THE TEMPLE OF SULIS MINERVA
—AT BATH—

VOLUME 2 THE FINDS FROM THE SACRED SPRING

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Contents

4 The curse tablets

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Preface

I am grateful to Professor B.W. Cunliffe and the Bath Archaeological Trust for inviting me to publish the inscribed metal tablets found in the sacred spring, and for allowing me to attempt a scale comparable with that of A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: the Latin Writing-Tablets* (1983), which has been my model.

Preliminary publication began in the annual Roman Britain (Inscriptions) survey in *Britannia* xii (1981), and has continued each year until *Britannia* xviii (1987). In this I am fortunate in having Mark Hassall as my colleague, and for the first two years we both examined **2, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 51, 94**; he was responsible for the first publication of **2, 8, 9, 16, 51**, which I have since re-drawn for uniformity's sake and to illustrate some small changes of reading. Examination would have been impossible without the expert cleaning and conservation carried out by Mrs S. Pollard in the Oxford University Institute of Archaeology.[1] I also received help from her successor, Ms E. Cameron, who cleaned and conserved **6, 14** and **55**. Many of the tablets were analysed by Dr A.M. Pollard in the Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art.[2] Deciphering and drawing the tablets has been made easier by the photographs of each one taken by Mr R.L. Wilkins in the Oxford University Institute of Archaeology. Copy-proofing of my line drawings has been done by his assistant Mr P. Scremin.

I am grateful to members of seminars and lecture audiences who made interesting and helpful suggestions, in particular to the Bath Graduate Medical Society. Individual scholars to whom my special thanks are due, for generously discussing various points or providing information, include Dr J.N. Adams, Dr S.J.B. Barnish, Mr Stephen Bird, Dr Nicholas Horsfall, Dr Ian Marriott, Dr J.H.W. Penney, Dr John Rea, Mr C.J. Salter, Professor Colin Smith, Professor H.S. Versnel, Dr Graham Webster, Dr J.P. Wild.

This report is divided into three parts: nine introductory sections; a detailed description of each tablet with commentary; and four indices. The bibliography and plates follow.

The commentary was written first, so that it could be set by the printer while the introductory sections were being written. I hope there are no serious inconsistencies, but there is a minimum of cross-reference between the two, to some extent intentional.

As a convenient abbreviation for citing the Bath tablets I suggest the form *Tab. Sulis*.

1. S.C. Pollard, 'Conservation of Pewter Objects from the Roman Reservoir at Bath', in G. Miles, S. Pollard (eds.), *Lead and Tin: Studies in Conservation and Technology* (1985), 57–63.
2. A.M. Pollard, 'Investigation of 'Lead' Objects using XRF', *ibid.*, 27–32.

A prayer to the goddess

'I ask your most sacred Majesty that you take vengeance ...' (35)

More than 1500 curse tablets (*defixiones*) are now known, two-thirds of them written in Greek; of the Latin texts, over half have been found in Britain, most of them from the area of the Severn estuary.[1] The 130 tablets from Bath, many of them fragmentary or otherwise illegible, are one of the largest groups ever published. It is convenient to call them 'curse tablets', although it will be seen that they are not typical *defixiones*; and in any case, we do not know what they were called by their authors. The word *defixio* is only attested in a bilingual gloss (*C. Gloss. Lat.* ii 40), and its use must be deduced from the verb *defigere* ('to fasten' or 'fix', and hence 'to curse').[2] *Defigere* is found in only three British curse tablets (*RIB* 6, 7, 221) which are exceptional, as will be seen, in cursing without stating the reason why. The cognate verb *configere* is found at Bath (**97, 5**, cf. **44, 1**), but, if asked to define what they were composing, the authors of tablets from Bath might well have used the word *devotio* (cf. **10, 5**), *ex(s)ecratio* (cf. **99, 1**), or *donatio* (cf. **8, 1** etc.). *Donatio* is much the most likely term: fifteen tablets 'give' (*donare*) stolen property or the thief himself to Sulis; and *donatio* seems actually to be the 'heading' of the Eccles (Kent) tablet. One of the Uley tablets, however, calls itself a *commonitorium* ('memorandum'), a word with even more marked legal overtones than *donatio*, and it is possible there was no single standard term. But 'curse tablet', if imprecise, is too convenient and familiar to be discarded.[3]

Curse tablets have been well defined as 'inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of small, thin sheets, intended to influence, by supernatural means, the actions or welfare of persons or animals against their

1. D.R. Jordan (1985a, 151–97), reckons (at p. 151) 'some 1,100 examples', by implication the total of Wünsch's 220 Attic lead curse tablets, Audollent's 305 (Greek and Latin), and 'over 650' collected by himself. To these can be added 53 Latin texts collected by Besnier (1920, 5–30), and another 48 by Solin (1968, 23–31). This grand total of almost 1,300 curse tablets (including a few noted since in *AE*) includes only 9 from Britain. The British total will not be known until the Uley tablets are examined; some inventory-numbers may cover more than one tablet, the total being c. 140. To this can be added 130 from Bath, and c. 25 from elsewhere, say c. 300 in all.
2. For the usage of *defigere* see *TLL* s.v. It is unclear whether the image is one of 'fastening' (cf. Greek κατάδεσμος) or of '(trans)fixing'; nails are quite often driven through curse tablets, but this would suit either sense.
3. A better term for most of the texts discussed in this section is 'juridical prayer', as suggested by Professor H.S. Versnel, to whom I am indebted for the use of a draft of his contribution to *Accessing the Divine: Studies in Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Stanford University, forthcoming).

will'.[4] They are documents from the notoriously ill-defined borderland where 'religion' marches with 'magic', and perhaps also with 'law'. This is the lordship of 'luck', good luck and bad, human success and failure, our own health and our relations with other people, where we need all the help we can get. Curse tablets can be used to ensure bad luck for someone else, or to correct our own bad luck. They are the loser's last resort. Ancient literature is full of references to magical practices, but with the exception of one library, now scattered, we possess few of the technical handbooks that once existed, and there is surprisingly little explicit reference to the use of leaden curse tablets.[5] The best-known is the account of the death of a Roman prince at Antioch in AD 19: among the sinister debris found in the room where he lay dying were 'leaden tablets with the name *Germanicus* scratched on them' mixed with human carrion and other objects believed to subject living creatures to the infernal powers.[6] But most of what we know about curse tablets must be deduced from the objects themselves which, being made of lead and often carefully buried, stand a good chance of survival. The number known is likely to increase sharply. In Britain ten years ago (in 1977) only about ten were known; then abruptly, with the excavation of the temple of Mercury at Uley and (in 1979/80) with the investigation of the spring of Sulis at Bath, there was a flood of them swelled by a trickle of casual finds, until now *c.* 300 are known. Curse tablets and wooden writing tablets, also found in recent years in large numbers, will have to compensate students of Roman Britain for a paucity of inscriptions, a lack of any native literature, and a loss to their country's endemic dampness of every single scrap of papyrus.

Curse tablets found at Kreuznach (Audollent 97, 100) consign the names of enemies 'to the infernal powers', like the tablets which helped kill Germanicus. Sometimes epitaphs claim that the deceased died of witchcraft, like that of a tribune's wife at Lambaesis, who was 'cursed by spells'.[7] Many surviving texts curse people, often in elaborate detail, without saying why. However, it is possible to deduce from the more informative texts four principal motives for composing a curse tablet: to curse calumniators, thieves, embezzlers, and perhaps to recover what has been lost; to hamper or silence the opposition in a lawsuit; to curse rivals in love, or to gain someone's love; and to curse charioteers and their horses (Audollent 1904, lxxxviii ff.). It is remarkable that almost all British curse tablets, those that can be classified, if we ignore the lists of names, fall into only the first of these categories, curses against thieves. There is not a single reference to lawsuits or charioteers, and only one possible love-charm, the *negotium Ettern(a)e* from Old Harlow. The only exceptions are the three curses which use the verb *defigere* (*RIB* 6, 7, 221), the unique sanction against perjury (94), and a few mystery texts like 14, 40, 46, 101, 103, and fragments of uncertain interpretation. Otherwise there is no British curse tablet which can be said to have been *not* prompted by theft. At Bath, for instance, the verb *involare* ('steal') and its synonyms are found in more than 30 texts; this total can be increased to more than 50 by fragments of other formulas associated with theft. At least four of the five Uley tablets so far deciphered were prompted by theft. From elsewhere in Britain *c.* 25 curse tablets are known; at least 12 were prompted by theft, and only four (Old Harlow and *RIB* 6, 7, 221) can be said *not* to have been. By contrast, in 1963 the number of British curse tablets aimed at thieves had just risen to four.[8]

In Britain as a whole, therefore, with almost all of the Uley tablets still awaiting examination, there are *c.* 70 curse tablets already known to have been prompted by theft, compared with less than ten, not counting lists of names, that can be attributed to other causes. It is difficult not to be reminded of the criticism sometimes made of modern British law, that it takes more account of crimes against property than against the person. This preoccupation of the British curse tablets with theft is the more remarkable if one looks for such texts among the *c.* 1300 curse tablets known from the rest of the Greco-Roman world. Many of them admittedly are fragmentary or unpublished, but it seems possible to find only twenty which were prompted by theft (including embezzlement of a deposit). The type of curse tablet which is dominant in Britain, therefore, is most uncommon elsewhere. It will be interesting to see whether such tablets, in Britain and outside Britain, share features in common; but first it may be convenient to tabulate the evidence. Unless stated, tablets are inscribed on lead.

British curse tablets (except Bath)

1. London. *RIB* 6. T. Egnatius Tyranus and P. Cicereius Felix are cursed (*defictus est*).
2. London. *RIB* 7. Tretia Maria is cursed (*defico*) in parts of the body, and silenced.

4. Jordan 1985a, 151. The introductory chapters to A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (1904), are still most valuable. There is a large bibliography, most of it to be found in Preisendanz 1972, 1–29, which is fundamental.

5. Audollent (1904, cxvii–xxiii), collects ancient testimonia, to which Preisendanz adds Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of S. Euthymius*, 57 (a curse tablet of tin). The *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (ed. K. Preisendanz, 1973–4) contain spells written on lead tablets, including restraining spells reminiscent of some curse tablets (e.g. IV 329ff., V 304ff., VII 396ff.).

6. Tacitus, *Annals* ii 69, *carmina et devotiones et nomen Germanici plumbeis tabulis insculptum*; cf. Cassius Dio lvii 18, ἐλασμοὶ μολίβδινοι ἀράς τινας μετὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ ἔχοντες, language so similar as to suggest a common source (Aufidius Bassus?). The reference to a tin curse tablet in the *Life of S. Euthymius* (see n. 5) is *very* literary, as is the love-charm inscribed on copper in Jerome, *Life of S. Hilarion*, 21.

7. *CIL* VIII 2756, *carminibus defixa*; cf. III 2197 (Salonae), *florente aetate depressere veneficae | mensesqu(e) quinq(ue) et annum cum aegrotaverit, | abreptam aetate in inferi Ditis specus*. These are the most explicit, but other epitaphs of persons who died untimely with suspicion of foul play are also collected by G. Björck (1938, 25–33).

8. Turner 1963, 121. The Caerleon tablet, as Collingwood suggested (ibid., n. 5), should have been added, to make the true total five.

3. London Bridge. *Britannia* xviii (1987), 360, No. 1. 'Metunus' (i.e. Neptune) is asked for vengeance on a list of names within nine days.
4. Eccles (Kent). *Britannia* xvii (1986), 428–31, No. 2. Fragmentary *donatio* containing a formula against a thief.
5. Silchester. Unpublished. An irregular rectangle of lead apparently inscribed in NRC, but still undeciphered. Not necessarily a curse tablet.
6. Hamble estuary. Unpublished. Neptune is asked to punish a thief and anyone privy to the theft.
7. Wanborough (Wilts.). *Britannia* iii (1972), 363–7. Fragmentary text containing a formula against a thief.
8. Brean Down (Somerset). *Britannia* xvii (1986), 433–5, No. 6. Fragmentary text containing formulas against a thief.
9. Pagans Hill (Avon). *Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7. An unknown deity is asked to recover a sum of money from a named person and his wife.
10. Pagans Hill (Avon). Ibid., 340, No. 8. Fragment cursing someone with weariness, of unknown reference.
11. Pagans Hill (Avon). Ibid., 341, No. 9. Fragment referring to 'wrong' and 'giving', probably prompted by theft.
12. Uley (Glos.). *Britannia* iv (1973), 324, No. 2. Fragment of unknown reference.
13. Uley (Glos.). *Britannia* x (1979), 342, No. 2. Complaint to Mercury of the theft of a draught animal by two named thieves, and a request that he force them to return it.
14. Uley (Glos.). Ibid., 343, No. 3. Memorandum to Mercury about a lost piece of linen, which he (or Silvanus) is to exact from the thief.
15. Uley (Glos.). Ibid., 344, No. 4. Mercury is required to discover the thief of a gold ring.
16. Uley (Glos.). Unpublished. Biccus gives Mercury what he has lost, and requires him to give the thief no rest until it is returned.

    There are *c.* 140 unexamined curse tablets from Uley, many of them still rolled or fragmentary and likely to remain illegible.
17. Kelvedon (Essex). *JRS* xlviii (1958), 150, No. 3. Mercury is to make a thief pay.
18. Old Harlow (Essex). *Britannia* iv (1973), 325, No. 3. Mercury is given 'the Etterna business' and herself.
19. Caistor St. Edmund (Norfolk). *Britannia* xiii (1982), 408, No. 9. Neptune(?) is required to recover a quantity of stolen property.
20. Weeting with Broomhill (Norfolk). Unpublished. Known only from a drawing. Contains formulas against a thief.
21. Brandon (Norfolk). Unpublished. To Neptune. Contains formulas against a thief.
22. Clothall (Herts.). *RIB* 221. Tacita is cursed (*deficta*).
23. Chesterton (Warwks.). *RIB* 243. Fragment mentioning a (stolen?) garment.
24. Ratcliffe-on-Soar (Notts.). *JRS* liii (1963), 122–4.

Jupiter is required to force a thief to return a stolen sum of money.
25. Ratcliffe-on-Soar (Notts.). Unpublished. No details known.
26. Leintwardine (Heref.). *JRS* lix (1969), 241, No. 31(a). List of names.
27. Leintwardine (Heref.). Ibid., No. 31(b). List of names.
28. Lydney (Glos.). *RIB* 306. Nodens is required to recover the ring stolen from Silvianus (by Senicianus?).
29. Caerleon (Gwent). *RIB* 323. Nemesis is required to curse the thief of a cloak and sandals.
30. No provenance. *Britannia* xix (1988), forthcoming. Fragment, asking 'your Majesty' that a thief be cursed.

Outside Britain: curse tablets prompted by theft

Greek texts
1. No provenance (Asia Minor?). Dunant 1978, 241–4. Bronze tablet (for display?). 'I dedicate (ἀνατίθημι) to Cybele all the gold I have lost, for her to recover it and reveal it all, and to punish the possessors in a way worthy of her power and for her not to be scorned.'
2. Cnidus (Caria). Audollent 2. 'Artemis devotes (ἀνιεροῖ) to Demeter and Persephone the person who did not return the clothes left by me, when I asked for them.' The criminal is not named, but this seems to be embezzlement of a deposit rather than theft.
3. Cnidus (Caria). Audollent 3. 'Nanas devotes (ἀνιεροῖ) to Demeter and Persephone the persons who took a deposit from Diocles and did not return it. She [i.e. Demeter] is to be merciful to them if they return it, unmerciful if they do not.' (etc.) The criminals are named on the other side.
4. Cnidus (Caria). Audollent 6. '[. . . devotes] to Demeter and Persephone the cloak he lost. And if (the thief) gives it back, you are to be merciful to him; but if he does not give it back, he is handed over to Demeter and Persephone for burning, and is not to find mercy until he gives it back.' Repeated in slightly different form.
5. Cnidus (Caria). Audollent 11. Fragmentary, but containing formulas found in 3 against the thief of a plate.
6. Cnidus (Caria). Audollent 12. Fragmentary, but containing formulas found in 3 against the thief of some cups(?).
7. Amorgos. Homolle 1901, 413–30. Complaint to Demeter that the owner's slaves have been enticed away by Epaphroditus. 'May the man who has done this to me enjoy no rest or activity of body or mind; let him not be served by men or women slaves, old or young; let him not complete what he attempts . . .' (etc.)
8. Delos. Bruneau 1970, 650–5. Invokes the anger of Atargatis (*dea Syria*) upon 'the person who lifted, who stole (my) necklace, those who were privy to

the theft, those who shared in it, whether man or woman' (ἴδε γυνὴ ἴτε ἀνήρ). The curse is repeated more fully, upon the brains, life, sinews, etc. of the victim.

9. Athens or Attica. Audollent 74. 'I devote and dedicate (καταγράφω καὶ κατατίθω) to the demons of the underworld, Hermes of the underworld, Hecate of the underworld, Pluto, Persephone, the Fates of the underworld, to all gods, and to Cerberus . . .' the person who took a deposit and did not return it. Fragmentary.

10. Athens or Attica. Audollent 75. The same formula as 9, directed at a thief. Also fragmentary.

11. Athens. Unpublished tablet noted by Jordan 1985a, 162, 'reproducing a version of Audollent 74 and 75, directed against thieves'.

12. Athens. Elderkin 1937, 389–95. The same formula as 9, directed at the thieves of three coverlets and a new white cloak, and at those privy to the theft who deny knowledge of it. Repeated.

13. Megara (Achaia). Audollent 42. Fragments of a curse upon parts of the body of persons who refused to give back a deposit of 20 denarii.

14. Bruttium (S. Italy). Audollent 212. Bronze tablet (for display?). '[Collyra dedicates (ἀνιαρίζει)] to the attendants of the god the dark-coloured [cloak] which [name lost took] and does not give back . . . and knows he is using . . . he is not to have rest for his soul until he pays the god a twelve-fold fine and a measure of incense according to the city's law.' Collyra also curses Melita in the same formula for taking three gold pieces and not giving them back. The petitioner is to be protected from the curse if she unwittingly eats or drinks with the thief, or enters the same house. (A fragment of the latter formula is found in 2 (Cnidus).)

Latin texts

15. Carnuntum (Pannonia). *AE* 1929, 228. Egger 1962, 81–97. Elaborate curse consigning Eudemus to the underworld, apparently for theft (of a coin hoard?). 'Let him replace the vase within nine days.'

16. Veldidena (Raetia). *AE* 1961, 181. Egger 1964, 3–23. 'Secundina entrusts (*mandat*) to Mercury and Moltinus that if anyone has stolen two calves(?) (worth?) 14 denarii . . . and commissions (*deligat*) you to pursue him and to separate him from his property and his nearest and dearest' (etc.).

17. Concordia (N.E. Italy). Solin 1977, 148–9. 'Secundula or (the person) who has stolen (it).'

18. Italica (Baetica). Gil and Luzón 1975, 117–33. 'Lady of the Spring, I require (*demando*) you to pursue two (*reading* 'duas') things. Whoever took my boots and sandals . . . whether girl or woman or man stole them . . .'

19. Baelo (Baetica). Bonneville, Dardaine and le Roux, forthcoming; cited by H.S. Versnel, who quotes from the text. 'I entrust (*commendo*) the theft to you, Lady. By your Majesty I ask you to pass

judgement (*reprindere*) . . . make examples (worthy of) your divinity and majesty.'

20. Emerita (Lusitania). Audollent 122. Vives 1971, No. 736. Marble slab inscribed to the goddess Ataecina (Proserpina). 'By your Majesty I ask, beg and beseech you that you avenge the theft that has been done on me. Whoever has dishonoured me, robbed me, diminished me of the property written below: 6 tunics, 2 linen wraps . . .'

If one reads these twenty text from outside Britain, it becomes clear that they contain similarities of thought and even language with the British texts, which are not found in the broad mass of *defixiones*. The similarities of language, which can be regarded as 'formulas', will be tabulated and discussed in the next section, but it may be worth outlining here the similarities of thought. The British and non-British tablets range from the simplest 'naming' of the thief (e.g. Bath **15**, Concordia) to elaborate curses upon a list of parts of the body (e.g. Bath **97**, Delos), but they all derive from a sense of injustice: the thief 'deserves' what is coming to him. The tablets are petitions for justice, not magical spells. They are addressed to respectable deities, not demons, even if the Athens tablets are tending that way. There are no magical names or words of power, none of the infallible formulas found in the Greek Magical Papyri by which to 'bind' supernatural powers. There is, in fact, little attempt even to shame the gods into taking action: Cybele is obliquely warned that for her not to act will bring her into disrepute, but this is unique; other petitioners allow themselves nothing stronger than an appeal 'by your Majesty'. By implication they rest their case upon its intrinsic merits: they know, and the god knows, that they have been robbed. Most of them name themselves; this too is unlike the conventional *defixio*, which is aimed at a named person by an anonymous enemy. The careful concealment of many curse tablets, by being rolled and folded, by being buried or thrown into water, even by encipherment of the text, is not in itself a striving after anonymity: it is only the privacy of prayer. A few texts, like the marble tablet from Emerita, were in fact clearly intended for display; one might say that a curse tablet would have been more effective if published, but this rationalisation of the god's power is foreign to the belief that prompted the petition.

There is thus a remarkable similarity of atmosphere, one might almost call it, in these texts found in the Aegean, on the Danube and in Italy, in southern Spain and in southern Britain. There are also some striking similarities of detail. The thief or the property stolen is 'given' to the deity; if the thief, it is sometimes added that his sufferings are not to cease until the property is returned; if the property itself is 'given', it is for the deity to 'exact' or 'pursue' it, like a debt-recovery agency. Even to be privy to the theft sometimes rates a curse. There are at least two coincidences of language: the mutually exclusive clauses ('whether man or woman') which are such a feature of the British texts are also found in the tablets from Delos and Italica; and the

request 'by your Majesty' is found both in Bath **35** and another British text (No. 30), and in the tablets from Baelo and Emerita. In studying these texts we have a task analogous to that of the classical scholar deducing the 'archetype' of a group of manuscripts: among the Bath tablets there are close similarities of thought and language which imply a common tradition of some kind; but these similarities can be extended to the other British texts, and from them to a tiny but distinct minority of the non-British texts, Latin and Greek. Clearly there was some measure of agreement, whether we regard it as a tradition or due to the circulation of handbooks, about how one should approach a deity to recover stolen property. It is of course characteristic of Greco-Roman paganism that there is no one god to whom to apply, no Olympian St. Antony of Padua, but that often the petitioner resorted to his local deity, albeit in a way which would not have been unfamiliar to another petitioner hundreds of miles – and even hundreds of years – distant. The 'formulas' with which one wrote to Sulis, and to other deities, to recover stolen property and to punish thieves, from which it is possible to deduce something of a tradition, will be examined in more detail in the next section.

Formulas

'Take lead from a cold-water pipe, make a tablet, and write on it with a bronze pen the following . . .'
<div align="right">Greek Magical Papyri (vii 398–9)</div>

All language, in a sense, is formulaic. We use words and phrases we have heard others use; if we did not, we would not be understood. One man's idiom is another man's cliché. However, religion and law exaggerate this necessary conservatism of language, by using and repeating phrases which acquire sanctity by repetition and familiarity. This is true of the Bath tablets: they are prayers of a kind (and gods expect to be addressed in familiar language), but they are also legal documents, again of a kind, in their concern for justice, the punishment of thieves, the recovery of stolen property. They are clearly 'formulaic'. This is not to say that one tablet is ever a copy of another – this never happens – or that they contain nothing unique and original except personal names and items of lost property, but the occurrence of the same or similar phrases in different tablets shews that they draw upon a common stock of language. This stock, ultimately, was wide, since the same 'formulas' can be found in other British curse tablets, and even sometimes in non-British curse tablets. On occasions they can be paralleled in Roman literature and law. Whether the common stock was continually replenished is another question (see p. 73), but it was not restricted to that immediately available in Bath and southern Britain. At some removes, it might be said, the Bath tablets draw upon language and ideas current for hundreds of miles and hundreds of years. This may become more clear after a detailed tabulation of the formulas which comprise so much of their text.

Words and Phrases

(Letters restored or supplied are not indicated unless uncertain or of particular interest, or unless they affect the point being made. References to the tablets cited by place of discovery will be found in the previous section.)

ante dies novem ('before nine days')
62, 3

ante quod ven(iant) die(s) novem (London Bridge)
ante dies nov[em] (Weeting with Broomhill)

infra dies novem (Carnuntum)
intra dies septe(m) (Audollent 250, Carthage)
No close parallel in the *Digest*, but *ante diem* (defined) is frequent.

donec ('until')
10, 15
see **nisi**

devoveo ('I curse')
devoveo eum qui caracellam meam involaverit (**10**, 5)
see **dono** (ii)

hunc ego aput vostrum numen demando devoveo desacrifico (Audollent 129, Arezzo)

dono (etc.) ('I give')

(i) the property stolen
    (a) present tense (*dono, donat*)
    dono numini tuo maiestati paxsam balnearem et palleum (**32**, 2)
    dono maiestati tuo sacellum (**33**, 2)
    ⁺*dono numini tuo pecuniam* (**34**, 2)
    dono ti[bi . . .]ream (**38**, 1)
    dono tibi pallium (**43**, 2)
    dono tibi pannum (**60**, 2)

    Exsuperius donat pannum ferri (**66**, 1)
    Basilia donat . . . anilum argenteum (**97**, 1)

do tibi palleum et galliculas (Caerleon)
deo s(upra)dicto tertiam partem donat . . . tertia pars donatur (Uley, No. 14)
Biccus dat Mercurio quidquid pe(r)d(id)it (Uley, No. 16)
donatur deo decima pars eius pecuniae (Ratcliffe-on-Soar)
cuius demediam partem tibi (Pagans Hill, No. 9)

'I dedicate (ἀνατίθημι) to Cybele all the gold I have lost' (No provenance, No. 1)
'[. . . devotes (ἀνιεροῖ)] to Demeter and Persephone the cloak he lost' (Cnidus, No. 4)
'[Collyra dedicates (ἀνιαρίζει)] to the attendants of the god the dark-coloured [cloak] which [*name lost* took]' (Bruttium)

    (b) perfect tense (*donavi*)
    deae Suli donavi argentiolos sex quos perdidi (**8**, 1)
    [. . .]eocorotis perdedi laenam palleum sagum paxsam donavi (**62**, 1)

Silvianus anilum perdedit demediam partem donavit
Nodenti (Lydney)

(ii) the thief

    (*a*) present tense (*dono, donat, donatur*)

    nomen rei qui destrale involaverit (donatur) (**15**, 1)

    nomen furis . . . donatur (**16**, 1)

    aenum meum qui levavit . . . dono (**44**, 1)

    Lovernisca donat eum qui . . . involaverit (**61**, 1)

    cf. **devoveo**; **execro**

'Artemis devotes (ἀνιεροῖ) to Demeter and Persephone the person who did not return the clothes left by me' (Cnidus, No. 2; cf. Nos. 3, 5, 6)

'I devote and dedicate (καταγράφω καὶ κατατίθω) to the demons of the underworld (etc.)' the person who took a deposit and did not return it (Athens, No. 9; cf. Nos. 10, 11, 12)

'I give to you (παραδίδωμί σοι) *name of victim*' is a common formula in curse tablets from Athens (Jordan 1985b, 241)

    (*b*) perfect tense (*donavi*)

    deae . . . dona[vit] illos qui (**57**, 2)

    deae Suli donavi furem qui . . . involavit (**65**, 2)

haec nomina hominum et equorum quae dedi vobis (Audollent 273, Hadrumetum)

data nomina ad inferos (Audollent 97, Kreuznach; cf. 100)

execro ('I curse')
execro qui involaverit (**99**, 1)
see **dono** (ii)

exigas ('you are to exact')

(i) the property stolen

    a nominibus infrascriptis deae exactura est (**8**, 3)

    ex(i)gas pe[r sanguinem e]ius (**38**, 4)

    exigas hoc per sanguinem et sa[nitatem su]am et suorum (**41**, 2)

tertiam partem donat ita ut exsigat istas res (Uley, No. 14)

cuius demediam partem tibi ut ita illum exigas a Vassicillo (Pagans Hill, No. 9)

donatur deo Iovi . . . ut exigat per mentem (etc.) (Ratcliffe-on-Soar)

id quod vobis delegat ut persecuatis (Veldidena)

ut tu persequaris [d]uas res demando (Italica, emended)

'for her to recover (ἀναζητῆσαι) it' (No provenance, No. 1)

pecunia . . . ex diversis nominibus exacta (*Digest* XXXII 41.6)

(ii) the thief

    qui [eam involaveri]t si servus si liber . . . exsigatur (**34**, 3)

pecunias . . . ex nominibus exactis (*Digest* XXXIV 3.28, 3)

fanum ('the temple')
see **templum**

fraudem ('wrong')

(i) *fraudem fecit*

    qui mihi fr(a)udem fecit (**32**, 5)

    qui [fraude]m fecerunt (**35**, 4)

fur qui fraudem fecit (Uley, No. 15)

quia mihi fraude(m) fe(cit) (Besnier 1920, 17, No. 27, Trier)

si meae constitutioni fraudem fecerit (*Digest* I 6.2)

(ii) *per fraudem aliquam*
98, 7

fraude sua ulla (Pagans Hill, No. 11)

infrascriptis ('written below')
a nominibus infrascriptis (**8**, 3)

deo s(upra)s(crip)to (Ratcliffe-on-Soar)

res s(upra)dictas . . . res quae s(upra)s(crip)ta(e) sunt (Uley, No. 14)

s(. . .) s(upra)s(crip)ti (Eccles)

eas res q(uae) i(infra) s(criptae) s(unt) (Emerita)

denuntio personis infrascribtis (Audollent 111, Aquitania)

See Jordan, 1985c, 165, for parallel formulas in Greek curse tablets.

quorum nomina subscripta sunt (Roman military diplomas)

ILS III p. 774, Index xv, s.v. *I S* (inscriptions)

epistulam scripsit in verba infra scripta (*Digest* XVI 3.28)

inveniat ('let her discover (the thief)')
de(us in)veniat (?) (**36**, 5)

qui rem ipsam involavit deus inveniat (**44**, 12)

quicumque res(!) deus illum inveniat (**99**, 4)

qui fraudem fecit deus inveniat (Uley, No. 15, emended)

si (servos) comitum vel legati sui reos proconsul invenerit (*Digest* XLVIII 19.6, 1)

involare ('steal')
This verb is so common in the Bath tablets (*c.* 30 instances) that it can be regarded as formulaic. Its synonyms occur only once each, *levavit* (**44**, 1), *tulerit* (**47**, 3), *furaverit* (**98**, 6). *Involare* is also found in the Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Kelvedon, Italica and Emerita tablets. But it is found only once in the whole of the *Digest*, and only occasionally in Classical Latin, in colloquial contexts like Catullus xxv 6, *remitte pallium mihi meum quod involasti*. This is because it is a 'Vulgar' word (cf. French *voler*, Provençal *envolar*), as indeed are the three synonyms just cited.

involaverit
See below (p. 69), s.v. 'Future perfect and Perfect'

maiestas ('majesty')
dono numini tuo maiestati (32, 2)
dono maiestati tuo (33, 2)
rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam ut vindices (35, 2)

oro tuam maiestatem (No provenance, No. 30)

per tuam maiestatem rogo oro obsecro ut vindices
  (Emerita)
*per maiestate(m) tua(m) . . . fac tu<t>o numini maies-
  tati exsemplaria* (Baelo)

nec natos nec nascentes ('neither children now nor in
  the future')
10, 14

[nec nat]os sanos habeant (Pagans Hill, No. 9)

natis nascentibus (*CIL* VI 8063; XII 3702)

nisi ('unless')
(i) the curse applies unless the stolen property is
  returned (see also **non permittas**)
  *nec permittas (etc.) . . . nissi istas species ad templum
    tuum detulerit . . . nisi ad templum tuum istas res
    retulerint* (32, 7 and 14)
  non illi permittas (etc.) . . . nisi haec ad fanum . . .
    (45, 6)
  sanitatem . . . nisi eidem loco ipsum pallium reducat
    (64, 3)
  cf. *donec caracallam meam ad templum sui numinis
    pertulerit* (10, 15)

*nec ante sanitatem habeant nissi repraesentaverint mihi
  iumentum* (Uley, No. 13)
*non ante laxetur nissi quando res s(upra)dictas ad fanum
  s(upra)dictum attulerit* (Uley, No. 14)
*nec ante sanetate(m) nec salute(m) nesi qua(m) in domo
  dei . . .* (Eccles)
*nec illis permittas (etc.) . . . nessi hanc rem [meam] ad
  fanum tuum attulerint* (Pagans Hill, No. 9)
cf. *nollis petmittas sanitatem donec perfera(t) usque
  templum Nodentis* (Lydney)

'but if he does not give it back, he is handed over to
  Demeter' (etc.) (Cnidus, No. 4)
'he is not to have rest for his soul until he pays the god a
  twelvefold fine' (etc.) (Bruttium)

(ii) the bogus concession
  nisi sanguine sua (6, 6, emended; context unclear)
  *nec oculos nec sanitatem nisi caecitatem orbi-
    tatemque* (45, 6)
  nec sanitatem nisi tandiu . . . (52, 3; context unclear)
  hoc donum non redemat nessi sanguine suo (65, 9)
  nec somnum nisi ut . . . (100, 8; context unclear)

non redimat ni(si) vita sanguine sui (Caerleon, emended)

nomen ('name')
a nominibus infrascriptis deae exactura est (8, 3)
nomen rei qui destrale involaverit (donatur) (15, 1)

nomen furis . . . donatur (16, 1)
numen furti (for *nomen furis?*) (102, 1)
(The use of *nomina* in 94, 4 is non-formulaic)

inter quibus nomen Seniciani (Lydney)
[ab ip]sis nominibus [inimicorum] meorum (Pagans Hill,
  No. 9)
me vendicas de iste numene (for *isto nomine*) (London
  Bridge)

inimicorum nomina . . . ad inferos (Audollent 96,
  Kreuznach)
data nomina ad inferos (Audollent 97, cf. 100, Kreuz-
  nach)
pecunia . . . ex diversis nominibus exacta (*Digest* XXXII
  41.6)
pecunias . . . ex nominibus exactis (*Digest* XXXIV 3.28, 3)
(See further, below, pp. 95–6)

numen ('divinity')
templum sui numinis (10, 17)
dono numini tuo maiestati (32, 2)
dono numini tuo (34, 2)

fac tu<t>o numini maiestati exsemplaria (Baelo)
*hunc ego aput vostrum numen demando devoveo
  desacrifico* (Audollent 129, Arezzo)
quibus fontibus praeest Sulis Minervae numen (Solinus,
  Coll. 22, 10, emended; see note to 94, 5)
numini Volcani (*RIB* 846, cf. 220)
praesentissimi numinis dei (*RIB* 1142)
intellexit numine inductus tuo (*RIB* 1791, Virgo Caeles-
  tis)
(These are the only instances in *RIB* of *numen* unless
Augusti (etc.).)

perdidi(t) ('I have lost/(he) has lost')
Docimedis perdidi(t) manicilia dua (5, 1)
stragulum quem perdidi (6, 1, reconstructed)
argentiolos sex quos perdidi (8, 1)
[. . .]eocorotis perdedi laenam palleum sagum paxsam
  (62, 1)
qui involaverit qui Deomiorix de hospitio suo perdiderit
  (99, 1)

Silvianus anilum perdedit (Lydney)
Biccus dat Mercurio quidquid pe(r)d(id)it (Uley, No. 16)

'[. . . devotes] to Demeter and Persephone the cloak he
  lost' (Cnidus, No. 4)
pecuniam perdere (*Digest*, 11 instances)

non permittas ('you are not to allow')
(The goddess is not to allow the thief any well-being
unless the stolen property is returned; see also **nisi**)
*nec ei somnum permittat nec natos nec nascentes donec
  . . .* (10, 12)
nec permittas somnum nec sanitatem . . . nissi (32, 4)
ut eis permittas nec somnum [nec . . .] (35, 5)
non illi permittas nec oculos nec sanitatem . . . nisi (45, 6)
[non il]li permittas in sanguine [. . .] (47, 4)

[. . . perm]ittas [somn]um nec sanitatem . . . (**52**, 1)
*non illi permittas nec sedere nec iacere nec . . . ambulare
    nec somnum nec sanitatem . . .* (**54**, 5)
cf. *nec ante illos patiaris [bibere nec m]anducare nec
    adsellare nec [meiere]* (**41**, 4)

*ne illi permittas bibere nec [. . .do]rmire nec ambulare
    . . .* (Wanborough)
*nec illis permittas sanitatem nec bibere nec manducare
    nec dormire nec natos sanos habeant nessi . . .* (Pagans
    Hill, No. 9)
nollis petmittas sanitatem donec . . . (Lydney)
cf. *ne (meiat) ne cacet ne loquatur ne dormiat ne vigilet
    nec sanitatem nessi . . .* (Uley, No. 16)

'May the man who has done this to me enjoy no rest or
    activity of body or mind' (etc.) (Amorgos, No. 7)
'he is not to have rest for his soul until . . .' (Bruttium,
    No. 14)
*Quintus Ligarius, qui cum Africae oram teneret,
    infirmum Tuberonem applicare non permisit nec
    aquam haurire* (Digest I 2.2, 46)

queror, conqueror ('I complain')
[tib]i q[u]er[or] (**47**, 1)
conq[u]aer[or] tibi, Sulis (**54**, 2)
Enica conqueror tibi (**59**, 1)

deo Mercurio Cenacus queritur (Uley, No. 13)

qui (without antecedent), **si quis, quicumque** ('who-
    soever')

(i) **qui** (without antecedent)
    (Contrast *devoveo eum qui* (**10**, 5), *Lovernisca donat
        eum qui* (**61**, 1), *donavi furem qui* (**65**, 2).)
    qui mihi VILBIAM involavit (**4**, 1)
    *Docimedis perdidi(t) manicilia dua. qui illas in-
        volavi(t) . . .* (**5**, 1)
    qui involaverit si servus si liber (**39** i, 1, repeated)
    qui calamaea negat (**40**, 1; context obscure)
    Exsuperius donat pannum ferri. qui illi innoc[. . .]
        (**66**, 1; context obscure)
    d[eae Suli . . .] qu[i involavit](?) (**90**, 1)
    si puer si puella si vir si femina qui hoc involavit (**100**,
        1; context obscure)

do tibi palleum et galliculas. qui tulit . . . (Caerleon)
('gift' to Neptune of money) *qui decepit si mascel si
    femina . . .* (Hamble estuary)

There are only three instances of the formula in the
    curses against violation of tombs collected in *ILS*
    8172–258:
qui me (commoverit), habebit deos iratos et vivus ardebit
    (8181, Mactar)
qui hoc titulum sustulerit, habeat iratas umbras (8199,
    Puteoli)
*qui hic mixerit aut cacarit, habeat deos superos et inferos
    iratos* (8202, Rome)

(ii) **si quis**
    si (quis) vomerem Civilis involavit (**31**, 1)

dono tibi pannum. si quis eum . . . (**60**, 2)
si quis balniarem Cantissen(a)e involaverit (**63**, 2)
[si] quis aenum mihi involavit (**66**, 12; at end of text)

no British parallel

si quis (denarios) xiiii sive draucus duos sustulit (Vel-
    didena)
si quis puela si mulier sive homo involavit (Italica)

si quis is frequent in Roman legislation and regulations,
and in the quasi-legal formulas which threaten the
violators of tombs with a fine to the Treasury; there is
one instance from Britain:
si quis in hoc sepulcrum alium mortuum intulerit . . .
    (*RIB* 754)
Like *qui* it is found in a few curses against violators of
tombs, e.g.:
*(ossa) si quis violaverit aut inde exemerit, opto ei, ut cum
    dolore corporis longo tempore vivat et cum mortuus
    fuerit, inferi eum non recipiant* (*ILS* 8184, Rome)
*si quis autem sibi admiserit, non bono suo fecerit et
    superos et inferos iratos habeat* (*ILS* 8198, Rome)

(iii) **quicumque**
    quicumque illic periuraverit deae Suli (**94**, 6)
    *quaecumque . . . de bursa mea sex argenteos fur-
        averit* (**98**, 2)
    quicumque res(!) deus illum inveniat (**99**, 3)

quicumque res Vareni involaverit (Kelvedon)
cf. *quisquis involavit (dena)rios Cani Digni* (Ratcliffe-
    on-Soar)

quicumque and *quisquis* are also found in Roman
legislation and regulations like *si quis*. In curses against
violators of tombs *quisquis* is more common, but
quicumque is found:
*quicumque eum titulum vellet removere, eum dolorem
    habeat* (*ILS* 8187, Rome)
quiqumque hinc clavos exemerit, in oculos sibi figat (*ILS*
    8188, Rome)

quoad vixerit ('so long as he shall live')
45, 8

No curse-tablet parallels, but frequent in the *Digest* (see
    Vocabularium Iurisprudentiae Romanae, s.v. *vivo*,
    1422, 26)

redemat ('let him buy back')
hoc donum non redemat nessi sanguine suo (**65**, 9)
sanguine et vitae suae illud redemat (**99**, 5)
cf. *nisi sanguine sua* (**6**, 6, reconstructed)

non redimat ni(si) vita sanguine sui (Caerleon, emended)
illa (re)dimat sanguine suo (Brean Down)

cf. *qui sanguinem suum qualitercumque redemptum
    voluit* (Digest XLVIII 21.1, 'to save one's own life by
    whatever means possible')
illi devovere corporis vitaeque ac sanguinis quod supersit
    (Livy VI 14, 8, 'to promise total loyalty')

rogo ('I ask')

rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam (35, 2)

erogat deum Mercurium (Uley, No. 13)
iteratis precibus te rogo (Pagans Hill, No. 9)
tibi rogo, Metunus (London Bridge)

per tuam maiestatem rogo (etc.) (Emerita)

sanguine suo ('with his blood')

(i) exaction (of a debt) in blood
See above, s.v. **exigas**
cf. *ut sanguinem suum (r)eputes* (98, 8)

(ii) payment (of a debt) in blood
satisfecerit sanguine illorum (66, 10)
sanguine suo illud satisfacere (94, 8)
cf. *qui hoc fecerit sanguinem suum in ipsum aenum fundat* (44, 5; not formulaic)

sangu(i)no suo solvat (Kelvedon)

satisfacere creditori (*Digest*, passim)
'If anyone violates (this tomb), his children will pay with their children, their blood, and their deaths' (*SEG* xxviii (1978), No. 1079, Pisidia)

(iii) buy back (a 'gift') in blood
See above, s.v. **redemat**

(iv) blood is cursed
ut sanguine et l(u)minibus et omnibus membris configatur (97, 4)

cf. *vetus quomodo sanies signeficatur Tacita deficta* (Clothall)

sanitatem ('health')
See above, s.v. **non permittas**
exigas hoc per sanguinem et sa[nitatem sua]m et suorum (41, 3)
[   ] *sanitatem* (64, 2)

ut nec ante sanitatem habeant (Uley, No. 13)
. . . nec sanitatem nessi (Uley, No. 16)
nec ante santetate(m) nec salute(m) (Eccles)

si . . . si (mutually exclusive alternatives)

(i) 'whether slave or free'
si servus si liber
10, 32, 34, 39, 44, 47, 49, 55, 57, 63, 65, 66, 71, 97, 102, 105

Uley, No. 14
Brean Down

si liber si servus
11, 36, 38, 45, 87(?)

utrum servus utrum liber
98

si servus si liber si libertinus
31

si liber si servus si libera si serva
62

[si libera] si ancilla
52

cf. *si servus si ancela si liberta* (Brandon)

The *Digest* often opposes free men and slaves, with the implication that they are mutually exclusive categories, cf. Gaius, *Institutiones* i 9, *quod omnes homines aut liberi sunt aut servi*. The *Digest* never uses the exact words *si liber si servus*, but they are implicit in the following:
sive liberi sint sive servi (IV 9.7, 1)
nihil interest, utrum liber an servus (XIV 1.1, 4)
sive liber sit . . . sive servus sit (XXIX 2.6, 7)
vel ad ipsum pertinet, si liber est, vel ad dominum eius, si servus est (XLI 1.10, 4)
quantum ad Dei cultum, non est masculus neque femina, neque liber neque servus (Justinian, *Novella* V 2; cf. *Galatians* iii 28)

(ii) 'whether man or woman'
si vir si femina
10, 32, 34(?), 36, 49, 52, 66, 71, 100

Uley, No. 14

sive vir sive femina
61

si femina [si vir (or *baro)]*
38

utrum vir utrum mulier
98

cf. *si vir si mulier* (Uley, No. 14)

si baro si mulier
57, 65

Brean Down

si mulier si baro
44

liberi, sive baro sive mulier (*Lex Raet. Cur.* 18, 6)
si quis baro seu mulier Ribvaria (*Lex Ribv.* 86, 1)
si quis mortuatus fuerit baro aut femina (*Pactus Alam.* ii 41)
(See Prinz and Schneider (edd.) 1967, s.v. *baro*)

Variants not found at Bath
si mulrer si mascel (Kelvedon)
si mascel si femina (Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Caistor St Edmund, Hamble estuary)
si vir si mascel(!) (Uley, No. 16)

si quis puela si mulier sive [ho]mo involavit (Italica)
Ἴδε γυνὴ ἴτε ἀνήρ (Delos)

The idea must have been a commonplace, since it occurs in sub-Roman law codes and in Justinian, *Novella* V 2: *quantum ad Dei cultum, non est masculus neque femina, neque liber neque servus* (cf. *Galatians* iii 28).

