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The Newsletter of
The Roman Finds Group

LUCERNA: THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ROMAN FINDS GROUP
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Editorial

To kick-off 2019, the 56th issue of *Lucerna* brings you several features to whet your appetite for a brand new year of research. The first instalment comes from Gil Burleigh and Ralph Jackson who, building on Gil's previous efforts overviewing some finds from in and around Romano-British Baldock that we saw a year ago in *Lucerna* 54 (pp. 5-12), this time delve into some of the images of Silenus from the very same 'sacred landscape'. The second featured article in this edition presents the results of some recently completed research on another group of Romano-British finds - this time from Caistor St Edmund - where Natasha Harlow compellingly examines the bone counters from the *civitas* capital of *Venta Icenorum* in the wider context of Roman board games and graffiti.

Subsequent features are, of course, those that regular *Lucerna* readers are familiar with, starting with our usual review of the exceptional Roman Finds Group Conference at Museum of London Docklands this past October entitled 'Finds for the Dead in Roman London and Beyond' and an overview of some of the upcoming books, conferences and events that may be of interest to fellow RFG members. Please also take some time to consider Lindsay Banfield's request for information about imported lava querns and millstones in Roman Britain as she seeks them out as part of her PhD research, further details about which are available on p. 19.

Finally, being January, may we gently remind you that subscriptions are now due. If you would like to remain a member please continue to make your payments as normal to Angela Wardle (details available on the following page). Many thanks to those who have already paid, and to everyone for their ongoing support, whether that be at conferences or as part of our growing online community.

We would like to sign off this time by thanking everyone who has contributed to this issue and wishing everyone a happy New Year as we look forward to the next exciting 12 months ahead.

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Lucerna Editor

Emily Blanchard
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Front cover image: Bone counters with markings - potential graffiti - from Caistor St Edmund. See p. 9.

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The Roman Finds Group Committee

The Roman Finds Group Annual General Meeting was held on the 25th March 2018 at the Spring Conference in Canterbury where the existing Committee was re-elected for the following year. A list of the current Roman Finds Group Committee is provided below and will also soon be available on the Roman Finds Group website (http://www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk/roman+finds+group+committee). Details about the 2019 elections will be distributed to members in due course.

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RFG Membership Update

The Roman Finds Group is flourishing - we now have over 260 members! Until 2013, we had a fairly constant membership of 150, although it was sometimes a struggle to collect all the subscriptions. Since then our membership has been increasing steadily to arrive at our present figure. Many new members have joined at our very well-attended meetings, taking advantage of the members' rate and I am pleased to say that most have remained with us.

Thanks to the very many of you who have already renewed subscriptions (£12 single; £15 joint) for 2019 by standing order, online payment or by cheque and a reminder to the rest that subscriptions are now due. I welcome cheques made out to the Roman Finds Group at my home address (below) and can email our bank details for online payments (awardle@waitrose.com).

Angela Wardle, Membership Secretary
1 Stebbing Farm, Fishers Green,
Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2JB

Membership Benefits

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

• Two copies of our Newsletter, *Lucerna*, each year.

• Access to our Roman finds datasheets.

• Full access to the website (www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk) and twitter feeds, including the members only section which includes access to recent copies of *Lucerna*. The website has been developed to include access to *Lucerna* and Datasheets and to include finds catalogues and other finds-related works which are currently out-of-print as pdfs.

• Reduced fees to our twice-yearly meetings, held in the spring (typically a two day meeting) and autumn of each year.

• Free/reduced entrance to major finds-related exhibitions, where this can be negotiated.

• Discounts on finds-related books, or pre-publication offers, where these can be negotiated.

• Access to small grants to help with small finds research. These grants are available to individual, fully paid-up, members and will be awarded for applications seeking to support our objectives e.g. publication drawings and maps or travel to museums for object research. Special consideration is given to articles offered to *Lucerna*. £1,000 is available each year (reviewable). Details on how to apply are on our website (www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk).

• Access, through the website, to educational films promoting the importance of finds research. Specialists talk about identifying different materials and objects in a series of films that might ultimately be themed around the chapters of Artefacts in Roman Britain or Nina Crummy's object categories.

• Group payment for individual RFG members to Instrumentum, the European bi-annual magazine. Join through RFG to receive four years' worth of Instrumentum membership for three years payment. In addition the RFG will absorb the conversion fee in a bulk payment on your behalf. The cost for Instrumentum membership is currently 90 Euros for 4 years. Members will be notified by email, in *Lucerna* and on the website when the next renewal is due.

• Help us increase the Romano-British presence amongst a wider European small finds community e.g. by the provision of extra entries and links to objects in the Instrumentum/Artefacts website.

Follow the Roman Finds Group Online

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

Our Roman Finds Group Twitter feed continues to go from strength to strength. We regularly post photographs, news items and links that may interest people with a passion for Roman objects, as well as sharing up-to-date information on the group. We post live-tweets from our conferences under the hashtags #rfg2019 #rfg2018 #rfg2017 etc., so that people from across the world can attend 'virtually'. We recently welcomed our 2531st follower! Do join us! @RomanFindsGrp.

Website (www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk)

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

Nicola Hembrey, RFG Communications Secretary

RFG Grants

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

Grants will be awarded against any area of the Group's

objectives (to promote the study, research, publication, teaching and conservation of the material culture of Roman Britain) but applications must be very clear as to which of these objectives are being applied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RFG Datasheets

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

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

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

Notes for Contributors

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

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

Matthew Fittock, Lucerna *Editor*

Next RFG Meeting

Hoarding and Deposition in Europe from Later Prehistory to the Medieval Period – Finds in Context
12th–14th June 2019
King's College London, Strand

The next Roman Finds Group meeting is in collaboration with the Finds Research Group, King's College London and the Instrumentum International Meetings.

The theme of the next Instrumentum Meeting will be hoarding and deposition. Projects on hoards of coins, metalwork and other objects or materials currently being conducted in Britain have looked at both their composition and their locations. Recently excavated hoards also offer the chance to look at little-studied aspects of hoarding as a depositional process, such as the environmental data from pollen and seeds or from materials such as textiles and leather. The conference will also explore other aspects of deposition, including finds in wet contexts and structured deposition, as well as 'stray' or surface finds.

Sessions include: what is a hoard and what is hoarded?; hoarding as a depositional process; hoards and structured deposits and their setting / topographic context; deposition in wet contexts, sacred or profane?; recent discoveries of hoards.

Programme and Registrations: The final programme, the registration form for the conference and all information relating to the running of the event will be published in February 2019.

Images of Silenus from the Territorium of Romano-British Baldock

Gil Burleigh & Ralph Jackson

Silenus was the immortal, faithful, companion and wise teacher of the Greek god Dionysus, the Roman Bacchus. He was a patron of wine-making and drunkenness. When intoxicated, he was said to possess special knowledge and wisdom as well as the power of prophecy. The original Silenus resembled a satyr, but with the ears of a horse and sometimes also the tail and legs of a horse, whereas the satyrs were goat-like. Along with the satyrs, Silenus became a drunken follower of Dionysus/Bacchus, and later was depicted as usually old, bald/balding, bearded, fat with thick lips and a squat nose. A notorious consumer of wine, he was usually drunk and had to be supported by satyrs or carried by a donkey. Silenus was described as the oldest, wisest and most drunken of the followers of Dionysus, and was said in Orphic hymns to be the young god's tutor.

Images of Silenus from Roman Britain are not common, but have been found at places such as Cirencester (*Corinium*), where he is depicted imbibing from a *rhyton* (drinking-horn) on the stone capital of a Jupiter-column (Henig *et al.* 1993, nos. 137-8; Aldhouse-Green 2018, 84-5); the fort at Richborough, Kent, where his bust is represented on a bronze steelyard weight (Bushe-Fox 1949, 135-7, pl. XLII, no. 159; *Lucerna* July 2018, 9, fig. 5 and front cover image); and the temple of Mithras in London where a small marble sculpture of a group includes Dionysus/Bachus, Silenus holding a cup and seated on a donkey or ass, a satyr and a maenad carrying a wine vessel (*R.I.B.* 1, Collingwood & Wright 1955; Guildhall Museum 1955).

It is appropriate then that definite and possible images of this god of wine-making and drunkenness have been found at sites associated with ritual feasting (commensality) in and around Romano-British Baldock. I have defined a possible *territorium* for Romano-British Baldock elsewhere (Burleigh 2008, 189-219; Burleigh 2015, 89-116), so this article will specifically consider five images possibly of or associated with Silenus from this region. Three of these images were discovered at the open-air religious ritual feasting site at Ashwell, Hertfordshire, which was excavated in 2003-6 (Jackson & Burleigh 2018). The other two are from Oughton Head, Hitchin, and Baldock itself, respectively.

No. 1 - Copper-alloy Medallion of Silenus' Head (Figs. 1a-b)

A circular medallion-like copper-alloy mount with central high-relief image of the head of Silenus and a spike at its rear (Figs. 1a-b). Probably a decorative fitting for a wooden box, casket or chest or other furniture. Height: 36.1mm, Diameter: *c.* 46mm, spike Length: *c.* 21mm, Weight: 18.69g. It was found in 2004 in a courtyard surface around the Ashwell End ritual feasting hollow, dated late 3rd to 4th century AD. A very similar Silenus medallion was found in excavations at Richborough and dated 2nd century AD (Bushe-Fox 1949, 142, pl. XLVI, no. 175; Jackson & Burleigh 2018, 266-7, fig. 312 & 272, fig. 318, no. 4.15).

