

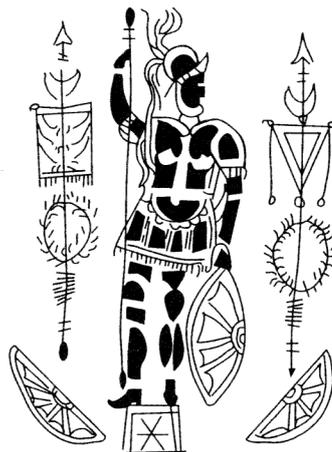
Arma

Newsletter of the Roman Military Equipment Conference

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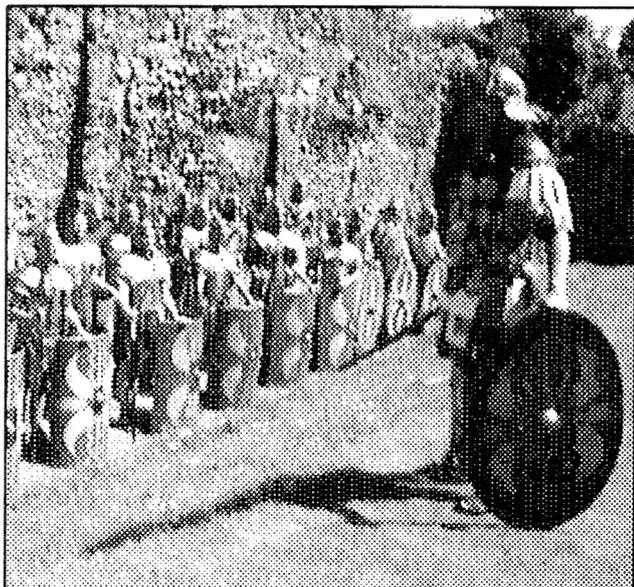


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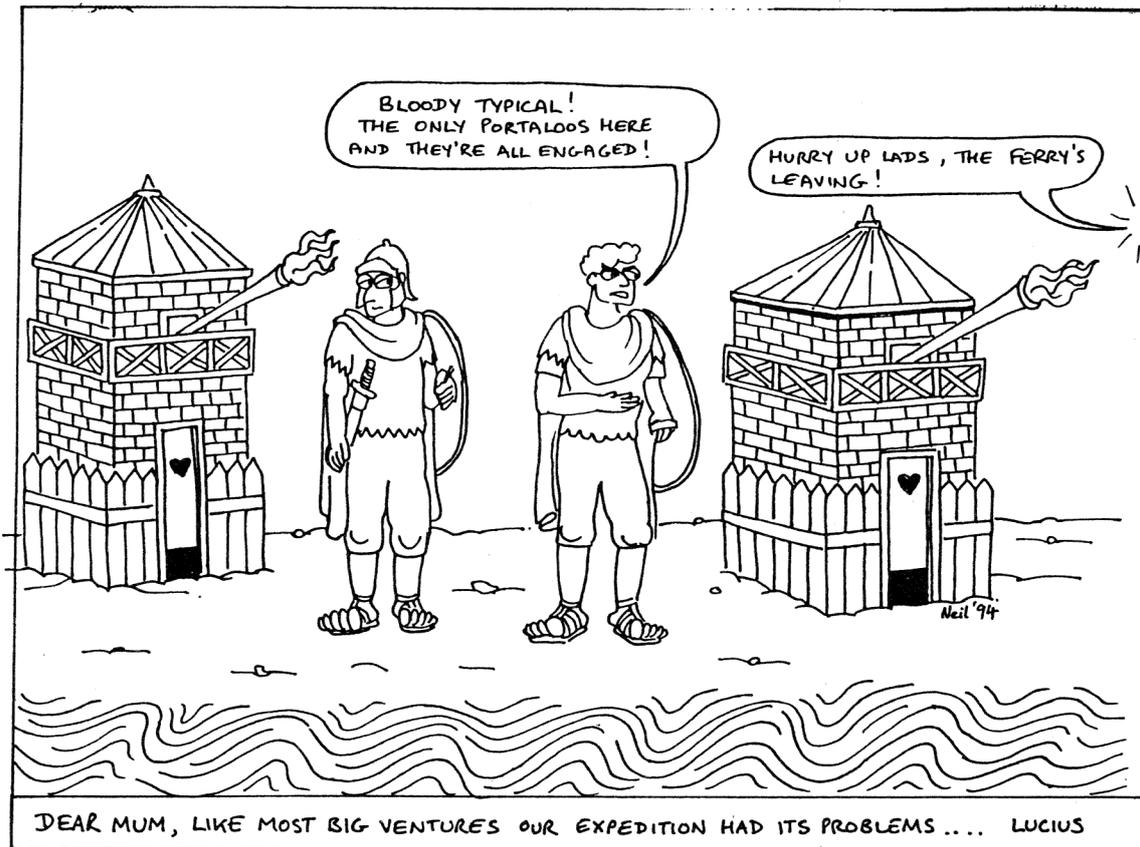
Legio XIII Gemina MV on parade. Their details were inadvertently omitted from the last issue – see inside for a contact address.

CVSTOS ARMORVM

The annual list of subscribers has now been modified to make it slightly more useful. The year of expiry is now given (i.e. the last issue you receive will be the winter issue for that year), so readers can now easily tell the state of their subscription.

Whilst we are on the subject of subscriptions, it cannot have escaped your notice that *Arma* has now maintained the same price for four years, whilst increasing postage costs and fluctuating membership numbers make producing the newsletter gradually more expensive. For instance, in the period between March 1990 and March 1994, *Land Rover Owner International* rose from £1.50 to £2.50 (a 66% rise), whilst *Personal Computer World* increased from £1.70 in March 1991 to £2.25 in 1995 (a 32% rise). Now, admittedly, our use of colour is rather limited at the moment and we don't quite run to a cover disk yet, but the time has come to rationalize (a euphemism for increase) the price slightly from £4 to £5 annually (an increase of a comparatively modest 25%). This has a number of additional advantages, as people keep pointing out to me, as it makes it feasible for continental readers to send a £5 note and avoid bank charges. In keeping with the tradition of *Arma* 'special offers', we will be offering five years' consolidated subscription for the price of four (£20). Check the list of subscribers on pages 22–4 and then return the enclosed renewal slip if your subscription has run out.