In literature it is found in prayers:
εἴτε γυνὰ τήνω παρακέκλιται εἴτε καὶ ἀνήρ (Theocritus, *Idyl* ii 44)
Venerem igitur almum adorans, sive femina sive mas est (Laevius, frag. xxvi)
si deus, si dea es . . . (Cato, *De agri cultura* cxxxix)

(iii) 'whether boy or girl'
si puer si puella
36, 44, 62, 100, 102

si puer si pu(e)lla (Caistor St Edmund)
si puuer si puuella (Hamble estuary)
si puer si [puella] (no provenance, No. 30)

utrum puer utrum puella
98

cf. *si quis puela si mulier sive [ho]mo involavit* (Italica)
qui . . . mulierem puellamve interpellaverit (*Digest* XLVII 11.1, 2)

(iv) 'whether pagan or Christian'
seu gen(tili)s seu Ch(r)istianus
98

cf. *quantum ad Dei cultum, non est masculus neque femina, neque liber neque servus* (Justinian, *Novella* V 2, cf. *Galatians* iii 28), 'in worship of Sulis, there is neither pagan nor Christian'

templum and **fanum** ('the temple')

(i) where the curse takes effect
ut mentes sua(s) perdat et oculos suos in fano ubi destinat (5, 5)
ut an[imam] sua(m) in templo deponat (31, 4)

See note to 94, 6–7, for other 'ordeal' springs where perjurers were punished.

(ii) where stolen property is to be returned.
donec caracallam meam ad templum sui numinis pertulerit (10, 15)
nissi istas species ad templum tuum detulerit . . . nissi ad templum tuum istas res retulerint (32, 7 and 14)
[. . .]um pertuleri(t) (38, 11)
nisi haec ad fanum [. . .] (45, 9)
[an]tequam in fa[no] (48, 2)

donec perferat usque templum Nodentis (Lydney)
nisi quando res s(upra)dictas ad fanum s(upra)dictum attulerit (Uley, No. 14)
nessi in templo Mercurii pertulerit (Uley, No. 16)

nessi hanc rem [meam] ad fanum tuum attulerint (Pagans Hill, No. 9)

'A cloak having been stolen from the bath house, the god [Men] punished the thief and after a time made him bring the cloak to the god, and he confessed' (etc.) (*TAM* V.1, 159, Lydia)

(iii) the thief is 'given' to the temple
aenum meum qui levavit exconictus est templo Sulis dono (44, 1)

(iv) stolen property is 'given' to the temple
Basilia donat in templum Martis anilum argenteum (97, 1)

no British parallel

'[Collyra dedicates] to the attendants of the god the dark-coloured [cloak] which [*name lost* took] and does not give back' (etc.) (Bruttium)

vindices ('may you take vengeance', 'reclaim')
rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam ut vindices ab his . . . (35, 2)
hoc devindices [si] quis aenum mihi involavit (66, 11; context obscure)

tibi rogo, Metunus, ut me vendicas (London Bridge, repeated)

per tuam maiestatem te rogo oro obsecro uti vindices quot mihi furti factum est (Emerita)
ut me vindicetis (twice) (Trier, *CIL* XIII 11340.3)
cf. *sed si (rem subreptam) a fure vindicassem . . .* (*Digest* XLVII 2.9)

Points of Style

The 'address'

(i) 'To Sulis (from) . . .'(named)
Docilianus Bruceri deae sanctissim(a)e Suli devoveo eum (10)
deae Suli Minerv(a)e Solinus dono numini tuo (32)
deae Suli Minervae Docca dono numini tuo (34)
deae [Suli . . .] Victorin[. . .] (50)
deae [. . .] Exsib[uus? . . .] (57)
Oconea deae Suli M(inervae) dono [ti]bi pannum (60)

deo Mercurio Cenacus queritur (Uley, No. 13)
devo Nodenti Silvianus anilum perdedit (Lydney)

cf. 'Claudius Silvanus and his brothers to the Lady Athena against Longinus, against whom we have often appealed to you . . .' (Greek ostracon from Upper Egypt, Gallazzi 1985).

(ii) (named) '. . . gives to Sulis'
Basilia donat in templum Martis anilum argenteum (97)
Docim[. . .] de(ae) Su[li . . .] (108)

Biccus dat Mercurio quidquid pe(r)d(id)it (Uley, No. 16)

'Artemis devotes to Demeter and Persephone ...'
(Cnidus, No. 2; cf. 3, 4)
'[Collyra dedicates] to the attendants of the god ...'
(Bruttium)
Secundina Mercurio et Moltino mandat (Veldidena)

(iii) 'To Sulis' (anonymously)
deae Suli Minervae rogo (35)
deae Suli si quis (63)
Minerv(a)e de(ae) Suli donavi (65)

dio Mercurio dono ti(bi) (Old Harlow)
donatur deo Iovi optimo maximo ut exigat (Ratcliffe-on-
Soar)
deo M(arti) Mercurio anulus aureus (etc.) (Uley, No. 15)

'I dedicate to Cybele all the gold I have lost ...' (No
provenance, No. 1)
'I devote and dedicate to the demons of the underworld'
(etc.) (Athens or Attica, No. 9; cf. 10, 11, 12)

(iv) 'To Sulis' (fragmentary, either (i) or (iii))
[. . . d]eae Su[li . . .] (20)
deo Marti [. . .] do[no? . . .] (33)
deae Suli [. . .] (45)
de(ae) Suli Mine[r]vae [. . .] (46)
d[eae Suli? . . .] (90)

(v) 'To you, Sulis' (vocative)
[. . .dea] Sulis, t[ibi . . .] (21)
[. . .] dono ti[bi . . .] (38)
Pu[. . .] dono ti[bi . . .] (43)
[. . .tib]i q[u]er[or . . .] (47)
con[q]aer[or] tibi, Sulis, Arminia (54)
Enica conqueror ti[bi . . .] (59)

dom(i)na Nemesis, do tibi (Caerleon)
tibi rogo, Metunus (London Bridge)
domine Neptune, tibi [. . .] (Hamble estuary)
dono tibi, Mercurius (Old Harlow)

dom(i)na Fons . . . tibi demando (Italica)
*dea Ataecina Turibrig. Proserpina per tuam maiestatem
te rogo* (etc.) (Emerita)

(vi) (named) . . . omitting 'Sulis'
Docimedis perdidi(t) manicilia dua (5)
si quis vomerem Civilis involavit (31)
Lovernisca donat eum (61)
Exsuperius donat pannum ferri (66)
*execro qui involaverit qui Deomiorix de hospitio suo
perdiderit* (99)

Future perfect and Perfect

The authors of British curse tablets like the verb-ending
-*erit* (-*erint*), future perfect or perfect subjunctive,
especially at the end of the text. It usually occurs in two
contexts, (i) the forced return of stolen property (e.g. 10,
15, *donec caracallam meam ad templum sui numinis
pertulerit*); (ii) the theft itself (e.g. 15, *nomen rei qui
destrale involaverit*). In Context (ii) the perfect often
occurs instead (e.g. 44, 1, *aenum meum qui levavit*). Is
the verb in -*erit* a future perfect or a perfect subjunctive?

The future perfect belongs to actions not completed at
the time of writing, and is thus appropriate to Context
(i): the petitioner has not yet secured the return of his
stolen property, but hopes to do so. Here the verb in
-*erit* usually follows the *non permittas* formula or
similar: the thief is to be permitted no well-being
until/unless (*donec, nisi*) he shall have returned the
stolen property. Sometimes the verb in -*erit* can be taken
as a perfect subjunctive, when it occurs in a clause
subordinate to an indirect command: e.g. 10 (tele-
scoped), *devoveo eum qui caracellam meam involaverit,
ut dea Sulis . . . nec ei somnum permittat donec
caracallam meam ad templum sui numinis pertulerit.* It
might be argued that an indirect command is implicit in
other texts, e.g. those introduced by *dono* (etc.), but the
argument would fail were Sulis ever addressed directly
with *non permittas.* Unfortunately the texts are too
incomplete to be sure one way or the other. However,
the perfect subjunctive is probably too subtle for the
syntax of these tablets. A Uley text (No. 13) is clearly an
indirect command: *erogat deum Mercurium ut nec ante
sanitatem habeant nissi repraesentaverint mihi iumen-
tum* (etc.). Yet it continues: (*iumentum*) *quod rapuerunt.*
The perfect indicative *rapuerunt*, where *rapuerint* would
be 'correct', guarantees that *repraesentaverint* is a future
perfect. There is the same disregard for the 'correct'
subjunctive in 35: *rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam ut
vindices ab his qui fraudem fecerunt* (not *fecerint*). It is
best, therefore, to take verbs in -*erit* like *pertulerit* in
Context (i) as future perfect, not perfect subjunctive.

Context (ii), the theft itself, is more difficult. Com-
monsense requires the perfect tense, since the theft has
already occurred for the tablet to be written at all. The
perfect indicative is in fact always used when the
reference is to 'loss': e.g. 5, *Docimedis perdidi(t)
manicilia dua.* But when the reference is to 'theft', the
Bath tablets are equally divided between *involavit* and
involaverit and their synonyms.

involavit (etc.)
4, 5, 31, 35 (*fecerunt*), **44, 54** (*[. . .]avit*), **65, 66**; cf.
Caerleon (*tulit*), Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Uley, No. 13
(*rapuerunt*), Emerita (*im(m)u(n)davit involavit
minusve fecit*), Concordia (*sustul(i)t*)

involaverit (etc.)
10, 15, 38, 47 (*tulerit*), **61, 63, 98** (*furaverit*), **99**; cf.
Kelvedon, Pagans Hill (No. 9) (*[. . .]averint*)

Among the instances of *involaverit* only **10**, and
possibly **38** and Pagans Hill, can be understood as
subordinate to an indirect command. Therefore there
must have been two usages, apparently concurrent, since
involavit and *involaverit* are found alike in ORC and
NRC texts. That there may have been confusion
between them is suggested by **44**, where *qui levavit* and
qui involavit are paralleled by *et qui hoc fecerit*;
however, *et* may be a mistake for *ut*. In **97**, however,

there seems to be a deliberate distinction of tenses between the perfect and the future perfect: Basilia curses the person who has stolen her ring (*is qui anilum involavit*), and anyone privy to the theft who shall remain silent (*siluerit, noverit, medius fuerit*).

This subtle distinction, between past theft and future complicity, is ignored by the tablets which use *involaverit* (etc.). Yet it is illogical that a future tense should be used of a crime that has already taken place. Possibly the petitioner who used *involaverit* had some sense in mind like '(the person) who shall have proved to be the thief'; there is a certain futurity in *nomen rei qui destrale involaverit* (15), since the criminal's name is unknown at the time of writing. Another possibility is that the use of *involaverit* is influenced by legal formulas (which naturally refer to future offences), in particular the formula common in epitaphs (see above, p. 66) which threatens violators of the tomb, whose protasis is regularly a future perfect. Examples tend to occur at Rome, but one is recorded from Britain (*RIB* 754): *si quis in hoc sepulcrum alium mortuum intulerit* (etc.). Tablets like 63 (*si quis balniarem Cantissen(a)e involaverit*) take this form, but the perfect tense is also found: e.g. 31, *si quis vomerem Civilis involavit*.

In Context (ii), therefore, the theft, it seems to have been a matter of indifference whether the perfect or the future perfect was used. The perfect tense was more logical, but the future perfect was also popular, perhaps by attraction from Context (i) or other formulas of commination. Future perfect suggests a threat of divine intervention (if the offence takes place), perfect a *request* for divine intervention (for something that has happened). In practice the distinction between threatening and invoking divine retribution is often narrow.

It may be added that there is one instance where the future perfect is used of the offence with entire correctness. A unique text (94) lists those who have sworn at the spring of Sulis (*qui iuraverunt*, perfect tense), and adds a sanction against perjury in the future perfect (*quicumque illic periuraverit*). This can be understood as a reference to the future discovery of perjury (in the sense of a false statement made knowingly at the time), or even to the future commission of perjury (by not doing what had been promised). This text shares a formula (*sanguine suo satisfacere*) with the curses against thieves, but otherwise stands alone.

Religious language

Since these tablets were deposited at the spring of Sulis (94, 5, *ad fontem deae Sulis*) by visitors to the temple (see above, s.v. *templum*), it is surprising how small a part is played by 'religious language'. The texts, though formulaic, do not follow a set form. This, and the variation of formulas, suggest that they are to some extent free compositions, not ritual prayers or incantations. Most of them are addressed to *dea Sulis*, often identified with Minerva, whose name only once (65, 1) precedes 'Sulis'. It may be a tribute to the authority of Sulis that her spring receives tablets meant for Mercury

(53) and Mars (33, 97), that she can punish a thief 'whether pagan or Christian' (98, 1), but there is no explicit reminder of her power and justice, and next to nothing about her cult and attributes. One tablet addresses her as *domina* (98, 6), another as *sanctissima* (10, 3); four tablets refer in conventional periphrasis to her *numen* (10, 18; 32, 2; 34, 2) or her *maiestas* (32, 2; 35, 3; cf. 33, 2). But there is no word of priest (cf. *RIB* 155) or soothsayer (cf. *JRS* lvi (1966), 217, No. 1), of any vision or commandment by Sulis (cf. *RIB* 153, *ex visu*); one of the Uley tablets (No. 13), by contrast, makes an obscure allusion to the *devotio* demanded by Mercury.

There is one religious idea that pervades these texts, that of 'giving' (see above, p. 63, s.v. *dono*). This combines two concepts at the heart of Roman religion, the 'vow' (*votum*) and the sacrifice. Many altars record the fulfilment of a 'vow' in return for divine favour, but none of the Bath tablets takes the form of a promise – or a thanks offering. The 'gift' is always made in the present or perfect tense, not the future, and the object given, whether it is the stolen goods or the thief himself, is not in the petitioner's possession. It is up to the goddess to take it. What the 'gift' really amounted to is not clear from the Bath tablets, none of which 'gives' a fraction of the stolen goods, one-tenth, one-third, one-half, like other British curse tablets. The thief, no doubt, was 'sacrificed', and good riddance to him; but did the 'sacrifice' of stolen goods miraculously recovered resemble a real sacrifice – an animal slaughtered at the altar, a token part burnt, and the rest consumed by the assembled worshippers? (The obsession of the British curse tablets with 'blood' (see above, p. 67, s.v. *sanguine suo*), identified with life, suggests their authors had sacrifice in mind.) Perhaps the answer is that the late owner retained the usufruct, that he leased from Sulis the cloak she had recovered for him, like the millionaire Trimalchio who wore a ten-pound gold bracelet made from the 0.1% of profits he had vowed to Mercury.[1]

Quasi-legal language

The Bath tablets, it has been said already, are prayers of a kind – and legal documents, again of a kind. It is the 'legalism' of their language which strikes the reader more than its 'religiosity'. One of the Pagans Hill tablets (No. 9) makes its request 'with renewed prayers', *iteratis precibus*, a word it is tempting to translate as 'pleadings', since this catches the ambiguity between 'earnest entreaty' and (in law) a formal statement of the cause of action. Many British curse tablets are petitions in an under-policed world like those which survive among the papers of Flavius Abinnaeus, commandant of an Egyptian garrison in the 340s. A small landowner, for instance, complains to him that a neighbour has carried off eighty-two of his sheep. 'Wherefore I request and beg of your philanthropy to apprehend this man and compel him to restore to me what he has wickedly seized' (*Abinnaeus Archive*, No. 44). The language is the

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1. Petronius, *Satyricon* 67. See Veyne 1983, 281–300, esp. 296ff.

same, but Abinnaeus' power was not supernatural and his petitioners tended to be persons of substance; a better parallel might be the petition written on a potsherd from Upper Egypt: 'Claudius Silvanus and his brothers to the Lady Athena, against Longinus, against whom we have often approached you. We are poor men who have done him no harm, but he has attacked us . . . We appeal to you to give us judgement.' A note in the margin reads, as if to recall Athena to her duties: 'We have also appealed to (the god) Ammon' (Gallazzi 1985).

The petitioners of Sulis, like the Egyptian brothers, were appealing, not to the Emperor or his mandatory, or to a local magistrate or dignitary, but to a supernatural patron. Yet they follow the procedure recommended by Ulpian (*Digest* XLVII 2.19) in an action for theft: the object stolen must be identified. If it is an utensil, he writes, the weight need not be given, but the type of utensil should be specified, and the metal: *pannum ferri* (**66**, 2; cf. **60**, 2) or *aenum* (**44**, 1 and 6). (Compare the pewter vessels (*vasa stagnea*) stolen at Caistof St Edmund. The metal, whether gold or silver, of the three rings stolen at Bath, Lydney and Uley, is also specified.) If cash is stolen, Ulpian continues, the number of coins should be given: (*denarios*) (*quinque*) (**34**, 3), *argentiolos sex* (**8**, 1) or *duo* (**54**, 4), *sex argenteos* (**98**, 5). It has been questioned whether the colour of stolen garments need be specified: Ulpian thinks that it should be, as it was by the author of the Bruttium tablet (a dark-coloured cloak) and of a tablet from Athens (No. 12, a new white one). At Bath this detail is never found, but one petitioner was so anxious to identify his lost cloak that he used three terms, *laenam palleum sagum* (**62**, 1), and two petitioners locate the theft precisely, *de bursa mea* (**98**, 5) and *de hospitio suo* (**99**, 2). (Most thefts, it will be suggested (p. 80) occurred in the baths, and the location may usually have been regarded as self-evident.)

It is not surprising, therefore, that the language of the Bath tablets has a strong legal flavour, that legal terms outweigh the religious. It is interesting, however, to find confirmation even here that 'legal talk and terminology seem rather more frequent and more at home in Roman literature than in ours' (Crook 1967, 8). The formulas which find echoes and definition in the *Digest* have been tabulated already, and it is unnecessary to do much more than list them here, with other words of legal application. Reference should be made to the tabulation or the commentary.

'Legal' Language

ante dies novem
exigas
fraudem fecit
furaverit (**98**, 6)
furem (**65**, 3), *furis* (**16**, 2)
furtis (**102**, 1) (for *furis?*)
infrascriptis
innocentiam (**66**, 3? **100**, 4)
(*reum*) *inveniat*

involare
iuraverunt (**94**, 4)
latronem (**44**, 11)
levavit (**44**, 1)
medius (**97**, 7) (for *conscius*)
nec natos nec nascentes
nomen
perdidi(t)
periuraverit (**94**, 6)
queror (**47**, 1), *conqueror* (**54**, 2; **59**, 1)
quoad vixerit
qui, si quis, quicumque
quoad vixerit
res (**32**, 15 etc.)
satisfacere
si servus si liber
si vir si femina (etc.)
species (**32**, 8)
tulerit (**47**, 3)
vindices

This list should be enough to establish the legal flavour of the Bath texts, but two further conclusions may be voiced, even if they are no more than impressions. The first is that this language, as well as being legal and even financial, also suggests the writing of a clerk: consider *id est* (**34**, 3), *infrascriptis*, *res* and *species*, *et reli<n>quas* (**32**, 14) (*et reliqua* is the Latin 'etc.'), and even the enigmatic *carta picta perscripta* (**8**, 6). (The evidence of 'copying' is collected below, pp. 98–9). These are words which belong to catalogues and summaries. The second impression is one, not just of 'legalism', but of popular ideas about law. These are apparent in the use of *involare* and other 'Vulgar' terms for 'theft', and probably *medius* for Classical *conscius* ('privy to'); in the use of the *si quis* and related formulas, as in the quasi-legal tomb violation formulas; in the fondness for impressive catch-all formulas like *si vir si femina* (etc.) which begin in literature and find their way into sub-Roman legislation. The tone of the Bath texts, personal and aggrieved, is also redolent of popular legalism: **44**, for example, with its wish that the thief's blood pour into the stolen vessel, is making the punishment fit the crime; the elaborate curses on the thief's well-being, **97** in particular, recall the excesses of late-Roman penal legislation. Here are two well-known outbursts of Basilia's contemporary, the emperor Constantine. To the provincials: 'The rapacious hands of officials shall cease immediately, they shall cease, I say; for if after due warning they do not cease, they shall be cut off by the sword' (*Cod. Theod.* I 16.7, trans. Pharr). To the people: Nurses who aid the seduction of their charges shall be punished, 'and the penalty shall be that the mouth and throat of those who offered incitement to evil shall be closed by pouring in molten lead' (ibid., IX 21.24). Perhaps the comparison is unfair, but surely Constantine was labouring under the same sense of outrage and frustration as the petitioner who wrote, not to him, but to the goddess Sulis.

Redundancy

The petitioners who folded their sometimes cryptic tablets and cast them into the waters were not writing for publication (after all, they have had to wait long enough), but they sometimes resorted to rhetorical devices to impress the goddess. Periphrasis is not common, but there are a few instances of *numen* and *maiestas* where a pronoun would be sufficient, notably *rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam* (35, 2) for *te rogo*. This is a faint provincial echo of the tendency which would become so marked in late-Roman letters and panegyric, of addressing persons by their attributes. In texts which were written from a lively sense of personal injury, it may be harsh to single out instances of over-emphasis: the multiplication of mutually exclusive alternatives, like the double trio in **62** and the quartet in **98**; the repeated and unnecessary *omnibus* in **97, 5**, *omnibus membris configatur vel etiam intestinis excomesis omnibus*; the pointed use of *ipse* in **44** (*in ipsum aenum . . . qui rem ipsam involavit*) and in **64, 3**, *eidem loco ipsum pallium*; the rapidity of *quantocius consumas* (54, 9), the diuturnity of *orbitatem quoad vixerit* (45, 8), when the bare curses are grim enough. *Infrascriptis* (8, 3) is a grander, bureaucratic way of saying *istis*, and the 'literary' *animam deponat* (31, 4) (see *TLL* s.v. *depono*, p. 578, 54ff.) amounts to no more than *moriatur*. The weakness for rare if not unique compounded verbs, *devindices, excomesis, exconictus, perexi[g. . .]*, is part of the same quaint striving for effect.

Repetition

Vain repetition is a notorious feature of prayer, ritual, and incantation, but is not much in evidence in the Bath tablets. There is nothing to equal the tablet from London Bridge: 'I ask you, Metunus, (*twice*) that you avenge me (*three times*) before nine days come (*twice*)'. Where formulas are repeated, there is usually some attempt at variation. The only repetitions are:

qui mihi VILBIAM involavit . . . qui eam involavit (4)
Senicianus, Saturninus, Anniola (8)
somnum nec sanitatem (32)
    (Fragmentary; the accompanying formula (of return to the temple) is varied.)
qui involaverit (39) (three times)
dono si mulier si baro si servus si liber si puer si puella (44)
    (The accompanying formula (of the thief) is varied.)
si liber si servus si libera si serva si puer si puella . . . si servus si liber si serva si libera si puer si puella (62)
    (The first two pairs of alternatives are reversed on their second appearance, to give a chiasmus.)

Synonyms

The Bath tablets consciously avoid repetition by the use of synonyms within the same text; synonyms are also found by comparing one text with another. The use of synonyms is characteristic both of legal and religious language. Congregations of the Church of England have been urged for centuries to 'acknowledge and confess' their 'manifold sins and wickedness', which includes the admission: 'We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep'. The beauty of the language need not obscure the purpose behind it, that to hit the nail on the head it may be necessary to take several swings of the hammer. The rhetoric of late-Roman legislation also demanded elaborate use of synonyms, so that technical terms are often swamped in the flood of language. The Bath tablets cannot be said to achieve either the beauty of the Prayer Book or the sophistication of the Theodosian Code, but the presence of synonyms suggests that their authors were able to pick and choose from a wider vocabulary than was strictly required.

(i) Common synonyms found in different texts
[a]misi (34) – *perdidi(t)* (5, 6, 8, 62, 99)
ancilla (52) – *serva* (62)
conqueror (54, 59) – *queror* (47)
dederit (98) – *donavi(t)* (8, 57, 65) cf. *dono, donat*
deferat (62), *detulerit* (32) – *pertulerit* (10, 38), *reducat* (64), *retulerint* (32)
devoveo (10) – *execro* (99)
    (Both equivalent to *dono* (9, 32, 33, 34, 38, 43, 44, 60))
donec (10) – *nisi* (6, 19, 32, 33, 45, 52, 64, 65, 100)
    (Not synonyms, but used in the same formula)
fanum (45), *fano* (5, 42, 48) – *templum* (10, 32, 97), *templo* (31, 44)
femina (10, 38, 49, 52, 61, 66, 71, 100) – *mulier* (13?, 44, 57, 65, 98)
furem (65), *furis* (16) – *latronem* (44), cf. *rei* (15)
involavit/erit (passim) – *furaverit* (98), *levavit* (44), *tulerit* (47)
    (All 'Vulgar' forms or synonyms; cf. also *fraudem fecit* (32), *fecerunt* (35))
l(u)minibus (97) – *oculos* (5, 45)
orbitatem (45) – *nec natos nec nascentes* (10)
sanguine satisfacere (94, cf. 66) – *sanguine redemat* (99, cf. 65)
si (passim) – *sive* (61), *utrum* (98)

(ii) Rare synonyms found in different texts
(Bracketed synonyms are found in other British curse tablets. 'Vulgar' words with Classical synonyms not attested in Britain, e.g. *bursa* (98) – *sacculus*, are not included.)
adsellare (41) – (*cacare*, Uley (No. 16))
argentiolos (8, 54) – *argenteos* (98), (*denarios*) (34)
    (The reference is probably to different silver coins)
baro (44, 57, 65) – *vir* (10, 13?, 36, 49?, 52, 61, 66, 71, 98, 100)
configatur (97) – (*defictus est*, London (No. 1))
devindices (66) – *vindices* (35)
deae exactura est (8) – *exigas* (38, 41)
excomesis (97) – (*comesis* is not attested in Britain)
exconictus (44) – (?*defictus*, i.e. *defixus*, London (No. 1))
medius (97) – (*conscius*, Hamble estuary)
perexi[g. . .] (98) – *exigas* (38), 41)

(iii) Synonyms found in the same text

32, *paxsam balnearem et palleum . . . nissi istas species ad templum detulerit . . . palleum et reli<n>quas nissi ad templum tuum istas res retulerint*

44, *aenum meum qui levavit . . . qui hoc fecerit . . . eum latronem qui rem ipsam involavit*

45, *nec oculos nisi caecitatem*

62, *laenam palleum sagum*

66, *pannum ferri . . . aenum*

97, *siluerit vel aliquid de hoc noverit . . . vel qui medius fuerit*

99, *qui involaverit qui Deomiorix de hospitio suo perdiderit . . . sanguine et vitae suae redemat*

Repetition, instead of synonyms, is neatly used for rhetorical effect in **5**: Docimedis has 'lost' his gloves (*perdidi(t)*) and asks that the thief should 'lose' his mind and sight (*perdat*).

Formulas by date

Formulaic texts written in cursive can be divided roughly by date, that is, between ORC texts (say *c.* A.D. 175 *c.* A.D. 275) and NRC texts (say *c.* A.D. 275 – *c.* A.D. 400) (see below pp. 87–8). Close dating is not possible, but one can hypothesise two groups, one centred on the first decades of the third century, the other on the fourth century. Capital-letter texts must be excluded, except **5** with its NRC first line, and **10**, whose elegant script and use of a patronymic suggest a second-century date. Three texts (**64, 65, 66**) have ORC and NRC features, and are included here with the NRC texts, but this decision does not affect the conclusions drawn. Of substantial formulaic texts (not lists of names or hopeless fragments) there are *c.* 9 in capitals (including **5**), *c.* 26 in ORC, and *c.* 8 in NRC. The disproportion of ORC texts is reflected among other British curse tablets, where the figures are 14 capital-letter texts, 11 in ORC, and 4 in NRC (Brean Down, Eccles, Brandon, Silchester). Of the ORC texts, Caerleon is particularly interesting, since it would seem to be the earliest, early second-century by the look of it. In the lists which follow, reference should be made to the full tabulation of formulas above. In (i) and (ii) the authority may be as few as two texts, so long as one is ORC and the other NRC; in (iii), since there is an argument from silence, at least three ORC texts are being used.

(i) Formulas found in both ORC and NRC texts
deus inveniat
involare
perdidit
redemat
si servus si liber
si vir si femina
si baro si mulier
si puer si puella
templum (i)
vindices

(ii) Formulas modified between ORC and NRC

ORC FORMULA	NRC FORMULA
si quis (initial)	*quicumque* (also found in Kelvedon ORC text)
dono (i)	*donat* (i)
sanguine redemat	*sanguine satisfacere*
templum (ii)	*templum* (iv)

(iii) Formulas found only in ORC texts
exigas
nomen (including **8**, of uncertain date)
maiestas
numen
non permittas
queror, conqueror

dono (ii) is found in five ORC texts, otherwise only in **65**

(iv) Formulas found only in NRC texts
There are no certain new formulas, except those listed in (ii). *Seu gentilis seu Christianus* (**98**) is a late development, but it is uncertain whether it was formulaic or unique.

It is interesting that some formulas persisted from the second century to the fourth, and are found both at Bath and at other sites. The most obvious is the popular complex of mutually exclusive alternatives, *si servus si liber, si vir si femina, si puer si puella,* and their numerous variants. The geographical spread is noteworthy, tablets from East Anglia and Nottinghamshire as well as Bath, Brean Down, and Uley; and more than this, the tablets from Delos (in Greek) and Italica. The idea itself is easily paralleled in Latin legal texts. Clearly it is one which came to Britain with the whole concept of inscribed curse tablets, and survived as an oral tradition rather than something in a handbook: the large number of variants is the symptom of survival by word of mouth. The longest tradition in Britain itself is enjoyed by another formula, *non redimat ni(si) vita sanguine sui* (Caerleon), which is found almost identically in **99**, and in closely related form at Brean Down (another NRC text); thus it survived from the early second century until well into the fourth century. On the other hand, it is noticeable that some formulas did not maintain themselves, *non permittas* in particular, which is found in eight Bath ORC texts (including **10** and **41**, *patiaris*), as well as at Wanborough, Pagans Hill, and (in capital letters) at Lydney. (The latter cannot be dated archaeologically, since the exact find-spot is unknown, and it is unclear when the cult of Nodens began there.) This formula, like *si vir si femina* (etc.), embodies an idea found in non-British curse tablets and must therefore belong to the early tradition. Since NRC texts are comparatively scarce, and **98, 100** and **101** in particular contain unexplained passages, it would not do to be dogmatic, but it looks as if the language, like the concept, of curse tablets for theft was introduced to Britain during the first century of Roman rule; language and concept maintained themselves as a living tradition, somewhat starved of outside influences, with some

formulas continuing to flourish into the fourth century, and others dying out. The formulas are too widespread and long-lived to be traced to a single handbook, or to a single 'professional' and his pupils, but this is a question to which we must return when considering the question of authorship (pp. 98–101). The immediate question is that of the Latin in which the tablets were inscribed, whether it suggests a medium for oral transmission, or something static and classical, a written language or a spoken, 'Vulgar' language.

Language

What class of people would speak, or be anxious to learn, the semi-artificial Latin of the learned and upper classes and at the same time be in a position to transmit words in their pronunciation to the British language? Hardly the members of the army, nor the merchants, nor the middle and lower classes in the towns, all of whom no doubt spoke various types of the ordinary standard Vulgar Latin just as their counterparts did on the Continent.

K.H. Jackson, *LHEB*, 109

The Bath tablets are the richest known source of the 'Vulgar' or spoken Latin in a town of Roman Britain during the Middle and Late Empire. Indeed the other sources, inscriptions and graffiti, are so scattered and scanty, town by town, that it would be difficult to say whether the Latin spoken in Bath was 'typical'. The other published collection of handwritten documents, the Vindolanda tablets, is only loosely comparable. They are much earlier in date, they come from a frontier fort not a town, and the letters among them were not written there; they are the product of a different geographical and social milieu, soldiers and officers not necessarily of British origin. The Bath tablets, on the other hand, were written at Bath; disregarding for the moment the question of whether they were written by local scribes or the petitioners themselves, we can deduce from the names they preserve (pp. 95–8) and the property that was stolen (pp. 79–81), that they were prompted by visitors to the sacred spring who were not Roman citizens or who, after A.D. 212, came from the social classes which previously had not enjoyed Roman citizenship. The petitioners may have included country dwellers like Civilis with his stolen ploughshare, but they must have been mostly members of the urban 'middle and lower classes', shopkeepers, craftsmen, labourers and their families. The tablets, though formal and formulaic documents, can be expected to reflect their speech. They should not of course be regarded as transcripts; what we have is rather, it has been well said, 'vulgar intrusions into would-be correct Classical Latin'.

This is the judgement of Professor Colin Smith upon the inscriptions and graffiti of Roman Britain. The new-found 'intrusions' from Bath are tabulated here in the order he has adopted in his important paper 'Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain: Epigraphic and Other Evidence' (*ANRW* II 29.2, 893–948). This Bath catalogue

can only be an interim report, until the material upon which it is based is analysed by a qualified linguist, and the results incorporated in the growing but insufficient volume of evidence of the Latin spoken in Roman Britain. The catalogue omits what seem to be pure errors of transcription, like *(om)nibus* (97, 6) and *pure* (44, 4; 62, 5) for *puer*, which are collected as evidence of (faulty) copying (below, pp. 98–9) where they may be checked for linguistic significance. All divergent spellings and forms, whether of linguistic significance or not, so long as the 'Classical' norm can be recognized (which excludes texts like 14), are also collected in Index IV. Words in this catalogue are read as if entire, restored letters being indicated by square brackets [ ] only where the restoration is uncertain and affects the point in question. Letters supplied to bring the transmitted form into conformity with the 'Classical' are enclosed by round brackets ( ). There is only limited commentary. Reference should also be made to the transcript and commentary of the tablet cited, to the third edition (1981) of V. Väänänen, *Introduction au Latin Vulgaire*, to K.H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (1953), and to Professor Smith's paper cited above, which has been invaluable.

I. VOWELS

1. *-AE-* (stressed and unstressed)

Brigomall(a)e (30, 1)
Cantissen(a)e (63, 3)
d(e)ae (19, 3)
de(ae) (46, 1; 65, 2; 108, 2)
Minerv(a)e (32, 1; 65, 1)
?Mantuten(a)e (98, 5) (if a matronymic)
sanctissim(a)e (10, 3)
Except for the confusion *d(e)ae*, these are instances of the feminine case-ending *-ae*, which is retained in *deae* (14 instances), *Mine[r]vae* (46, 1), *nebulae* (100, 9), and *vitae suae* (99, 6, for the ablative). Initial *-ae-* is retained in *aenum* (44, 1), *Aeternus* (30, 7), *caecitatem* (45, 7), *haec* (45, 9), *la[enam]* (62, 1), *quaecumque* (98, 2, for *quicumque*). There may be two hypercorrections:
Aessicunia (98, 20)
   The god's name is usually transliterated as *Esus* (*ILS* 4613a; Lucan, *Phars.* i 445).
conquaer[or] (54, 2)

2. *-ER->-AR-*

Matarnus (30, 3)
Patarnianus (30, 2)

3. Stressed vowels

a) *-Ĕ-*
paxsam (32, 3; 62, 2) for *pexam*
   But it was the correct form which was borrowed by British Celtic: cf. Middle Welsh *peis* (*LHEB*, 535).

Senicio (51, 5)

This variant of Senecio is very common; in Bath it was standard: cf. *Senicianus* (8, 5; 98, 16).

b) -Ĭ-

nessi (65, 10) for *nisi*

perdedi (62, 1) for *perdidi*

Recomposition by analogy with the uncompounded verb *do* (*dedi*), the accent falling on the radical, not the prefix (see Väänänen 1981, p. 143).

redemat (65, 10; 99, 6) for *redimat*

Recomposition by analogy with the uncompounded verb *emo*, the accent falling on the radical, not the prefix (see Väänänen 1981, p. 35).

c) -Ī-

mantutene (98, 5) for *ma<n>tutine* (adverb) or *Ma<n>tutin(a)e* (personal name)

d) -Ō-

numen (102, 1) for *nomen*

A confusion also found in the London Bridge tablet, made here by a semi-literate scribe who could write *numen furti* for *nomen furis*, but probably of linguistic significance like the variant transliterations of a Celtic god's name as *Nodenti* (*RIB* 306) and *Nudente* (*RIB* 307).

4. Unstressed vowels

a) Vowels in hiatus

argentiolos (8, 1; 54, 4) cf. *argenteum* (97, 2); *argenteos* (98, 5)

balniarem (63, 2) cf. *ba(ln)earem* (32, 3)

Exsupereus (4, 4)

Oconea (60, 1)

palleum (32, 3; 62, 2) cf. *pallium* (43, 3; 64, 3)

prid(i)e (94, 6)

The forms *Exsuperius* and *Occonia* are attested elsewhere. The occurrence at Bath itself of variants of *balnearem* and *pallium* confirms that post-consonantal *e* and *i* followed by a vowel in hiatus must have been indistinguishable in pronunciation as [y]. (See Väänänen 1981, pp. 46–7.) When the succeeding vowel was *e*, synizesis like *prid(i)e* was easy.

b) Initial vowels

au>a

A(u)gustalis (4, 6)

A well-attested instance of dissimilation, where an initial syllable containing *au* is followed by one containing *u* (see Väänänen 1981, pp. 39–40). *Fr(a)udem* (32, 5), however, is anomalous and may only be a transcription error.

e>a

Valaunecus (96)

The form in *ual-* is well attested, but the original name element seems to have been -*uellaunos* (*LHEB*, 306).

u>i

liminibus (97, 4) for *luminibus*

The other instance of *u>i* (*anilum*, see below) is found

in the same tablet, but this one is probably a transcription error due to confusion between NRC *li* and *u*.

c) Medial vowels

anilum (97, 1 and 7) for *anulum*

Also found in *RIB* 306; explained by Smith (934) as due to a change of suffix, as if a diminutive of *an-*.

donatu|ur (16, 5)

The first *u* seems to have been crossed out, and was probably repeated by oversight in a semi-literate text.

san(g)uene (46, 7) for *sanguine*

sangu(i)ne (47, 4; 65, 11)

cf. *cus* (31, 1) for *quis*

suua (31, 5) for *suam*

5. Greek vowels

Euticius (98, 13) for *Eutychius*

II CONSONANTS

6. Initial consonants

a) *B/V*

There is no instance of this confusion in the Bath tablets. *Morivassus* (53, 11) and *Riovassus* (53, 12) confirm that *Vassinus* (*RIB* 215) is another name derived from **uasso-*, not a variant of *Bassinus*. The other instance adduced by Smith (913), *Betto* (*RIB* 2144), could be a variant of *Bitto* or *Bitus*; as a centurion, its bearer need not have been born in Britain.

