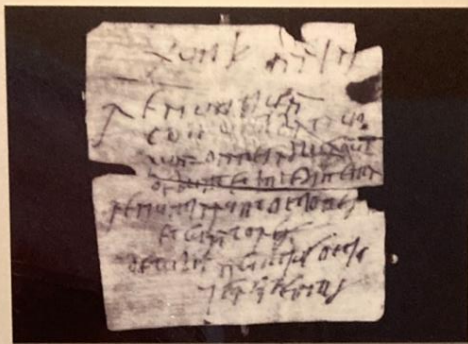


VINDOLANDA

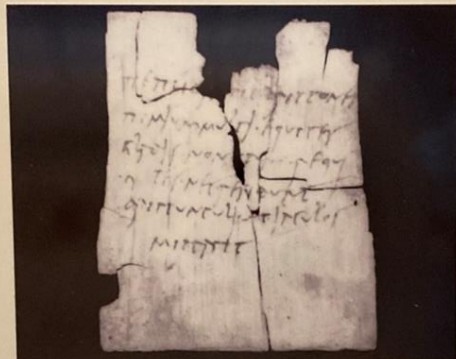
These ink writing-tablets are the oldest surviving handwritten documents from Britain. They come from the Roman fort of *Vindolanda* (Chesterholm), one of the main military posts on the northern frontier of Britain before the building of Hadrian's Wall. The first tablets were discovered there in 1973 and hundreds more fragments have come to light in subsequent archaeological excavations.

Waterlogged conditions preserved the tablets in rubbish deposits in and around the commanding officer's residence. They date mainly to the phase of activity between about AD 92-120, a period of great significance for the history of Britain's northern frontier. During that time the fort was garrisoned variously by the First Tungrian Cohort and the Ninth Batavian Cohort, and most of the tablets are official military documents relating to those auxiliary units. However, numerous others are the private letters sent to, or occasionally written by, the serving soldiers and officers. Together, they give a remarkable insight into the working and private lives of the Roman garrison in this remote outpost fort on the edge of the Empire.

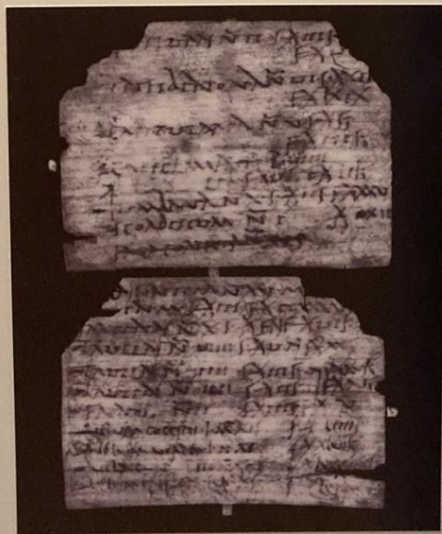
The tablets are fragile and vulnerable even after specialised conservation and they require a carefully-controlled environment. The present display is a selection of the best preserved examples.



Tablet 2, military report. Infra-red photograph



Tablet 3, intelligence report. Infra-red photograph



Tablet 5, inventory or memorandum. Infra-red photograph

THE VINDOLANDA INK WRITING-TABLETS

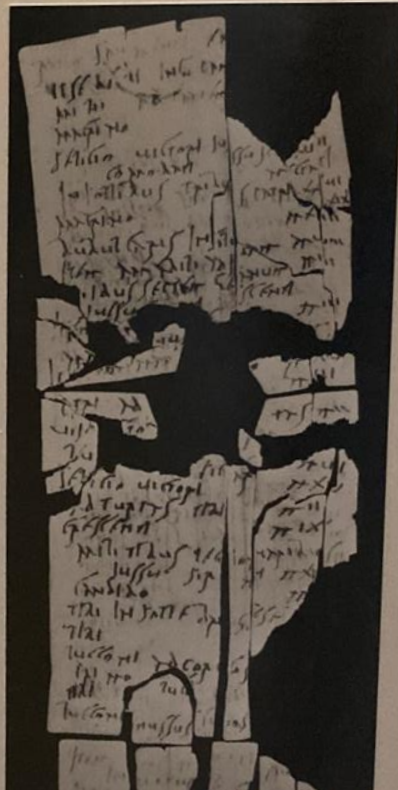
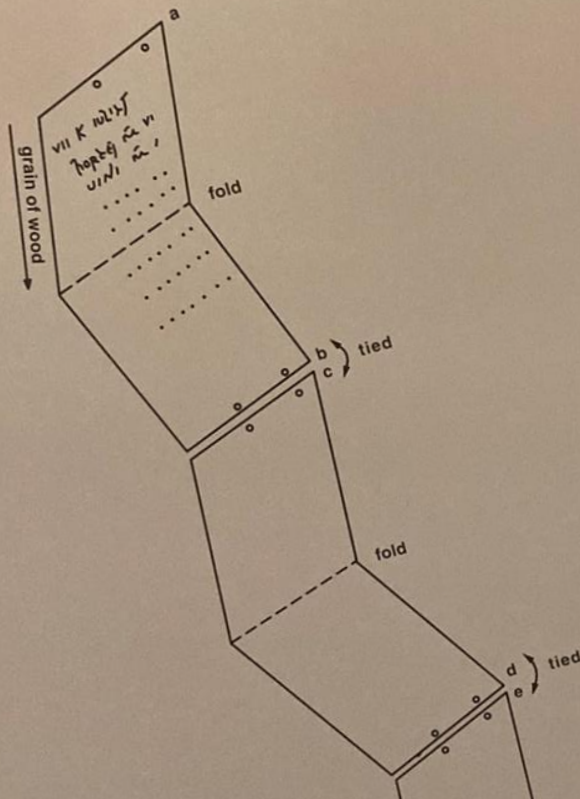
Apart from their fascinating content the Vindolanda tablets are important for two other reasons. First, there is a great variety of individual handwriting, numbering several hundred different hands, which greatly adds to our knowledge of the development of Roman cursive writing in the period around AD 100.

Second, the majority of the tablets are not of the wax type made to be incised with a metal stylus, which were previously thought to be the commonest medium for writing in the Roman world, apart from papyrus. The Vindolanda leaf tablets are wafer thin slices of wood (mainly birch and alder), the writing done with carbon ink and quill-type pens. Most of the larger tablets are roughly the size of a postcard, while the smallest ones are about half that size.

The letters were generally written with the broad dimension of the leaf running horizontally and the text set out in two columns, the first at the left, the second at the right. After completing the letter the

the larger tablets are roughly the size of a postcard, while the smallest ones are about half that size.

The letters were generally written with the broad dimension of the leaf running horizontally and the text set out in two columns, the first at the left, the second at the right. After completing the letter the writer scored it vertically down the centre, folded it, and wrote the address on the back of the right hand half. Some tablets had notches cut into the edge so that they could be tied together.



1 Strength report

Translation

'18 May, net number of the First Cohort of Tungrians, of which the commander is Iulius Verecundus the prefect, 752, including centurions 6 of whom there are absent: guards of the governor 46; at the office of Ferox?; at Coria 337, including centurions 2 (?); at London centurion 1 (?); ... 6, including centurion 1; ... 9, including centurion 1; ... 11; at (?) ... 1 (?); ... 45; total absentees 456, including centurions 5; remainder, present 296, including centurion 1; from these: sick 15; wounded 6; suffering from inflammation of the eyes 10; total of these 31; remainder, fit for active service 265, including centurion 1'

This is a strength report of the First Cohort of Tungrians, probably dating to about AD 92-7. It is the first of its kind from Britain, a most important military document which sheds light on the deployment and organisation of military units. The regiment was probably a milliary cohort, and the tablet shows it was close to its full complement of 800 men, though it was 4 centurions short of the normal total of 10.

Of the 752 soldiers on the roll only 296 were present at the base garrison, of whom just 265 were fit for active service. Most of the absentees were a detachment of 337 on a tour of duty at nearby Corbridge (Coria). A further 46 were detached for duty as guards with the governor of the province. They were assigned to a man named Ferox, who may have been the commander of the Ninth legion Hispana at York.

