Wilmott. This suggests that variable, often difficult, conditions on these wet muddy Walbrook sites introduces some distinctive preservation and recovery biases which are dependent on the types of deposits excavated. Taphonomic processes and recovery biases also have to be considered in terms of the recovery of human remains. However, statistical analysis of assemblages from across London suggests that the Middle Walbrook material is very distinctive (Fig. 7). In part this is due to differential preservation and recovery when compared to ‘dry’ sites on the adjacent hillside but the area is also distinct from wet sites along the Thames Waterfront and in the Upper Walbrook. This suggests that these finds assemblages are not simply a heterogeneous mixture of finds brought from elsewhere and instead reflect the specifics of local conditions (both systemic and taphonomic).

The numerical underpinning of Merrifield’s model can also be shown to be flawed. His core dataset from the National Safe Deposit Company can be compared with assemblages from immediately adjacent modern excavations and this suggests extensive ‘cherry picking’ of complete or attractive objects during recovery or retention (Fig. 8). Some of the types of objects that Merrifield focuses on are indeed better represented in the area than elsewhere in the city but this is partly due to preservation, recovery and identification issues especially for iron

objects such as styli. It is also possible to critique Merrifield’s privileging of metalwork, indeed specific types of metalwork, over other finds. In doing so he largely ignores other classes of finds including very large quantities of metalworking waste and organics which could be taken to characterise local deposits. There *is* plenty of evidence for ritual activity on site but is this really so unusual in Roman London more generally?

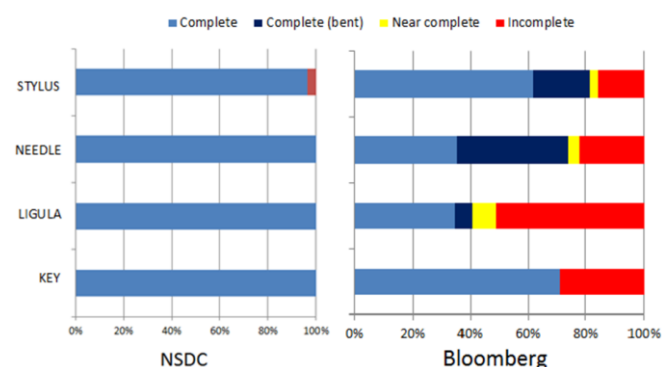


Figure 8. Comparison of the condition/completeness of some of Merrifield’s key classes of find between the 19th National Safe Deposit Company assemblage and Bloomberg London.

Overall, a new more critical analysis, based on modern datasets and involving comparisons with other sites and detailed consideration of site formation, is required. Small finds can’t be studied in isolation but need integrated with other finds and stratigraphic evidence. The evidence from recent MOLA excavations should now allow us to address these problems in detail.

Martin Pitts

First generation urban communities: comparing ceramic and brooch assemblages in Roman Britain

Martin’s paper compared elements of finds and pottery assemblages in Roman Britain, with emphasis on exploring the diverse cultural scenarios presented in the establishment of Britain’s first urban communities. By isolating recurrent combinations of particular artefacts (or ‘suites’) and examining assemblages in the light of pre-Claudian as well as Continental comparanda. He suggests that new ways of visualising cultural geographies are possible for this crucial formative period. In particular, past interpretations of Claudio-Neronian urban communities (e.g. Chichester, Colchester and London) have been disproportionately driven by studies of

(often later) settlement patterns and written historical sources. The finds data seemingly present a rather different, and arguably more nuanced, picture in which the nature of pre-conquest political affiliation and connections with Continental and military communities constitute major fault-lines of difference.

