

THE CAMOMILE STREET SOLDIER RECONSIDERED

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SUMMARY

When studied as a source of information on Roman military equipment, the fragmentary sculptured relief known as the Camomile Street soldier proved to possess many points of interest. The figure may have belonged to a Flavian tombstone modelled on Julio-Claudian examples, erected by a member of the governor's staff in London; possibly a beneficiarius, and executed by a skilled sculptor. When the tombstone was dismantled to be used in the foundations of one of the bastions round the Roman city of London, it was buried with its head between its legs, reflecting a contemporary burial rite which is today something of a mystery. The figure of the soldier is described and considered in the context of other figured military tombstones.

Introduction

'In the autumn of 1876 the Rev. J.J. Kenworthy, M.A. of Clapton, called upon Mr. W.H. Overall, F.S.A. Librarian to the Corporation, and informed him that certain architectural fragments had been found in Camomile Street while removing the foundations of what proved to be one of the bastions attached to the City Wall.'

Price (1880, 3)

Excavation continued, now 'under the personal direction and superintendence of John E. Price Esq. F.S.A.' (Price, 1880, 4) on behalf of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, and the finds were to include 'the life-size figure in hard oolitic stone of a Roman warrior clad in fine military costume and wearing the characteristic legionary sword'—the Camomile Street soldier. Within four years of the discovery of the bastion and excavation of its contents, Price was to publish an account of his findings (1880), which contains the only detailed consideration of the figure published since its discovery.¹

For the present study, the figure was examined, photographed, measured, and 'squeezes' made of the items of military equipment. During the course of this

work, and in subsequent research, it became apparent that the figure held an anomalous position in the tradition of Roman military funerary sculpture and merited detailed consideration.



Plate 1 The Camomile Street soldier: the figure as it is today (scale in 50mm & 100mm divisions)



Fig. 1 The Camomile Street soldier: the figure as it is today (not to scale)

Description of detail

The figure of the soldier survives to a height of 1.32m and is 0.8m wide at the broadest point. He wears a military cloak (*paenula*) over his military tunic (*tunica*), the right-hand side of the *paenula* being thrown back over his right shoulder to display the classic Roman short sword (*gladius*); around his neck is a scarf (*focale*), whilst a studded strap hangs from his waist, terminating in a lunate pendant (Pl. 1; Fig. 1). He holds a scroll in his left hand, as well as several writing-tablets apparently suspended from a cord. His right arm is missing as are his feet, although his legs survive almost to the bottom of the shins. By his left side, the remains are to be found of one of the pilasters (c. 0.67m high) which evidently flanked the tombstone.

The Camomile Street bastion (No. 10) was one of a series with solid bases added to the eastern sector of the landward defensive wall of the City and now generally recognised as Roman and additions to the city's defences in the second half of the 4th century AD (Marsden, 1980, 171–3). The sculptured stones were found in the base of the structure, packed in with Kentish ragstone rubble. The figure was in the upper level of sculptured stones, orientated parallel to the city wall, and was found in four pieces: the body and the left arm to the elbow, with the head placed between the shins, the left forearm and ornamental pilaster, and the capital of the pilaster (Price, 1880, Pl. III). Various other decorated stones were found in the bastion, most being either of oolite or greensand (*idem*, 80–90).

The tunica, focale, and paenula

The Roman military *tunica* was distinctive and can frequently be seen on tombstones and monumental sculpture in general, particularly on Trajan's Column.² There are, however, two recognisable forms of *tunica* in use during the 1st century AD. The first, earlier, type is that found on most of the Rhineland tombstones and is characterised by its many semi-circular folds and curved hem, which is apparently higher at the sides than at the front or back (Pl.2). This type may also be found on the column bases from Mainz (Robinson, 1975, Pl.198). The majority of infantry tombstones showing the deceased in military dress would appear to be Tiberio-Claudian in date, while the column bases have been suggested as early Flavian.

The second type of *tunica* can be found on Trajan's Column (Lehmann-Hartleben, 1926, Taf. 9, X–XII),



Plate 2 The Camomile Street soldier: the tombstone of Annaius Daverzus

the Cancelleria relief (Magi, 1945, Tav. 3), and the Chatsworth relief (Pl.3), and this type has a straight hem and less pronounced folds in the material. These sculptures all date to between the Flavian and Hadrianic periods and thus this second form of *tunica* seems to be later than the first.³

Although that of the Camomile Street soldier is largely hidden by a *paenula*, enough of it is visible to distinguish it as the later type. The hem hangs just above the knee, the customary position (Quintilian XI, iii, 138), it would appear, but one or two tombstones show soldiers with shorter or longer versions.⁴ The *tunica* is belted about the figure's waist, although the belt is largely hidden by a fold of the *tunica*.