No. 2 - Copper-alloy Head Mount of Silenus (Figs. 2a-b)

A small tear-shaped copper-alloy mount, probably a decorative stud for a wooden casket or box, in the form of a low-relief profile of the head of Silenus. From the centre of the slightly hollowed back a short tapered fastening spike projects (Figs. 2a-b). Found unstratified during the 2004 excavations at Ashwell

Fig. 1a (above): Image; and 1b (below): drawing of the Silenus copper-alloy medallion from Ashwell End, Herts.

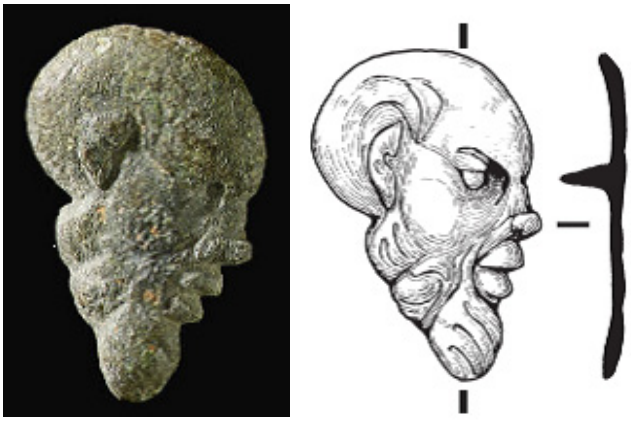

Fig. 2a (left): Image; and 2b(right): drawing of the copper-alloy Silenus head from Ashwell End, Herts.

Fig. 3a (above): Image; and 3b (below): drawing of the possible Silenus pipe-clay head from Ashwell End, Herts.

End. Ht: 22.2mm, spike L: 7.5mm, Wt: 2.59g. (Jackson & Burleigh 2018, 266-7, fig. 312 & 272, fig. 318, no. 4.16).

No. 3 - *Pipe-Clay Head (Figs. 3a-b)*

A hollow pipe-clay head of a grotesquely caricatured elderly man, broken obliquely at the neck (Figs. 3a-b). Originally the head of a complete reclining figurine, a character from Roman Comedy, it was re-used and placed in a special structured deposit in the ritual feasting hollow at Ashwell End (Jackson & Burleigh 2018, 327-9). Its appearance with its bald high crown, the hair restricted to a prominent tuft brushed forward above each ear; the right ear disproportionately large and outward-projecting; the triple-wrinkled forehead and eyebrows raised high above the wide oval eyes with bulging eyeballs; the nose large with broad fleshy nostrils; the cheeks hollowed, especially the right cheek; the pointed beard schematically rendered with gashed angled striations on the lower cheeks and chin; and the mouth, below the full upper lip, a gaping slot-like open perforation as though the man is speaking. It closely resembles images of Silenus and its secondary re-use may have had that meaning for the votary who deposited it. As Ralph Jackson has written, the image of the old fool, with coarse exaggerated features, is a stock figure in classical art and Roman Comedy, and the pipe-clay versions sometimes appear to be satirical caricatures of learned men, whether philosophers or teachers, like Silenus. Indeed the original figurine may have been a depiction of Silenus reclining on a couch. Found in 2003 in a structured deposit placed in a shallow scoop in the homogeneous soils of the ritual ceremonial hollow at Ashwell End. The deposit included also an improvised ceramic pedestal to support the head, Iron Age and Roman coins, numerous cut-up fragments of iron mail armour, two Bronze Age spearheads, and other metalwork. Mid-1st century AD. Ht: 52.7mm, W: 47.3mm, Wt: 34.22g. (Jackson & Burleigh 2018, 264-6, figs. 310-11 & 271, fig. 317, no. 4.8, & 328-9).

No. 4 - Copper-alloy Satyr-like Head (unillustrated)

A small copper-alloy mount in the form of a satyr-like head was found by a metal detectorist in 1990 at the springs, Oughton Head, Hitchin, the source of the river Oughton which flows via the river Ivel into the Bedfordshire Ouse, and ultimately The Wash. It bears a remarkable resemblance to the pipe-clay head of Silenus from Ashwell End (no. 3 above). The surrounding area is another sacred site which has produced hundreds of Roman coins, a copper-alloy bust of Minerva wearing a crested helmet (Burleigh 2018, 8, fig. 8), Prehistoric artefacts (including Neolithic worked flints, Late Bronze Age metalwork, Iron Age coins and a copper-alloy torc), and some Anglo-Saxon coins and personal dress items. Aerial photographs reveal a double ring-ditch monument and a circular post-built monument, each about 30-40 m diameter, to north and south of the spring-head, both as yet undated (Burleigh 2008, 197-8; Burleigh 2015, 108; Burleigh 2018, 8; Burleigh forthcoming; not illustrated).

No. 5 - Pipe-Clay Face-Mask (Fig. 4)

Our next image was excavated in Baldock in 1972 by Ian Stead on Site B, Walls Field, Context 204, a pit dated c. AD 150-80 (Fig. 4). It is a considerably larger than life size moulded fired-clay face-mask with three pairs of holes cut around the edge for fixing. It depicts a face which is grotesque, leering, with scarcely human features, including strange oval ears. It may possibly represent a satyr or even Silenus. It has a triple-wrinkled forehead, like the grotesque pipe-clay head from Ashwell End (no. 3 above). It was probably an architectural fixture and was found incomplete and in pieces in a special placed deposit group in the pit that included two complete pots from the bottom layer of soil and four almost complete pots with the (deliberately broken?) mask in the upper layers (Rigby in Stead & Rigby 1986, 167-9, fig. 73, no. 687, 336-9, fig. 140). Other pits with special deposits, perhaps ritually placed, dotted the surrounding area, usually within ditched enclosures. Shrines and human burials were close by, both on Walls Field and the adjoining Upper Walls Common, where there is a ritual feasting hollow similar to that excavated at Ashwell End (Burleigh 2008, 190-91, fig. 6; Burleigh 2015, 98; Burleigh in Jackson & Burleigh 2018, 334-5, fig. 365; Burleigh forthcoming).

As mentioned above, images of Silenus are not common from Roman Britain. Unprovenanced examples include two from 'near Colchester' and one from Hampshire (Jackson & Burleigh

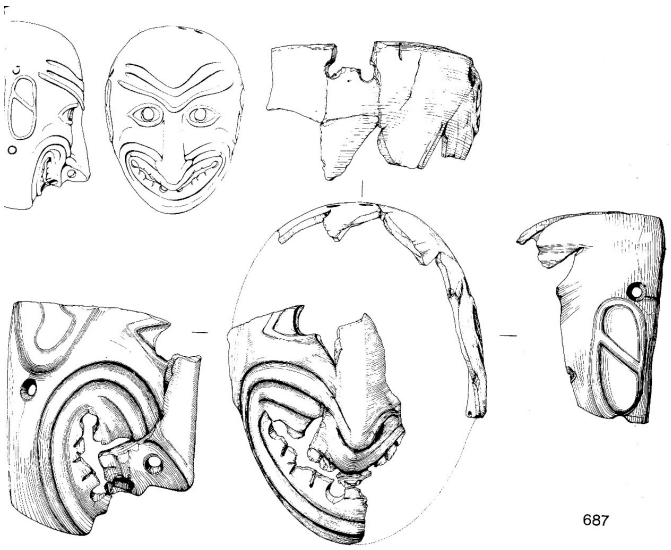

Fig. 4. Fired-clay face-mask from Baldock, Herts.

2018, 267). Others may lie as yet unrecognised in museum and metal detectorists collections.

Acknowledgements

GB's thanks are extended to Miranda Aldhouse-Green, Ralph Jackson and Valory Rigby for their knowledge and expertise; Craig Williams of the British Museum for his consummate drawings; Saul Peckham of the British Museum for his excellent photographs; David Stuckey for reporting his finds from Oughton Head, Hitchin; The Trustees of the British Museum for the use of Figures 1-3b; and The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies for the use of Figure 4.

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Roman Bone Gaming Counters from Caistor St Edmund

Natasha Harlow

Introduction

Counters are regular finds at Romano-British towns and across the wider empire. Different materials seem to have coexisted, with glass examples perhaps being slightly earlier (1st century AD) and bone types becoming more prevalent in 2nd-3rd century AD contexts (Cool 2016, 174; Cotton 2001, 13). Pre-conquest grave goods of counters and boards were found at King Harry Lane, St Albans and at Stanway, Colchester in the so-called Doctor's and Warrior's graves (Crummy 2007; Schädler 2007). Outside areas of Roman control, the Knowth Gambler's grave in Ireland demonstrates the penetration of board games beyond the frontiers (Hall & Forsyth 2011, 1327-31).