FRB P1989.6.2.21. Tab. Vindol. II. 154

2 Military report (*renuntium*)

Reconstructed text

xvii K Maias
renuntium
coh viiii Batauo
rum omnes ad loca qui
debunt et impedimenta
renuntiarunt optiones
et curatores
detulit Arcuittius optio
(centuriae) Crescens

Translation

'15 May, report of the 9th cohort of Batavians. All who ought to be at their stations are there, as is the baggage. The report was made by the *optiones* and the curators. Arcuittius, *optio* of the century of Crescens delivered it.'

A novelty among the Vindolanda tablets, which sheds new light on day-to-day military routine, is the finding of large numbers of reports with the *renuntium* heading. They appear to be routine checks on personnel and equipment, made at regular (perhaps daily) intervals, and submitted by *optiones* (deputy centurions). The need for such 'all present and correct' reports is understandable in view of the numerous detachments from the main garrison outposted or engaged in special tasks away from base (see tablet 1).

FRB P1995.7.1.21

3 Intelligence r Reconstructed

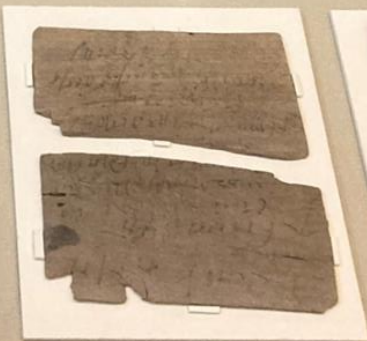
nenu....[.]n. Br
nimium multi
gladis • non
tes • nec
Brittunculi •
mittant

Translation

'...the Britons are u
(?). There are very n
cavalry do not use s
wretched Britons mo
javelins.'

A tantalizing fragmen
probably a memorand
commanding officer fo
describing the fighting
Britons. Despite the dis
to *Brittunculi*, 'Little B
the document was an ass
potential for recruitment
military units.

FRB P1986.10.1.34. Tab. Vindol. II. 164



2

3

untium)

qui
tenta
mes

s optio
entis

of the 9th cohort of who ought to be at their here, as is the baggage. The ade by the *optiones* and the *quittius*, *optio* of the century of livered it.'

mong the Vindolanda tablets, is new light on day-to-day routine, is the finding of large of reports with the *renuntium*. They appear to be routine checks nnel and equipment, made at (perhaps daily) intervals, and ed by *optiones* (deputy centurions). ad for such 'all present and correct' is understandable in view of the ous detachments from the main on outposted or engaged in special away from base (see tablet 1).

1995.7.1.211

3 Intelligence report

Reconstructed text

nenu...[.]n. Brittones
nimium multi • equites
gladis • non utuntur equi-
tes • nec residunt
Brittunculi • ut • iaculos
mittant

Translation

'...the Britons are unprotected by armour (?). There are very many cavalry. The cavalry do not use swords nor do the wretched Britons mount in order to throw javelins.'

A tantalizing fragment of what was probably a memorandum, perhaps left by a commanding officer for his successor, describing the fighting habits of the Britons. Despite the disparaging reference to *Brittunculi*, 'Little Brits', it may be that the document was an assessment of their potential for recruitment into the local military units.

FRB P1996.10-1.34. Tab. Vindol. II, 164

4 Leave request

Reconstructed text

....[.] ha[b]eas • cui •
des • commeatum
Córís Messicus t[.]
rógo • domine [

Translation

'I, Messicus...,ask, my lord, that you consider me a worthy person to whom to grant leave at Coria.'

A request from a soldier named Messicus for a period of leave to be spent at nearby Corbridge (Coria). The Vindolanda texts have shone new light on the system for requesting and granting leave. They are written in different hands and although they are almost formulaic they are not 'form letters'. None specifies the number of days requested, but there may have been a standard grant or, alternatively, the period may have been decided once the commander knew where the soldier wished to go.

FRB P1996.10-1.137. Tab. Vindol. II, 175

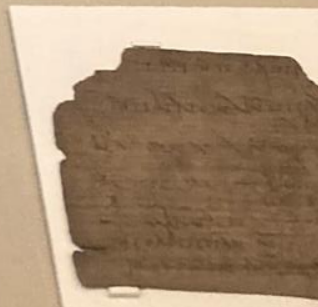
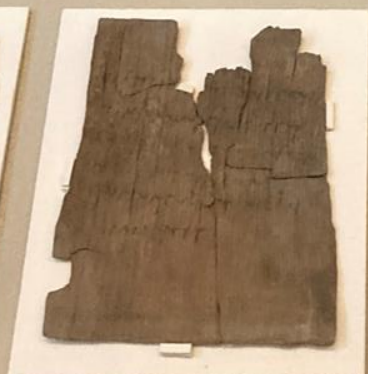
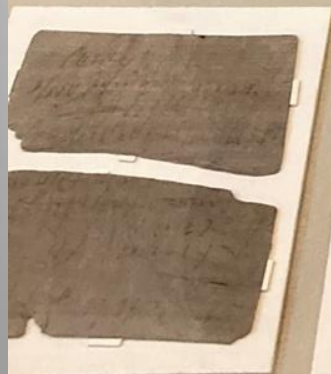
5 Inventory or memo

Translation

'Necklace-clasps (?), nu each, total 7+ *denarii*. *C denarii* each, total 65 *de* number 5, *denarius* each Hair, 9 pounds in weight, pound, total 51 *denarii*. L 10, 2 *denarii* each, total 2 (?), number 1, 12 *denarii*. *E bark* (?), number 15 (?). *E Cloaks made of bark* (?), num measure(s) (?), ..., 3 *denarii* pe total 235+ *denarii*. Bags, numl *denarius* and 1 *as* each, total 6 Skillets, number 4, 5 *denarii* an total 20 *denarii*. Skillets, numl *denarii* and 1 *as* each, total 15. Skillets, number 4, 2 *denarii* an total 11 *denarii*. Reins, number 2 *denarii* each, total 7 *denarii*. Scarf (?). 1. measuring 1 *ft*, total 54+ *de* Green curtain (?). 1. measuring 1 *ft*, + *denarii*. Purple curtains (?). 2. mea 11 *ft*, total 88 *denarii*. ... curtain measuring 10 *ft*, total 55+ *denarii*.'

A complete diptych, with writing on 2 inner faces and one outer face. The text is not a normal account and is thought to be part of an informal inventory of miscellaneous items and their valuation at the residence of the commanding officer Flavius Cerealis. It was perhaps compiled by a household slave or another individual responsible for the domestic administration. It is a fascinating list of commodities made still more interesting by the inclusion of prices.

FRB P1996. 7.1.196



4 Leave request

Reconstructed text

...[.] ha[b]leas • cui •
des • commentum
Cōris Messicus t[er]m[us]
rōgo • domine []

Translation

'I, Messicus...ask, my lord, that you consider me a worthy person to whom to grant leave at Coria.'

A request from a soldier named Messicus for a period of leave to be spent at nearby Corbridge (Coria). The Vindolanda texts have shone new light on the system for requesting and granting leave. They are written in different hands and although they are almost formulaic they are not 'form letters'. None specifies the number of days requested, but there may have been a standard grant or, alternatively, the period may have been decided once the commander knew where the soldier wished to go.

FR 9.1386.10-1.137. Tab. Vindol. II, 137

5 Inventory or memorandum

Translation

'Necklace-clasps (?), number 2, $3\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 7+ denarii. Cloaks, number 6, $11\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 69 denarii. Headbands, number 5, $\frac{3}{4}$ denarius each, total $3\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Hair, 9 pounds in weight, $5\frac{1}{4}$ denarii per pound, total $51\frac{1}{4}$ denarii. Drawers, number 10, $2\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 25 denarii. Saddle (?), number 1, 12 denarii. Cloaks made of bark (?), number 15 (?). [Entry crossed out] Cloaks made of bark (?), number 15, measure(s) (?), 3 denarii per measure (?), total 235+ denarii. Bags, number 10, $\frac{3}{4}$ denarius and 1 as each, total $6\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Skilleto, number 4, 5 denarii and 1 as each, total $20\frac{1}{4}$ denarii. Skilleto, number 4, $3\frac{3}{4}$ denarii and 1 as each, total 15 denarii. Skilleto, number 4, $2\frac{1}{2}$ denarii and 1 as each, total 11 denarii. Reins, number 2, $3\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 7 denarii. Scarlet curtain (?), 1, measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$, total $54\frac{1}{2}$ denarii. Green curtain (?), 1, measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$, total $46\frac{1}{2}$ denarii. Purple curtains (?), 2, measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$, total 88 denarii. ... curtain (?), 1, measuring $10\frac{1}{2}$, total 55+ denarii.'