The soldier wears a *focale* around his neck. On Trajan's Column, auxiliary infantry can be seen wearing it in a distinctive knotted style (Lehmann-Hartleben, 1926, Taf. 14, XXIV) and it has been suggested that it was worn under the '*lorica segmentata*' to prevent chafing of the neck (Robinson, 1975, 177). On the figure from Camomile Street, the left-hand side (from the observer's point of view) is crossed over the right-hand and disappears into the cloak.

It has already been noted that the military *tunica* was distinctive and the same could be said of the military cloak. It is agreed that there were two basic types of cloak



Plate 3 The Camomile Street soldier: the Chatsworth relief

used by the army, the *sagum* and the *paenula*, the former being a rectangle of material that is draped, whilst the latter is shaped to fit over the wearer's head.⁵ The *paenula* appears to have been oval with an opening for the head and at the front, with a hood fitted in most cases.⁶ Whilst it could be worn as a cape, as it is on the Cancelleria relief,⁷ it seems to have been common practice to pull either one or both of the front sections back over the shoulder. This is shown by a relief from the Antonine Wall,⁸ as well as by several of the Rhineland tombstones: soldiers are clearly depicted wearing their military equipment as a matter of pride, so the *paenula* could be thrown back to display a *gladius* and a *pugio*,⁹ but the Camomile Street soldier only has his pulled back over his right shoulder.

The fastenings of the *paenula* are extremely clear on this statue (Pl. 4; Fig. 2,1): at the neck opening, there is a circular one, approximately 15mm in diameter, and there is a second, identical, fastener 40mm below it. The radial creases around these two fasteners show in a most convincing manner how the material is under tension. The only other fastener visible is just above the point below which the cloak is open and this appears to be in the form of a bar or toggle, apparently fastened *through* the border of the *paenula*. Between the second circular fastener and the bar at the bottom, it might be expected that there would be another fastening, since the cloak is not pulling apart as one might expect it to do here, but at this precise point the statue is damaged by a concave chip, some

20mm in diameter, obscuring the detail where the edges of the cloak meet.

It is clearly puzzling that there should be two different methods of securing the garment. The two circular fasteners could well be of the sort known as 'button-and-loop' (Wild, 1970), which are relatively common on military sites. If so, they would be sewn onto one side of the cloak and pass through loops sewn into the other half.¹⁰ The 'bar' type of fastening cannot be so readily identified; the general standard of accuracy in the depiction of detail on the figure must suggest that this is a faithful representation and so some sort of brooch, however simple, would seem to be precluded, as indeed, would any form of pin.¹¹ A more reasonable solution could possibly be a toggle, similar to that found on the modern duffle coat. The centurion on the Chatsworth relief wears a *paenula* (Pl.5) and this is fastened by four 'bars', so the interpretation of these objects as brooches would imply that the wearer would be involved in considerable inconvenience when fastening or unfastening them. The toggle, on the other hand, would be relatively simple to manipulate and is surely a more likely candidate for the 'bar'. This does not, of course, explain why the *paenula* of the Camomile Street soldier should also be fastened by the 'button-and-loop' method, but this may be purely a matter of personal taste or a sign of ostentation.

The material of the cloak itself would appear to be of double thickness, a fact revealed by the technique of 'top-