7. Medial consonants

b) -*B/V*-

Again, there is no instance of this confusion in the Bath tablets. Dr A.S. Gratwick (1982, 17–32) has demonstrated that it was rare in all the western provinces until the fifth century, and that in Italy it tends to occur where Greek was widely spoken. His four possible British examples can probably be excluded: *RIB* 1, as he and others have pointed out, is an imported group of statuary; *CIL* vii 1336.546 is a stamped piece of samian, and thus not of British provenance either; *Vivius* (*RIB* 17) is a variant of *Vibius* well attested in Dalmatia, and its bearer, another centurion, need not have been born in Britain; *donavit* (*RIB* 306) is now proved by the Bath tablets (esp. 8, 1; 65, 2) to be formulaic, not a confusion for *donabit*.

c) -*V*-

Bellaus (30, 8) for *Bellavus?

ser(v)us (9, 7, 9, 10; 36, 6; 39, 2; 49, 3; 62, 4; 65, 6; 66, 5; 87, 2; 97, 2; 102, 2)

As common as the Classical form *servus*.

s(e)r(v)us (63, 4)

Written hastily.

d) -*G*-

Ri(g)ovassum (53, 12)

This lenition is thought to have occurred in spoken

Celtic after the Roman period (*LHEB*, 456–7, cf. *Brigomall(a)e* (30, 1)), but evidently occurred earlier, perhaps in a Vulgar Latin environment at Bath, where medial *g* might be lost before *o* or *u*.
san(g)uine (97, 4)
The missing *g* was supplied interlineally by the scribe.
san(g)uene (46, 7)

e) Geminated consonants
S/SS
Aessicunia (98, 20)
The *-ss-* confirms Jackson's suggestion (*LHEB*, 523) that the cognate place-name *Aesica* may have had original *st*, *ns*, etc. > Brit. *ss*.
laset[ur] (37, 2)
Reading uncertain; for *lassetur* or *laxetur*?
nessi (65, 10)
nissi (32, 7, 14)
The standard form at Bath was *nisi* (seven tablets).
recentisimi (55, 4) for *recentissimi*
[s]se (32, 7)

L/LL
manicilia (5, 2) for *manicillia* (equally rare)

T/TT
retulerint (32, 15) for *rettulerint* (cf. *RIB* 1523)

X/XX
exxigi (47, 2)
Hypercorrection, cf. *RIB* 863 (*vixxit*).
Failure to geminate consonants may only be graphic, as in the variants *Anniola* (8, 6) and *Aniola* (8, 7). When found in some names of Celtic etymology, however, its intention may have been to assimilate a 'Celtic' name to a Latin cognomen, just as *Docilis* and its cognates may derive from *Docca*.
Bel(l)ator (51, 8)
Cat(t)inius (9, 11)
Cat(t)onius (30, 4)
Cat(t)us (4, 7)
?Dac(c)us (55, 1)
Luc(c)ianus (17, 4)

f) *QU-*
com[o] (4, 2) for *quomodo*
cus (31, 1) for *quis*

g) *-X-*
destrale (15, 2) for *dextrale*
Espeditus (13, 6)
Reduced to [s] before a consonant. The only British evidence hitherto was *Sestius* for *Sextius*, also from Bath (*RIB* 163).
ussor (9, 6, 8; 30, 3) for *uxor*
Medial [ks] assimilated to [ss]. Perhaps also:
Mascntius (37, 8) i.e. *Masentius* (for *Maxentius*)
laset[ur] (37, 2) if for *laxetur*

h) *-XS-* for *-X-*
Exsactoris (9, 11)
exsigat[ur] (34, 5)

paxsa (32, 3)
Exsibuus (37, 6; 57, 1)
Exsupereus (4, 4) and *Exsuperius* (66, 1) are in fact correctly spelt, but the scribes may have been hypercorrecting *exuper-*.

i) Groups with nasal
-ND-
quandiu (52, 4) for *quamdiu*
tandiu (52, 3) for *tamdiu*
These variants are also Classical (cf. *quando*, *tandem*); the more usual form *(ta)mdiu* is found at 97, 3.

-NT-
mantutene (98, 5) for *matutene*
Probably a hypercorrection of the tendency to lose *n* before a dental (cf. *RIB* 7, *me(n)tem*, *si(n)t*), prompted by the etymology from *mane*.

-NQU-
relinquas (32, 14) for *relinquas*
If this is not simply confusion between cognate forms, it may also be a hypercorrection of the tendency to lose *n* before a velar (cf. *RIB* 924, *sa(n)cto*).

8. Loss of final consonant
-M-

anima(m) (6, 2 reconstructed)
anima(m) (39 ii, 2)
paxsa(m) (32, 3)
suua(m) (31, 5)

-S-
Suli(s) (94, 5)
Perhaps by confusion with the familiar dative.
sua(s) (5, 5) in *mentes*(!) *sua(s)*
-T-
destina(t) (5, 9)
habe(at) (97, 6)
Follows the graph *(om)nibus*, and perhaps also due to oversight.
involavi(t) (5, 4)
perdidi(t) (5, 2)
pertuleri(t) (38, 11)
Perhaps due to lack of room at the end of the tablet.

9. Greek consonants

c(h)arta (8, 6)
Euticius (98, 13) for *Eutychius*

10. Celtic personal names

Vulgar Latin influence may have caused the lenition of *Ri(g)ovassum* (53, 12) and the failure to geminate consonants in *Luccianus* etc. (see above, 7(e)); that it was not universal is proved by the survival of *Brigomall(a)e* (30, 1) and the hypercorrect *Aessicunia* (98, 20). Disre-

garding **14** and **18** for the moment, there are other signs of Celtic influence:

-OU-
Louernisca (61, 1)
cf. *adixoui* (18, 1)

-TH-
Lothuius (37, 7)
Methianus (9, 13)
Transliterating Celtic barred *D*.
Uricalus (94, 1) for *Viri-/Vericalus*?
For a comparable reduction of the place-name *Viroconium* see *PNRB* s.v.

caracalla (10, 6, 16; 65, 4): the hooded cape worn in Celtic-speaking provinces, now attested in Britain as early as the second century; the word is likely to be of Celtic etymology.

baro ('man') (44, 3, 9; 57, 4; 65, 7): the appearance of this word in British curse tablets centuries earlier than the sub-Roman German law codes invalidates the received opinion that it is of Germanic etymology. Despite its un-Celtic formation in *-o/onis*, it may be of Celtic etymology, as implied by the scholiast on Persius v 138 (*lingua Gallorum barones dicuntur . . .*) and by John Lydus (*de mag.* i 12). See note to 44, 3.

III. MORPHOLOGY

11. The declensions

There is no instance in the Bath tablets of the Vulgar Latin reduction of five declensions to three, only a few confusions of gender, and one instance (*sangu(in)em*) of a third-declension accusative being reduced to conform with the nominative.

ani(m)am sui (103, 2–3)
Perhaps confusion of pronouns rather than gender.
illas (5, 4) referring to *manicilia dua*
pannum (60, 2; 66, 2) for *pannam*
san(g)uene sua (46, 7) for *sanguine suo*
The gender of third-declension words like *sanguis* could not be deduced from the inflexion; its Romance derivatives vary between masculine and feminine.
sangu(in)em (44, 5)
cf. Ital. *sangue*, Fr. *sang*, by the same reduction.
stragulum q(ue)m (6, 1 reconstructed)
The regular forms are *stragula vestis* or *stragulum* (neut.). The assimilation of neuter to masculine is typical of Vulgar Latin.

12. The cases: forms and usage

Serious confusions, involving more than the loss of final consonant, only occur in 'late' (NRC) texts, which suggests that the loss of understanding was progressive.

Accusative:
anima (6, 2 reconstructed)

anima suam (39 ii, 2)
ani(m)am sui (103, 2–3)
an[imam] suua (31, 5)
illas (5, 4) for *illa*
intestinis excomesis omnibus habeat (97, 6)
The verb may have been an afterthought.
mentes(!) *sua* (5, 5)
paxsa ba(ln)earem (32, 3)

Genitive:
ad fontem deae Suli (94, 5)
?*dono numini tuo maiestati* (32, 2–3)
Confusion of two formulas which could have been resolved by inserting *et* or, more neatly, by writing *numinis tuae*.

Ablative:
sanguine et vitae suae (99, 5–6)

Oblique case:
?*Deomiorix* (99, 2)
This name was not declined, but the context demands an oblique case; which case is unclear.

There is no sure instance of the complementary use of preposition + noun to replace the synthetic case, but **97**, which was also capable of *intestinis excomesis omnibus habeat*, almost achieves it:
Basilia donat in templum Martis anilum argenteum (1–2) for Classical *templo.*
. . . vel aliquid de hoc noverit (3–4): Classical *noscere de hoc* means 'to know from this' (i.e. to deduce); *aliquid* could be taken on its own, almost adverbially ('to know somewhat'), but the phrase *aliquid de hoc* resembles the 'Vulgar' substitute for the genitive (i.e. 'some of this').

13. The verb

There are five losses of final consonant (see above, 8 s.v. *-T-*), which make for confusion between first and third person in the perfect tense. There may be confusion between singular and plural in **32**, where there is a shift from *detulerit* (8) to *retulerint* (15), unless a new subject was introduced in 9ff. There are other confusions and new formations.

Past participle:
exconictus (44, 1)
The context, which requires the sense of 'utterly accursed', excludes a formation from **exconicere* or **exconvincere*. Better to understand it as an error (in a reversed text with other errors) for *excon(f)ictus* from **exconfigere* (cf. **97**, 5, *configatur*). The form (instead of *-fixus*) is 'Vulgar', like *defictus* (*RIB* 6) and *deficta* (*RIB* 221), which Smith suggests is by analogy with *defictum* from *defingere*.

Perfect:
perdedi (62, 1) for *perdidi*
Recomposition by analogy with the *-do* (*-dedi*) stem.

Future:

discebit (71, 6) for *discet*

If the reading is correct, a confusion between 2nd and 3rd conjugation.

Present subjunctive:

facit (103, 2) for *faciat*

Indicative for subjunctive, but perhaps a transcription error typical of this reversed text.

liquat (4, 2)

Indicative and active (if intended for *liquetur*, 'may he become liquid'). Smith suggests it is for *liqueat*, which is rare in this sense. Otherwise *CISTAUQIL* (the text is reversed) might be an anagram error for *liquiscat* (i.e. *liquescat*).

Active for deponent:

adsellare (41, 5)

execro (99, 1)

furaverit (98, 6)

There is only one sure deponent verb, *conqueror* (59, 1), but they can be restored at 54, 2 and 47, 1. All are *queror* and its compounds, also found in *Britannia* x (1979), 342, No. 2 (Uley), *queritur*. The deponent form may have survived because it was formulaic.

14. Word order

Most tablets with a continuous text (the exceptions are 65, 94, 100, 103) conclude with a finite verb, almost invariably the verb of a subordinate clause in the present or future perfect. The main verb, unless a jussive subjunctive (e.g. 94, 7, *facias*), is usually found at the beginning in the 'Romance' word order, Subject – Verb – Object, with a dative pronoun or similar between Verb and Object, in what is already standard Vulgar Latin by the time of the Vindolanda tablets (see J.N. Adams in Bowman and Thomas 1983, 74). For example:

deae Suli Minervae Docca. dono numini tuo pecuniam . . . (34)

Oconea deae Suli Minervae. dono tibi pannum . . . (60)

Basilia donat in templum Martis anilum argenteum . . . (97)

15. Pronouns

animam sui (103, 2–3)

See note to 103, 3.

si quiscumque (45, 5)

Confusion between *si quis* and *quicumque*, both formulaic in the Bath tablets, probably due to the 'Vulgar' confusion of interrogative and relative pronoun.

IV WORDS AND SENSES

The Bath tablets use words and senses not found in Classical authors, unsurprisingly, since they are the product of a provincial milieu in the post-Classical period. The distinction between 'post-Classical' and 'Vulgar' is legitimate, but the two terms are not mutually exclusive. Discussion of individual words will be found in the commentary.

1. Post-Classical and Technical

adsellare (41, 5)

argenteos (98, 5)

balnearem (32, 3; 63, 2)

Christianus (98, 1)

gentilis ('pagan') (98, 1)

infrascriptis (8, 3)

quantocius (54, 9)

species ('goods') (32, 8)

2. Intensive variants

devindices (66, 12)

excomesis (97, 6)

exconictus (44, 1)

perexigere (98, 6)

3. Vulgar Latin

Words like *mafortium* explicitly said to be 'vulgar' by grammarians; words like *baro* ('man') and *manducare* ('eat') for which there was a Classical synonym; words and senses like *bursa* ('purse') and *levavit* ('stole') not found in Classical authors, which are only found in Latin and Romance languages after the Roman period. *Involare* is occasionally used by Classical writers, but can be regarded as 'Vulgar': see above, p. 64.

argentiolos (8, 1; 54, 4)

baro ('man') (44, 3, 9; 57, 4; 65, 7)

bursa ('purse') (98, 5)

caballarem (49, 1; 62, 7)

capitularem (55, 5)

caracallam (10, 6, 16; 65, 4)

destrale (15, 2)

exactura (8, 4)

hospitio ('house') (99, 2)

involare ('steal') (passim)

levavit ('stole') (44, 1)

mafortium (61, 5)

manducare ('eat') (41, 5)

manicilia (5, 2)

medius ('privy to') (97, 7)

pannum ('pan') (60, 2; 66, 2)

paxsam (32, 3; 62, 2)

rostro (human 'snout') (62, 5, 9)

The Bath tablets, it can be seen, supplement and confirm Professor Smith's invaluable collection and analysis of the epigraphic evidence for Vulgar Latin in Roman Britain. They may be weighted towards a later date than the inscriptions are, the third and fourth centuries, and even more than inscriptions by their formulaic nature may have exaggerated their degree of literary 'correct-

ness'. They are not, it must be repeated, transcripts of the spoken language. But the Vulgar Latin which nonetheless 'intrudes' can be fitted more or less neatly into the categories established by Professor Smith. The implication is that Bath, even if it was a town (and not a typical one at that) which happens to be uniquely well documented, was a microcosm of the speech-habits of Roman Britain. It also follows that the Latin spoken at Bath, like that in Britain as a whole, shared common features with the Vulgar Latin of the other western provinces. The rich haul of new words, for example, if we disregard 'learned' coinings like *excomesis*, is typical of the common stock of Vulgar Latin, down to its possession of the two known even to amateurs, *manducare* and a derivative of *caballus*. More careful analysis may even detect different dates and 'levels' of Latin, ranging (say) from the elegance and tight syntax of 10 to the well-inscribed but asyntactic 97. There are also hints of the bilinguality which has always been assumed in Roman Britain, in the survival of Celtic vowels and consonants, the profusion of 'Celtic' names, and of course the unprecedented discovery in Britain of what seems to be spoken Celtic transcribed in Roman letters (14)

This can only be a series of impressions, or not much better, but it is undeniable that our knowledge has been enlarged of Vulgar Latin in an area ill-served by inscriptions, the civilian towns of Roman Britain. That the urban population spoke some kind of 'standard' Vulgar Latin was never denied by Professor K.H. Jackson, whose complex thesis of the 'archaism' of British Latin has been over-simplified by all of us unable to understand the loan-word evidence on which it is based. The evidence from Bath, although it supports some criticisms which have been made of Jackson's thesis, is strictly speaking peripheral, since it is evidence of the speech of the urban minority in the third and fourth centuries, not that of 'the mass of the rural peasants who were the true storehouse of the British language' (*LHEB*, 111). However, the decipherment of the Bath tablets may lead indirectly to the heart of the question. In one respect the sacred spring was not unique. Inscribed curse tablets were also deposited at hilltop temples either side of the Severn estuary, at Lydney, Brean Down, Pagans Hill and Uley. Only five tablets are known from the other three sites, but the 'archive' from the temple of Mercury at Uley rivals that of Sulis, more than a hundred tablets. The temple, high on the Cotswold escarpment, was more than ten miles from the nearest town. If only its tablets are as generous with texts as Bath has been, in the countryside this time, their decipherer may be able to set a cautious foot inside that storehouse of the British language by another door. Once again, however, the medium is likely to be nothing more romantic than a chronicle of stolen goods.

Stolen goods

Will the clergyman who stole my umbrella kindly return it. This club consists half of gentlemen and half of clergymen, and it is clear that no gentleman would steal an umbrella.

Cloaks in the Roman world were like umbrellas in ours, misappropriated often enough to be bit of a joke (see note to 62, 1–2). There are seven of them listed as stolen in these curse tablets which are the dark side of the altars and inscribed monuments in the precinct of Sulis. They too were addressed to the goddess. Religious documents of a kind, as we have seen (p. 70), they were also quasi-legal petitions amounting to the largest published dossier of petty theft in Roman Britain, and incidentally to a varied catalogue of personal possessions. Even the lists of names are sometimes, if not always, those of suspected thieves (see pp. 95–6). Some tablets are too fragmentary for resolution, and others like 35 and 40 are obscure, but the only tablet which was certainly not prompted by theft is 94, the unique sanction of an oath sworn 'at the spring of Sulis'; and even this recalls the 'ordeals' imposed on suspected thieves at other hot springs and seething pools and in the Anatolian 'confession' cults (pp. 102–4). This emphasis on theft is typical of British curse tablets, c. 70 such now being known (p. 60). At least thirty of the Bath tablets seem to have specified what was stolen, although sometimes (e.g. 38, 45, 47) the text is too damaged for us to know what this was, and sometimes (e.g. 4, 16, 59) it is too corrupt. Only occasionally, so far as we can judge, as in 99 and 100, does the author not state what has been stolen, either because he was careless or because the goddess knew already. Usually he is explicit (62 is hyper-explicit), as if making an insurance claim. Often, as we have seen (pp. 63ff.), the stolen goods are 'given' to Sulis, for her to 'exact' them or their equivalent in the thief's life-blood, or to ruin the thief's health unless they are returned. The goddess is thus treated as a debt enforcement agency, or rather, a supernatural policeman or detective; she is even asked to 'discover' the thief.

These formulas are found elsewhere, but the Bath archive is the largest yet published, and contains an interesting cross-section of the personal belongings of the votaries of Sulis. The goods stolen are always portable, chattels, not real property. There are no aggrieved heirs, none of the cheated depositors found in some Greek texts, no victims of robbery by violence; there is vague reference to deceit or 'wrong' (*fraudem*, see note to 32, 5), and an implication of pilfering in the theft of coins 'from my purse' (98, 5) and once even burglary 'from his house' (99, 2–3). Two or three people have lost jewellery, a bracelet (15, *destrale*), a silver ring (97, *anilum argenteum*), and perhaps another ring (59). Oddly enough, although 97 is one of the most elaborate

texts, the ring lost by Basilia would have been worth much less than the gold rings whose theft is recorded at Uley and Lydney. No less portable, but not so personal, are four sums of money: five *denarii* (34), two third-century silver coins (54, *argentiolos*) presumably 'anto-niniani', six silver coins (8, *argentiolos*) of uncertain date, and six fourth-century silver coins (98, *argenteos*) actually from the victim's purse. These sums are all of the same magnitude, better than base-metal loose change, but not coin hoards like the 'vase' stolen at Carnuntum (*AE* 1929, 229) or the 412 denarii stolen from Agatho's granary in A.D. 113/4 (*TAM* V.1, 257); they are sums regretted by their owners, almost enough to pay for a silver votive plaque (cf. *RIB* 215, six *denarii*), but nothing like the two purses of coin lost by builders of Hadrian's Wall: 28 *denarii* at Birdoswald and 3 *aurei* and 60 *denarii* in a quarry at Barcombe (Collingwood Bruce 1978, 155 and 202). The victims at Bath carried much less cash than second-century legionaries; clearly they came from a lower social and economic stratum, as indeed their nomenclature suggests (pp. 96–8). Yet they wrote, or at least commissioned, curse tablets to recover these comparatively small sums. Evidently the raw materials and professional expertise, if any, were also cheap; at least, it would be strange if the cost of cursing came to more than two 'antoniniani' (cf. 54).

A few household items were stolen. Deomiorix lost something from his house or lodgings (99). It might have been a bronze vessel (44, *aenum*), like the *urna aenia* lost, believed stolen, from a taverna at Pompeii (*CIL* IV 64); or perhaps a frying-pan, one of them explicitly made of iron (60, 66, *pannum ferri*). The shrine (33, *sacellum*) 'given' to Mars may also have been stolen from someone's house, although a temple precinct seems more likely. The only object unlikely to have been stolen in Bath itself is Civilis' ploughshare (31, *vomerem*).

The largest and most distinctive category of stolen goods are the textiles and articles of clothing, no less than fifteen items in twelve tablets. The clothes are mostly outer garments not worn indoors. There is a pair of gloves (5, *manicilia*), something almost unique in ancient literature with its Mediterranean bias, a cap or hood (55, *capitularem*), two of the hooded cloaks (10, 65, *caracallam*) typical of the north-western provinces, 10 being probably the earliest instance of the word made famous by the emperor Antoninus (A.D. 211–7), a woman's cape (61, *mafortium*), and no fewer than four ordinary cloaks (32, 43, 62, 64, *pallium*). One of the latter disappeared with a 'bathing tunic' (32, *paxsam balnearem*), a combination also found probably in 62, (*paxsam* unqualified); a third tablet (63) records the loss of a *balnearis* on its own. This was not a bathing costume, which the Romans did not bother with, but a garment worn under a cloak when leaving the baths (see note to 32, 3); perhaps it had a raised nap, or even the looped pile found on Coptic towels, like a modern bath robe. Lastly there is a '(bed)spread' (6, *stragulum*), whose derivation from *sterno* implies a rug or blanket which is 'spread' for sitting or lying on, and the two

enigmatic 'horse (blankets)' (49, 62, *caballarem*). Since a thief would hardly steal a horse blanket and leave the horse (one of the Uley tablets is prompted by the theft of a draught animal), and since one *caballaris* disappears with a cloak and (bathing) *paxsa* (62), the word may be a term transferred to a rug or blanket used by bathers. Perhaps it was something small and thick like a Tibetan or Chinese saddle rug, which a naked bather put on the hard floor, whether it was hot or cold. The same might be suggested of the *stragulum*.

This is to anticipate the likeliest circumstances in which all these rugs and cloaks and bathing tunics were stolen: in the extensive baths attached to the temple of Sulis, whose hot waters they enjoyed.[1] These were garments discarded before bathing, which another bather carried off, like the dinner guest in Martial's epigram (viii 59) who often returned home wearing two cloaks. This might also be the fate of a ring or bracelet which a bather put down for a moment because his hands were sweating, or of the money which he might have concealed among his clothes or in a corner; perhaps the thief left the purse (98, 5) to avoid detection. Basilia's silver ring (97), however, suggests another possibility which she may have overlooked. Three silver rings were found in the drain of the Caerleon fortress baths, not to mention ten of iron and twelve of bronze, which implies that lost jewellery was not always stolen (Zienkiewicz 1986, 142–5). This impression is reinforced by the 88 engraved gemstones also found in the Caerleon baths, like the 34 found in the Bath culvert, and smaller totals in other bath house drains (ibid., 117ff.), which can also be seen as casual but genuine losses. But there need be no doubt about the rugs and clothes, and probably the vanished coins: these were the work of 'bath house thieves' (*fures balnearii*), typical of the petty criminals with whom the early Christians resented being num-bered, who even earned a chapter to themselves in the *Digest*.[2] From this we learn that stealing at the baths might be punished by forced labour in the mines. (The Greeks were still more harsh; whereas burglary was only a civil offence, bath house thieves were executed. This is the spirit in which some of the Bath tablets were written.)[3] According to the *Digest*, if the thief were a soldier, he might be discharged with ignominy: it is likely that the cloak and sandals 'given' to Nemesis in the Caerleon amphitheatre (*RIB* 323) did not belong to a competitor, but were stolen, perhaps in the legionary bath house. Unfortunately there is no knowing whether civilians convicted of stealing in the baths at Bath then laboured in the Mendip mines to lift the lead on which their more fortunate successors would be cursed.

The bath house thief is a well-known literary figure.[4] Catullus addressed a poem to a champion of the trade (xxxiii, *O furum optime balneariorum*), urging him to

1. As Dr J.P. Wild has also noticed: (1986, 352).
2. *Dig.* XLVII 17. Tertullian, *de fuga in persecutione* 13. 5 (*CSEL* lxxvi, 42); *de idolatria* 5 (*CSEL* xx, 34); *apologeticum* 44.2 (*CSEL* lxix, 103).
3. ps. Aristotle, *Problemata* xxix. 14.
4. Most of the references will be found in Blümner 1911, 433.

anticipate conviction by going into exile. The noise of one being caught red-handed was heard by Seneca (*ep.* 56, 2) in his lodgings over a public baths. Plautus points the problem with brutal logic (*Rudens*, 382ff.): the bather cannot recognize a potential thief, but the thief can see who is watching the clothes. We might see the problem as one of no clothes lockers. Instead, the bather had to own or hire someone to watch his clothes. A bilingual schoolbook details a typical visit to the baths: the master tells his slave to undress him, take off his shoes, tidy his clothes and look after them: 'Don't go to sleep, because of thieves'.[5] Even this might fail: the dinner guests in Petronius' *Satyricon* (30) are met by a slave who is about to be flogged for losing his master's clothes in the baths, clothes hardly worth 'ten sestertii' [2½ denarii]. If the bather did not own an attendant, he could tip a slave (*capsarius*) at the baths; Diocletian's *Prices Edict* (vii 15) fixes the fee at two (depreciated) *denarii*. Unfortunately the *capsarius* might be as incompetent as the one-eyed hag imagined by Martial (xii 70), or corrupt (cf. *Digest* I 15.3, 5), or in fact a prostitute (ibid., III 2.4, 2). (Catullus' bath house thief was the father of an unsuccessful male prostitute.) No wonder Fortune was worshipped in bath houses. That schoolbook concludes its visit with the master's orders to his slave: 'Wash my head and feet, give me my shoes and put them on, give me my cloak and tunic, collect my clothes and all my things, and escort me home'.[6] This was a moment of embarrassment for a few bathers at Bath, like Solinus (32) who found his cloak and tunic missing, or at least a moment when a purse (98) felt too light. We may suspect that these bathers were not just unlucky or negligent: they were the ones who did not own a slave to watch their clothes, or who could not afford to tip a *capsarius* every time. This would explain why the sums of money are comparatively small, and why Basilia's ring (97) is only made of silver. As their names suggest (pp. 96–8), they were humbler people than Roman legionaries, and their recourse was not to the law of the *Digest*, but to lead and pewter tablets.

Manufacture and preparation

Human remains were found in the floor and walls, spells and curses and the name 'Germanicus' scratched on leaden tablets, with half-burnt ashes smeared with corruption, and other baleful objects believed to subject living creatures to the infernal powers.

Tacitus, *Annals* ii 69

Gold and silver were reserved for amulets and medical charms.[1] Lead was the traditional medium for curse tablets intended to harm, which have only occasionally been found inscribed on bronze and other materials.[2] Lead was used for the same reasons that made it suitable for tags and labels of all kinds: it was cheap and easily made into thin sheets; like other writing materials it could be cut with a knife and inscribed with a stilus, but it was more durable than papyrus or wooden tablets. It is clear from many of the Bath tablets that a practised scribe could write on the soft metal surface as easily as on wax. When freshly inscribed, the writing would shine against its dull background. To hide the text, the lead could be simply folded up, with less trouble than sealing a wax tablet. But these practical considerations must have taken second place to sympathetic magic. The only Bath tablet to practise this explicitly is 4, with its prayer that the victim 'become as liquid as water', no doubt the spring into which it was thrown. A Gallic tablet curses the other party to a lawsuit: let them be as harmless 'as this puppy', and their lawyers defend them no better than its mother (Audollent 111). A magical papyrus recommends sewing the lead tablet inside a dead frog, with the prayer that the victim's blood should drip and his body dry up like the frog's (*PGM* xxxvi 231ff.). The lead itself offered a seductive simile. Like other metals, it was cold to the touch, an attribute of ill health and death. It was the heaviest common metal; in human terms this weight was lethargy, the 'dead weight' of a corpse. Unlike gold, silver and bronze, lead was not bright in colour, but dark and sinister, like the blotches on the body of the dead Germanicus, or the ashes of his funeral pyre. Even its chemical compounds were poisonous. These similes are usually implicit, but the authors of tablets from Gaul and Germany pray that their enemy 'sink like lead'; a tablet from Carnuntum prays that Eudemus should become as heavy 'as this piece of lead'; the Greek tablets from Attica include curses that a victim's tongue should turn to lead, that he should

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5. *Colloquia Monacensia*, 10 (*C. Gloss. Lat.* III 651); 'expolia me, discalcia me, compone vestimenta, cooperi, serva bene, ne addormias propter fures'.
6. Ibid. 'terge mihi caput et pedes. da caligulas, calcia me. porrige amiclum, pallam, dalmaticam. collige vestimenta et omnia nostra. sequimini ad domum . . .' It is not clear what the difference was between *amic(u)lum* ('wrap') and *palla* ('mantle'), or whether they were alternatives. His costume on leaving the baths seems to be equivalent to *paxsa balnearis* and *pallium* (cf. Hist. Aug., *Alex. Sev.* 42.1). The additional reference to *vestimenta* shews that he has changed his clothes.

1. Jordan 1985c, 162–7. cf. Marcellus, *de Medicamentis* viii 59, a charm for *lippitudo* written with a copper needle on a gold plate.
2. Audollent 1904, xlvii–xlviii. cf. *PGM* iv 329ff., v 304ff., vii 396ff., xxxvi 231ff. (binding spells and curses written on lead). Use of bronze: Audollent 196, 212; Dunant 1978, 241–4. Copper: Jerome, *Life of Hilarion*, 21 (strictly speaking, a love-charm, and probably fictional). Tin: *PGM* vii 417ff., 459ff. (love charm); Marcellus, *de Medicamentis* xxi 8, xxii 10 (medical charms); Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of S. Euthymius*, 57 (a true curse tablet, but miraculous in detail).

become as cold and worthless as lead.[3] Thoughts like these must have run through the minds of visitors to the sacred spring, as they heaved their tablets through the archway and watched them disappear with a satisfying splash.

It is not surprising, therefore, that lead has remained popular for curse tablets until modern times. What *is* surprising is that pure lead is hardly ever found among the Bath tablets.[4] Most of them look like lead, but of the 75 tablets catalogued whose composition is known, only four are in fact lead; another three contain more than 90% lead, and six more are rich in lead (Pb 65–80). In other words, only 14 tablets, less than one-fifth, contain at least two-thirds lead. The lead is alloyed with tin, sometimes with a trace of copper. Almost two-thirds (49) of the 75 tablets contain at least one-half tin, and almost three-quarters (55) fall within the range Sn 40–85. High-tin alloys are rare: only three tablets are pure tin, and another four contain more than 90% tin. Three groups are discernible, but it must be emphasised that each merges into the next:

Sn 42–50	13 tablets (16%)
Sn 53–70	27 tablets (36%)
Sn 72–86	15 tablets (20%)

The middle group embraces (by ± 10%) the eutectic alloy of lead (38.1) and tin (61.9), modern tinman's solder (Pb 37, Sn 63), the alloy which has the lowest melting point (183°C.) and which passes immediately from the molten state to the solid without an intervening pasty state in which metallic crystals form. This alloy would give the sharpest casting and the smoothest surface (Tylecote 1986, Ch. 3). The tin-rich group corresponds roughly to English pewter, which, before lead was eliminated in modern times, was standardised at Sn 80. There is also a small group (five tablets) within the range Pb 65–75, like modern plumber's solder (Pb 67, Sn 33) and the alloy found in Roman lead sealings.[5] But it must be repeated that there is no narrow, distinct group, which would be evidence of a definite alloy being used. Moreover, it seldom happens that any two tablets have the same composition, such a coincidence only once being shared by that of thickness and physical appearance (2 and 117). It seems clear, therefore, that there was no standardisation, and that the Bath tablets were the product of many small-scale meltings.

Most of the tablets, though looking like lead, can be more correctly described as 'pewter'. This alloy of lead and tin seems to have been invented in Roman Britain, where both metals were freely available, as a cheap substitute for silver. It was probably developed by trial and error from the manufacture of vessels of pure tin, when it was discovered that the addition of lead lowered the melting point and made the metal harder and more stable. Six small 'pewter' ingots (Sn 94, 68.4, 67.6, 67.4, 54.0, 50.4) found in the Thames at Battersea have been seen as examples of standard alloys, since they carried official-looking stamps, but most Romano-British pewter which has been analysed falls within a different range, Sn 70–80. A few pieces are known with a higher, dangerously higher, proportion of lead.[6] On present evidence, there does not seem to have been a standard alloy of Roman pewter.

Although the tablets are thus recognizable as 'pewter', it remains puzzling that tin should have been used so freely, when lead was the traditional metal and was mined nearby in the Mendips. Tin had to be brought from Devon and Cornwall, and must have been more expensive than lead, even if the price-ratio was nothing like the 80:7 quoted by Pliny: he is writing in the 70s A.D., long before the large-scale exploitation of British tin by the Romans, at a time when British lead was notoriously cheap (*Hist. Nat.* xxxiv 161, 164). There may have been some metallurgical advantage in the use of tin: the alloy would have melted at a lower temperature than lead and have been even easier to handle; it could evidently be made into very thin sheets if required (66 is only 0.36 mm thick), which were tougher than tin or lead, but smooth and soft enough to be inscribed without difficulty, unlike bronze. In the quantity required to make a tablet, the use of tin can have added little to the cost. Unfortunately other British curse tablets have not been analysed, except for Ratcliffe-on-Soar (*JRS* liii (1963), 121), which was 'impure lead', so we do not know whether Bath was peculiar in using 'pewter' instead of lead. It is surely significant that it lay midway between two centres of pewter production, Camerton and Nettleton Shrub, and may even have had a centre of its own on Lansdown.[7] It is easy to imagine scrap pewter, wasters and lathe trimmings, broken and discarded tableware like 30, being 'recycled' into curse tablets. Perhaps they should be regarded as a by-product of the local pewter industry. That 'pewter' alloy was abundantly available, and that costing was not tight, is suggested by the two 'lead' coffins from Ilchester: when they were analysed they turned out to be almost half tin (Sn 45 and 42) (Tylecote 1986, 49). Even in north Britain, where tin was not

3. Marichal 1981, 41–52, *quomodo hoc plumbu(m) non paret et decadet, sic decadet aetas, membra* (etc.). Audollent 98, *sinto inim(i)cus sic (quomodo) plumbum subsidet* (etc.). *AE* 1929, 228, *quod ille plu(m)bus po(n)dus h(a)bet, sic et Eud(e)mus h(a)beat.* Wünsch 1897, (*IG* III 3), *Praefatio* p. iii and Nos. 67, 105–7.

4. The tablets were analysed by Dr A.M. Pollard in the Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, and their thickness was measured by Mrs S. Pollard in the Conservation Laboratory, Oxford University Institute of Archaeology, to whom I am also indebted for notes on their structure and folding. For advice on metallurgy I am indebted to Mr C.J. Salter, Oxford University Department of Metallurgy and Science of Metals.

5. Only two have been analysed (Richmond 1936, 122–3): Pb 72.9, Sn 27.1 and Pb 69.97, Sn 29.83.

6. Tylecote 1986, 50 (Table 28) collects pieces of Roman pewter which have been analysed. Attempts have been made to group alloys by composition: Smythe 1937–8, 255–65; Hughes 1980, 41–50 (the Battersea ingots).

7. Wedlake 1958, 82ff; 1982, 67ff. Stone moulds for tableware were found on Lansdown, but not necessarily for pewter: *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London* 2nd ser. xxii (1907–9), 34–8.

locally available, the garrison of Brough-under-Stainmore did not bother to save the alloy sealings which came to the fort; instead they were dumped over the cliff and only salvaged for scrap in the nineteenth century (Richmond 1936, 105).

A chronological question remains. The received opinion is that Roman interest in west-country tin revived only in the third century, which is confirmed by the archaeological evidence at Camerton, where pewter manufacture seems to have begun in the mid-third century, and at Nettleton Shrub, where the date is c. A.D. 340. Surviving pieces of tableware cannot be dated with much precision; the tendency is to see them as fourth century or mid-third century at earliest.[8] The Bath ORC tablets, however, many of which are inscribed on 'pewter' sheet, are earlier than this. Most of them can be dated by their handwriting to the first half of the third century (pp. 87–8), and three tablets, 9, 10 and 30, by reason of their script and presentation, and the use of patronymics, should be dated to the second century. Yet 9 and 10 are inscribed on 'pewter' (Sn 55.0 and 73.8 respectively), and 30, which has not been analysed, is actually a pewter plate (Pl. XXIV). Unless 30 in particular is to be radically re-dated (and it must be remembered that it was already a discarded piece of tableware when it was inscribed), it would seem that the beginning of the Romano-British pewter industry is earlier than has been supposed.

It was quite easy to make a tablet. The alloy melted at a low temperature, if need be in a pot or iron ladle over a domestic fire. To make a sheet, it could be poured over a flat surface: tablets sometimes exhibit 'cold shuts', small natural holes where the alloy failed to spread before it set. A good example can be seen in the corner of 46 (Pl. XXI). The only problem was that the surface tension of the liquid was too great for it to form a metal sheet thin enough to be conveniently inscribed and folded. (95 and 96 (Pl. XXVIIIa) are almost unique in being 'blobs' which were allowed to set and were then inscribed without further preparation.) There were two solutions to the problem, the Romans not using rollers to make lead sheet. The simpler solution was to hammer the metal after it had set: 54 is a good example, the hammering having caused the metal to spread out in a scalloped outline (Pl. XXVIa). It is often difficult to tell whether a thick tablet (0.8 mm or more) has been hammered or not, but 5, 8, 39, 53 and 58 probably have been. Hammering was certainly used to flatten two 'late' tablets with sophisticated texts, 65 and 97, so it is not an index of unsophistication, but it is less common than the other solution. This was to put the molten alloy under pressure, so that it set in a thin sheet. How this was done is not clear, but possibly the molten alloy was poured onto a smooth flat stone surface, and another smooth flat stone was lowered upon it. Tablets with uncut edges preserve evidence of the casting process. Sometimes the edge is sinuous or irregular, retaining the curving outline left by the spreading liquid as it cooled and set, with a

bullnose cross-section due to the meniscus. Some tablets are entirely irregular, having been hammered or pressed from a pool of molten alloy; a few have been trimmed into irregular polygons, like the pentagons 5, 16 and 37; but a rectangle was evidently the preferred shape (3, 4, 6 and 15 are exceptional in being squares), and this was achieved in two ways. Usually the rectangle was cut or trimmed from a larger sheet, one or two sides sometimes preserving its original edge. This was done with a knife, sometimes in a series of short strokes, some of which might fail to sever the metal; there seems to have been no attempt at precision, by using a ruler for instance, or cutting right-angle corners. Even the blank tablet 117, which is exceptionally neat, was not cut with the aid of a ruler; and 2, which came from the same sheet, is very rounded in outline. Another blank tablet, 119, is also evidence of a sheet being cut up: three sides have been cut by a knife, the fourth preserves the irregular edge of the original.

The other way of achieving a rectangle is more interesting. The edge of some tablets, mostly fragments, has a flanged cross-section, either single ('L' profile) or double ('T' profile) (Pl. XXI). The edge runs more or less straight, the molten alloy evidently pressing against some obstruction as it set under pressure, no doubt the edge of a mould. A single flange suggests that the liquid forced its way upward, into the space between the side of the mould and its lid. A double flange suggests that it could also force its way downward, either because the mould was a wooden box whose bottom did not meet the sides perfectly, or because it was hollowed from stone and the sides had been chiselled a little too deep. Stone moulds were used for casting pewter plates and other vessels, so simple stone moulds may have been used for tablets too. Unfortunately these tablets, being quite thin, were fragile and only two survive reasonably complete, 10 and 44. Three cast edges survive of 79, but otherwise it is not clear from the single flanged edges which survive of fragments, or the occasional corner like that of 35, that the original tablet was cast in one piece. It can be seen that 10, 44 and 79 are all of different sizes, and that their sides are not straight. They clearly came from different moulds.

Even in the mould-made tablets, therefore, there is a lack of precision or standardisation. The wide range of alloys used suggests that there were many small-scale meltings, that the sheets produced were small (only two tablets, 2 and 117, can be proved to come from the same sheet), and that tablets were made in ones and twos rather than mass-produced. This does not mean, however, that petitioners made their own tablets. Thin 'pewter' tablets may well be peculiar to Bath; if so, they suggest a distinctive local method of manufacture, a workshop tradition rather than individual initiative. The survival of blank tablets, including an 'off-cut' (119) and another (117) from the same sheet as an inscribed tablet, does suggest that tablets were being prepared for others to use. This is the impression given by 15 in particular, a 'monumental' ansate square defaced by a semi-literate scribe (Pl. XXIIIa). The mould-made rectangles, 10, 44

8.   Peal 1967, 19–37; Brown 1973, 184–206.

and 79, which would have required some skill and experience, also suggest workshop production, perhaps as a sideline of the local pewter industry, even if only on a small scale. The scribe of 30, a pewter plate, no doubt found his own tablet, but on the whole the evidence suggests that at Bath, by analogy with other temple sites where small votive objects were made for sale to visitors, it was possible for petitioners to save themselves trouble by buying tablets ready for inscribing.

Tablets were usually inscribed without further preparation, but three of the NRC tablets, 98, 100 and 104, like 112 and 117, were smoothed first with an edged tool like a chisel; the tool used for 104 was only 6 mm wide, and was probably the other end of a stilus. This would be done to erase a wax tablet, but there is no sign of a previous text on these Bath tablets. However, 104 was inscribed by two different hands, and so perhaps were 4 and 78. The enigmatic 14 was inscribed by as many as five different hands using different stili. 4 was cut after it had been inscribed, and 64 was cut in two after it had been inscribed and folded.

These tablets are exceptions, and it is hard to see why they were so treated. There may have been more than one petitioner, or perhaps second thoughts. At Bath, as elsewhere, most tablets after being inscribed were rolled up 'in the usual way', as the magical papyrus says of that tablet sewn up inside the frog. 'Folded' is a better term, once or several times; and sometimes both ends of the folded billet were turned inwards to make a compact lump. This folding has of course damaged many tablets, creasing the text if not reducing it to fragments. Its purpose may have been, like the encipherment of reversed texts, to conceal what had been written. Two tablets (27, 58) carry a few capitals on the outside, perhaps to identify the inner text, but something similar is found on one side of 54, which was not folded at all.[9] 54, which is almost 1 mm thick, seems to anticipate a group of 'late' texts (65, 94–100) inscribed on thick tablets which were not folded either (Pl. XXVII). There may have been a change of ritual, or at least fashion. They must be distinguished from tablets which were not folded because they were nailed. Nail holes can be difficult to distinguish from natural flaws ('cold shuts'), as in 61, but a number of Bath tablets were nailed: 8, 10, 16, 37 and 53, all double-sided texts, and 34, 52 and 62. Possibly these tablets were nailed to something, but this would have concealed only half of the double-sided texts; nailing, which is quite often found in curse tablets, was probably sympathetic magic: the victim was 'defixed' like the tablet itself. Some tablets, however, like 61, though thin enough, were not nailed or folded; and 45, which was inscribed on both sides, was folded only once. Except for the small group of thick 'late' tablets, it is difficult to find any significant pattern. Most petitioners, it would seem, preferred to fold their tablets into tight billets; but others were content to throw them as

they were into the sacred spring. In either event, once the tablets lay beneath its opaque waters, their handwriting would be safe from mortal eyes.

Handwriting

"'She have it written in Latin!' says Hennessy. 'Faith she's able to write that way, or any other way for yee!' says I. 'Well, I'll tell ye what ye'll do,' says Hennessy. 'There's a boy in the Medical Hall, and he's able to read all languages. Show it to him,' says he. I showed it then to the boy in the Medical Hall. Sure, the very minute he looked at it – 'Elliman's Embrocation', says he. Sure them's the stupidest people in Hennessy's."

My sympathies were with the house of Hennessy; I, too, had encountered Mrs. Knox's handwriting, and realised the high imaginative and deductive qualities needed in its interpreter. No individual word was decipherable, but, with a bold reader, groups could be made to conform to a scheme based on probabilities.