During Donald Atkinson's excavations (1929-1935) at the *civitas* capital of *Venta Icenorum* (modern Caistor St Edmund, Norfolk), over 60 worked bone counters were recorded, with other discs of glass, stone and ceramic. Since 2009, the *Caistor Roman Project*'s excavations within the walled town and its hinterland recovered a further 8 bone roundels (Atkinson never fully published the site and as a result the small finds from the *civitas* capital have lacked the recognition and research enjoyed by other towns, such as Silchester and Wroxeter. Greep's catalogue (1983) includes most of the counters from Atkinson's excavations. The archive resides in Norwich Castle Museum (NWHCM, accession code 1929.152; bone objects are prefixed with the letter O, M for miscellaneous and X for 1934 season finds. SF numbers are *Caistor Roman Project* finds). These objects are generally interpreted as gaming counters. About a third of these finds are inscribed. This short study brings together a consideration of the counters and symbols from Caistor St Edmund with a more general discussion of Roman board games and graffiti.

Gaming in the Ancient World

Several ancient board games, probably originating in the Greek East and Egypt, were incorporated into Roman gambling practices. The best known are *XII Scripta*, a game played with both pieces and dice, and *Ludus Latrunculi*, based on military strategy and tactics, played on a board without dice (Austin 1934, 1935; Crummy 1983; Keegan 2014, 215; MacGregor 1976). These reflect games like draughts or backgammon, although it is hazardous to rely too closely on modern parallels. Some Classical writers refer to games of chance, often in moralistic treatises which decry gaming alongside idleness and drunkenness (Ovid *Ars. Am.* 3, *Tr.* II; Martial *Epig.* XIV, 17; Varro *Ling.* II, 10.22).

Did later prehistoric Britain have a tradition of board games or were they introduced through interactions with the Roman Empire? Schädler (2007) argues that indigenous gaming existed in the 1st century BC, perhaps developing hybrid forms during the contact period. Hall and Forsyth (2011) disagree, instead favouring a model which sees varied responses to the transmission of material culture and a conceptual appropriation of the *idea* of gaming within entirely local structures. Certainly, the distribution of early gaming equipment aligns well with groups in south-eastern Britain which had most contact with the continental empire and displayed this association through material and ideological artefacts, especially in death.

Literacy and Numeracy

Familiarity with Latin letters and numerals begins with imports of coins around a century before the conquest (Williams 2001). Limited indigenous literacy is implied by inscribed British coin series. In eastern Britain, the Iceni were issuing coins from three different mints, often bearing legends (Talbot 2017). Under Roman occupation, individual names were scratched on finewares and plain samian tableware. This suggests personal ownership of vessels and the ability, at least, to write one's name. Graffiti occur more frequently at forts and *vici* than small towns and rural sites, which suggests lower levels of rural literacy, although *styli* are widespread (Cool 2006, 35-6). Literacy at the *civitas* capital of Caistor is attested by *styli*, graffiti and inscriptions on ceramics. Monumental carving is limited to one fragment (M94), reflecting the lack of local freestone. A lead curse tablet from the nearby River Tas, was written by, or on behalf of, a local man, Nase[nnius] (Hassall & Tomlin 1982, 408-9; My thanks to Alex Mullen (University of Nottingham's *Latin Now* project) for suggesting the likely ending of the name on the *defixio*, of which only *Nase*... survives). An indirect relationship with written communication is implied by intaglio rings and seal-boxes.

Typology and Dimensions

Three main typological schemes exist for gaming counters (Crummy 1983, 91; Greep 1983, 1986; Kenyon 1948, 266, fig. 91). Greep's types 1-4 (1998) are used here throughout; for concordance see Table 1. Most bone counters exhibit a central indentation where the disc was fitted to the lathe. There are four types: T1-T4. The simplest and earliest (*circa* 40-200/250 AD) counters are plain, flat and develop into those with countersunk obverses (largely 2nd century AD). Flat counters with

Description	Greep	Crummy	Kenyon
Plain with lathe indent	1	1	C
Plain with countersunk obverse	2	1	A
Concentric circles (plus notched rim)	3	2 + 4	B
Plano-convex	4	3	N/A

Table 1. Concordance of counter types.

Fig. 5. A selection of bone counter types (NWHCM: 1929.152.O256).

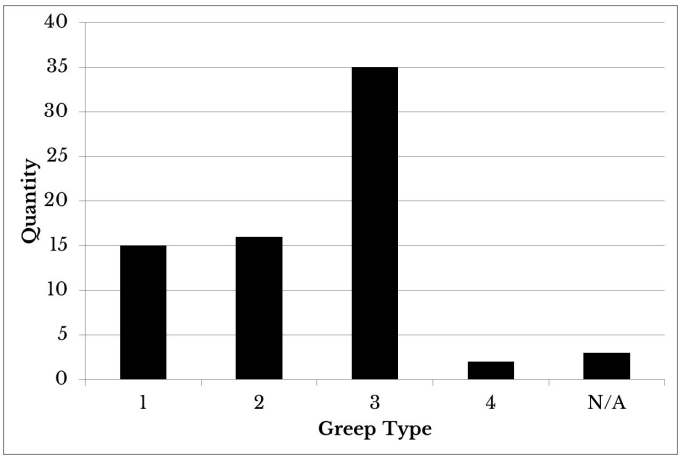

Fig. 6. Bone counters by type (total = 71).

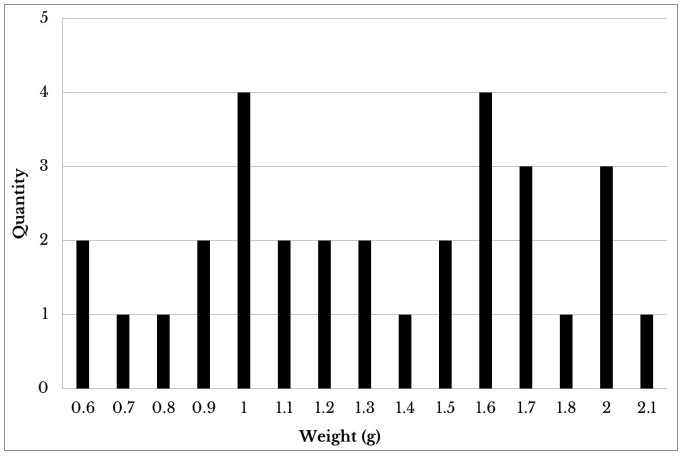

Fig. 7. Bone counters by weight (total = 31).

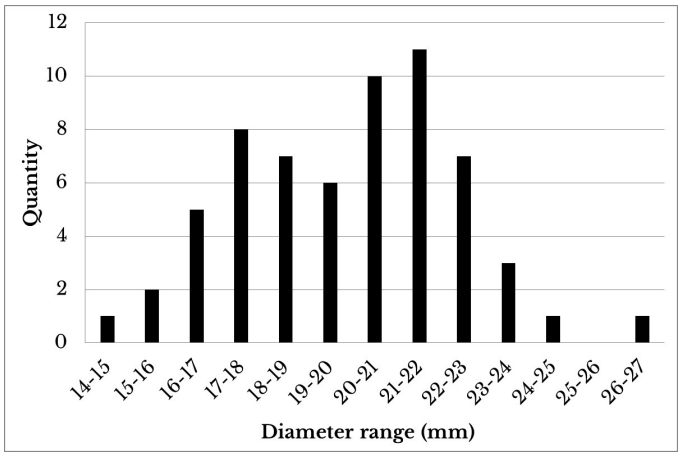

Fig. 8. Bone counters by maximum diameter (total = 62).

concentric grooves on one surface date throughout the Roman period (Fig. 5). Later examples are convex or domed and perhaps provided prototypes for Anglo-Saxon plano-convex pieces (Crummy 1983, 91; Greep 1983, 257-60; 1998, 272). The counters from Caistor St Edmund are predominantly T3 (Fig. 6).

While sizes of bone counters are necessarily constrained by dimensions of the source material, they can show local variation. Measurements are presented in Figures 7-8. Twenty-three counters on display in Norwich Castle Museum were unfortunately not available for closer study at the time of writing, so it is not possible to be definitive about the trends in these measurements. Nonetheless, using Greep's catalogue and my own measurements of those available, only 9 diameters and 31 weights were unknown. The average weight of T1 counters is 1.6g, 1.4g for T2, dwindling to 1.2g for T3 counters. Although T3s are largest in diameter, they are also the lightest on average, showing a tendency towards thinner and wider discs. Diameters vary according to type. T1 counters peak in the 17-18mm range and T2 in the 20-21mm range, comparing well with Greep's British survey (1983, 259, fig. 67). T3 counters cluster around 21-22mm, slightly larger than Greep's 19-20mm. The overall spectrum is 15-24mm, which agrees with ranges of 16.5-23mm from Trentholme Drive, York (Wenham 1968, 97) and 16-24mm at Chichester (Down & Rule 1971). A 26.5mm 'flat, oval disc' from the *cella* of Temple A should probably be discounted. The smallest counter (O69) is smooth with a large central perforation and may instead be a bead. Excluding these outliers results in an overall range of 15-24mm.