This issue of *Arma* sees news reaching us of work on the dramatic finds of military equipment (including '*lorica segmentata*') from Gamla in Israel, whilst the end of 1994 brought the publication of the next volume in the series on Roman bronzes from Morocco, this time dealing with military equipment. Amongst an impressive array of equipment from all periods (with the possible exception of Republican), pieces of '*lorica segmentata*' leap out from the pages. Clearly, segmental armour was more widespread than anybody had dared suggest: to deny that would be plain stupid. It now only remains to see what surprises 1995 will bring.



JRMES 4

Volume 4 of the *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* is now nearing completion and should be available by the end of April. Contents include papers on mail armour from a barrow at Fluitenberg in the Netherlands; a bronze spearhead from Augusta Rauricorum; Roman tents 'replicated' in stone-built barracks; a new English translation of the Pseudo-Hyginus' *de munitionibus castrorum*; hedgehogs, caltrops, and palisade stakes; the ownership and disposal of military equipment in the Late Roman army; a collection of 3rd-century material from Wange in Belgium; and dolphin scabbard runners from Carlisle. The volume will be available from Oxbow Books, Park End Place, Oxford, OX1 1HN (phone: 01865 241249 fax: 01865 794449) at £25, or £18 if you take out a regular subscription. In the USA, contact The David Brown Book Company, PO Box 5605, Bloomington, IN 47407 (Phone: 812-331-0266; fax: 812-331-0277).

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A welcome new catalogue has just been published bringing together the military equipment from Morocco. It has to be said that some pieces of equipment (particularly 2nd/3rd-century baldric fittings, identified there as belonging to horse harness) have appeared in a previous volume in the series, but that is hardly anything to complain about (unless you have to buy both volumes, that is).

The pieces of '*lorica segmentata*' are particularly important, but then so is a new piece of *cheiroballistra*. There are belt fittings, items of scabbard furniture, and all sorts of things to tempt students of military equipment from the early to late imperial periods. It is probably best not to ask how iron weapons and lead slingshot wormed their way into a volume with the word 'bronze' so conspicuous in its title; just be grateful they are there.

C. BOUBE-PICCOT, *Les bronzes antiques du Maroc. IV. L'équipement militaire et l'armement* Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations: Paris (1994) ISBN 2-86538-244-3 357 FF

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ROMAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT SINCE 1980 Papers (Part 11)

E.W. Black, 'Villa-owners: Romano-British gentlemen and officers', *Britannia* XXV, 1994, 99–110

U. Brundl, B. Kniep, & I. Krumm, 'Ein Fundensemble römischer Militaria aus Kärling(?), Gem. Eferding, OÖ', *Ostbairische Grenzmarken. Passauer Jahrbuch für Geschichte Kunst u. Volkskunde* 36, 1994, 259–63

P. Carrick & I.P. Stephenson, 'Painting a Roman shield', *Arbeia Journal* 2, 1993, 45–9

A.T. Croom, 'The reconstruction of a Roman vexillum', *Arbeia Journal* 2, 1993, 40–5

- C. van Driel-Murray, 'Wapentuig voor Hercules', in N. Roymans & T. Dekes, *De tempel van Empel*, (s'Hertogenbosch 1994)
- S. Greep, 'Antler roundel pendants from Britain and the north-western Roman provinces', *Britannia* XXV, 1994, 79–97
- W.B. Griffiths & D. Sim, 'Experiments with replica Roman javelins', *Arbeia Journal* 2, 1993, 1–13
- A.E. Holley, 'The ballista balls from Masada', in *Masada IV. The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965 Final Reports*, Jerusalem 1994
- E.M. Ruprechtsberger, 'Ze spätantike Gürtelbeschlagen aus Salzburg-Maxglan', in C. Zacherl (ed.), *Die Römer in de Alpen, Historikertagung in Salzburg 13–15.xi.1986*, (Bozen 1989)
- D. Sim, 'The manufacture of javelin heads', *Arbeia Journal* 2, 1993, 37–40

Reports (Part 10)

- C. Boube-Piccot, *Les bronzes antiques du Maroc, IV. L'équipement militaire et l'armement*, Paris 1994

THE MARBURG CONFERENCE

C. von Carnap-Bornheim (ed.): *Beiträge zu römischer und barbarischer Bewaffnung in den ersten vier nachchristlichen Jahrhunderten*, Veröffentlichung des Vorgeschichtlichen Seminars Marburg Sonderband 8, (Lublin/Marburg 1994)

The prompt appearance of the proceedings of the 1994 Marburg Conference means students of military equipment now have access to an exciting range of papers dealing with the relationship between Roman and barbarian weaponry. At first sight, the big drawback is the price, DM148 (currently just under £66); however, given that it is over 480 pages long, that works out at slightly under £0.14 per page (compare this with the current rate of *Arma* at £0.16 or *JRMES* 3 at £0.14 and it begins to appear good value for money. I have not seen a copy, but the contents list is as follows:

- G. Waurick:** 'Zur Rüstung von Frühkaiserzeitlichen Hilfstruppen'
- J. Tejral:** 'Römische und germanische Militärausrüstungen der antoninischen Periode im Licht norddanubischer Funde'
- L. Petculescu:** 'Roman military equipment in the Dacian hill-fort at Ocnita'
- N. Gudea:** 'Römische Waffen aus den Kastellen des westlichen Limes von Dacia Porolissensis'
- M. Treister:** 'Roman military equipment in the Kingdom of Bosphorus'
- J.G. Vinogradov & V.V. Nazarov:** 'Römische Besatzungstruppen in Olbia Pontica im 1. bis 3. Jh. und ihre Bewaffnung'
- M. Biborski:** 'Römische Schwerter mit Verzierung in

Form von figürlichen Darstellungen und symbolischen Zeichen'