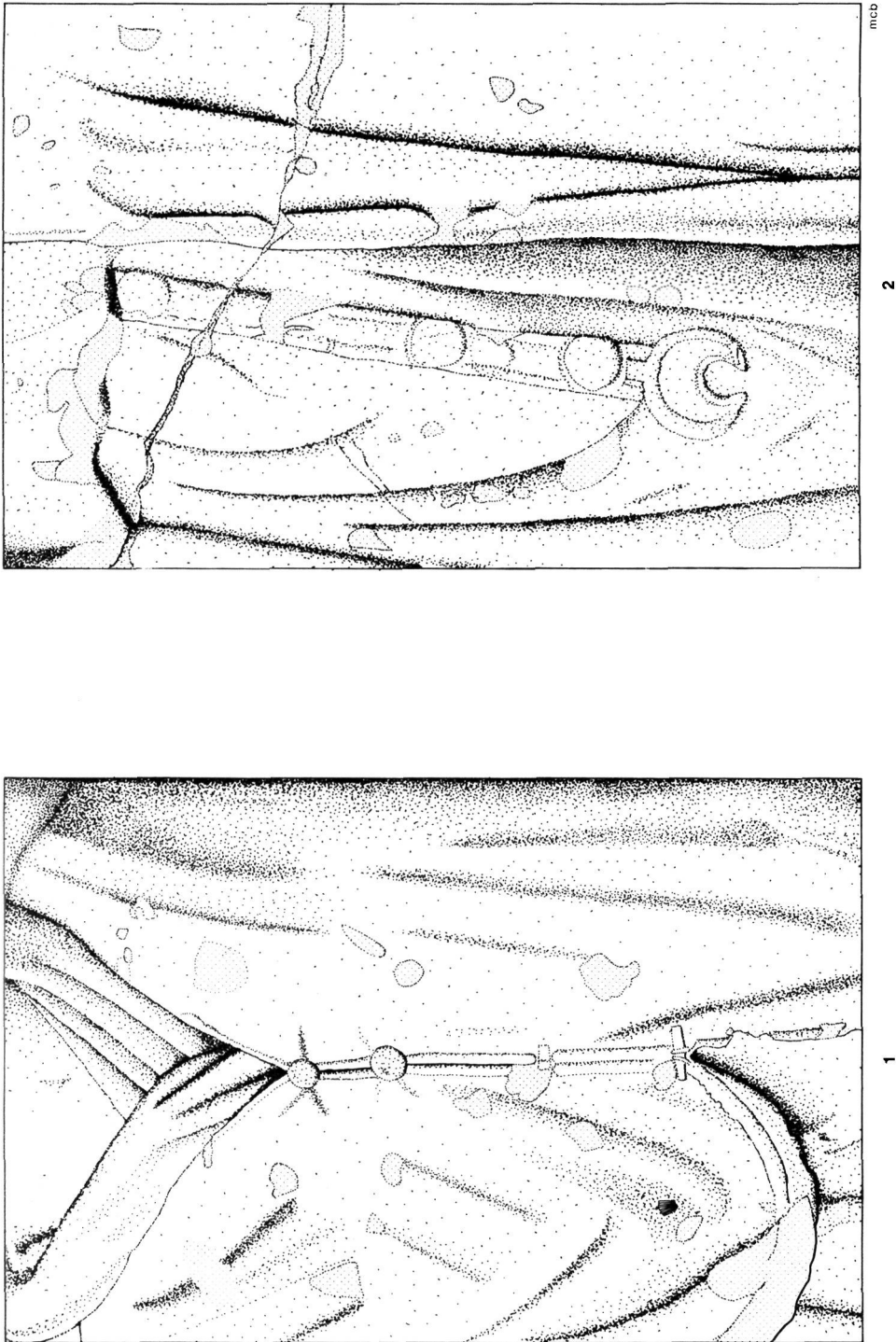


Fig. 2 The Camomile Street soldier:
1) Detail of the paenula fastenings 2) Detail of the apron strap (not to scale)



Plate 5 The Camomile Street soldier: detail of the centurion on the Chatsworth relief

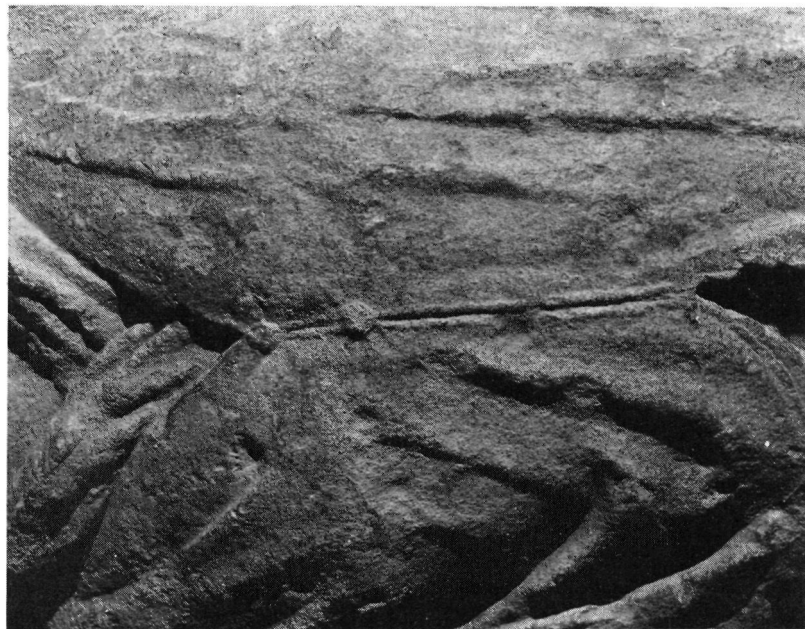


Plate 4 The Camomile Street soldier: detail of the paenula fastenings



Plate 6 The Camomile Street soldier: the gladius

stitching' seen around the area of the fasteners as a ridge at the edge of the material (Fig. 2,1); this served to ensure neatness and prevented fraying, whilst double thickness material would add 'body' to the cloak.¹²

The *paenula* would seem to have been the usual overgarment for a soldier, on- or off-duty, that marked him as a member of the military establishment by form, as well, perhaps, by colour.¹³

