

## **Grave and pyre goods**

There are three main categories of grave-goods: clothing and personal adornment worn by the corpse; clothing and personal adornment placed in the grave alongside the corpse; and objects placed on top of the corpse or coffin. The first category is the possessions of the deceased, and the third category probably gifts from mourners, while the second category could be either. The reason for including possessions in graves are unclear, and in particular whether the items are for the benefit of the deceased in the afterlife (and the understanding of and belief in such a concept seems to be hugely variable in the Roman world) or for the benefit of those left behind, either by demonstrating grief, belief or wealth or by protecting them from malign forces of the deceased. Such is the variation in the funerary rites it is clear there is not just one answer, due to what Driel-Murray (1998, 135) has described as 'highly individual needs of expression'.

For those with the means, funerals could be expensive events, potentially involving purpose-built furniture, expensive perfumes and clothing (Cool 2004, 441). Such cost is often not visible archaeologically; expensive coffins made using the techniques used in furniture-making would not use any nails, while civilian clothing, which rarely involved metal fittings after the end of the second century, would have been worth much more than the majority of the surviving jewellery. Graves elsewhere in the Empire show that clothes and soft furnishings of considerable value were frequently included, both under and over the body as well as wrapped round it as a shroud (Wild 2012; Carroll 2012, 136-7). The surviving pyre-goods of Grave 20106 (hobnails and pipe-clay figurine) are nothing out-standing, and had the funerary bed used for the funeral been decorated with exotic wood veneer instead of bone the presence of the expensive item of furniture would not have been suspected. While the rich were no doubt expected to have funerals to suit their status, expensive burials do not necessarily reflect the status of the deceased in life, since families can use expensive funerals as an indication of their love and grief.

## **Inhumations**

### ***Worn items***

At Bainesse, as at other cemeteries, it seems that it was fairly standard to bury the corpse fully dressed. However, due to the poor bone preservation, it is not always clear if items were being worn or just placed over or under the body in the appropriate position (Wild 2012, 21). In a burial at London Eastern Cemetery hobnails shoes were clearly laid at right-angles under the feet (Barber and Bowsher 2000, fig. 99), and there is a possible example of this at Bainesse (Burial 81), while the shoes in Burial 61 were placed under or over one leg.

Due to the nature of male civilian costume and its lack of metal fittings, iron hobnails are often the only finds in male graves. In women's graves there can be additional jewellery, and in children's graves amulets. Only one burial containing worn jewellery could be identifiable as that of a man, who wore two copper alloy rings (Burial 20955). Finger-rings were one of the few items of jewellery acceptable for a man to wear, although this usually took the form of a signet ring. Here the man wore a simple copper alloy ring on each hand.

### ***Unworn items***

The most common items found placed beside the bodies are nailed shoes. Numerous reasons have been put forward for this practise, including use for the journey to the underworld or for activities when there; provision for a return home, or simply because it was traditional, any original meaning having been long forgotten (Powell 2010, 318). It may be that in some cases the shoes were sitting with a pile of folded tunics, mantles or capes which do not show up in the archaeological record, and were just part of a person's wardrobe and had no individual symbolism; there is a possible example of this at Bainesse (Burial 16).

Suggested reasons for including unworn items include placing familiar items in the grave to bring comfort to the dead, gifts to the gods to ensure the dead reached the underworld or symbolic dowries (Philpott 1991, 156-7). There could also be cultural rules against re-using certain personal possessions of the deceased, so that their clothing and jewellery had to be buried with them to avoid bad luck descending on the new owners; the additional ill-fortune brought on by premature death could explain why the young often have more grave-goods than older people. The unworn possessions would also have been a demonstration of wealth, since funerals were public events and the corpse may not have been fully covered until the coffin was in the grave (Cool 2010, 309; Barber and Bowsher 2000, 93). Such displays of conspicuous consumption could also be a manifestation of extreme grief (Noy 2000, 42, in the context of cremations).

### ***Items placed on body or coffin***

Items added to the grave by mourners could include items intended for the benefit of the deceased in the afterlife (if believed in), or as public proof of personal grief, or as an act of protection for the living. Two graves at Bainesse had iron bracelets placed on the body (Burials 194 and 198), and it is possible these were chosen not as items of jewellery but for religious reasons, having significance as both being made out of protective iron and being circular. This may be a fourth-century practice, as these are both fourth-century graves, as were two graves at Scorton which also had bracelets placed on the body (Eckardt *et al* 2015, 203-4, Graves 11 and 12). A shoe or shoes placed outside the coffin in Burial 20621 (7-12 years) must also have had a ritual function. Reasons for including shoes in a grave include providing footwear for the journey to the underworld, for use in the afterlife, or wishing for the deceased to return to the living, or as very personal gift due to the fact that the imprint of a person's foot shapes the sole (Driel-Murray 1998, 132, 135; Philpott 1991, 173).

### **Cremations**

It is impossible to distinguish between the three categories of grave-goods, but almost certainly all three were present. As with inhumations the body was likely to have been fully dressed, including jewellery for women, as evidenced at Brougham (Cool 2004, 438). Footwear, and no doubt clothing, could also be placed beside the corpse. In the Mediterranean region it seems to have been normal for additional clothing to be added to the pyre, since Tacitus, by saying that the Germans did not do so, suggests that the Romans did, while the will of a man from Langres, France includes textiles in the list of possessions he wanted burnt with his corpse (Wild 2012, 19). That it was normal for mourners to put items on the pyre is suggested by Cassius Dio's description of Septimius Severus' cremation at York, when he says: 'as

for the soldiers' gifts, those who had things at hand to offer as gifts threw them upon [the pyre]' (17.15; Cary 1927); and although this was an Emperor's funeral Dio seems to take it as read that the soldiers present would want to add their own offerings.

