



Roman Britain in 1998

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Britannia*, Vol. 30 (1999), pp. 319-386

Published by: [Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/526690>

Accessed: 28/11/2012 09:15

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II. Inscriptions¹

By R.S.O. TOMLIN and M.W.C. HASSALL

A. MONUMENTAL

1. **London** (*Londinium*, TQ 3236 8080), Upper Thames Street, EC4 (FIG. 1 (a) and (b), PL. XXVIII A and B). Inscribed pewter tablet, 150 to 163 mm by 75 mm, cut from paper-thin, flexible foil made of lead alloyed with tin, found² in 1989 unstratified on the site of the medieval and Roman waterfront. It has been damaged by ancient folding, and the smooth metallic patination typical of metal tablets deposited in water has been abraded by modern cleaning, but the text is well preserved. It was inscribed with a sharp point, probably that of a writing-stilus, and contains both cursive and capital-letter forms.³ (For transcription see FIG. 1(a) and (b).) It seems to be a list of valuables, but has not been fully interpreted: 'Belts, 2. (One) pound of *incroinatura*. Pellets of gold, 9. (One) ... towel. (One) napkin. A small box decorated with(?) a *tumus*. Silver ring, 11. Gold (rings), 10. ...'

Transcription⁴

CINTOS II LIBRAM INCROINATVRE
PASTELOS AVRI VIII SABANVM ALXADRI
MAPPAM LOCELLVM TVMVM
ORNATVM ANVLVM ARGENTE
5 VM XI AVRIOS X OIIDI IV VENTI
NOTANNS A DOMINO ILLVTRASI

NIICIOCTORIS PVRDO

¹ Inscriptions on STONE and the two leaden tablets have been arranged as in the order followed by R.G. Collingwood and R.P. Wright in *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* Vol. i (Oxford, 1965), henceforth cited as *RIB*. Citation is by item and not page number. Inscriptions on PERSONAL BELONGINGS and the like (*instrumentum domesticum*) have been arranged alphabetically by site under their counties. For each site they have been ordered as in *RIB*, pp. xiii–xiv. The items of *instrumentum domesticum* published in the eight fascicules of *RIB* II (1990–95), edited by S.S. Frere and R.S.O. Tomlin, are cited by fascicule, by the number of their category (*RIB* 2401–2505) and by their sub-number within it (e.g. *RIB* II.2, 2415. 53). When measurements are quoted, width precedes the height. Unless otherwise indicated (e.g. No. 1, London), Dr Tomlin (RSOT) is responsible for entries north of the Mersey–Humber line and Mr Hassall (MWCH) for those south of it.

² With four other pewter tablets, not yet published, during excavation by the Museum of London. Helen Hatcher analysed it by XRF in the Research Laboratory for Archaeology, Oxford, and found that it averaged (in round figures) lead 40%, tin 60%, with traces of other metals. The other four tablets, although similar in composition, do not bear related texts; the most important is a Greek metrical phylactery against 'plague'. Jenny Hall made them available to RSOT, who has published this tablet more fully in M. Henig and D. Plantzos (eds), *Classicism to Neoclassicism: Essays dedicated to Gertrud Seidmann* (1999), 105–10.

³ Tabulated in *Tab. Sulis*, pp. 91–4. There are only two cursive ligatures, VI in 2, and RA at the end of 6. B is a capital, but D cursive, with a possible exception in ALXADRI (2). E is generally cursive, but at the end of ARGENTE (4) it is a capital. P is a capital in 3 (MAPPAM), but cursive in 2 (PASTELOS). R wavers between a capital-letter form in 1 and a cursive form thereafter. Where the word is uncertain or the letter damaged, it can be difficult to distinguish A from R, C from E and T, and N from IV or RI.

⁴ Transcribed as capitals, but see previous note. The scribe, unless he was pressed for space (for example in 2, 4 and 5),

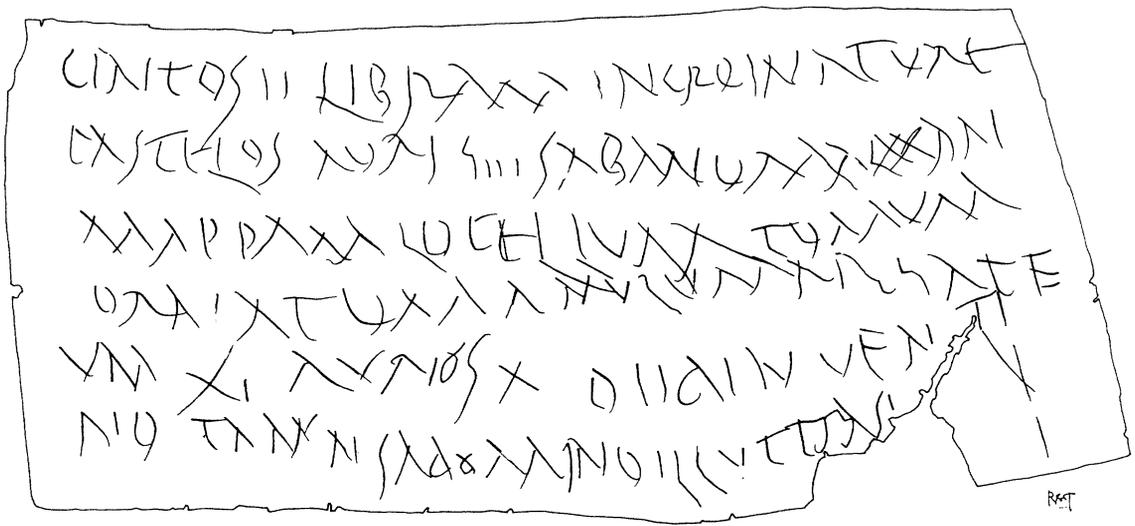


FIG. 1 (a). London: inscribed pewter tablet, No. 1 (obverse). Scale 9:10.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

separated words. Recognizable words have been separated here, but difficulties remain in 5, 6 and 7. A line-by-line commentary follows.

1. CINTOS II. The accusative is 'a sort of unmarked case which in accounts and lists could be given to the nouns signifying the object(s) bought / sold' (Adams in *JRS* 85 (1995), 114). The substantive *cintus* is unattested, but CINTOS is an acceptable Vulgarism for *cinctos* < Classical *cinctus*; cf. *cinto* ('belt') in modern Italian.