The gladius

The Camomile Street soldier wears the traditional Roman short stabbing sword, the *gladius*, on his right-hand side—the chape of the sheath reaching to just above the hem of his *tunica* (Pl.6). It is the *gladius*, however, that introduces the one unharmonious note in the whole statue, for it appears to be bent when viewed from the front, as the observer is supposed to see it, although this is not unknown in Roman funerary sculpture.¹⁴ Despite

this, it is easily recognisable as a Pompeii-type *gladius* (Ulbert, 1969, 119–22) with its parallel-edged blade and short point, as well as the characteristic hand-guard and pommel on the handle.¹⁵ The sword is 590mm long, 410mm being the length of the sheath. The handgrip (usually of bone, but sometimes of ivory on more elaborate swords)¹⁶ is octagonal in section and consists of four finger-depressions divided by three ridges (Fig. 3,1). The sheath itself has bordered metal plates indicated at the mouth and chape and it is possible that these were once decorated (as they were on real swords), either by slightly raised relief or by paint—any traces that remain are too slight for anything conclusive to be said about them. There are, however, more substantial traces of what might be raised decoration on the top border of the chape plate (Fig. 3,3) discernible in 'squeezes', and possibly consisting of opposing triangles, a common motif in 1st-century military decoration.¹⁷

The *gladius* on the tombstone lacks a scabbard terminal knob, but this could be because it has been damaged; similarly, the handle lacks a terminal knob at the top of the pommel (used to cap the tang of the blade, which passes through the three elements of the handle). More curious is the single scabbard mouth-plate, for most examples of the Pompeii-type *gladius* have a double-sized plate in that position.¹⁸ The scabbard is also edged with guttering, often attested in the archaeological record.¹⁹

The methods of suspending *gladii* have recently come under close scrutiny by Hazell (1982), although the subject had previously been examined by Nylen (1963, 224–7) and Ulbert (1969, 115–8). Nylen distinguished two principal modes of suspension, with the sword fastened to a baldric (*balteus*), or attached directly to the soldier's belt. The former method being used in action and the latter reserved for everyday use (*idem*, 224). However, Hazell disagrees with these conclusions and prefers a method that combines a baldric with a flexible fastening to the belt (1982, 73–6).

The figure from Camomile Street shows no trace of a *balteus* worn either under or over the *paenula*, but a small part of the belt may be visible between the right-hand edge of the scabbard mouth-plate and a large fold in the *tunica* (Fig. 3,2); at the same time, there is no sign of the four suspension rings usually found on *gladii*.²⁰

The *gladius* is clearly designed to be observed from the front, since the rear edge of the sword is very indistinct when viewed from the side.

The 'apron strap'²¹

The single visible apron strap is 255mm long, including the lunate pendant, and 20mm wide (Pl. 7; Fig. 2,2). There are two obvious studs towards the bottom and a third is fairly easily distinguishable at the very top. The strap is damaged about one-third of the way down and there would appear to be a suggestion of a fourth stud. Intriguingly, just below the third stud from the top, there is what might be an attempt by the artist to erase a stud which was found to be in the wrong position (Fig.2,2). There is a border of 5mm on either side of the strap, possibly representing stitching in the leatherwork.

The lunate pendant at the end of the strap is of a form well-known from Roman military sites and close parallels

