Gods and monsters in Roman Scotland: recent finds of Roman figural bronzes

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ABSTRACT

Recent finds of copper alloy and lead figural sculpture from Roman Scotland are presented and discussed. These are rare finds in this frontier area, and represent a significant addition to a small corpus. Discussion considers whether such finds offer clues to the location of shrines or other sacred places in the wider landscape, a question that has largely been ignored in research to date. The rarity of such finds among the Roman imports on Iron Age sites leads to a discussion of the uptake and impact of such naturalistic imagery on the local population. An appendix catalogues the finds.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, a number of casual discoveries of Roman figural copper alloy and lead sculpture have been reported from Scotland. These are of intrinsic interest, as such images from Classical mythology are not common from this country: figurines are particularly rare (Durham 2012: fig 7), though figural elements on objects such as bronze vessels or horse gear are more common from fort sites (eg Robertson 1975: fig 35; Allason-Jones 2007: 409–10, fig 10.30 no 53, 437–9 no 219; Henig 2012). These recent finds lead onto wider questions of the nature of the findspots and the uptake of these markers of the Classical world in the frontier zone. Specific details of the pieces can be found in the appendix; findspots are given in illus 1.

FIGURINES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS ITEMS

Scotland is notably poorly served by finds of Roman figurines and statues: a recent review recorded only 12 examples (Durham 2012: nos 199–201, 230–2, 265–6, 411, 874, 882–3).[1] One of these has received only brief publication so far. The only known Scottish figurine of Jupiter was reportedly found in the 1960s at Kingsmeadows, Peebles (which sits near the south bank of the River Tweed), though it was only reported for Treasure Trove in 1999 (illus 2). It shows Jupiter standing with thunderbolt in his right hand, pointing with his raised left arm. The feet are broken off, with one stump showing signs of previous repair. The figurine is small and not particularly well modelled, but the style and pose find ready parallel in the art of the north-west provinces (eg Espérandieu & Rolland 1984: pl I nos 3–4, for variations on this theme).

A worthy addition to the corpus is a recent find of a lead mount showing a female head, probably of a Maenad, a female follower of Bacchus, with her hair in a top knot secured by a wreath of fruit (illus 3). It was found close to Auldgirth (Dumfries and Galloway), near the Roman road up the Nith Valley. There are no obvious clues as to how the mount was fastened, but Bacchic imagery was commonplace in the classical world, as we shall see again below. Such mounts were commonly used on furniture or as vehicle decoration (eg Nuber 1988: 103, Abb 50).

Recent finds have also added some more creatures to our Roman-period menagerie. A remarkably fine depiction of a seated eagle-griffin with raised wings was found about a

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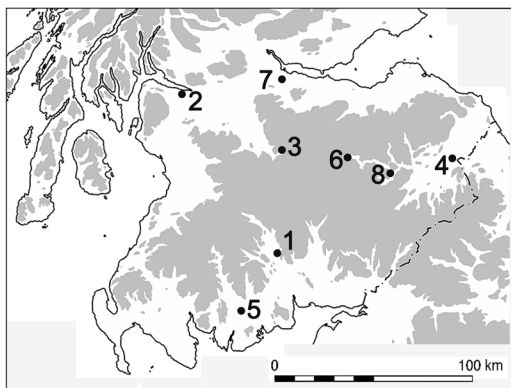
ILLUS 1   Findspots discussed in this paper. 1 Auldgirth,
2 Bishopton, 3 Castledykes, 4 Coldstream
(Earl's Haugh), 5 Glenlochar, 6 Kingsmeadows,
Peebles, 7 Polmont, 8 The Rink

kilometre south of the Antonine Wall at Polmont (Falkirk). It is one of the finest pieces of small-scale Roman art from the Scottish frontier, very classical in form, well modelled and well preserved (illus 4 and 5). It is unclear what it was once fixed to (the base plate has two attachment holes). The flat base is inconsistent with a helmet fitting (compare the griffin on the Crosby Garrett helmet (Breeze & Bishop 2013)), but such mythological figures could have served as guardians on a wide range of items, from furniture to vehicles (compare a lying griffin with tanged base from Neuss (Menzel 1986: 146, Taf 134 no 385)). British parallels are rare: there are none in Durham's (2012) catalogue of figurines from Britain, but a closely similar example has been found near Vindolanda in Northumberland (Breeze & Bishop 2013: illus 32).


ILLUS 2   The Jupiter figurine from Kingsmeadows, Peebles. Photo: National Museums
Scotland /Ian Larner

Illus 3   Lead head of a Maenad from Auldgirth.
H: 60mm. Photo: National Museums
Scotland / Neil McLean

The function of another creature is clearer – a rather stylised hollow-cast standing eagle found near Coldstream (Scottish Borders), its wings against its body (illus 6). The treatment is rather schematic, with patterns of stab-marks and crescents indicating the plumage on its wings and chest; the style is very similar to one probably from Woodeaton, Oxfordshire (Henig & Munby 1973: 386–7, pl xxx), a site which has produced a notable concentration of bird figurines (eg Kirk 1949: pl V). It stands on a plinth which has a gently curved underside, and it is clear that this extended into a ring some 35mm in diameter. This concept of a bird perched on a fitting finds good parallels among religious paraphernalia, notably in sceptre finials (eg from Felmingham Hall, Norfolk, and Willingham Fen, Cambridgeshire (Gilbert 1980: 168–70, pl VII; see Henig 1996 for wider discussion)). The depiction of an eagle links it to the cult of Jupiter.