LIBRAM INCROINATVRE, *libram incroinatur(a)e*. The metal is creased and split after M, and the sequence NCR would be impossible at the beginning of a new word without a preceding vowel; but there is space after M for I, and possible trace of it in the damage. The substantive *incroinatura* is not attested, but the word might be corrupt; two verbal nouns, both hypothetical, may be suggested. (i) *incoctura* ('tinning'), from the verb *incoquere* used by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 34. 162) of 'tinning' vessels; hence they were called *incoctilia* (ibid.), an adjective also applied to the 'tinned' (perhaps silvered) leaf-stops which contrast with the gilt letters of an inscription (*CIL* viii 6982). (ii) *incoriatura* ('leather fittings'), from a presumed verb *corio(r)*, 'make *corium*, leather', like the unique verbal noun *coriatio* found in *Tab. Vindol.* II, 343.40 (with *JRS* 85 (1995), 108). If CINTOS II is indeed 'two belts', this might be the bronze buckles, strap ends, belt-stiffeners, which would have belonged to them. (ii) is closer than (i) to *incroinatura*, but they are both only guesses.

2. PASTELOS AVRI VIII. PASTELOS is the accusative plural of *pastelus*, an acceptable Vulgarism for *pastillus*, a diminutive of *panis* ('loaf') used of bun-like objects; it is usually found in the medical sense of 'pill'. So perhaps a 'pellet' of gold, either a gold bead, or more likely a nugget or smelted granule.

SABANVM is a (linen) towel. Diocletian's Prices Edict lists various types and qualities and, since one is explicitly 'Gallic', Holder, *Altceltischer Sprachschatz* (s.v.), collects many other references. But none of them throws light on ALXADRI, if this qualified *sabanum*.

ALXADRI. The dotted letters are the likeliest reading. With its backward-curving second stroke, 'D' is unique in this text; it seems to be an ill-formed capital-letter D, rather than A or R. Next comes the same visual combination as in 7, where it seems to be RI. Egypt was a major source of linen cloth, and 'Coptic' linen towels survive, so it may be conjectured that ALXADRI is an error or a scribal contraction for *Al(e)xa(n)dri* or even *Al(e)xa(n)dri(num)*, '(one) Alexandrian towel'. But there is no evidence that they were exported as far as Britain, or even that the terms 'Egyptian' or 'Alexandrian' actually described a superior grade of towel.

3-4. LOCELLVM TVMVM ORNATVM. E has been written over I, as if the scribe first envisaged a diminutive in *-illus*. *Locellus* is a diminutive *locus*, a 'little place' for storage; cf. Valerius Maximus 7. 8.9, *anulos in locellum repositos*, 'rings kept in a little box'. In view of the rings in 4-5, this is an attractive sense here. TVMVM ORNATVM would be descriptive of LOCELLVM, not a new item, if the accusative TVMVM were a solecism for the ablative required by ORNATVM, because attracted into the same case as the surrounding accusatives. This unknown substantive *tumus* might be cognate with

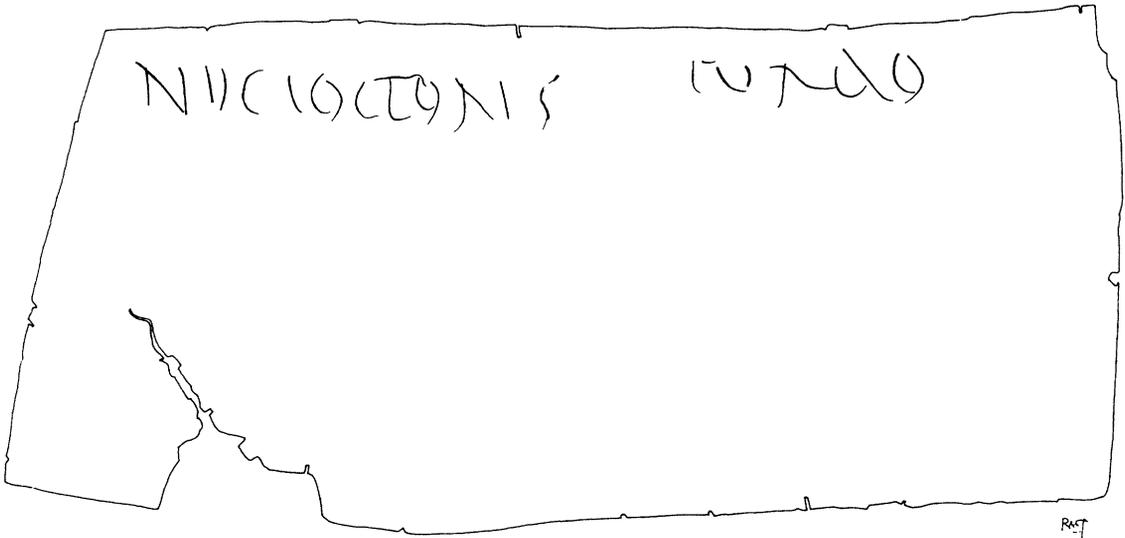


FIG. 1 (b). London: inscribed pewter tablet, No. 1 (reverse). Scale 9:10.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

tumulus ('mound'), but possibly TVMVM is a syncopation of *tympanium* ('drum'), a technical term recorded by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 9. 109) for a large pearl flattened underneath. Britain was a notorious source of pearls (Tacitus, *Agric.* 12.6).

4–5. ANVLVM ARGENTEVM XI AVRIOS X. Clearly a catalogue of finger-rings, with note of metal and number. AVRIOS is a Vulgarism for *aureos*. The scribe must have intended ARGENTEVM, but instead of GE he made two loops which resemble a late-Roman cursive E; and instead of NT, he has written AT. (Perhaps he missed out T, and added it by crossing the N; but more likely, as he wrote the third stroke of N, he thought he was already writing T.) ARGENTEVM is followed by another demonstrable error, the numeral XI: a singular noun followed by the plural '11'. Obviously the scribe meant '11 rings, 1 silver, 10 gold', which would have been ANVLOS XI ARGENTEVM I AVREOS X, but by oversight he has syncopated it.

5–6. The right-hand corner is not inscribed. The writing goes up towards the end of both lines as if to avoid the split in the metal, which would thus seem to be original. The incised marks beyond it are due to the stylus slipping while writing TI at the end of 5.

OIIDI. This resembles the sequence in 7, NIICI, each being followed by an apparent noun or personal name in the genitive case (see below). Both OIIDI and NIICI are placed as the beginnings of 'words', but as letter-sequences they are impossible; so perhaps they consist of numerals and one-letter abbreviations.

IV VENTI. IV with its elongated I and diagonal third stroke can hardly be N. The personal name *Iuventi* ('of Iuventus') is possible, but the gap between IV and VENTI may indicate that the scribe intended IVMENTI, genitive of *iuumentum* ('beast of burden'). He wrote V variously with curving strokes (see ORNATVM), and with straight diagonals (see AVRIOS) like those of M; thus he may have written V for M here by mistake. There is another gap after NO in 6, suggesting that it ended a word, but if the scribe had intended IVVENTINO (the ablative of *Iuventus*) he would surely have added the NO to 5, where there was plenty of room. A more attractive idea is that he actually intended INVENTARIO ('inventory'), i.e. the list in 1–5.