Tatiana Ivleva

What's in the name? 'Britishness' of British-made brooches abroad

Brooches were an integral part of the clothing of provincials in the Roman Empire and served to hold two pieces of a person's clothing together, functioning essentially as clothes-fasteners. Being part of material culture they were also multivocal in their functional aspects, which reveals that brooches' primary purposes were not limited to being a dress accessory or to pinning down garments, but were rather defragmented and transformed into idiosyncratic value (Fig. 9). For instance, brooches have appeared in hoards and at sacred sites. Such treatment of objects primarily intended as lifestyle accessories and for decoration implies changes in the value and meaning, i.e. from secular to sacred for votives, from active to non-active for brooches in hoards. By way of contrast, the occurrence of brooches with objects found in rubbish pits indicates their non-value, i.e. after fulfilling the purpose of decoration and pinning, they were no longer needed and were thrown away. Moreover, people used brooches in a myriad of ways and in a variety of social and cultural contexts. The physical and sensory qualities of the brooches may have had a significant impact on the wearers and viewers. Brooches' visual dominance may have allowed them to act like a badge, symbolising affiliations and preferences in the social person's status, profession, religion, politics, and gender. The visual, colourful, and decorative qualities of brooches evoked responses and meanings, as well as devised and (re)routed behaviour, guiding human actions towards particular responses such as evocation, provocation or adoration. The evocative quality is closely connected with the brooches' ability to act as 'a metaphorical storage' of memory, associations, feelings and past activities. Their being a vehicle for storage of past histories and memories can be exemplified by their being used as heirlooms, cherished and valued for their ancestral associations and connections with the past.

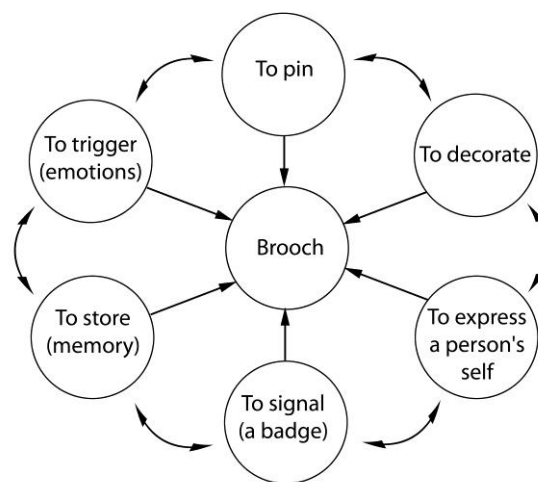


Figure 9. The various functions of brooches.

My paper presented at the RAC session aimed to focus on two aspects of what brooches do, as being triggers of emotions and for storage of memories. As a case-study I used 242 British-made brooches recorded from 102 sites across the Empire, since they had appeared in the variety of contexts, reflecting the diversity of their meanings and associations emanated through their usage (Fig. 10).

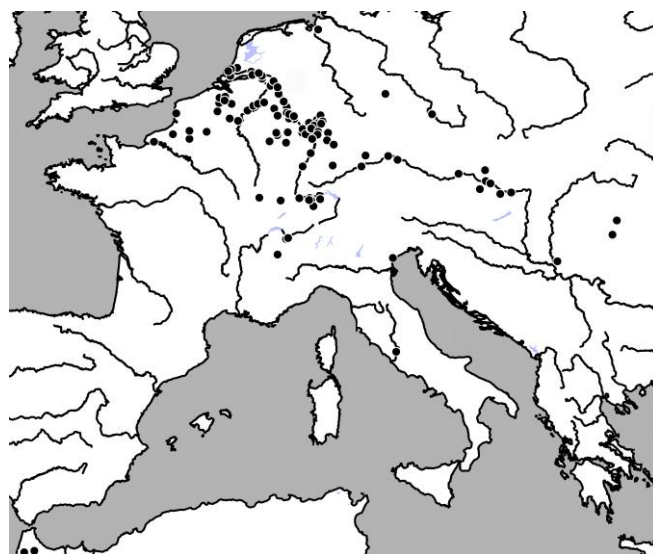


Figure 10. Distribution of British-made brooches.

In total 34 British-made brooches have been found in, or associated with, cremation burials. Determining geographic origin by the presence of a British-made brooch is impossible, because wearing or dying with a British brooch would not have made someone British. The majority of the brooches found in burials were most likely brought by the veterans returning from Britain to their own homelands – this suggestion was made on the basis of epigraphic analysis which showed that the tribal areas where these brooches were found supplied recruits to the troops stationed in Britain. All brooches found were in good condition

and unburnt, suggesting their deposition after the burning of the body and some were found on top of the cremated remains, indicating that they were used to fasten a bag or cloth containing the bones of the deceased. So made in Britain, brought across the Channel to the Continent because of their functionality, they officially ended their lives being buried with, or being a protector of, a dead individual's remains. Therefore, it was not their precious looks or their functional value for the living, but their particular associations with the deceased which might have been important. Since these brooches were confined to areas where there is evidence for the presence of veterans having returned from Britain, I suggest that they were valued by their owners and, later, by the relatives of the deceased for their associations with the past, as a manifestation of memory relating to the deceased's experience and connection with Britain.