The findspot has no known Roman associations, but such finds may offer clues to the location of shrines or temples in the landscape. It sits close to the edge of a terrace above the River Tweed, a location similar to the poorly recorded Kingsmeadows Jupiter. A connection to a shrine is a likely explanation for other finds – such as the statuette of Mercury from Stelloch in Wigtownshire, which comes from an area which has produced a cluster of unusual finds of a religious character (Hunter et al forthcoming). Our knowledge of shrines and temples in Roman Scotland is poor because so much research attention has focused on fort sites, but there are plentiful parallels elsewhere for shrines in the wider landscape (eg the well-preserved shrines to Vinotonus on Scargill Moor near Bowes, North Yorkshire (Wright 1946; Richmond & Wright 1947)). The findspots of some stone sculptures also suggest the presence of landscape shrines, such as a small marble statue from the Leader
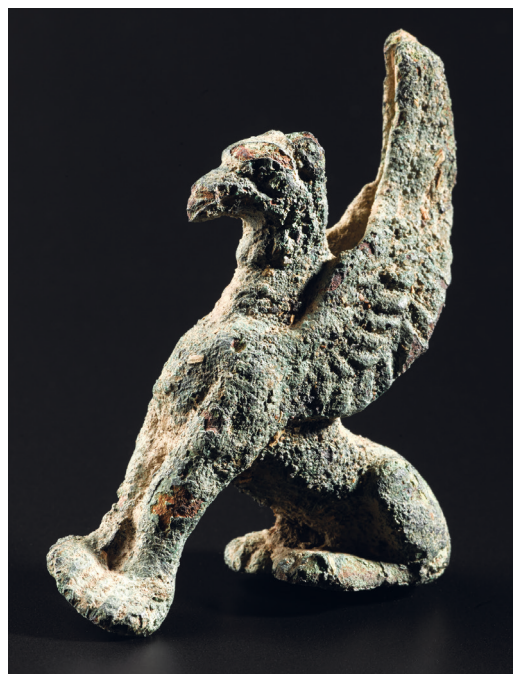
Illus 4   The Polmont griffin. H: 57mm. Photo: National Museums Scotland / Neil McLean
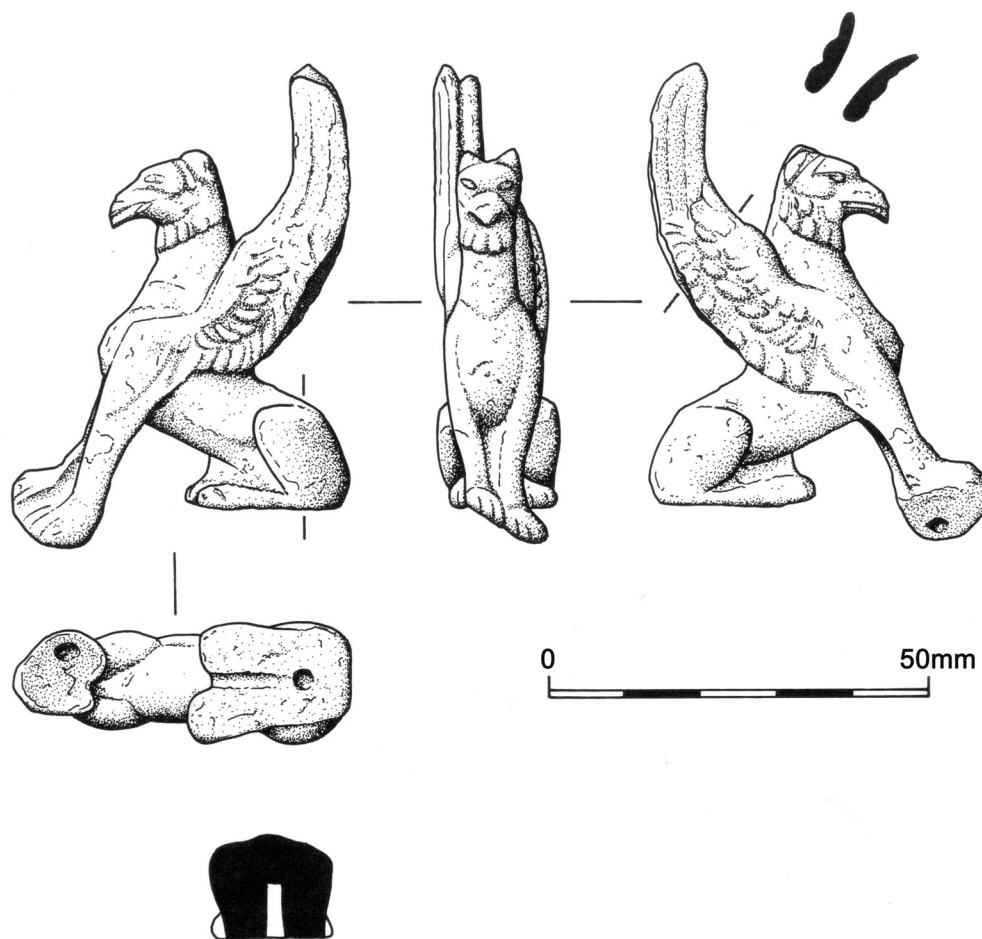
ILLUS 5   The Polmont griffin. Drawn by Alan Braby

Water near Newstead and small reliefs of gods from Minto and Appletreehall (all Scottish Borders) (Keppie 1990: fig 7; *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 1995: 9; Henig 2012: 154, fig 14.2). All were found at some distance from known Roman sites: while sculpture could be moved around in secondary use, such finds can plausibly be seen as hints of sacred sites dispersed through the landscape and merit pursuit in the field in search of a context.