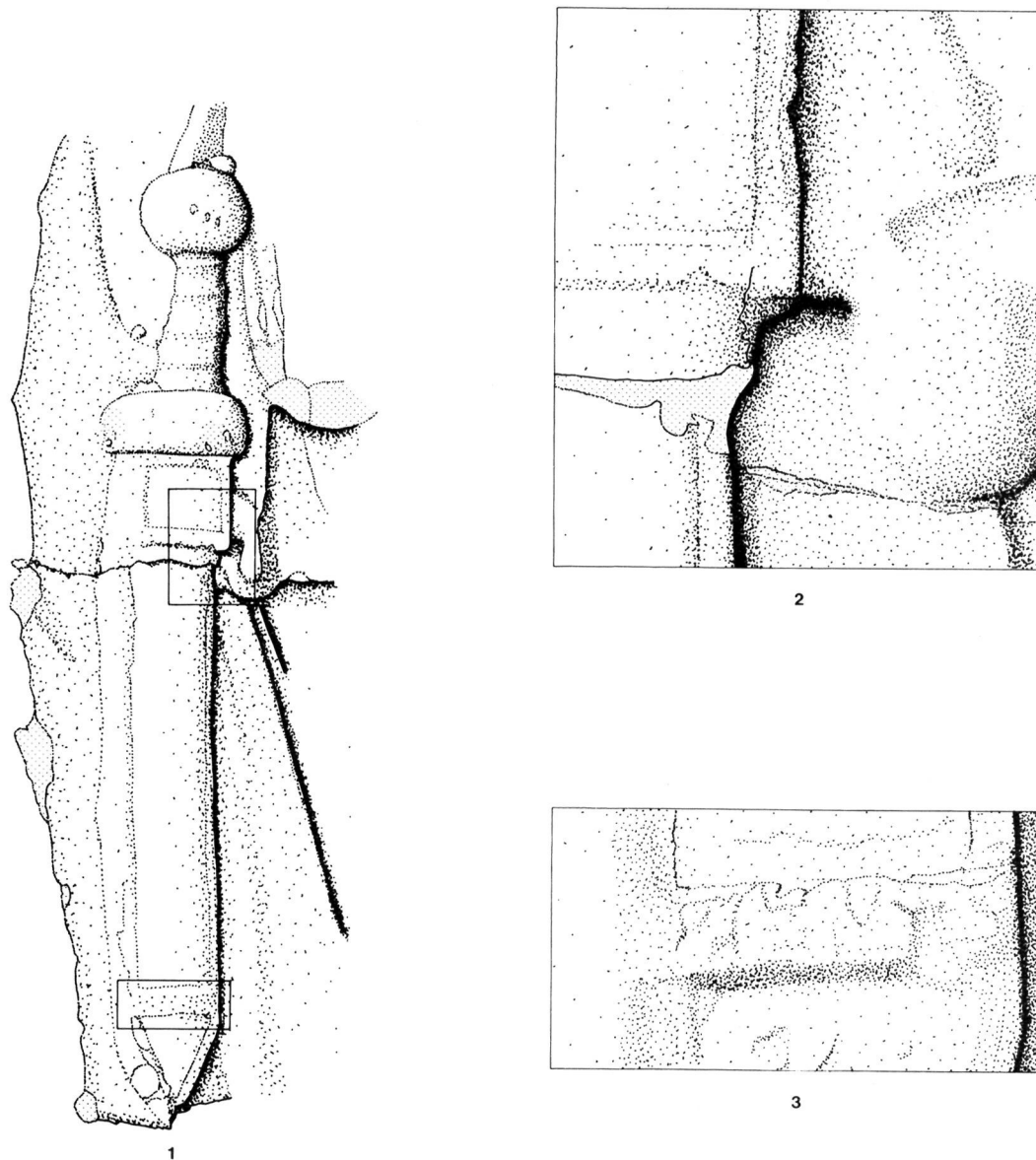


Fig. 3 The Camomile Street soldier:
1) The gladius 2) Detail of the belt 3) Detail of the chape (not to scale)

for both size and form are not hard to find.²² The *lunula* is 50mm high and 42.5mm wide, surrounded by a border of about 5mm. The role of the *lunula* as a powerful charm has been demonstrated (Zadoks-Josephus Jitta & Witteveen, 1977, 173–4) and it is not surprising that it is frequently found as part of harness decoration in the 1st century AD.²³ It is not clear whether the pendant is hinged to the bottom stud or to the strap itself in some way.

The 'apron', as it has become known, may have evolved from the need to protect the wearer's groin, as the developments in body armour led to shorter *loricae*. It probably originated in excess belt material being ornamented with terminals (as with the tombstone of Cn. Musius)²⁴ and then studs (as with Annaeus Daverzus, who also wears the more elaborate form of apron),²⁵ but it rapidly developed into an extremely elaborate piece of equipment, with as many as eight straps, with over twenty studs on each;²⁶ however, it soon began to simplify once more, the numbers of both straps and studs decreasing until four straps became the norm in the Flavian and subsequent periods.²⁷ The terminals were always, to judge from both the sculptural and archaeological evidence, of pendant form.²⁸

Although only one strap is visible on the Camomile Street soldier, it would be a reasonable assertion that there are three more concealed beneath the *paenula*.

The scroll and the writing-tablets²⁹

In his left hand, the soldier is carrying what appears to be wooden writing-tablets. The scroll is held between the thumb and little finger, while the tablets are suspended by a cord from the index and middle finger (Pl. 8; Fig. 4).

The scroll is approximately 200mm long and is somewhat flattened in section. Some two-thirds of the way from its top, there is a raised circular lump which is reminiscent of a seal, perhaps as on official documents, and this is significantly held towards the observer. Many representations of deceased legionaries and auxiliaries carry scrolls of one form or another and it was clearly important for the soldier that he should be depicted in this fashion. If the scroll was indeed important, then it must inevitably be asked why this was so and what it might have signified. In the case of auxiliaries, it might be suggested that such a scroll marked the grant of citizenship, but this would obviously not apply to legionaries.³⁰ Again, the deeds of a land-grant or a promise of payment for a discharge bonus are unlikely, since many legionaries died before they were discharged and would not, therefore, have qualified for either the bonus or land-grant.³¹