NOTANNS A DOMINO. DOMINO is inevitable, and presumably A is its preposition. This isolates NOTANNS. The second N is not M, but its third stroke is cut by a short diagonal, followed apparently by another short diagonal, as if the scribe were inserting a small V.

ILLVTTRASI. The reading is fairly certain, but makes no sense. Perhaps the scribe interchanged two letters by mistake, and intended ILLUSTRATI, i.e. *a domino illustrati* ('marked by the owner').

7. NIICIOCTORIS. 'RI' is the same letter-combination as at the end of 2, and *-oris* is frequent as a genitive case-ending. But there is no obvious name or substantive here.

PVRDO. The word is undamaged and complete, but no such substantive or personal name, whether *purdo* or *purdus*, is known.

2. Ibid. (*Londinium*, TQ 3302 8119), 7–11 Bishopsgate, EC3. Fragment of a marble slab inscribed with good-quality letters, probably a tombstone, 0.145 by 0.095 m, 0.038 m thick, found⁵ in c. 1996 with miscellaneous Roman material in an area disturbed by quarry pits. Only part of two lines survives: [...] *vacat* MAR[...] | [...] *vacat* ET[...].

3. **Marlborough Downs** (SU 15 73), Wiltshire (FIG. 2). Oblong tablet with rounded corners, 72 by 49 mm, cut from sheet lead c. 1 mm thick, found⁶ in 1998 in topsoil near scattered Roman pottery and coins. The tablet is complete except for minor losses at the corners, but both faces are badly corroded and there is damage due to folding. There are surface indications in the corrosion layer of lead carbonate that both faces were originally inscribed, but after the tablet was folded into three, only two-thirds of its inner face was sufficiently protected for the underlying metal to retain the incisions of the writing-instrument. Some letters have also been lost in the first fold and in a central patch of deep corrosion, and they have all been lost to the right of the second fold. (For transcription see FIG. 2.)

‘I give (?). To the god Mars ... asks your Genius, Lord, that they [stop] as soon as possible and do not go for nine years. Do not allow [them] to sit [or to ...] ... ’⁷

Transcription

vacat do (over a) *vacat*
 deo Marti A[.]VNISEA id [est? ...]
 3–4 *eculium eum et secur*[...]
tidisse e . . . illum iume . [...]
 5 *rogat genium tuum dom*[ine]
ut quamp[im]m res[ideant?]
nec eant per annos novem n[on eis]
permittas nec sedere [nec ...]
 . . . MIMBRIC[...]

⁵ During excavation by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS). Angela Wardle made it available and provided details.

⁶ With a metal-detector, some miles south of Swindon, east of which another ‘curse tablet’ has been found, at Wanborough (*Britannia* 3 (1972), 363–7). The finder made it available, and showed the find-spot to RSOT.

⁷ Commentary line by line.

1. *do* is apparently a centred heading above the text, but not part of it, since the petitioner writes in the third person (see 5, *rogat*). Compare *dono* in *Tab. Sulis* 9 and *donavi* in *Britannia* 26 (1995), 371, No. 1 (Uley), which are also centred, but below the text.

2. *deo Marti*. M is awkwardly formed in four strokes unlike M elsewhere, but otherwise the reading is certain. ‘Mars’ was second to ‘Mercury’ as a Celtic god (Caesar, *Gallie War* 6. 17); tablets were addressed to him at Bath (*Tab. Sulis* 33, cf. 97), and at Uley he is identified with ‘Mercury’ (A. Woodward and P. Leach, *The Uley Shrines* (1993), 121–3, Nos 2 and 3, and 128–30, Nos 24 and 84).

After *Marti* the first letter is A (or perhaps T), but the next 2–3 letters are faint and ambiguous. If ID belongs to *id [est]*, it marks the end of the previous word; here SEA looks certain. One would expect the petitioner’s name, or perhaps a cult-title of Mars.

3. The first 3–4 letters are as drawn, but ambiguous; they might end with either IV or P.

eculium might therefore be *peculium* (‘property’), but in view of the possible reference to a ‘beast of burden’ in 4, it is tempting to understand *eculium* < *eculeum*, otherwise *equuleum* (accusative), a ‘small [or young] horse’. The demonstrative *eum* would imply ‘that foal’ had been mentioned already, which is unlikely; so *eum* may be a slip for (*m*)*eum*, ‘my pony’.

et secur[...] might be a second stolen object; the obvious restoration would be *secur[im]* (‘an axe’).

4. *tidisse*. The reading is certain, and the repeated E (probably *et*) marks the word-ending.

illum iume[ntum] is the most likely reading, with acceptable trace of the first stroke of N and the tail of M. For a stolen *iumentum* (‘beast of burden’) see Woodward and Leach, 118, No. 1. This reading would support *eculium* (‘pony’) in 3.

5. *rogat genium tuum, dom*[ine]. After ROG enough survives to exclude ROGO. The first stroke of A has apparently been lost in a series of vertical score-marks (not drawn). Despite *do* (1), therefore, the tablet is written in the third person. Requests are usually made ‘by’ someone’s ‘genius’ (*per genium*), not directly to it. This is also the first ‘curse tablet’

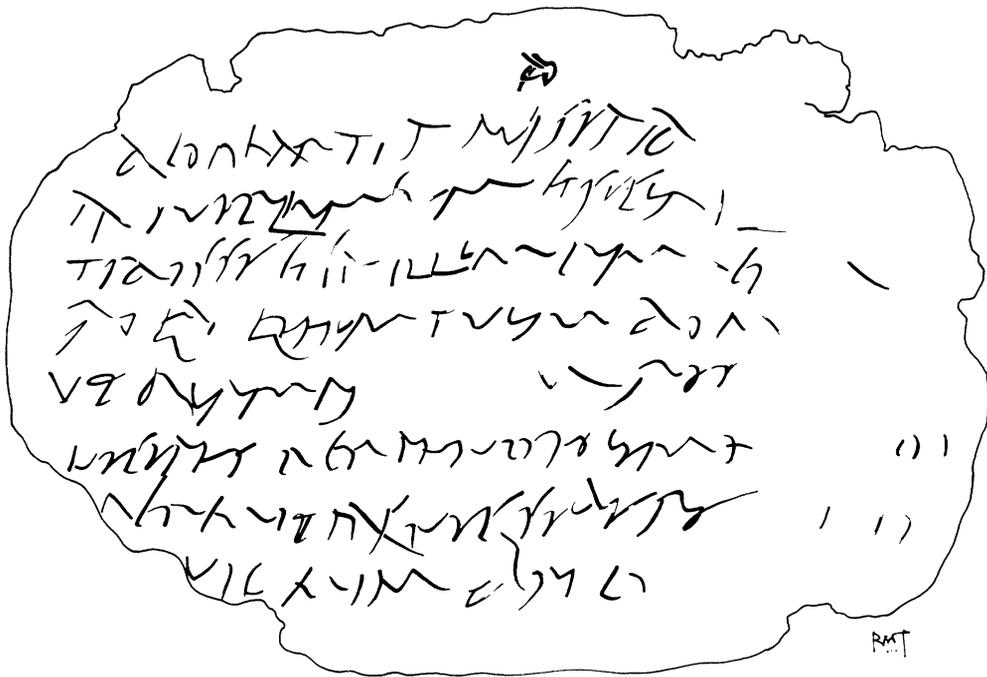


FIG. 2. Marlborough Downs: inscribed lead tablet, No. 3. Scale 3:2.
(Drawn by R.S.O. Tomlin)