A complete diptych, with writing on both inner faces and one outer face. The text is not a normal account and is thought to be part of an informal inventory of miscellaneous items and their valuations in the residence of the commanding officer, Flavius Cerealis. It was perhaps compiled by a household slave or another individual responsible for the domestic administration. It is a fascinating list of commodities made still more interesting by the inclusion of prices.

FR 9.1386.7-1.136

6 Account

Reconstruct

a Gauuone
bedocem
fabae
lanae
p(ondo) (a

tosseas ii
mellis m
sagum
summa
(de

Back:

ratio Gauonis

Translation

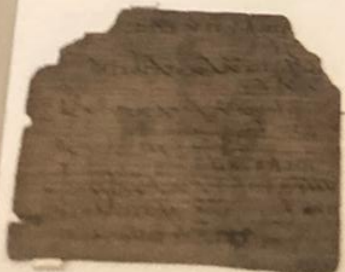
'From Gavo: a cover
beans, modii 55 (?), 4
... lbs, ... denarii 12
denarii ... (?), of hons
a sagum, denarii ... (?
(Entry crossed out) de

Back:

'Account of Gavo.'

This account is written in cursive script on the upper leaf (the blank lower half which has a notch and a t edge. Gavo appears to be an entrepreneur or supplier of miscellaneous variety of textiles was more probably a household of the commanding officer for the ordinary soldiers of

FR 9.1386.10-1.137. Tab. Vindol. II, 137



1 Strength report

Translation

'18 May, net number of the First Cohort of Tungrians, of which the commander is Iulius Verecundus the prefect, 752, including centurions 6 of whom there are absent: guards of the governor 46; at the office of Ferox?; at Coria 337, including centurions 2 (?); at London centurion 1 (?); ... 6, including centurion 1; ... 9, including centurion 1; ... 11; at (?) ... 1 (?); ... 45; total absentees 456, including centurions 5; remainder, present 296, including centurion 1; from these: sick 15; wounded 6; suffering from inflammation of the eyes 10; total of these 31; remainder, fit for active service 265, including centurion 1'

This is a strength report of the First Cohort of Tungrians, probably dating to about AD 92-7. It is the first of its kind from Britain, a most important military document which sheds light on the deployment and organisation of military units. The regiment was probably a cohort and the tablet shows it was close to its full complement of 800 men, though it was 4 centurions short of the normal total of 10.

Of the 752 soldiers on the roll only 296 were present at the base garrison, of whom just 265 were fit for active service. Most of the absentees were a detachment of 337 on a tour of duty at nearby Corbridge (Coria). A further 46 were detached for duty as guards with the governor of the province. They were assigned to a man named Ferox, who may have been the commander of the Ninth legion Hispana at York.

PRB P1989.6-2.21. *Tab. Vindol. II*, 154

2 Military report (*renuntium*)

Reconstructed text

xvii K Maias
renuntium
coh viii Batauo
rum omnes ad loca qui
debunt et impedimenta
renuntiarunt optiones
et curatores
detulit Arcuittius optio
(centuriae) Crescentis

Translation

'15 May, report of the 9th cohort of Batavians. All who ought to be at the stations are there, as is the baggage. report was made by the *optiones* and curators. Arcuittius, *optio* of the *centuria* *Crescentis* delivered it.'

A novelty among the Vindolanda tablets which sheds new light on day-to-day military routine, is the finding of large numbers of reports with the *renuntium* heading. They appear to be routine reports on personnel and equipment, made at regular (perhaps daily) intervals, and submitted by *optiones* (deputy centurions). The need for such 'all present and correct' reports is understandable in view of the numerous detachments from the main garrison outposted or engaged in special tasks away from base (see tablet 1).

PRB P1995.7-1.211



h report ion

net number of the First Cohort of is, of which the commander is recundus the prefect, 752, ; centurions 6 of whom there are uards of the governor 46; at the Ferox?; at Coria 337, including is 2 (?); at London centurion 1 (?); iding centurion 1; ... 9, including 1; ... 11; at (?) ... 1 (?); ... 45; total 456, including centurions 5; r, present 296, including centurion ese: sick 15; wounded 6; suffering mmation of the eyes 10; total of remainder, fit for active service ding centurion 1'

trength report of the First Tungrians, probably dating to 92-7. It is the first of its kind in, a most important military which sheds light on the it and organisation of military regiment was probably a milliary d the tablet shows it was close to plement of 800 men, though it urions short of the normal total

soldiers on the roll only 296 nt at the base garrison, of whom re fit for active service. Most of es were a detachment of 337 on uty at nearby Corbridge (Coria). 6 were detached for duty as n the governor of the province. assigned to a man named Ferox, ve been the commander of the n Hispana at York.

.. Tab. Vindol. II, 154

2 Military report (*renuntium*)

Reconstructed text

xvii K Maías
renuntium
coh viii Batauo
rum omnes ad loca qui
debunt et impedimenta
renuntiarunt optiones
et curatores
detulit Arcuittius optio
(centuria) Crescentis

Translation

'15 May, report of the 9th cohort of Batavians. All who ought to be at their stations are there, as is the baggage. The report was made by the *optiones* and the curators. Arquittius, *optio* of the century of Crescens delivered it.'

A novelty among the Vindolanda tablets, which sheds new light on day-to-day military routine, is the finding of large numbers of reports with the *renuntium* heading. They appear to be routine checks on personnel and equipment, made at regular (perhaps daily) intervals, and submitted by *optiones* (deputy centurions). The need for such 'all present and correct' reports is understandable in view of the numerous detachments from the main garrison outposted or engaged in special tasks away from base (see tablet 1).

PRB P1995.7-1.211

3 Intelligence report

Reconstructed text

nenu....[.]n. Brittones
nimium multi • equites
gladis • non utuntur equi-
tes • nec residunt
Brittunculi • ut • iaculos
mittant

Translation

'...the Britons are unprotected by armour (?). There are very many cavalry. The cavalry do not use swords nor do the wretched Britons mount in order to throw javelins.'

A tantalizing fragment of what was probably a memorandum, perhaps left by a commanding officer for his successor, describing the fighting habits of the Britons. Despite the disparaging reference to *Brittunculi*, 'Little Brits', it may be that the document was an assessment of their potential for recruitment into the local military units.

PRB P1986.10-1.34. Tab. Vindol. II, 164

report (*renuntium*)

Reconstructed text

*K Maias
ntium*

*Batauo
es ad loca qui
! impedimenta
runt optiones
ratores
Arquittius optio
e) Crescentis*

ion

report of the 9th cohort of
is. All who ought to be at their
are there, as is the baggage. The
as made by the *optiones* and the
Arquittius, *optio* of the century of
delivered it.'

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perhaps daily) intervals, and
d by *optiones* (deputy centurions).
for such 'all present and correct'
s understandable in view of the
s detachments from the main
outposted or engaged in special
y from base (see tablet 1).

.211

3 Intelligence report

Reconstructed text

*nenu...[.]n. Brittones
nimium multi • equites
gladis • non utuntur equi-
tes • nec residunt
Brittunculi • ut • iaculos
mittant*

Translation

'...the Britons are unprotected by armour
(?). There are very many cavalry. The
cavalry do not use swords nor do the
wretched Britons mount in order to throw
javelins.'

A tantalizing fragment of what was
probably a memorandum, perhaps left by a
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Britons. Despite the disparaging reference
to *Brittunculi*, 'Little Brits', it may be that
the document was an assessment of their
potential for recruitment into the local
military units.