Somerville and Ross, *The Irish R.M.*

The Bath tablets can be as exasperating as Mrs Knox's shopping list, but the difficulties they present are different in kind. Some are clumsily written, presumably by semi-literates, notably 6, 16, 22, 39, 40, 75, 77, 78, 101, 103, 104, and a few like 63 are scrawled in too much haste, but the scripts of 10 and 30 are distinguished, and most tablets have been inscribed by practised hands in letters which are more or less regular. The scribes themselves seem occasionally to have confused similar letter-forms (see p. 99), and to a modern eye certain letter-forms are easily confused, *A* and *R*, *B* and *D*, *E* and *N*, for instance, but where the sample is large enough and the text itself not a mystery like 14 and 46, these confusions can usually be resolved. The real difficulty is not the handwriting itself, but the state of its preservation. The texts have been scratched on thin sheets of lead or lead/tin alloy with a sharp point, probably a stilus, and when freshly inscribed (the only moment they were intended to be read by mortal eyes), they would have been perfectly legible: the scratches would have been bright, unoxidised metal against a dull grey background. Unfortunately the scratches soon became the same colour as their background, grey on grey, like typescript on carbon paper. A distinguished papyrologist has stated the problem of reading curse tablets: 'Under magnification much more is to be seen, but in any constant angle of light only some of the strokes are visible, so that the plaque has to be held in the hand and tilted or rotated to take advantage of various angles of light, if the patterns of the letters are to be recognized' (Rea 1972, 365). Moreover, the writing is sometimes very shallow. The scribe of 66, for instance, pressed so hard that he indented the tablet (see Pl. XXI), but the line left by his stilus survives only in the minutely thin layer of patination, and where this has been lost, the writing is almost invisible on the bare surface of the metal. It is fortunate, therefore, that the

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9. The Eccles tablet (*Britannia* xvii (1986), 430–1, No. 2) is inscribed with an abbreviated address(?) on one side, which would however have been obscured when it was folded up.

Bath tablets were expertly cleaned and conserved; casual finds by treasure hunters are much at risk. Folding (and unfolding) curse tablets stresses the inscribed surface; the metal may in any case be brittle, or corrosion may have cemented the folds together; lead corrosion unfortunately does not preserve the original form of the metal in the way that copper-alloy corrosion can do. For all these reasons, the text is often fragmentary, either because letters have been partially or wholly lost or obscured (e.g. Pls. XXVIa, XXVIIb), or because the tablets have broken into pieces during the centuries they have spent in the turbulence of the sacred spring. Many isolated fragments were recovered, but it has hardly ever been possible to marry any of them with major surviving pieces; the two exceptions are detached corners of 10 and 14.[1]

These difficulties make it impossible to photograph the entire text of a tablet. It might be worth experimenting with combining photographs taken under raking light from various angles in succession, although even then the shadows caused by surface irregularities (and tablets are often imperfectly flat) would be troublesome. To read the tablets at all, examination letter by letter in shifting light is often necessary. For these reasons the decision was taken to draw, as well as to photograph, virtually every one. This was done with the help of an enlarged photograph, on which was drawn all the lettering visible under favourable conditions, care being taken to indicate damaged letters and overlap of lines where it was significant of the 'ductus'. Care was also taken to indicate the minute variations in line width and the 'serifs' (sometimes added afterwards, sometimes the natural result of lifting and lowering the stilus), which contribute much to the character of the writing. This has not always been done in published drawings of curse tablets. The rough drawing on the photograph was then fair-copied, with constant reference to the original. There was no attempt to represent the surface of the original, unless significant as in 18 (Pl. XXIIIb) and 99 (Pl. XXVIIb), since this would only distract from understanding of the text. There seemed no point in making the draughtsmanship more laborious, simply to illustrate how difficult the decipherment had been. The tablets are also represented as if perfectly flat. The drawings have been reduced in the text to a scale of 1:1, a reduction dictated by the page-size which may be excessive, but which gives an impression of the legibility of the tablets when freshly inscribed. The drawings are much more legible than the originals now are, let alone the best photograph. (The tablets chosen for illustration in the Plates are those which photographed well.) It must be emphasised that, although they are meant to record what is visible on the original (and no more than this), the drawings are inevitably interpretative, if not subjective, and must be regarded as part of the commentary itself. Study of them by scholars should lead to improved readings. It is also to be hoped that they will amount to something still more precious, one of the richest and most accessible groups of illustrations of Roman handwriting-styles available outside the Egyptian papyri.

The only comparable collection from Britain is, of course, the Vindolanda tablets, of which excellent photographs have been published to accompany a text and commentary (Bowman and Thomas 1983) which are models of exact scholarship. Our knowledge otherwise of Roman handwriting in Britain is very defective: except for a few barely-legible waxed tablets, it depends on graffiti, most of them brief, executed on unsympathetic materials like clay. The Bath tablets and the Vindolanda tablets both contain many different people's handwriting, but in other respects they complement each other. The Vindolanda tablets are ink texts written with a nib on wooden leaves, whereas the Bath tablets were inscribed on metal, but with much the same freedom. 8 and 10 in fact seem to have been written with a (metal) nib, and 10 resembles an ink-written text, except for the three-stroke S with its avoidance of curves, because of its 'calligraphic' quality and pleasing alternation of thick and thin strokes. In the Vindolanda tablets the letter O is almost always made with two strokes, as if on metal, whereas in the Bath tablets it is quite often made with a single flourish of the stilus. In the Bath texts as a whole, it is clear the scribes wrote with ease, the fine point of their stilus gliding over the smooth metal surface as it would over that of a waxed tablet. The perfect freedom of 30 is remarkable, with its sweeping initial letters, the O made with a single movement of the stilus, the numerous other little loops and curves. The scribe was not inhibited by his unusual medium. In date the Bath tablets are complementary to the Vindolanda. This will be discussed later, but it may be said here that, whereas the Vindolanda tablets can be closely dated to the period A.D. 95–105, the Bath tablets all belong to a later, much wider, period stretching from the second century to the fourth. Geographically the opposite is true. The Bath tablets were almost certainly all written in one place, 'at the spring of the goddess Sulis' (94, 5), whereas the Vindolanda tablets have a wider origin: the documents were written there, but the letters came from elsewhere. There is also a difference in scribes. The Vindolanda documents must be the work of military clerks, and arguably the letters too; at least they were written either ·by Roman officers and soldiers, members of their families, or their amanuenses. The Bath tablets, however, are the product of a civilian environment; and it may be argued (pp. 79–81, 95–8) that they come from a humbler social and economic class, not the garrison of Britain fifty years after the invasion, but the 'middle and lower classes in the towns' (*LHEB*, 109) a hundred years and more later still. It may even be suggested (pp. 99–101) that they are not the work

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1.   10 is an object-lesson against 'reasonable' restoration. Before the top R. corner was found in a box of mixed fragments, 1–3 had been provisionally restored as *Doci[lis] Bru[ceti] deae san[ctae](?)*. It will be noticed that the scribe in fact failed to centre *Docilianus*, that *Bruceri* is arguably mis-transcribed, and that *sanctus* is frequent in *RIB* (*Index*, p. 73) whereas the superlative is found only once (this was before 35 had been examined).

of professional scribes. As documents, it is unnecessary to add, they are also different: not the letters received by a frontier garrison and its own records, but lists of names and petitions to a goddess.

The Bath tablets are casually inscribed, with few noticeable conventions. 9 and 10 are unusual in having 'headings', although others begin like a letter: 'Solinus to the goddess Sulis Minerva' (32; see p. 68). None of them begins with a leftward-extended first line, like letters at Vindolanda (*Tab. Vind.* 21 and 30), but an indented first line is found in 32, 43 and 65. Only four tablets are square (3, 4, 6, 15), all of them inscribed in capital letters. The usual shape is an irregular rectangle, inscribed indifferently across the short axis (*transversa charta*) like military documents from Vindolanda and elsewhere (5, 9, 10, 31, 32, 38, 46, 51, 52(?), 55, 65, 66, 102), or across the long axis like letters at Vindolanda and legal documents inscribed on waxed tablets (2, 8, 34, 35, 40, 41, 44, 45, 60, 61, 62, 64, 94, 100, 101, 112). (It is often impossible to tell which way fragments are inscribed.) There was a tendency at Bath to write NRC texts long-axis, but otherwise there seems little correlation with the kind of document. Petitions were written either way. There may have been a preference for writing pure lists of names *transversa charta*, like 9, 51 and, significantly, 98(*b*), where the petition (*a*) is written long-axis. Lists of names which belonged to a petition were also written long-axis (4, 8, 94); and sometimes the length of the names or the dimensions of the tablet dictated long-axis format (17, 53, 95, 96). A minority of tablets are not rectangular: two discs (18, 30) pressed into service, irregular pentagons (9, 16, 37), a trapezoid (121), and others entirely irregular or partly trimmed (1, 39, 53, 54, 58, 63, 74(?), 77, 78, 97, 112, 113, 114, 115); it is noticeable that the latter include the illiterate pseudo-inscriptions and a semi-literate text like 39, but the presence of 97 warns us that irregularity is not always an index of unsophistication.

Two tablets (8, 10), it has been said, were inscribed with a metal nib, but the usual writing instrument was a sharp point, no doubt that of a stilus. Sometimes the stilus had become blunt (53, 60, 63, 77, 78, 79, 84, 99, 107), or was sharpened to a broad (40), round (41), or chisel point (74). The stilus that inscribed 4 seems to have been sharpened half-way through, but it may be that 4ff. was the work of a second hand. Two hands were certainly responsible for 104 (and perhaps for two texts), but 14 is unique in this as in other ways, since no fewer than five stili and scripts can be distinguished. Almost always, as one would expect, tablets were inscribed by a single hand, usually with practised fluency. Variant letter-forms are sometimes found, the most common being two forms of *E* in ORC texts.

Interpunctuation by medial point, already uncommon in the Vindolanda tablets, is only found in 9, 2 and 3. Word division is rare, being found in 9, 30, 56(?), and 61. There are only three instances of abbreviation, all conventional: *fil(ius)* (30, 1), (*denarios*) (*quinque*) (34, 3), and *M(inervae)* (60, 2). 104 was smoothed before inscribing, with a chisel-like tool 6 mm wide having a

minutely serrated edge, no doubt the fishtail end of a stilus. This suggests the metal was thought to be like a waxed tablet, but such smoothing is uncommon (100 is a notable example), and would have spoiled the dark surface. This may be why mistakes were not smoothed over, using the fishtail end of the stilus, as they would have been on a waxed tablet; nor was crossing-out much used (for possible examples see 54, 1 and 96); instead, the correction was written on top (see 44, 10 and 12; 61, 6; 62, 4, 5, 7, 8; 66, 11). An omitted letter is twice supplied interlineally (97, 4; 60, 1). Such corrections (pp. 98–9), it may be noted, are always to correct copying mistakes; they are not evidence of 'drafts' or second thoughts. Copying mistakes are particularly prevalent in the reversed texts, which take various forms: (i) words in correct sequence, but with letter-sequence within each word reversed (4); (ii) line-sequence preserved, but with letter-sequence in each line reversed (44, 62, 103, 99, 2 only); (iii) entire text reversed (98); (iv) line-sequence preserved, but with letter-sequence in each line reversed and in mirror-image letters (61). The reversed letters in 2 and 15, and the anagrams of 6, seem to be due to dyslexia rather than cryptography. There is no instance of the simple encipherments known to the Romans.[2] These reversed texts, except 44 and 62, were left unfolded, perhaps because they were felt to be 'secure' already; but they do tend to be written on thick sheets which would have been difficult to fold.

The scripts of ninety-two tablets or fragments have been tabulated letter by letter at the end of this section, to accompany a discussion of letter-forms (at the risk of over-simplification due to the omission of ligatures), and to illustrate the remarkable diversity of scripts. It will be seen that only two tablets are from the same hand, 95 and 96, lists of names inscribed on 'blobs' of alloy otherwise unique; they amount to a single text. This diversity of texts, every text from a different hand, with its implication that they are not the work of professional scribes, will be discussed below (pp. 99–101). The scripts used fall into three groups: capital letters (1–29); Old Roman Cursive (ORC) (30–93); New Roman Cursive (NRC) (94–111). The categories are not quite exclusive. Four capital-letter texts contain some cursive, a few words of ORC in 9, 13 and 14, one line of NRC in 5, but nothing like the interesting because casual mix of NRC and capitals in the inscribed tile from Villafranca de los Barros (Mallon 1982, pl. xii). Isolated capitals are found in the ORC texts 50, 74 and perhaps 76; capital-letter 'addresses' have been inscribed on the outside of 54 and 58. Of greater interest, however, are those texts which contain elements both of ORC and NRC, which will be discussed shortly.

The capital-letter texts it would be tempting to interpret as evidence of semi-literacy, of the kind voiced by a character in Petronius' *Satyricon* (58, 7), a self-made man resentful of the over-educated, who says he can at least read monumental inscriptions: *lapidarias litteras scio*. His handwriting, if he had one, would have

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2. Suetonius, *Div. Iul.* 56.6; *Div. Aug.* 88. Aulus Gellius xvii 9.1–5.
    Hunt 1929, 127–34 (a magical text) = *PGM* lvii.

resembled that of a sailor on active service in A.D. 166, who sold a slave boy to his *optio*; the text of the deed of sale (*P. Lond.* 229 = Seider I, No. 36; *ChLA* 200) is in a notary's neat hand, but below it the vendor has inscribed his own three-line acknowledgement in painfully-formed capitals. This description would serve for **3, 6, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 25**, although even these exhibit varying degrees of competence. Other capital-letter texts like **4** and **8** have at least a brutal legibility, and are the work of practised hands. There is even a certain stylishness about **8** and **9** (in the use of serifs, the treatment of *S*, for example), which becomes very marked in **10** and its related scripts (**11, 12, 14**). In quality **1, 2, 19, 20, 21, 22** are intermediate. It would be fair to speak of a spectrum of achievement (p. 100): it can be seen from the tabulation that most of the letter-forms are shared by the majority of capital-letter texts; what differs is the precision with which they are achieved, the control of straight, sinuous, or curving line. Except perhaps for some of **3, 4, 6, 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 25**, the model for these capital-letter texts is, not monumental inscriptions (*lapidarias litteras*), but Latin bookhand. The script of **10** in particular resembles the 'headings' used by Roman military clerks: compare Seider I, No. 21 (a detached service record perhaps of *c.* A.D. 130); ibid., No. 34 (a *pridianum* of A.D. 156). The style continues into the third century (cf. *ChLA* 403, a list of legionary *principales* of A.D. 235/42), but a second-century date for **10** is reasonable in view of its elegance and the use of a patronymic. The same date is perhaps to be extended to **11** and **12**, but it must be noted that **14**, whose script is related, is accompanied by a snatch of third-century cursive. Other capital-letter texts, except for **5** with its line of NRC, cannot be dated. If, however, **5** is typical of fourth-century capitals at Bath, the lack of similar scripts may suggest that other capital-letter texts are earlier, that is, third century.

This prompts the question of dating the cursive texts. There is, unfortunately, only one internal date, *prid(i)e idus Apriles* (**94**, 6) in a year unstated, which is as helpful as the archaeological context, a quicksand. However, the vocabulary has a 'late' look to it (p. 78); this can be explained as due to the delay in words current in the spoken language finding written expression, but *argentiolos* (**54**, 4) surely belongs to the decline of the *denarius* that followed Caracalla's minting of a new silver coin, and the opposition *gentilis/Christianus* (**98**, 1–2) must, in Britain, be significantly later than the 'Edict of Milan' (A.D. 313). Senses like *baro* ('man') (**44**, 3, 9; **57**, 4; **65**, 7), *bursa* ('purse') (**98**, 5), *levavit* ('stole') (**44**, 1), *paxsam* ('tunic') (**32**, 3; **62**, 2), which elsewhere are first found in the post-Roman period, are unlikely to be earlier than the third and fourth centuries. Onomastics, which will be discussed in the next section, also point this way. The mass of colourless Latin cognomina suggests a well-worn stock of names, many of them derived from simpler cognomina in what is elsewhere seen as a 'late' development. Names like *Dracontius* (**51**, 2) and the four names of Greek etymology, *Alogiosa* (**94**, 3), *Basilia* (**97**, 1), *Calliopis* (**98**, 22) and *Euticius* (**98**, 13), are likeliest to

have been current in late-Roman Britain. Conversely, the use of patronymics (with its suggestion of peregrine nomenclature before the *constitutio Antoniniana* (A.D. 212)) is uncommon in the tablets, and almost restricted to **9, 10** and **30**. **9** and **10**, it has been suggested already, are second-century texts: **10** because of the quality of its 'rustic capitals', **9** because it is the only text with interpunctuation and almost the only with word division, both features already obsolescent by the time of the Vindolanda tablets.

Our best guide to dating the cursive texts ought to be the handwriting itself, but this can only be approximate and depends on comparison with dated texts from eastern provinces. The same styles of writing were current in different parts of the Empire, but often we can only assume they were contemporary; we know next to nothing about their diffusion. The Bath texts can be divided, like other Roman cursive texts, into ORC and NRC, the criterion being the great change in writing style which occurred in the later third century. This change cannot be closely dated, and indeed may not have happened simultaneously and uniformly in every province and class of writer; in any case, it must have taken some time, and there was evidently an overlap. The new style reached Dura in the 250s (e.g. *P. Dura* 105), but ORC texts are known later still from Egypt (e.g. *P. Oxy.* 2951 (A.D. 269), *ChLA* 404 (A.D. 276–82)), and in the African outpost of Bu Njem the garrison was still keeping its records in ORC in 259 (*CRAI* 1979, 447, fig. 4). Third-century NRC texts are very rare (e.g. *PSI* 111 = *ChLA* 780 (A.D. 287–304)) and in early NRC texts isolated ORC letter-forms are sometimes still found: for example ⟋\ = A and ⟋ʎ = B in *P. Lond.* 731 (Seider I, No. 48, *ChLA* 205) (A.D. 293), and ⟋ʎ = B in *P. Flor.* I 36 (*ChLA* 778) (A.D. 312). At Bath some ORC letters occur in certain NRC texts, notably ORC *A* in **104**, *R* in **94**, and *S* in **94, 95, 96** and **97**. But much the most interesting text is **66**, where the first line is in NRC, the rest in ORC. Line 1 was written first, since 2ff. is aligned with it and *Exsuperius* (1) is required as the subject of *donat*, the first word of 2. Line 1 was written with the same stilus and pressure as 2ff., but it is not certain that the scribe was the same; it is conceivable a man might 'sign' his name and pass the tablet to an amanuensis for completion, perhaps what has also happened in **5**. But there is no escaping the conclusion that the two scripts, ORC and NRC, were for a time both current at Bath, and practised by members of the same community. This unique text must be borne in mind when considering the attractive thesis (Casamassima and Staraz 1977) that Roman cursive began to 'bifurcate' in the later second century into two branches, the ordinary script of literacy which ultimately became NRC, and the 'special' script of the civil and military bureaucracy which is the fossilised ORC of many third-century documents. The Bath tablets as a whole, despite being undated, are of considerable palaeographic interest: they must span a long period before, during, and after the adoption of NRC; and unlike most of our evidence, they are in no way 'official' or even the obvious work of 'bureaucrats'.

66, however, is unique. The broad division of the Bath cursive texts into ORC or NRC is perfectly clear, and it would be reasonable to date the latter (**94–111**) to the fourth century. As we have seen, there is some internal evidence to support this. There is very little 'anticipation' of NRC in the Bath ORC texts, which is surprising, since some 'NRC' letter-forms, notably *P*, can be found in second-century texts elsewhere. Such a *P* occasionally occurs in the Vindolanda tablets, and is found in the Caerleon curse tablet (*RIB* 323), but never at Bath. The *R* in **63**, 2 is not significant: it is a variant of the usual ORC form found in **4** (*liber*), inscribed without lifting the stilus; the scribe was in a hurry, as can be seen from *s(e)r(v)us* (**4**). The *E* in **64**, 2 (*sanitatem*) is not particularly significant either, except that it is only found here (as a variant) and in **65** among ORC texts; the form is quite common in third-century texts and has even been found in the Vindolanda tablets. **65**, however, might be said to 'anticipate' NRC. Most of the diagnostic letters, *A*, *B*, *N*, *R* and *S*, are of ORC form; but *E* and *F* are 'NRC', the *D* is the only vertical *D* in the Bath ORC texts, although quite common elsewhere, and the vertical *H* and *Q* are hardly found in any other Bath ORC texts. The variant of *M* in *furem* (**3**) and *meam* (**5**) is half-way to NRC.

These texts apart, the sequence of ORC texts (**30–62**) is distinct. From the tabulation at the end of this section it can be seen that, although the handwritings are diverse, the letter-forms are remarkably consistent. They are discussed in more detail in the Analysis (pp. 89–90), and here it is enough to say that most variations depend on whether or not the stilus was being lifted between strokes; there are also two forms of *E*, often in the same text (as in the papyri), a 'capital' *N* in **31–33**, and differences in the angle of the descender of *L* and *Q*. The overall impression is of homogeneity, a large group of scripts unlikely to be later than the third quarter of the third century. The terminus post quem is the mid-second century, perhaps somewhat later. The writing has the rightward slope that Roman cursive only acquired in the second century. Apart from this, many of the letter-forms are different from those in the inscribed waxed tablets found in London, Lothbury (A.D. 84–96) and Throgmorton Street (A.D. 118).[3] The Dacian waxed tablets (A.D. 131–67)[4] can be compared with these from London, as indeed can the Caerleon curse tablet (*RIB* 323), making it the earliest yet found in Britain. The Bath ORC texts are clearly distinct, and considerably later. They are incidentally also unlike the Vindolanda tablets in script: *= L* and *= N* are never found at Vindolanda, and *= E* seldom, all of them letter-forms typical of Bath ORC; by contrast, typical Vindolanda letter-forms are never found at Bath, *= A* and *= E*, both regarded as 'early', *= H*, and *I* with rightward serif or ligature.

The London tablet of A.D. 118 is the latest dated cursive text yet found in Britain. The Bath ORC scripts can be compared with the ink-written text of another waxed tablet, found near Bath as it happens, at the Chew Stoke villa (*JRS* xlvi (1956), 115–8), but unfortunately not dated. Professor E.G. Turner, the papyrologist who published it, dated it convincingly to 'the first half or middle of the third century' by analogy with *P. Mich.* 165 (*ChLA* 290, A.D. 236). *P. Oxy.* 1114 (A.D. 237) (Seider I, No. 42), *P. Oxy.* 1466 (A.D. 245), *P. Oxy.* 1271 (A.D. 246). The script is also comparable with that of a curse tablet found at the nearby Pagans Hill temple (*Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7); with its mention of 'three thousand denarii' (compare the small sums stolen at Bath), this text must surely belong to the dizzy inflation of the later third century. Further analogies to the Bath ORC scripts can easily be found: see for instance the new *pridianum* published in *JRS* lxvii (1977), 50–61, and the parallels adduced by its editor, Dr J.D. Thomas; *P. Dura* 98 (Seider I, No. 39 = *ChLA* 353, c. A.D. 218), *P. Dura* 82 (Seider I, No. 46 = *ChLA* 337, c. A.D. 233). These are all military records, but *P. Dura* 64 (*ChLA* 319, A.D. 221), an officer's letter, is perhaps closest of all to the style and letter-forms of the Bath ORC texts. (It may be noted that its scribe uses both forms of *E* and *L*, and the familiar diagonal *D* as well as a vertical *D* not found at Bath but common in Dura texts.) This sort of script has been described by the editor of the Dura papyri, Professor C.B. Welles, as 'clerical hand' (Welles 1959, 56); he notes the Chew Stoke tablet as a rather crabbed example. The question of whether the Bath tablets were written by clerks must remain open. There was a procurator's office nearby at Combe Down (*RIB* 179), and the 'professionalism' of many of the hands is striking, but none of them is duplicated (the special case of **95** and **96** excepted), and some are quite 'amateurish' or even illiterate. The bearing this has on the question of authorship will be discussed later (pp. 99–101). The dating may be less of a problem: *P. Lond.* 730 (*ChLA* 204, A.D. 167) must remind us that the letter-forms found in Bath ORC were already current in the second century, and it might be cautious to conclude by suggesting a span of c. A.D. 175 – c. A.D. 275, with a weighting towards the first half of the third century. It is tempting to put **30**, with its elegant, affected script, its word division, as well as its patronymics, into the second century. The mass of ORC texts, however, might well be contemporary with the Twentieth Palmyrene Cohort's tenure of Dura, c. A.D. 208–256. If the garrison of Bu Njem was still daubing its potsherds with this sort of ORC in the 250s, then why not the aggrieved civilians of Bath and their metal tablets?

Analysis of cursive letter-forms

Reference should be made to the tables which follow, tabulating ORC and NRC letter-forms in sixty-four tablets and fragments, and to the invaluable 'Analysis of the letter-forms' in Bowman and Thomas 1983, 60–67

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3. *London Museum Catalogue* 3, 1930, 54–8; *Antiquaries Journal* xxxiii (1953), 206–8. The Throgmorton Street tablet was found in 1986 and has not yet been published.
4. *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae* I (1975), Nos. 31–55.

(*Tab. Vind.*). For (simplified) tables of ORC and NRC letter-forms, see ibid., 54, and Bischoff 1979, 82. There are useful tables of diagnostic letters (A, B, D, E, F, G, M, N, P, Q, R, S, V) at the end of Casamassima and Staraz 1977. The vexed question of how NRC is related to ORC is admirably handled by Bowman and Thomas 1983, 55–60.

A. In ORC texts this is always the standard form, Stroke 1 sometimes being prolonged, and Stroke 2 sinuous, as notably in 30, 7 (initial letter). It ligatures to left and right. It is found in one NRC text (104), as in the NRC component of the Villafranca de los Barros inscribed tile (Mallon 1982, 322–5, esp. Pl. xii). The development of the NRC form can be seen in 94, the rightward return of Stroke 1 (cf. *Tab. Vind.* fig. 11.3); then more fully in 96, 97, 99; and in exaggerated form in 95, 96, 101, 103. The full development was for Stroke 2 to be made without lifting the stilus, in closed form in 97 and 101, where it accompanies an intermediate form, and in open form in 98 and 100.

B. In ORC texts this is always made with the 'panse' (loop) to the left, either in two separate parts as always in *Tab. Vind.*, or without lifting the stilus between the parts. Both variants are found in 30, and in 31, 11 the two parts can be seen on their way to being joined. In 31, 10 (damaged) and 52 another variant can be seen, where the stilus is not lifted, but the final down-stroke is clear of the 'panse'. In NRC texts *B* is always made with the 'panse' to the right, by means of two separate down-strokes. In 98, 5 (*bursa*) there is a variant which superficially resembles an ORC *B*, but was in fact made as usual with two separate down-strokes (see note in the commentary).

C. Always made with two strokes, except in 37, 95, 96; in 54, 9, Stroke 1 is vestigial and Stroke 2 virtually a *C* in itself. Stroke 1 is often ligatured to the left, and usually ends with a curve to the right. Stroke 2 is occasionally horizontal, when it may ligature to the right (e.g. 34, 1; 35, 2), but a rising stroke is regular both in ORC and NRC texts.

D. The three forms found in *Tab. Vind.* all occur at Bath. Loop and *hasta* are usually made separately, but sometimes without lifting the stilus. Both forms are found in 62. The third form, with vertical *hasta*, which is found with the diagonal form in (e.g.) *P. Lond.* 730 (*ChLA* 204, A.D. 167) and *P. Dura* 64 (*ChLA* 319, A.D. 221), occurs only in 65 and NRC texts at Bath; it is variously made in two separate parts, or without lifting the stilus.

E. The early 'capital' form (*Tab. Vind.* fig. 11.9) is not found at Bath, except anomalously (and as a true capital) in 103. The usual *Tab. Vind.* form is common, Stroke 1 almost always being curved (straight in 47). The more cursive form made without lifting the stilus, although rare in *Tab. Vind.*, is common at Bath and, as in the papyri, often occurs in the same texts as the other form.

It ligatures to left or right. The NRC form, which is a common variant in third-century papyri and is even found in *Tab. Vind.*, hardly occurs in Bath ORC texts (only 64, 65 and 66). It is usual in the NRC texts, but a tightly-curved variant of the ORC *E* is also found. *II* for *E*, the form typical of stilus writing tablets, although common in graffiti, is hardly ever found at Bath (only in 53 and perhaps 76, 101).

F. Stroke 1 curves leftward. The cross-strokes tend upwards, the lower one sometimes ligaturing to the right; they are either made separately, or in a hook without lifting the stilus, the latter being the usual NRC form.

G. The usual ORC form is like that in *Tab. Vind.*, except that Strokes 1 and 2 are made without lifting the stilus, then the cap is added. It may ligature to the left. In 44 and 76 the whole letter is made with a single stroke, the usual form in the NRC texts. A peculiarity of Bath ORC (35, 40, 41, 46, 47, 79) is that the cap is sometimes omitted, making the letter look like ORC *H*.

H. The 'normal form in ORC' usual in *Tab. Vind.* is never found at Bath. Instead, the letter is always made without lifting the stilus, the *hasta* sloping rightward (often with an initial loop) in ORC texts, and vertical in NRC texts.

I. In ORC texts both the 'long' form, especially if an initial letter (e.g. 32, 3; 51, 4), and the 'short' form are common. The 'long' *I* often begins with a hook, sometimes even a loop (e.g. 34, 1; 59, 1); the 'short' *I* often ligatures to the left, but not to the right. Both forms usually slope rightward. In NRC texts there is less variation in height, the letter is usually vertical and not hooked (96 being an exception).

K. Occurs only in 53, 1.

L. The 'long' *L* common in *Tab. Vind.* is hardly found in Bath ORC texts (see 52, 60), but is fairly common in NRC texts. The usual form at Bath, also found in NRC texts, is the one with a long diagonal descender. It may ligature leftward.

M. All four variations of the basic ORC form, depending on whether they are made with one stroke, two, three or four, are found at Bath. The most common is the form made with two strokes, allowing ligature to the left. The variation in 65 (*furem, meam*), where Stroke 1 is succeeded by a redundant up-stroke, anticipates the NRC form which is universal in the NRC texts.

N. The 'basic capital form' usual in *Tab. Vind.* is rare in Bath ORC texts (30–33) and occurs only in the two-stroke variation, although it is still found in third-century papyri (e.g. *P. Gen. Lat.* 5 (*ChLA* 10), post A.D. 211; *P. Mich.* 163 (*ChLA* 279), A.D. 222–39). In Bath ORC texts the usual form seems to be a

development of this, Stroke 2 intersecting Stroke 1 about mid-way, its elbow (except in 65) remaining well above the bottom of Stroke 1. This elbow can be a curve $\mathcal{V}$ or even a straight upward line made without lifting the stilus $\mathcal{V}$ (62, 64), when it resembles *E*. The ORC texts have been catalogued in this sequence, but it is a typological arrangement which may have no chronological significance: the form, although typical of third-century papyri, is also found as a variant in second-century papyri (see Casamassima and Staraz 1977, Tavola I). In the Bath NRC texts the form is found in 94, but otherwise the usual NRC forms occur, a three-stroke 'capital' form $\mathcal{N}$ or the 'uncial' form $\mathcal{N}$.

O. Variously made in two strokes, as in *Tab. Vind.*, or without lifting the stilus as a simple circle.

P. In ORC texts made in the usual way $\mathcal{P}$, Stroke 1 curving rightward at the foot, Stroke 2 sloping downward, except in 37, where it resembles *C* (which in 37 is made with a single curved stroke). The rightward curve at the foot distinguishes ORC *P* from *R*, with which it is confused in 44, 12. In NRC texts the usual 'capital' form is found $\mathcal{P}$.

Q. Both diagonal $\mathcal{Q}$ and vertical $\mathcal{Q}$ forms are found, as in *Tab. Vind.*, the vertical form being universal in NRC texts except 107. It is variously made in two parts or with a single movement of the stilus, the latter being usual in the vertical form (44 and 94 are the only exceptions).

R. In ORC texts made in two sinuous strokes, the variations depending on where they intersect, in effect either $\mathcal{P}$ or $\mathcal{R}$, when it resembles *A*: compare 79, 2 (*R*) with 30, 7 (*A*), both initial letters. Rare variants are found as well as the usual ORC form in three texts: in 35, 2 and 65, 10 it is written as an initial letter with a

single up-stroke $\mathcal{N}$; in 63, 2 it is scrawled with the usual down-stroke, but without lifting the stilus for Stroke 2 $\mathcal{P}$, the result resembling the NRC form. There is a mixture of ORC and NRC forms in 99, otherwise the NRC form is found in NRC texts except 95 and 96, where there is a 'capital' form (cf. 76).

S. In ORC texts the letter is made in two separate strokes $\mathcal{S}$, Stroke 1 usually curving leftward, but almost straight in 66 and 78. It can ligature leftward, *VS* $\mathcal{S}$ being common; in 64, 2 an elaborate variant of this ligature omits Stroke 2 and resembles one in *P. Lond.* 731 (Seider I, No. 48 = *ChLA* 205, A.D. 293). Some Bath NRC texts retain the ORC form (94, 95, 96), which also survives as a variant in 97 and 100. The NRC form, which developed from the ORC form by not lifting the stilus $\mathcal{S}$ (98, 101, 103) and is fully developed in 97 and 102 $\mathcal{V}$, is often found in third-century papyri, especially as the last letter in a word, but not in ORC texts at Bath.

T. In both ORC and NRC texts of conventional form $\mathcal{T}$, Stroke 1 usually curving rightward at the foot, and Stroke 2 occasionally extended to mark a word-ending (e.g. 52, 53, 64). Stroke 1 can ligature leftward and Stroke 2 rightward. A first-century form $\mathcal{T}$ not found in *Tab. Vind.* is found in 43, 2 and perhaps 54, 3.

V. In ORC texts except 76 always made without lifting the stilus $\mathcal{V}$. It often ligatures to the right, when it becomes more curved and is written above the line. In 65 and the NRC texts 95, 97, 100, 105, it occurs as a variant of the usual NRC form which is made with two strokes $\mathcal{V}$.

X. No significant variations. In 9, 11 it covers the previous letter. In 34, 3 there is a (*denarii*) sign $\mathcal{X}$.

Tabulation of letter-forms

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
1	A	B	C	D	E															X
2	A	B		D	Ǝ				I	L		N				R		T	V	
3	A			D	F				I		M	N	O			R	S	T	V	
4	A	B	C		E		S	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
5	A	B	L	D	E	F			I	L	M	N	Ч	P	Q	R	S	T	V	
6	A			D	E		S		I	L	M	N				Q	R	S	T	V	
7	A		C				S	H	I			N	O						T	V	
8	A	B	C	D	E	E			I		L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
9	A		C	D	E		S	H	I	L	M	N	O	P			R	S	T	V	
10	A	B	C	D	E	E	S		I		L	M	N	O	P		R	S	T	V	X
11(i)	A		C		E	E			F	L					Q	R	S	T	V	
11(ii)	A	B		D	E				I							R		T	
11(iii)			C						I		M				Q				V
12(i)	A				E				I	L	M	N	O		Q	R	S	T	V
12(ii)				D	E						M					R	S	
12(iii)	A				E				I		M	N					S	T
13	A			D	E				I	L	M	N	O			R	S	T	V
14	A	B	C	D	E				I	L	M	N	O			R	S	T	V
15	A			D	Ǝ				I	L	M	N	O	P		R	S	T	V
16	A			D	E	F			I	L	M	N	O		Q	R	S	T	V
17	A		C	D	E		G		I	L	M	N	O				S	T	V
18	A		C	D	F				I		M	N	O			R			V	X
19	A			D	E				I		M	N				R	S	T	V
20(ii)					E						X				Q			T	V
24	A				F				I					P			S	T	V

Capital-letter texts

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
30																				
31																				
32																				
33																				
34																				
35																				
36																				
37																				
38																				
39																				
40																				
41																				
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46																				
47																				
48																				
49																				
50																				
51																				
52																				
53																				
54																				

ORC texts (i)

92

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
55																				
56																				
57																				
58	A	B	C		E						N				R					
59					G															
60																				
61																				
62																				X
63																				
64																				
65																				
66																				
67																				
68																				
69																				
70																				
71																				
72																				
73																				
76																				
77																				
78																				
79																				
80																				
81																				

ORC texts (ii)

RMT

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
5																				
64																				
65																				
66																				
94																				
95																				
96																				
97																				
98																				
99																				
100																				
101																				
102																				
103																				
104																				
105																				
107																				

NRC texts

Names

Her dislike of her name being known [was] largely based on a fine primitive feeling that by letting your name be known you gave unknown powers a handle over you.
Angela Thirkell, *The Headmistress*

The Bath tablets preserve more than 150 names.[1] A dozen are patronymics, the name of someone's father (once or twice his mother) added for better identification. Eight names occur twice, *Civilis* three times, but probably a different person each time. Of these 140 or so persons, only about twenty are more than names: they are the authors of tablets, often cast in the form of a letter to the goddess, like (32) *deae Suli Minerv(a)e Solinus*. Other tablets are written anonymously or impersonally, but there is no noticeable inhibition about revealing one's name; only 98 seems to envisage the possibility of a counter-curse. By 'author' is meant the person ultimately responsible for the tablet being inscribed; whether he drafted and wrote it himself is another question, which will be discussed in the next section. If we disregard tablets whose beginning is entirely lost, we find these formulations:

(i) *21 tablets whose author is named*
(a) 10 written in the first person: 10 (Docilianus), 12 (Marin[...]), 32 (Solinus), 34 (Docca), 54 (Arminia), 59 (Enica), 60 (Oconea), 62 ([...]eocorotis), 98 (Annianus), 99 (Deomiorix).
(b) 9 written in the third person: 5 (Docimedis), 31 (Civilis), 55 (Civilis), 57 (Exsib[...]), 61 (Lovernisca), 63 (Cantissena), 66 (Exsuperius), 94 (Uricalus), 97 (Basilia). Three of these (31, 55, 63), like 99, name the author only as the owner of the property stolen.
(c) 2 tablets, verbal person not known: 50 (Victorinus), 108 (Docim[...]).

(ii) *27 tablets written anonymously or impersonally*
(a) 7 written in the first person without naming the author: 4, 8, 9, 35, 38, 44, 65.
(b) 9 written impersonally, usually with *qui*: 15, 16, 37, 39, 40, 49, 53, 100, 102.
(c) 11 pure lists: 1, 2, 3, 17, 18, 30, 51, 77, 78, 95, 96. (9, 37 and 53, which are noted under (a) and (b), are also virtually lists.)

The authors of the tablets, anonymous or not, and sometimes the texts are too fragmentary to be certain, must have been visitors to the sacred spring. Some authors listed people known to them: there are at least fourteen lists, varying in length from two names (2) to eighteen (98), a hundred names being supplied by only ten tablets. These were not necessarily visitors. Only 94 explicitly lists six people 'at the spring of Sulis', where

they swore an oath. The other lists are not explicit, except for 8, which requires the goddess to exact stolen money 'from the names written below': the text ends with three names, which are repeated on the reverse. This trio may have been confederates whose guilt was known, but longer lists attached to a curse, like 4 (ten names) and 98 (eighteen) must be the names of those suspected of the theft. Lists like 30 (eight) and 95, 96 (fifteen), which are nothing but names, may of course be 'enemies' rather than suspected thieves; a curse tablet found at Kreuznach (Audollent 96B) lists nineteen names under the heading 'Names of Enemies' (*inimicorum nomina*). But the distinction must often have been blurred; the author of a tablet from Pagans Hill elaborately curses the thief's health, and then renews his plea for compensation 'from the names of my [enemies]'.[2] At Bath, since most of the lost property seems to have been stolen at the baths, it is likely that many of those listed were also visitors to the sacred spring.

Folklore and magic are full of tests for suspected thieves, such as special food which will choke the criminal, or floating objects identified with the suspects, pins, nuts, bits of bread or labels, which sink. The Bath lists can be seen as a magical identity parade. By writing the thief's name with that of other suspects, one could be sure the curse applied to *him*.[3] This is the purpose of the quasi-legal catch-all formulas, cursing the unknown thief 'whether man or woman, whether slave or free', just as the author of 62 used three different words for his stolen cloak, to be sure of using the right one. For obvious reasons, the thief's identity is usually unknown; it is exceptional for Verecundinus (54) to be cursed by name for theft, like Vitalinus and Natalinus being cursed at Uley for stealing a beast of burden.[4] Instead, one could curse the thief's 'name' (15, 16, 102), or allow the goddess to pick it out for herself from the list she was offered. The word *nomen* ('name') was like *x* in algebra: it represented the unknown until it was discovered. As well as its literal meaning, it means by extension 'account' and even, for magical purposes, the person of the thief. The author of the Lydney tablet (*RIB* 306) applies the formula in what seems at first a redundant periphrasis: until his ring is returned, cursed be 'anyone of the name *Senicianus*'.[5] In nineteenth-century Wales it was still possible to curse an enemy successfully by writing his name in a book and dropping a pin 'in the name of the victim' or a piece of slate or parchment bearing his initials into a sacred well, when he was locally said to

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1. See Index I. Exact totals are not possible, since it is sometimes uncertain whether a word (e.g. 10, 11, *maximo*), which may also be fragmentary or of uncertain reading, is a personal name or not. Individual names are discussed in the commentary.

2. *Britannia* xv (1984) 339, No. 7, *[ab ip]sis nominibus [inimicorum] meorum*.
3. The two sheets of lead inscribed with personal names found in the bath house of the fort at Leintwardine (*JRS* lix (1969), 241, No. 31) can now be identified as curse tablets. A list of names accompanies a plea for vengeance *de iste numene* (for *de isto nomine?*) on the tablet from London Bridge (*Britannia* xviii (1987), 360, No. 1).
4. *Britannia* x (1979), 342, No. 2. A thief may also be named in 10, 11 (see note ad loc.).
5. *inter quibus nomen Seniciani*. Audollent 1904, l, collects instances of nomina being cursed.

have been put into the well himself (see p. 102). To know someone's name, whether man or god, is to have power over them. The Greek magical papyri are full of names, sometimes a paragraph long, by which infallibly to invoke gods and demons. Some latitude is possible. The destruction of Carthage was entrusted to 'Father Dis, Veiovis, the spirits of the Dead, or what other name it is right to name you', and Quintus Letinius Lupus 'also known as *Caucadio*' (note the care with names) is consigned by a leaden tablet to 'you Seething Waters, you Nymphs, or what other name you wish to be called by'.[6]

We therefore have about 150 names, many of them probably visitors to the sacred spring, perhaps the largest local collection from Roman Britain. (By contrast, the stone inscriptions of Chester, where conditions favoured their survival, preserve just over 100 names.) Coins recovered from the sacred spring, however, outnumber curse tablets by a hundred to one; the names we know are an infinitesimal if random sample of some enormous total. We do not even know whether any of them were residents of Aquae Sulis. It is interesting to compare their names with the 35 or so which are preserved on the stone inscriptions of Bath, mostly altars and tombstones.[7] There are four coincidences of name, *Latinus*, *Peregrinus*, *Saturninus* and *Victoria*, but only one possible identification, *Brucetus*, the father of the sculptor Sulinus (see note to 10, 2). The differences are more striking. Almost everyone recorded on stone is a Roman citizen, many of them immigrants or at least of immigrant descent.[8] One-third of them are soldiers, not all of them successful visitors to the spa: centurions (two of them accompanied by their freedmen), legionaries, a Spanish cavalryman. The civilians include a priest of Sulis and his wife, a soothsayer (*haruspex*), and three civic dignitaries, all of them able to afford the high cost of professionally-inscribed stones. Among the five non-Romans it is not surprising to find a stonemason, Priscus Touti f(ilius) *civis Carnutenus* from Chartres, and the local sculptor Sulinus Bruceti f(ilius); the other three have similar names with non-Roman patronymics, another local man, Sulinus Maturi f(ilius), the Treveran Peregrinus Secundi f(ilius), and [. . .] Novanti f(ilius).