4. **Old Carlisle** (*Mag(...)*, NY 259 463), Cumbria. Two conjoining fragments of a red sandstone slab probably a tombstone, 0.14 by 0.19 m, found⁸ in 1995 on the surface of a pasture field south of the fort. The back is irregular, but may be original; if so, the slab was only 0.030 to 0.035 m

addressed to a god's 'genius'. It is a variant of the formulaic address to the divine 'majesty' (for which see *Tab. Sulis*, p. 65, and cf. *Tab. Vindol.* II, 344, *tuam maiestatem imploro*). Neptune is invoked as *domine* in *Britannia* 28 (1997), 455, No. 1 (Hamble estuary), and Sulis as *domina dea* in *Tab. Sulis* 98. For two examples from Spain, see *Habis* 6 (1975), *domna Fons*, and J.-N. Bonneville, S. Dardaine, P. Leroux, *Belo V: L'Épigraphie* (1988), 21–4, No. 1, *rogo, domina, per maiestate(m) tua(m)*.

6–9. These lines, although incomplete, must contain a variant of the *non permittas* formula (see *Tab. Sulis*, pp. 65–6), which denies the victim physical well-being expressed as a series of complementary or alternative actions ('eating or drinking', 'waking or sleeping', etc.). The first prohibition here is unparalleled, but for the second see *Tab. Sulis* 54, *no[n] il[li] p[er]mittas nec sedere nec iacere*. However, the slight traces in the corrosion layer at the end of 8 do not suit *iacere*.

7. *per annos novem* is the first instance from Britain of this 'magical' length of time, but compare the formulaic time-limit of *ante dies nov[em]* ('before nine days') in *Britannia* 25 (1994), 296, No. 2 (Weeting with Broomhill), where other instances are cited.

9. After three damaged letters comes a series of four strokes just like MI in *permittas* (8); after that, MBR is well preserved.

⁸ By Mark Aylward, who took them to Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, to which they have now been given by the landowner, Mr Carter. Ian Caruana sent full details including a drawing and a photograph. Tim Padley made them available at Tullie House (accession no. 1996.11).

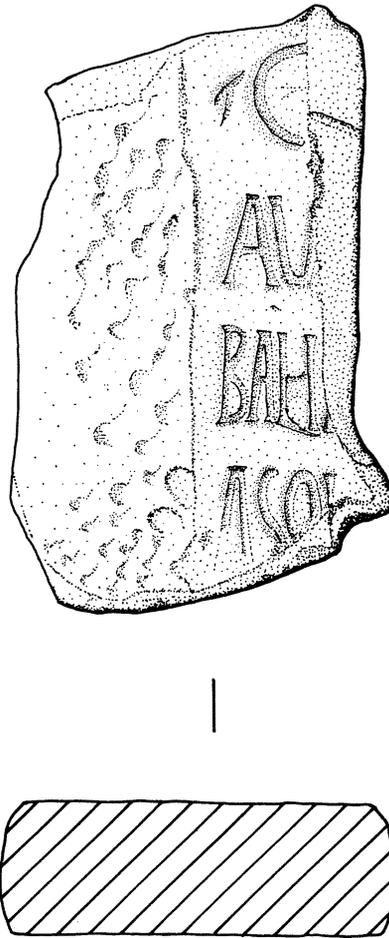


FIG. 3. Wallsend. Fragment of a sandstone building inscription, No. 5. Scale 1:4.
(Drawn by Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum)

thick. Part of a plain moulded border survives on the left-hand side. The letters are well-cut with V-shaped profile and serifs: [...] | CA[...] | AF(*or* P)[...] | O(*or* Q)[...] | [...].⁹

5. **Wallsend** (*Segedunum*, NZ 300 660) (FIG. 3 and PL. XXVIII). Fragment of a buff sandstone building inscription, 0.20 by 0.335 m, 0.07 m thick, found¹⁰ in 1998 unstratified in the area of the south-west gate (*porta quintana sinistra*). Only part of the left-hand edge survives, with a moulded

⁹ The two letters AF(*or* P)[...] are damaged by the break between them. The first letter has no cross-bar and, in spite of the A above being barred, it is probably an open A. Otherwise it might be N or ligatured M, but difficult sequences of letters would result. If this is the beginning of a personal name, *Apf...* is much more likely than *Aff...*. There is a space to the left of the letter below, of which one-third of a circle survives (from 9 o'clock to 1 o'clock); it is too large to be part of S.

¹⁰ During excavation by Tyne and Wear Museums on behalf of North Tyneside Council (now at Wallsend fort, inv. no. WS.IM.510). Alex Croom sent a drawing, photograph, squeeze and other details.

border trimmed flat: [...] | * C[...] | AV[...] | BALIN[...] | ASOL[...] | [...], [...] | c[...] | Au[...] | *balin[eum ...]* | *a sol[o ...]* | [...]. It records the building, or rather the rebuilding, of a bath-house 'from ground-level', perhaps in the period 198/210.¹¹

6. **High Rochester** (*Bremenium*, NY 833 985), Northumberland (PL. XXIX). Fragment of inscribed buff sandstone, 0.235 by 0.180 m, preserving the upper left-hand corner of the recessed rectangular panel of a tombstone, found¹² in 1998 in a field wall immediately south-west of the fort. It reads: D[...] | TE[...] | [...], *D(is) [M(anibus)]* | *Te[...]* | [...].

B. INSTRUMENTUM DOMESTICUM

DEVON

7. **Pomeroy Wood**, Honiton (SY 1325 9930). Two conjoining sherds from the shoulder of a black-burnished (BB1) jar probably third- or fourth-century in date, found¹³ in 1998. Scratched after firing: VIIIA[...], perhaps *VII Ia[nuari]*, '7' and '(property) of Ianuarius'.¹⁴

DURHAM

8. **Binchester** (*Vinovia*, NZ 210 313). Rim sherd of a dark grey jar found¹⁵ in 1977. Two graffiti have been scratched below the rim after firing: (a) 'X', a mark identifying a previous owner; and on top of 'X' (b), [...]TON[...].¹⁶

9. *Ibid.* Wall sherd of a vessel coated in pale slip, found in 1978, incised after firing with well-formed capital letters with serifs. They are fragmentary, but may read: [...]ATI[...], [...] *Jati*, '(property) of [...]atus'.