These stray finds are unlikely to be connected to indigenous habits, since there is a notable absence of sculptural material among the wealth of Roman finds reaching Iron Age sites. The only example is a raven figure from the hillfort of Traprain Law (MacGregor 1976: no 333); this site has also produced an unusual miniature iron antler (Burley 1956: no 267).[2] This is in marked contrast to other areas beyond the frontier. For instance, statuettes are common in the northern Netherlands (Zadoks-Josephus Jitta et al 1967) and a number of examples are known from Denmark (Klindt-Jensen 1950: 199–200), where they are argued to be a key part of influences which led to radical changes in local conceptions of gods (Andrén 2005: 129). There was no such development in Iron Age Scotland; such naturalistic representations of deities were avoided, although the local population was exposed to other naturalistic
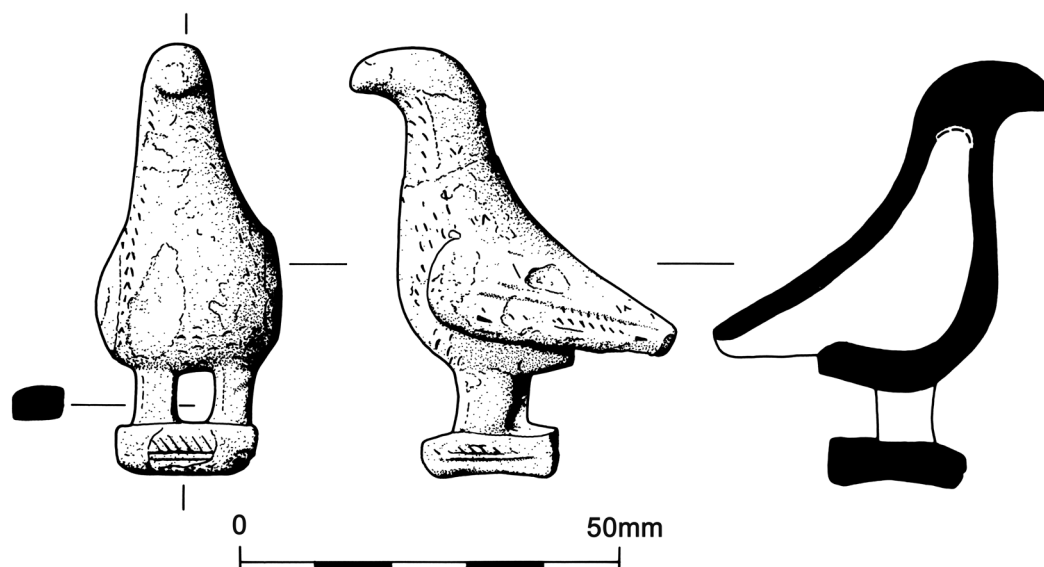
ILLUS 6   The Coldstream eagle. Drawn by Alan Braby

imagery such as decorated samian bowls and coinage. Interestingly, zoomorphic brooches, which probably had religious significance (Allason-Jones 2015), are also rare on Iron Age sites.[3] This serves as a useful reminder of the very different reactions to the Roman world in different areas.

FINE DINING ON THE FRONTIER

Two recently reported finds provide examples of a rare type of vessel handle with anthropomorphic decoration. One from the fort complex at Castledykes (South Lanarkshire) was found some years ago but only recently came to notice; the other, from the fort of Glenlochar (Dumfries and Galloway) was discovered in 2015 (illus 7–9).

The two handles take a near-identical tightly curved form, indicating a shallow cup or bowl. The handle has a curved thumb-rest on top and a human face peering into the vessel. Both bear vine-related symbolism. The Glenlochar figure is probably a Maenad, a female follower of Bacchus, with decoration evoking a tendril of vegetation, what may be stylised grapes and leaves. The Castledykes one probably shows

Bacchus himself flanked by leaf patterns with a vine scroll running down the handle; the lower attachment plate takes the shape of a stylised vine leaf.