The cavalryman's name *Tancinus Mantai f(ilius)*, the name *Sulinus*, and three of the patronymics, are the only names of Celtic etymology. By contrast, there is not a single Roman citizen named in the tablets: no praenomen, scarcely a nomen, and no combination of nomen with cognomen.[9] Only a dozen even have patronymics like those just mentioned. Counting patronymics, there are about 80 names of Celtic etymology, most of them inconceivable as the cognomina of Roman citizens by birth.[10] There are about 70 'Roman' names, all of them Latin cognomina except for the nomina *Arminia*, *Egnat[ius]* and *Maria*, the Illyrian(?) name *Surilla*, and four names of Greek etymology, *Alogiosa*, *Basilia*, *Calliopis* and *Euticius*, which are 'late' and occur, as might be expected, in NRC texts. Five of the 'Roman' names seem to be unique, *Applicius*, *Compedita*, *Decentinus*, *Minantius* and *Primurudeus*(?); but the great majority are colourless Latin cognomina like *Civilis* and *Latinus*, no more distinctive than modern Christian names, which occur widely in Britain and the western provinces. At least 28 of them, almost half, have developed from simpler cognomina, like *Cupitianus* from *Cupitus* or *Carinianus* from *Carus* via *Carinus*, reinforcing the impression of a stock of names which had been in circulation for many years.

The 'Celtic' names are more interesting, 'Celtic' (in inverted commas) because they are names of Celtic etymology which do not guarantee that their bearers were Celts, whatever that means; or rather, to avoid implying that Britain was populated by two distinct races, Celts and Romans, who can be distinguished by their nomenclature. (At Bath, for example, two Celts by origin, Iulius Vitalis *natione Belga* and M. Valerius Latinus *civis Equester*, bear colourless 'Roman' names.) Where Celtic etymology is not certain, it can be assumed in names like *Senicianus*, which were popular in Celtic-speaking provinces and must have had Celtic homonyms; this may even be true of pure Latin cognomina like *Docilis* and its cognates, which perhaps recalled *Docca*. These romanised names are fairly common, but many of the 'Celtic' names from Bath, like *Aessicunia* and *Deomiorix*, are unique or rare, incidentally making them difficult to decipher. Does this mean that a unique name like *Lovernisca* is newly coined? Related names like *Lovernius* are also attested, and it is more likely that the uniqueness of such names is due to the nature of the evidence, which is a very limited, written sample. To find another *Enica* or *Oconea*, for example, we have to go to Celtic north Italy. So it is reasonable to suppose that unique or rare 'Celtic' names were current in the spoken language, but did not often

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6. Macrobius, *Sat.* iii 9.10, *Dis pater, Veiovis, Manes, sive vos quo alio nomine fas est nominare*; Audollent 129B, *Q. Letinium Lupum, qui et vocatur Caucadio . . . vos Aquae Ferventes, sive vos Nimfas, sive quo alio nomine voltis adpellari*, cf. 196, *nomen delatum Naeviae L(uci) l(ibertae) Secunda(e), seive ea alio nomini* (for *nomine*) *est.*

7. *RIB* 138–78; *JRS* lvi (1966), 217, No. 1. Discussed by B.W. Cunliffe (1984, 182ff.).

8. Only two of the nine persons who state their *origo* are from Britain, *RIB* 161 (Glevum) and 156 (*natione Belga*, if the British Belgae are meant). To them can be added the two Sulinus-es, [. . .] Novanti f(ilius) whose Celtic patronymic could well be British (cf. *CIL* xvi 160), and the legionary C. Iav[olenus] Saturnalis who may owe his rare nomen to a *iuridicus* of Britain. But apart from the seven persons of explicit foreign origin, seventeen others bear Italian or exotic names, even if they include freedmen (or their descendants) of British stock, and some are certainly established residents. Four other names are fragmentary or too colourless for any firm conclusion.

9. The enigmatic *lucium* (14, 1) is not a praenomen. Three of the 'Celtic' names, *Catinius, Catonius* and *Mattonius*, are found elsewhere as nomina manufactured from Celtic personal names, but two are glossed here as *ser(v)us* (9) and the other (30) bears a peregrine patronymic.

10. There are c. 9 exceptions like *Lucianus* and *Senicianus*, where there is a coincidence between a Latin name and a Celtic word or name. Other 'Celtic' names may be latent among what have been taken as 'Roman' names, such as *Docilis* (etc.) and *Mutata*.

find themselves transcribed; when they were, they were superficially romanised if possible, the Latin nominative in -us replacing Celtic -os.

In Celtic-speaking provinces fathers with 'Celtic' names tended to give their sons 'Roman' names, but we should not over-generalise from the evidence available, since it mostly consists of Latin-language inscriptions which would have over-represented the tendency. At Bath also we should be cautious about supposing that 'Celtic' names were being displaced by 'Roman' ones in the mass of the population. Docilianus, Docilis and Docilina, it is true, were the children of 'Celtic' fathers, but their names may have been adapted from the local name *Docca*. Severianus and Patarnianus were the sons of Brigomalla (the father's name is not stated), Marinianus was the son of Belcatus. On the other hand, Luccianus and Bellinus adapted their own 'Celtic' names for their sons Lucillus and Bellaus; and Catinius and Catonius, like Sulinus Maturi f(ilius), were given 'Celtic' names by their 'Roman' fathers Exsactor and Potentinus. This reverse tendency is occasionally found elsewhere.[11] That 'Celtic' names remained current at Bath is suggested by a closer look at the lists. Much the same proportion of 'Celtic' to 'Roman' names as is found overall, 80:70, is also found in samples of restricted date. First, in the five longest lists, which will have contained names all current at the same moment:

Tablet	'Celtic' names	'Roman' names
4	5	5
30	7	7
51	3	8
95 and 96	9	6
98	8	10

Only in **51** is there a striking disproportion. That this was chance is suggested by a look at the broad groupings of tablets by date:

(i) three 2nd-century(?) tablets, 9, 10, and 30:
   'Celtic' names: 16   'Roman' names: 12 (inc. *Docilianus*)

(ii) tablets in ORC including 30, i.e. 2nd/3rd century:
   'Celtic' names: 30   'Roman' names: 26

(iii) tablets in NRC including **5** and **66**, i.e. late 3rd/4th century:
   'Celtic' names: 22   'Roman' names: 24 (inc. 3 *Docilis* names)

The sample is too small for any dogmatism, but it gives the impression, no more than this, that 'Roman' names did not displace 'Celtic' names at Bath in the third and fourth centuries, at least in the population represented by the tablets, but rather that 'Roman' and 'Celtic' names formed a common stock. It may indeed be doubted, for example, that a late-Roman father who

called his son *Senicianus* was conscious of its being a 'Celtic' name. This impression, however, is not borne out by two other pieces of evidence. The first is a tile found at the fort of Binchester (Co. Durham), which was inscribed in NRC with at least 25 names, including duplicates; they suggest a different proportion than in late-Roman Bath, only 6 'Celtic' names to 19 'Roman'.[12] More than half these names, 'Celtic' as well as 'Roman', are also found in the Bath tablets, so the sample cannot have been peculiar to Binchester; but perhaps centuries of Roman military occupation had created a local concentration of 'Roman' names. A second difficulty is that it happens to be the 'Roman' and not the 'Celtic' names of Bath which survive in the sub-Roman inscriptions of Wales and Celtic Britain: if one allows for close cognates, 15 of the 'Roman' names of Bath are found in *ECMW* and *CIIC*, but perhaps no more than 5 of the 'Celtic'.[13] 'Celtic' names nonetheless predominate in *ECMW*, which also preserves Celtic name-elements found at Bath, suggesting not only the undoubted survival of spoken Celtic, but also that the mass of the population drew on a much wider selection of 'Celtic' than 'Roman' names in Roman and sub-Roman Britain. As a result, there would be fewer bearers of any one 'Celtic' name than of any one 'Roman' name. If one shouted 'Victor' at the baths, several heads would turn; but there would be only one Paltucca.

The striking difference between the two samples of names from Bath, the stone inscriptions and the tablets, can be explained by date and by social and economic class. Most of the stone inscriptions cannot be closely dated. Some, like the tombstone of the cavalryman Tancinus, are first-century; the majority are probably second-century, *RIB* 164 (now lost), apparently a late-Roman sarcophagus, being the only one that looks post-Severan. 'Late' inscriptions are rare from Britain, and Bath was probably no exception. The tablets, on the other hand, virtually begin when the stone inscriptions tail off. We have seen (p. 88) that a date of c. A.D. 175– c. A.D. 275 is reasonable for the ORC texts, the mass of them dating to the first half of the third century. The NRC texts, of course, are later still, probably fourth century. Perhaps only 9, 10 and 30 should be dated to the second century, the texts which also happen to contain almost all the patronymics.[14] This formulation is typical of non-Roman nomenclature before the *constitutio Antoniniana* (A.D. 212) made virtually all the Empire's inhabitants Roman citizens. Thus it would seem that the two samples, stone inscriptions and tablets, are chronologically almost distinct; and where there is an overlap, in the period when Roman citizenship was still a privilege, that the persons of the tablets came from a lower social class. The nomenclature

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11. The only sure instance in *RIB* seems to be 375, Iulius Belicianus son of Iulius Alesander, if we discount 804 as fragmentary, and the father's name *Vindex* in 620 and 2142 as 'Celtic' (cf. **uindo-*). Another instance is the mortarium maker Matugenus Albini f(ilius) (Frere 1972, 372).

12. *Britannia* x (1979), 347, No. 20.
13. *Brigomalla, Senila*, perhaps *Cocus, Oconea*, and much of *Cantissena* and *Lovernisca*.
14. There are thirteen possible patronymics, and nine occur in these three texts. None of the other four is beyond doubt, *Ter[en]ti* (54), *mantutene* (98) (perhaps an adverb), and two capital-letter texts of unknown date, 18, and 27.

of the later tablets, a mixture of 'Celtic' names and colourless Latin cognomina, suggests that this continued to be true.

This can only be an impression, not a firm conclusion, but it is supported by the economic atmosphere of the tablets. A professionally-inscribed monument was expensive; an elaborate curse tablet cost, by implication, less than two 'antoniniani' (cf. 54). The sums stolen are comparatively small; the lost property is all portable, most of it articles of clothing worn for a visit to the baths. It is easy to conclude (p. 81) that the victims were precisely those bathers who could not afford to bring a slave attendant with them, or even to tip a *capsarius* to watch their belongings while they bathed. There is no need to go further than this, and to suppose that belief in curse tablets was confined to the humbler classes. This contradicts all that we know of the religious history of the Roman empire. On the contrary, the tablets are evidence only of petty theft; we need only suppose that the rich were better able to protect their property. But an interesting question remains: if the victims of theft were mostly humble persons, or at least typical of the mass of the Bath population, does the literacy of their protest imply that many people could read and write?

Authorship

"Here are the names of men who have put shame upon me," he said; "but principally Olari, chief of the Lukati people."
"I will put a spell upon Olari," said the witch-doctor; "a very bad spell, and upon these men. The charge will be six English pounds."
Sanders paid the money, and 'dashed' two bottles of square-face and a piece of proper cloth. Then he went back to headquarters.

<div align="right">Edgar Wallace, Sanders of the River</div>

Common sense and the analogy of other societies, ancient and modern, would suggest that visitors to the sacred spring sought professional help in making petitions to the goddess. Even to write a list of names required literacy. What proportion of the inhabitants of a Roman town could read and write is incalculable, but it is likely to have been low by modern European standards (Harris 1983). It is possible that Bath had professional scribes and letter writers like the one depicted in a wall painting at Pompeii (ibid., 111), just as it had priests and diviners (*RIB* 155; *JRS* lvi (1966), 217, No. 1) and carvers of inscriptions (*RIB* 151). The handwriting of many tablets, it has been noted already (p. 88), can be described as 'clerical', and there also seem to be 'clerical' turns of phrase in some of them (p. 71). The question of literacy apart, to curse a thief properly would require knowledge of the correct formulas with which to address the goddess. How did the petitioners know them? The question of

'authorship', which has been latent in previous chapters, must now be considered.

The question is complex, since it is really two questions to which there may, or may not, be the same answer. Who wrote the tablets (the scribe); and who composed the text (the author)? Are they the same person? Are they (is he) the same person as the one whose name is on the tablet; or, if the tablet is anonymous, the same as the aggrieved party, the petitioner? That two, if not three, persons may be involved is clear from the fact that the Bath tablets are fair copies. Crossings-out, it has been said already (p. 86), are rare; and when the text is corrected, it is by writing a letter or two on top. This is not evidence of a 'draft', quite the reverse. There is only one explicit reference to copying, in 8, 6: *carta picta perscripta*, 'the written page has been copied out', but it can be deduced from the copying errors tabulated below. These must be distinguished from the 'errors' which are due to the influence of the spoken language, which have been collected above (pp. 74–8). Copying errors are due to the scribe's eye slipping between the master-text and the copy, especially when reversing a text. Sometimes mistakes are corrected (that is, the scribe himself recognized them as mistakes), and have been marked in the lists which follow with an asterisk (*). Some tablets like 14 and 46, where the 'correct' text is unknown, have been largely omitted from consideration.

1. Errors in reversed texts
(i) failure to reverse pairs of letters because the ligature was familiar:
pure (*puer*) (44, 4; 62, 5)
ipsmu (*ipsum*) (44, 6)
aenmu (*aenum*) (44, 6–7)
*libre (*liber*) (44, 9–10)
*latronme (*latronem*) (44, 11–12)
Cnadidina (*Candidina*) (98, 13)

(ii) omission of repeated letters:
(r)eputes (98, 9) NRC *R* confused with preceding *M*
faci(a)t (103, 2) Perhaps confusion of tenses
ani(m)am (103, 2)
pe(r)d(e)re (103, 3)

(iii) letters repeated in error:
comc (*como(do)*) (4, 2)
isive (*sive*) (61, 3)
**si sir(v)us* (*si ser(v)us*) (62, 4)
*in rinstro (*in rostro*) (62, 5)
*cabaclarem (*caballarem*) (62, 7)
hosipitio (*hospitio*) (99, 2)
*iniam (*animam*) (103, 2)

(iv) other errors:
*ipsu aenu (*ipsum aenum*) (44, 6–7)
ba (*baro*) (44, 9) Written correctly at 44, 3
*inverit (*involaverit*) (61, 6)
gens (*gentilis*) (98, 1)
Chistianus (*Christianus*) (98, 1–2)
sx (*sex*) (98, 5)

2. Errors in 'straight' texts
(i) anagram errors:
6, passim
(?) *sic liquat (liquiscat)* (4, 2)
(?) *gineninsu[s]* (9, 17), *gienusus* (9, 18), *igeunsns* (101, 3)
   (*Ingenuus*)
(?) *later.r.uet* (16, 3) (*involaverit*)

(ii) omission of repeated letters:
**argentiolos (s)ex* (8, 1–2)
An(n)iola (8, 7) Written correctly at 8, 6
**devov(e)o* (10, 5)
qui (i)nvolav . . . (39, ii, 3 and 8)
nisi (i)nnocentiam (100, 4)

(iii) letters repeated in error:
donatu<u>r (16, 5)
ex<x>igi (47, 2) Perhaps a hypercorrection
<D>deae (50, 1)
nomina<a> (94, 4)
qui iuraverunt <qui iuraverunt> (94, 4–5)
Severia<ia>nus (95, 4)
Seni<i>la (95, 5)
Compe<pe>dita (96, 1)

(iv) visual confusion of letters:
perdn (perdat) (5, 6) capital *N* for *AT*
eerdidi (perdidi) (6b, 2) capital *E* for *P*
inerascriptis (infrascriptis) (8, 3) capital *E* for *F*
Seniciaaius (Senicianus) (8, 5) capital *AI* for *N*
(?) *Bruceri (Bruceti)* (10, 2) ORC *R* for *T*
*R for *M* (14, 6)
semnum (somnum) (35, 6) ORC *E* for *O*
Mascntius (Masentius) (37, 8) ORC *C* for *E*
(?) *et (ut)* (44, 5) ORC *E* for *V*
rem (44, 12) ORC *P* and *R* conflated
liminibus (luminibus) (97, 4) NRC *LI* for *V*

(v) letters omitted by oversight:
q(ue)m (6b, 1)
ba(ln)earem (32, 3)
fr(a)udem (32, 5)
s(p)on[sa](?) (32, 9)
(?) *deveniat (deus inveniat)* (36, 5)
(p)uella (36, 7)
ex(i)gas (38, 4)
so(l)verit (41, 6)
**Oc(o)nea* (60, 1)
qu(o)d (85, 4)
(ta)mdiu (97, 3)
**san(g)uine* (97, 4)
(om)nibus (97, 6)
habe(at) (97, 6)

(vi) other errors:
<sed> (8, 5)
caracellam (caracallam) (10, 6) Written correctly at 10, 16
pal<u>leum (32, 13) Written correctly at 32, 3–4
**Valaunicus (Valaunecus)* (96)
<.>Belia (96)

Not every error is attributable to careless copying, and some tablets are over-represented, no doubt because their scribes were hasty or careless, but it is fair to conclude that most, if not all, texts of any length are fair copies. The recurrence of the same or similar formulas in different tablets (see pp. 63–9), and the absence of crossings-out or second thoughts, support this conclusion. However, it should be noted that no two tablets are duplicates, and that all sorts of small variations occur in the formulation. Moreover, these formulas can be traced from as early as the Caerleon tablet (c. A.D. 100?) to fourth-century NRC texts like 99, and in tablets from other British sites as well as Bath. There is ample evidence for the existence of magical handbooks in the Roman world – if only because the government or other enthusiasts vainly organised their destruction from time to time[1] – and one surviving curse tablet (Audollent 188) actually reproduces a binding spell found in the Greek magical papyri (*PGM* lviii, 1–14). But the British curse tablets are too varied to be traced to one or two handbooks containing stereotyped formulas of the kind found in the Greek magical papyri, or indeed to the magical equivalent of a booklet of model letters on various themes (e.g. *CPL* 279). It has been suggested already (p. 73) that the formulaic content of these tablets derives from a living tradition, orally transmitted, to judge by the 'Vulgarism' of its language. It is difficult to say whether this tradition was confined to priests and magicians, or whether it was shared by the population at large.

Elsewhere in the Roman world close-knit groups of curse tablets have been discovered, notably at Rome, Carthage, Hadrumetum, which have been credited to a single magician or cabal because of their similarities of text and form (Audollent 1904, xlv). More than a hundred were found in a well at Amathous (Cyprus); all those which have been deciphered contain the same formulas and 'evidently issue from the same atelier' (Jordan 1985a, 193). Whether such groups are inscribed in the same handwriting has unfortunately not always been noted, but many of the tablets addressed to the god Set-Typhon at Rome are said to be in the same hand (Wünsch 1898, 75ff.), and twelve tablets from a Roman well in Athens which have been examined recently prove to be written by the same person (Jordan 1985b, 205ff.). The same seems to be true of another group from an Athenian well (Jordan 1985a, 160). At Bath, however, it can be seen by tabulating their alphabets (pp. 91–4) that the tablets are all from different hands. (The only exception, 95 and 96, does not count, since these two lists of names are physically unlike any other Bath tablet and can be regarded as parts of the same text.) This diversity of scripts, every text the work of someone else, poses an unexpected hypothesis. They were not the work of professional scribes. The sample, more than ninety distinct scripts, is surely large enough to shew up

1. e.g. Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 31, 1; *Acts* xix 19; cf. Ammianus Marcellinus xxix 2.4. These and other references to magical handbooks are collected in Dieterich 1911, 3ff.

duplicate hands. If professionals were at work, one would expect some of them to be represented by more than one text each. This objection, it is true, is not conclusive. Only one-sixth of the deposit, at a rough estimate, has been removed from the sacred spring; among the five hundred and more tablets which may still remain, we may expect duplicates will be found. Most of the fifty ORC texts which have been tabulated, it has been suggested (p. 88), belong to the first half of the third century; if so, this is a survival-rate of one tablet every twelve months or so. There might be quite a few people in Bath in the course of a year capable of writing a document to order, whether it was a letter or a curse tablet. (Whether they would all be versed in the necessary formulas to be used in petitioning Sulis is another question.) Mathematically, therefore, it is still possible that our random sample of texts from the sacred spring should all be from different hands. But it is difficult not to feel that the odds are against the possibility, and that there may be another reason why the tablets are all written by different people. (The survival of **95** and **96**, if anything, lengthens the odds; it shews that duplicate texts, when they existed, have actually been found.) This feeling is strengthened by two further considerations.

The first is the wide range of competence displayed by the texts: the majority, it is true, are inscribed in a 'clerical' hand, but a few (notably **10**, **11** and **30**) are almost 'calligraphic', and quite a number (notably **6**, **16**, **22**, **39**, **40**, **75**, **77**, **78**, **101**, **103**, **104**) are so clumsy as to suggest semi-literacy. This suggests at least a mixture of professional and amateur scribes, but something like it would be found in our own more or less literate society: literacy is not something so simply defined as black and white, but is a whole spectrum of achievement. Compare the second consideration, the strange group of pseudo-inscriptions (**112–6**), the texts inscribed in imitation letters. They must be the work of illiterates. It might be said that they were saving a scribe's fee (by implication from **54**, it would have been less than two *argentioli*), or were preserving 'security' (not that petitioners are reluctant to name themselves), but the simplest explanation is that they were imitating literates whom they had seen inscribing tablets, thus doing their best outside the visible bands of that spectrum of achievement. The implication is that there was a religious or social pressure on petitioners to inscribe their tablets to the goddess for themselves. Perhaps it could not be done by proxy.

The diversity of scripts is echoed by that of the tablets themselves (pp. 82–4). They seem to have been produced in ones and twos, in different meltings, in different small sheets of alloy, by different methods, without much correlation between script and metal. (The only correlation is the tendency of NRC texts to be written on thick, unfolded sheets.) The three tablets, **10**, **44** and **79**, made by a distinctive 'workshop' process, cast in a box-like mould under pressure, are all inscribed by different hands. The only 'ansate' tablet (**15**) with some pretensions is inscribed by a mean, semi-literate hand. In the language of economists, it is difficult to discern vertical integration between the manufacture of tablets and their inscribing. Apart from tablets made or improvised by petitioners for themselves, it seems likeliest that they were made in workshops like other votive objects and souvenirs for sale to visitors.

The tablets are commonly inscribed with the petitioner's name, twenty-one tablets in all (p. 95). Ten of these are in the first person ('I give', etc.), nine in the third person ('he gives', etc.), but there is no indication that the latter have been written by someone else. Thirteen tablets do not give the petitioner's name, being of anonymous (6) or impersonal (7) format. Another fourteen are no more than lists of names, and of course many tablets are too fragmentary to be classified. The proportion of named petitioners is much higher than in Audollent's collection, where it may be as low as one in ten.[2] These tablets in Audollent, it may be noted, with the exception of four love charms, are aimed at thieves, embezzlers, calumniators, and lawcourt opponents, persons against whom the petitioner could believe that justice was on his side. In this they are like the Bath tablets, lists of names apart, in being petitions addressed to a supernatural judge and magistrate. They are not really magical spells, let alone infallible formulas for binding demons to harm or manipulate others, like the Greek magical papyri, and it may be doubted whether their authors would have laid themselves open to a charge of magic in Roman law. This may imply that the petitioner was also the author, or at least the scribe, since we never find the scribal formula often found in Greek papyri. The petition quoted (p. 70) to Flavius Abinnaeus contains a typical example: 'I Aurelius Sakaon have made this statement. I Aurelius Demetrius have written on his behalf as he is illiterate' (*Abinnaeus Archive*, No. 44).

The argument, however, cannot be pressed, since it is from silence. We can only say that, whereas a magician would naturally have concealed his identity in the illicit spell he wrote for someone else, the same anonymity would not be necessary in a petition for stolen property addressed to a respectable goddess. Occasionally, however, the treatment of names in the Bath tablets does hint at the hand of an amanuensis. The unique patronymic of Docilianus, *Bruceri* (10, 2), should perhaps be emended to *Bruceti*, since this is locally attested (*RIB* 105, 151, *Sulinus Bruceti*); the error would be easily explained as due to a misreading of ORC *T* for *R* in the first draft, but is not an error likely to have been made by the bearer of the patronymic himself. A certain error is the writing of the name 'Oconea' as *Ocnea* (60, 1), since this was corrected by interlineating an *O* differently formed than the *Os* in *dono* (60, 2); one possibility is that Oconea herself corrected someone else's text; at all events, she is unlikely to have mis-spelt her own name. A third puzzle is the name 'Deomiorix' in 99, where the context requires an oblique case: was it Deomiorix himself who had never learned how to inflect

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2.   Audollent 1904, xlv, n.1: 29 tablets out of 305, and 14 more possibles.

his unusual name, or a scribe to whom this was a novel problem? There are also two tablets headed by the petitioner's name in NRC, *Docimedis* (**5**, 1) and *Exsuperius* (**66**, 1), followed by a text in capitals and ORC respectively which may be from another hand; are these names 'signatures' followed by the writing of an amanuensis?

The authorship of the tablets, therefore, in the sense of who inscribed them, must remain an open question. Until duplicate texts from the same hand are found at Bath, or Uley, or another temple-site as yet unexplored, it would be unwise to assume that petitioners did not usually write their own texts. But until there is better evidence that this was *required* of them, we cannot say they always did so. The diversity of scripts, however, is striking, and it will be interesting to see if it is repeated among the Uley tablets. No matter who the scribes were, we may at least say that a respectable number of people at Bath could read and write.

The authorship of what was written is another question. Here, the evidence for copying does suggest that the scribe and the author might be different people. It is unlikely that some unfortunate like Solinus (**32**), who seems to have left the baths in his skin, already knew the proper phrases with which to clothe his indignation. He must have taken advice. 'Advice' need not have amounted to consultation of a magician: the tablets contain no arcane information or whispered names and titles; their formulas, it has been said already (p. 73), circulated widely and for centuries, in all the imprecision of an oral tradition. At Uley the curse tablets seem to have been cleared away from time to time and buried, which implies they had been on display, like the naively written and touching requests for prayer that can sometimes be seen in an English parish church. True, they were folded up, but they need not have been beyond human eyes; and we cannot assume that every Bath tablet disappeared at once into the sacred spring. At all events, the tradition persisted, and perhaps its likeliest repository is the priesthood and attendants of Sulis herself. They could surely be expected to advise the aggrieved petitioner how best to approach their mistress, the *domina dea* (**98**, 6), and to promise him that his petition, if made in proper form, might be answered. We must next consider how well founded was their trust in the power of the goddess.

The power of the goddess

It was a favourite superstition of Uncle Matthew's that if you wrote somebody's name on a piece of paper and put it in a drawer, that person would die within a year. The drawers at Alconleigh were full of little slips bearing the names of those whom my uncle wanted out of the way, private hates of his and various public figures such as Bernard Shaw, de Valera, Gandhi, Lloyd George and the Kaiser, while every single drawer in the whole house contained the name Labby, Linda's old dog. The spell hardly ever seemed to work, even Labby having lived far beyond the age usual in Labradors, but he went hopefully on, and if one of the characters did happen to be carried off in the course of nature he would look pleased but guilty for a day or two.

Nancy Mitford, *Love in a Cold Climate*

Did the Bath tablets work? We are never told by a successful petitioner that they did, but the practice of inscribing them continued for two centuries, from the second to the fourth, which implies that they did work. Or rather, that they were believed to work; and, perhaps, that this belief was justified. The second conclusion need not follow. There is a fable of Babrius of the countryman who lost his mattock, and accused the other peasants of stealing it; they denied the charge, and he took them to the town to repeat their denial on oath at a temple. But while they were waiting they heard the town crier offering a reward for the recovery of property stolen from the temple. What was the use of asking the god to find out who stole the mattock, if he had to invoke human aid to find his own thief?[1] This scepticism is rare, however. Religious belief and belief in magic are self-justifying: the wish, the need to believe, are sufficient for belief; and why not, since the mysteries which prompt them defy any rational explanation? Life on earth is the flight of a sparrow across a lighted hall, from darkness into darkness. It is difficult *not* to believe in magic, astrology and the like, once the will is there; even if a spell or formula does not work, the system of belief is elastic enough to accommodate failure: some detail was omitted, something was incorrectly articulated, a counter-spell prevailed. An introspective late-Roman academic, the future St. Augustine, was not diverted from his faith in astrology by the rationalizing of a reformed astrologer, but only by being confronted with two different people who shared the same horoscope (*Conf.* vii 6(8)). Thus, in a sense, the question of whether the Bath tablets worked is irrelevant: the existence of the belief itself, which cannot be doubted, is sufficient answer. Its psychological benefits have been well noted in two recent studies of religion in Roman Britain: it 'removed intolerable tensions' (Henig 1984, 145), it 'allowed a transfer of emotion' (Webster 1986, 136). If nothing else, to inscribe a curse tablet and throw it into the sacred pool relieved the injured party's

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1. *Fable* 2, quoted and discussed by Versnel (see n. 5).

feelings: something had at least been done. And something else might happen. It is easy to sympathise with a petitioner who believed, or at least hoped, that when the odds of life tilt further than the usual six to five against, the balance might be restored by divine intervention.

In another sense, too, belief in the tablets is self-justifying, provided it is shared by both petitioner and victim. This also there is no reason to doubt. The waters of Bath can cure disease. There is no need to invoke the authority of the Oxford Professor of Assyriology, who in 1889 experienced an 'almost miraculous' cure of his sciatica by visiting Bath after the medicine of his own university had failed (Sayce 1923, 264). Recent research has proved that prolonged hot baths and plenty of water to drink will flush toxins from the system; no need in fact to drink the unspeakable spa water. But if this healing process be credited to the divinity of the uncanny hot spring, it is an easy step to believing that the process can be reversed, that the classical features of Sulis Minerva can become a gorgon's mask. Solinus, the only ancient author to notice the Bath spring, reports that there were in Sardinia healing springs which also blinded thieves (*Collect.* 4, 7). We will also be considering certain Anatolian divinities like the god Men who could both heal and protect the innocent, and punish the guilty.

At Bath the healing process was reversed in antiquity, not by pure magic, spells, formulas, infallible names of power, but by the petitions which have already been discussed (pp. 70–71). Continuity of belief is impossible to establish, but it can be surmised from its persistence in a crude form in a Celtic-speaking province in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Holy wells were still common in Wales, 'Tyro Archaeologicus' wrote in 1857. 'Some of them have a high reputation for healing particular diseases; some of them a less amiable character of cursing wells, which are invaluable in assisting the malevolent and revengeful in gratifying the worst of passions. There are others also very useful to the local man of mystery, who undertakes to reveal the malefactor with undeviating certainty.'[2] The most notorious of cursing wells, first attested only as a healing spring, was St. Aelian's Well at Llanelian yn Rhos (Denbs.), whose cult flourished in the early nineteenth century. A local magician was gaoled in 1831 for taking a fee to lift a curse; according to him, the victim's initials were scratched on a piece of slate, or written on parchment folded in lead, and then placed in the well. It was locally believed that if someone were 'put into the well', he would waste away and die; and there are circumstantial accounts of its victims, who included a Nonconformist minister.[3] A Welsh clergyman denounced the practice in c. 1815. The victim's name was written in a book kept by a woman at the well, a fee was paid, and a pin was dropped into the water in his name.

He soon heard about it. 'If this object was a person of credulous disposition, the idea soon preyed upon the spirits, and, at length, terminated fatally; unless a timely reconciliation should take place between the parties, in which case the priestess, for a fee, erased the name from her book, and took the poor wretch out of the well; that is, retracted the curse. Where death has been the consequence, and, that it has been so in many instances, is attested so as to leave little or no doubt of the facts, is it less murder in the priestess and the applicant, than if it were perpetrated by any other means?'[4]

The Romans themselves believed that every spring was sacred, and the literature of the subject is immense, but even these two instances from Wales illustrate by analogy, if not by transmission of belief, several aspects of the cult at Bath. Curse tablets were believed to 'discover' thieves (cf. **44**, 14; **99**, 5); they cursed the 'name' of the thief; we do not hear of curses being 'retracted', but by implication they lapsed once the stolen property had been returned (see p. 65, s.v. *nisi*); an important tablet (**94**) alludes to a practice well attested elsewhere, the divine punishment of perjury and, by extension, the testing of statements by oath. The mechanism of the Welsh cursing wells, and thus the sacred spring at Bath, can be rationalized by invoking the idea of psychosomatic illness: the victim *knew* he had been cursed, he half-expected to fall ill, and he duly did so. It might be objected that the Bath curse tablets, unlike the book at St. Aelian's Well, were confidential; hence the reversed texts, the folding, the casting into the opaque waters of the spring. This is certainly an index of the petitioners' confidence in the goddess, but there is no need to exclude the thieves from this climate of belief. Someone who stole a cloak from the baths, if he had any imagination, might suspect he had been cursed by his victim. He could only hope the curse would not take effect: perhaps it was wrongly worded, perhaps the goddess was busy, perhaps she did not punish someone who 'borrowed' a cloak when it started raining, or who could not afford to buy his own, unlike the rich fool wallowing in the next room. We do not know whether theft at Bath was casual, opportunist, or whether there were habitual offenders; what we know elsewhere of 'bath-house thieves' (pp. 80–81) would suggest that Bath too had its professionals. For one reason or another, thieves decided to take a chance; this does not mean that they excluded the possibility of divine punishment, any more than a modern burglar can be sure, if he bothers to think about it, that the police will not catch him one day.

Psychosomatic illness, therefore, induced by guilt is one way in which the Bath tablets would have 'worked', if only against casual offenders, not the hardened professionals, if any. But there was a more subtle way in which the tablets could have worked, which no thief would have escaped, the sense of guilt induced by illness.

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2.   *Archaeologia Cambrensis* n.s. iii (1857), 214, cited like Roberts
       1815, 245–6 by Kittredge (1929, 132–3). For examples of
       divinatory wells see Jones 1954, 113–4.
3.   Jones 1954, 119–23.

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4.   Roberts 1815, 245–6. The payment of a large fee to retract the
       curse, by implication without the consent of the person who laid
       it, may have been a later innovation.

Here too we must argue from analogy, best provided by the 'confession' inscriptions of north-eastern Lydia and bordering parts of Phrygia, of which more than eighty are now known.[5] These are standing stones of the second and third centuries A.D., often beautifully carved and inscribed, which have been rifled from the sanctuaries of a bewildering variety of localised divinities. It is not known how many cult-centres there were, but the numerous divinities have much in common. They were gods to whom vows were made and fulfilled, in return for the protection of the petitioner, his family and animals, or his restoration to health. Among the stones from the 'Pereudene' sanctuary is one giving thanks for Tatianos' recovery (Herrmann and Varınlıoğlu 1984, No. 7), and another (ibid., No. 5) for the protection enjoyed by Philippicus' animals, two mules and six oxen lovingly depicted. At another sanctuary Artemis Anaeitis was thanked by Meltine for healing her feet (TAM V.1, 323), by Alexandra for healing her breasts (ibid., 324), by Eugamia for relief from internal pain (ibid., 330). The carved insets of Meltine's legs and Alexandra's breasts are easily paralleled by the ex-votos found in western shrines, which may include the stylized breasts carved in ivory from Bath (fig. 4, no. 3); at all events, the altars from Bath which record vows fulfilled (in the usual VSLM formula) imply that prayers were being made to Sulis Minerva for healing and protection. In this the Anatolian sanctuaries are not unusual, but besides making such prayers explicit in their epigraphy, they share another common feature which is remarkable: the eighty-odd inscriptions in which victims of illness and other misfortunes, or their heirs if they are dead, acknowledge divine punishment for offences which they confess having committed.

These 'confessions' are usually brief, formulaic, and often allusive. The 'punishment' is not always specified, and the offence itself may be obscure to us. What, for example, was the 'disobedience in the house of the god' for which Apollonius lost his son and daughter (Herrmann 1985, No. 2)? Often it seems that the god was offended by neglect, or the breach of some taboo. Agathopus was punished with eye trouble for neglecting the service of the 'Pereudene' gods for days on end (Herrmann and Varınlıoğlu 1984, No. 1), two married couples fell foul of Apollo Lairbenos for having sexual intercourse when the wife was called to the god's service (JHS 1887, 381, No. 12; ibid., No. 13 = MAMA IV, 284). Trespassing on the precinct was punished (e.g. MAMA IV, 283, 285, 288, 289), let alone interfering with sacred pigeons (ibid., 279), an offence for which Zeus

Sabazios and Mother Heipta inflicted eye disease upon Diocles (TAM V.1, 264). Menophilus sold timber belonging to Zeus 'of the Twin Oaks', perhaps a death-bed confession, since the stone was erected by his son (TAM V.1, 179a).

These are offences against the god's prerogative, but wider interests might be involved when the offence was perjury. Often this is unspecified, and usually it seems to have been a failure to fulfil one's vow to the god. This may be treated allusively: thus Hermogenes lost his ox and donkey for perjury 'about the flocks of Kaikos'; when he refused to confess his fault, Zeus Epidemios took his daughter as well (Hellenica x (1955), 36). Diogenes was luckier: when he failed to keep a vow 'about his ox', Zeus Peizenos punished him by giving his daughter trouble with her eyes (TAM V.1, 509). The most explicit of these inscriptions is the stone erected to Men by Epaphroditus (CMRDM I, No. 80): he was punished for praying for the wife of his choice, and not keeping his promise when he duly secured her. Only once is a god prepared to compromise: Tatiane vowed a bull 'for her brothers', but was unable to pay; Men Axiottenos, when asked, was willing to accept a standing stone instead (TAM V.1, 453).

Perjury is the most common offence, but only occasionally was it extended from breaking a promise to the god to making a false statement on oath. These 'confessions', although rare, are the most circumstantial and interesting. Three pigs strayed into the herd belonging to Hermogenes and his brother Apollonius, who denied it when they were claimed back by the owners. They were forced to repeat their statement on oath by a ritual alluded to in several texts, 'placing the sceptre' (on the altar) of the divinity concerned, in this instance Dea Antenaeitis and Men Tiamou. The outcome was the death of Hermogenes, and a 'confession' by Apollonius and the widow and child of Hermogenes (TAM V.1, 317 = CMRDM I, No. 43). More dramatic still was the madness of Iucundus (TAM V.1, 318 = CMRDM I, No. 44), who was locally thought to have been poisoned by his mother-in-law Tatias. To rebut the rumours, Tatias 'placed the sceptre' herself and invoked a curse should she be lying. The gods punished her with death, and more than this: her son Socrates, who had trespassed on the sacred grove, dropped a pruning sickle on his foot and died within a day. Their offence, and the gods' power, were acknowledged by the children of Iucundus, who had seen in succession their father's madness and the deaths of their grandmother and uncle. We are not entitled to assume that such deaths were anything but natural: there is no mention in any of these texts of any 'ordeal', any divinatory food or drink, hardly a mention even of a priesthood. Illness, disease and premature death could be seen as divine punishment; they could even resolve legal disputes; indeed, how many litigants with an uneasy conscience would have pressed their case as far as the temple of these inexorable gods? The chill feeling remains that the key to this Anatolian Greek Tragedy is that Tatias was innocent.

5. This is the estimate of P. Herrmann (1985, 258): four times the number first collected by F. Steinleitner (1913). For bibliography see Varınlıoğlu, 1983, 83, n. 38. The largest collection is in *Tituli Asiae Minoris* (TAM) V.1 (1981), but see also CMRDM I (1971), Inscriptions, and III (1976), 17ff.; Horsley, 1983, 20–31; Herrmann and Varınlıoğlu, 1984, 1–17. The analogy with Bath is drawn by Professor H.S. Versnel, to whom I am indebted for the use of a draft of his full and learned paper on 'juridical prayer', which will be published in *Accessing the Divine: Studies in Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (Stanford University, forthcoming).

Tablet 94 implies something of the same belief at Bath: the goddess would avenge perjury at her spring; the perjurer would have to 'give satisfaction' with his own life-blood, like the 'punishment' and 'expiation' exacted by the Anatolian divinities. Thus we hear of Skollos, who accepted a deposit from Apollonius and swore to return it, but broke his word. This sort of embezzlement is the subject of several Greek curse tablets (pp. 61–2), but we are not told how Apollonius applied to the goddess Mother Atimitis, only that he did. The outcome was the death of Skollos, and an act of expiation by his surviving daughter (*TAM* V.1, 440 = *CMRDM* I, No. 51). We are told, however, what Artemidorus did when slandered 'about wine': he 'gave a tablet' (πιττάκιον), and Men Axiottenos punished one of his (named) calumniators, who erected an apologetic inscription (*TAM* V.1, 251 = *CMRDM* I, No. 58). Unfortunately we do not know what this 'tablet' was like, whether it was required to name a 'defendant' whose statement could be tested on oath, or whether it might be a complaint against a person or persons unknown. If the latter, then there is an attractive analogy with the Bath tablets. Something of the kind is implied by the vow paid to the goddess Mother Aliane by Rhodia 'for the 412 denarii stolen from her husband Agatho and found with Crescens' (*TAM* V.1, 257); she seems to have complained against an (unknown?) thief, and to have received an answer.

Two remarkable inscriptions, the second an illuminating counterpart of events at Bath, shew whole communities invoking divine punishment upon malefactors, a formalisation of the social pressure which forced Tatias to make her ill-starred attempt to vindicate herself. Property was stolen from the house belonging to the orphaned sons of Philippicus, and they were swindled by moneylenders. The community (κατοικία) 'placed the sceptre' against those responsible, who were hounded to death by the god Men, who ordered that an inscribed stone be erected (*TAM* V.1, 231 = *CMRDM* I, No. 62). And again, 'the sceptre was placed' against anyone who stole from the bath house. A cloak was stolen, and the god Men Axiottenos punished the thief; after a time he was compelled to bring the cloak to the god and to confess. An 'angel' ordered that the cloak be sold, and the story be inscribed (*TAM* V.1, 159 = *CMRDM* I, No. 69). We are not told why the thief did not erect the stone himself: perhaps he had no money (beneath the carved relief of Men with the cloak at his feet is another, of a boy praying), or perhaps he was already dead.

These fascinating inscriptions, enough to make anyone despair of the arid epigraphy of Roman Britain, derive from a limited area of Asia Minor and can safely be used only as an analogy. Studying them, it is easy to imagine a climate of belief in which the Bath tablets would have worked. After all, the idea of illness being divine punishment for sin is as old as the *Iliad*. This commonplace of Job's comforters easily passed into the Christian tradition. Consider the story of Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts* v 1–11). They withheld part of the sale

price of a piece of property which they had pledged to the early Christian community, and claimed that they were contributing the whole of it. 'You have lied, not to men, but to God', St. Peter told him. At these words Ananias fell down dead, and his wife likewise. This is a divine judgement upon perjury, of the kind implied by 94, Roman law remaining faithful to the principle that its punishment must be left to the gods.[6] The belief that divine justice refreshes the parts that human justice cannot reach is found in a story told by Ammianus Marcellinus (xxi 6. 2–3). The emperor Constantius II refused to take action against a tribune suspected of embittering relations between his late brothers Constantine and Constans: 'If he is guilty, I will see him punished by his own conscience'. Next day at the circus, a crowd-barrier opposite the imperial box collapsed, and some spectators were slightly injured; there was only one fatality, the said tribune.