There were several forms of discharge in the Roman army, most desirable of which was the *honesta missio*, or honorable discharge, which marked the soldier as being of good character.³² It may well be that the scroll carried by so many soldiers on tombstones was an indication of *honesta missio* and death in service may have been considered as equivalent to such an honorable discharge, even though the deceased would only hold it in theory.³³

The set of writing-tablets attracted Price's attention and receive detailed coverage in his monograph. Indeed, he viewed them as one of the key factors suggesting that the Camomile Street soldier was a *signifer* (1880, 57). Others have followed Price in seeing the tablets as indicative of

clerical duties, but chosen to see the soldier as a member of the administration of the province, possibly even a *beneficiarius consularis*.³⁴ When viewing the statue, it is particularly striking that the number of tablets—six—is emphasised for the observer by staggering them. Moreover, the hand holding the scroll and tablets is proportionally larger than the rest of the body, as if the viewer's attention is to be drawn towards it. Unfortunately, the significance of the six tablets remains uncertain, but we can probably be sure of the fact that they were important. The frontmost tablet is 70mm square, although the staggered effect means that the set is 90mm high in all.

There are traces of a V-shaped indentation on the outermost tablet (Fig. 4), which may represent patterning on the cover or, more likely, some means of fastening the tablets when they were being carried.³⁵ Indeed, the tablets have fractured along the right-hand line, although Price's illustration (1880, Pl. IV) depicts the tablets as having a rounded corner instead.

Additional details

The dagger, or *pugio*, was the secondary sidearm of legionary and auxiliary infantry until the Flavian period, when it seems to have ceased to have been used as a legionary weapon.³⁶ It has already been noted how the *paenula* would be drawn up to display the weapons of a soldier, but in the case of the Camomile Street soldier, this is only so for the left-hand side (as it is viewed), where the *gladius* is visible. The cloak hangs freely on the right-hand side and would thus obscure the *pugio*, if one were worn. However, such is the quality of the craftsman's depiction of the drapery, that it is clear that no *pugio* was intended, for it would surely have been indicated below the drapery.

If the lowest portion of the statue is studied, the curve of the *paenula* can be discerned hanging below the *tunica* and between his legs. However, below the *paenula*, there are two concentric curved lines which clearly have little to do with any of the soldier's items of clothing (Fig. 1). These lines are a uniform 20mm apart and can be traced to some 260mm below the lowest point of the *tunica*. The curve of these lines suggests that they form a segment of an oval, the long axis of which will have run from bottom left to top right of the figure.

Many figured tombstones show legionary and auxiliary infantrymen with shields and that of Flavoleius Cordus (Esp. 5835) from Mainz is an example that is oval in shape, as is that of a possible *beneficiarius* on the Cancelleria relief (Magi, 1945, Tav. 3). However, it would perhaps be unjustified to suggest that the Camomile Street soldier has a similar shield, for these lines would imply an extremely unusual position in which to carry it; moreover, no carrying strap is visible. Similarly, although the shield could conceivably be resting against the side of the tombstone, this would seem to be rather too untidy to suit a monument of this quality. These lines therefore remain an enigma.

Reconstruction

In his monograph, Price naturally saw fit to include a reconstruction of the tombstone,



