

man victories date this tablet to a period A.D.84-96 and makes it important in that it provides a rare example of dated cursive script. The five fragmentary lines form part of an oath or promise that was presumably written and sealed in the presence of witnesses. It is perhaps tempting to think that the oath was made in the temple dedicated to the *numen* of the Emperor that must have existed in London⁸.

No. 4 London Museum (29.94/11) from the Walbrook, Lothbury, 1927. 135 x 39mm. Writing scratched on the wood⁹.

quam pecuniam petitionis item
scriptis solvere mihi debet Cres-
cens isve ad quem ea res per-
tinebit ris primis
. ss . . . t

'... which money by the terms likewise of the claim shall be paid to me by Crescens or by the person concerned . . .'

Here we clearly have not part of an oath or promise but part of a business transaction, either a loan or a purchase of some kind.

No. 5 London Museum (29.94/11) from the Walbrook, Lothbury, 1927. 141 x 36mm. Writing scratched on the wood¹⁰.

.
. . . . rem vendidisse
ex taberna sua
. navem faci-
endam et permissionem dedisse
. clavi faciendi

It is unfortunate that this tablet is so fragmentary, as it is in some ways the most interesting of the group. All we have is a disjointed collection of snippets, referring to the sale of an object from a shop (*taberna*), to the building of a boat (*navem*), and to the granting of authority for some purpose or other, including probably the making of a steering oar (*clavi*).

At first sight these tablets appear unimpressive, being so fragmentary and inconclusive, and it is not until we stop to think that they were written by some of the inhabitants of Roman London some 1800 years ago, that they make their true impact. They are primary sources offering information directly from the people on the streets of Londinium to the modern historian. It is unfortunate that the many gaps make it impossible to use this advantage to the full, and leaves so many tantalising questions unanswered. It is to be hoped that future excavations in the City, particularly along the course of the Walbrook, will produce more texts and special care will clearly have to be taken to check all thin fragments of wood for carbon ink writing, but in the meantime the many fragments of tablets already in the collections of the Guildhall, London and British Museums might well repay close re-examination.

8. *R.I.B.* 5; R. Merrifield *The Roman City of London* (1965) 44.
9. *London in Roman Times op. cit.*
10. *Ibid.*

Roman Road at Old Hibernia Wharf, Southwark

ALAN GRAHAM

DURING CONTRACTORS' EXCAVATIONS on the site of Old Hibernia Wharf (just west of London Bridge), the line of a Roman road was traced for 12m. as it crossed the site from the N.E. to the S.W. The gravel metalling only survived under the modern road along the eastern side of the site, where it was observed to be up to 1.5m. thick; in the area excavated, cellar floors had removed all deposits above the natural clay silt.

However, the course of the road could be traced by the position of a completely undisturbed band of natural clay/silt, going across the site. To the south of this was a large oval area of gravel working, and to the north a line of inter-connecting gravel pits, parallel to the edge of the road. When these had been partially filled in, a large ditch was dug, again parallel to the line of the road, cutting through the northern edge of the gravel pits.

At an early stage, perhaps before the end of the 1st century, the area to the south of the road was levelled and built over, and a well associated with this occupation was

filled towards the end of the 2nd centry. To the north of the road, the area was levelled at about the same time.

A projection of the road line to the S.W., crosses the trench excavated in Montague Close (Dawson, G., *London Archaeol.* 1 no. 5 [1969] 114) where road gravels of a similar thickness were found. The evidence now strongly suggests that this was a road on a N.E. to S.W. alignment, not as originally suggested by the excavator, a north to south alignment.

When projected towards the Thames, the road reaches the modern river front about 100m. from the site, close to the western side of the medieval London Bridge. This position is very close to the point of incidence on the modern river front, of the projected line of the Roman road found in the G.P.O. trenches beneath Borough High Street, (see Mosaic) and altogether, this is very strong evidence to suggest that the Roman river crossing was close to the position of the medieval London Bridge.