Graffiti

A detailed discussion of ancient graffiti is beyond the scope of this paper (see Baird & Taylor 2011; Keegan 2014). The term encompasses a wide variety of markings, from single letters or numerals to longer texts and drawings. Modern graffiti are often thought of as transgressive, antisocial and destructive, but also as a form of outsider art (*cf.* Banksy) (Sliwa & Cairns 2007). While Romano-British sentiments towards 'defacing' (or customising) objects remain unknown, the acts, *loci* and nature of gambling may have enabled subversion and resistance in an occupied land. Opportunities for irreverence and disorder are often enacted in plain sight, in gathering places such as taverns and marketplaces (Scott 1990). Gaming pieces are common finds from bath-house drains (e.g. Caerleon, Greep 1986; Church Street, York, MacGregor 1976). Baths were locations for both free expression and dissolute behaviour, one of Tacitus's 'alluring vices' which the Britons supposedly found irresistible (*Agr.* 21).

At Trentholme Drive, a cremation urn contained 46 bone counters. Twelve of these had 'meaningless' graffiti upon their reverses (Wenham 1968: 32). Most carried a simple 'X' or variant, but some were much more complex (*ibid.* 38, 97, 99, fig. 40). I would argue that these symbols are far from 'meaningless', although it is unclear exactly what they represent. Some are very deliberate, while others exhibit only faint striations perhaps deriving from use-wear or post-depositional processes. Bone lends itself more easily to simple personalisation with a sharp implement than glass or stone. This suggests

Fig. 9. Counter with inscribed X on reverse (NWHCM: 1929.152.O61).

Fig. 10a. Counter with complex marks on reverse (NWHCM: 1929.152.O147).

Fig. 10b: Counter with complex marks on reverse (NWHCM: 1929.152.O161).

Fig. 10c. Counter with complex marks on reverse (NWHCM: 1929.152.O175).

that the game(s) played with inscribed bone counters may have differed, and developed later, to the sets using harder materials. Notably, ceramic 'counters' are rarely inscribed.

Of the 71 bone counters from Caistor St Edmund, 25 have potential graffiti. T1 counters are most frequently inscribed (46.7% compared to 37.5% and 34.3% for T2 and T3 respectively). Like Trentholme Drive, the most common graffito is a simple two-stroke 'X' on the reverse (Fig. 9), while others display complex and elaborate groups of markings (Figs. 10a-c). Other variants include a 'star' which is more akin to the 'X' with an additional stroke through the centre-point (O23, O130; Fig. 11). This may be a method of writing the number IX or XI. Many numeric combinations are attested from other towns including Chichester, Colchester, Caerwent and Silchester (Down & Rule 1971, fig. 5.15; Greep 1983, vol. 4, fig. 215; Hassall & Tomlin 1978, 477).

Fig. 11. Counter with three-stroke star motif (NWHCM: 1929.152.O23).

Fig. 12. Inscribed circumference of counter (NWHCM: 1929.152.O176).

Three examples hint at the complicated relationship between gaming and literacy/numeracy. Greep (1983, 262-5) divides graffiti into groups including individual letters, numbers, names and dots (Table 2). The assemblage from *Venta* features all six types, including a countersunk piece with an 'X' on the reverse and a numeric string firmly inscribed around its edge (O176, Fig. 12). This appears to read 'XXVIIII', but on closer inspection there is a faint initial 'X' and other numerals have been diagonally crossed to form 'N's and other symbols. If the number 39 was intended, it does not reference any known game from the period. The second counter is inscribed *NLL* in retrograde, with the upstroke of the central L extending as a line of punched

Fig. 13. Counter with 'arrow' graffito (NWHCM: 1929.152.O5).

Fig. 14. Counter with three-stroke star and lattice motif (NWHCM: 1929.152.O28).

dots (NWHCM: 2012.6). Does this represent *null*? A counter from Caerleon was inscribed *NVLLVM* (Greep 1986, 205). Finally, counter O37 has *PRI* scratched on the reverse: perhaps *primo* or *primus*, potentially both a name and a number (Adrian Marsden, Norfolk Museums Service, pers. comm. (18/07/2018)).

The most likely explanation is that these marks represent Roman numerals, perhaps indicating points for scoring local variants of games. This fits with the

Graffiti	Greep
Numerals	G1
Individual letters	G2
Names and mottos	G3
Dots	G4
Miscellaneous	G5
Inscribed rim	G6

Table 2. Greep (1983) graffiti groups.

counters' other potential function as accountancy tokens (Eckardt 2018, 201). Greek and Roman games of chance were usually played for stakes (Schädler 2013, 2842). Inscribed counters may represent 'chips' with values used for gambling. Some could depict magical sigils for good fortune. Apotropaic graffiti and mirror-writing were common in the Roman world (McKie 2017, 107). Perhaps the complex marks symbolise individual names or motifs, each player having their own character piece. This would explain why these intricate marks are rarely duplicated. Lastly, some have argued that the glass pieces, gaming board and enigmatic rods in the Stanway Doctor's burial were used for divination (Carr 2003; Crummy 1997).

Fig. 15. Bone die with ring-and-dot markings (NWHCM: 1929.152.O108).

Context and Usage

Context may help us explore the practical uses of these discs. *Venta*'s forum produced 23 bone counters. Four counters (O5 with 'arrow' graffito, Fig. 13; O8-O10) were excavated in a 2nd/3rd century AD domestic building (Atkinson 1932, 105). Two examples with 'X' graffiti (O61, O63) came from a feature (Pit 16) below a 'dwelling-house of considerable pretensions' (*ibid*. 112). These may be part of a set: the colouration, bevel and polish on both pieces appear closely matched. This pit also contained coins of Nero and Domitian, two blue beads and blue vessel glass. Taken together with ceramic evidence, these indicate a late 1st/2nd century AD date (*ibid*. 137). This assemblage finds parallels with Pit 20 at Richborough, which also showed selective deposition, including blue beads and blue glass with gaming equipment (Bushe-Fox 1928, 28-32).

Room 1 of the same house yielded eight bone discs, including four uninscribed counters from the same context (O65-O68) and a T3 counter (O54) in the overlying gravel. Only one inscribed piece comes from this part of the building: O28, which has an intricate combination of lattice-work or a combined double-X and a three-stroke star (Fig. 14). These motifs seem to have a common currency across much of Roman Britain and may represent a well-known provincial game (*cf*. Greep 1983, vol. 4, figs. 208-16). Other gaming equipment includes an early composite bone die from an apsed dwelling with its own bath suite (O108, Fig. 15) (Greep in prep.) and two possible chalk dice from the forum (M112) and South Gate (X31). Three further counters were excavated near this gate (including X23, X24). This deposit also included two marble palettes (X9, X10) and a seal-box (X5) which are plausibly associated with practices of literacy (Eckardt 2018, 23, 28-9).

The wider social distribution of Roman games is within settlements, sanctuaries and tombs. Games found in private houses are extremely rare. Public gaming boards were sometimes supplied by civic authorities or wealthy benefactors. Alternatively, they were unofficially carved on pavements and even rooftops. Almost 100 game boards are recorded at the Forum in Rome (Keegan 2014, 216; Schädler 2013, 2841). Stone boards are known from Richborough (Bushe-Fox 1928, 13) and in wood from Stanway (Crummy 2007). *Venta's* basilica yielded an unusual ceramic fragment, its upper surface subdivided into regular lozenges (SF6764, Fig. 16). Two rounded stone 'counters' (SF6762, SF6763) were also found in this context, one of which appears scratched with a 'V' and an 'I' on opposing sides. While not obviously a standard board, together these items may represent part of a gaming or accounting set. A more conventional game board fragment was unearthed in the forum North wing. This thick, rectangular piece of floor tile has a plastered surface, demarcated with scored lines into eight roughly square zones (SF7059, Fig. 17).

What is the spatial distribution at *Venta Icenorum*? There is undoubtedly a concentration in the forum-basilica complex; of course this could be biased through trench size and location, or density of occupation. Findspots may not be the location of original usage. However, as the civic and administrative heart of the urban area, this

Fig. 16. Inscribed ceramic fragment, possibly a game board (CRP SF6764, image courtesy Ian Jackson).

was a focal point for public activity of the townspeople, the bureaucratic practices of tax collectors and the tallying of merchants and their customers. It would also be a place of leisure and time-wasting, surely an ideal opportunity for gaming to occur.

Absences are also notable: while the counters are clustered in well-appointed private houses and public areas, there were none found on intra-mural roads or in the large triple ditches which enclosed the early settlement. Neither have they yet been found in the south field or other extra-mural areas. The lack of temple finds makes their usage as divination tools or magical devices unlikely to have been part of 'official' rites. Inclusion in pits perhaps suggests an unofficial, but considered, means of disposal, such as the counter (SF1734) in the fill of a large pit which also included a complete weaning cup and a dump of painted plaster, one of several 'special deposits' at *Venta* (Bowden forthcoming).