Nine British-made brooches have also been found within the sanctuaries. The deliberateness of the act of deposition stresses the brooches value, especially if we take into account that the choice fell on objects of personal adornment. Analysis has shown that these brooches were also brought by families of returning veterans or by veterans themselves. Upon completion of their service, veterans may have wished to make a sacrifice of things they had used or acquired during their military life, as an expression of gratitude for surviving the harsh realities of their military and warring lives. That the choice of gift fell on British-made brooches might indicate their symbolic value as an embodiment of 'British' military past. Objects, as symbols of the past and possibly unpleasant service, were no longer needed in daily life, probably because of their associations, triggering the responses in veterans – to fulfil the vow and get rid of the possible unpleasant memories.

Some brooches were recorded as rubbish, and they were found on the military sites on or in direct proximity to the frontiers where there is evidence for the stationing of troops coming from Britain, e.g. British auxiliary units and units posted in Britain for some time and then transferred to the Continent. These brooches represent the case of having been brought as clothes fasteners or as part of personal accessories by people who lived for a number of years in Britain and acquired these objects for personal use. Yet, the rarity of British-made objects on the Continent and impossibility of buying them did not influence the decision of some brooch owners to throw them away. Considering that all the

sites had a direct connection to British auxiliary units or units coming from Britain, it is possible that soldiers regarded these objects as non-essential, of little value, something that one can easily exchange for the brooches produced locally.

Altogether, British-made brooches were treated in a variety of ways by people travelling from Britain, and some of them may have played a significant role in the process of evocation and remembrance of the past. Different meanings were emphasised in each case, but a connection with Britain was present in all of them. One should take into account that on Continental sites with a homogenous material culture objects made in Britain would have stood out in the material record of that site, providing a ground for the questions of where the owner and wearer acquired these unusual artefacts. Answers could range from 'I served as a soldier in Britannia' or 'I travelled to Britannia and returned safely' to 'I was born in Britannia'.

Hella Eckardt

Immigrant soldiers at Hollow Banks Quarry, Scorton? New work on crossbow brooches, burial rites and isotopes

At Hollow Banks Quarry, Scorton, located just north of Catterick, a highly unusual group of 15 late Roman burials was excavated between 1998 and 2000. The small cemetery consists of almost exclusively male burials, dated to the 4th century AD. An unusually large proportion of these individuals was buried with crossbow-brooches and belt fittings, suggesting that these men may have been serving in the late Roman army or administration, and that they may have come to Scorton from the Continent. Multi-isotope analyses (carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and strontium) of nine sufficiently well-preserved individuals indicates that seven males, all equipped with crossbow brooches and/or belt fittings, were not local to the Catterick area and at least six of them probably came from the European mainland. Dietary (carbon and nitrogen isotopes only) analysis of a tenth individual also suggests a non-local origin. The relationship between artefacts, burial rite and isotopic evidence is not always consistent, suggesting that cultural and social factors played an important part in the creation of funerary identities. Clarke's suggestion for Lankhills that only those individuals buried wearing these dress ornaments were incomers is not correct, but the mere presence of crossbow brooches and belt fittings may point to a foreign origin. The paper highlights the need for multi-proxy analyses, and for the careful contextual study of the artefacts.

TRAC SESSION: SMALL FINDS AND ANCIENT SOCIAL PRACTICES

Adam Parker

Staring at Death: The Jet *Gorgoneia* of Roman Britain

Several types of pendant are made from jet and jet-like materials, although the total number is fewer than 40 at this time for the Roman world. There are three types of such pendant: those that depict individuals or family group portraits, those depicting mythical scenes and those with a Gorgon head, the so-called *Gorgoneia* (Allason-Jones 1996). All the pendant classes are sufficiently unique as to be described as bespoke objects and each clearly fulfils a specific iconographical purpose.