Many bronze vessels in the Roman world were linked to the serving and consumption of wine, often with relevant Bacchic scenes or other mythological depictions on the handles (eg Hutchinson 1986: 316–43). The handles under consideration here are a much more unusual form. British examples are rare (there are finds from Faverdale (Co Durham), Verulamium and London (Bogaers in Doppelfeld 1967: 338; Waugh & Goodburn 1972: 132, fig 42 no 137; Niblett & Reeves 1990; Walton 2012, fig 76.2; Franke 2015: Abb 3.4)), consistent with a sparse but widespread distribution pattern with further finds from Gaul, Germany, Italy and Switzerland (Bienert 2007: 167–8, 170–1; Franke 2013: 150–1; Franke 2015: Abb 5). These examples are Bienert's form 58; intact vessels suggest this was a shallow bowl with a footring and paired handles (illus 10). The wine-related imagery of our examples might suggest a role as drinking vessels, but Regina Franke (2015: 205) argued the rim profile of intact examples was inconsistent
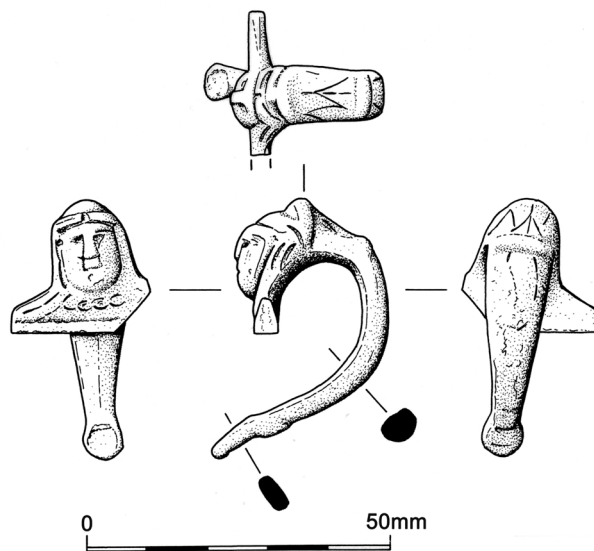
ILLUS 7
Handle with head of a Maenad, Glenlochar. Drawn by Alan Braby
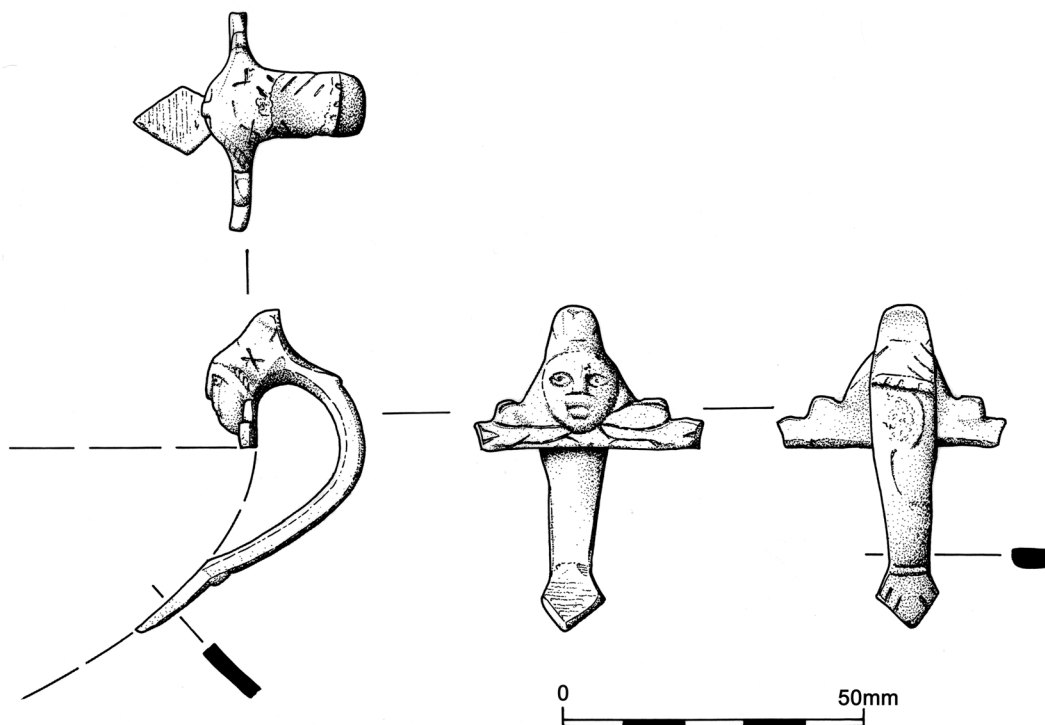
ILLUS 8   Handle with head of Bacchus, Castledykes. Drawn by Alan Braby

ILLUS 9   The heads from Castledykes (left) and Glenlochar. Photo: National Museums Scotland / Neil McLean

with this and proposed a role as serving vessels. Her assessment of dated examples indicates origins in the mid-1st century AD and use through to the later 2nd century (Franke 2015: 208).

Three of the surviving bowls, from Locarno-Muralto (CH), Maastricht-Belfort (NL) and London, are ornately decorated with niello inlay and (in the former case) silver inlay and a beaded rim (Simonett no date: 76 fig 85; J E Bogaers in Doppelfeld 1967: 336–7, Taf 127; Franke 2015: Abb 4). A fourth, from Butzbach (D) has unusual conical fittings soldered to the inner side, making it impractical as a drinking vessel and supporting use as a serving vessel (*Germania* 33 (1955): 122, Abb 10.1, 11.1a–c; Bienert 2007: 168). Other evidence for reuse and repair suggests these vessels were valued: the handles on the Maastricht bowl are argued to be replacements, while the handle of such a vessel was reused as

a handle on a lamp from Dax (F) (Santrot 1996: 295–8).

Decoration on the handles varies (Franke 2015: 205). Most show young females (eg Verulamium, with vegetal decoration on outer side of handle; Butzbach, flanked by animals; Dax, flanked by birds; and Bouches-du-Rhone area (F) (Waugh & Goodburn 1972: fig 42.137; Oggiano-Bitar 1984: 116 no 248; Santrot 1996: 295–8)). One from Bavay (F) has the face of a youth (Santrot 1996: 298). A few with bearded male masks may represent Silenus but the Maastricht examples are veiled, suggesting they were priests. The vessel from Horath (D) shows a young male with flowing locks and wings (Bienert 2007: 170–1 no 191–2); the outer side of the handle has engraved vegetal decoration, as on the Scottish finds, and it ends in a leaf-shaped attachment.
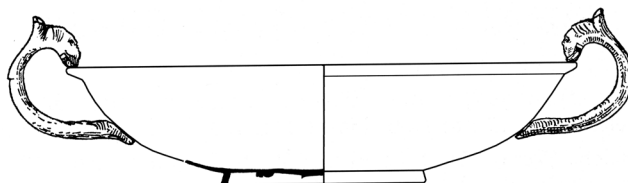
ILLUS 10 Illustration of the vessel type from which the Glenlochar and Castledykes handles derive. From Bienert 2007: 170

ILLUS 11 The Rink eagle. Photo: National Museums Scotland / Neil McLean

Bienert (2007: 168) differentiated on grounds of style between a group of Italian make and others of provincial manufacture. However, Franke (2015: 205–6) links the use of niello-inlaid decoration on the finest examples to military traditions, and suggests they were a product of the north-west provinces, with the distribution suggesting a middle Rhine production centre. The Scottish examples are likely to be British provincial products as the figures are more stylised than naturalistic. The simplified form of the head would be described as 'Celtic' in older scholarship but this is misleading: it is a Romano-British version of clearly classical figures rendered by craftworkers who either lacked the training for classical naturalism or (just as likely) were less concerned with mere rendition of nature (Hunter 2015: 143–7).

