

## **A Roman textile from the Crossrail Broadgate site**

Associated with a disarticulated human skull is a distinctive type of cloth that is characteristic of the northern provinces of the Roman empire. The fine, relatively lightweight cloth, which is now in a very fragmentary state, is woven from combed, Z-spun yarn, in half-basket weave, with a double yarn in the weft system. Similar cloth has been found on several sites in London and Southwark, including deposits dating to the last quarter of the 1st-century at the Bloomberg Street site.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a long strip, which was wrapped round a hazelwood tool handle, was recovered from a 2nd-century deposit at Coptall Avenue, also situated close to the Walbrook riverbed, where damp, anaerobic conditions have enabled some textiles to be preserved.<sup>2</sup> Other examples have been recorded in association with 3rd-century coin hoards in Suffolk and Staffordshire<sup>3</sup> and from sites occupied by the Roman army at Vindolanda on Hadrian's Wall and Xanten and Mainz in the Rhineland.<sup>4</sup> A few textiles of this type from London, Vindolanda and Mainz preserve bands and areas in tapestry weave indicating that the some of the fabrics were more colourful and highly patterned than is apparent now.<sup>5</sup>

Frances Pritchard

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<sup>1</sup> Wild 1975, 139; Wild, 1978, 405-6; Pritchard forthcoming

<sup>2</sup> Pritchard 1983

<sup>3</sup> Wild 1970, 90

<sup>4</sup> Wild 1970, 109; Wild 1981, 11 and 15; Wild 2002, 15

<sup>5</sup> Wild 1975, 139; Wild 1981, 15; Wild 1993, 80