ESSEX

10. **Colchester** (*Camulodunum*, TL 998 251), Co-operative Stores, Long Wyre Street. Sherd

¹¹ Apart from *Britannia* 1 (1970), 306, No. 3, where its restoration is uncertain, there are 20 other instances from Britain of the phrase *a solo*. They are all Severan or later, like the lettering of this inscription (cf. *RIB* 1300), and they almost all refer to rebuilding. A non-religious building inscription longer than a 'centurial stone' is likely to have begun with imperial names and titles, and the likeliest restoration of the surviving letters in lines 1 and 2 would be COS and AVG. But if there were only one emperor, AVG would precede COS in his titulature. So this inscription probably named two emperors, both COS, but jointly AVGG. (For an example see *RIB* 1234.) If they were Septimius Severus and Caracalla, Geta Caesar would conveniently fill the line-width after AV[GG], which otherwise is difficult. After *balineum* might be an associated structure, e.g. *balneum cum basilica a solo instruxit* (*RIB* 1091) or an explanation of why the bath-house was rebuilt, e.g. *balineum refect(um) [et] basilicam vetustate conlabsum a solo restitutam* (*RIB* 605) and *balineum vi ignis exustum ... restituit* (*RIB* 730).

¹² By the farmer, John Dixon, who has given it to the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne (accession no. 1999.7). Lindsay Allason-Jones sent a photograph and full details. For similar tombstones from High Rochester see *RIB* 1289 and 1291. The likeliest name of the deceased is *Tertius* or *Tertullus*, but there are other possibilities.

¹³ During excavation by Wessex Archaeology of a later settlement on the site of the annex to a first-century military base on the Roman road from Dorchester to Exeter. Andrew Fitzpatrick provided details and sent the sherds to RSOT.

¹⁴ *Veia*[...] might be read, as part of the rare name *Veiatius*. But a line has been scratched underneath VII, which is on a slightly different alignment from that of IA[...], and the forward slope of II differs from that of I, which is vertical. Therefore, since *Ianuarius* is such a common name, we prefer to read VII as a numeral.

¹⁵ With the next item during excavations for the Bowes Museum and Durham County Council directed by I.M. Ferris and R.F.J. Jones. See *Britannia* 9 (1978), 477, and 10 (1979), 347. Mr Ferris made them available with other graffiti too slight for inclusion here, which will be noticed in the final report now in preparation.

¹⁶ Before T and after N there is a little space unincised, but not enough to guarantee that the graffiti is complete. This seems unlikely, since names that might be abbreviated to TON are rare. [AN]TON[II], [SVT]TON[IS], etc. are more likely readings.

from a bead-rim bowl in black-burnished fabric found¹⁷ in 1998 with residual material in third- to fourth-century demolition debris. A graffito cut on the shoulder reads: SABINA.

11. *Ibid.* Sherd from a bead-rim bowl from the same context as the previous item, but from a different vessel. A graffito cut on the lower part of the vessel reads: SA . [...], presumably SA[BINA] again.

LONDON

12. **The City** (*Londinium*, TQ 3271 8077), Suffolk House, 5 Laurence Pountney Lane and 154–6 Upper Thames Street, the site of the supposed governor's palace. Bone counter, 20 mm in diameter, 2 mm thick, with rim bevelled on both sides, found¹⁸ in *c.* 1994 with dumped material perhaps of first- or second-century date used as make-up for the waterfront. Four letters have been scored on the upper face, but a hole has been drilled through the centre, damaging the two middle letters: A J E L.¹⁹

13. *Ibid.* (TQ 3331 8125), Baltic Exchange site, 14–21 St Mary Axe. Sherd from a Dressel 20 amphora found²⁰ in 1995 with residual material in a medieval refuse pit. A graffito cut on the rim after firing reads: [...]VI XII, probably (*modii*) VI (*sextarii*) XII, 'six *modii*, twelve *sextarii*'.²¹

14. *Ibid.* Body sherd of a Dressel 20 amphora found as residual material in a pit dated to A.D. 200–250. A graffito cut after firing reads: [...]ITO[...], perhaps [CAP]ITO.

15. *Ibid.* (TQ 301 817), the British Museum. Fragment of tile, 0.108 by 0.098 m, 0.027 m thick, found²² in 1997 with other Roman material, mostly flue-tile, in make-up almost certainly brought from the City by Sir Robert Smirke when building the forecourt of the present Museum in 1850. There is a lattice of lines scored before firing on the back of the tile, and on the front the worn impression of a stamp; within a raised ansate panel, the letters: P Δ PR [.] B[...], *p(rocuratores) pr(ovinciae) B[r](itanniae)*, 'the procurators of the province of Britain'.²³

16. *Ibid.* (TQ 410 530), Shelley House, 3 Noble Street, EC2. Sherd of Central Gaulish samian, Drag. 18/31 or possibly Drag. 31, found²⁴ in 1996 in a medieval pit. A graffito cut on the inside wall of the foot ring reads: [...]IAN[...].²⁵

17. **Southwark** (TQ 3278 8023), London Bridge Underground Station, London Bridge Street. Body sherd of a black-burnished jar found²⁶ in 1995 in a gully with material dated to A.D. 140–60. A graffito made after firing reads: VIRII[...] or possibly VIRIL[IS].

18. *Ibid.* (TQ 3288 8026), London Bridge Underground Station, Mayor Sworders Arches. Body sherd from a Dressel 20 amphora found²⁷ in 1992 in a Roman demolition layer with pottery dated to *c.* A.D. 60–100. Scored after firing: X.²⁸

¹⁷ With the next item during excavation by the Colchester Archaeological Trust directed by Howard Brooks, for the Colchester and North East Essex Co-operative Society. Mr Brooks provided details and rubbings of both items.

¹⁸ During excavation by MoLAS. Angela Wardle made it available and provided details.

¹⁹ This might be ATTI, '(property) of Att(i)us', but the reading is very uncertain. AILL for *Ael(i)*, '(property) of Aelius', seems more likely.

²⁰ With the next item during excavation by MoLAS directed by Liz Howe. Roberta Tomber of the Finds and Environmental Service, Museum of London, provided details of both items.

²¹ The *modius* of 16 *sextarii* was a dry measure also used for liquids, equivalent to 8.754 litres, so the amphora would have contained 59.089 litres. This is appropriate for a Dressel 20 amphora; they often carry graffiti indicating a capacity of 6 or 7 *modii* and some *sextarii*. See *RIB* II.6, p. 33.

²² During excavation by the Department of Prehistoric and Romano-British Antiquities at the British Museum, directed by Tony Spence. The Keeper of the Department, Dr T.W. Potter, provided details and a drawing by S. Crummy.