Plate 8 The Camomile Street soldier: detail of the scroll and writing-tablets



Plate 7 The Camomile Street soldier: the apron strap

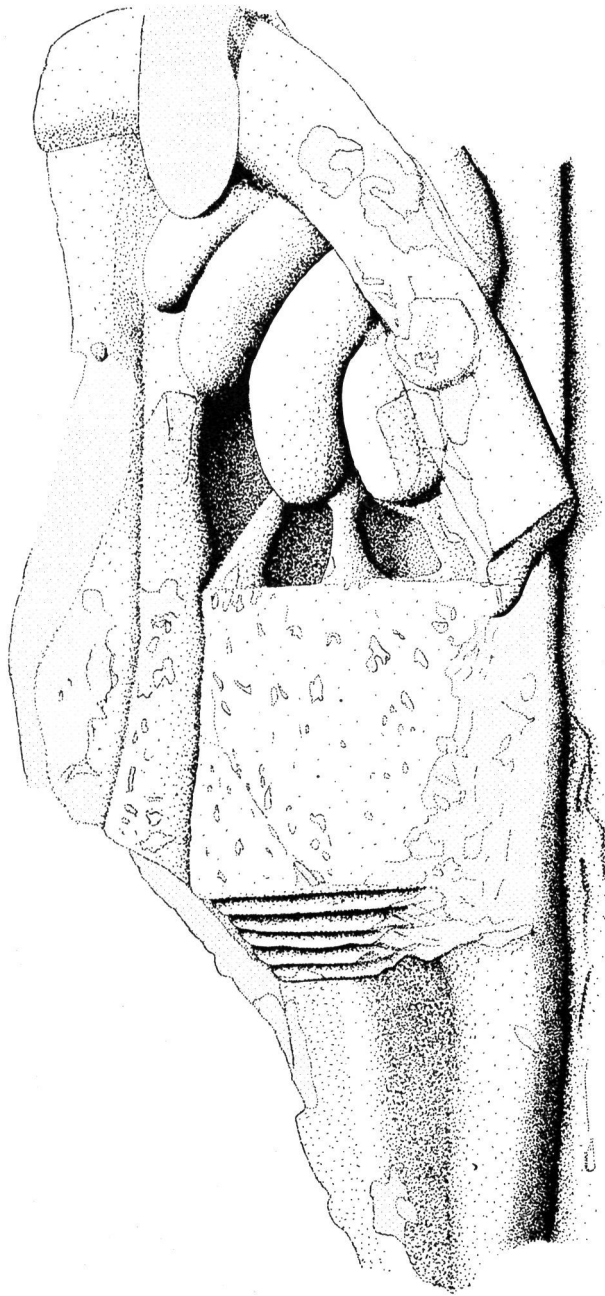


Fig. 4 The Camomile Street soldier: Detail of the writing-tablets and scroll (not to scale)

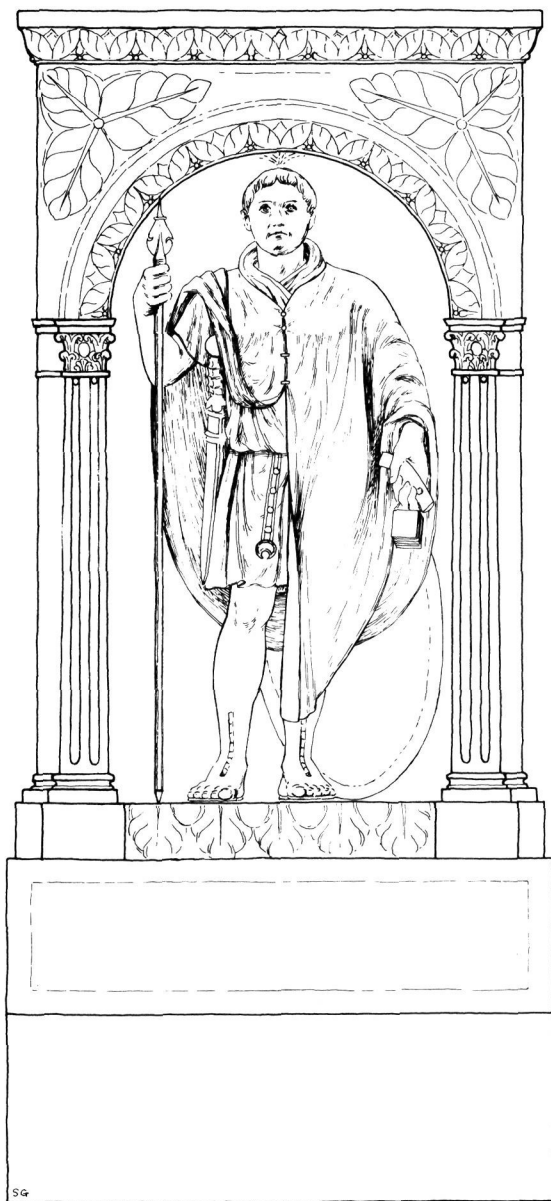


Fig. 5 The Camomile Street soldier: partial reconstruction of the tombstone (not to scale)

produced for him by Alfred White (Price, 1880, Pl. VII). Price and White selected some other sculptured pieces from the Camomile Street bastion, consisting of two fragments of

an arched canopy and a possible piece of the base. Price saw this reconstruction as being fairly close to other tombstones of its type, noting the comparison with the tombstones of Favonius Facilis from Colchester and Duccius from York (1880, 57), although he does go on to suggest that the sculptural remains from the bastion belong to a larger memorial, similar to that at Igel (*idem*, 91), thus seemingly confounding his earlier reconstruction.

The coincidence of the discovery in the bastion of both the figure of the soldier and the elements of a typical military tombstone (such as the cabled arch and decorated spandrels) is clearly too close to overlook. Roman military tombstones follow a set of conventions which allow us to be reasonably certain that Price and White's reconstruction is feasible. It will be noted from the illustrations that only half of the arch was found in the Camomile Street bastion (Price, 1880, Pl. VII and Fig. 13), despite the caption in the Roman London volume of the Royal Commission of Historical Monuments' survey (RCHM, 1928, Pl. 15); the other half of the arch was found during the excavation of bastion No. 8 in Duke Street in 1881.³⁷ Interestingly enough, Price says the arch and possible base are of greensand (*idem*, 87), while the soldier is carved in oolite, an unusual combination upon which he comments (*idem*, 57).