PRB P1986.10-1.34. *Tab. Vindol. II*, 164

4 Leave request

Reconstructed text

*...[.] ha[b]leas • cui •
des • commeatum
Cōris Messicus t[.]
rōgo • domine [*

Translation

'I, Messicus...,ask, my lord, that you
consider me a worthy person to whom to
grant leave at Coria.'

A request from a soldier named Messicu
for a period of leave to be spent at near
Corbridge (Coria). The Vindolanda text
have shone new light on the system for
requesting and granting leave. They are
written in different hands and although
they are almost formulaic they are not
'form letters'. None specifies the numbe
days requested, but there may have beer
standard grant or, alternatively, the per
may have been decided once the comma
knew where the soldier wished to go.

PRB P1986.10-1.137. *Tab. Vindol. II*, 175



the report
of the text

Brittones
ulti • equites
non utuntur equi-
nec residunt
i • ut • iaculos
t

n

sons are unprotected by armour
are very many cavalry. The
not use swords nor do the
Britons mount in order to throw

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sculi, 'Little Brits', it may be that
ment was an assessment of their
for recruitment into the local
units.

1.34. *Tab. Vindol. II, 164*

4 Leave request

Reconstructed text

....[.] ha[b]leas • cui •
des • commeatum
Córis Messicus t[.]
rógo • domine [

Translation

'I, Messicus...,ask, my lord, that you
consider me a worthy person to whom to
grant leave at Coria.'

A request from a soldier named Messicus
for a period of leave to be spent at nearby
Corbridge (Coria). The Vindolanda texts
have shone new light on the system for
requesting and granting leave. They are
written in different hands and although
they are almost formulaic they are not
'form letters'. None specifies the number of
days requested, but there may have been a
standard grant or, alternatively, the period
may have been decided once the commander
knew where the soldier wished to go.

PRB P1986.10-1.137. *Tab. Vindol. II, 175*

5 Inventory or memorandum

Translation

'Necklace-clasps (?), number 2, $3\frac{1}{2}$ + denarii
each, total 7+ denarii. Cloaks, number 6,
denarii each, total 69 denarii. Headbands
number 5, $3\frac{3}{4}$ denarius each, total $3\frac{3}{4}$ denar
Hair, 9 pounds in weight, $5\frac{3}{4}$ denarii per
pound, total $51\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Drawers, numbe
10, $2\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 25 denarii. Sade
(?), number 1, 12 denarii. Cloaks made of
bark (?), number 15 (?), ... [Entry crossed
Cloaks made of bark (?), number 15,
measure(s) (?) ... , 3 denarii per measure (?
total 235+ denarii. Bags, number 10, $\frac{5}{8}$
denarius and 1 as each, total $6\frac{7}{8}$ denarii.
Skillets, number 4. 5 denarii and 1 as eac
total $20\frac{1}{4}$ denarii. Skillets, number 4. $3\frac{7}{8}$
denarii and 1 as each, total $15\frac{3}{4}$ denarii.
Skillets, number 4. $2\frac{7}{8}$ denarii and 1 as ea
total $11\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Reins, number 2. $3\frac{1}{2}$
denarii each, total 7 denarii. Scarlet curt
(?). 1. measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$, total $54\frac{1}{2}$ + denarii.
Green curtain (?). 1. measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$, total
+ denarii. Purple curtains (?). 2. measuri
 $11\frac{1}{2}$, total $88\frac{3}{4}$ (?) denarii. ... curtain (?),
measuring $10\frac{1}{2}$, total 55+ denarii.'

A complete diptych, with writing on bo
inner faces and one outer face. The tex
not a normal account and is thought to
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miscellaneous items and their valuatio
the residence of the commanding offic
Flavius Cerealis. It was perhaps compi
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administration. It is a fascinating list
commodities made still more interestin
the inclusion of prices.

PRB P1995. 7-1.196

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ask, my lord, that you
worthy person to whom to
Coria.'

a soldier named Messicus
leave to be spent at nearby
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Tab. Vindol. II, 175

5 Inventory or memorandum

Translation

'Necklace-clasps (?), number 2, $3\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total $7\frac{1}{2}$ denarii. Cloaks, number 6, $11\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 69 denarii. Headbands, number 5, $\frac{3}{4}$ denarius each, total $3\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Hair, 9 pounds in weight, $5\frac{3}{4}$ denarii per pound, total $51\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Drawers, number 10, $2\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 25 denarii. Saddle (?), number 1, 12 denarii. Cloaks made of bark (?), number 15 (?). ... [Entry crossed out] Cloaks made of bark (?), number 15, measure(s) (?) ..., 3 denarii per measure (?), total $235\frac{1}{2}$ denarii. Bags, number 10, $\frac{5}{8}$ denarius and 1 as each, total $6\frac{5}{8}$ denarii. Skillets, number 4. 5 denarii and 1 as each, total $20\frac{1}{4}$ denarii. Skillets, number 4. $3\frac{7}{8}$ denarii and 1 as each, total $15\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Skillets, number 4. $2\frac{7}{8}$ denarii and 1 as each, total $11\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. Reins, number 2. $3\frac{1}{2}$ denarii each, total 7 denarii. Scarlet curtain (?). 1. measuring $11\frac{1}{2}$, total $54\frac{1}{2}$ denarii. Green curtain (?). 1. measuring $11\frac{1}{2}$, total $46\frac{1}{2}$ denarii. Purple curtains (?). 2. measuring $11\frac{1}{2}$, total $88\frac{3}{4}$ denarii. ... curtain (?), 1, measuring $10\frac{1}{2}$, total $55\frac{1}{2}$ denarii.'

A complete diptych, with writing on both inner faces and one outer face. The text is not a normal account and is thought to be part of an informal inventory of miscellaneous items and their valuations in the residence of the commanding officer, Flavius Cerealis. It was perhaps compiled by a household slave or another individual responsible for the domestic administration. It is a fascinating list of commodities made still more interesting by the inclusion of prices.

PRB P1995. 7-1.196

6 A
R
a

mus greeting. I wanted
letter has been sent to me
which he writes to me that I
to him what I have done
. As to which, if you have
regard with the
you write back to me with
that I can similarly
reply. If you have made any
intermediary (?), I will issue
no delay in proportion to
[time I have spent]. Let this be
written in this to you I was
1. I wish you may be in
my father sends you his
(Left margin) If you
please send a note of
it I may be the more
[reliable] at Vindolanda. To
you from Maior.'

A complete diptych is
shown on the inner faces
of the left margin. It is
a wax tablet which has the
word 'da' marked on the
subject of the letter is
the writer's father has
written about. The
1 and the obvious
subject suggest that it
is a spindle, the large iron
spindles turned. Maior and
I have been involved in
this, not unnaturally
in the form of corn.

10 Letter to Flavius Cerealis
Reconstructed text

Column i:

*Niger et Brocchus Ceriali
suo salutem
optamus frater it quot
acturus es felicis-
simum sit erit autem
quom et uotis nostris*

Column ii:

*conueniat hoc
pro te precari et tu
sis dignissimus con-
sulari n(ostro) utique ma-
turius occurres
optamus frater
bene ualere te
domine ... no exspec*

Back:

*[Fl]au[io] Cerial[i]
[prae]f[ecto] coh[ortis]*

Translation:

'Niger and Brocchus to their Cerialis,
greeting. We pray, brother, that what you are
about to do will be most successful. It will be
so, indeed, since it is both in accord with our
wishes to make this prayer on your behalf
and you yourself are most worthy. You will
assuredly meet our governor quite soon. (2nd
hand) We pray, our lord and brother, that you
are in good health ... expect ... (?)'

Back:

(1st hand) 'To Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the
cohort ...'

A complete well-preserved diptych written
in two columns in an elegant script. The
slim letters have marked ascenders and
descenders and there is little use of
ligature (joining together of letters). While
not explicit, the subject matter of this brief
letter evidently concerns a matter of some
importance to Cerealis, the unit commander,
involving a forthcoming meeting with the
governor of the province of Britain. In
another tablet, a draft letter, Cerealis had
enlisted the aid of a well-placed
intermediary to secure this meeting, so it
would appear he had been successful.