- H.-J. Ubl:** 'Wann verschwand der Dolch vom Römischen Militärgürtel?'
- L. Borhy:** 'Gans oder Adler? Bemerkungen zu den Motiven römischer Paraderüstungen'
- W. Pohl:** 'Barbarenkrieger – Wahrnehmungen und Wirklichkeiten'
- K. Godlowski:** 'Die Chronologie der germanischen Waffengräber in der jüngeren und späten Kaiserzeit'
- J. Bemmann:** 'Zur Zeitliche Ordnung von Waffengräbern der jüngeren römischen Kaiserzeit in Norwegen'
- U.L. Hansen:** 'Zum Verhältnis von zivilem und militärischem Import in der römischen Kaiserzeit'
- P. Kaczanowski:** 'Aus den Forschungen an der territorialen Differenzierung des Zustroms römischer Waffenimporte im Barbaricum'
- M. Rasch:** 'The appearance of weapon graves in Scandinavia around the birth of Christ – some interpretations in the light of weapon graves from Öland'
- J. Ilkjaer:** 'Das Mooropfer von Illerup Ådal – der Stand der Bearbeitung im Jahr 1994'
- P.V. Petersen:** 'Einige Ergebnisse der neuen Ausgrabungen im Mooropfer von Nydam, Südjtland'
- H.-U. Voß:** 'Römische Waffen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern – Bilanz der Materialaufnahme für das „Corpus römischer Funde“'
- E. Droberjar & J. Peska:** 'Waffengräber der römischen Kaiserzeit in Mähren und die Bewaffnung aus dem Königsgrab bei Musov'
- M. Watt:** 'Gladii in Dänemark – Milieu und Zeitstellung'
- A. Gundelwein:** 'Kampfspüren an Lanzen und Speeren kaiserzeitlicher Moorfundes'
- G. Kieferling:** 'Bemerkungen zu Äxten der römischen Kaiserzeit und der frühen Völkerwanderungszeit im mitteleuropäischen Barbaricum'
- E. Schultze:** 'Die halbkugeligen germanischen Schildbuckel der jüngeren römischen Kaiserzeit'
- A. Kokowski:** 'Bemerkungen zu Schildbuckeln des Typs Jahn 8 (Ilkjaer Typ 5a–5b)'
- S. von Schnurbein:** 'Römische Handwerker in der Germania Magna – ein Diskussionsbeitrag'
- W. Nowakowski:** 'Krieger ohne Schwerter – die Bewaffnung der *Aestii* in der römischen Kaiserzeit'
- A. Asadauskas:** 'Baltische Waffen der römischen Kaiserzeit im Gräberfeld von Dauglaukis'
- E. Istvánovits & V. Kulcsár:** 'Roman and Germanic elements in the armament of the barrow-graves of the 2nd–3rd centuries A.D. in the Great Hungarian Plain'
- O.W. Sarov:** 'Ein reiches Pferdegeschirr aus Kerc'
- M. Kazanski:** 'Les éperons, les umbo, les manipules de boucliers et les haches de l'époque romaine tardive dans le region pontique: origine et diffusion'
- M. Shchukin:** 'Shields, swords and spears as evidence of German-Sarmatian contacts and Barbarian-Roman relations'

HOT NEWS ABOUT ARTILLERY

Hands up everyone who has heard of the artillery piece found at Caminreal, Teruel. Hmm, I thought so. Always quick with the hot news, *Arma* – thanks to our new subscriber Aitor Iriate – can now bring you a few details about this new catapult... found in 1985! At first sight, it looks like the more famous Emporion example (in other words it is a field frame with washers). As Sr Iriate pointed out in his letter to me, the frame has some similarities with the Cremoma catapult shield, in that it has a second aperture below that intended for the slider.¹ Should you wish to see the object, it is now in the Museo Arqueologico Provincial de Teruel, inv. no. 8.966. Photographs of the objects concerned as found and after conservation have already been published – we will hopefully bring you full details in the next issue of *Arma*.

NOTES

1. BAATZ, 1980, Taf.90,1; SCHRAMM, 1980, Abb.D. Baatz's reconstruction (*ibid.* Abb.3) seems to ignore this lower aperture.

REFERENCES

- BAATZ, D. 1980: 'Ein Katapult der *Legio IV Macedonica* aus Cremona' *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilungen* 87, 283–99
SCHRAMM, E. 1980: *Die Antiken Geschütze der Saalburg*, with introduction by D. Baatz, Bad Homburg v.d. Höhe

UP IN ARMS: ROMAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM GAMALA, ISRAEL

The discovery of military equipment during excavations at Gamla (Gamala) in Israel is fairly common knowledge by now,¹ but what is not so widely known is that work is now under way to publish the material. Gamla, which was situated to the east of the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, was so named ('Camel') because it was situated on a narrow ridge with a camel-like hump. It was besieged and captured by Vespasian in A.D.67. The finds included artillery projectiles and – by all accounts – substantial amounts of 'lorica segmentata' fittings. Dr Jodi Magness of the Department of Classics at Tufts University, Massachusetts, is working on the material with Guy Stiebel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, whilst Andrew Holley of Hartlepool Museum is studying the stone projectiles from the site. We hope to have a report on their work in a future issue of *Arma*.

NOTES

1. PETERSON, 1992, 19.

REFERENCES

- PETERSON, D. 1992: *The Roman Legions Recreated in Colour Photographs*, London

ROMAN OR NATIVE? A NEW HILT-GUARD FROM A ROMAN CONTEXT

M.C. Bishop

The newly discovered Roman fort of Roecliffe is in North Yorkshire, just 2km from the Roman town of *Isurium Brigantum*, modern Aldborough. It lies 28km from the fortress at York and 19km south of the fort at Healam Bridge. Situated by the River Ure, a tributary of the Ouse, it is right next to the Devil's Arrows standing stones, and within sight of the medieval bridging point at Boroughbridge. The fort was revealed by geophysical survey undertaken in advance of the project to upgrade the A1 between Wetherby and Scotch Corner from dual carriageway to three-lane motorway status.