PROTECTING VEHICLES

The final two examples come from Roman wagons or similar vehicles; the creatures depicted here were probably thought to offer protection to the vehicle as well as serving an ornamental
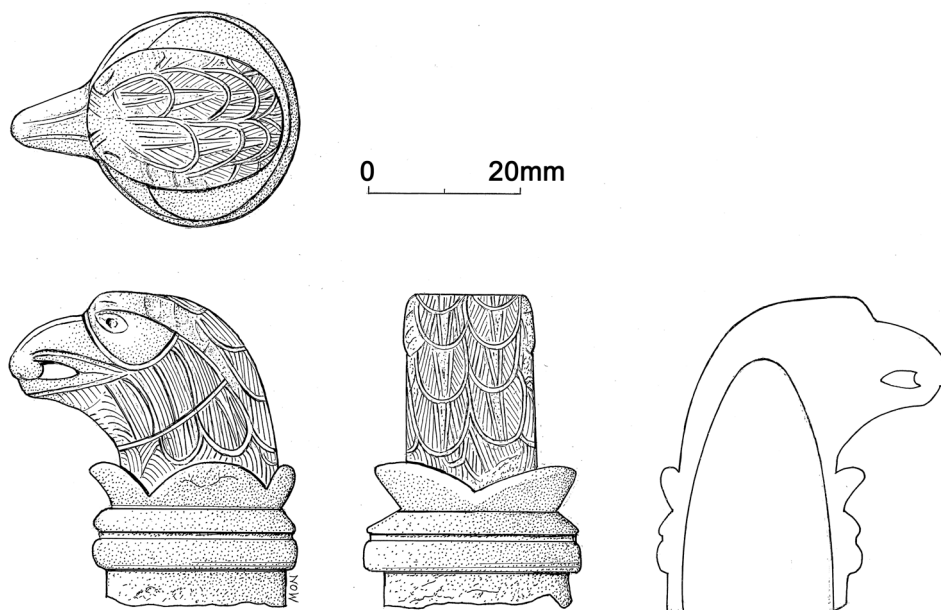
ILLUS 12 The Rink eagle. Drawn by Marion O'Neil

0   20mm
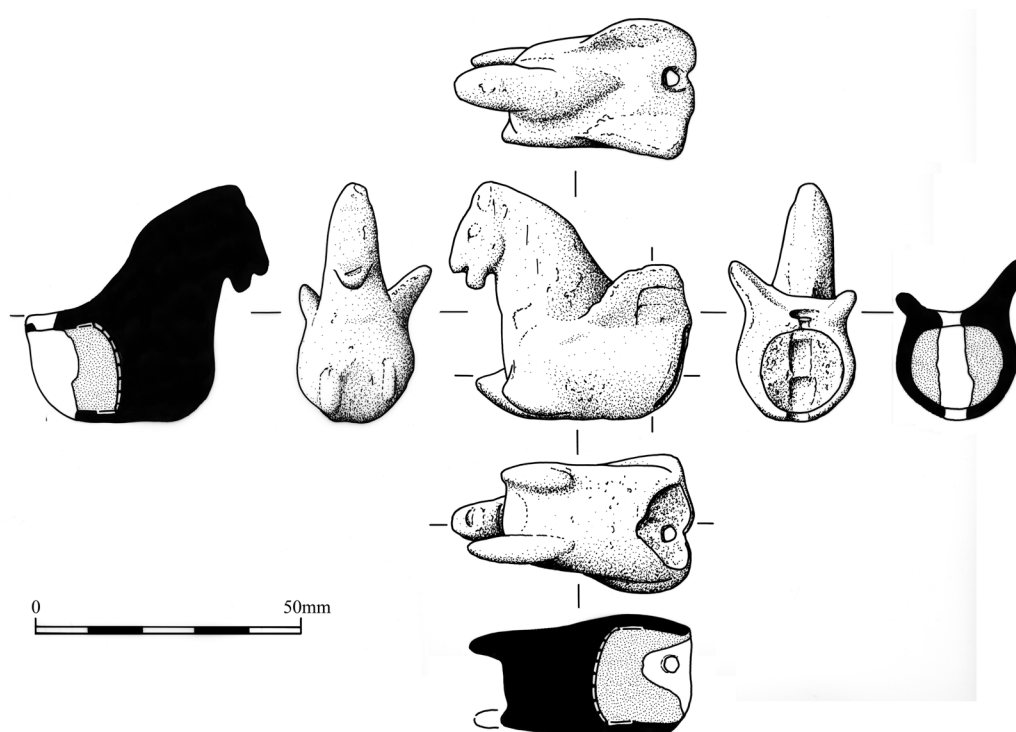
Illus 13 The Bishopton Pegasus. Drawn by Alan Braby

purpose. One is an eagle-headed mount found close to the River Tweed at The Rink (Scottish Borders). It is a broken socketed fitting with the eagle bursting out of a flower and holding a berry in its mouth (illus 11 and 12). The form is a well-known one, which would originally have had a hooked fitting to hold a strap, either for a rein or a suspension strap which held the body of the chariot (Painter 1971; Röring 1983: 12–26, 102–26; Crummy 2000; Worrell 2007: 340–1). The eagle-headed form is typically of 1st-century date and frequently has military associations (Crummy 2000; 2011: 53–4).