PRB P1980.3-3.21. Tab. Vindol. II, 248



Portrait from Pompeii
National Museum, Naples

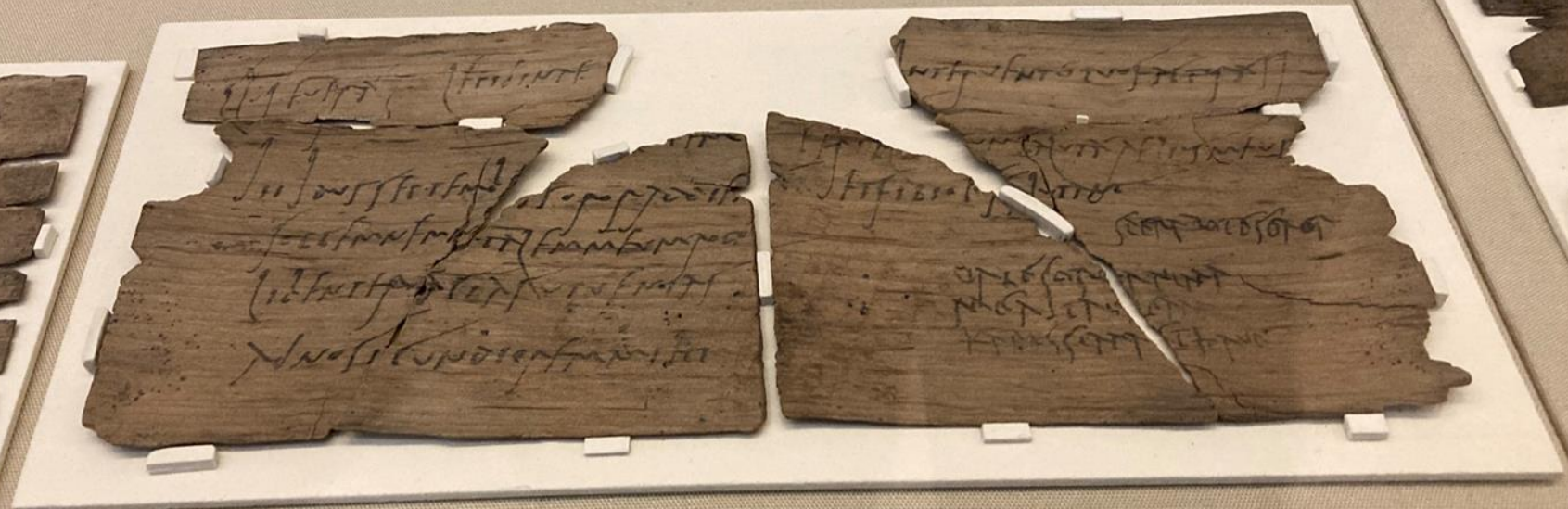
‘Claudia Severa to her Lepidina,
greetings. On 11 September ...
for the ... celebration of my birthday,
I give you a warm invitation ...’

and hail.

Back:
(1st hand) 'To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of
Cerialis, from Severa.'

close friendship and with
literal sense). The ident
Briga is not known thou
near to Vindolanda.

PRB P1986.10-1.46. Tab. Vindol II, 292



11

ptych written
script. The
nders and
use of
etters). While
er of this brief
atter of some
it commander,
ing with the
ritain. In
Cerealis had
ed
eting, so it
cessful.

11 Birthday invitation to Sulpicia Lepidina

Reconstructed text

Column i:

*Cl(audia) • Seuerá Lepidinae [suae
[sa]ll[u]stem*

*iii Idus Septembr[is] soror ad diem
sollemnem natalem meum rogó
libenter faciás ut uenias
ad nos iucundiozem mihi*

Column ii:

[diem] interuentú tuo facturá si

*Cerial[em] tuum salutá Aelius meus []
et filioli salutant*

*sperabo te soror
uale soror anima
mea ita ualeam
karissima et haue*

Back:

Sulpiciae Lepidinae

Cerialis

a S[e]uera

Translation

'Claudia Severa to her Lepidina greetings.
On 11 September, sister, for the day of the
celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm
invitation to make sure that you come to us,
to make the day more enjoyable for me by
your arrival, if you are present (?). Give my
greetings to your Cerialis. My Aelius and my
little son send him (?) their greetings. (2nd
hand) I shall expect you sister. Farewell,
sister, my dearest soul, as I hope to prosper,
and hail.'

Back:

(1st hand) 'To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of
Cerialis, from Severa.'

Sulpicia Lepidina was the wife of Flavius
Cerealis, prefect of the Ninth Cohort of
Batavians. This birthday invitation is one of
two letters she received from Claudia Severa,
wife of Aelius Brocchus. The scribe who
wrote the greater part of this letter is the
same person who wrote the letter from Niger
and Brocchus to Flavius Cerealis (10). The
tall elegant script contrasts with the
competent but less accomplished three-line
closure written by Severa herself. That, and
similar closures on 12 and one other letter
from Severa, is the earliest known example of
writing in Latin by a woman (about
AD 97-103).

PRB P1986.10-1.64. *Tab. Vindol. II, 291*

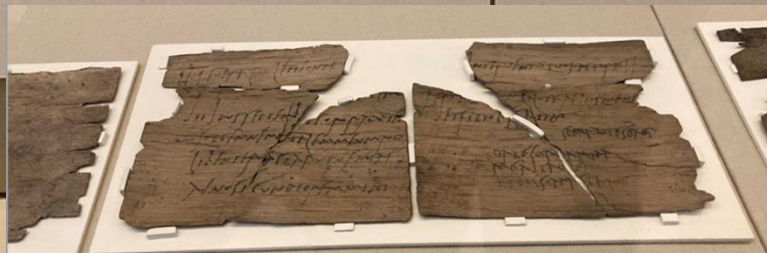
12 Letter to Translati

'... greeti
sister, an
Brocchus
him and h
it was alv
together'
way I can
things wh
which yo
I was ... a
Cerialis]
(Back, 2r
dearest a
To Sulpi
Severa, v

This ratl
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literal ;
Briga i
near to

PRB P1986



Sulpicia Lepidina was the wife of Flavius Cerealis, prefect of the Ninth Cohort of Praetorians. This birthday invitation is one of the 12 letters she received from Claudia Severa, wife of Aelius Brocchus. The scribe who wrote the greater part of this letter is the same person who wrote the letter from Niger to Aelius Brocchus to Flavius Cerealis (10). The elegant script contrasts with the competent but less accomplished three-line measure written by Severa herself. That, and similar closures on 12 and one other letter from Severa, is the earliest known example of writing in Latin by a woman (about 97-103).

P1986.10-1.64. *Tab. Vindol. II*, 291

12 Letter to Sulpicia Lepidina

Translation

'... greetings. Just as I had spoken with you, sister, and promised that I would ask Brocchus and would come to you, I asked him and he gave me the following reply, that it was always readily (?) permitted to me, together with ... to come to you in whatever way I can. For there are certain essential things which ... you will receive my letters by which you will know what I am going to do ... I was ... and will remain at Briga. Greet your Cerialis from me.'

(Back, *2nd hand*) Farewell my sister, my dearest and most longed-for soul. (*1st hand*) To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa, wife of Brocchus (?)'

This rather poorly preserved tablet is a rare survival at Vindolanda of a letter written on more than one diptych (13 is the only other example). It is rather curiously set out, for on the remains of the first double leaf the text runs right across both leaves in a single broad column, while on the second diptych the scribe changed to the more normal double column format. Finally, while the letter continued on a third diptych (only part of one half surviving), Severa's closing greeting was written on the back, together with the address.

The intimate tone of the letter indicates that the women were in regular correspondence (but the use of the word 'sister' was one of close friendship and was not meant in its literal sense). The identification of the place Briga is not known though it was probably near to Vindolanda.

PRB P1986.10-1.46. *Tab. Vindol. II*, 292

wife of

close friendship (in
literal sense). The identification of the place
Briga is not known though it was probably
near to Vindolanda.
PRB P1986.10-1.46. Tab. Vindol II, 292

since he had had...
cash, I would have given him them.