In this climate of belief at Bath there may have been specific instances of the goddess' power. Some we might dismiss as pyschosomatic illness, but we can go further than this: illness and disease, misfortune, premature death, more widespread and inexplicable in the Roman world than our own, could be attributed to divine anger. Some offence must have been committed. Athenaios was punished 'many times' in a dream for having sinned in ignorance; by command of Zeus 'of the Twin Oaks' he inscribed a stone in acknowledgement of the god's power, its carved relief depicting a priest holding the sceptre, and Athenaios himself praying, as well he might (*SEG* xxxiii (1983), 1013). Other instances of 'unconscious' offences are recorded (*TAM* V.1. 179b; 254; 255; 592.) The comparison with St. Jerome is irresistible. In mid-Lent he fell ill with a wasting fever, and dreamed his famous dream (*ep.* xxii 30). In this he was brought to Judgement, interrogated, and replied that he was a Christian. 'You are a liar', he was told; 'You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' In the midst of being flogged for his passion for classical literature, in the torments of a burning conscience, he cried out: 'In the grave who will *confess* unto You?' (*Psalms* vi 5). At last he was released, swearing an oath by the divine Name never to read classical literature again. Bath must have been a paradise for hypochondriacs, a place where illness and guilt were indissoluble, and the curse tablets can be seen as drawing strength from this union. The three are united, again in a Christian context, in a Byzantine story of the sixth century, which happens to be one of the few literary references to a metal curse tablet. The brother of a monk fell ill, his life was despaired of (like Jerome's), and finally he told the mourners to leave the room. Then he turned his head to the wall and prayed to St. Euthymius, and was rewarded with a dream of the saint, who asked him where it was hurting. He indicated his

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6.   *Codex Iustinianus* iv 1.2 (Alexander Severus), *iurisiurandi contempta religio satis deum ultorem habet.* cf. Tacitus, *Annals* i 73 (Tiberius), *deorum iniurias dis curae.*

stomach, and Euthymius pointed his fingers like a scalpel, opened the place, and extracted an inscribed tin tablet which he laid on the table. Then he closed the incision, healed it, and explained what had happened: the man's enemy had consulted a magician, who had been able to invoke demons because he had neglected his salvation by not going to church or receiving communion for many days (Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of S. Euthymius*, 57).

An invalid must search his conscience. Explicit evidence may never be found at Bath, but at least we know that Sulis punished perjury (94, 6–8), and we may suspect that she punished other sins with illness, that sometimes the priest found a garment left anonymously at the steps of her temple. The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be. The routine, formulaic tone of many tablets breathes belief in the power of Sulis; but not entire confidence, to judge by the shrillness of Basilia's ill will (97). If punishment were inevitable, it would not need to be overstated. A cold in the hand is worth galloping consumption in the bush. This is only to be expected. Divine justice is more credible to its victims: an invalid is reluctantly a believer, but someone whose fellow-man has just stolen his clothes can only hope.

1–29 *Texts in Capitals*

1–7, capitals with barred *A*
8–14, 'rustic capitals'
15–18, other capitals
19–29, fragments

Four texts include some cursive, **5** (NRC), **9**, **13** and **14** (all ORC). Capitals are also found in **50**, **74** and perhaps **76**; and on the outside of **54** and **58**.

1   *ABC . . .*

Irregular oval partly cut from cast alloy sheet, apparently complete.
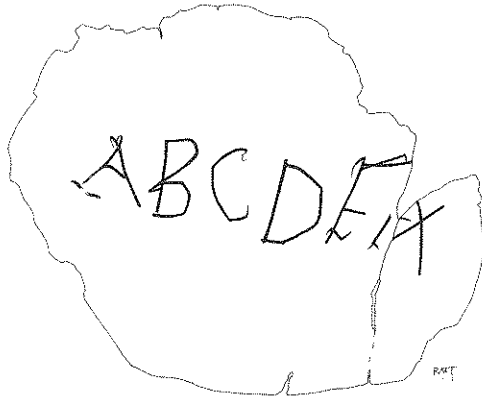
TEXT

A B C D E F X

Alphabets and part-alphabets are common as graffiti. On lead, perhaps with magical significance, cf. R.E.M. Wheeler, *Lydney Park* (1932), 101, no. 5 with Fig. 28, 5; *JRS* lvi (1966), 221, No. 22 (Holt). Since this example was deposited with curse tablets, a possible explanation of the intrusive *X* is that the author intended a covert allusion to cursing: *ABC def(i)x(io)*.

2 Two names

Rounded rectangle cut from alloy sheet, probably the same sheet as **117**. The writing is assured, but the *E*s (like **15**) and one *B* are reversed.

TEXT

Britivenda

Venibelia

1. *Britivenda*: this 'Celtic' name or a variant also occurs in **3**.
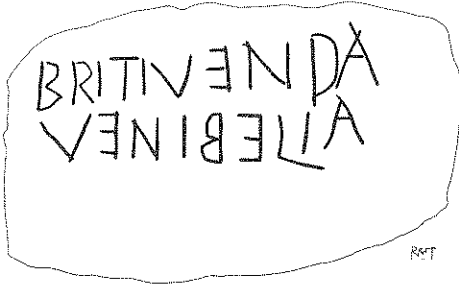2. *Venibelia*: 'Celtic' name otherwise unattested, but cf. *Vendibedis* (**95**), *Sedebelia* (**95**), *Belia* (**96**).

The difference between the two *B*s raises the question of whether *Britivenda* and *Venibelia* were written by different hands. There are minor differences in the other letters common to both names. The two *I*s of *Britivenda* are left-sloping or vertical, the *V* was written with the left stroke first, the horizontal strokes of the reversed *E* were made from left to right, the *N* is rather square, the diagonals of the *A* are almost straight. By contrast, the two *I*s of *Venibelia* are vertical or right-sloping, the *V* was written with the right stroke first, the horizontal strokes of the second reversed *E*, but not the first, were made from right to left, the *N* is rather narrow, the diagonals of the *A* are sinuous. But the question must remain open, since both names are written with reversed *E*s and there is even a difference in the way the *E*s were made within *Venibelia* itself.

3 Three names

Inv. no. 623
Britannia xiii (1982), 397, No. 2

76 by 76 mm
Pb 90.5   Sn 9.4   Cu 0.1
folded twice

Irregular square cut from leaden alloy, inscribed with a stilus. The surface is badly corroded, and the tablet has almost broken into two across 3, but the text is complete.

	TRANSCRIPT	RESTORED TEXT
	brpituenda	Br<p>ituenda
	marinus	Marinus
	memorina	Memorina
	vacat	

'*Brituenda, Marinus, Memorina*'

1. *Br<p>ituenda*: there seem to be traces of other letters under *BR*. There is no trace of the upper half of *B*, but what is there is too small for *D*, and in view of **2**, 1 must be taken as a defective (or perhaps damaged) *B*. The *P* is intrusive and perhaps belongs to an earlier text; it is smaller than the surrounding letters. The *I* is not barred (despite *Britannia* xiii (1982), 397, Fig. 27). This must be a simpler spelling of the 'Celtic' name *Britivenda* (**2**, 1).
2. *Marinus*: cf. **12**, 1 and **30**, 5. A common cognomen already attested in Britain (*RIB* 858).
3. *Memorina*: feminine form of *Memorinus*, one of several cognomina developed from *Memor* (itself common, but attested in Britain only at Bath, where it is borne by the *haruspex* L. Marcius Memor (*JRS* lvi (1966), 217, No. 1)); two of the three instances of *Memorinus* cited by Kajanto (*Cognomina*, 255) are in *CIL* XIII.

Theft of VILBIA

68 by 68 mm

not folded

The original 'Bath Curse' found in 1880. It is an incomplete square cut from alloy sheet. After being inscribed, it was reduced by being scored down the L. side by two incomplete cuts 8 mm apart; the strip between was broken off, and the top L. corner was bent over, damaging the text. This text was inscribed from L. to R. in correct word-sequence, but with the sequence of letters within each word reversed, unlike any other British curse tablet. 4ff. seem to be in a second hand.
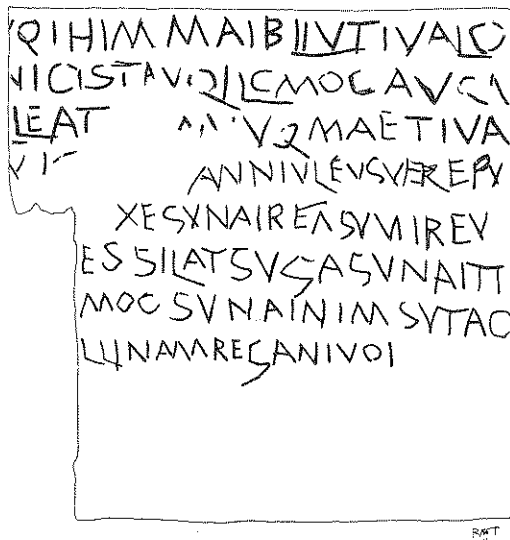
TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
]uqihimmaibliutiualo		qu[i] mihi *VILBIAM* in[v]olavit
]nicistauqilcmocauqa		sic liquat com[o](do) aqua
]lleat[2–3]miuqmaetiua		. . . qui eam [invol]avit
] .[ ]*vacat* anniuleusuerepu		*vacat* Velvinna Ex[s]upereus
]xesunaireusunireu	5	Verianus Se[verinus
]essilatsugagunaiti		Agustalis Com[itianus
]mocsunainimsutac		Minianus Catus
]llinamreganiuoi *vacat*		Germanill[a] Iovina

'*May he who has stolen VILBIA from me become as liquid as water . . . who has stolen it* [or *her*]. *Velvinna, Exsupereus, Verianus, Severinus, A(u)gustalis, Comitianus, Minianus, Catus, Germanilla, Iovina.*'

1–3 and the first letters of 4 were inscribed with a blunt point, and some letters seem to have been re-cut. After an uninscribed space, 4–8 were inscribed with a sharp point on a different alignment, perhaps by a second hand: the second stroke of *L* now dips, *S* like *G* has a distinct top stroke, and there is a dip in the horizontal stroke of *T*. The regular spacing of letters and the way that some overlie the previous letter (*T* in 1 over *L*, *A* in 3 over *L*, *T* in 7 over *V*, *I* in 8 over *L*) prove that this text, unlike most reversed texts, was written conventionally L. to R. Reversing the letter-sequence in each word, but retaining the word order without word-division (*RIB*'s 'medial point' in 1 is only casual damage or a casting flaw), is peculiarly difficult: the copyist's eye has to keep jumping from the beginning of one word to the *end* of the next. *CMOC* for *como(do)* may not be the only copying error.

The certain restoration of *in[v]olavit* in 1–2 suggests that only two letters were damaged or lost in 1–4 when the L. side was cut off. Below 4 the only certain loss is the last letter(s) of *Germanill[*]; the other names divided between the lines seem to have lost nothing by the cut.

1. *VILBIAM*: the reading is certain (Zangemeister read *ma(n)teliu(m)* ('napkin') from a photograph, but there is no support for this on the original, and it would be unlikely that only one word were not reversed). However, it is difficult to follow *RIB* in understanding it as a personal name, not just because it is unattested (but cf. *Vellibia, RIB* 1181), but because no other British curse tablet is prompted by the 'theft' of a woman. (Common sense also suggests that the 'short list' of suspects would be shorter, and all men at that.) *Involavit* is regularly used of the theft of property. *VILBIAM* may be a copying error for the stolen object, but no candidate is obvious. *Fib(u)lam* ('brooch') is almost an anagram, granted that *FI* in cursive can resemble *VI* after the *I* of *mihi*, but this can only be a suggestion.

2. *liquat*: active ('make liquid') for passive *liquetur* or deponent *liquatur*, or by confusion for *liqueat* (not usually found in this sense); another possibility is that *sic liquat* is an anagram error for *liquiscat* (i.e. *liquescat*). The phrase is not found in other curse tablets. It is the only instance in the Bath tablets of sympathetic magic.

como(do): 'Vulgar' spelling of *quomodo* (cf. **31**, 1, *si cus* for *quis*) already found in *CIL* IV 9251 (curse tablet, Pompeii) but without the apocope, of which this seems to be the earliest instance. Since

it is universal in the Romance languages (Old Ital. *como*, Old Fr. *com*, etc.), it was already known that it had occurred in the Roman period. *Quomodo . . . sic* is found in Audollent 111–2, which also invokes sympathetic magic.

3. *m[2–3]taell[.]*: *RIB*'s *muta ell[a]* is not visible on the original, and is unconvincing (why the change of gender between the two *quis*?), but nothing better suggests itself.

3–4. *[invol]|avit*: traces remain of *VN* followed by a mark made by the same blunt point as 1–3, but the displaced *S* read by *RIB* is dubious. Since *involavit* is so common and easily restored here, *RIB*'s recondite *v[or]avit* which assumes *VILBIAM* is a woman is unnecessary.

4. *Velvinna*: the first of ten names, the usual Bath mixture of 'Roman' and 'Celtic', who are suspected of the theft. *Velvinna* is unique, but may be a diminutive of *Velva* (*RIB* 688), as Wright suggests.

4–5. *Ex[s]|upereus*: the first *S* is read by *RIB*, but is no longer visible on the original. As *Exsuperius* (in NRC) the name also occurs in 66 and as the name of a bishop, not necessarily British, on a silver dish found in Derbyshire (*IBChr.* 216). This is the usual spelling. It tends to occur in Christian inscriptions (see Kajanto, *Cognomina*, 278) and suggests a 3rd/4th century date.

5. *Verianus*: the *V* has been inverted and the *E* has a prolonged top stroke like an *F*. The name occurs in Britain as the cognomen of an officer from Numidia (*RIB* 816), but is best attested in *CIL* V and XIII. *Veri-* and *-veros* are both common 'Celtic' name-elements, although Kajanto (*Cognomina*, s.v.) derives it from *verus*.

5–6. *Se|verinus*: the *N* has been reversed, perhaps by attraction to the preceding *V*, and resembles a ligatured *VI*. A cognomen developed from *severus* which is common in Britain and survived the Roman period (*ECMW* No. 171).

6. *A(u)gustalis*: 'Vulgar' spelling (cf. *RIB* 310, *A(u)gustinus*) of a common personal name, found in Britain as *Austalis* (*EE* VII 1141).

6–7. *Com|itianus*: a cognomen derived like *Comitinus* (*JRS* lix (1969), 241, No. 31; *Britannia* iii (1972), 353, No. 4) from *Comitius*, and attested in *CIL* XIV 246, 3, 12 (Ostia).

7. *Minianus*: *RIB* reads *Catusminianus*, but the cognomen *Minianus* (see *CIL* VIII 2296) is rightly distinguished by R.W. Davies and G. Alföldy. *Minius* is found as a cognomen in *CIL* XIII 5780 and may be a 'Celtic' name.

Catus: probably the 'Celtic' name usually spelt *Cattus/os*, but also a good Latin cognomen (e.g. of the consul of 198 BC and the procurator of Britain Decianus Catus).

8. *Germanill[a]*: restored by *RIB*, although the uncertainty of what has been lost on the L. side does not exclude *Germanill[us]*. Diminutive of *Germana* (*Germana* is well attested in *CIL* XIII); Kajanto (*Cognomina*, 127) notes 'a certain preference for the diminutive forms in *-illus/la* in the Celtic countries', so this should probably be seen as 'Celtic'.

Iovina: a common theophoric name derived from *Iuppiter*, attested in Britain only in *Britannia* ii (1971), 300, No. 69 (*Iovinus*).

Theft of a pair of gloves

Inv. no. 477

Britannia xvii (1986), 432, No. 5

68 by 99 mm

Pb 64.1   Sn 35.9   Cu 0.1

folded once

Irregular rectangle of alloy sheet straightened by being folded on the R. side before being inscribed, and folded once after being inscribed, which is where it has now broken into two, but otherwise almost complete. The first line only is in NRC (cf. **66**), the rest is in capitals.
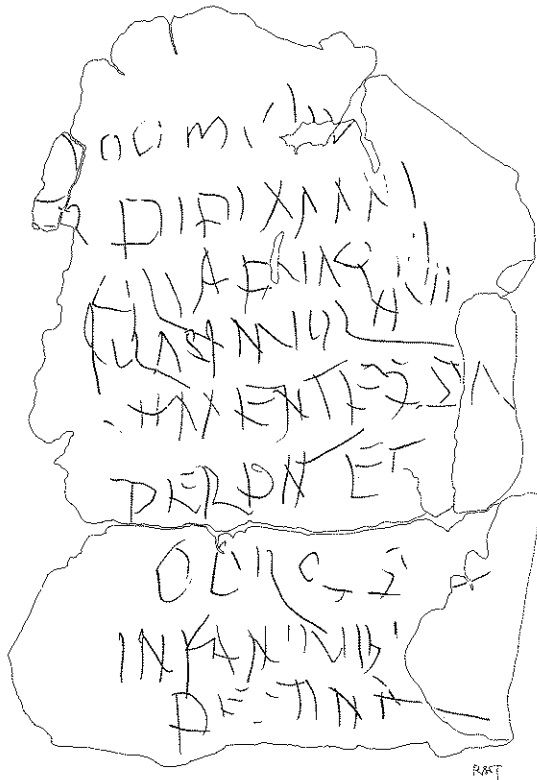
	TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
	].ocimẹḍis		[D]ocimẹḍis
	]ẹrdidimani		[p]ẹrdidi(t) mani-
	ciliaduaqụi		cilia dua qụi
	illasinuolaui		illas involavi(t)
5	utmentessua	5	ut mentes sua(s)
	perdnṭet		perd[at] et
	oculoṣsụ[.]ṣ		oculoṣ sụ[o]ṣ
	infanọubị		in fanọ ubị
	deṣtina		deṣtina(t)

'Docimedis has lost two gloves.   (He asks) that (the person) who has stolen them should lose his minds [sic] *and his eyes in the temple where (she) appoints.'*

1. *[D]ocimedis*: only the vertical strokes survive of both *D*s, but the name can be restored with certainty from its occurrence in **95**. The name is not found in *TLL* Onomasticon, and is probably 'Celtic' like others in *Doci-* , but Greek derivation is also possible. It has been written in NRC with the same instrument as the rest of the text (in capitals), and clearly belongs to it. No other text from Bath exhibits this combination, although **66** is headed by a name in NRC followed, even more oddly, by a text in ORC.

2. *[p]erdidi(t)*: *perdidi* ('*I* have lost') could of course be read, but the scribe had the 'Vulgar' habit of omitting the final *-t* of the 3rd sing. verb forms (cf. *involavi(t), destina(t)*).

2–3. *manicilia dua*: the word *manicilium*, a diminutive of *manica* ('sleeve'), is virtually unique, being attested only (in the spelling *manicillium*) as a gloss on the Greek word χειριδίον (*Corpus glossariorum Latinorum* (ed. G. Goetz) II, 476, 24) which may mean 'glove' in a medical writer quoted by Oribasius (vi 18.5, used for massage). But in the words of J.P. Wild (*Bonner Jahrbücher* clxviii (1968), 227), 'Gloves were unknown in classical antiquity and long sleeves (manicae) served instead to protect the hands against the cold'. The Elder Pliny's secretary may only have worn long sleeves to protect his hands when writing, though mittens would seem more likely (Pliny, *ep.* iii 5.15, *cuius manus hieme manicis muniebantur*). But leather gloves, not sleeves, were certainly worn to protect the hands against thorns in rough farmwork: *Odyssey* xxiv 230, χειρῖδάς τ' ἐπὶ χερσὶ βάτων ἕνεκα, and Palladius, i 42(43), 4 (farm equipment), *tunicas vero pellicias cum cucullis et ocreas manicasque de pellibus, quae vel in silvis vel in vepribus rustico operi et venatorio possint esse communes*. It was a glove like this that the raven stole from St Columbanus: *tegumenta manuum, quos Galli uuantos uocant, quos ad operis labore solitus erat habere* (Ionas, *vita Columbani* i 15). The biographer evidently thought it would be something unfamiliar to his readers. *Manicilia*, a pair of something separate from any garment, it is natural to take as 'gloves', though the question must remain open.

4. *illas*: a solecism for *illa* unexpected after the hypercorrect *dua*. 'Vulgar' Latin tends to treat the neuter plural as a feminine singular, but that is not the case here; rather it seems to be analogous with the Italian idiom of coupling the femine plural article *le* with the plural in *-a* for some nouns signifying pairs of things (e.g. *le labbra, le braccia*).

involavi(t): see note to *perdidi(t)*.

5. *ut* introduces an indirect command dependent upon a verb like *rogat* (cf. **35**, 2) in ellipse, as in **31**, 4.

mentes sua(s): this is certainly what was written. For the curse, cf. *RIB* 7 (London), *Tretia(m) Maria(m) defico et illeus vita(m) et me(n)tem*, etc. The plural *mentes* perhaps anticipates the plural of *oculos* (7). The *V* of *sua(s)* is curtailed because the stilus struck the edge of the tablet which had already been folded over; *A* is therefore the final letter and *S* has been omitted, either because the scribe confused feminine and neuter plural endings (see note to *illas*), or because of the 'Vulgar' tendency exemplified in *RIB* 7 of dropping the final consonant.

6. *perd[at]*: the sequence of strokes (the diagonal succeeded the two verticals) makes it clear that the scribe wrote *N*, not *AT*; there is no trace of a vertical stroke to accompany the cross-bar of *T* and, despite damage here, it seems that no such stroke was ever made. *Perdñt*(!) thus seems to be a copying error by a scribe who would have written *perdat* as *perda(t)* without the final *–t*, just as he wrote *perdidi(t)* and *involavi(t)*. The verb occurs in other tablets as to 'lose' property (**8**, cf. **99** (confused)) and to 'lose' one's own life (**103**). The author has used the two senses in echoing *perdidi(t)* with *perd[at]* ('tit for tat'), a rhetorical touch in keeping with the pretentious ending (8–9) of his text.

7. *oculos*: for other curses on sight, which reverse the healing power of the spring (cf. Solinus, *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* 4, 6–7), see **45** and **97**.

su[o]s: the final horizontal stroke of the second *S* survives. The identity of terminations evidently saved the scribe from writing *suo(s)*.

8–9. *in fano ubi destina(t)*: understand *Sulis*. For the spelling *destina(t)* see note to *perdidi(t)* (2). *Destinat* is probably to be restored in **40**, but its context is obscure. The elaborate formula here may be the author's own invention. Otherwise only **5** and **31** specify that death or disease is to occur 'in the temple'. This idea is found at other sacred springs (e.g. ps.Aristotle, *Mirabilia*, 152=Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* i 6), but the authors seem to have been more immediately influenced by British curses which require the return of stolen property 'to the temple' (e.g. **10**, *RIB* 306 (Lydney), *Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 3 (Uley)).

Theft of a rug

Inv. no. 673   60 by 62 mm

folded once

Square cut from leaden alloy sheet, inscribed on both sides in irregular capitals. The outer face (side (*a*), not drawn) became coated in a paint-like corrosion layer, much of which has flaked away, taking the text with it. The inside (*b*) is also badly corroded.
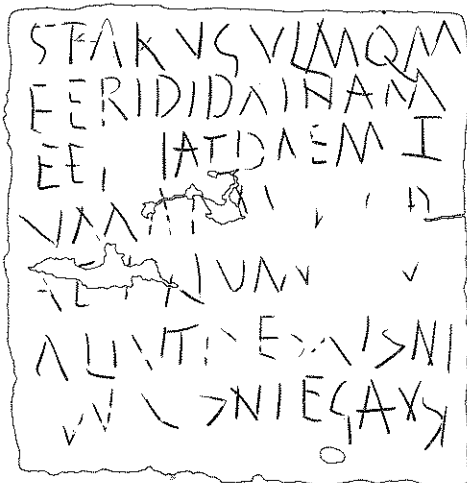
	TRANSCRIPT		CONJECTURAL RESTORED TEXT
(*a*)	[5 lines lost?]		
	[ ]s.		
	nc.3t[?		
(*b*)	sṭaṛugulmqm	(*b*)	sṭṛagulum q(ue)m
	ẹerididainam		(p)erdidi anima(m)
	ee.[.]iatdaem.		. . .
	um *traces*		. . .
5	ae1–2ṇu *traces*	5	. . . [invo-]
	aliut1–2e1–2isni		lavit . . . nisi
	3–4ṣniegauṣ		ṣ[an]g[u]ine ṣua

'. . . *the rug which I have lost,* . . . *(his) life* . . . *has stolen* . . . *unless with his own blood*'

The scribe, like the scribe of 5, has used both forms of capital *A*, open and barred. At the end of *b*3 is an unidentified letter resembling a serifed *I*, but the serifs are exaggerated, and the scribe otherwise does not use them. At the end of 7 is a redundant vertical stroke which may be a continuation of the *I* at the end of 6.

The text is garbled, but some sense can be recovered by treating it as a series of anagrams. Anagrams might be regarded as an extreme form of the various letter-order reversals found in other tablets to achieve a 'secret' text, but there is no other example in British curse tablets. Moreover, the *QM* of 1, the apparent confusion of *E* with *P* in 2 and perhaps in 3, the tendency to reverse pairs of letters (marked in 1–2), all suggest, not cryptography, but dyslexia.

*b*1. *stragulum*: properly a (bed)spread, but here perhaps in general terms a rug or blanket, like *caballarem* (49, 1; 62, 7). For British rugs cf. Diocletian's *Prices Edict*, xix 28, *tapete Britannicum*; for *stragula*, ibid. 36.

  q(ue)m: if this is what the scribe intended, it is a solecism since *stragulum* is neuter.

2. *(p)erdidi*: the first letter was written was *E* (or possibly *F*), not *P*. For the probable formula cf. 8, 1–2, [*d*]*eae Suli donavi* [*arge*]*ntiolos sex quos perd*[*idi*]: the author 'gives' his stolen *stragulum* to Sulis that she may punish the thief (see further, note to 6–7).

  anima(m): the thought seems to be that the thief to whom the author has 'lost' his *stragulum* should 'lose' his own life in return: cf. 5 for the word-play of *perdidi(t)* and *perdat*, and for *animam perdere*, 103.

3. The same confusion between *E* and *P* as in 2 may have occurred, the scribe intending *perdat* (see previous note), but *I* makes this difficult.

  DAEM: perhaps *dea* or *deam* was intended (cf. 103, *deus faci(a)t ani(m)am pe(r)d(e)re sui*), but the syntax is obscure.

6. After *-lavit* perhaps *eum* (cf. 1, *q(ue)m*) was intended, but although *E* is clear, *V* and *M* cannot be discerned.

7–8. *nisi s*[*an*]*g*[*u*]*ine sua*: cf. 65, 9–11, *hoc donum non redemat nessi sangu(i)n*[*e*] *suo*, with note to 9ff. for other examples of this formula.

  sua: a solecism for *suo*.

Inv. no. 399   (ii) 26 by 33 mm
                                                                Sn 100   (?)

Three fragments, two conjoining but the third not necessarily from the same tablet, although of similar composition and 'brassy' patination; found with three other similar scraps on which isolated letters are visible.

	TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
(i)	]uo[		
(ii)	[.]. .[	(ii)	[.]. .[s-]
	angu[		angu[ine
	noctis[		noctis [ ]
	quiṃih[		qui mih[i
5	uụi[	5	uụi[

Sanguine(m) and *qui mihi* ... are both found in formulaic phrases, but *noctis* ('of night', if complete) is unparalleled.

Theft of six silver coins

Inv. no. 473
Britannia xii (1981), 370–2, No. 6

94 by 52 mm
Pb 20.3   Sn 79.7
not folded

Irregular rectangle cut from alloy sheet, edges subsequently damaged and surface corrugated. After being inscribed with a nib or chisel-pointed stilus (the line is 'W' section and varies from thick to thin), it was transfixed with a nail that has left a raised lip on (*b*).
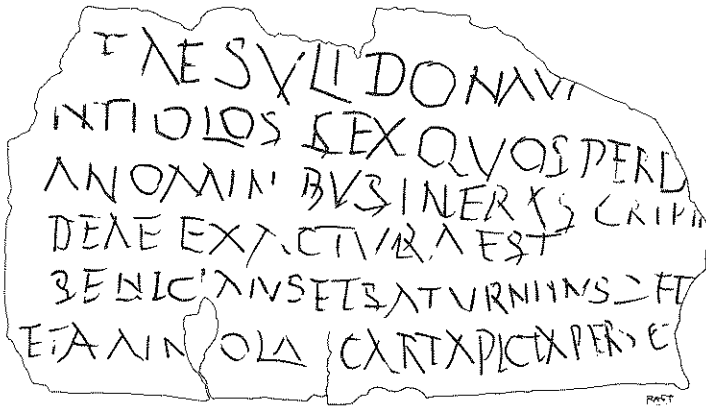
TRANSCRIPT

(*a*) [.]eaesulidonaui[

ntiolossexquosperd[

anomin[.]businfrascrip. .[

deaeexacturaest *vacat*

5   seniciaiusetsaturninussed[

etann[.]olacartapictapersc[

RESTORED TEXT

(*a*) [d]eae Suli donavi [arge-]

ntiolos sex quos perd[idi]

a nomin[i]bus infrascrip[tis]

deae exactura est

5   Senicia(n)us et Saturninus <sed>

et Ann[i]ola carta picta persc[ripta]

'*I have given to the goddess Sulis the six silver coins which I have lost. It is for the goddess to exact (them) from the names written below: Senicianus and Saturninus and Anniola. The written page (has) been copied out.*
An(n)iola
Senicianus
Saturninus.'

This is only tablet to allude to 'copying' (which can often be deduced from copying errors), an allusion which is confirmed by its own crop of errors: *a*2, *S* is written over an unfinished *E* (the scribe thinking he had reached *sex* with the *S* of *argentiolos*); *a*3, the *F* of *infrascriptis* is suspiciously like *E*; *a*5, the first *N* of *Senicianus* has an odd line underneath, and the second *N* has been reduced to a single vertical because the scribe read *NV* as *IV*; *a*5, there are three or more letters redundant at the end of the line, that they were later seen to be redundant being revealed by the insertion of *et* L. of 6 to link *Anniola* with *Saturninus*; *b*1, *N* has been omitted from *Anniola*; *b*3, the first *S* of *Saturninus* has been written over another (incomplete?) letter, and a shallow *V* has been interlineated above *NS* where it had been omitted. The picture is thus one of careless copying partially corrected.

*a*1. *donavi*: the present tense is more common, but the perfect is well attested (**62**, **65**, cf. **11**) and there is no longer any need to suspect *donavit* in *RIB* 306 (Lydney) as a possible example of *bv* confusion.
1–2. [*arge*]*ntiolos*: Hassall's restoration has since been confirmed by the occurrence of this rare word in **54**. It is a diminutive of the adjective *argenteus* ('silver'), which itself is used as a substantive ('silver coin') in **98** and is attached to a specific denomination of silver coin under the tetrarchy (see K. Erim, J. Reynolds, M. Crawford, 'Diocletian's Currency Reform: A New Inscription', *JRS* lxi (1971), 171–7). *Argentiolus* ('silver coin') is attested in a gloss on the phrase *concisum argentum* in
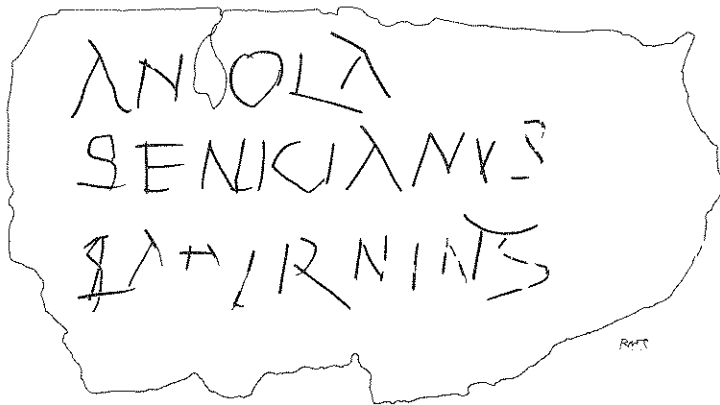
(b) an[.]ola   (b) An[i]ola

senicianus   Senicianus

saturninus   Saturninus

Juvenal, *Satires* V, 14, 291, *in argentiolos sive nummos* (P. Wessner (ed.), *Scholia in Iuvenalem vetustiora* (1931)). The scholia on Juvenal, according to Mommsen (*Ges. Schr.* VII, 509–11), were probably composed in Rome in *c.* 400. The Augustan History, of about the same date, invents a coin called the *argenteus Philippeus minutulus* which may imply a contemporary *argentiolus* (see 'Fairy Gold: Monetary History in the Augustan History' in C.E. King (ed.), *Imperial Revenue, Expenditure and Monetary Policy in the Fourth Century AD* (1980), 255–79). However, the word's occurrence in the ORC text **54** means that it was already current in the third century, presumably when the one-*denarius* coin (cf. **34**) was replaced by multiples.

3. *a nominibus infrascriptis*: cf. Audollent 111, *denuntio personis infrascribtis*, and Greek parallels collected by D.R. Jordan in *AJA* lxxxix (1985), 165. There are two ideas here: (i) the use of *exactura* (see below) means that *nomen* also has the transferred sense of 'account' from the practice of writing the name of the person concerned at the head of the page that contained his account, cf. *OLD* s.v. *nomen* 22(a). (ii) In magic, by using the proper name of a man or god, one gains power over them; hence the curse of the *nomen Seniciani* (*RIB* 306) or, if one does not know the name, the *nomen rei* (**15**) or *nomen furis* (**16**, cf. **102**).

4. *exactura*: for the classical *exactio* (cf. Cicero, *Att.* V 1.2, *extrema exactio nostrorum nominum*), but not found in *TLL*. Evidently a form current in 'Vulgar' Latin, since it is otherwise first attested in this sense in the eleventh century: see J.F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (1976), s.v. For the idea of 'exaction' see note to **41**, 3.

5. *Senicianus*: variant spelling of the cognomen developed from *Senecio*, which is common in Celtic provinces including Britain (**98**, 16, *RIB* 306, *CIL* VII 1305).

    Saturninus: a common cognomen already attested at Bath (*RIB* 146) and still current in sub-Roman Wales (*ECMW* No. 32, Early Welsh *Sadwrn*).

6. *Ann[i]ola*: a diminutive formed from the nomen *Annius/a*, cf. *CIL* XIII 1396 *Annia Anniola*, and properly spelt with *NN*, although *N* (cf. *b*1) is found in *CIL* VIII 10481. The nail which was driven through *Anniola* from side (*a*) exited through *Aniola* on (*b*); this may only be coincidence, but it is possible that the change in the sequence of names on (*b*) was made for this purpose.

    carta picta persc[ripta]: the meaning of *carta picta* emerges from the description of a quasi-medical cure for insomnia in Quintus Serenus, *liber medicinalis* 982 (*Corpus medicorum Latinorum* (ed. F. Vollmer) II, 3). Write the spell on a sheet of paper (*carta variis pinxit quam littera verbis*), burn it, and drink the ashes in hot water before retiring. *Perscribere* can mean 'to copy out' without even understanding what is copied out: Pliny uses it of an elephant which learned to copy Greek letters (*NH* VIII 6, cf. Aulus Gellius 17.9.11, *litteris ita perscriptis* of an enciphered message). This scribe's copying errors have been tabulated above.

*b*1–3. The three names are repeated, but with *Anniola* (now spelt *Aniola*) at the head, and *Saturninus* displaying two copying errors.

Inv. no. 612

Britannia xiii (1982), 400, No. 4

Pl. xxiia

59 by 85 mm

Pb 45.0   Sn 55.0

folded five times

Two conjoining fragments preserving almost the whole text; the 'gabled' top is original, as is the bottom R. corner. Part of the text is written in ORC, with the same stilus apparently as the capitals, the word *ser(v)us* being written in both. Side (*b*) is written in a looser version of the scripts of (*a*) and is probably from the same hand. It is the only Bath tablet to use interpunctuation and word division.
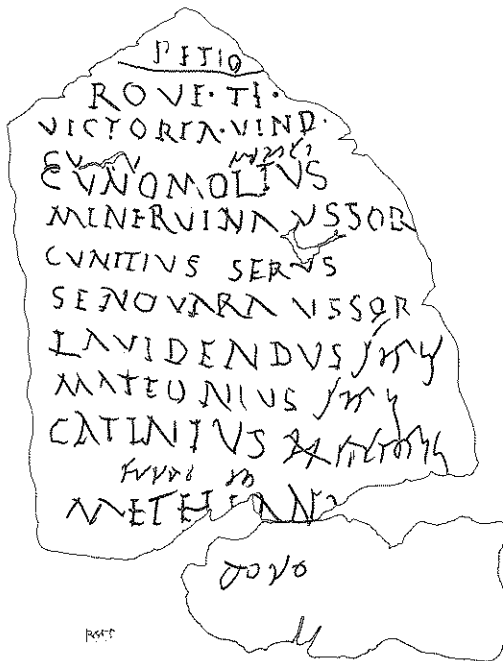
TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
(*a*) petio		(*a*) petio
roue · te ·		rove te
uictoria · uind ·		Victoria vind(. . .)
cuṇ *vacat* miṇici (*in cursive*)		Cuṇ (*unfinished*) Miṇici
5 cunomolius	5	Cunomolius
mineruina ussor		Minervina ussor (*i.e.* uxor)
cunitius serus		Cunitius ser(v)us
senouara ussor		Senovara ussor (*i.e.* uxor)
lauidendus serus (*in cursive*)		Lavidendus ser(v)us
10 mattonius serus (*in cursive*)	10	Mattonius ser(v)us
catinius exsactoris (*in cursive*)		Catinius Exsactoris
fuṇdo eọ (*both in cursive*)		fuṇdo eọ
methịanụ[ ]		Methịanụ[s . . .]
[ ] dono (*in cursive*)		[. . .] dono

'. . . *you, Victory (?) . . . Cunomolius (son?) of Minicus, Minervina (his?) wife, Cunitius (their?) slave, Senovara (his?) wife, Lavidendus (their?) slave, Mattonius (their?) slave, Catinius (son?) of Exsactor . . . Methianus . . . I give . . .*'

*a*1. *petio*: the underlining (hardly found elsewhere if at all, see **14**(ii) and **86**) suggests that this is a heading, perhaps an error for *pet(it)io* ('petition'), *cf. Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 3 (Uley), *commonitorium* ('memorandum'). The word *petitio* is already attested in the epigraphy of Roman Britain, in a commercial context in one of the wooden writing tablets from London (*JRS* xxi (1931), 247, No. 2).

2. *rove te*: this can be interpreted as a personal name *Rovet(a)e* ('petition of Roveta') hitherto unattested (but *Roveca* and *Roveos* are found in Holder), at the cost of regarding the medial points as decorative only. This seems unlikely (despite such graffiti as *Britannia* v (1974), 468, No. 50), since *te* and *vind*(. . .) have both been carefully distinguished by interpunctuation. (The O after *VIND* in *Britannia* xiii (1982), 400, Fig. 29, has proved to be another medial point). *Te* suggests an appeal to the deity like *Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7 (Pagans Hill), *iteratis precibus te rogo*, and *Britannia* xviii (1987), 360, No.1 (London): *rogo te, Metunus. ROVE* must then be seen as an error for something like *oro* or *rogo*.

3. *Victoria vind*(. . .): *Victoria* is a woman's name, even if much less common than *Victor* and its cognates, but it is tempting to see it as the goddess Victory, the *te* of 2. The personal names of 4ff. are all qualified by a patronymic(?) or as *ussor/ser(v)us*, whereas *vind*(. . .) implies *Victoria* was something different. *Vind(ex)* suggests itself, a rare epithet attached to Jupiter and to Fortune (notably *CIL* XIV 2852 (Praeneste), *votorum vindex semper Fortuna meorum*), but apparently not to *Victoria*. Sulis is once invited to 'vindicate' her petitioner (**35**). But it can only remain a hypothesis that the names which follow (4ff.) are consigned to 'Avenging Victory'.

4. *Cun*: the scribe began to write *Cunomolius*, but ran into a split due to a casting flaw, and started again in 5.

    Minici: not *maritus* as first read, but apparently a patronymic (cf. **30**) from *Minicius* or *Minicus*; the former is a common Roman nomen, but one might expect a 'Celtic' name here cognate with *Minius* (see 4, 7, *Minianus*).

5. *Cunomolius*: not attested, but 'Celtic' names in *Cuno-* are common.
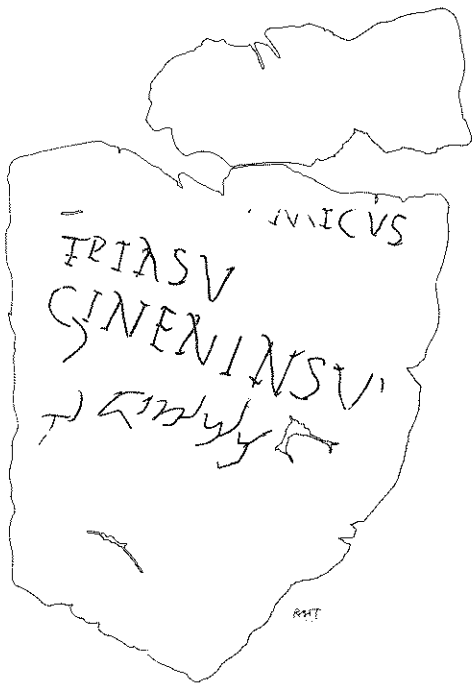
(b) 15   ].micus   (b) 15   ].micus

         tpiasu *vacat*   tpiasu

         gineninsu.   gineninsu[s]

           gienusus (*in cursive*)   gienusus

6. *Minervina ussor*: *Minervina* is not a common name (see Kajanto, *Cognomina*) and, being found in the city of Sulis Minerva, may be a local theophoric name like *Sulinus* (*RIB* 105, 151; and *RIB* 150).

     ussor is a 'Vulgar' spelling of *uxor* also found in 30, 3. The names of 'enemies' cursed in Audollent 101 (Kreuznach) include two described as *uxsor*. Minervina is presumably wife of Cunomolius.

7. *Cunitius ser(v)us*: the name is unattested, but must be cognate with *Cunittus* (*JRS* lix (1969), 241, No. 31 (Leintwardine)).

     ser(v)us: the omission of the first *V* before another *V* is typical of 'Vulgar Latin' (*V* and *VV* would both sound like *w*): see V. Väänänen, *Introduction au Latin Vulgaire* (1981), 51. The 'Vulgar' spelling of *servus* is also found in 36, 39, 49, 62, 65, 66, 87, 97, 102. Cunitius and the other *servi* presumably belong to Cunomolius, but *servus* may only define their status.