The final example is much rarer. A hollow-cast mount in the shape of Pegasus, the winged horse of antiquity, was recovered from the banks of the Clyde about a kilometre north-east of the Roman fort of Bishopton in 2012 (illus 13 and 14). It is a hollow casting of the front of the beast, the ceramic core still in place, with fittings to the rear. Despite extensive surface erosion, it is clear it was once a fine object.

Such figural bronze mounts of mythical creatures are rare, but there is a close cousin in a griffin from the Roman fort of Strageath (Perth and Kinross) (Frere & Wilkes 1989: 146, fig 74). There is another British griffin from Trawscoed in Dyfed (Davies 1987); a similar find from Telita in Romania has a bar rather than a socket for fixing (Simion 1995: 222 no 5, fig 5.2), while one from the vicus of the auxiliary fort at Aquincum-Víziváros (Hungary) has a crescent resting on its wings (Kérdő & Kovács 2002, fig 3); a closely similar one is known from Valkenburg (Netherlands; Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden, 1912/3.4). But our example is clearly a Pegasus, even in its worn condition: the narrow head shape is that of a horse, its eyes on the sides of the head rather than looking forward like a griffin, and the open mouth shows no sign of a griffin's curved beak.

These items are plausibly seen as vehicle mounts, though how exactly they were used is unclear. They are not included in Röring's

Illus 14 The Bishopton Pegasus. H: 47mm. Photo:
National Museums Scotland / Neil McLean

(1983) study of vehicle fittings, though figural bronzes with rather different cylindrical fittings are known from wagon-related contexts (eg von Mercklin 1933: Abb 13–14). A check of major bronze catalogues produced no further close parallels, suggesting this is a rare type.[4] They must have received heavy wear, as the Bishopton mount broke in use; the form of hollow in the rear would suit a leather strap running round the rivet. The original fixing of the Strageath mount may have been similar, but was repaired with a sheet bracket which seems to be held by looping it round the original rivet (not soldered, as the publication suggests). This would take a vertical strap, rod or tang around 5mm in diameter. A similar protome of a horse was found attached to a lamp handle in a royal tomb at Meroë in the Sudan (Comstock & Vermeule 1971: 348–9 no 489); the rather ungainly fixing of the protome's disc to the handle suggests this represents secondary use.

It is noteworthy that all three British examples come from the vicinity of auxiliary forts, while Aquincum-Víziváros seems to have had a cavalry garrison (Németh 2003) and Telita lies near Isaccea/*Noviodunum*, which was base for a legion and the Moesian fleet. It seems this type was particularly favoured by the military. The Trawscoed example is a stray find (the neighbouring fort has a Flavian-Antonine date range) but the Strageath griffin comes from Antonine levels, and the fort at Bishopton is Antonine. The Aquincum find comes from a 1st-century AD context.

CONCLUSIONS

This group of objects shows that the typical gods and creatures of Roman mythology were in active service on the frontier. It also raises two wider points. The first is the question of the nature of such stray finds. Some are discarded material from fort complexes, such as the Glenlochar and Castledykes handles which had both been removed from their vessel. Others, such as the Rink fitting, Bishopton Pegasus and Auldgirth mount, probably broke or fell off in use as troops, traders or others using the Roman road systems moved around the landscape. But could some stray finds offer clues to sites of religious activity? These have potential for investigating the location of small shrines or temples, a category sorely under-studied in Roman Scotland.

The second point is the rarity of such figural representations among the spectrum of Roman imports reaching Iron Age sites. This is further confirmation of the selectivity behind this process, and contrasts notably with other areas beyond the frontier. It points to very different ways of seeing the world, with a Roman world where gods took human form in contrast to an Iron Age world where this was apparently inconceivable.

Each of these new discoveries casts a little bit more light on life in Roman Scotland. These finds offer us a glimpse of the military community, its beliefs and values on this north-western frontier.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Campbell and Natasha Ferguson, for inviting me to examine them, to the various finders who reported the material, and to the referees for their helpful comments. The excellent photographs are the work of Neil McLean; the drawings are by Alan Braby and Marion O'Neil.

APPENDIX

Grid references are generally given only to four figures in order to protect the findspot; researchers can apply for further details to the recipient museum or the Treasure Trove Unit. The finds are ordered alphabetically by findspot.

AULDGIRTH (DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY): LEAD BUST OF A MAENAD

Lead appliqué with flat rear, showing a youthful female head, probably a Maenad, with flowing locks framing her face; part of her hair is gathered in a top-knot, apparently held by a wreath of fruit. H: 60mm, W: 43mm, Th: 19mm. For similar representations of Maenads, compare bronze chest fittings from Eigeltingen-Eckartsbrunn, Baden-Württemberg (Nuber 1988, 103, Abb 50). It is unclear how the Auldgirth mount would have been attached.

Found by metal-detecting in 2011 near Auldgirth, on the east side of the River Nith close to the line of the Roman road through Nithsdale (NGR: NX 91 88). Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 102/13) and allocated to Dumfries Museum (*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 2014: 54; *Britannia* 46 (2015): 291).

BISHOPTON (RENFREWSHIRE): PEGASUS MOUNT

Rather worn copper alloy mount in the shape of Pegasus. Only its foreparts are represented; at the rear of the lost-wax casting is a socket filled with a ceramic casting core. A vertical U-shaped groove 8mm wide cut into the rear of the core aligns with a rivet hole in the upper edge of the socket, 3mm in diameter; the lower edge is broken from use-damage. The surface detail is mostly lost, as are the legs and most of the wings, although traces of the left eye and some incised detail of wing feathers survive. The object is 45mm long, 26mm wide and 47mm high as it survives; socket internal diameter 17.5mm.