## **Jewellery**

Excluding footwear, almost all the surviving grave-goods from Bainesse, Cataractonium and Scurragh House are items of jewellery or amulets, from 20 inhumations and four cremations (see Table 1). There are no gold or silver pieces, but just a range of items that were on the whole probably not very expensive. The number of items in a grave is also low, with three, a necklace and two bracelets, being the maximum number (see Table 2).

*Table 01: The jewellery and amulets from inhumations and cremations*

<b>type</b>		<b>totals</b>
Brooch		<b>2</b>
P-shaped	1	
penannular	1	
Necklace		<b>2</b>
jet and glass beads	2	
Armlet		<b>1</b>
with spiral and sliding knot	1	
Bracelet		<b>10</b>
cast penannular	2	
D cross-section	1	
diamond cross-section	1	
plain wire hook and eye	2	
iron	4	
Finger-ring		<b>5*</b>
spiral	1	
annular	3	
iron	1	
Anklet		<b>5</b>
plain wire, loose knot	2	
plain wire, sliding knot	1	
ribbon-twisted, sliding knot	2	
Amulets		<b>8</b>
bracelet/necklace with beads	4	
without beads	4	
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>

Key

\* includes two non-worn items which are not certainly finger-rings

*Table 02: The type and quantity of jewellery found in inhumation burials*

Burial	Brooch	Ring	Bracelet	Armlet	Anklet	N' lace	bead	amulet	sex	age
16					1				F	46+
35					1				?	18+
103								Y	?	?
119			1		2				F	26-35
130				1					?	18+
147								Y	?	(juvenile)
149			2						?	?
150								Y	?	(juvenile)
180								Y	?	(juvenile)
188							1		?	?
194		?*	1*						?	juvenile
198			1*						M?	26-35
203								Y	?	(juvenile)
221								Y	?	(juvenile)
235			2			Y			?	young juvenile
10827						Y			?	juvenile?
11808					1				?	18-25
20198			1						F	adult
20476	1*	2*							?	13-17
20955		2							M	36-45

Key: \* = not worn

Ages in bracelets taken from grave-length

The most common category is the bracelet, made of copper alloy or iron and probably also of glass beads. There are none of precious metals, shale, jet or bone. The wearing of bracelets is generally most common in the late Roman period, reaching a peak in the fourth century (Cool 2010, 297). The 293 burials at Brougham cemetery produced a total of two bracelets, and it was assumed this was a reflection of the third-century date of the cemetery (Cool 2004, 390). In contrast the bracelets from Bainesse and Catterick almost all come from graves dating to the second or third centuries (Burials 119, 235, 6790, and Grave 1738 from previous excavations: Mould 2002, fig. 290, no. 76). The wearing of bracelets before they became common-place in the fourth century, and the popularity of anklets as jewellery seem to be a distinct local regional fashion. The bracelet assemblage is also of interest in that there are no examples of the cable-twist style, by far the most common form of Romano-British bracelet.

Despite burials continuing the fourth century at Bainesse, there are no examples of the typical fourth-century 'light bangle', nor the large collections of unworn jewellery that are characteristic of this period elsewhere, such as the 16 pieces of jewellery from a grave at South Shields Fort (Croom 1994, fig. 5). This may be because in the fourth-century jewellery is most commonly associated with juveniles and very few sub-adults were buried at Bainesse during this period.

The second most common form of jewellery found in the graves are anklets, which are found in both third- and fourth-century graves. The six burials that include anklets from just Bainesse, Catterick and Scurragh House almost equal the number

recovered from the whole of the rest of the country. The wearing of anklets, especially by men, seems to have been a local trend.

Apart from jewellery there are no other 'female' type grave-goods, such as spindle-whorls, hairpins and (possibly) combs: the pierced pottery disc and bone pin from Burial 20474 were both incomplete rather than broken and seem to be accidental inclusions.

### Grave-goods in male graves

Other than footwear there were few archaeologically visible grave-goods from male graves. There does not seem to have been a male equivalent to the jewellery included in female graves, and there were no late 'military'-style burials as seen at Scorton (Eckardt *et al* 2015). The only burial that could possibly be classified as military burial was a third-century cremation with a cloak brooch in it (Burial 272), although the use of a bone-decorated funerary bed might be a fashion for third-century military families (Burial 20106).

### Amulets

The three sites were also distinctive in having a large number of graves containing amulets. They were found in seven inhumations and one cremation. Although the majority of the amulets came from burials with poor or non-existent bone preservation, the size of the graves suggest most were for infants or juveniles. This association with the young is common through-out the country (see Crummy 2010 for examples). The choice of amulets is varied, but does include some rare provincial *bullae*, which were more common on the Continent than in Britain.

*Table 03: Amulets in burials*

Grave			remains	grave size
103	<i>bullae</i> , sphere, beads	spaced out in rough circle towards centre of grave	non-adult	c.0.8m
148	pierced coin, lead disc, loop, dog's tooth	together towards end of coffin; in bag?		0.8m+, truncated
150	<i>bullae</i>	approximately third of way down grave		c.1.4m
180	phallic pendant, beads	together towards one end of grave		c.1.3m
203	phallic? pendant; beads	together near centre of grave		1.0m+, truncated
221	pierced coin, beads, fancy bead	together to one side of grave, towards centre		c.0.9m
269	pierced coin	on cremation vessel		

20476	group of circular objects	beside skull; in bag?	unsexed, 13-17 years	
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