By my count, the current total of jet *gorgoneia* known from Roman Britain stands at nine, with a selection of additional examples known from the Continent, particularly centres at Cologne. Of those in Britain, four are from York (RCHME 1962, 142), two from London (Barber and Bowsher 2000, 146, 226-7), and one each from Rochester (Evans 1915, 572), Colchester (Colchester Archaeology trust *forthcoming*) and Chelmsford.



Figure 11. Jet *Gorgoneion* from York, depicting the Medusa face with six snakes surrounding.

The *gorgoneia* are a visually striking form of pendant – all are ovular, flat-backed and include a transverse perforation on the uppermost side. The engraved decoration, from which their name derives, depicts a hand-carved relief of a Medusa or Gorgon visage facing forwards and incised in some detail with a classically-proportioned face. As well as hair, the Gorgon image has snakes growing from her head,

as she is usually represented in antiquity. Grouped in mirrored pairs, the snakes number a total of either four or six and have the added detail of cross-hatched scales on the snake bodies (Fig. 11).

In all cases the gorgon has a cropped or bunched hairstyle atop which she wears a winged helm. The winged-headresses are each represented through roughly incised groups of cross-hatched parallel lines in irregularly spaced groups of twos or threes. Her face shape is subject to some minor variation between ovular and rounded. The shape of the face may have much to do with the overall shape of the amulet as a frame from which the image is carved, whereby an ovular frame lends itself to an ovular face within it. The range in width is approximately 3–5 cm. Some limits will be applied by the availability of suitably large jet pebbles coming ashore, although an exceptionally large roughout plank from York demonstrates that huge roughouts were certainly available on occasion. Attempts at symmetry of decoration are visible through the position of snakes and the cross-hatched incisions of the winged helmet. In all cases the Medusa remains expressionless, staring forward.

The only major exception to this formulaic depiction of Medusa on a jet pendant is the first such example found in Britain. Rochester's riverside example, whilst displaying a winged helmet and four snakes (two from beneath the chin and two from behind the jawline; in keeping with the other examples with four-snakes), is noticeably different in terms of her orientation – she faces right. The helm and snake figures are incised in the same orientations as the forward-facing examples, making the image seem somewhat abstract when compared to the remaining pendants.

It is clear from the few available examples that there are a group of features acceptable for inclusion on such an amulet. Largely these will have been informed by the well-established use of Medusa's image in the Classical world as a religious, mythological, artistic or apotropaic icon (cf. Henig 1974, catalogue refs 725–731). It is interesting to note that the majority are forward-facing and contain the same key elements: the winged helm, four or six snakes at similar positions, a blank expression, an oval or sub-ovular frame and a transverse perforation for suspension. Whereas variation between other pendant classes (the betrothal charm and family group) is justified by the variability in the human form and the social need and acceptability of the bespoke images contained within them, clearly there is some uniformity that can be seen within the *gorgoneia* sub-class that makes them

unique within this sphere. They are certainly produced by craftsmen with the knowledge of the Medusa image generally, but this is evidence that perhaps a more general knowledge of this image as a form of pendant is available. Certainly similar examples of the forward-facing Medusa visage are known from mosaics, glass vessels, antefixae, intaglios and various metal fittings.

Allason-Jones (1996) goes so far as to suggest that, because of the small number available, all jet pendants may have been produced at a single site. Analyses undertaken as part of the collation and cataloguing by Lindsay Allason-Jones in 1995–6 of jet material in the collections of the Yorkshire Museum have definitively identified the three surviving examples of *gorgoneia* at York to have been sourced from Whitby jet. These are the only examples that have been objectively analysed using modern scientific investigation. Further investigation is required to establish the source and exact nature of the fabric of the other *gorgoneia*, though in the following I refer to each as made of jet using the principle of innocent until proven guilty until such a time as I can fix this. However, in my mind, the structural similarities between the *gorgoneia* represented lends itself more to an accepted tradition of Gorgon representation within the province than it does to the finer points of a local production centre.