²³ The stamp resembles *RIB* II.5, 2485.9 (i) and (ii).

²⁴ During excavation by MoLAS directed by Tony Thomas. Details of this and the next three items were provided by Fiona Seeley of the Specialist Services, Museum of London.

²⁵ The graffito, if inverted, could be interpreted as [INGI]INVI, '(property) of Ingenius', but this seems less likely.

²⁶ During excavation by MoLAS directed by Julian Bowsher, in advance of the Jubilee Line extension.

²⁷ During excavation by MoLAS directed by James Drummond-Murray, in advance of the Jubilee Line extension.

²⁸ The numeral '10', or a mark of identification.

19. *Ibid.* (TQ 3275 7935), 165 Great Dover Street. Sherds from a storage vessel of Alice Holt / Farnham ware, dated to *c.* A.D. 250–400, found²⁹ in 1996 in the Roman cemetery. On the shoulder of the vessel a retrograde numeral has been cut after firing: IIIIXXX, ‘34’.³⁰

TYNE AND WEAR

20. **South Shields** (*Arbeia*, NZ 365 679) (FIG. 4). Part of a leaden sealing, 20 by 6 mm, found³¹ in 1998 in material used to construct or repair a hearth in a *contubernium* of a barrack of Period 6 (thought to last from *c.* A.D. 222–35 to *c.* 270–312). It is 6 mm thick, with a central, vertical thread-hole. An impressed rectangular die reads: DN, *D(omini) N(ostri)*, ‘(property) of Our Lord (the Emperor)’.³²



FIG. 4. South Shields. Part of a leaden sealing, No. 20. Scale 2:1.
(Drawn by D. Whitworth)

SCOTLAND

BORDER REGION

21. **Newstead** (*Trimontium*, NT 571 345). Samian base sherd, of uncertain form but South Gaulish, found³³ in 1998 unstratified. Scratched underneath after firing, in capitals: PRIM[...], *Prim[us]* or perhaps a cognate name.

STRATHCLYDE REGION

22. **Castledykes** (NS 9244) (PL. XXX). Copper-alloy die with rectangular face rounded at the corners, 18 by 12 mm, with an integral tang for attachment to a handle, found³⁴ in 1998 in the vicinity of the Roman fort. In relief against a tooled latticework, the rectrograde letters LCG.³⁵

²⁹ During excavation by MoLAS directed by Tony Mackinder.

³⁰ This might indicate the capacity of the vessel, the number of its contents, or even its weight.

³¹ During excavations for Tyne and Wear Museums and the Earthwatch Institute, directed by N. Hodgson, P. Bidwell and G. Stobbs. (Find no. IM80, context 24279.) Dr Hodgson provided details and discussed the historical significance of the sealing.

³² This is the first example from Britain. For similar sealings see R. Turcan, *Nigra Moneta* (1987), 20, Nos 12 and 13. It belongs to the reign of a sole emperor who used the title *dominus noster*. Septimius Severus was the first to do so formally, but for almost all of his reign he had a colleague (from 198 his son Caracalla) and his numerous sealings at South Shields bear the legend AVGG NN (*RIB* II.1, 2411.1–16; *Britannia* 28 (1997), 466, Nos 36 and 37). So this sealing is later than the death of Geta (26 December 211), and at earliest belongs to the sole reign of Caracalla (212–17), if not later still. It is thus evidence for official use of the enlarged South Shields supply-base after 211, where all 24 granaries survived until the period *c.* 270–312 (see P. Bidwell and S.C. Speak, *Excavations at South Shields Roman Fort*, vol. 1 (1994), 28–33).

³³ By Walter Elliot during fieldwalking on the fort area, near the north gate. Fraser Hunter of the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, sent details. It is now in the museum.

³⁴ By a metal detectorist. Fraser Hunter sent photographs and other details. It is being claimed as Treasure Trove and will be allocated to an appropriate museum, most probably the Hunterian.

³⁵ In view of the find-spot, we treat it as Roman, but there is no close parallel from Britain. We would have expected an intaglio, retrograde inscription. LCG can be understood as the abbreviated three names of a Roman citizen, *L(ucius) C(...) G(...)*.

ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

(a) **RIB III.** Contributions are invited to the third volume of *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, monumental inscriptions on stone and metal discovered after 31 December 1954, the closing date of the first volume. Details of unpublished inscriptions and new information relating to the inscriptions first published in *JRS* and *Britannia*, for example photographs and drawings, improvements in reading and interpretation, bibliography, changes of location, should be sent to the editor, Dr R.S.O. Tomlin, at Wolfson College, Oxford OX2 6UD.

(b) **RIB 154** (*Tab. Sulis* 4), the original ‘Bath Curse’ found in 1880, cursing the thief of ‘Vilbia’, *qu[i] mihi VILBIAM in[v]olavit*. Despite the objections raised in *Tab. Sulis*, the *RIB* interpretation can be maintained that this refers to the theft of a girl. ‘Vilbia’ is now attested as a name: there was a local family of Vilbii at Biot in the territory of Antibes.³⁶ Its members included Vilbia Marcella, the wife of Amaenius Fronto, whose nomen is likewise unique.³⁷ A direct connection is unlikely, but it can now be said that ‘Vilbia’ is a possible Celtic woman’s name. Although ‘curse tablets’ always use the verb *involare* in the sense of stealing personal property such as clothes, coins and jewellery, it does occur in Vulgar Latin in the special sense of ‘snatching’ persons: not of ‘stealing’ their affections in the modern sense, but of stealing them as objects.³⁸ Whether Vilbia was actually the writer’s property, or only his concubine, this would seem to be the sense here.

(c) **RIB 888** (Old Carlisle). Horsley identified this lost altar with one preserved at Drumburgh Castle. The latter was rediscovered there in 1977 or 1978, and is published as *CSIR* i 6, No. 323.³⁹

(d) **RIB 946 + add.** (Carlisle) has been re-examined.⁴⁰ The published drawing is accurate except in three small details. In line 2 of the inscription, the broken letter is ambiguous (see below). In line 4, the two diagonal strokes of each M intersect at the base-line, as usual in a Roman M, and not above it. Below the inscription, the circumference of the arched opening was actually more than 180°: its curving edge returns, as if to form a keyhole-shaped aperture.⁴¹

In line 2, all that remains of the broken letter is the top and bottom of the first stroke, i.e. the base and the top left-hand corner, a leftward serif appropriate to either M or N. The two fragments are vertically aligned, suggesting it was N, but since there is variation elsewhere in this respect, the criterion is not quite decisive.⁴² Since therefore it is not altogether possible to

³⁶ A. Chastagnol, *Inscriptions Latines de Narbonnaise*, II, *Antibes, Riez, Digne* (1992), Nos 121 (Vilbia Marcella), 123 (L. Vilbius Marcellus), 124 (Vilbi[...]), 125 ([... Vil]bius).