12

13

GLOSSARY

Batavians,
9th Cohort an auxiliary unit, raised in Gaul,
which garrisoned Vindolanda in
the years around AD 100

beneficiarius an adjutant seconded for special
duties to a higher-ranking officer

bracis a kind of cereal used in making
Celtic beer

Cataractonium the Roman name of Catterick

Cerealis Flavius Cerealis, prefect of the
9th Cohort of Batavians at
Vindolanda about AD 100

Coria the Roman name of Corbridge

fish sauce *muria* was a spicy fish sauce, a
Roman culinary favourite

modius the most-commonly used Roman
measure of capacity,
approximately 8.62 litres

optio (optiones) the second-in-command or
deputy centurion of a century

prefect
(*praefectus cohortis*) the officer in charge of an
auxiliary cohort

renuntium a regular report on personnel
and equipment

sagacia, sagum kinds of military cloak

saturnalia a carnival-like festival in
December in which everyone

GLOSSARY

Batavians, 9th Cohort	an auxiliary unit, raised in Gaul, which garrisoned Vindolanda in the years around AD 100
<i>beneficiarius</i>	an adjutant seconded for special duties to a higher-ranking officer
<i>bracis</i>	a kind of cereal used in making Celtic beer
Cataractonium	the Roman name of Catterick
Cerealis	Flavius Cerealis, prefect of the 9th Cohort of Batavians at Vindolanda about AD 100
Coria	the Roman name of Corbridge
fish sauce	<i>muria</i> was a spicy fish sauce, a Roman culinary favourite
<i>modius</i>	the most-commonly used Roman measure of capacity,

Cerealis	Flavius Cerealis, prefect of the 9th Cohort of Batavians at Vindolanda about AD 100
Coria	the Roman name of Corbridge
fish sauce	<i>muria</i> was a spicy fish sauce, a Roman culinary favourite
<i>modius</i>	the most-commonly used Roman measure of capacity, approximately 8.62 litres
<i>optio (optiones)</i>	the second-in-command or deputy centurion of a century
prefect (<i>praefectus cohortis</i>)	the officer in charge of an auxiliary cohort
<i>renuntium</i>	a regular report on personnel and equipment
<i>sagacia, sagum</i>	kinds of military cloak
<i>saturnalia</i>	a carnival-like festival in December in which everyone, including slaves, took part
<i>sextarius</i>	one-sixteenth of a <i>modius</i> , approximately 0.54 litres
skillet (<i>trulla</i>)	a deep-bowled military saucepan
Tungrians, 1st Cohort	an auxiliary unit, raised in Gaul, which garrisoned Vindolanda, in full or in part, between about

prefect (<i>praefectus cohortis</i>)	the officer in charge of an auxiliary cohort
<i>renuntium</i>	a regular report on personnel and equipment
<i>sagacia, sagum</i>	kinds of military cloak
<i>saturnalia</i>	a carnival-like festival in December in which everyone, including slaves, took part
<i>sextarius</i>	one-sixteenth of a <i>modius</i> , approximately 0.54 litres
skillet (<i>trulla</i>)	a deep-bowled military saucepan
Tungrians, 1st Cohort	an auxiliary unit, raised in Gaul, which garrisoned Vindolanda, in full or in part, between about AD 90-120

Reconstructed texts and translations by Dr A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas. See A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas, *The Vindolanda Writing-tablets*, and Alan K. Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier* (both British Museum Press, London 1994, available at the Museum bookshop).

13 Letter to Candidus

Translation

'Octavius to his brother Candidus, greetings. The hundred pounds of sinew from Marinus - I will settle up. From the time when you wrote about this matter, he has not even mentioned it to me. I have several times written to you that I have bought about five thousand *modii* of ears of grain, on account of which I need cash. Unless you send me some cash, at least five hundred *denarii*, the result will be that I shall lose what I have laid out as a deposit, about three hundred *denarii*, and I shall be embarrassed. So, I ask you, send me some cash as soon as possible. The hides which you write are at Cataractonium - write that they be given to me and the wagon about which you write. And write to me what is with that wagon. I would have already been to collect them except that I did not care to injure the animals while the roads are bad. See with Tertius about the 8½ *denarii* which he received from Fatalis. He has not credited them to my account. Know that I have completed the 170 hides and I have 119 *modii* of threshed *bracis*. Make sure that you send me cash so that I may have ears of grain on the threshing-floor. Moreover, I have already finished threshing all that I had. A messmate of our friend Frontius has been here. He was wanting me to allocate (?) him hides and that being so, was ready to give cash. I told him I would give him the hides by 1 March. He decided that he would come on 13 January. He did not turn up nor did he take any trouble to obtain them since he had hides. If he had given the cash, I would have given him them. [cont.]

Translation continued

I hear that Frontinius Iulius has for sale at a high price the leather ware (?) which he bought here for five *denarii* apiece. Greet Spectatus and ... and Firmus. I have received letters from Gleuco. Farewell.

Back:

(Deliver) at Vindolanda.'

This, the most impressive and extensive letter found so far, consists of two complete diptychs with notches and tie-holes. It is a rapidly-written business letter by Octavius, an entrepreneur supplying goods on a considerable scale to the Roman army. The style is colloquial, with a variety of financial idioms and a few technical terms. The well-preserved text is slightly obscured by 'offsets', which were caused when the leaves were folded before the ink had dried. The use of the abbreviation *Vindol* on the back in place of the normal address implies that the letter was brought to Candidus at Vindolanda by an acquaintance.

The writer may have been left-handed since the normal letter format has been reversed: page 1, top right; page 2, top left; page 3, bottom right; page 4, bottom left. The closing, greeting and main letter are in the same hand suggesting that the writing is that of Octavius himself. He evidently wrote the letter in haste to judge by the form of the script, the offsets and a number of mis-spellings and this may have been related to his main concern, the urgent need for cash. The letter sheds valuable light on the scale and sophistication of financial dealings in northern Britain at this time.

PRB P1989.6-2.74. Tab.Vindol. II,343

14



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iece. Greet
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arewell.

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14 Letter to Flavius Cerialis
Reconstructed text

*Flauio Ceriali praef(ecto)
coh(ortis) •
a Iustino col(lega) •*

Translation

'To Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the cohort,
from Iustinus his colleague.'

The back of the right-hand leaf of this
diptych is displayed in order to show the
way in which the Vindolanda letters were
addressed. The writer, Iustinus, was
probably prefect of another auxiliary unit.

PRB P1988.10-5.34. *Tab. Vindol. II, 260*

15 Letter to Veldedeius
Reconstructed text

Column i:

*Chrauttius Veldeio suó fratri
contubernali antiquo pluri-
mam salutem
et rogo te Veldei frater miror
quod mihi tot tempus nihil
rescripsti a parentibus nos-
tris si quid audieris aut
Quot.m in quo numero
sit et illum a me salutabis
s uerbis meis et Virilem
ueterinarium rogabis
illum ut forficem*

Column ii:

*quam mihi promissit pretio
mittas per aliquem de nostris
et rogo te frater Virilis
salutes a me Thuttenam
sororem Velbuteium
rescribas nobis cum ...
se habeat
opt<o>sis felicissimus
uale*

Back:

*Londini
Veldedeio
equisioni co(n)s(ularis)
a Chrauttio
fratre*

Translat

'Chrautt
messmat
you, bro'
you have
such a le
anythin
which u
my wor
Ask hin
through
shears'
for mor
greet fr
back to
hand?)
of fort

Back:

*(Ist ha
Veldec
brothe*

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and
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15 Letter to Veldedeius

Reconstructed text

Column i:

*Chrauttius Veldeio suó fratri
contubernali antiquo pluri-
mam salutem
et rogo te Veldei frater miror
quod mihi tot tempus nihil
rescripti a parentibus nos-
tris si quid audieris aut
Quot. m in quo numero
sit et illum a me salutabis
s uerbis meis et Virilem
ueterinarium rogabis
illum ut forficem*

Column ii:

*quam mihi promissit pretio
mittas per aliquem de nostris
et rogo te frater Virilis
salutes a me Thuttenam
sororem Velbuteium
rescribas nobis cum ...
se habeat
opt<o>sis felicissimus
uale*

Back:

*Londini
Veldedeio
equisioni co(n)s(ularis)
a Chrauttio
fratre*

Translation

'Chrauttius to Veldeius his brother and old messmate, very many greetings. And I ask you, brother Veldeius - I am surprised that you have written nothing back to me for such a long time - whether you have heard anything from our elders, or about ... in which unit he is; and greet him from me in my words and Virilis the veterinary doctor. Ask him (Virilis) whether you may send through one of our friends the pair of shears which he promised me in exchange for money. And I ask you, brother Virilis, to greet from me our sister Thuttena. Write back to us how Velbuteius is (?). (2nd hand?) It is my wish that you enjoy the best of fortune. Farewell.'