Conclusions

Bone counters are deceptively simple, familiar finds in Roman Britain. Nevertheless, the cryptic mark-making on their surfaces relates to the advent of mass literacy and numeracy and indicates a potential range of practices, from mundane to magical. People were seizing some of the power of literacy (Eckardt 2018, 11-2) and wielding it, perhaps in a subversive or empowering fashion, according to local rules, using non-élite materials. A catalogue of finds from *Venta Icenorum* will be presented in a future publication (Harlow in Bowden forthcoming). I would be interested to hear from researchers working on similar assemblages, in particular further interpretations of the graffiti.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Will Bowden and the *Caistor Roman Project*, especially Jenny Press and Ian Jackson for allowing me to use their images. I owe much to John Davies, Adrian Marsden, Tim Pestell and Alan West for facilitating access to Atkinson's archive material at Norwich Castle Museum over many years. Stephen Greep kindly commented on an earlier version of this paper.

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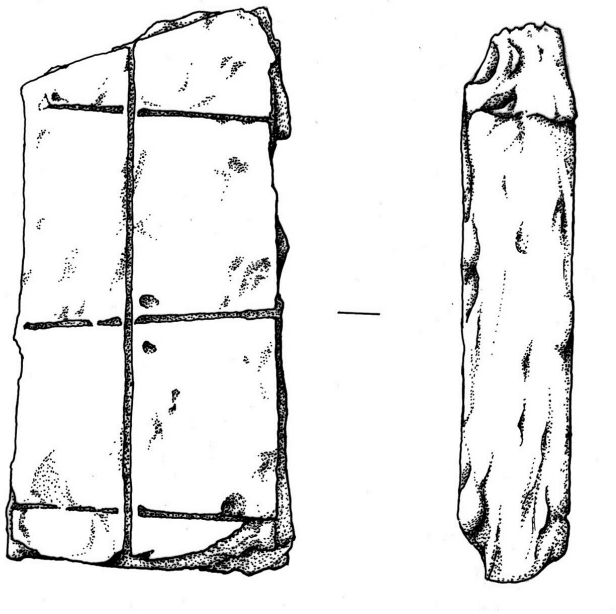

Fig. 17. Plastered tile gaming board fragment (CRP SF7059, image courtesy Jenny Press).

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The Roman Finds Group Autumn Conference 2018 - Finds for the Dead in Roman London and Beyond

Museum of London Docklands

The 2018 RFG Autumn Meeting was held at the Museum of London Docklands on Monday 15th October, and was jointly organised with the Museum of London (MOL) and Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). We would like to thank, in particular, Jackie Keily of the Museum of London and Mike Marshall of MoLA for all their hard work in organising what was an exceptional event comprising three sessions of twelve talks covering various aspects of Roman funerary archaeology and finds, primarily in London, as well as the rest of the team for their hospitality and access that the audience had to their exhibition on 'The Roman Dead' (Fig. 18). The following is a summary of all of the papers given but does not do justice to the rich material on show throughout the day, which we all greatly enjoyed. Several of these summaries were reviewed by their respective presenters, for which we are grateful. We look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Fig. 18. The Roman Dead Exhibition entrance Copyright Museum of London.

Session 1

A Watery Grave: Funerary Activity in the Upper Walbrook Valley
Alison Telfer, MOLA

The day's papers got underway with an intriguing analysis and discussion of a special group of burials discovered at Finsbury Circus (125 burials) and the Crossrail Site (7 burials) in the Upper Walbrook valley to the north of the town. Updating work started in the 1980s, Alison began by highlighting some of the standout burials and finds from this area and the potential burial practices they may have been part of. The first interesting object discussed was a set of timber gates that had been laid down on the eastern bank of the Walbrook stream that may have been an attempt at building a bridge; a gravel layer overlying the gates contained several human skulls, while other notable deposits from the area included roadside ditches containing several (21) human crania and a poppyhead beaker. Radiocarbon dating of the roadside ditch crania suggests that their deaths occurred over a 70 year period from AD90, and isotopic analyses of their teeth indicated that the group included males born and raised in southeast Britain, as well as individuals possibly from Sweden and the Mediterranean. Very close to the ditch was a charnel pit containing other human bones. The contents of these two features suggest the aftermath of a flooding episode from the Walbrook, with people selecting and separating the crania from the other bones.

Other notable, and possibly related, graves discovered nearby had themselves been decapitated (although these had their skulls buried with them); a group that includes a 26-35 year old male who too appears to have been born and raised in southeast Britain before his death between AD 140-60; another – possibly a slave or freedman - interred with a large iron ring around his wrist with parallels from a similar burial in York; and one further skeleton with its head removed from a probable second-century grave at Finsbury Circus – 200 blue glass beads from a necklace was found in a 3rd- or 4th-century grave (NB she had her head in place!).

Several interpretations have been put forward about the crania and decapitated burials, and the practices they might be associated with. For instance, some of the crania may have been accidentally removed from in situ burials and by Victorian workman long after the Roman period. However, Finsbury Circus' location within a flood plain and evidence that some skulls had been polished or are water stained could mean that they may in fact have originated from Roman cemeteries further north and were later washed down the Walbrook and reburied at a later date. Nevertheless, there is still the possibility that some may also be related to the Roman 'Cult of the Head' – a cult that is already relatively well evidenced in London.

Possibly the reason for the largest number of crania in this area stems from their presence in the gravel layer, believed to have been used as consolidation behind likely timber revetting at the edge of the stream. The gravel was redeposited and, given its skeletal content (not just crania but also bones from almost every part of the human skeleton) it was most likely to have been quarried from the areas of the more established cemeteries to the north and east, disturbing burials in the process. The high numbers of crania – the most personal and recognisable of all human bones - are probably due simply to deliberate selection by quarrymen (just like the selection seen between the roadside ditch and the charnel pit) – whether for respectful, spiritual or superstitious reasons. This whole group of 132 burials (including 11 cremations), found at a relatively poorly laid out and organised first to fourth century burial ground, on either side of the Walbrook stream, and including the area south to New Broad Street, Old Broad Street and London Wall, might additionally indicate that this particular site might be more specifically connected with the burial practices of individuals and families within individual properties.

Grave Goods from the High Status Burials at Spitalfields
Angela Wardle, RFG

Excavations from 1991-2007 uncovered a significant part of an early second (c. AD 120) to fourth century Roman cemetery to the north of central London to the east of Ermine Street. Male burials outnumber females here 5:1, with a more even sex ratio later, where several third to fourth century graves in particular were especially well furnished with objects paralleled on the Continent that highlight the diversity and mobility of Roman London's population.

Several examples of this were given by Angela, the first of which is the grave of a 5 year old who was buried with a beaker with parallels from the Rhineland. At the foot of the grave was also found a circular/oval-shaped copper-alloy casket containing an array of jewellery made of jet, shale and ivory (including bracelets, beads and hairpins, the jet in very good condition), that have been interpreted as a potential dowry. The fourth-century burial of a child aged about 8 years old in a timber burial vault contained several glass vessels that included two colourless drinking vessels that are rarely found in Britain, though some are known from late Roman Continental contexts. Four additional large globular flasks from this grave – the first found in London – are equally suggestive of higher status activity (see Fig. 19 for two examples).

The burial of an 18-25 year old woman in a lead coffin decorated with a scallop-shell and cable pattern, set within a large limestone sarcophagus is perhaps the most famous of the graves from the site, largely due to the remarkable survival of textiles which suggest that the corpse was richly dressed in a damask silk tunic incorporating purple wool and gold thread tapestry decoration strongly indicative of high status. Her head rested on a pillow of bay leaves (a plant traditionally associated with Apollo by the Romans). Analysis of residues from the coffin has provided evidence for the use of pine resins for embalming in Britain. High-status objects from the grave included glass vessels, notably a pipette-shaped phial which is found exclusively in burials across the Roman Empire. Another phial with distinctive trailed decoration is likely to have come from the Rhineland and although in itself expensive, its contents were probably even more so. Unusual jet objects further emphasise the expensive and rather ostentatious character of the grave. The diversity of London's population is hard to prove definitively through grave goods alone but the latest research using stable isotope and DNA analysis has shown that the lady from the sarcophagus may have spent her early life in the southern Mediterranean, possibly the area around Rome itself.

Fig. 19. Large 'football' flasks from the mausoleum at Spitalfields. Copyright MOLA. Photogaph by Maggie Cox.

As analytical techniques improve and work continues on the remains of the dead from London's various Roman cemeteries, the geographic origins of its population will become clearer and can be compared against any associated cultural artefacts to better understand the interplay between cultural and biological identity, wealth and status.

Something Fishy Going on in Southwark: Diet, Mobility and Burial Practices in Londinium's Southern Cemetery
Victoria Ridgeway, PCA

This paper discussed the burials found at Lant Street and Trinity Street on the limits of Roman settlement in Southwark where there is some evidence of Roman occupation and a nearby second century temple; a configuration that persisted into the fourth century AD. By 1996 we had seen the recovery of 38 cremations and 48 inhumations in this southern cemetery area as a whole, However, in the following twenty years that number had increased to 46 cremation burials and 416 inhumations, as a result of developer-funded projects.