³⁷ The only other instance of ‘Vilbius’ noted by Chastagnol is L. Vilbiu(s) Fronto, a member of the Fifth Cohort of Vigiles at Rome in 205 and 210 (*CIL* vi 1057, 1058). His origin is unknown, but he might belong to the same family.

³⁸ *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* VII.2, 258–9, s.v. *involo*. Witches ‘steal’ a child (Petronius, *Sat.* 63), a fisherman ‘steals’ one fish without alarming the others (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 9. 181). In the pre-Vulgate translation of the Bible (the ‘Itala’), *involare* is used for the Vulgate’s *furari*, of Joseph (Genesis 40.15) and Israelites (Exodus 21.16) sold as slaves, of stolen animals (Exodus 22.1 and 12), and of the body of Jesus (Matthew 28.13).

³⁹ Information from Ian Caruana, who sent a photograph. It matches Horsley’s drawing.

⁴⁰ At the prompting of John Mann, who suspected an allusion to Commodus in line 2. The fullest description and discussion is by Coulston and Phillips in *CSIR* i 6, 157, No. 474. See also M. Rostovtzeff, ‘Commodus-Hercules in Britain’, *JRS* 13 (1923), 91–109. Tim Padley made the stone available, and Chris Howgego has discussed the coin-evidence.

⁴¹ Coulston and Phillips (see previous note) suggest that the aperture framed a statue of Hercules ‘so that the opening of the arch was behind the head’. A keyhole-shaped aperture would have neatly echoed the silhouette of head and shoulders.

⁴² In COMMILITON (4), the first (vertical) stroke of the first M leans slightly to the right, but in the second M it is quite vertical. The first stroke of N leans slightly to the right, whereas in SEXTANI (7) it leans slightly to the left. (These small variations are apparent on the stone itself, but not in Collingwood’s drawing nor in the photograph published as *CSIR* i 6, pl. 107, No. 474.) A better criterion would be the angle of the second, diagonal stroke, measured by its distance along the base-line from the mid-point of the vertical stroke. It would have been 13 mm for M, 22 mm for N, but unfortunately the break in the stone, although it is 14 mm away, is too abraded at the edge for M to be eliminated.

distinguish between N and M in line 2, it follows that the second word began with CON or perhaps with COM.⁴³

The original width of the inscription is almost certain.⁴⁴ With the certain restoration of [IN]VICTI in 1 and the likely restoration of [VIRTV]TIBVS in 2, the length of the two missing epithets of Hercules can be closely calculated: *c.* 6 letters in line 1, and *c.* 10 letters (including CON or COM) in line 2. The standard epithet *Invictus* is associated with *Romanus* in dedications of 192, when Commodus first identified himself as the Roman Hercules. This is the only time that *Romanus* was used.⁴⁵ Rostovtzeff thought of restoring ROMANI in line 1, but rejected it because he dated the inscription to 185–87. However, this dating is not necessary.⁴⁶ If one restores ROMANI in line 1, where it fits perfectly, the coin-evidence suggests two possibilities for the second epithet, depending on whether CON is read, or COM.

The first is CON[DITORIS], Roman Hercules ‘the Founder’, like *Romanus* an epithet applied to Hercules by Commodus in 192.⁴⁷ The second is COM[MODIANI], Hercules ‘the (god) of Commodus’, which was applied to Hercules in 191, but is not associated with *Romanus*, and explicitly does not identify Commodus with Hercules.⁴⁸ It would surely have been obsolete as an epithet of Hercules in 192. On the other hand, *Commodianus* was applied to other Roman institutions in 192, including Rome itself and military units, and it might be conjectured that it lingered long enough to be applied to the ‘Roman’ Hercules.⁴⁹ But on balance, CON[DITORIS] is the easier restoration. In 192 there were now coins and bronze ‘medallions’ in circulation with the Hercules-head of Commodus on the obverse, and the figure of Hercules HERC ROM CONDITORI on the reverse, inviting those who handled them to identify the one with the other. Likewise in Carlisle, the worshipper’s eye would have turned from the Hercules-Commodus image in the niche to the dedication to Roman Hercules above it. It is easy to imagine the image; it would have resembled the well-known statuette of Commodus identified as Hercules, which is said to have been found on Hadrian’s Wall in Cumberland.⁵⁰ So the following restoration is proposed of lines 1–3:

⁴³ Enough survives to eliminate F, I, P and R. There is no reason to think that unequivocal traces of N have been destroyed since Rostovtzeff saw the stone in 1920. His reading of CON seems to have been due to his wish to restore *Conservator*, ‘one of the most common epithets of Hercules’ (*JRS* 13 (1923), 97), but in fact CONSERVATORIS will not fit the space available.

⁴⁴ It can be calculated from the curvature of the arched opening, but the decisive argument is Richmond’s restoration of the unit-title in 5–6. See the drawing to *RIB* 946. The other restorations in 3–4 and 7–8 are debatable, but do not affect the issue.

⁴⁵ Coins were struck with the reverse legends HERC(VLI) ROM(ANO) CONDITORI and HERCVLI ROMANO AVG(VSTO) in Commodus’ 17th tribunician year (10 December 191–9 December 192), and ‘medallions’ with both legends in his 18th tribunician year, intended presumably for New Year’s Day 193, which he did not live to see. The epigraphic evidence is collected by M.P. Speidel, ‘Commodus the god-emperor and the army’, *JRS* 83 (1993), 109–14. It amounts to the Dura altar (17 March 193) which calls him *pacator orbis invictus Romanus Hercules*; another military dedication, from Volubilis (*AE* 1920.48 = *IAM* ii 363), *pius invictus felix Hercules Romanus*; and an official dedication from Treba near Rome (*ILS* 400), *pacator orbis felix invictus Romanus Hercules*. The new titulature had reached Oxyrhynchus in Egypt probably by 11 October 192 (*PSI* ix 1036, in Greek), *pacator orbis felix invictus Romanus Hercules*.

⁴⁶ Rostovtzeff had two reasons. (1) After identifying himself with Hercules, Commodus would have been offended by ‘the moderate and somewhat enigmatic language’ of *RIB* 946, so it must be earlier than 192. This is a matter of opinion; and it will be suggested that the inscription was accompanied by a statuette of Hercules-Commodus which made the identification explicit. (2) Rostovtzeff connects *RIB* 946 with the British victory of 184, but with almost two-thirds of the text lost, we do not know whether it celebrated a major victory or (like *RIB* 1142) a local success.

⁴⁷ *RIC* iii, *Commodus*, Nos 616 and 629; Gneocchi, *Medaglion*, p. 54.