Back:

(1st hand) '(Deliver) at London. To Veldedeius, groom of the governor, from his brother Chrauttius.'

A complete diptych with double column text written in a large, sprawling script, probably by a scribe, with the closure by Chrauttius himself. As in 11 and 12 the use of the word 'brother' is to be taken as a term of friendship. The mention of a veterinary doctor, one of several medical references in the Vindolanda tablets, is of interest as also are the unusual Celtic and Germanic personal names Velde(de)ius and Chrauttius. Veldedeius may well have been on detachment to the governor in London and on his return to Vindolanda may have brought this letter with the rest of his belongings.

PRB P1988.10-5.66. Tab. Vindol. II,310

16 Letter to Advectus

Translation

'Metto (?) to his Ad greetings. I have seen through the agency; 34; axles for carts, axle turned on the number, 300; planl 26; seats, number, (?); boards (?), number benches (?), number skins, number, 6 (are in good health

This fragmentary business letter, though more than an inventory concluded with a greetings. Both I probably civilian army. Their considerable largely of wood

PRB P1986.10-1.56. Tab.

s brother and old
tings. And I ask
m surprised that
back to me for
you have heard
or about ... in
him from me in
eterinary doctor.
you may send
the pair of
me in exchange
rother Virilis, to
uttena. Write
is (?). (2nd
ou enjoy the best

don. To
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uble column
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he closure by
1 and 12 the use
e taken as a
ntion of a
veral medical
la tablets, is of
sual Celtic and
elde(de)ius and
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nor in London
anda may have
rest of his

16 Letter to Advectus
Translation

'Metto (?) to his Advectus (?) very many greetings. I have sent you wooden materials through the agency of Saco: hubs, number, 34; axles for carts, number, 38; therein an axle turned on the lathe, number, 1; spokes, number, 300; planks (?) for a bed, number, 26; seats, number, 8 (?); knots (?), number, 2 (?); boards (?), number, 20+; ..., number, 29; benches (?), number, 6; I have sent you goat-skins, number, 6 (2nd hand) I pray that you are in good health, brother.'

This fragmentary diptych is very much a business letter, the text comprising little more than an inventory preceded and concluded with only the briefest of greetings. Both Metto and Advectus were probably civilian suppliers working for the army. Their consignment referred to here is largely of wooden vehicle fittings.

PRB P1986.10-1.56. *Tab. Vindol. II.309*

17 Letter concerning the transport of
stone

Reconstructed text

.[
*quem modum carrulorum
missurus sis domine
deliberare tecum debes
ad lapidem portandum
Voconti enim centu[
carrulis uno die la [*

Left margin:
*nisi rogas Vocontif
ut lepidem exp[
non explicabi[
rogo ut rescri[bas
quid uelis me [
opto bene [ualeas*

Translation

'... you ought to decide, my lord, what quantity of wagons you are going to send to carry stone. For the century of Vocontius ... on one day with wagons ... (2nd hand) Unless you ask Vocontius to sort out (?) the stone, he will not sort it out. I ask you to write back what you want me to do (?). I pray that you are in good health.'

Part of the left-hand portion of a diptych. The main text is written in a rather elegant squarish cursive script, with a second text written at right-angles in the margin. A revealing glimpse of military logistics.

PRB P1986.10-1.167. *Tab. Vindol. II.316*

18 Le
Re
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[..
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Advectus

This Advectus (?) very many have sent you wooden materials agency of Saco: hubs, number, carts, number, 38; therein an on the lathe, number, 1; spokes, planks (?) for a bed, number, nber, 8 (?); knots (?), number, 2), number, 20+; ..., number, 29; number, 6; I have sent you goat-er, 6 (2nd hand) I pray that you health, brother.'

itary diptych is very much a er, the text comprising little a inventory preceded and ith only the briefest of th Metto and Advectus were lian suppliers working for the onsignment referred to here is oden vehicle fittings.

Tab. Vindol. II, 309

17 Letter concerning the transport of stone

Reconstructed text

.I
quem modum carrulorum
missurus sis domine
deliberare tecum debes
ad lapidem portandum
Voconti enim centu[
carrulis uno die la [

Left margin:

nisi rogas Voconti[
ut lepidem exp[
non explicabi[
rogo ut rescri[bas
quid uelis me [
opto bene [ualeas

Translation

'... you ought to decide, my lord, what quantity of wagons you are going to send to carry stone. For the century of Vocontius ... on one day with wagons ... (2nd hand) Unless you ask Vocontius to sort out (?) the stone, he will not sort it out. I ask you to write back what you want me to do (?). I pray that you are in good health.'

Part of the left-hand portion of a diptych. The main text is written in a rather elegant squarish cursive script, with a second text written at right-angles in the margin. A revealing glimpse of military logistics.

PRB P1986.10-1.167. Tab. Vindol. II, 316

18 Letter of appeal

Reconstructed text

Column i:

eo magis me ca[
d ... [.Jem mercem [
r[.Juel effunder[...r[
[...mine probo tuam maies-
[tatem imploro ne patiaris me
[i]nnocentem uirgis cas[t]igatum
esse et domine prou[.] prae-
[fe]cto non potui queri quia ua-
[let]udini detinebatur
ques[tu]s sum beneficiario

Column ii:

[... .. cen]turionibu[s]
[... ..] numeri eius [
[... tu]am misericord[ia]m
imploro ne patiaris me
hominem trasmarinum
et innocentem de cuius ffide
inquiras uirgis cruent[at]u[m]
esse ac si aliquid sceler[is]
commississem

Translation

'... he beat (?) me all the more ... goods ... pour them down the drain (?). As befits a honest man (?) I implore your majesty not allow me, an innocent man, to have been beaten with rods and, my lord, inasmuch (?) I was unable to complain to the prefect because he was detained by ill-health I complained in vain (?) to the *beneficiarius* and the rest (?) of the centurions of his unit. Accordingly (?) I implore your mercifulness not to allow me, a man from overseas and an innocent one, about whose good faith you may inquire, to have been bloodied by rods as if I had committed crime.'

transport of

ss
m

y lord, what
e going to send to
ry of Vocontius ...
(2nd hand)
to sort out (?) the
ut. I ask you to
me to do (?). I
health.'

on of a diptych.
a rather elegant
th a second text
he margin. A
ry logistics.

18 Letter of appeal Reconstructed text

Column i:

*eo magis me ca[
d ... [.]em mercem []
r[.]uel effunder[...]r[]
[.]mine probo tuam maies-
[t]atem imploro ne patiaris me
[i]nnocentem uirgis cas[t]igatum
esse et domine prou[.] prae-
[fe]cto non potui queri quia ua-
[let]judini detinebatur
ques[tu]s sum beneficiario*

Column ii:

*[...] cen[turion]ibu[s]
[...] numeri eius []
[.] tu]am misericord[ia]m
imploro ne patiaris me
hominem trasmarinum
et innocentem de cuius f[ide]
inquiras uirgis cruent[at]u[m]
esse ac si aliquid sceler[is]
commississem*

Translation

'... he beat (?) me all the more ... goods ... or
pour them down the drain (?). As befits an
honest man (?) I implore your majesty not to
allow me, an innocent man, to have been
beaten with rods and, my lord, inasmuch as
(?) I was unable to complain to the prefect
because he was detained by ill-health I have
complained in vain (?) to the *beneficiarius*
and the rest (?) of the centurions of his (?)
unit. Accordingly (?) I implore your
mercifulness not to allow me, a man from
overseas and an innocent one, about whose
good faith you may inquire, to have been
bloodied by rods as if I had committed some
crime.'