The second to fourth century site at Lant Street consists of 84 inhumations and 2 cremations. Most burials comprise disarticulated bone, with males slightly outnumbering females by a ratio of 1.3:1, while roughly 28 percent are children; 35 percent of all graves contained grave goods. Out of the skeletal remains, 22 individuals were sampled for isotopic analysis, sampling oxygen to highlight their mobility, and carbon and nitrogen to analyse their diets. This population was diverse, whilst many had grown up and/or spent most of their lives in London, some more diverse signatures do suggest that quite a few individuals were probably migrants from warmer climates. Analysis of the individual from Burial 15, for example – a teenager found with an iron and ivory folding knife in the shape of a panther (Fig. 20), a copper-alloy chain and key, and a wooden casket with key inlay (an object with few British or Continental parallels) - indicates that she had spent much of her younger life in the Mediterranean before evidently coming to, and spending the rest of her life in, Britain. Intriguingly, the carbon and nitrogen analyses demonstrated that this population had consumed little or no freshwater or marine fish in their later life.

At Trinity Street, a second to fifth century burial site, 35 isotopic samples showing low consumption of marine fish but higher levels of freshwater fish. Oxygen and strontium analyses suggest less mobility amongst this group compared to the people buried at Lant Street. However, a couple of the individuals buried at Trinity Street are probably incomers as well. As such, Trinity Street broadly contains a more homogenous group of people with similar isotopic signatures.

Generally speaking, the graves from both the Lant Street and Trinity Street sites evidence the mixed burial practices of a culturally diverse population in Roman London but further analysis of grave alignment and artefacts will no doubt help provide a more detailed picture of this in the future.

Fig. 20. Ivory and iron leopard knife. Courtesy of Victoria Ridgeway.

Designing 'The Roman Dead'
Jackie Keily and Meriel Jeater, MOL

The final talk of the morning explained the rationale behind and creation of 'The Roman Dead' exhibition at the Museum of London Docklands. Jackie explained that inspiration for the exhibition came from the discovery of a stone sarcophagus in the foundation of a mausoleum at Harper Road in Southwark during 2017. Found with its lid ajar (probably disturbed) the sarcophagus offered a new glimpse into burial practices in Roman London, though not first without some conservation to preserve it by specialists Taylor Pearce – especially because of the severe cracking in the lid. Excavation of the finds took place at Mortimer Wheeler House where the soil was removed and sieved. This revealed approximately 75% of the skeleton of a woman laid on her side and grave goods including a second century jasper intaglio which may well have been an heirloom by the time it was put in the grave in AD 275-280, and a small gold sheet – possibly part of a piece of jewellery. And finally, on May 10th 2018, after meticulous preparation, the sarcophagus was lifted into the gallery space, overcoming the tricky hurdle of carefully unloading and navigating such a heavy object into an old sugar warehouse that itself dates back to 1802.

Once positioned in the centre of the gallery, the object that went on to surround it were selected by rooting through all of the existing excavation reports and archives, while the opportunity was also taken to reanalyse many of the historical finds as well, including nine cremation urns filled with disarticulated bone of an adult found in 1866. As well as carefully considering how to present such sensitive funerary material, the results of several focus groups showed that it was important to show diversity amongst the material, as well as exhibit the remains of males, females and children as respectfully as possible. One of the outcomes of this was a decision to keep infant remains separate from those of adults to avoid any distress they might cause to some visitors.

Overall the exhibition's layout as a cemetery with subtle lighting and mid-lit walls is as memorable as the material itself (Fig. 21), and made respectfully accessible what is both fascinating but also very sensitive subject matter.

Matthew Fittock

Session 2

Jane/John Doe: Identifying Roman Mobility Using Bioarchaeology
Rebecca Redfern, MOL

Rebecca has been looking at skeletal remains and integrating finds research with environmental evidence to identify population mobility in the Roman period. Inscriptions in Roman Britain are heavily biased towards the military and suggest a high degree of mobility. Rebecca used scientific approaches to look at the skeletal remains, looking for ancient DNA, and stable isotope analysis to look at diet. Examination of non-native plants such as millet, a food associated with poverty in the Roman period revealed two individuals eating the seeds. Strontium/ Oxygen analysis revealed that the majority of individuals examined grew up in London. However, closer examination of inhumations from around the city revealed a surprising range of people. Notably a male of Black African ancestry who grew up in London and had suffered with DISH, a disease associated with a rich diet and a woman in her late 30s who grew up in North Africa, buried with locally produced pottery.

The results of the survey of Roman London's dead revealed that the city had a diverse population of 1st and 2nd generation migrants. It demonstrated that social inequalities were present in Roman London though they do not seem to have been based on ancestry or origin. The majority of migrants to the city came from Europe, particularly Italy, Gaul and Germany. It also demonstrated that the faces of people living in Roman London were wider than those of the present day. The research performed by Rebecca fed directly in to the Roman Dead exhibition and highlighted the mobility of the Roman population of the city.

Commemoration and Internment of the Roman Dead in London: The Use of Stone
Kevin Hayward, PCA

Kevin's talk discussed the sources of stone used in the commemorative monuments of Roman London. Arguably these monuments are the most conspicuous forms of commemoration, the study of stone monuments has focused primarily on what is depicted or written upon them rather than the stone itself. In this field Kevin argues we lag behind the continent in understanding that the choice of stone used for the monument is as important as what it depicts. This is

Fig. 21. The Roman Dead Exhibition gallery layout. Copyright Museum of London.

especially true in Britain where there is no monumental use of stone prior to the Roman period.

London, despite having no local stone source, has a large number of monuments, many were reused in the bastions of the land wall. In most cases these monuments are recorded as 'limestone' or 'marble' despite the wide range of these terms and their lack of geological specificity. Mineralogical examination of the stone used in these monuments has revealed a wide range of sources for the monuments of Roman London. There was exploitation of imported Caen stone from norther Gaul, however, the monument of Classicianus was produced from an Oolitic limestone found near Tetbury, Gloucestershire. As this is the only example known from this source it suggests it was perhaps a one-off commission for the deceased.

The close dating of many monuments also allowed Kevin to observe trends over time. Primarily that while there is a noticeable increase in the use of stone from the 2nd century onwards there is an observable decline in the quality of the stone used. This perhaps reflects improved economic access to the stone sources of the South Cotswolds. As inhumation became more prevalent in the 3rd and 4th centuries there was also a change in the types of stone used. The softer limestones and sandstones of earlier monuments were replaced by harder limestones that were more durable.

Marking the Dead in Roman London:
Text, Sculpture, Monument
John Pearce, Kings College London

The final talk of the session looked again at the theme of monumentality in Roman London's cemeteries. This time though, examining the role of text in roadside monuments. Only a small fraction of the population could afford a stone monument and of that fraction, an even smaller amount survive. Despite the size and importance of London there are very few fragments, most that have survived were reused in the Roman bastions and are not *In situ*. Indeed, only 33 epitaphs have survived from the city, along with 38 fragments of monuments. These largely reflect a skewed population sample, more men than women, more adults than children and heavily biased towards the military and public officials.

When looking at these monuments we should see the text as part of the decoration and therefore the aesthetic quality of the object. These monuments were a form of conspicuous competitive display between groups. The size of the lettering and the shaping of the letters all have a part to play in this display. Indeed, even the way that the daylight falls upon the lettering has a bearing on the impact of a monument, highlighting or hiding the letters at different times of the day. The largest lettering on monuments is reserved normally for the fulfilling of religious duties, thus the D. M. of *Dis Manibvs* is normally in a larger font than the life achievements of the individual.

To conclude John spoke of the difficulty of calibrating London in a European context. London sits alongside smaller second order settlements in epigraphic monuments. This is possibly due to the longer epigraphic habit of many European towns and cities and due to ferocious medieval reuse of the stonework in the limekilns of the later city. Despite this, those fragments that do survive speak of a mobile city with wide connections across the Empire.

All three of the talks in Session Two demonstrated how London's dead were not only from a wide variety of backgrounds and ethnicities, but also had connections across the province and the Empire. They chose to reflect their status through the types of stone they used for their monument and to compete with the other families of the city through elaborate monuments. They made use of lettering as a form of display, that even the illiterate who passed by would have understood how to interpret. The use of science to look at the bones of the dead, the stone of the monuments, alongside the interpretation of the archaeology and epigraphy has led to a truly integrated understanding of the Roman funerary context.

Edwin Wood

Session 3

Scroll Holders and the Funerary Pyre:
An Example from Roman London?
Stephen Greep, RFG

In the 1940's, Fermersdorf published about doors and hinges based on evidence from graves in Belgium and Cologne. The hinges were made of bone and antler. In Roman London, at Eastern Cemetery grave B197, a bone disc with terminal and tubs was found. Stephen surmised that this was not a hinge as previously suggested but part of a scroll holder. He showed numerous examples of hinges from both the UK and Europe which were made of bone as well as sculptural and illustrated references to hinges and doors. The disc/terminal/tube combination was uncommon. But in cemetery contexts, including Heidelberg where 49 graves have at least one of the three this combination is more prevalent. Where the sex of the grave could be obtained the person buried was female and many of them were also buried with pork. Most commonly they date to AD125-250. There have now been complete ones found at Cologne and Huissen and another complete with wooden bar in centre found in Schagen. A recent find from Bemme showed the scroll holder in situ. Stephen suggested that they could be for professional female scribes.