⁴⁸ *RIC* iii, *Commodus*, Nos 221, 581, 586, 591, variously HERC. COM. and HERC. COMMODIANO, dated by his 16th tribunician year (10 December 190–9 December 191).

⁴⁹ The Dura altar, dedicated by a cohort *Com(modiana)*, and *ILS* 400, dedicated by an *ordo decurionum Commodianor(um)*, confirm the literary evidence of Dio Cassius 75.12; Herodian i, 14.8; and Hist. Aug. *Commodus*, 8.6–9.

⁵⁰ *CSIR* i 6, 77, No. 190.

DEI HERC[VLIS ROMANI IN]
VICTI CON[DITORIS VIRTU]
TIBVS (etc.)

‘To the virtues of the Roman Hercules, Unconquered, the Founder ...’ The date would be 192. But it must be added, as a caution, that this restoration is the result of interlocking hypotheses; it is not proved beyond doubt.

PLATE XXVI



(Photo: Mr J. Cruickshank, Trimontium Trust)

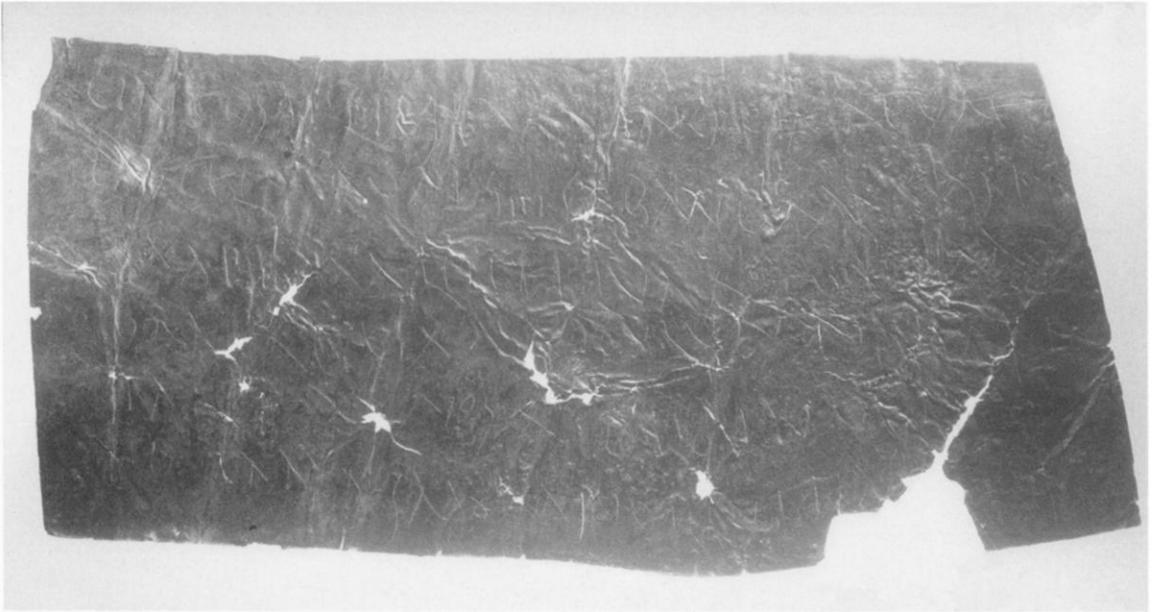
A. Newstead: intaglio in red jasper, showing the young Caracalla. (p. 332)



(Photo: Mr J. Cruickshank, Trimontium Trust)

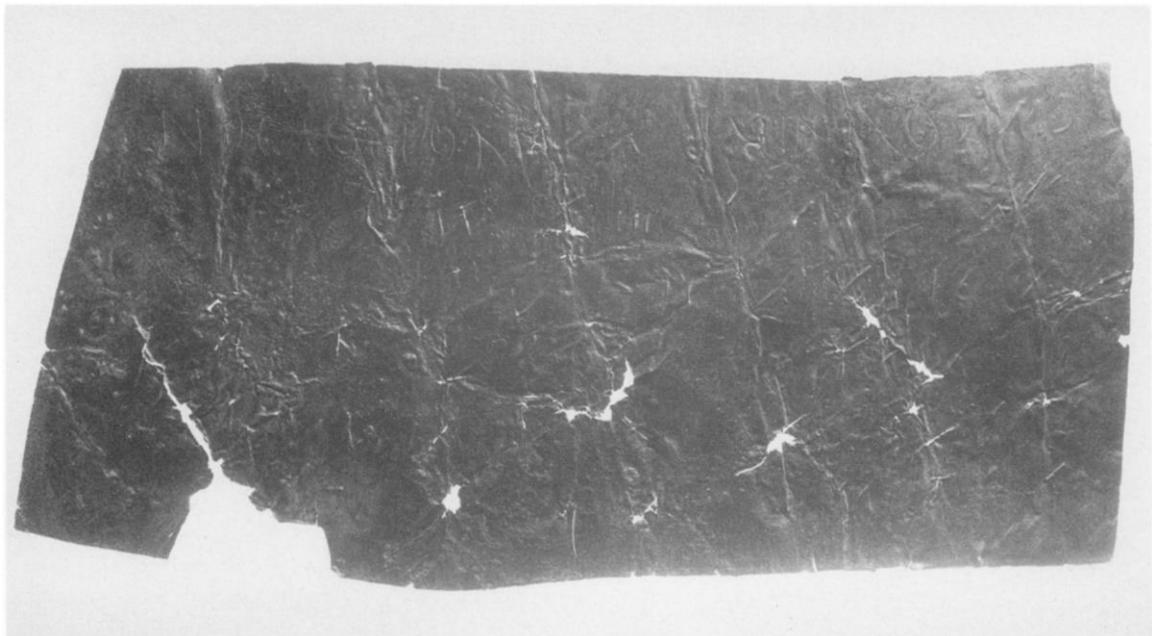
B. Newstead: double coin mould. (p. 332)

PLATE XXVII



(Photo: Institute of Archaeology, Oxford)

A. London: inscribed pewter tablet (p. 375, No. 1), obverse. Width of tablet 150–63 mm.



(Photo: Institute of Archaeology, Oxford)

B. London: inscribed pewter tablet (p. 375, No. 1), reverse. Width of tablet 150–63 mm.

PLATE XXVIII



(Photo: Arbeia Roman Fort and Museum)

Wallsend. Fragment of a sandstone building inscription (p. 380, No. 5). Width 0.20 m.

PLATE XXIX



(Photo: Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne)

High Rochester. Fragment of a tombstone (p. 381, No. 6). Width 0.235 m.

PLATE XXX



(Photo: National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh)

A. Castledykes. Copper-alloy die with integral tang (p. 383, No. 22). Width of face 18 mm.



(Photo: National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh)

B. Castledykes. Face of copper-alloy die (p. 383, No. 22). Width of face 18 mm.