The second part of a letter draft written on
the back of a three-leaved tablet, on the
front of which was an account of wheat.
The form of address indicates that the
letter was intended for the governor of the
province, since the unit commander had
been unavailable to help. The writer,
seemingly a civilian, appears to be seeking
redress for a beating he has received,
apparently unjustly. This is not surprising,
since other sources frequently refer to
arbitrary and severe beatings meted out by
the military, in particular by centurions,
and vain attempts to secure justice from
others in the military hierarchy.

PRB P1989.6-2.73. Tab. Vindol. II,344

19



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of wheat.
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t surprising,
refer to
eted out by
nturions,
tice from
7.

19 Letter to the slave of Verecundus
Reconstructed text

*fabae frensae m(odios) duos
pultos uiginti
mala si potes formonsa inueni-
re centum qua centum aut
ducenta si ibi • aequo emantur*

Left margin:

*Jrio mulsi si ebr [
]mus (sextarios) viii muriae [
]s modium oliuae [
] no m*

Back:

Verecundi

Translation

'... bruised beans, two *modii*, chickens, twenty, a hundred apples, if you can find nice ones, a hundred or two hundred eggs, if they are for sale there at a fair price. ... 8 *sextarii* of fish-sauce ... a *modius* of olives ...'

Back:

'To ... slave (?) of Verecundus.'

Part of the right-hand portion of a diptych, listing a range of foodstuffs. Verecundus was probably the prefect mentioned on three other tablets. The provisions listed here were probably acquired for his household by one of the domestic slaves in his retinue.

PRB P1989.6-2.17. *Tab. Vindol. II,302*

20 Letter to Candidus
Reconstructed text

Column i:

*S[eu]er[us] Candido suo
salutem
souxtum saturnalicium
(asses) iii aut seks rogo frater
explices et radices ne mi-
nus (denarii) s(emissem)*

Column ii:

uale frater

Back:

*Candido Genialis
prae(fecti)
a Seuero*

...i seruo

Translation

'Severus to his Candidus, greetings. Regarding the ... for the Saturnalia, I ask you, brother, to see to them at a price of 4 or six *asses* and radishes to the value of not less than half a *denarius*. Farewell, brother.'

Back:

'To Candidus, slave of Genialis the prefect, from Severus, slave of ...'

This well-preserved diptych has a short letter written from one slave to another. Both their masters were probably prefects. The subject of the letter, provisions for the Saturnalia, is particularly apt since that festival had a special importance for people of servile status.

PRB P1988.10-5.237. *Tab. Vindol. II,301.*

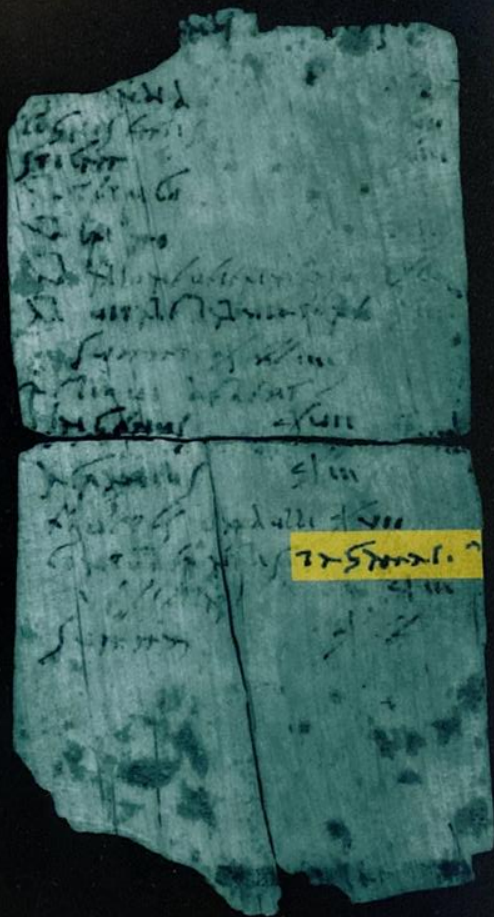
21 Account of money received or owed

This double-leaf tablet (diptych) was found in 2001. It contains an account of cash sums paid or owed by a number of men mainly for lances – the type of spear used by cavalry soldiers. The account is written in three columns. Although some of the writing is damaged several soldiers' names can be read, including Crescens, Exomnius and Tullio.

Near the middle of the second column (just below the largest hole on the left leaf) are two soldiers of particular interest, Tagomas who is labelled *vexellarius* – a standard-bearer – and Victor, who is described as *venator* – a huntsman. The importance of hunting in military life is highlighted at Vindolanda by several tablets which refer to hunting hounds and hunting nets (see one of the tablets on display in Room 70, case 22) as well as to huntsmen.

The unusual name Tagomas is especially interesting because it has been found twice more at Vindolanda, on another cash account tablet (see the photograph on the right) and scratched onto the handle of an amphora. Clearly this was the same soldier, a flag-bearer of a cavalry unit, probably a detachment of the Spanish regiment *cohors I fida Vardullorum equitata*.

PY 2004, 0501.35. Inv. T01-39



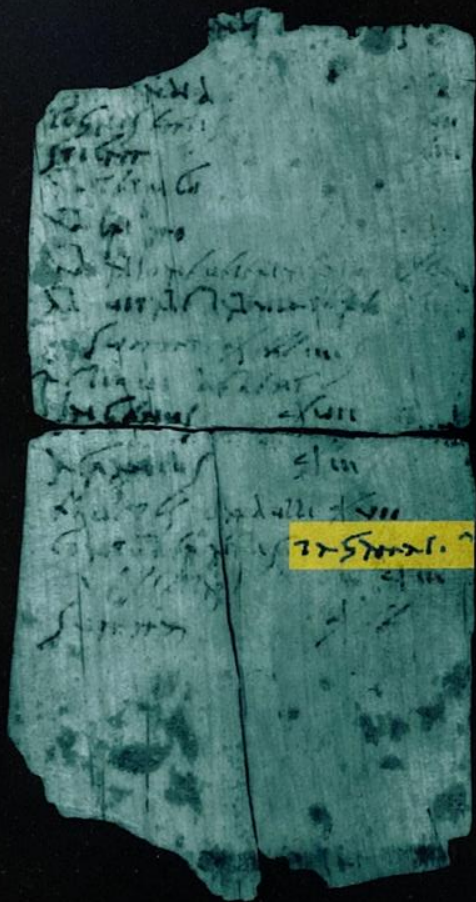
Infra-red photograph of cash account tablet Tab. Vindol. II, 181 (PY 1989,0602.71), with the name Tagamatis highlighted.

ived or owed

(diptych) was found
account of cash
number of men
type of spear used
account is written
ough some of the
eral soldiers' names
Crescens, Exomnius

second column (just
n the left leaf) are
r interest,
l *vexellarius* – a
ictor, who is
huntsman. The
ilitary life is
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nting hounds and
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22) as well as to

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otograph on the
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avalry unit,
the Spanish
dullorum



Infra-red photograph of cash account tablet
Tab. Vindol. II, 181 (PY 1989,0602.71), with
the name Tagamatis highlighted.

Further information

The translations and reconstructed texts used here are by Dr A. K. Bowman and Dr J.D. Thomas. For their full publication of the Vindolanda Tablets see A.K. Bowman and J.D. Thomas *The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets* Volumes II and III (British Museum Press 1994 and 2003). For a more popular account see A.K. Bowman *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier* (British Museum Press 2003). For young people see Barbara Bell *Minimus: starting out in Latin* (Cambridge University Press 2004).

Vindolanda Tablets Online

<http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk>

Vindolanda fort online information

<http://www.vindolanda.com>

Visitors may wish to go to Gallery 70
(Rome and the Roman Empire) to see more
Vindolanda Tablets on display in case 22.

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