Figure 12. Jet *Gorgoneion* from York, showing use-wear on front from rubbing.

We understand that there are magical and medicinal properties inherently associated with jet, as written about by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.*: 36), Galen (*Colect. Memo*) and Solinus (*De Simpl.med. Facul.* 9.203), and tantalising evidence the *gorgoneia* are used in such a way comes from an example from York (Fig. 12), where the wear on the front face is a result of being

rubbed by hand, possibly to engage the electrostatic properties inherent in jet.

There is clear evidence of *gorgoneia* being included as an aspect of inhumation funerary rites. I would argue that we actually have a limited understanding of the *efficacy* of these objects; which in magical terms refers to where and when they are appropriate to use, although the depositional context for each of the pendants provides some information. Of the four from York, provenances for two are lost, but the other two both come from female inhumation burials. Both examples from London are associated with inhumation burials, one in the fill above a grave. The Colchester amulet comes from a grave where no human remains survived, and the Chelmsford and Rochester examples are associated with cemetery sites. A further association can be made between the use of this jet pendant and its proximity to the chest of the individual as a worn pendant in both life and death (wear to the perforations can only have been caused through use).

Conclusions

We should appreciate that the use of the Medusa image comes within a wider appreciation or tradition of gorgon-head representation within North-West Europe in the years of Roman occupation and that is not unique to jet pendants. That said, within this stylistic tradition there are subtle nuances with the final form that the amulet takes. The number and position of snakes within the hair of the Gorgon are variable but appear to conform to a series of pre-set locations about the face where such imagery is expected or traditionally used – there is an additional assumption here that the Gorgon myth is known and understood in the personal environment from which these objects arise in order to provide efficacy and agency to the applied imagery. Given the differences in the imagery and execution I think we can argue a case for these being bespoke objects, not something mass-produced; a conclusion that correlates well with the small total number of surviving pendants and the major theme of familial ties represented through these.

The *Gorgoneia* are a very potent combination of mythologically appropriate imagery represented upon an intrinsically magical material which appears in spatially significant contexts within Roman Britain.

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SGRP SESSION: DEPOSITS FULL OF CHARACTER

This session looked at deposits containing ceramics and/or other specific finds from the viewpoint of pre-consumption and consumption. Papers focused on the nature of the deposits, for example waste, ritual and burial, putting them into a wider social, economic and chronological context. In particular the finds were considered for the interpretation of the organisation of trade, merchants and supply, whilst also offering a glimpse into the potentially more personal world of consumer habits and assemblages for the gods, the deceased and the afterlife.

The session began with two papers on the importation of pottery to Britain. Meike Weber's paper (Consumption Deposits and their Enormous Importance for Trade and Interpretations of the Economy) concentrated on samian and large pottery shop or warehouse assemblages from sites such as Wroxeter. These assemblages allow the study of groups of contemporaneous vessels and the *modus operandi* of samian exporters. They provide a snapshot, both of the spheres of distribution of different samian production centres and the organisation of trade and supply within a narrow chronological time frame. Then Jane Timby (Pottery Consumption at Pre- and Early Roman Silchester: Pots for foreigners or immigrants?) considered the nature of some Gallo-Roman pottery from Silchester and whether, as traditionally thought, newly imported tablewares are being brought in to *oppida* for the purpose of redistribution or for other reasons. Perhaps instead they are being imported by Gallic and Roman entrepreneurs testing out new territories, as a deliberate political act prior to invasion or with

new settlers who then created a demand for further supplies from their homelands.

The next two papers discussed the special deposition of material other than pottery. Mara Vejby (Ordinary Objects Transformed: Utilitarian items in non-utilitarian contexts) discussed the deposition of Roman finds such as coins, pottery and tiles in the Neolithic tombs around the Baie de Quiberon in Morbihan, France. Sherds of pottery and tiles in particular may not appear to be materials that would form special deposits, but their regular appearance at a number of tombs indicate the use and appropriation of earlier sites in the landscape for Roman votive practices. Lisa Lodwick (The Ritual Consumption of Evergreen Trees in the Roman Empire: Economic and cultural implications) then examined the deposition of stone pine and cypress cones in Britain and elsewhere in the Empire. Cones and nuts have been found within temples and other votive sites and are particularly associated with deities such as Cybele. The importation of these items for ritual use has important implications for the long-distance trade of plant items specifically for religious practices. It also highlights the important contribution that material such as plant remains can make to our understanding of these practices.