Found near the banks of the River Clyde about a kilometre north-east of the Roman fort of Bishopton by metal-detecting in 2012 (NGR: NS 42 72). Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 124/12) and allocated to Paisley Museum (*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 2013: 161–2; *Britannia* 45 (2014): 317).

CASTLEDYKES (SOUTH LANARKSHIRE): ANTHROPOMORPHIC VESSEL HANDLE

This copper alloy handle was found by metal-detecting around the Roman fort of Castledykes in the 1980s or 1990s, and is now in the collection of Biggar Museum. It had been deliberately detached from a shallow bowl as the arms of the rim mount are broken off (making it impossible to assess the diameter). The handle has an asymmetrical oval section with faceted edges; traces of a clear substance in one area are probably modern glue. A worn curving line on the handle was probably intended as a curling branch of vegetation. At the bottom, a transverse bar moulding marks the boundary with a diamond-shaped terminal. The handle curves round into the rim mount, with a concave moulding on its top for a finger rest; again a bar acts as separator, this time with decorative notching. The thumb rest leads into a human head resting on the rim mount, which steps into the extended broken arms. On other vessels these mounts take the form of bird heads, but here horizontal lines divide the step from the lower edge; grooves on the lower edge were probably intended to evoke vegetation.

The head is very simply rendered as a near-circular form, lacking ears; its left side shows a very worn fringe of hair, but this has been worn away on the right. It has two almond-shaped eyes with a central indented pupil, a triangular nose, and two bars marking the lips (the lower shorter than the upper). The stylisation is typical of so-called 'Celtic' heads. The peaked form of the thumb rest gives it the effect of wearing a hood or an Attic cap. Faint marks in the casting on each

side of the head appear to be deliberate though their function is unclear; the head's left side has X, its top – and its right side <. There are also faint angled grooves on the edges of the finger rest and on the lower terminal. All appear to have been in the original wax model. These may be maker's marks, though they are a little prominent for this; the handle from Dax (F) concealed the maker's mark 'D' under the circular foot (Santrot 1996: 295).

The decoration carries subtle, stylised vegetal imagery, probably to evoke vine plants. The form of the lower terminal and the grooves can be seen as a stylised vine leaf, the worn scroll on the handle a vine-scroll, while leaf patterns flank the head on the mount. The head itself is probably intended as Bacchus given its clean-shaven nature.

The underside of the lower terminal and the lower edge of the rim mount are filed to make it easier for solder to adhere. The other surfaces have fine file-marks from cleaning the casting. The handle in particular has pock-marks of corrosion. The handle has clearly seen extensive use as much of the decoration is rather worn. H: 56mm, W: 36mm.

EARL'S HAUGH, COLDSTREAM, SCOTTISH BORDERS: EAGLE-SHAPED SCEPTRE HEAD

This copper alloy hollow-cast figure takes the form of a rather static, plump standing eagle looking forward, its wings folded. The surface is rather worn. The depiction is stylised; for instance, it has no feet, and viewed from the front, the bird leans slightly to its right. The plumage is defined as down-pointing crescents on the lower chest and tighter crescents or stab-marks on the upper chest, rather worn. The folded wings stand slightly proud of the bird's flanks and show traces of bands of linear decoration, some with angled incisions to represent feathers. The right side has a slightly recessed channel with angled stabs to define the tip of the wing. The hooked end of the beak is very worn; the head shows a trace of an incised circular eye. The tail is broken. The bird stands on a base with a stepped profile; the upper part shows angled incisions between two bars before stepping back to a decorated bar at the sides. The front and back edges are incomplete and the underside of the base is curved, indicating it formed a ring some 35mm in diameter. This strongly suggests it was the head of a sceptre; compare examples from Felmingham Hall, Norfolk, and Willingham Fen, Cambridgeshire (Gilbert 1980: pl VII). H: 57mm, W: 24.5mm, Th: 43mm, of which the base is 18 × 18 × 6.5mm; mass is 64.86g.

The bird was found by metal-detecting in 2003. The location is recorded in NMRS (NT83NW 181) as some 20m from the edge of the river terrace at Earl's Haugh, near Coldstream (NGR: NT 814 393).

Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 117/14) and allocated to Scottish Borders Museum Service.

GLENLOCHAR (DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY): ANTHROPOMORPHIC VESSEL HANDLE

Copper alloy anthropomorphic handle, the original surface lost in places, especially on the grip. The lower attachment plate is mostly lost, as are the ends of the upper one. These are the points where it would have been soldered to the wall of a copper alloy bowl, suggesting it has been broken off. The upper plate has a roughened area on its inside surface which was probably designed to aid solder adhesion. The grip curves tightly to the foot, implying a broad, shallow vessel. There is space for a single finger, with the thumb placed on a concave rest on top. At the top of the handle, a female head faces into the bowl. Her stylised face is quite round, with prominent brows, flattened nose and large eyes with raised iris. Her hair is parted centrally, the strands falling by the side of her face. Features are simply defined but detailed, with indents to mark the pupils, nostrils and corners of the straight, closed mouth. Lines on her shoulders follow the slope of the attachment plate, while below her chin is a series of several crescentic decorative indents with central dots, perhaps intended to represent grapes.

The thumb-rest has incised decoration representing a leaf pattern, and the vegetal symbolism is carried onto the grip where a sinuous lightly engraved line, much damaged by

corrosion, probably represents a vegetal tendril terminating in a worn boss. The lower plate expands from this. There is a slight casting flaw on one side of the upper handle (a linear indented area), and file marks in places from finishing. H: 44mm, W: 23mm, depth 26mm.