The geophysical survey revealed a double-ditched fort with a probable box rampart in twin palisade trenches, surrounded by a system of overlapping concentric outwork ditches. The box rampart and outwork ditches were strongly suggestive of a pre-Flavian or Flavian date, whilst its proximity to Aldborough, where a Flavian-founded fort almost certainly underlies the town (which was a Hadrianic foundation), pointed towards a first-century date. Moreover, Aldborough lies on Dere Street, at the main crossing of the Ure, the relationship between the forts at Aldborough and Roecliffe therefore bearing a remarkable resemblance to that at Corbridge and Beaufront Red House – an early fort at a river crossing near to, but not actually on the Dere Street, and a later one on the road. It was a reasonable inference to draw that Roecliffe pre-dated Aldborough and the construction of Dere Street, some time in the second half of the 80s to judge by the dating of Corbridge main site, but post-dated the traditional Cerealian date of 71 for the conquest of this area of Brigantia (although a remote chance existed that a pre-Flavian presence might be encountered as a result of Cartimandua's marital problems).

The excavation corridor ran across the outwork ditches and beside, but not through, the fort itself, and the area was divided between fields to the north and south of a dismantled railway line. The stratigraphy was quite severely damaged by medieval ploughing.

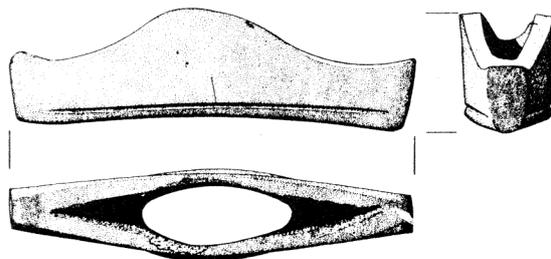


Fig.1 The Roecliffe hiltguard (scale 1:1); drawn by D. Ronan.

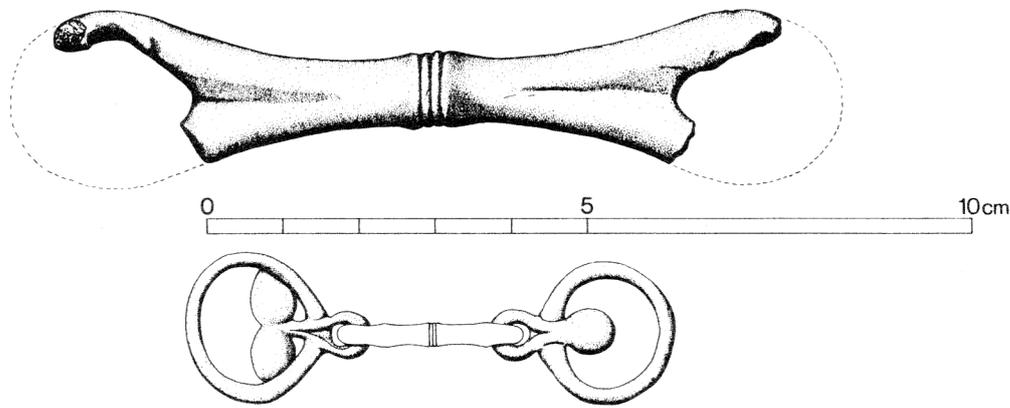


Fig.2 The Roecliffe bit mouthpiece (scale 1:1); drawn by D. Ronan.

Several phases of strip buildings belonging to extramural settlement associated with the fort were encountered, along with several phases of the east-west road visible on the geophysical survey. Numerous pits of various forms were found, most containing demolition material, some at least clearly having functioned as cess and rubbish pits before their final role. Further, contemporary, occupation was examined on the north bank of the river, at Langthorpe, strongly reinforcing the idea that Roecliffe was guarding a river crossing.

The dating evidence endorsed the historical scenario outlined above, in that the coins, samian, and coarse ware all accorded with occupation between the very early 70s and the latter part of the 80s. Small finds included pieces of *lorica segmentata* and a *pilum* head, along with cavalry harness fittings, perhaps indicating both legionary infantry and auxiliary cavalry, whilst a waterlogged well included a portion of a tent.

One of the pits produced a copper alloy hilt-guard of Piggott's Type IVa, his so-called 'cocked hat' group (Fig.1).¹ The object is 58mm long, 15mm wide, and 16mm high and is decorated only by a simple incised line above the base. The aperture at the top suggests a tang cross section of 22mm x 10mm, whilst that in the base gives blade dimensions of 50mm wide by 7mm thick. There is a slight casting flaw on top, next to the tang aperture, and two instances of damage which may be martial in origin. The first is on the top edge, half way between the tang aperture and the terminal; it consists of a cut that has struck the handguard at an angle, although the amount of force involved in its delivery is questionable. The second is a scratch on the opposite face which may conceivably be a result of such damage.

Roecliffe produced other examples of non-Roman or Celtic artefacts in Roman contexts, most notably the mouth piece from a derivative three-link bit (Fig.2) which demonstrated considerable signs of wear on the one surviving portion of its two loops.² More importantly than this, however, were the sherds of Iron Age pottery of similar character and forms to that found at Stanwick and dated to the first century AD. Residuality seemed unlikely at Roecliffe, since the pieces showed no signs of weathering prior to deposition and thus seem to have been contemporary with the Roman pottery in the same contexts. Although a number of Neolithic features were

excavated at Roecliffe, only one possible Iron Age feature – a hut circle with an accompanying ring ditch – was identified and it produced no associated finds.