Tombs of Unknown Craftsmen?
Carpenter Burials in Roman Britain and Europe
Owen Humphreys, University of Reading/MOLA

Owen surmised that it is difficult to always link grave goods to what the dead were doing in life. This is especially true when looking at tools which are buried with the dead. As an example, he looked at Eastern Cemetery grave B256 in London. This grave included an axe and a shale bangle, but the bones did not survive. Due to the goods it was assumed that the grave belonged to a woodworker. Overall in Roman Britain there are few graves with associated tools but of the few available Owen has broken them into two groups.

Group 1 include cremations with tools. There are two examples of this; one a female from Turners Hall Farm with woodworking planes which could have been used for arrow making, and the second from Wellwick Farm where the individual was buried with pottery and an adze. There are continental parallels.

Group 2 are inhumations like the London example and Dyke Hill. In both they are buried with axes. Usually seen as 'weapons burials', there are continental parallels most closely associated with Germanic male military burials. But the axes are to heavy too big and heavy to be weapons and are more likely to be tools.

Mystery Solved: A Gold Plaque in the Collections of the Yorkshire Museum
Adam Parker, York Museum Trust

When looking through the collection, Adam found a 10cm by ½ cm gold plaque (Fig. 22). It has two holes at either side with one perforation going front to back and the other going back to front. Adam began to investigate the object. He turned to the museum's historic handbook written by Wellbeloved and found an entry about the object that it has been found close to a female skull and was associated with a coin of Severus dating it to the early 3rd century. There was also a reference in the catalogue which put the grave on the land of the current railway station. Adam was able to find the skull (the only part of the skeleton to survive) and the coin which is confirmed to be Severan.

Adam published his mystery object in *Lucerna* 52 (p. 10) in January 2017 and was contacted by a member of the group with an article about similar plaques on the continent. They are always made of gold and would have been placed over the mouth of the deceased; something that he currently believes is the only example of this practice so-far identified from Roman Britain There are 23 plaques associated with inhumations. The York plaque also has a small inscription of FL. This was written up by Roger Tomin in *Britannia* 48 (see III. Inscriptions, pp. 457-490) and could be interpreted as Flavius. The project was part of the Arts Council England funded 'Old Collections, New Questions' Romans research project at the Yorkshire Museum.

Fig. 22. The gold plaque used as a face cover from Roman York. Copyright York Museums Trust (Yorkshire Museum) [CC By-SA 4.0].

Colchester's Roman Dead: Collections, Cremations and Coffins
Glynn Davis, Colchester Museum

At Colchester, Glynn has been working towards reassessing the Museum's collection of Roman cremations that form part of the antiquarian collection of George Joslin. Finds from this collection include the famous Marcus Favonius Facilis tombstone and the iconic Colchester Vase (Fig. 23). This object has often been seen as a beautiful piece within itself but is often overlooked as a cremation urn, of which the remains are still inside! Further objects that have been reconsidered as part of a project looking at Colchester's Roman Dead include a beautiful jet anthropomorphic pendant, which could have had apotropaic properties. Other jet pendants from Colchester include those depicting cupids (in the British Museum's collection) and the gorgon Medusa (recently excavated by CAT). The jet pendant could be a stylised African representation and is not completely dissimilar to the well-known amber 'African' pendant from Colchester - although both could be caricatures. A lost antiquarian inscription (RIB 193) records the rare presence of an African, Imilico, at Colchester.

Glynn also mentioned Roman lead coffins as a potential area of research as a corpus of these has not be revisited since a major publication by Toller in 1977. Two lead coffins from Colchester have recently been recovered by Essex Police and are soon to be acquired by Colchester Museums, having been studied by the Colchester Archaeological Trust.

Barbara Birley

Fig. 23. The Colchester Vase. Copyright Colchester Museums.

Request for Information

Help Needed for Lava Quern Project
Lindsay Banfield

I am a PhD student at the University of Reading (supervised by Ruth Shaffrey & Hella Eckardt) and am currently researching the social and economic significance of imported lava querns and millstones in Roman Britain. These distinctive stone objects are thought to originate from the Eifel region (Mayen). I will be cataloguing as many examples as possible to examine: distribution, typology, chronological variation and use-wear. As lava querns have not been subject to detailed study, I also aim to complete XRF analysis on a limited number of samples to provenance material to specific lava flows and quarries.

I was hoping that those of you who manage or hold collections of Roman period material might be able to assist in my investigation by providing access to study lava querns or millstones in your care. I would also be interested in recording any lava fragments, as they can still indicate the presence of these objects at a site or within a region. Alternatively, any database information you might have would also be helpful. If you are also able to provide permission for destructive analysis, that would be greatly beneficial, though I am still in the process of devising a detailed sampling strategy. I am of course happy to share the results of my findings with you.

If you think you can help, please contact me at l.banfield@pgr.reading.ac.uk. Thank you!

Recent Publications

New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain Volume 3: Life and Death in the Countryside of Roman Britain
By A. Smith, M. Allen, T. Brindle, M. Fulford, L. Lodwick & A. Rohnbogner. 2018. Roman Society Publications, Britannia Monograph 31. Paperback, 448p, 297x210, 129 colour &b/w, ISBN 9780907764465. Around £30.

This final volume of New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain focuses upon the people of rural Roman Britain – how they looked, lived, interacted with the material and spiritual worlds surrounding them, and also how they died and what their physical remains can tell us. Many previous syntheses of life and death in Roman Britain have drawn mostly upon data from urban or military settings with rural life being limited to the elite residing in villas. Thanks largely to the increase in new information resulting from developer-funded excavations over the past thirty years, this situation has now changed so that we can place the spotlight firmly on the mass of the rural population living in farmsteads and nucleated settlements across the Roman province. This is a world that has rarely been explored before and provides a picture of the countryside of Roman Britain that is – for the most part – far removed from the bucolic scenes of villa-life.

The six main chapters in this volume each tackle a different theme relating to life and death in the countryside of Roman Britain, all combining to facilitate construction of a broad social archaeology of the province. Overall the analyses indicate a geographically and socially diverse society influenced by pre-existing cultural traditions and degrees of social connectivity between settlements. There is no doubt that incorporation into the Roman Empire brought with it a great deal of social change though it would appear that this change was largely to the detriment of many of those living in the countryside.

Londinium: A Biography (Fig. 24)
By Richard Hingley, 2018. Bloomsbury Publishing. Paperback, 400p, 189x246x22.86, *55* Maps. ISBN 9781350047297. £various.

This major new work on Roman London brings together the many new discoveries of the last generation and provides a detailed overview of the city from before its foundation in the first century to the fifth century AD. Richard Hingley explores the archaeological and historical evidence for London under the Romans, assessing the city in the context of its province and the wider empire. He explores the multiple functions of Londinium over time, considering economy, industry, trade, status and urban infrastructure, but also looking at how power, status, gender and identity are reflected through the materiality of the terrain and waterscape of the evolving city. A particular focus of the book is the ritual and religious context in which these activities occurred. Hingley looks at how places within the developing urban landscape were inherited and considers how the history and meanings of Londinium built upon earlier associations from its recent and ancient past.

As well as drawing together a much-needed synthesis of recent scholarship and material evidence, Hingley offers new perspectives that will inspire future debate and research for years to come. This volume not only provides an accessible introduction for undergraduate students and anyone interested in the ancient city of London, but also an essential account for more advanced students and scholars.

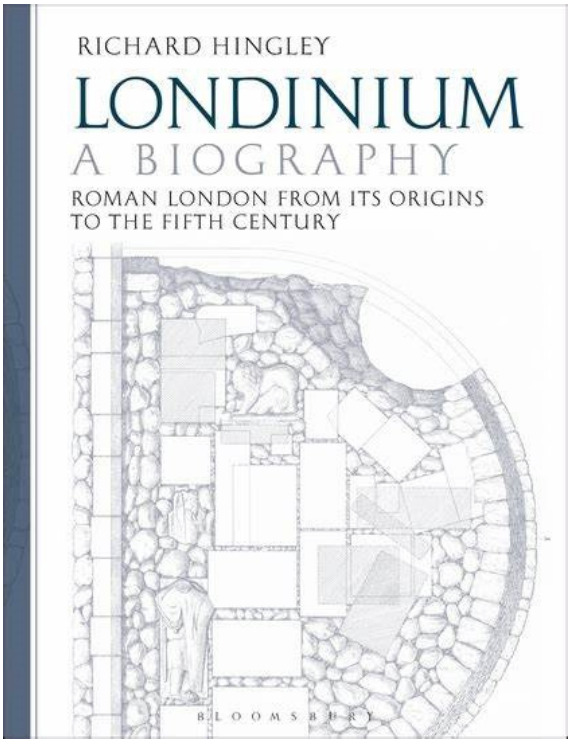

Fig. 24. Front cover of Londinium: A Biography.

Embracing the Provinces: Society and Material Culture of the Roman Frontier Regions
By T. Ivleva, J. de Bruin & M. Driessen (eds.). 2018. Oxbow Books. Hardback. 226p, 280 x 216, ISBN 9781789250152. £48.