The final two papers returned to pottery with Edward Biddulph (Residual or Ritual? Pottery from grave backfills and non-funerary features in cemeteries) examining pottery sherds found in grave fills at Pepper Hill cemetery at Springhead, Kent. While much of the pottery found in the graves originally formed part of the grave-good assemblages from earlier graves, some sherds appear to have been deliberately selected and placed within the graves and may attest to activities such as funerary feasting or grave-side commemoration. Finally, Birgitta Hoffmann (The Curious Case of the Riverside Shaft Deposits) discussed a series of shafts that were eroded out along the banks of the Almond River outside Bertha Fort near Perth. These contained a variety of goods, including pottery vessels, which indicate a ritual use for the shafts.

RAC SESSION: CLAY AND CULT: ROMAN TERRACOTTAS IN DOMESTIC, RELIGIOUS AND FUNERARY CONTEXTS

This session sought to move beyond the simple study of terracotta items as objects used in domestic and religious practices and to consider the manufacture, provenance, distribution, context, iconography and

dating of clay artefacts from around the Mediterranean and beyond.

Emma-Jayne Graham (*Composite Bodies: Gods, humans and the anatomical votive in the Republican sanctuary*) started the session with a paper examining the deposition of votive offerings in the form of clay body parts at sanctuaries in central Italy in the 4th to 1st centuries BC. She discussed the complex mortal–divine relationships constructed by this deposition, which moved beyond simple acts of devotion and healing to a division of the body and its reconstruction by the deity.

Elena Martelli (*Clay Artefacts from Roman Ostia (Rome): Overview of patterns of consumption in urban and funerary contexts*) then discussed some unusual terracottas from Ostia, including anthropomorphic jugs depicting Dea Nutrix, a nursing man or a drunken woman, the last two depicting people transgressing the rules of normal behaviour. The jugs, along with money boxes, were often found at public contexts such as baths and theatres. Moulds in two halves depicting scenes of the theatre and arena are often thought to have been used for food, but experiments showed foods such as bread, cake, marzipan and jelly do not show the details of the moulds, whereas plaster does and so it seems more likely that the moulds were used to produce plaster objects.

Matthew Fittock (*Broken Deities: The pipe-clay figurines from Roman London*) discussed his work on pipe-clay figurines and a version of this paper appears below.

Solenn de Larminat (*Clay Figurines, Masks and Animal-Shaped Vessels in Children's Burials in Roman Imperial Africa*) discussed burials in Africa Proconsularis. Masks were less common than figurines, but found more often in the graves of children less than seven years in age. The masks include depictions of Bacchus and Mercury, as well as theatre masks and children, which perhaps represented the deceased. One particularly interesting example from Pupput, Tunisia contained an amphora in which a mask was placed along with the child's bones, and another mask was placed at the neck of the amphora, thus creating a ceramic head and body.

Adi Erlich (*Terracottas from Roman Palestine: Workshops, shrines and tombs*) then took us further east to discuss figurines made at workshops, which also produced lamps, in Palestine. A number of

examples showed that the same moulds were used to produce a variety of figurines, but that the heads were made separately to represent different deities. The types represented included both standard Roman types such as Venus, as well as regional types such as the man on a horse.

Finally, Demetrios Michaelides (*Terracottas in a Domestic Context: the case of the House of Orpheus in Nea Paphos, Cyprus*) discussed the *c.*400 clay figurines and masks from a single house. The pieces have been examined using pXRF to analyse their chemical composition. This showed that the figurines came from two workshops, one locally in Paphos and one in central Cyprus. 3D scanning was also used to explore the production and function of the terracottas.