'Cocked hat' and 'crown' handguards have come from a number of Roman military sites, occurring in two distinct areas (Fig.3). 'Crown' handguards from sites in the west country, associated with pre-Flavian occupation by the second legion, and both 'crown' and 'cocked hat' handguards at Flavian sites in the north of Britain, including Manchester,³ Newstead,⁴ and Fendoch,⁵ as well as Roecliffe. It has been suggested that such weaponry may have been confiscated earlier in the British wars, perhaps

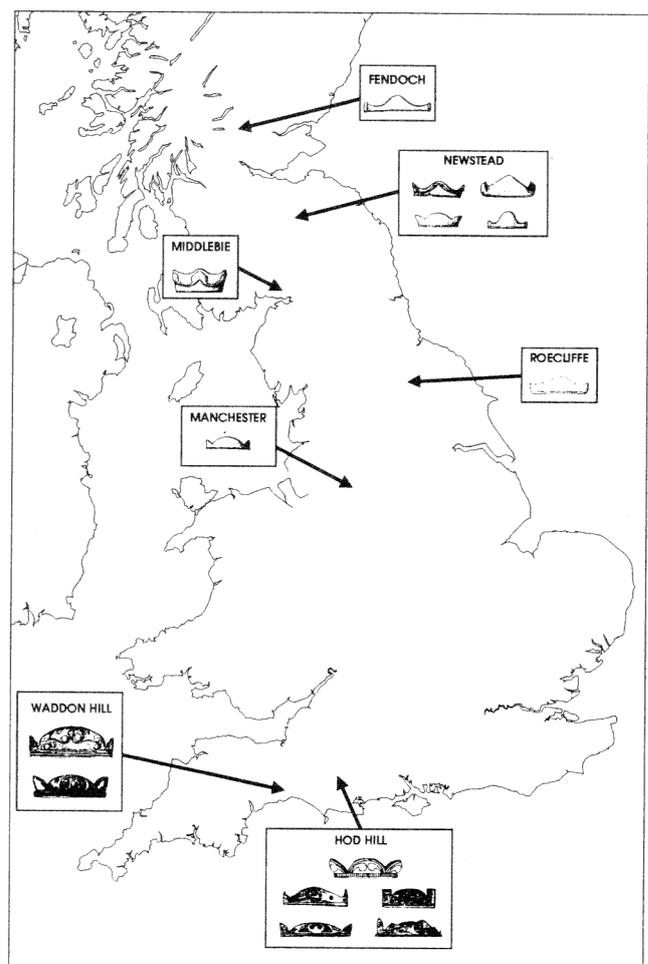


Fig.3 Piggott's 'cocked hat' and 'crown' hiltguards from Britain.

from the Iceni, or perhaps used by auxiliaries, some of them maybe even British.⁶

However, Celtic swords form only one part of a range of native metalwork recovered from Roman military sites. Roecliffe produced pottery, the handguard, and part of a bit, whilst the finds from Castleford also included a cheekpiece from a derivative three-link bit, terrets, and strap slides, and most notably examples of boss-and-petal decoration from Flavian contexts,⁷ and examples of 'native' craftsmanship are also prevalent at other sites, such as Newstead.⁸

Where does this all leave us? Native equipment in Flavian contexts is widespread in the north of Britain and might well be the result of confiscations, but it might also indicate trade and a Roman taste for indigenous goods, or perhaps even the presence of native levies serving with the Romans, a practice widely attested elsewhere in the Roman Empire. Native militias of Helvetii were being used in Germania Superior to man garrison posts and it was their pay convoy that the 21st legion so famously intercepted in January of 69.⁹ We cannot help but wonder just how Roman the army in Britain was.

NOTES

1. PIGGOT, 1950.
2. Cf MACGREGOR, 1976, Nos.5, 7, and 10.
3. MACGREGOR, 1976, No.148.
4. *Ibid.*, Nos.151-4.
5. *Ibid.*, No.146.
6. Tacitus, *Agricola* 32.
7. BISHOP, forthcoming.
8. CURLE, 1911, *passim*.
9. Tacitus, *Historiae* I,67.

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- BISHOP forthcoming: M.C. Bishop, report on the military equipment from Castleford, West Yorkshire
CURLE 1911: J. Curle, *A Roman Frontier Post and its People*
MACGREGOR 1976: M. MacGregor, *Early Celtic Art in Northern Britain* (Leicester)
PIGGOTT 1950: S. Piggott, 'Swords and scabbards of the British early iron age', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 16, 1-28

EIN NEUER SCHILDFESSELBESCHLAG AUS XANTEN?

Hans-Joachim Schalles

Im vergangenen Jahr gelangte ein länglicher Gegenstand aus Kupferlegierung in den Besitz des Archäologischen Parks/Regionalmuseums Xanten (Abb.1).¹ Es stammt nach Aussage seines Finders vom Fürstenberg aus dem Bereich des Legionslagers Vetera I, das 13/12 v. Chr. angelegt und im Bataveraufstand 69/70 n. Chr. zerstört wurde.

Das massiv gegossene Stück ist 148mm lang und in der Mitte 10mm breit, der Durchmesser beträgt 5mm, an einem der Enden 6mm. Zu den Enden hin, die beide Brüche aufweisen, verjüngt es sich ein wenig. Während die Rückseite des Objekts plan ausgebildet ist, ist die Vorderseite gewölbt. Die Oberfläche dieser Seite ist durch Korrosion zwar stark angegriffen, doch sind noch Reste der ursprünglichen Verzierung erkennbar. Das höher erhaltene Ende ist durch eine schmale Kehle vom Rest des Stückes abgesetzt, eine entsprechende Ausbildung wird man für das andere Ende voraussetzen dürfen. An beiden Enden schließen zwei v-förmige, nach innen weisende Kerbverzierungen an. Auf dem Rücken des Stückes folgen kurze Kerbverzierungen, die nur an einem der Enden noch deutlich erkennbar sind. Etwa in der Mitte schließlich sind zwei vertikale Kerbverzierungen angebracht, die von weiteren, schrägen Verzierungen gerahmt worden zu sein scheinen.