Embracing the Provinces is a collection of essays focused on people and their daily lives living in the Roman provinces, c. 27 BC-AD 476. The main aim is to showcase the vibrancy of Roman provincial studies and suggest new directions, or new emphasis, for future investigation of Roman provincial world. It capitalizes on a wealth of data made available in recent decades to provide a holistic view on life in the Roman provinces by analysing various aspects of daily routine in the frontier regions, such as eating, dressing, and interacting. The contributors, who are acknowledged experts in their fields, make use of innovative interpretations and modern approaches to address current issues in the study of the provinces and frontiers of the Roman Empire. Twenty-one essays are cohesively structured around five themes, encompassing studies on the female and juvenile presence on Roman military sites, Roman provincial cooking, and Roman cavalry and horse equipment. For the first time in the Roman provincial scholarship the volume has a special section on the subject of Roman leather, providing a much-needed overview of the current stance of work. A few papers deal also with experimental archaeology. The essays reflect a wide geographical and chronological range, while retaining thematic consistency, and will be of great interest to those working in Roman archaeology and provincial studies.

Gill Mill: Later Prehistoric Landscape and a Roman Nucleated Settlement in the Lower Windrush Valley nearWitney, Oxfordshire
By P. Booth & A. Simmonds. 2018. Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph No. 42. Hardback. 916p, 297x210, 410 illustrations, 168 tables ISBN 9781905905423. £35

The valley floodplain landscape covered by the Gill Mill quarry, almost 130ha, was intensively exploited from about 300 BC at a variety of Iron Age settlements. The largest of these remained in occupation into the early 3rd century AD, but meanwhile a large nucleated settlement grew up around a road junction roughly 1km distant to the NW. This became the sole focus of occupation, covering an area of about 10ha. Featuring multiple ditched enclosures, some in very regular layouts associated with one of the roads, the settlement contained relatively few identified buildings and appears to have had a specialised economic role related to systematic cattle management, illuminated in part by large finds and environmental assemblages. It may have been an integral component of a wider estate holding and perhaps had an administrative focus (including a shrine) at its unexcavated centre. It is notable that occupation of the site had almost entirely ceased by about AD 370.

Roman Leicester. Life in the Roman World
By G. Savani, S. Scott & M. Morris. 2018. School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester, 64p. ISBN 9780957479258. £8.95.

Through a combination of narrative and new archaeological research Life in the Roman World: Roman Leicester by Giacomo Savani, Sarah Scott and Mathew Morris explores the nature of everyday life under the Romans. Based on the world-class research of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History (SAAH), the excavations and publications of University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), and objects at the Jewry Wall Museum and the Harborough Museum, it examines topics which still concern us today, such as conflict, social inequality, multiculturalism, migration, diet, disease and death. Inspired by recent archaeological discoveries in Leicester, the narrative imagines the experiences and responses of ordinary people living in the town through four centuries of Roman rule. Leicester is examined in detail because it is one of the most excavated urban centres in Britain, and the range of evidence shows us that it was a vibrant multicultural centre from its earliest phases.

The book is aimed at KS3-5 (11 to 18 years) and is linked to a new resource for teachers entitled Life in the Roman World: Ratae Corieltavorum (Roman Leicester) which includes session plans, activities and worksheets, as well as introducing Latin in the context of the archaeology of Roman Leicester. The resources are available for free download from our website (https://le.ac.uk/archaeology/outreach/for-teachers/teaching-resources).

Roman Funerary Monuments of South-Western Pannonia in their Material, Social, and Religious Context
By B. Migotti, M. Šašel Kos & I. Radman-Livaja. 2018. Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 45. Paperback. 205x290; ix+276p (133 plates in colour). Printed ISBN 9781789690217, £50. Epublication ISBN 9781789690224, £16.

This book has come about as a result of the project Roman Funerary Monuments of South-Western Pannonia in their Material, Social, and Religious Context, unfolding between 2015 and 2018 in the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts under the auspices of the Croatian Science Foundation, with B. Migotti as the project leader and M. Šašel Kos and I. Radman-Livaja as collaborators.

Roman Funerary Monuments of South-Western Pannonia in their Material, Social, and Religious Context examines around two hundred funerary monuments and fragments (stelai, sarcophagi, ash-chests, tituli, altars, medallions and buildings) from three Roman cities in the south-west part of the Roman province of Pannonia in the territory of north-west Croatia: colonia Siscia (Sisak) and municipia Andautonia (Ščitarjevo) and Aquae Balissae (Daruvar). A juxtaposition of the evidence from three administrative units of different dimensions and municipal profiles, and of unequal importance in the wider area, offered a good opportunity for a meaningful comparison of the main components for a reconstruction of material, social and cultural components of the three Romano-provincial communities. The components studied were: 1 – territorial scope of the individual cities; 2 – quantification of the monuments in terms of kinds and chronology; 3 – structural typology and iconography; 4 – social aspects of the monument use; 5 – ritual and religious aspects (incineration vs. inhumation, classical religion vs. Christianity); 6 – geo-archaeological aspect. The most valuable contributions have been achieved in the geo-archaeological field, as such research had never been carried out in the studied area before.

Britannia Monographs Now Available Online!

Several Britannia Monographs, one of the many leading publications of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, are now available for free download online via the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). To peruse and download the list of titles visit http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/series.xhtml?recordId=280.

Conferences and Events

Styx, stones & Roman bones
16th–24th February 2019
Museum of London

This family-friendly interactive summer show explores how the Romans treated their dead. Roman Londoner Claudia passed away over 1,800 years ago, and according to her beliefs, her soul should have crossed the River Styx to the Underworld long ago. For some reason, she's still here! Join in to learn what this ancient Londoner has seen over the centuries and explore the differences between modern London and Roman Londinuim. Then, help Claudia finish the journey she started more than 1,800 years ago by recreating a Roman funeral to guide her to the Underworld. Celebrate Claudia's life with music and other Roman traditions in the interactive and sensory show aimed at families with children aged seven and above. Free advanced booking.

Institute of Archaeology Lecture:
Moving bodies and making place: rethinking pilgrimage in early Roman Latium
12th March 2019; 5:30 PM
Room 349, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1

Emma-Jayne Graham (Open University) will give the penultimate Accordia Lecture of the 2018-19 series. The lecture is entitled Moving bodies and making place: rethinking pilgrimage in early Roman Latium and all are welcome. This event is a joint lecture with the Institute of Classical Studies. Any enquiries about the Accordia Lectures on Italy 2018-19 series may be directed to: ruthataccordia@gmail.com

Berkshire Archaeological Society's Conference
6th April 2019; 10am to 4pm
The Cornerstone Hall, Wokingham, RG40 1UE

The conference will have ten specialist talks starting with prehistoric evidence found in quarries and on the banks of the Thames, through the Roman period with Professor Fulford talking on the Roman baths, Silchester and Dr Sara Machin discussing Nero's brickworks. Paul Booth of Oxford Archaeology will offer his thoughts on eleven years of excavation on Roman Dorchester and on to Mediaeval Runnymede and the churchyard at St Mary's, Wargrave.

All welcome. Bring a packed lunch or local cafes available. Parking nearby. Entrance: £10. For further information contact: tacoombs1@gmail.com.

TRAC 2019
11th April – 14th April 2019
University of Kent, Canterbury

This year TRAC 2019 will be hosted by The Department of Classical and Archaeological Studies at the University of Kent, Canterbury. The plenary lecture will be on the evening of the 11th, followed by two days of three conference sessions running in parallel, as well as an 'un-conference' session. On the Sunday 14th, delegates will have the choice of excursions to the Saxon Shore Forts of Reculver or Richborough, as well the Painted House in Dover.

The registration fees include light refreshments during the day (tea, coffee, biscuits and a drink at the conference reception but no lunch). For any questions, please contact: trac2019@kent.ac.uk

Corinium Mosaics with Emma Stuart
18 April 2019, 2:30-3:30pm
Corinium Museum

Join Emma as she takes you on a journey through the mosaics of Roman Corinium. Hear about the development of the mosaic collection and how mosaics were lifted and laid in their current place in the museum. The tour will last approximately an hour with places to sit en-route. We will end with a rare look at some of the paintings and sketches of mosaics from the Museum archive. £5 - £5.50.

Rampart Scotland
15th–21st July 2019
King's Park Cairn, Stirling

Explore a newly discovered Romano-British fort, nestled at the heart of Scotland's oldest and best preserved Royal Park. All welcome, costs £50 a day (no accommodation or food provided). For more details or to book a place contact Dr Murray Cook on info@rampartscotland.co.uk

The Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall 2019
20th–28th July 2019
Newcastle and Carlisle

The first 4 days of the Pilgrimmage will be based in Newcastle and the remainder in Carlisle. The Wall will be visited from South Shields on the North Sea to Maryport on the Solway. Pilgrims will travel in coaches between sites but there will be plenty of walking. The main themes of the tours will be the evidence for the building of the Wall and its later history in the third and fourth centuries. Eight experts in Hadrian's Wall will undertake the guiding.

The registration fee for participation will be approximately £410 per person. Please enquire for options for accommodation, if required. For booking contact: elizabethallnutt@btinternet.com

An AHRC-funded collaboration between the University of Kent, Manchester Metropolitan University, and the Petrie Museum at UCL

https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/egypt-artefacts/

UCL PETRIE MUSEUM OF EGYPTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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