Matthew Fittock (*Broken Deities: The pipe-clay figurines from Roman London*) writes: Moulded by craftsmen working from terracotta workshops in the Allier Valley, France during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, pipeclay figurines are relatively low value and common objects that provide key insights into the daily religious lives and practices of those who inhabited the north-western provinces. The systematic study of pipeclay figurines has developed most significantly on the continent, where typologies combine with contextual–chronological analyses to explore regional patterns of consumption and function throughout Gaul (Beenhouwer 2005; Bémont et al. 1993; Gonzenbach 1986, 1995; Rouvier-Jeanlin 1972). However, the study of these artefacts is comparatively under-developed in Britain, where the only major contribution remains an un-published PhD on 390 statuettes from the province (Jenkins 1977).

With this in mind this paper presents the first typological catalogue of 129 pipe-clay figurines recovered from Roman London that are stored at the Museum of London and London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre. Categorising the assemblage reveals interesting patterns of consumption, demonstrating that deities are the most common figurine type from the settlement. Of these, Venus statuettes are the most common, with Type 1 figurines (depicting the goddess holding the garment over the left wrist) the most numerous of the four different types identified (Fig. 13), whereas depictions of other deities, such as Dea Nutrix, Minerva, Diana/Luna Lucifera and Juno, occur much less frequently. The rest of the assemblage comprises a small collection of animals that includes bulls, cockerels, hens, horses, a dove and a very rare type of lizard, as well as a limited group of humans

comprising depictions of *Risus* (Fig. 14), a rare type of gladiator and other broken busts of women and/or children.



Figure 13. Type 1 Venus figurine from Upper Thames Street, London. Courtesy Museum of London.



Figure 14. Risus figurine from Liverpool Street, London. Courtesy Museum of London.

Comparing this assemblage with continental collections shows that this higher proportion of deities and lower proportion of animal and human

figurines corresponds with the wider trend throughout Europe, although all of the continental assemblages generally feature a greater variety of animal and human figurine types than the British material. On the other hand, the recovery of extremely rare figurine types such as Juno, Diana/Luna, the gladiator and the lizard indicate a unique pattern of consumption within Roman London itself compared with broader patterns identified throughout the remainder of Britain and mainland Europe.

A spatial and social distribution analysis of the material was consequently conducted associating pipeclay figurines with particular types of site (habitation, trade and religious) and deposit (pits, ditches, graves) to review the use of these objects throughout Roman London (e.g. Eckardt 2002, 2005). This demonstrates that the 49 finds from habitation sites are widely distributed across the settlement and come from pit, ditch and landfill rubbish and construction deposits; a number of which could be ritually significant. At the same time, the 26 figurines from leveling and/or natural fill deposits on trade sites are all located within the vicinity of the settlement's port area. These finds most probably represent discarded imported goods rather than any overt ritual practice, although three Venus figurines recovered alongside a number of whole and unused Samian vessels could have a degree of ritual significance. Finally, seven finds from religious contexts also indicate that a small proportion of pipeclay figurines were involved with ritual activities and/or were deposited as special grave goods, perhaps as curated heirlooms, during high-status child funerary practices from the third century AD.

Drawing inspiration from Chapman's studies of pre-historic material culture from the Balkans (2000; Chapman & Gaydarska 2007), the final aspect considered concerns how pipeclay figurines are broken, and whether their fragmentation provides an insight into the nature of religious beliefs and practices in Roman London (e.g. Croxford 2003). A study of Venus figurines in particular shows that torso/body/leg fragments are the most common fragment type associated with the deity, while the head and torso/body groups are relatively uncommon. Grouping fragment types into broader categories reveals further trends including the numerous mid-lower body fragments compared with the lower proportion of heads, upper-body fragments and more complete specimens; the latter of which remained in circulation and/or were otherwise deposited, most notably in burials. Comparison with the different fragmentation profiles of continental collections also

potentially highlights the varied implementation of this cultural practice, though much more work is required to verify such patterns.

My upcoming PhD at the University of Reading will collate and study the full collection of pipeclay figurines from Britain to better understand how these objects provide new and important information about the character of religious life and cultural identities in the province. If anyone has or knows of any pipeclay figurines (especially unpublished finds), please do get in touch with me via e-mail: matthewfittock@googlemail.com.