Das Stück weist deutliche Ähnlichkeiten mit einem Objekt auf, das in den achtziger Jahren aus einem Altrheinarm bei Xanten-Wardt ausgebaggert und als Schildfessel bzw. Schildfesselbeschlag angesprochen wurde (Abb.2).² Dieser Altrheinarm enthielt zahlreiche, in der Mehrzahl frühkaiserzeitliche Fundstücke, darunter etlicher Militaria.³ Daß das Vergleichsstück in einem militärischen Kontext gehört, ist durch die Inschrift > ALBANI ('aus der Centurie des Albanus') zweifelsfrei erwiesen. Bedie Objekte ähneln sich nicht nur in ihrem halbmondförmigen Querschnitt, sondern auch in ihrem Dekor aus kurzen bzw. längeren, v-förmigen Kerbverzierungen. Bei dem Neufund vom Fürstenberg dürfte es sich also um das Mittelstück einer Schildfessel handeln. In ihren Abmessungen liegt sie etwa in der Größenordnung

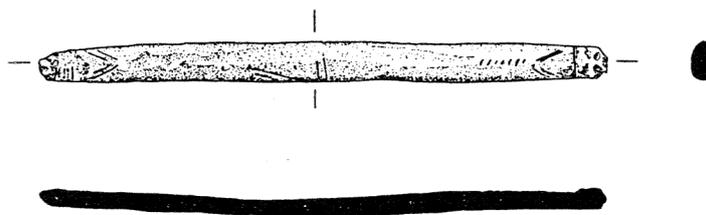


Abb.1 Schildfesselbeschlag, Xanten-Fürstenberg. Maßstab 1:2

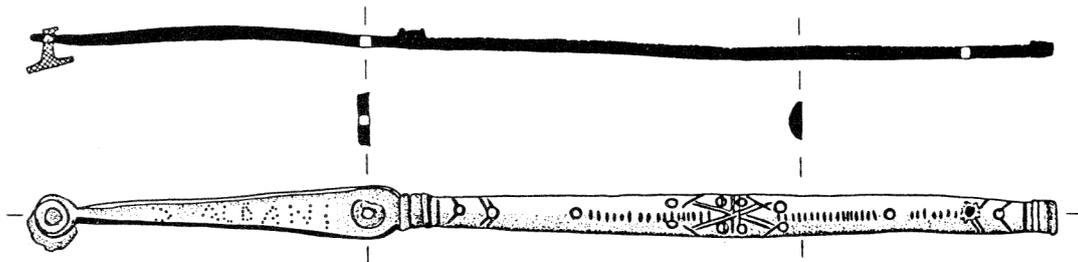


Abb.1 Schildfesselbeschlag aus dem Altrhein bei Xanten-Wardt. Maßstab 1:2

des entsprechenden Teilstücks aus dem Rhein (172mm). Demzufolge ist sie wohl um zwei gerundete, sich einziehende Endstücke mit Nietloch zu ergänzen, von denen sich bei der Schildfessel aus Xanten-Wardt eines erhalten hat.

ABKÜRZUNGEN

SCHALLES in Druck: Schalles, H.-J., 'Frühkaiserzeitliche Militaria aus einem Altrheinarm bei Xanten-Wardt', *JRMES* 5

SCHALLES & SCHREITER 1993: Schalles, H.-J., & Schreiter, Ch. (Hrsg.), *Geschichte aus dem Kies. Neue Funde aus dem Alten Rhein bei Xanten*, Xantener Berichte 3, Köln-Bonn

VON DETTEN *et al* 1993: von Detten, D., Schalles, H.-J., & Schreiter, Ch. 'Militaria (Mil 1-85)', in SCHALLES & SCHREITER, 1993, 178-228

ANMERKUNGEN

1. Inv. RMX 93,3.002. - Zeichnung Abb.1-2: H. Stelter.
2. VON DETTEN *et al*, 1993, 228 Kat. Mil 83 Taf.47.
3. SCHALLES & SCHREITER, 1993 (dort die ältere Lit.). - SCHALLES, in Druck.

DURA PENDANTS: PARALLELS, PLEASE!

Simon James

The drawing shows one of a number of copper alloy pendants in the assemblage from Dura-Europos, Syria, deposited no later than the AD250s when the Roman garrison town was destroyed by the Persians. There are many other fittings of clearly Roman military origin (to go with the well-known Roman shields, horse-armours, etc). However, some of the material is of Mesopotamian, Hellenistic, Palmyrene and Persian affiliation, and of course objects like this need not be military at all. (There are items of Palmyrene civilian dress in the assemblage, and the original excavators thought these particular objects were 'shoe-tags'.)

Does anyone know of any good parallels for these objects? If so, I would be grateful to hear from you, as I am trying to get the catalogue for the Final report on the

Arms and Armour finished soon (it should be published by British Museum Press in a couple of years). Please send any information to:

Dr Simon James, Education Service, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, Great Britain. (fax 0171-323-8855. E-mail CompuServe 100343,645 or Internet 100343.645@compuserve.com)

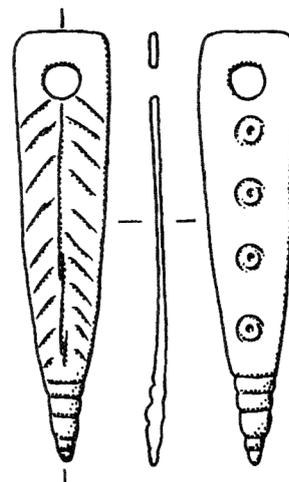


Fig.1 Pendant from Dura (scale 1:1)

A ROMAN 'COAL SCUTTLE' HELMET FROM GREECE

Theodore Adamakopoulos

[The following is a brief summary of a paper by A. Spetsieri entitled 'ΠΡΩΙΜΟ ΡΩΜΑΪΚΟ ΧΑΛΚΙΝΟ ΚΡΑΝΟΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΟ ΠΟΛΥΔΡΟΣΟ ΘΕΣΠΡΩΤΙΑΣ' ('Early Roman bronze helmet from Polydroso in Thesprotia') in *ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΑ ΑΝΑΛΕΚΤΑ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ* (Archaeological Miscellanea from Athens) 15, 1982, 59-64]

In the small village of Polydroso in Thesprotia (Thes-

protia is part of Epirus, one of the ten districts of Greece) in the town hall exists a small collection of ancient and folkloristic items. Among these items there is an early Roman bronze helmet. Unfortunately we do not know when and where this helmet was found. There are some rumours saying that it was found in 1910 in Zagora near Polydrosos village.