8. *Senovara ussor*: not attested, but a number of 'Celtic' names (including *Senovirus*) are compounded with *Seno-*. Presumably the wife by courtesy of the slave Cunitius.

9. *Lavidendus*: apparently unattested.

10. *Mattonius*: the second *T* may be a heavily serifed *I* or even *E*, but *TT* seems most likely in view of the 'Celtic' name *Matto* (see Holder) from which is derived the nomen *Mattonius* (*CIL* XIII 2018); but *Mattio* is also attested (*AE* 1897, 114).

11. *Catinius*: probably cognate with *Catonius* (30) and like it derived from the 'Celtic' name *Cattus/os*; cf. *Cattinius* (*CIIC* 153 and 157) and *Catus* (4).

     Exsactoris: the diagonal stroke crosses the first two letters like a crossing-out, but since the rest of the word is clear enough, it can be read as an exuberant *X*. The 'Vulgar' *XS* for *X* occurs in 34 and is common in *RIB* (see *Index*, p. 98). *Exactor* as a substantive ('enforcer', 'tax collector') recalls *exactura* (8) and *exsigatur* (34), but its relevance here is obscure; better taken as a patronymic like *Minici* (4) also in cursive, although *Exactor* as a personal name is rare (see Kajanto, *Cognomina*, 361).

12. *fundo eo*: *furem* cannot be read, but what this means is obscure.

13. *Methianu[s]*: unattested; the un-Latin –*th*– may represent the Celtic barred *D*, which would suggest the name is 'Celtic' and cognate with *Meθiatus* (*CIL* XIII 10010, 1329) and *Mediannus* (XIII 2895).

(b) 15.].*micus*: perhaps [*ini*]*micus* ('enemy'), but more likely the end of another personal name.

16. Presumably a blundered personal name.

17–18. Perhaps an attempt to write the same name in capitals and cursive (the marks before G in 18 may not be letters). If so, it was a failure. Possible names include *Ingenuus* (30), *Igennus*(?) (*Britannia* iii (1972), 352, No. 2 (Cirencester), *Ingenuinus* (*RIB* 123, 158). It may have been a difficult name to spell: *Ingenui* in *CIIC* 466 (Cornwall) is transcribed in Ogham script as *Igenavi*.

121

Inv. no. 638
Britannia xii (1981), 375–7, No. 8

70 by 100 mm
Pb 26.1   Sn 73.8   Cu 0.1
not folded

Four conjoining fragments of a rectangle cast in alloy sheet, inscribed on both sides with a metal-nibbed pen or similar instrument by a practised hand, in well-formed 'rustic capitals'. At least one nail (in *a*10) was afterwards driven through it.
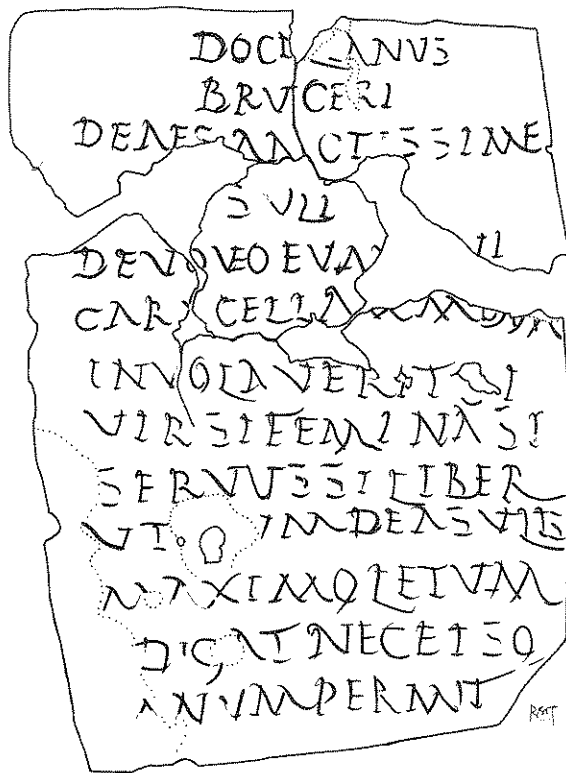
	TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
(*a*)	docilianus	(*a*)	Docilianus
	bruceri		Bruceri
	deaesanctissime		deae sanctissim(a)e
	suli		Suli
5	devoveoeum[.]ui	5	devoveo eum [q]ui
	caracellammeam		caracellam meam
	inuolaueritsi		involaverit si
	uirsifeminasi		vir si femina si
	seruussiliber		servus si liber
10	ut[1–2]umdeasulis	10	ut [1–2]um dea Sulis
	maximoletum		maximo letum
	[.]digatneceiso		[a]digat nec ei so-
	mnumpermit		mnum permit-

'Docilianus (son) of Brucerus [*Brucetus?*] to the most holy goddess Sulis. I curse him who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, that . . . the goddess Sulis inflict death upon . . . and not allow him sleep or children now and in the future, until he has brought my hooded cloak to the temple of her divinity.'

This is the only Bath tablet to be given a carefully centred heading (1–4) like a monumental inscription. This and the beauty of the writing tempt one to see a connection between Docilianus (if *Bruceti*, see below) and the *scultor* Sulinus Bruceti f. (*RIB* 151, 105), but there are difficulties. This is the first text to give the nominative of *Sulis*, and perhaps the earliest reference to a *caracalla*; the cloak stolen does not seem to be the same *caracalla* as **65**.

1. *Docilianus*: a Roman cognomen formed from *docilis*, cf. **94** for cognate formations.
2. *Bruceri*: the second *R* is certain, but the name *Brucer/us* is not attested, whereas *Bruceti* is a local patronymic (*RIB* 105, 151, *Sulinus Bruceti*). Perhaps the scribe mistook a cursive *T* for *R* in the text he was copying (the ligatured *VE* in 5 is probably a copying error corrected), in the way that *RIB* 306 (Lydney), also in capitals with a 'monumental' heading, reads *petmittas* for *permittas*. If so, it would suggest that the scribe was not Docilianus the petitioner, since he is unlikely to have miscopied his own name. In which case, one cannot see Docilianus as a brother(?) of the *scultor* Sulinus Bruceti, without supposing he went to a professional scribe for a service his brother could well have provided.
3. *sanctissim(a)e*: 'Vulgar spelling, *AE* and *E* being the same vowel-sound. *Sanctus* is applied to many gods, but this is the only instance of Sulis; however cf. **35**, *rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam*.
5. *devoveo*: *VE* is the only ligature in the whole text, and looks like a corrected copying error due to the repeated *E*, *V* and *O*. This is the only instance in a British curse tablet of the sophisticated *devoveo* (used in Audollent 129B (Arezzo) to address *aquae ferventes*; cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* III 9.10ff. for an example of *devotio*), instead of the usual *dono*.

6. *caracellam*: correctly spelt at 16 and in **65**, and probably only a slip of the pen. This may be the earliest reference to the characteristic hooded cape of Gaul and Britain which became associated with the emperor M. Aurelius Antoninus ('Caracalla', A.D. 211–7): see J.P. Wild, 'Bath and the Identification of the Caracalla', *Britannia* xvii (1986), 352–3. Unfortunately **10** cannot be dated: it employs formulas found in many other tablets, but its patronymic, its sophistication of phrasing (e.g. *devoveo*, *letum adigat*, *nec natos nec nascentes*) and the elegance of the lettering and layout may mean it is comparatively early, second-century rather than third, pre-Caracallan in fact. **65** is a third-century text and refers to another *caracalla* (see note ad loc.).

7. *involaverit*: like *pertulerit* (19) probably a future perfect, although a case can be made here for perfect subjunctive within a clause subordinate to an indirect command.

8–9: formulas typical of British curse tablets.

10–12. Meaning and restoration are uncertain. [*A*]*digat* is unavoidable, even if the expression *letum adigere* is not exactly paralleled; its usage with *vulnus* would suggest it means 'inflict death upon' (someone, dative). Thus *maximo*, and not [1–2]*um*, would seem to be the victim. In this case, *maximo* should be taken as a personal name ('upon Maximus') and [1–2]*um* either as a conjunction (although *dum* or *cum*, the obvious candidates, would not fill the space available) or as an adjective oddly removed from *letum*, say *suum* in emphatic position ('her own particular sort of death' or, less
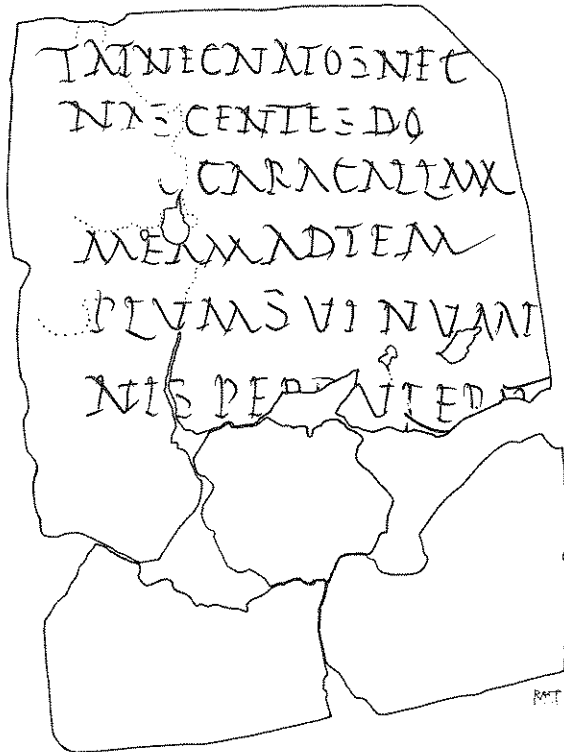
	(*b*) tatnecnatosnec		(*b*) tat nec natos nec
15	nascentesdo	15	nascentes do-
	[. .]ccaracallam		[ne]ç caracallam
	meamadtem		meam ad tem-
	plumsuinumi		plum sui numi-
	nis per.ulerit		nis per[t]ulerit

grammatically, 'his own particular death', possibly suicide). The natural restoration of what the nail destroyed is [*e*]*um* (cf. 5, *eum* and 12, *ei*), but this would not fill the space available and cannot be construed with *letum adigat*. The difficulty of reading *Maximo* (proper name) is not the illogicality of supposing that the thief can return the cloak after he has been put to death (that exists in any case), but the capping an elaborate curse on 'whoever' stole the cloak with a casual reference to the thief by name. But what else can *maximo* be? An unattested title of Sulis (i.e. *maxima*) or a frigid adverb (i.e. *maxime*)? Curse tablets are magical texts and should not be treated like the legal documents they sometimes superficially resemble; *RIB* 306 displays the same illogicality: the author has 'lost' a ring and calls a curse upon the *nomen Seniciani*.

10. *dea Sulis*: the first (and only) instance of the nominative case of the deity's name; she is Sulis, not **Sul*, as already divined by the late Professor Tolkien (see note to *AQVAE SVLIS* in *RIB*, pp. 42–3).

12ff. *nec ei somnum permittat* (etc.): this formula with variations, usually in the 2nd sing. *permittas*, is common in British curse tablets, 'sleep' and 'health' being the usual deprivations. See **35, 41** (*patiaris*(?) *manducare*, etc.), **45** (*oculos*, etc.), **47** (*in sangu(i)ne*), **52, 54** (*sedere*, etc.), **100**(?), *RIB* 306 (Lydney), *Britannia* iii (1972), 365 (Wanborough) (*bibere*, etc.), xv (1984), 339, No. 7 (Pagans Hill).

14–15. *nec natos nec nascentes*: this phrase is unparalleled in curse tablets, but cf. **45** (*orbitatem*) and *Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7 ([*nec nat*]*os sanos*). It is quasi-legal: cf. *CIL* VI 8063, XII 3702, a *patronus* provides a burial place for himself and his freedmen present and future (*natis nascentibus*). *nascentibus*).

15–16. *do*|[*ne*]*c*: two letters have been lost to corrosion, a trace of the C remaining; *do* ('I give') is precluded by the syntax, and the formula is paralleled by *RIB* 306 (Lydney), *donec perferat usque templum Nodentis*.

17–19. *templum sui numinis*: for the periphrasis cf. **32** and **34**, *dono numini tuo*, and the phrase that can be recovered from Solinus (see note to **94**, 5), *Sulis Minervae numen*.

19. *per*[*t*]*ulerit*: the last word also of **38**; for the formula cf. *Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 2 (Uley), *nissi quando res s(upra)dictas ad fanum s(upra)dictum attulerit*; xv (1984), 339, No. 7 (Pagans Hill), *nessi hanc rem . . . ad fanum tuum* [*at*]*tulerint*.

Inv. no. 399

(i) 25 by 32 mm
(ii) 17 by 25 mm
(iii) 32 by 23 mm
(iv) 15 by 13 mm
(v) 9 by 22 mm

Four fragments inscribed in 'rustic capitals' on alloy sheet like 10, but not conjoining nor even necessarily from the same tablet or the same hand. The fifth fragment (not drawn) is in larger script.

(i) TRANSCRIPT		(i) RESTORED TEXT
[. . .]		[. . . invo-]
lauer[		laver[it . . .]
fuerit[		fuerit [. . . ?dona-]
uisil[		vi si l[iber si servus ?quicum-]
5 queco[	5	que co[

3. *fuerit*: cf. (iv); **53**, 4; **97**, 8.

(ii) TRANSCRIPT	(ii) RESTORED TEXT
]ue[	]ve[
]dibat.[	]dibat.[
]iber[	si l]iber [si servus
]. . .[	]. . .[

(iii) TRANSCRIPT	(iii) RESTORED TEXT
].[	].[
].cumque[	qui]cumque[
]quicumq[	]quicumque]
]ic[	?qu]ic[umque

Writing practice?

(iv) TRANSCRIPT

ho[

fueri̧[

(iv) RESTORED TEXT

ho[c

fueri̧[t

2. *fueri*[*t*]: cf. (i) with note.

(v) TRANSCRIPT

]. .[
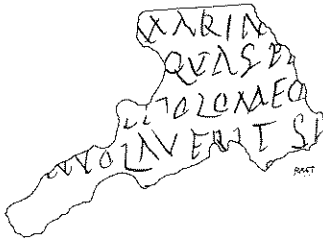
]u.[

Inv. no. 399

(i) 28(43) by 23 mm
(ii) 22 by 14 mm
(iii) 17 by 17 mm

Three fragments inscribed in different 'rustic capitals' than 10 and 11, of similar but not identical script.

(i) TRANSCRIPT	(i) RESTORED TEXT
]marin[	]marin[
]quaspe̞[	]quas pe̞[rdidi?
].ṭiolomeo[	].tiolo meo[
]nuolaueritsi[	i]nvolaverit si[
5 *traces*	5 *traces*

Perhaps the 'gift' of stolen property (*res meas*?) to Sulis by a Marinus (cf. 3). The first letter of 3 resembles *E*, not *N*, so [*argen*]*tiolo* must be excluded.

(ii) TRANSCRIPT	(ii) RESTORED TEXT
daṇ.[	daṇ.[
resme[	res me[as
.e. .[	.e. .[

2. *res*: (stolen) property, cf. 32, 15 (with note).

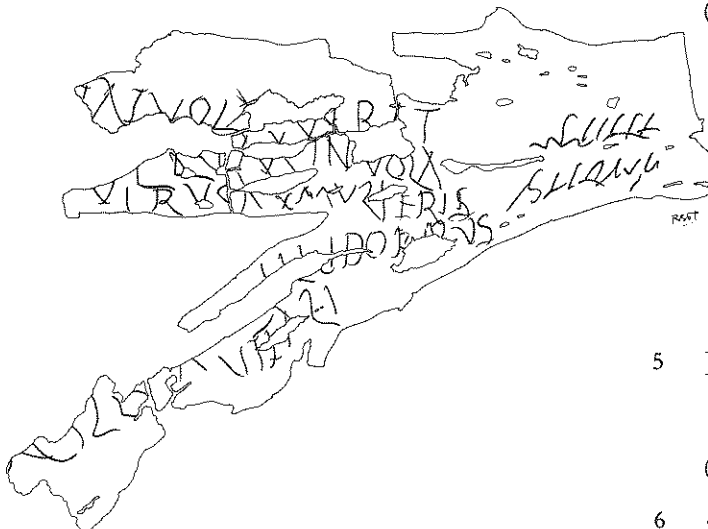| (iii) TRANSCRIPT	(iii) RESTORED TEXT
nit.[	nit.[. . . ?res]
meas[	meas[
infr̞[	infr̞[ascript. . .?

1–2. [*res*] *meas*: (stolen) property, cf. (ii) and 32, 15 (with note).
3. cf. 8, 3 (with note), *a nominibus infrascriptis*.

13

Inv. no. 20,005

Five conjoining fragments of lead sheet full of casting flaws before it was inscribed, and much damaged since. There are the remains of a five-line text in 'rustic capitals' and, the other way up, two lines of ORC by another hand.

	TRANSCRIPT	RESTORED TEXT
	(capitals)	(capitals)
	]inuolauerit	] involaverit
	]lḷuminuola	]llum invola-
	]uiruṣ. .mulieris	[verit. . .]virus. .mulieris
	]illido2–3us	]illido2–3us
5	]. . .lluṃuitali *vacat*	]. . .llụṃ Vitali
	(cursive)	(cursive)
6	espeditus	6 Espeditus
7	tatirụm	7 tatirụm

Capitals
3. Perhaps a bungled *si vir si mulier* formula.
4. The 2–3 damaged letters look like *RR* with perhaps another letter between them; the end of a personal name?
5. *Vitali*: dative of *Vitalis* (personal name) or *Vitali*|[*anus*].

Cursive
Written with the same sort of instrument as the text in capitals, but with greater pressure and so presumably by another hand.
6. *Espeditus*: 'Vulgar' spelling of the cognomen *Expeditus*.
7. *tatirum*: perhaps a 'Celtic' name, cf. *CIL* XIII 10010, 1889, *Tattra* (otherwise read as *Tatira*).

Inv. no. RBS 80 CS 3
BBCS xxxiv (1987), forthcoming

(i) 56 by 46 mm
(ii) 17 by 20 mm
Pb/Sn alloy
not folded

(i) Four conjoining fragments preserving the top L. corner and part of the bottom edge of a tablet, inscribed in five different scripts. (ii) Detached fragment preserving the top R. corner probably of another tablet. The primary inscription of (i) is a 'heading' (1) of large well-spaced capitals followed by five lines (2–6) of smaller capitals. Below them, at the bottom of the tablet, are three lines (7–9) of ORC, 8–9 being inscribed with a different stilus than 7. Between 5 and 6, and 6 and 7, two lines (5a, 6a) of capitals have been interlineated with a finer stilus than the primary text, overlying the cursive of 7. Between 2 and 3, a line (2a) of different ORC, probably third-century, has been interlineated almost invisibly with an extremely fine stilus. (ii) is inscribed in capitals like those of (i), perhaps by the same hand.
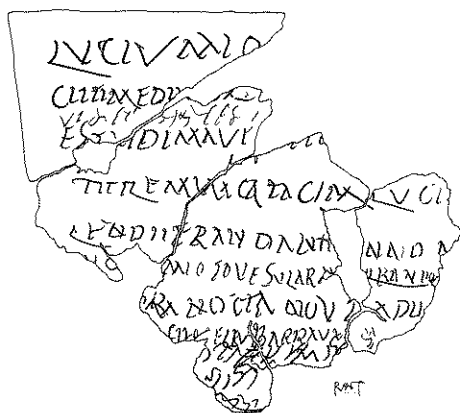
TRANSCRIPT (i)

1	luciumio[	
2	cittimediu.x̣ṣ[	
2a	uibẹc̣[. .]ṭraceọṣ[	(*cursive*)
3	estạịdimaui[. .]. . .[	
4	tittlemṃacatacimluci[	
5	lendiierandant.[. .]nno(*or* d)a(*or* n)[	
5a	[.]ục̣[2–3]miotouesularạ.[*c*.2].iranḍọ.[	
6	[*c*.4].m(*over* r)noṭtanou.m(*or* .a)dịi[	
6a	[*c*.6]cịị. .eleubarrau.[1–2]. .[	
7	]staginemse[*c*.2]. .[	(*cursive*)
8	]. .fẹr[	(*cursive*)
9	].r.(*over* [?])[	(*cursive*)

(ii)

]luio
]ai(*or* mi *or* n)qtit
]rii

The capital script is regular and even elegant, but the reading of some letters is doubtful because it cannot be checked against a probable restored text. The most difficult letters to distinguish are *D* and *O*, *I* and *T*, and (especially if damaged), *A*, *N* and *M*. There seems to be an underlining at the end of 5a (not *L* since it overlies *R*), and another at the end of ii1. The letters of ii1 are smaller than those of i1 and the cut edge is different.

The text of (i) is not reversed or enciphered, but is clearly not Latin. The absence of word-division and the difficulty of deducing it prevent certainty, but there seem to be some un-Latin combinations of letters. These include:

3. *AI*: even if one divides the words here, virtually the only possibility would be [*Mod*]*esta* and the unattested patronymic *Idimavi*.

4. *TTL*: even if -*tit* were taken as a verbal ending, no Latin word begins *tl*-.

ML: the lengthened *M* followed by *Luci*- may well mark a word-ending, but -*catacim* belongs to no Latin word, nor is it plausible as a Latinised 'Celtic' name.

5. *IIE*: perhaps a word-division (but what does one make of -*lendii*/*lende* and *erandant*- ?). *II* for *E* occurs elsewhere in the Bath tablets only in **18**, **53** and perhaps in **101**.

6a. *EVB*: if *barra*- is taken as a new word, the word-ending -*eleu* hardly seems possible.

Difficulties of this kind usually suggest a high concentration of 'Celtic' names (e.g. **53**, where the writing presents greater problems of decipherment). There are certainly several 'Celtic' names or name-elements:

1. *lucium*: not the praenomen, but a variant spelling of *Luccius* (from *Lucco*), cf. *Lucianus* (**17**), *Lucillus* (**30**, 6, with note). Perhaps repeated in 5a.

2. *citti*: cf. *Cittus* (*CIL* V 6928, *Citti*) and *Cettos/Cettus* (XIII 10010.548).

mediu[.]: there is trace of the next letter; it is not *M* and almost certainly not *S* (and *medius* in any case is excluded by *XS* which probably follows); *C* is the most likely restoration. There are 'Celtic' names in *Medi-* where Latin *D* replaces the Celtic barred *D* (see note to **9**, **13**, *Methianus*).

4. *cataci*: cf. *Catacus* (*ECMW*, No. 54) and *Catuc* (No. 50), both incorporating the name-element *catu-* (see D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names* (1967), 171ff., and cf. *Catus* (**4**), *Catinius* (**9**), *Catonius* (**30**)).

luci[ ]: cf. *lucium* (1, with note).

5. *-andant-* : perhaps incorporating the name-element **ande-* (Ellis Evans, 136ff.).

5a. The coincidence of letters with 1 suggests the restoration of [*l*]*uc*[*iu*]*mio*. . . For *lucium* cf. 1 (with note).

sulara: cf. *Sulis*.

-ando- : cf. *-andant-* (5, with note).

6. *notta*: cf. *CIL* XIII 3377, *Notta*.

6a. *barra-* : cf. *Cunobarrus* (*CIL* VII 1267 with *JRS* xxi (1931), 249, No. 8); *RIB* 947, Mars *Barrex*; *EE* IX 1327 (Newstead), (*centuria*) *Barri Compitalici*.

The presence of all these 'Celtic' names, or at least name-elements, prove that this is not an illiterate pseudo-inscription (see 112ff.) – the script is too good in any case – but they do not allow one to interpret 14 simply as a list of names. The other lists from Bath contain a mixture of 'Roman' and 'Celtic' names with recognizable case-endings. (Accusative in **53**, but otherwise nominative except for a few patronymics or matronymics in the genitive. Most names end in *-us* or *-a*; there is no instance of the Celtic nominative *-os*.) 14 looks nothing like this. *Lemma* and *kata* happen to be Greek words, but a transliterated Greek text can be excluded as a possibility. The possibility that must be considered is that 14 is a Celtic text written down in Latin letters.

It is difficult for a non-philologist to dispute Professor Jackson's well-known dictum (*LHEB*, 99–100): 'It should always be borne in mind that British was not a written language, and that the *only* language of writing was Latin; it would not occur to anyone to write in British, nor would they know how to do so.' Jackson excludes names from his generalisation, reasonably enough, since their context was Latin, but nonetheless the number of new or barely-attested 'Celtic' names in the Bath tablets is impressive: *Aesibuas, Aessicunia, Alauna, Andagin, Austus, Belator, Belcatus, Belia, Bellaus, Bitilus, Brigomalla, Britivenda* . . . They probably include errors in transcription (e.g. **10**, 2, *Bruceri*), and sophisticated attempts to catch an un-Latin sound (e.g. **37**, 7, *Lothuius*; **9**, **13**, *Methianus*). They suggest at least a limited attempt to 'write British sounds in Latin characters' (*PNRB*, 15). Professors Rivet and Smith find it 'something of a puzzle' that Celtic texts were not written in Latin characters until after the Roman period, in view of early and continuing experience with names, and the importance of spoken Celtic in Britain. Professor Charles Thomas suggests (*Christianity in Roman Britain* (1981), 62–3) that there may be a sociolinguistic explanation to be drawn from the superior status of Latin: Jackson is *not* saying that it was 'technically impossible to write the bare bones of an official letter, or a memorial, or a love-poem of sorts, in British, using the Latin alphabet. It does seem to have been socially and in some mysterious way psychologically something that, as far as we can see, just was not done.'

The views just quoted, too briefly, are undogmatic and entirely reasonable, but they do contain an element of argument from silence. The Gauls could, and did, write Celtic texts in Latin characters; but apart from graffiti (including elaborate notes of production at La Graufesenque) and personal names, such texts are rare. They do, however, include texts inscribed on sheets of lead and thrown into a sacred spring: six tablets from the principal hot spring at Amélie-les-Bains (see J. Coromines, 'Les Plombs Sorothaptiques d'Arles', *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* xci (1975), 1–53) and another from a mineral spring at Chamalières (published by M. Lejeune and R. Marichal in *Études Celtiques* xv (1976–7), 156–68). The Chamalières tablet (best illustrated in *Gallia* xxxi (1973), 444, pl. 8) was found with thousands of wooden ex votos, including hundreds of uninscribed wooden tablets. The longest text in Gaulish Celtic, apart from the enigmatic Coligny Calendar, is also inscribed on lead, two fragments of the same tablet found in a grave near La Graufesenque, and thus probably a *defixio* (see M. Lejeune et coll., 'Le Plomb de Larzac', *Études Celtiques* xxii (1985), 95–177). Its editors discern more than 160 words. The translation of these texts is still uncertain, but it is fair to say that in Gaul tablets resembling curse tablets were sometimes – not often – written in Celtic. Why not in Britain, where Latin never achieved the status it did in Gaul?

It was technically possible, in Thomas' words, to write a curse tablet in British, using the Latin alphabet. But Sulis understood Latin, the formulas were all Latin, anyone who was able to transcribe Celtic would also know Latin, to be able to read and write at all. Would he *prefer* to write in Celtic? 14 seems to be the first such text. It contains name-elements, but these need not all belong to names; they had an independent role in the Celtic language(s), **ande-* as an intensive prefix, **catu-* meaning 'battle', and so on. 14, although a fragment, seems to be a continuous text which requires translation. Thus it differs in degree from 18, which is virtually a Celtic text but probably no more than a list of names, even if they are of un-Latinised form. 14 is the first text to interrupt the argument from silence that British Celtic was *never* written, but even if it does not remain unique, it is unlikely to find many parallels.

Theft of a bracelet

Inv. no. 531
Britannia xiii (1982), 402, No. 5
Pl. xxiiia

63 by 63 mm
Pb 98.3   Sn 1.6   Cu 0.1
folded twice

Ansate square cut from sheet lead, inscribed in crude capitals with some letters reversed.

TRANSCRIPT	RESTORED TEXT
nomenrei	nomen rei
quidestra	qui destra-
leinuolaue	le involave-
rit *vacat*	rit

'The name of the culprit who has stolen (my) bracelet (is given).'

Like **10**, this text has a 'monumental' quality, being the only Bath tablet to be inscribed on an 'ansate panel' like the 'Tablette de Chamalières' (*Gallia* xxxi (1973), 444, pl. 8), an inscribed lead tablet found in a Gallic healing spring. Perhaps it was intended for nailing up like **16** with its similar formula. Instead, it was inscribed by a semi-literate and folded up before being thrown into the water. Is there an analogy with those 'centurial stones' which have a well-cut panel defaced by an inscription from another hand? If there is, it would imply that this tablet was not cut out by the scribe himself, and even that blank tablets (see **117ff.**) were being manufactured.

1. *nomen rei*: see note to **8**, 3.
2–3. *destrale*: 'Vulgar' spelling of the late-Latin word *dextrale* ('bracelet'), which survives identically as *destrale* in modern Italian.
3–4. *involaverit*: probably a future perfect, but understand *donatur* (cf. **16**), which may have been omitted by mistake.

Inv. no. 523   77 by 58 mm
Britannia xiii (1982), 398–9, No. 3   Pb 25.5   Sn 74.3   Cu 0.3
                                                          not folded

Irregular pentagon partly cut from thick (2 mm) sheet, with two holes probably caused by nails. A text in clumsy capitals has been inscribed on both sides with a stilus or similar instrument.
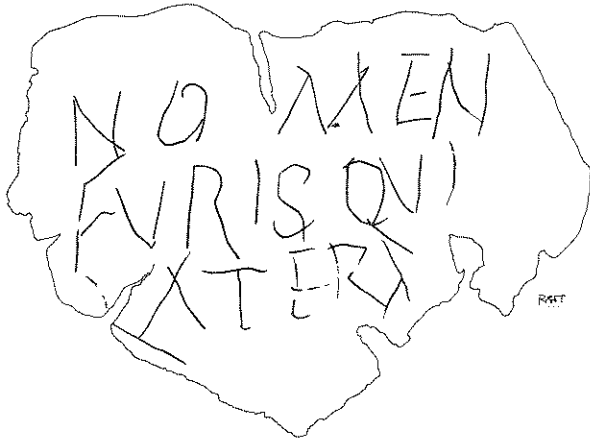
	TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
(*a*)	nomen	(*a*)	nomen
	furisqui		furis qui
	later.		later.

(*b*)	r.uet	(*b*)	r.vet
5	donatu̶	5	donat<u>-
	ur		ur

'*The name of the thief who . . . is given.*'

This seems to be a blundered version of the formula found in the previous tablet (**15**).

1–2. *nomen furis*: see note to **8**, 3.

3–4. Sense requires that this should be a disastrous attempt at *involaverit*, but the corruption is too great to be explained. The *L* was distorted by being written over a crack in the tablet. The final letter of 3 looks like a blundered *A*, but the short stroke is uncertain. The second letter of 4 looks like cursive, but it could be *Q*, *B*, *D* or even NRC *A*.

5–6. *donatur*: the *V* at the end of 5 has been crossed out, either because it was obscured by *T* or because it was realised that it had been repeated in 6. Towards the end of 6 there are scratches suggestive of letters, which seem to be random; there are also several cut-marks on (*b*) which must date from when the tablet was cut from the sheet.

Inv. no. 675   69 by 23 mm
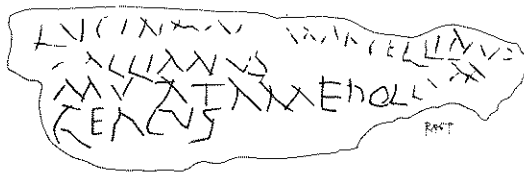Pl. xxiib   Pb 16.4   Sn 83.5
                                   not folded

Flat 'blob' (1.5 mm thick) of high-tin alloy, inscribed on both sides in crude, rather square capitals.
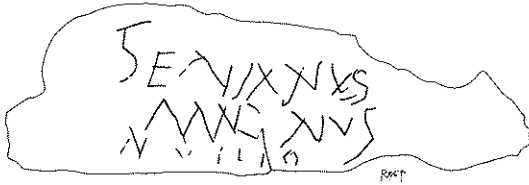
TEXT

(a) Senianus

     Magnus

     Mc.4o

(b) Lucianu[s] Marcellianus

5   [M]allianus

     Mu[t]ata Medol. . .

     geacus

a1. *Senianus*: the first letter might be *G*, but looks more like the other *S*s than the probable *G*s. Like *Senila* (95) it is probably not derived from *senis*, but rather from the 'Celtic' name *S(a)enus*: cf. *ILS* 2572, D. Senius Vitalis *civis Brit.*, *AE* 1956, 249, Aemilius Saeni (filius) *civis Dumnonius*, both buried at Cologne, *RIB* 67, 685 (*Saenus* or *Saenius*). *Sennianus* (*JRS* xxx (1940), 190, No. 30) might be a variant spelling.
2. *Magnus*: Latin cognomen already well attested in Britain and perhaps at Bath (*RIB* 162).
3. Too worn for decipherment.
(b)4 The writing is rather faint on a pitted surface.
    Lucianus: Latin cognomen and also a 'Celtic' name derived from *Lucco*, properly spelt *Luccianus* (30); as *Lucianus* it is also found in *RIB* 617, 2181.
    Marcellianus: cognomen developed, like Marcellinus (53), from the cognomen *Marcellus*.
5. *Mallianus*: developed from the 'Celtic' name *Mallus* (see Holder s.v.), like *Malliacus* (M.R. Hull, *Roman Potters' Kilns of Colchester* (1963), 87).
6. *Mutata*: Latin cognomen (see Kajanto, *Cognomina*, 353), or perhaps a variant spelling of the 'Celtic' name *Mutacus* (see Holder s.v.).
    Medol. . . This name perhaps incorporated the element *Medio-*. The surface is too worn to be able to say whether the name continued into 7.
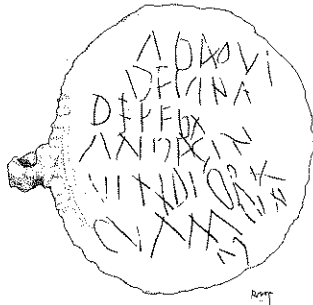7. *geacus*: perhaps part of the preceding name. *Geacus* is not attested as a name, but it is difficult to read -*genus*, which would be a plausible name-ending. *Se(n)acus* (cf. *ECMW* No. 78) also seems too difficult.

18   *List of Celtic names?*

Disc probably of tin with 'bronze' patination, having attached ring for suspension as a pendant. Inscribed with a fine point in straggling capitals.

TEXT

   adixoui
   deiana
  deieda
  andagin
5 uindiorix
  cuamiin
     ai

No letters have been lost, and the reading except for the dotted letters is hardly in doubt. If a list of names, only *Vindiorix* is certain. All the other lists of names are a recognizable mixture of Roman and 'Celtic' names of Latinized form. No other tablet is of pendant form.

1. *adixoui*: not a Latin word or attested personal name (whether genitive or dative).
2. *deiana*: *deuina* could also be read. Not in *TLL* Onomasticon, but perhaps a 'Celtic' personal name derived from *deiuos.('god') like the place-names *Deva* and *Devona* (var. *Devana*) and various personal names in *Deio-*, *Dio-* and *Devo-* (see *PNRB* s.v. and Holder).
3. *deieda*: the third letter carries a short diagonal stroke, perhaps only a slip of the stilus or casual damage. It is not the remains of *P* or *R*. Not in *TLL* Onomasticon, but perhaps a 'Celtic' personal name like *deiana* (2).
4. *andagin*: no letters have been lost, and the word is thus of un-Latin form. (Apart from a few oddities like *quin*, no Latin words end in *-in*; the Latin of the Bath tablets occasionally displays the loss of final consonant, e.g. 5, 5 *mentes sua(s)*, but not a whole syllable.) Perhaps cognate with or a variant of the 'Celtic' name *Andegenus* (*CIL* XIII 10010.119), which like many others incorporates the Celtic intensive prefix **ande-* (see D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names* (1967), 136ff.).
5. *uindiorix*: the 'Celtic' name *Vindiorix* seems to be unattested, but is a plausible formation from **uindo-* ('white', cf. the nomen *Vindius*) and *rix ('king'). *Deomiorix* (99, 2) is of similar formation.
6–7. *cuamiin|ai: II* (for *E*, see note to 53, 9) seems more likely than a clumsy *V*. No letters have been lost from 7, which presumably completes 6; the stilus seems to have slipped when writing the final *I*. If this is a personal name, possibly the patronymic of *Vindiorix*, it seems to be unattested, whether it is 'Celtic' or derived from κύαμος ('bean').

19

Inv. no. 399   36 by 21 mm

Fragment preserving part of the bottom three lines of a tablet.
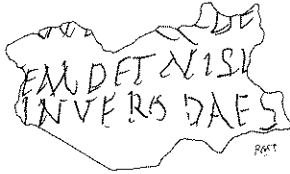
TRANSCRIPT	RESTORED TEXT
]3–4[*c*.2]!!.ḍe[	. . .
].emdetnisi[	]em det nisi [
]inuerodaes[	] in vero d(e)ae S [uli *or* is

Only *nisi* can be distinguished with reasonable certainty; it implies that the curse would not be lifted 'unless' the stolen property was returned. *LL* suggests the *si puer si puella* formula, but this cannot be fitted to what remains of 1. No parallels elucidate the proposed word division of 2 and 3. *Deae* is liable to be reduced to one syllable (see **46**, **65**) because *E* and *AE* were the same vowel-sound. *RIB Index*, p. 96, collects six instances of *d(e)ae*.

Inv. no. RBS 80 CS 3

(i) 39 by 19 mm
(ii) 28 by 24 mm

Two conjoining fragments and another, not necessarily from the same tablet or by the same hand, deeply inscribed in bold capitals.

(i) TRANSCRIPT

]eaesu. .[

]. .[

(i) RESTORED TEXT

d]eae Su[li

]. .[

(ii) TRANSCRIPT

sequ[

etm[

f[

(ii) RESTORED TEXT

sequ[

et m[

f[

The Q is ORC.

Inv. no. RBS 80 CS 3   21 by 16 mm
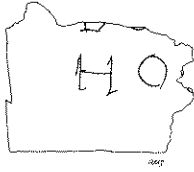
Fragment of 'rustic capitals'.

	TRANSCRIPT	RESTORED TEXT
	]ṣulist[	? dea] Ṣulis, t[ibi
	]ẹn[	]ẹn[

There is no close parallel for the restoration suggested, but cf. **38** 1, and **60**, 2, *dono ti*[*bi*]. It might also be an address to Sulis by someone called *St*[. . .].   2 might be *arg*]*en*[*tiolos* (cf. **8**).

Inv. no. 399   24 by 20 mm

TRANSCRIPT   RESTORED TEXT

d.[d.[

ho.[hoc [

23

Inv. no. 307

38 by 40 mm
Pb
not folded?

Top R. corner of a thick (2mm) lead tablet, inscribed in crude capitals.

TRANSCRIPT	RESTORED TEXT
]ṇus	]ṇus
].u[?	].u[?
]lauit*c*.3	invo]lavit *c*.3
.*traces*	*traces*

1 is probably the end of a personal name.

Inv. no. RBS 80 CS 3   34 by 22 mm
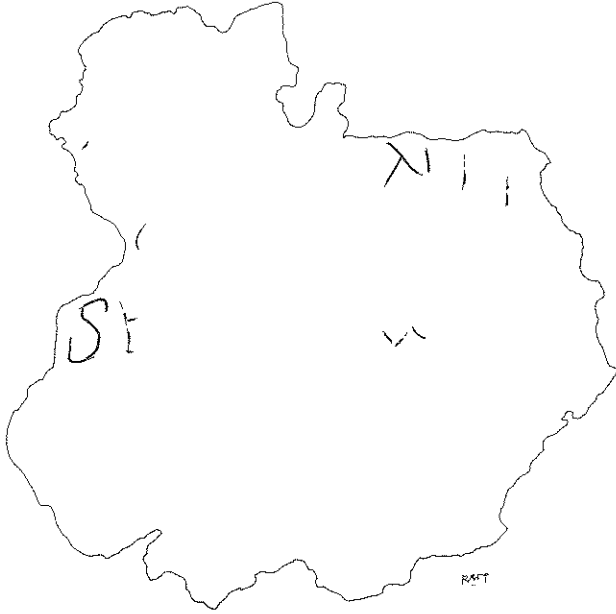
TRANSCRIPT

].pita.[

]dae(*or* f)n(*or* al)su.[

2. Perhaps restore]*da falsum*[.   The upward slope of the horizontal strokes suggests *F*; there is too much space before *S* just for *N*.

25

Inv. no. 695

Irregular flat (1–2 mm thick) 'blob' of lead, its inscribed surface almost entirely

TRANSCRIPT

traces

se[

[   ]

Inv. no. RBS 79 CS 3 11 by 10 mm

TRANSCRIPT

]ser[

ser[*vus*]?

Inv. no. 680

c. 130 by 150 mm
Pb 36.5   Sn 63.5
still folded

Rectangle folded five times and doubled over, now broken into four conjoining pieces. There is a text on the inside in bold capitals c. 10 mm high. On the outside, before it was folded, a line of capitals was inscribed in one corner. (Not drawn).

TRANSCRIPT

[. .]uendi

Presumably a man's name in the genitive case, -vendus being a common 'Celtic' name ending. But unless the text continues from the other side, [Cuno]vendi (e.g.) is too long to be restored.

Inv. no. 399

19 by 19 mm

TRANSCRIPT

].ẹr.[

Inv. no. 399

9 by 13 mm

TRANSCRIPT

].[

].n[

30–33, $N=\mathcal{N}$ or (32) $\mathcal{N}$

34–43, $N=\mathcal{V}$

44–50, $N=\mathcal{V}$ (first half of the second stroke is horizontal)

51–59, $N=\mathcal{V}$ (first half of the second stroke slopes upward)

60–63, $N=\mathcal{V}$ (resembles *E*)

64–66, 'transitional' texts with NRC features (but **65** also has $N=\mathcal{N}$)

67–84, fragments, grouped roughly by similarity of hand

85–93, *descripta* without line drawings

The texts collected by R. Seider, *Paläographie der lateinischen Papyri* I (1972), imply that $N=\mathcal{V}$ is a late ORC form, since it is first found in No. 40 (*P. Dura* 125, A.D. 235). It is never found in the Vindolanda tablets (*c.* A.D. 100). The usual Vindolanda form ($N=\mathcal{N}$) is hardly found at Bath. Other Vindolanda forms are not found at Bath (the references are to A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: the Latin Writing-tablets* (1983), Fig. 11 and 60ff.): three-stroke *A* (11.2), three-stroke *E* (11.9), both regarded as early forms; two-stroke *H* (11.15, 'the normal form in ORC . . . which occurs most often in the tablets'), *I* with rightward serif/ligature (11.16, 17). By contrast, *E* made with two connected strokes (11.11, 'not uncommon in second-century papyri but rare in the tablets') and *L* with a long diagonal descender (no good example at Vindolanda) are both common at Bath. Most of the Bath ORC tablets resemble Seider I, No. 42 (*P. Oxy.* 1114, A.D. 237, but with a *D* not found at Bath), No. 43 (*P. Dura* 56a, A.D. 208), and indeed other Dura papyri of the first half of the third century, except for an incipient NRC *S* ($\mathcal{J}$). Grouping the Bath tablets by form of *N* is somewhat arbitrary, and may not give a valid chronological sequence or development, but it does help when distinguishing the various hands. The result is surprising: all substantial ORC texts (**30–66**) seem to be by different hands, nor does there seem to be unity of authorship with, or among, any of the fragments (**67–84**).