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RFG Committee

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Stephen Greep, sjgreep@gmail.com

Ellen Swift, E.V.Swift@kent.ac.uk

Sally Worrell, s.worrell@ucl.ac.uk

MYSTERY OBJECTS



This photograph of a bronze fragment, probably from a vessel, depicts a horse and ?barbarian rider. It is around 5 cm in length and well abraded. Although I have consulted several colleagues no one has been able to provide any parallels or suggestions as to what this might be. The best guess at the moment is that it is from the ornate base or a component of a handle from a jug or similar vessel, but I have been unable to find any close parallels. It is a metal detector find from a particularly rich Roman site in East Yorkshire. There are finds from throughout the Roman period (and beyond). Any help/advice welcome.
Stephen Greep (sjgreep@gmail.com)



Preston Candover, Hampshire (HAMP-58BF76)

This brooch found at Preston Candover is stunning and well-preserved and although other examples of gilded disc brooches with a central setting are

known, those with a square setting and similar decoration are very rare. Do readers know of any parallels?

Sally Worrell (s.worrell@ucl.ac.uk)



Cawood, North Yorkshire (SWYOR-A153A2)



Littlethorpe, North Yorkshire (YORYM-B3FE27)

I am very intrigued by the large quantity of ithyphallic figurines that were recorded by PAS in 2013. As far as I know similar objects are not known in Britain or France. I'd be very happy if others knew of parallels

Sally Worrell (s.worrell@ucl.ac.uk)

BOOKS

***Life in the Limes: Studies of the people and objects of the Roman frontiers* by Rob Collins and Frances McIntosh (eds).**

264p, b/w and colour illustrations. Oxbow Books. ISBN: 9781782972532. Special price £34 at Oxbow now.

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CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Gebrochener Glanz: Römische Grossbronzen am UNESCO-Welterbe Limes



Gordian III. From the *vicus* of the fort at Niederbieber in Neuwied, Germany

This major exhibition on large Roman statuary from along the German limes is currently on show in the LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn (until 20 July 2014), and is then due at the Limesmuseum in Aalen, southern

Germany (16 August 2014 to 22 February 2015) and at the Museum Het Valkhof Nijmegen, Netherlands (21 March to 21 June 2015). This is one of the outputs of a major research project, funded by the VolkswagenStiftung as part of their programme to make collections and museums more accessible to current research, which has brought together historians, art historians, and scientists to document and study the wealth of bronze statuary that formed part of the limes and its immediate hinterland and infrastructure. The exhibition is accompanied by a substantial hard-cover book (in German) offering in-depth background chapters to the topic, and many brief sections on individual items and assemblages on show. Several of these are of particular interest to more technologically-minded readers, but all of them are informative, well-written and well-illustrated.

British Museum Touring Exhibition

Roman Empire: Power and People brings together over 160 stunning pieces from the British Museum to explore the story of one of the most powerful empires the world has ever seen.

Highlights include sculpture from the villas of the Emperors Tiberius and Hadrian, coins from the famous Hoxne treasure, beautiful jewellery and even near-perfectly preserved children's clothing from Roman Egypt.

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Future venues

The Herbert Museum and Art Gallery,
Coventry
17 May – 31 August 2014

Leeds City Museum
20 September 2014 – 4 January 2015

The McManus, Dundee
24 January – 10 May 2015

Segedunum Roman Fort and Baths
30 May – 13 September 2015

Beyond the walls 15th November 2014

Day conference organised by WallQuest and the Arbeia Society on recent work on the baths, temples, villages and fields outside the forts on Hadrian's Wall. Cost £15 (Society members/concessions), £20 non-members, £5 (WallQuest participants).

For further information look on the website (www.arbeiasociety.org.uk/nextcon.htm) or contact Alex Croom (alex.croom@twmuseums.org.uk).

Portable Antiquities Scheme Conference: Finds in the Landscape British Museum 24th November 2014

This conference will examine how portable antiquities contribute to our understanding of past landscapes. Speakers include: Roger Bland, Tom Brindle, Adam Daubney, Anwen Cooper, Chris Green, Adrian Chadwick, Eleanor Ghey, Claire Harris, Julia Farley, Katharine Robbins and Julian Richards.

Attendance is free. For further information contact Janina Parol (jparol@britishmuseum.org).