But we are certain of one thing. For decades the locals were using this helmet as a coal bucket for religious purposes in the local village church. In 1970 a tinker from Ionnina (capital of the Epirus district) found that helmet, cleaned it, treated it with tin and engraved a small inscription on the back 'This helmet was used in the church to transport coal until 1970'.

This helmet belongs to the Jockey Cap category. It is made from bronze and has a height of 167mm, a maximum diameter of 245mm, and a minimum diameter of 188mm. There are a lot of cracks and deformations from continuous use as a coal bucket. Most of the surface is covered with scars from the tinker's cleaning brush.

As far as we can tell, this helmet was constructed with hammering on a suitable mould. There is a hole in the back for a leather tongue and two holes in the sides for the cheekpieces, now lost. Also there are various engravings. This is the only helmet of this category that the author knows in Greece, but some cheekpieces were found in Dodone and Corfu. There are a lot of these helmets in European museums, for example in Cremona, Karlsruhe etc, but there are two similar helmets from tombs in Benacci and Todi. The last one is from the middle of the third century B.C. The author believes that the Polydrosos helmet is slightly older and it is a memento from the Italian expeditions of King Pyrrus of Epirus (281-72 B.C.). We know that Pyrrus dedicated spoils of war in the temple of Dodone and this is verified by the archaeological evidence (the cheekpiece from Dodone).

THE IMPERIAL 'APRON' – A MODEST THOUGHT

W.B. Griffiths

In his recent paper on the subject,¹ Mike Bishop outlined the various interpretations put forward to explain the existence of the military 'apron' in the early imperial army. The main question is whether it was there primarily for fashion or for function. As Bishop points out, it was, until recently, erroneously accepted that it was worn for protection of 'the soldier's lower abdomen and private parts',² an idea laughed out of court by re-enactors who have tried running while wearing the apron! Instead Bishop puts forward some of the alternative explanations; that it simply represents a typological development of the decoration of left-over belt strap; that it was designed to make a noise, along with the hobnailed boots, to announce the imminent arrival of a legionary; even that it may

perhaps have been used to an extent as a unit identifier (funny place to hang your dog tag!).

However, I should like to suggest another possible function for the apron, that it was perhaps principally designed to preserve a soldier's modesty! This could be achieved in two ways. Firstly, when seated the apron can fall in such a way as to fold the tunic down between a soldier's legs.³ Secondly while on the march it will help to weight the tunic down in high winds etc. I suspect that this consideration may be, in part at least, behind the initial creation of the apron as part of the panoply of the legionary, and that questions of decoration, noise, and status are secondary to it.

This will, I am sure, seem a fanciful notion to some, especially any who do not see the Roman legionary as a bashful chap! However, I believe the idea deserves some consideration, especially given that the apron seems to disappear from use around the time of the adoption of trousers for the military.⁴

NOTES

1. BISHOP, 1993.
2. *Ibid.*, 101.
3. Cf photo in PETERSON, 1992, 75.
4. I am grateful to Alex Croom and Tony Drake for discussing this idea with me.

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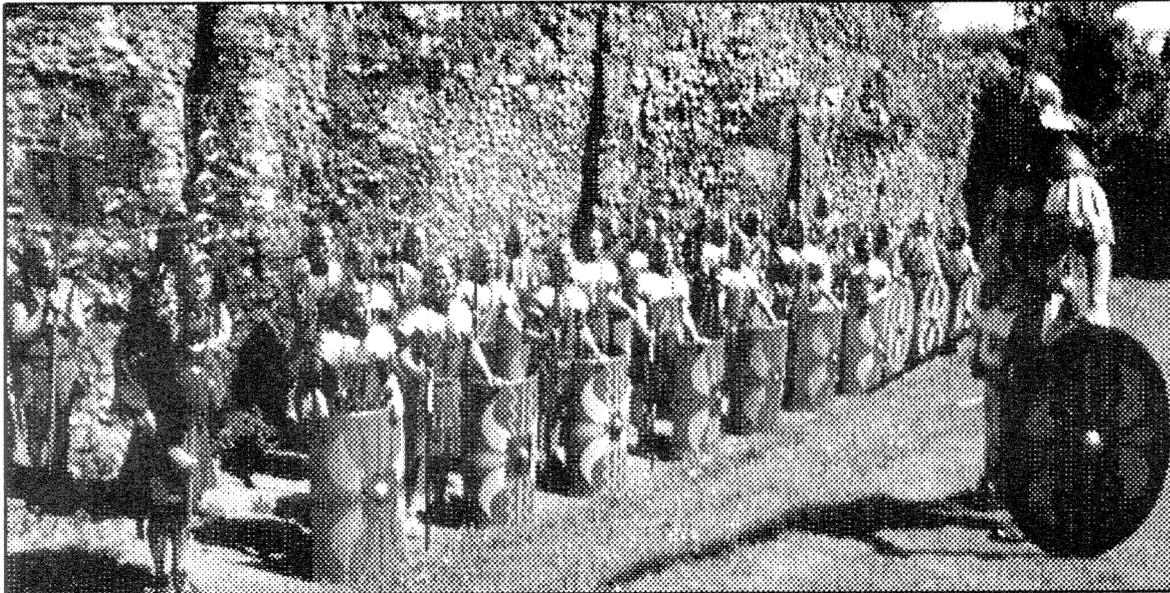
ROMEC IX, LEIDEN 1994

Rain-soaked Leiden greeted participants in this, the most recent and – arguably – most ambitious of the Roman Military Equipment Conferences, from Thursday 15th to Saturday 17th September 1994. Not only was there to be the usual academic shenanigans, but re-enactment societies from all over Europe were to be on display at the ready-made display ground of the Archeon, an archaeological theme park only a short drive away.

There were two main themes to this conference – the context of military equipment finds, and reconstruction work, although (as usual) room was made for general contributions of interest to all.