Found by metal-detecting in the environs of Glenlochar Roman fort in 2015. Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 36/15) and allocated to Stewartry Museum.

KINGSMEADOWS, PEEBLES (SCOTTISH BORDERS): FIGURINE OF JUPITER

Jupiter is represented as a standing nude figure, bearded, with a wreath or diadem in his hair fastened at the rear with a rosette. His head is turned slightly to the right. A cloak is draped over his left shoulder. His left arm is raised to his shoulder, the fist clenched and the index finger pointing. In this pose he often holds a sceptre or rests on a spear, but the positioning of the hand is wrong for that in this case. The right arm is crooked and extended away from the body, and holds a stylised thunderbolt depicted as bluntly pointed lobes divided in three by two incised lines on the front. This is a schematised version of the normal bolt with two lightning shafts beside it. The feet are lost. The left leg has a small hole in its bottom, 2.5mm in diameter and 5mm deep, for attachment to the base, while the angular end of the shortened right leg and traces of solder indicate it had been repaired. The anatomy is stylised and the musculature neither detailed nor well-modelled, suggesting it is provincial workmanship.

The copper alloy figurine was found in the 1960s, reported to Colchester Museum in 1980, and drawn to the National Museum's attention in 1999. Details of the find circumstances are accordingly rather uncertain, and the attribution cannot be accepted entirely unquestioningly, but the setting is plausible. It was found at Kings Manor House, Kingsmeadows, on the edge of Peebles, by the south bank of the River Tweed (around NGR: NT 26 40). There is a Roman road along the River Tweed, and the possibility that it derives from a small shrine, perhaps at a ford, should be considered. Evaluation work in 2006 recovered a Severan denarius in the vicinity (at NGR: NT 265 394), but this too was a stray find (*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 2006: 146). However, it adds weight to the idea that there is a Roman site in the vicinity. H: 92mm, W: 50mm, Th: (torso) 11mm.

Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 151/98) and allocated to Scottish Borders Museums. (*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 1999: 79; *Britannia* 31 (2000): 384, pl XXIA).

POLMONT (FALKIRK): GRIFFIN FIGURINE

Copper alloy statuette of a seated eagle-griffin with raised wings. The piece is well-modelled in some detail, with three sets of wing feathers, a ruff of feathers around the neck, and well-defined musculature. The front legs are cast in one but modelled in relief to give a clear view of two legs. No tail is shown, and the griffin's gender is not made clear. In good condition apart from surface corrosion; once the granular corrosion is cleaned this should be a spectacular piece of Roman art. Ears damaged and front feet twisted, presumably from removal of the statuette. The wings have been clenched together. Attached to a flat surface by pegs in two conical holes, one under the rear legs (depth 8mm), one under the left paw (depth *c* 3mm). L: 45mm, W: 17mm, H: 57mm.

Found by metal-detecting in 2014 about a kilometre south of the Antonine Wall (NGR: NS 94 78). There is nothing obvious in the topography or previous finds from the area to suggest why it might have been there (Geoff Bailey pers comm), but Roman activity in an area so close to the Wall can be assumed.

Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 32/15) and allocated to Falkirk Museum.

THE RINK (SCOTTISH BORDERS): EAGLE-HEADED VEHICLE MOUNT

Eagle head emerging from a three-leaved calyx, which sits on a collar moulding on the terminal of a broken cylindrical fitting. This is a beautifully made, finely detailed lost-wax casting, with incised detail made in the wax model. The eagle holds a piece of fruit in its beak. The eye (with dot pupil) is shadowed by a prominent brow,

and there is a series of tufts below the cheek. Elsewhere the head is covered in scale-like feathers depicted with considerable naturalism, with two lines defining a central stalk or rachis and angled incisions for the barbs of the feather. Under the chin the plumage is represented by simple crescents. Marginal lines outline the beak. The socket has fractured and there is slight damage to the base of the neck on the right side. Originally it would have had a longer socket with a hook fitting at the bottom for a leather strap (Röring 1983: Taf 11–12). H: 42mm, W: 39mm, socket diam 23.5mm, collar diam 28.5mm.

Found by metal-detecting in September 2010 on the floodplain north of the River Tweed, close to its junction with the Ettrick Water (NGR: NT 48 32). The Iron Age fort of The Rink lies only a few hundred metres away, but the likelihood is that this is a casual loss from Roman wagons passing along the riverside.

Claimed as Treasure Trove (TT 57/11) and allocated to National Museums Scotland (X.FT 144) (*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 2011: 160–1; *Britannia* 43 (2012): 289).

END NOTES

1 Her no 228, a horse from Northmavine (Shetland), is late Norse (compare Grieg 1933: figs 331–6).
2 The Mercury figure recorded as a stray find from Barnhill, near Perth (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot* 71 (1936–7): 93–5, fig 2), near a souterrain site, has been identified by Emma Durham as a 19th-century pipe-tamper (Durham 2012: 2.3.1).
3 While dragonesque brooches, which embody and combine Iron Age and Roman styles, are common, zoomorphic brooches are much rarer. Only four are known from Iron Age sites: a cockerel from Bow (Scottish Borders), an eagle from Castlelaw (Midlothian), an insect from Howe (Orkney) and an unidentified creature from Birnie (Moray) (Childe 1933: fig 13.1; Robertson 1970: fig 10.8; Ballin Smith 1994: 223, illus 135; Hunter, in prep). They are also rare on Roman military sites in Scotland, so their rarity on local sites may be due to availability as much as avoidance.
4 A horse protome from Neuss may be related (Menzel 1986: no 404).

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