List of names

Inv. no. 657
Britannia xvi (1985), 323, No. 2
Pl. xxiv

145 mm diameter
pewter
folded twice

Circular plate with beaded rim (cf. 99) inscribed in a bold, calligraphic cursive.
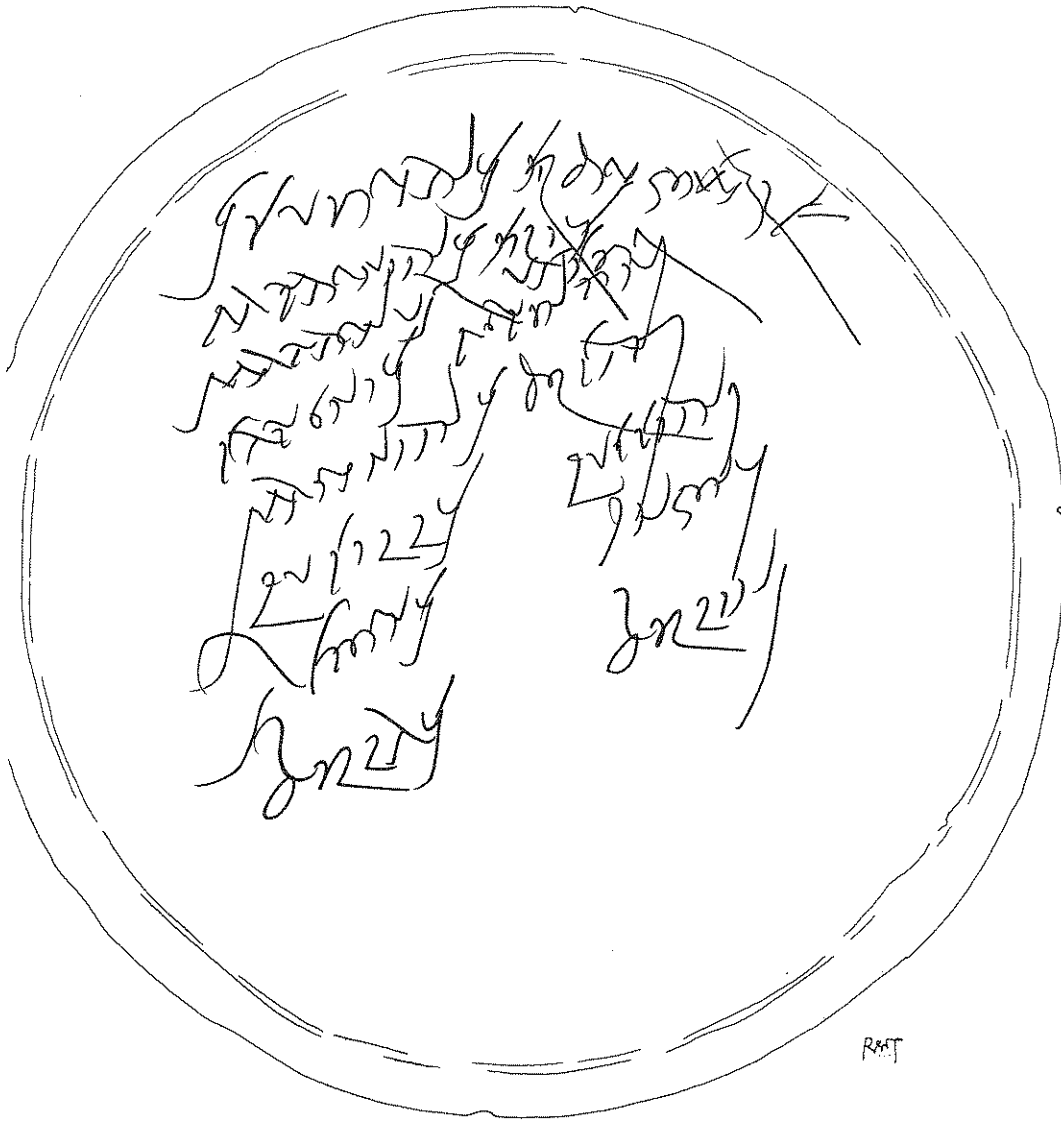
TEXT

Severianus fil(ius) Brigomall(a)e

Patarnianus filius

Matarnus ussor

Catonius Potentini

Marinianus Belcati

Lucillus Lucciani

Aeternus Ingenui

Bellaus Bellini

'*Severianus son of Brigomalla; Patarnianus (his?) son; Matarnus (and his?) wife; Catonius (son of) Potentinus; Marinianus (son of) Belcatus; Lucillus (son of) Luccianus; Aeternus (son of) Ingenuus; Bellaus (son of) Bellinus.*'

This is the most elegant ORC text from the spring, indeed with **10** the most elegant text of all. Elaborate initials are otherwise rare: **37**(b) is the only other set, with isolated examples in **36**, **45** and **79**. There is also word division, accentuated by a central boss in **6–7** which was avoided by the scribe. The form of *N* varies, but is exaggeratedly vertical and in *Matarnus* and *Marinianus* approaches that of **31** which is common in second-century papyri, but hardly found in the Bath tablets. **30** therefore seems to be an early Bath text, second-century rather than third. In format it is closest to **9**, also a list of names glossed with *ussor* or a patronymic.

1. *Severianus*: cf. **95**, 4, a cognomen developed from the common cognomen *Severus*.

Brigomall(a)e: O and E in this hand can be confused (cf. the O of *ussor* with the second E of *Aeternus*), but since *Brigo-* is a common 'Celtic' name element, one should read O. The M was written without lifting the stilus between the second and third strokes; the diagonal stroke above it was written after the ligatured *AL* and may have been intended to shorten the long descender. The 'Vulgar' spelling *(a)e* is common, cf. *sanctissim(a)e* in **10**, 3. The name *Brigomalla* seems to be unattested, but cf. *Brigomaglos* (*RIB*, p. 541), which by lenition of g ultimately becomes *Briamail* (*LHEB*, 448). Except for *Matutin(a)e* (**98**, 5 with note), it is the only matronymic in the Bath tablets (but cf. **53**, 10). Identification by female lineage is found in some Latin curse tablets from Italy and Africa (see D.R. Jordan in *Philologus* cxx (1976), 127–32), but does not seem to have been significant at Bath.

2. *Patarnianus*: 'Vulgar' spelling of *Paternianus*, a derivation of *Paternus* unattested in Britain, but cf. *Paterninus* (*ECMW* No. 294). Since Welsh *Padarn* develops from *Paternus* (still *Patern* in Old Welsh, see *LHEB*, 280–1), the spelling *Patarnianus* is of interest, since is shows that the shift from *ern* to *arn* had already occurred in Britain in the Roman period.

3. *Matarnus*: 'Vulgar' spelling of *Maternus* (cf. *Patarnianus*), common as a name and cognomen in Roman Britain.

ussor: 'Vulgar' spelling of *uxor*, as in **9**, where however it glosses two female names; here *et* should probably be supplied, '. . . and his wife' (unnamed).

4. *Catonius*: like *Catinius* (**9**, 11) derived from the 'Celtic' name *Cattus/os*, and more usually spelt *Cattonius*.

Potentini: 'Roman' cognomen (e.g. *RIB* 334) derived from *potens*, which survived the Roman period in Britain (cf. *ECMW* No. 84, *Icori(x) filius Potentini*).

5. *Marinianus*: another 'Roman' cognomen, derived from the cognomen *Marinus* (cf. **3**, 12). cf. *CIL* VI 3279, Nig. Marinianus *natione Britanicianus*.

Belcati: the second letter could be O (see note to *Brigomall(a)e*), but *Bel-* is a common 'Celtic' name element; the name *Belcatus* (cf. *Cattus*) seems to be unattested.

6. *Lucillus*: despite its apparent derivation from the praenomen *Lucius*, this too is a 'Celtic' name derived, like his father's, from *Lucco* (for which see Holder). *Lucco* is already recorded among the Dobunni (XVI 49).

Lucciani: cf. *Lucianus* (**17**, 4); not in Holder, but derived from *Lucco* like *Lucconianus* and *Luccius*.

7. *Aeternus*: the A is unusually elaborate; the name is a 'Roman' cognomen (*CIL* VII 1297, *RIB* 648) popular in the post-Roman period (*ECMW* Nos. 97, 271, 306).

Ingenui: a cognomen popular in Roman Britain.

8. *Bellaus*: properly *Bella(v)us*, cf. *ser(v)us* (**9**, 7 with note); 'Celtic' name apparently unattested, but cognate with (and derived from?) his father's name.

Bellini: a 'Celtic' name frequent in *CIL* XII, already attested in Britain (*RIB* 611, 1027).

Inv. no. 677

36 by 88 mm
Pb 54.5   Sn 45.5
folded three times

Five conjoining fragments of a rectangle cut from alloy sheet (the hole between 2 and 3 is a casting flaw)
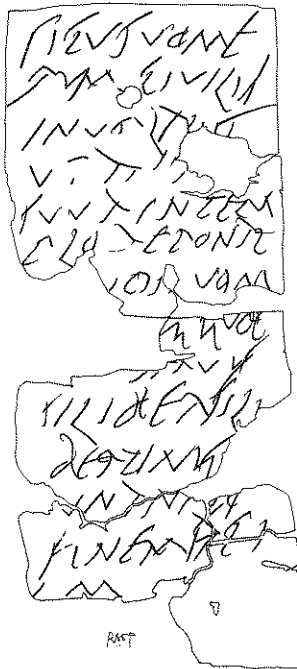
	TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
	sicusuome		si (qui)s vome-
	remciuilis		rem Civilis
	inuolauit		involauit
	utan̲. .[c.2]		ut an̲[imam]
5	suuaintem̲	5	su<u>a(m) in tem̲-
	plodeponat		plo deponat
	[. .].o̲.uom		[?si n]o[n] vom-
	[4–5]. .u̲b̲		[erem .] . .u̲b̲
	[3–4]. .r̲uus		[c.2 si se]r̲vus
10	silibersil̲i̲	10	si liber si l̲i̲-
	bertinus[c.2]		bertinus [c.2]
	u̲nan̲. .o̲		u̲nan̲. .o̲
	finemfaci		finem faci-
	.m *vacat*		[a]m

'If anyone has stolen Civilis' ploughshare (I ask) that he lay down his life in the temple [?unless] . . . the ploughshare, whether slave or free or freedman . . . I make an end to . . .'

Civilis' ploughshare is the only item in the Bath tablets which could not have been stolen at the baths, unless *manicilia* (5, 2, see note) are farming gloves. The author, Civilis presumably, therefore lived outside Bath. Sulis is known to have had devotees from other provinces; unsurprisingly, she also appealed to the local rural population. The writing is practised, but we do not know whether Civilis was the scribe. The formulation in some respects is unusual, which makes restoration difficult.

1. *si cus* (i.e. *quis*): cf. 60, 3 and 63, 2; for the 'Vulgar' spelling, cf. 4, 2, *comc* (*quomodo*).
2. *Civilis*: the name can reasonably be restored in 53, 4 and 55, 5, but was clearly borne by three different people. It is a common cognomen already well attested in Britain; the three tablets are by different hands in different formats, and refer to different incidents.
3. *involavit*: the second *V* contains a superfluous stroke, but the reading is hardly in doubt (not *involaverit*).
   (*rogo*) or similar must be understood before *ut*, as in 5, 5.
4–6. *ut an[imam] sua(m) in templo deponat*: for the idea, cf. 5 (with note to 8–9); for the phrase cf. Audollent 250B (Carthage), <h>animam et <i>spiritum deponat.
   su<u>a(m): *V* has been repeated in error (thinking of *suum*?) and the final consonant omitted, perhaps a 'Vulgar' error (cf. 5), but more likely part of the slip of the pen that repeated *V*.
7–9. Only partial restoration is possible. There is enough left of *non* to make its restoration probable, with space for two letters before it. The threat to the thief's life (4–6) requires something on the lines of '. . . unless he returns the ploughshare', so *si non* (for the usual *nisi*) is reasonable. But in 8 -*erem* as required by *vom*- (7) does not fill the whole space available. There is probably one letter still to restore, and sense to make of the four letters which follow: the first is probably not *M*, which in this hand is made with three or four strokes, but perhaps something ligatured to the previous letter (*E*?). The second letter could be part of *G*, or ligatured *EI*, or *H*. The last two letters are surely *VB*. There is space for two more letters in 9, before the certain restoration of [*si se*]*r̲vus*.
10–11. *si libertinus*: this formula is not found elsewhere; it is odd to find a second alternative to *si*

liber, the mutually exclusive alternatives always falling into pairs, but it does not seem possible to restore an alternative to *libertinus* (say *ingenuus*) in 12. The two letters lost after *libertinus* cannot therefore be *si*; perhaps *et* or *ut*.

12. There is not quite enough space to restore *unam*. The slight curve of the fifth letter suggests *R*, which makes *reo* ('the guilty person', cf. **15**, 1) a possibility.

13–14. *finem faci[a]m*: an end to what? The loss/injury, or the thief himself (and so perhaps 12 should be restored as *unan*(for *m*) *reo*). This phrase is not found in any other tablet, and with *libertinus* and *animam suam in templo deponat* lends **31** a sophistication which is belied by its 'Vulgar' spellings.

32 Theft of a cloak and bathing tunic

Inv. no. 616

78 by 91 mm
Pb 23.4 Sn 76.5
folded four times

Three conjoining fragments of a rectangle cut from alloy sheet, shallowly inscribed with a stilus. The surface is rather worn and the writing now faint.
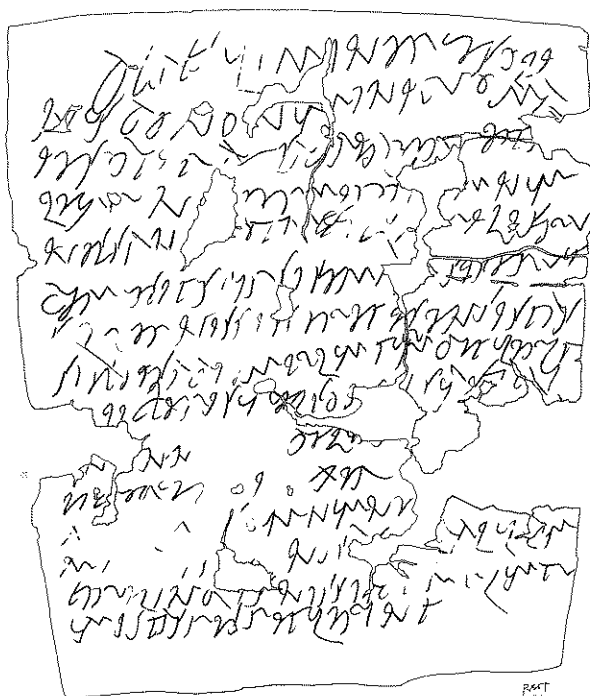
TRANSCRIPT

vacat dẹaẹṣuliminerueṣọli
nusdonoṇuminiṭuoma
iesṭaṭipạxsabạaearẹmet. . .
leumn.[.].ermiṭṭạ.[. .]mnum
5 necsan. . .ṭẹm.eịquiṃihifru
dem.ecitsịuirsifemị[.].siseruus
s[.]ḷ. .ernissi. .eretegensistas
s.eciesad. .mplumtuụmdetulerit
[2–3]. .berisuiue(*over* e)lsoṇ1–2sua.equi
10 [.].[1–2]. .[*c.*5]deg. . .[
eiquọque[*c.*3].[*c.*2]xẹ.[
.[*c.*4].[*c.*2]. .mnumne[
m.[*c.*3]. .[*c.*3]n. .[*c.*4].alụl.ụm
eṭṛelinq[.].ṣnissiaḍ.[.]mplumtu
15 umistasresretulerint *vacat*

RESTORED TEXT

   dẹae Ṣuli Minerv(a)e Ṣọli-
nus dono ṇumini ṭuo ma-
iesṭaṭị pạxsa(m) ḅa(ln)earẹm et [pal-
leum [nec p]ermiṭṭạ[s so]mnum
5 nec san[ita]ṭẹm<.>eị qui ṃihi fr(a)u-
dem [f]ecit sị vir si femị[na] si servus
s[i] ḷ[ib]er nissi [<s>s]e retegens istas
s[p]ecies ad [te]mplum tuụm detulerit
(2–3li]beri sui vel soṇ1–2 sua e[t?] qui
10 [.].[1–2]. .[*c.*5]deg. . .[
ei quọque [*c.*6]xẹ.[
[*c.*8 so]mnum ne[c sanitate-
m [*c.*9]n[*c.*6p]al<ụ>ḷ[e]ụm
eṭ ṛẹli<n>q[ua]s nissi aḍ [te]mplum tu-
15 um istas res retulerint

'Solinus to the goddess Sulis Minerva. I give to your divinity (and) majesty (my) bathing tunic and cloak. Do not allow sleep or health to him who has done me wrong, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, unless he reveals himself and brings those goods to your temple . . . his children or his . . . and(?) who . . . to him also . . . sleep or [health] . . . cloak and the rest, unless they bring those things to your temple.'

The text is repetitive and formulaic. It contains three 'Vulgar' spellings, *paxsa*, *Minerv(a)e*, *nis<s>i*, 'correct' forms of two of which occur in other Bath tablets. There are also quite a few simple spelling mistakes, the state of the tablet leaving some of them in doubt: *paxsa(m)*, *ba(ln)earem*, *fr(a)udem*, *<e>ei*, *<s>se*, *s(p)onsa* (?), *pal<u>leum*, *reli<n>quas*, *retuleri<n>t*. The handwriting is fluent and practised; these mistakes can be seen as due to carelessness and perhaps haste.

1. Indented, like **43**, **65**. For the language cf. **34**, *deae Suli Minervae Docca. dono numini tuo . . . Minerv(a)e*: 'Vulgar' spelling, *-e*, for *-ae*, as in **65**, 1.

1–2. *Solinus*: not *Sulinus* (*RIB* 105, 150, 151), but itself perhaps a theophoric name (from *Sol*); already attested in *RIB* 22.

2–3. *dono numini tuo maiestati*: cf. **34** (quoted above) and **35**, *deae Suli Minervae. rogo sanctissimam maiestatem tuam . . .* The writer omitted *et*, or perhaps intended *numinis tui* (cf. **10**, 18–9).

3. *paxsa(m)*: the *M* was omitted by mistake, since the writer does not consistently omit the final consonant; for *paxsa* cf. **62**, 2, and for its meaning see J.P. Wild, 'Soft-finished textiles in Roman Britain', *CQ* n.s. xvii (1967), 133–5. It seems to be a 'Vulgar' spelling of *pexa* ('combed'), for (*tunica* or *vestis*) *pexa*, a soft-finished woollen garment or shirt; in Roman Britain it may have meant no more than *tunica*, judging by the Middle Welsh loan word *peis* ('tunic'), modern Welsh *pais* ('petticoat').

ba(ln)earem: cf. **63**, 2. The succeeding *et* which links *palleum* to *paxsa(m)* suggests that this is an adjective defining *paxsa(m)*; the scribe omitted *LN* perhaps because of the similarity between his elaborate *E* and an *L*. What garment is meant by a 'bathing tunic' is obscure, but it was presumably something like the *balnearis vestis* said to have been worn by Alexander Severus under a cloak (*lacerna*) when he returned from using the public baths (*Historia Augusta, Alex. Sev.* 42.1). Solinus evidently lost *both* garments while using the baths of Sulis.

3–4. *[pal]|leum*: this hypercorrection of the Classical form *pallium* (see **43** and **64**), a reaction to the tendency of *e* in hiatus to close to *i* in 'Vulgar' Latin, is also found in **62** and *RIB* 323 (Caerleon).

4–5. *[nec p]ermitta[s so]mnum nec san[ita]tem*: the space available suits the restoration of *nec* rather than *non*. The formula with variants is common: cf. **52**; **10**, 35 (*somnum*); *RIB* 306 (Lydney), *Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7 (Pagans Hill) (*sanitatem*), etc.

5. *ei*: *E* seems to have been written twice in error.

5–6. *qui mihi fr(a)udem fecit*: quasi-legal phrase found also in *Revue de Philologie* xliv (1920), 17, No. 27 (Trier), *q(u)ia mihi fraude(m) fe(cit)*; cf. *Britannia* x (1979), 344, No. 4 (Uley), and perhaps **35**, **85**, **105**. The spelling *fr(a)udem* seems to be no more than a mistake, one of several in this text, since the 'Vulgar' monophthongisation of *-au-* is to *-o-* or, if first-syllable and followed by *-u-*, to *-a-* (e.g. *A(u)gustalis*).

6–7. *si vir si femina* (etc.): this formula is so common in British curse tablets that the restoration is certain.

7. *nissi*: this 'Vulgar' gemination of *s* after a short vowel is also found in *Britannia* x (1979), 342, No. 2 and 343, No. 3 (Uley); cf. **65**, 10, *nessi*.

[<s>s]e retegens: from the surviving traces it appears that *S* has been written twice, perhaps under the influence of *nissi*. The phrase is not found in any other curse tablet.

8. *s[p]ecies*: the repetition in 14–15 requires this to be a synonym of *res*, and so it is being used in the late-Latin sense of 'goods'. (This seems to be an instance of a 'Vulgar' text anticipating later documentary usage).

ad [te]mplum tuum detulerit: cf. 14–15 (*retulerint*), **10**, 17–9, cf. **38** (*pertulerit*), *Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 2 (Uley) (*ad fanum attulerit*) cf. *Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7 (Pagans Hill). The compounding of *-tulerit* varies without apparent change of meaning. The same compound (*deferat*) is found in **62**.

9. This line seems to introduce a curse on the thief's children as well, cf. **10**, 14, *Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7 (Pagans Hill). The word missing at the beginning might be *vel*, *ut*, or even *cum* (reading *[li]beri(s) sui(s)*).

son1–2 sua: the loss of 10–11 makes this obscure; *vel* and the repetition of *sui . . . sua* suggest that it is something related to the thief which contrasts with *liberi sui*, which makes *s(p)on[sa] sua* ('his wife') an attractive restoration. However, the damaged letter before *sua* resembles *E* and cannot be *A*. Perhaps one should restore *s(p)on[s(a)e] suae* ('or his wife's'). Another possibility is *s(p)on[te] sua* ('of his own accord').

12. cf. 4–5; *nec* (or *non*) *permittas* should probably be restored as well.

13. *[p]al<u>l[e]um*: can be restored from its previous occurrence in 3–4; *V* seems to have been ligatured to the second *L*, but the surface is corroded here and it may only be an elaborate serif.

14. *et reli<n>q[ua]s*: *V* is easily restored since it tends to be written well above the line after *Q* (see 5, *qui*). This seems to be a mis-spelling of the adjective *reliquus* influenced by the cognate verb *relinquo*. As a verb *relinquas* makes little sense here.

14–15. Repetition with variation of *res* for *species* and *retulerint* for *detulerit* of 7–8, presumably for literary effect; unless further victims have been introduced in 9, the plural of *retulerint* is a mistake.

15. *res*: in the sense of (stolen) property, cf. **12** (ii), **86**, *JRS* xlviii (1958), 150, No. 3 (Kelvedon), *Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 3 (Uley).

'Gift' to Mars

Inv. no. RBS 80 CS 3 37 by 38 mm

Top L. corner of a rectangle cut from alloy sheet.
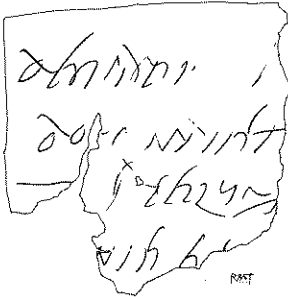
TRANSCRIPT	RESTORED TEXT
deomarti.[	deo Marti .[
do. .maiest[	do[no?] maiest[ati tuo
sacellum.[	sacellum .[
[c.2]nisie. .[	[c.2] nisi e.[

'. . . to the god Mars . . . [I] give to [your] majesty . . . shrine . . . unless . . .'

1. *deo Marti*: this is the only tablet addressed to Mars, but cf. **97**, 1, *Basilia donat in templum Martis* . . .   The only other epigraphic evidence for the cult of Mars at Bath is *RIB* 140 (see note to **97**, 1).
2. *do[no] maiest[ati tuo]*: the surviving traces do not particularly suit the restoration of *dono*, *donat* or *donavi*, but one of them is required by *do[*] and the context. For the phrase, cf. **32**, 1–2, **35**, 3.
3. *sacellum*: there is a horizontal line, apparently not part of a letter, L. of *sacellum*. The reference is obscure, not necessarily to a temple (cf. **97**, 1) but to a small shrine (see *OLD* s.v. and cf. *ILS* 5317, which couples *sacella* with *aras signaque* ('altars and statues') as things to be cleared away in preparation for building works); perhaps no more is meant than something like the gabled reliefs (*RIB* 131, 132) dedicated to Mars and Romulus at Bisley (Glos.).
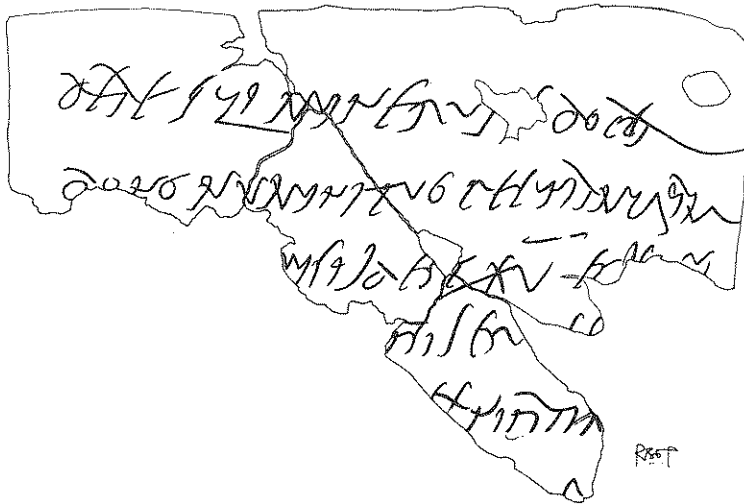4. *nisi*: implies the 'gift' of a thief *unless* stolen property is returned.

34 *Theft of five denarii*

Inv. no. 621
Britannia xiii (1982), 403, No. 6

98 by 66 mm
Pb 33.9   Sn 66.1
not folded

Four conjoining fragments of a rectangle cut from alloy sheet, inscribed with a stilus by a practised hand. There is a nail hole in the top R. corner.

TRANSCRIPT

deaesulimineruaẹdocca

dononuminituopecuniamquam

[*c*.6]ṃisiidest⊁ụeṭiṣ[.]ui

[*c*.12   ]ṭsiser[. .]ṣṣ[*c*.5]

5   [*c*.15   ]exṣigat. .[*c*.5]

].[

RESTORED TEXT

deae Suli Minervạẹ Docca

dono numini tuo pecuniam quam

[*c*.5 a]ṃisi id est (denarios) (quinque) eṭ iṣ [q]ui

[eam involaveri]ṭ si ser[vu]ṣ ṣ[i liber]

5   [si vir si femina] ex<ṣ>igat[ur *c*.5]

].[

'Docca to the goddess Sulis Minerva. I give to your divinity the money which I have lost, that is five denarii; and he who [has stolen it], whether slave or [free, whether man or woman], is to be compelled . . .'

1–2. For the language cf. **32**, *deae Suli Minerv(a)e Solinus. dono numini tuo* . . .
   Docca: *CIL* XIII 10010.794 (followed by *TLL* Onomasticon) takes *Docca* to be an abbreviation of *Doccalus*, both of them occurring on stamped samian. This text proves that *Docca* is an independent 'Celtic' name, from which *Doccalus* and *Doccius* (*CIL* VII 1218, Lydney) are derived.
3. [*a*]*misi*: cf. *Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 2 (Uley); *perdidi(t)* is more common.
   (*denarios*): the usual sign, as found in *Britannia* xv (1984), 339, No. 7 (Pagans Hill) and, a variant, *JRS* liii (1963), 122 (Ratcliffe-on-Soar). For other thefts of money, see **8, 54, 98**.
   et: *E* is certain, but *ut* would be neater since it would subordinate *exsigatur* to *dono* ('I give that he may . . .') as in **97**; however, this clumsy *et* is also found in **44**, 5.
4–5. These formulas are so common in British curse tablets that they can be restored here with certainty.
5. *ex*<*s*>*igat*[*ur*]: for the 'Vulgar' spelling, and the formula of 'giving' stolen property to the god who is required to 'exact' it, cf. *Britannia* x (1979), 343, No. 3 (Uley), *deo* . . . *donat ita ut exsigat*; see also **41**, 3 (with note). Properly it is the debt which is 'exacted', but *exigor* (passive) is occasionally used of the debtor.

35 *Plea for vengeance*

Inv. no. 655

<div style="text-align:right">61 by 46 mm
Pb 18.1   Sn 81.9
not folded</div>

Six conjoining fragments of a rectangle of cast alloy sheet, inscribed with a stilus by a practised hand. The scribe did not cross his G or Cs. Only the top edge and part of the L. edge survive, but although the R. edge is lost, almost the whole width of 1–3 remains.
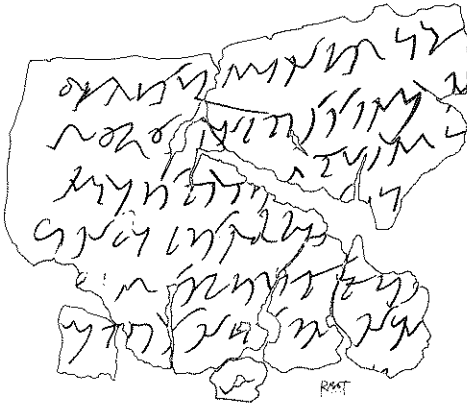
TRANSCRIPT

deaesul[.]mineruae[

rogo[.]anctissimam[

maiestatẹmtuamu[

uindicesabhiṣ[.]ui[

5   [.]..mfeceruntutẹi.[

mittasneçsemnum[

[   ].[   ]..[

RESTORED TEXT

deae Sul[i] Minervae

rogo [s]anctissimaṃ

maiestatẹṃ tuam u[t]

vindices ab hiṣ [q]ui [fra-]

5   [ude]m fecerụnt ut ẹi[s per-]

mittas neç ṣ(o)mnum [nec

[   ].[   ]..[

'To the goddess Sulis Minerva. I ask your most sacred majesty that you take vengeance on those who have done (me) wrong, that you permit them neither sleep [nor . . .'

2ff. For the formula cf. Audollent 122 (Emerita), *per tuam maiestatem te rogo oro obsecro uti vindices quot mihi furti factum est.*

2–3. [s]*anctissimam maiestatem tuam*: for the superlative cf. 10, 3; for *maiestatem* cf. 32, 2, 33.

4. *vindices*: cf. 66, 12, *devindices*, and *Britannia* xviii (1987), 360, No. 1 (London): *tibi rogo, Metunus, u(t) m(e) vendicas*, repeated twice.

4–5. [q]*ui* [fra|ude]*m fecerunt*: cf. 32, 5–6, *qui mihi fr(a)udem fecit*, with note.

5–6. [per]|*mittas nec s(o)mnum*: for the formula cf. 32, 4–5, with note. *Somnum* has certainly been written with an *E*, but this must be a mistake, either in copying or because *E* in this hand resembles an incomplete *O*.

7. *Sanitatem* should probably be restored at the beginning of the line. What may be part of the bottom edge is preserved, but if 7 was the last line, the text must have ended abruptly.

36 Theft of two . . .(?)

Inv. no. 679

59 by 55 mm
Pb 21.0 Sn 79.0
folded

Fragment of a rectangle(?) cut from alloy sheet, inscribed with a stilus by a practised hand. Only the top L. corner and part of the L. edge survive, but although the R. edge is lost, only two letters are missing from 5–6.
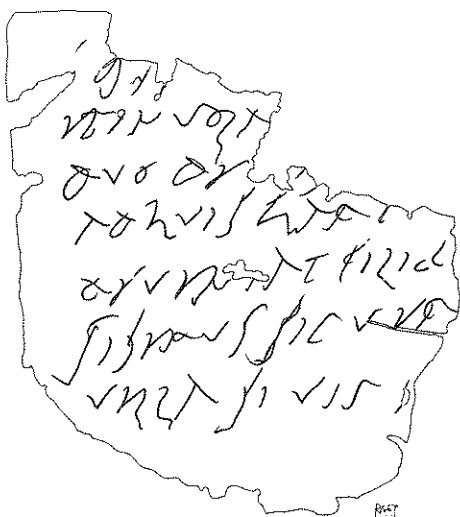
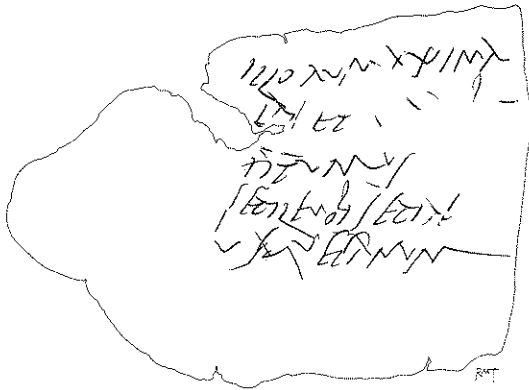| TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
[1–2]q. .[		[1–2]q. .[
etinuola[		et invola[vit *or* verit
duode[. .]. .[		duo de[. .]. .[
adhuisgar.[		adhuisgar.[
5 deueniatsilib[	5	deveniat si lib[er]
siserussipuer[		si ser(v)us si puer [si]
uellasiuir.[		(p)uella si vir s[i]
traces		*traces*

'. . . *and has stolen . . . two . . . whether free or slave, whether boy or girl, whether man* [*or woman*] . . .'

1. The only surviving letter resembles a vertical Q (cf. **44**) which is rare in the Bath tablets; this would suggest a *si quis* opening (cf. **31**, **63**).
2. *et invola[vit *or* verit]*: there is no other instance of *involare* being linked (by *et*) with another verb; moreover it always follows the object stolen, e.g. **10**, 5, *qui caracellam meam involaverit*.
3. *duo de[. . .]*: two objects stolen, presumably, although one would expect them to precede the verb. Except in the late text **98**, the numeral follows its noun, e.g. **8**, *argentiolos sex quos perdidi*. But if 5 (see below) allows one to deduce the original width of line, there can have been space for only *c*.4 letters at the end of 3 (*c*.6 letters after *invola[vit]*). So *de[. . .]* may be the objects stolen, *de[stralia]* (cf. **15**) being the most attractive restoration; but it could be a preposition (cf. **99**, *de hospitio suo*), or the beginning of a compounded verb like *deveniat* (cf. 5), or even *de[us]* (etc.).
4. There seems no sense to be made of this line. *Ad* perhaps is a preposition governed by *deveniat*, *huis* perhaps a blunder for *hui(u)s*.
5. *deveniat*: this verb is not found in any other tablet; perhaps a mistake for *inveniat*, cf. **44**, 12, *qui rem ipsam involavit deus inveniat*; **99**, *quicumque re(u)s deus illum inveniat*; *Britannia* x (1979), 344, No. 4 (Uley) (emended), *qui fraudem fecerit deus inveniat*. *Deveniat* may be a reminiscence of *de[. . .]* (3) or, more likely, a mistake by haplography for *deu(s inu)eniat*.
5ff. *si lib[er] si ser(v)us*, etc. These formulas are so common in British curse tablets that they can be restored here with certainty, incidentally determining the original width of 5 and thus of the text as a whole.
6. *ser(v)us*: 'Vulgar' spelling, cf. **9**, 7 with note.
7. *(p)uella*: if 6 was the same width as 5, there was no room for *P* of *puella*, which must therefore have been omitted by mistake, since there is no sign of it at the beginning of 7.
7–8. *Femina*, or perhaps *mulier*, can be restored, divided between the lines.

Inv. no. 594

68 by 48 mm
Pb 30.0   Sn 70.0
not folded

Irregular pentagon cut from alloy sheet, inscribed both sides with a stilus by a practised hand. There is a hole left by a nail.

(a) TRANSCRIPT
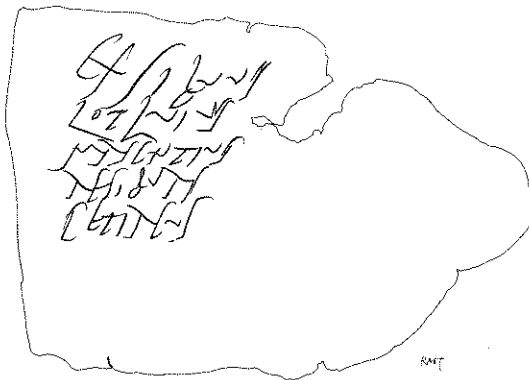
illorumanima

ḷạṣet *traces*

ṭịtumuṣ

ṣedileubisediạc

5   uṣ(*over* a)quepanum

(a) RESTORED TEXT

illorum anima

ḷạs(s)et[ur

list of names?

(b) TRANSCRIPT

exsibuus

lothuius

mascntius

aesibuas

10   petiacus

(b) RESTORED TEXT

Exsibuus

Lothuius

Mas(e)ntius

Aesibuas

10   Petiacus

'*May their life be weakened.*' List of names follows.

1–2. *illorum anima las(s)et[ur]*: for other curses of the *anima* cf. **31**, **39**, **103**, none of them closely comparable; for the phrase cf. Audollent 250B (Carthage), *lassetur . . . <h>animam et <i>spiritum deponat*. 2 is damaged by the nail hole; *SS* may have been written, but *S* is more likely, like those at the end of 6 and 7.

3–5: probably personal names, a list continued in 6–10. There are traces at the end of 2, so it is not certain that *titumus* is complete, but cf. *Tetumus* (*CIL* V 4883) (Brescia), a 'Celtic' name).

4. *sedileubi . . .* Difficult to explain, unless a patronymic from an unrecorded personal name (cf. **95**, *Sedebelia*).

4–5. *Sediac|us*: reasonably taken together, cf. *Sedianus*, *CIL* XIII 2151.

5. *. . .quepanum*: difficult, because in the accusative case (but *fanum* cannot be read); the *P* resembles that in *Petiacus* (10), *C* in this hand being made without lifting the stilus. No personal name *Quepanus* is attested.

6. *Exsibuus*: cf. **57**, *Exsib[uus]*, but otherwise unattested.

7. *Lothuius*: not attested.

8. *Mas(e)ntius*: *C* not *E* was written, probably in error; *Masentius* would be a 'Vulgar' spelling of *Maxentius*.

9. *Aesibuas*: not attested, but presumably one of the theophoric names formed from *Aesus* (cf. **98**, **20**, *Aessicunia*).

10. *Petiacus*: not attested, but cf. *Petianus* (*CIL* XIII 6803, third-century legionary at Mainz).

Inv. no. 687

46 by 75 mm
Pb 34.8 Sn 65.2
folded four times

Fragment, roughly the R. half of a rectangle cut from alloy sheet, inscribed with a stilus by a practised hand. Surface worn and damaged, and writing now faint.
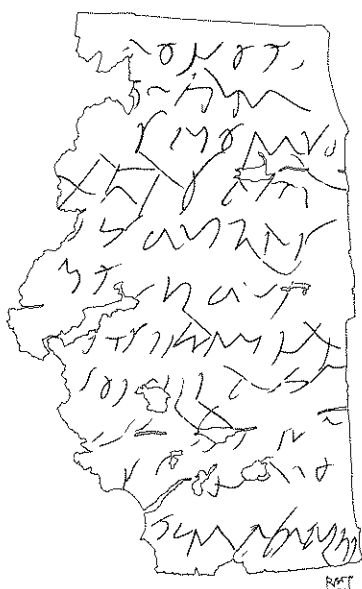
	TRANSCRIPT		RESTORED TEXT
	]donoti		] dono ti-
	]ream		[bi]ream
	][.]siuiomeọ		][.]sivio meọ
	]xgaspe1–2a		e]x(i)gas pe[?r sa-
5	]iusquihas	5	[?nguinem e]ius qui has
	]rityelqui		[involave]rit vel qui
	]itsifemina		[?medius fuer]it si femina
	].o. . .liber		].o. [si] liber
	]. .[1–2]ṣạ.[.]. .		]. . 1–2 ṣạ.[.]. .
10	]. . .	10	]. . .
	]. .umpertuleri		]. . um pertuleri(t)

'. . . I give to you . . . [that] you may exact (them) [through the blood of him] who has [stolen] these, or who has [been privy to it,] whether woman . . . [whether] free . . . has brought . . .'

Enough survives of the formulas to give the drift of the tablet, but any detail is lost. Stolen property is 'given' to Sulis, presumably, for her to exact it from the thief; the curse will not be lifted until the property is returned.

1–2. *dono ti*|[*bi*]: cf. **42, 60**. Preceded probably by *deae Suli*.

2. [. . .]*ream*: the object stolen; no obvious restoration, but just possibly the adjective [*au*]*ream* ('golden'). See note to *has* (5).

3. [. . .]*l*[.]*sivio meo*: the final *O* is unusually small and so faint that the reading is uncertain; it would imply the location of the object stolen, cf. **98**, 5, *de bursa mea*; **99**, *de hospitio suo*. Gradenwitz's *Laterculi* does not suggest any possible restoration. [*de*] *l*[*i*]*sivio meo*, a 'Vulgar' spelling of *lixivium* ('lye', an alkaline solution of wood ash used for washing, etc.), implying the theft of washing, is only a guess.

4–5. *e*]*x(i)gas pe*[*r sa*|*nguinem e*]*ius*: for this restoration cf. **41**, [*e*]*xigas hoc per sanguinem . . . suorum*.

5–6. *qui has* |[*involave*]*rit*: this reasonable restoration gives the width of the original line, and squares with the restorations proposed of 5 and 7.

has: the objects stolen, in 2 (see above) apparently a feminine singular noun; perhaps two objects were linked in 2–3 (cf. **32**, 3, *paxsa(m) . . . et* [*pal*]*leum*).

6–7. *vel qui* |[*medius fuer*]*it*: for this restoration cf. **97**, 7, *qui anilum involavit vel qui medius fuerit*.

7–8: part of the usual formulas, but in unusual sequence, since *vir* (or *baro*) does not precede *femina*, nor *servus* precede *liber*.

9–10: too worn for recovery; SA suggests *sanitatem* (etc.), but it cannot be fitted in.

11. [. . .]*um pertuleri(t)*: a concluding formula like **10, 17**, *ad templum sui numinis pertulerit* (with parallels quoted there from Uley and Pagans Hill). The first letters are not *TV* (for [*tu*]*um*). The final *T* was omitted, apparently because there was no room for it.