After a welcome by Marijke Brouwer of the RMO and a brief introduction to the subject matter by the editor of this newsletter, Thursday began with a session 'Contexts of Use', including examples of equipment finds from Oberwinterthur and Carnuntum, the last including the sort of well-stratified and dated finds of second-century A.D. finds of military equipment that have, until now, been so sadly lacking.

The afternoon saw two different but important aspects of the question of context, 'Deposition in Water' and 'Deposition on Land'. Contributions here included ivory



LEGIO GEMINA MARTIA VICTRIX was established in 1981 and now has a membership of 35, fielding between 15 and 25 at events. It costs nothing to be a member, but within one year of joining they are expected to have complete, acceptable kit. They produce sporadic bulletins and event notices, but have a formal newsletter planned for autumn of 1994.

from Scandinavian bog finds, the dramatic finds from dredging near Xanten-Wardt, the pits at Newstead, and helmets from the Kops plateau at Nijmegen.

Friday morning saw the themes of 'Burial Contexts' and 'Crossing the Frontiers' bringing papers on Roman weaponry found outside the empire. Contributors from Poland, Slovakia, and Denmark brought interesting perspectives to the subject. In the afternoon, the session on 'General Topics' brought contributions on the influence of tent design on Republican stone barracks, the Roman equivalent of barbed wire, the decoration of swords and daggers, military equipment on Hadrian's *exercitus* coinage, and Late Roman helmet fragments from Richborough. A presentation on the rich archaeology of Ribchester (*sans* finds!) served to put the main theme of the conference... into context.

Saturday saw the conference transfer to Alphen aan den Rijn where the Archeon theme park is situated. A series of papers before lunch concentrated on practical aspects of military equipment studies included the Ermine Street Guard's leather tent, *cohors V Gallorum's* weapons research programme, the Carpow scale armour and its reconstruction, Roman smithing techniques, a fully working reconstruction of Heron's *cheiroballistra*, and some reconstructed cavalry sports armour. After a Roman lunch (well, almost – we were sitting, not reclining) there was a chance to see all of these in action; or rather, there would have been had it not poured with rain. Most of the groups were forced to hang around in the buildings showing off their work. At least it gave the buildings a genuine 'Roman' feel. David Sim's smithing demonstration in the medieval smithy was very popular. The next day, Sunday, was an improvement by all accounts, with many of the groups able to give demonstrations, but your editor had had to leave by then, so he missed it (typical).

Thanks are due to *all* who helped prepare and run the

conference, including Marijke Brouwer and the staff at the RMO, Peter de Haas and the staff at Archeon, and especially Carol van Driel-Murray who oversaw the whole vast venture in such a masterful fashion.

The bulk of the papers presented on the theme of military 'Equipment in Context' will appear in volume 5 of JRMES, with papers on the other themes appearing in both volumes 4 and 6.

GAFF OF THE MONTH

Life is incomplete without howlers, clangers, and general incompetence on the part of your editor, and last month was no exception. The entry for *legio XIII Gemina* in the section on re-enactment groups inadvertently left out their contact address. So we hereby offer them our apologies, repeat their entry and photograph, and this time give you a contact address:

Legio XIII Gemina Martia Victrix, Freiherr vom Stein Str.22, 55774 Baumholder, GERMANY

Issue 7:1 of *Arma* will hopefully bring a revised, updated, re-enactment group supplement which will include some of those we missed last time.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS

This year's innovation to the list of subscribers is the year of subscription expiry: the year in brackets (charmingly emboldened) after your address is the last one for which you will receive *Arma*, so if you need to renew your subscription, use the enclosed renewal form. Some organisations have standing orders and this is indicated by

SO in parentheses. This will hopefully avoid confusion for all concerned and save me having to send out subscription reminders. If you disagree violently with the year of expiry indicated by my records, or you just don't like having your expiry date embazoned on paper for all to see, write and let me know.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Copy dates for *Arma* are 31st May (for the Summer edition) and 30th November (for the Winter one).
2. Absolutely anything pertaining to the study of Roman military equipment will be considered for publication, including details about recently published books or articles, news about finds, or information about forthcoming courses or exhibitions.
3. Contributions should preferably be in typescript in English, French, or German, but a computer disc with the text will be very helpful (either as ASCII text, in RTF (Rich Text Format), or WordPerfect 5.1); disk formats handled include Acorn (DFS, ADFS), IBM/MSDOS (in whatever combinations of 5.25in, 3.5in, DD or HD you can manage), Apple (3.5in HD). Please, *no* Amstrad PCW 3in discs unless you have no access to a real computer.
4. This one is usually ignored, but is nonetheless very important. Illustrations should be designed to fit the text area – either landscape, portrait, a portion of the latter, or a column's width. They should also be camera-ready: i.e. should already have been reduced to the size required in reproduction.
5. Photographs (up to 296 × 210mm) can now be readily included in *Arma*, and these can be colour or black and white, prints or transparencies (up to 100 × 100mm); even negatives, if you are desperate.
6. Contributions can be sent to any of the editorial board – M.C. Bishop, C. van Driel-Murray, or H.-J. Ubl (see below for addresses).

STOP PRESS

News has just arrived of a forthcoming international symposium to be held at Shumen in Bulgaria (October 25–27th 1995), entitled 'Armament in Ancient Thrace'. Further details from Georgi Kitov, Institute of Archaeology with Museum, 2 Saborna str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria (fax no. 88 24 05). There is a conference fee of US\$20 and there are grants available for Eastern European participants; titles of papers must be submitted by the end of April 1995.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription for *Arma*, which includes two issues (Summer and Winter), is now £5.00 (US \$00) per annum for Britain, the rest of Europe, and the rest of the world. A five-year consolidated subscription is available for a stunning £20.00 (US \$00). Postage is inclusive in the price, 1st class for Britain, surface mail to the rest of the world. CHEQUES (IN STERLING OR US DOLLARS, PLEASE) SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO 'M.C. Bishop'; alternatively, the appropriate amount can be transferred to the following British Giro account: M.C. Bishop, 639965903 (but please add £2.50 to cover the transfer charge I have to pay to receive it!). US \$ prices include bank charges.

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ADDRESSES

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