The possibility that the arch does not belong with the figure must be borne in mind, but it is difficult to overlook the fact that such typically military tombstone designs must have been comparatively rare in London, while the probabilities of finding both the figure and the surround in the same context seem too convincing to pass by. As Price noted (*idem*, 90–1), the monument probably came from one of the nearby cemeteries (either Bishopsgate or Aldgate),³⁸ and this may also be the origin of the oolite lion which likewise came from the Camomile Street bastion (*idem*, 60–80), since this object has strong funerary connotations. Indeed, it would be very tempting to see it as yet another piece of the soldier's tombstone, since there are some well-known parallels. The overall effect of the tombstone suggests that such an adornment

would indeed be in order; the normal pattern was to have a sphinx in the centre of the top of the tomb, flanked by lions, such as the one from the bastion. This arrangement can be seen on the tombstones of the infantrymen Annaius Daverzus at Bad Kreuznach and Firmus at Bonn, as well as on the cavalry tombstones of Rufus Sita and Longinus Sdapeze from Britain.³⁹ These lions are frequently found in the western provinces of the Roman empire,⁴⁰ so the association of the lion with a tombstone is fairly certain, but it could well belong to another monument from the cemetery.

It should be added that, at c. 0.6m long, the lion could not have rested directly on top of the arch, which is only 0.3m wide. It is possible that, as with the tombstone of Firmus, there was a 'flared' capping stone above the arch which broadened to accommodate the length of the lion. Alternatively, the stone White selected as the base of the tombstone is in fact 0.74m deep, so if the whole tombstone matched this and only part of the arch survives, it would be possible to place the lion on top with room to spare.

Paradoxically, whilst we can be fairly certain how the rest of the tombstone would have appeared, when we come to reconstruct the soldier himself there are several problems. The soldier's feet were almost certainly clad in *caligae*, although, as with most military tombstones, the boots may only have been represented by the central lacing ridge, the actual straps being added in paint.⁴¹ His right arm is clearly raised, so he must be holding some form of staff or shafted weapon, the exact nature of which is clearly crucial to any discussion of his rank or post. Price thought there was sufficient evidence to believe him to have been a *signifer*, bearing in mind the close parallels with Duccius from York (*id.*, 52–3 & 57), since the latter also wears a *paenula* over his *tunica* and holds what might be a set of writing tablets in his left hand. However, by the same token, the figure of the *optio* Caecilius Avitus from Chester bears a similar resemblance to the Camomile Street figure.⁴² It would not be possible to consider the figure as that of a centurion, since he wears his sword on his

right-hand side,⁴³ but there is a further possibility and one which has received a considerable following for different reasons. Accepting that the writing tablets imply duties of a clerical nature, it is necessary to have a garrison present for the roles of *optio* or *signifer* to be likely attributions, but London only received a permanent garrison at the end of the 1st century AD.⁴⁴ If, for reasons to be considered below, the figure can be shown to be pre-Trajanic in date, then it would be unlikely that he would be attached to a regular unit; moreover, the quality of the carving, compared with the more humble reliefs of Duccius or Avitus, suggest access to a better quality of stonemason and, necessarily, the means to pay for it.⁴⁵ The post of *beneficiarius consularis*, a legionary attached to the clerical staff of the governor and based away from his unit, would seem to provide a very agreeable solution. Furthermore, it might suggest that the soldier holds in his hand not the staff of an *optio* or standard of a *signifer*, but the lance of a *beneficiarius*,⁴⁶ his unique sign of rank. This possible explanation will be of importance when we come to consider one of the more curious aspects of this tombstone, but for the time being, it will suffice to say that the figure of the soldier from the Camomile Street bastion may have been a *beneficiarius* on the staff of the governor of Britain, possibly in the pre-Trajanic period, and that he might be restored as holding a lance of a *beneficiarius*.

The reconstruction is complete, except to add that it will, of course, have been painted when new and that the differing types of stone used (if indeed they do differ) in its construction will not have been apparent to the passer-by.⁴⁷

General Discussion

It is constructive to begin this section by considering the circumstances in which the remains of a soldier's tombstone came to be in the foundations of a bastion belonging to the Roman wall around London and, more importantly, the inferences that might be drawn from his presence there.

The fact that elements of the same tombstone have been found in two bastions must surely point to a degree of simultaneity in the construction of at least some of them and, moreover, the use of a common source of building material – the nearby cemeteries. The Camomile Street soldier's tombstone may have been deliberately demolished by the builders of the bastion, but the result was that the statue reached its destined resting-place in pieces. Price remarked upon the care with which the large sculptured stones were arranged within the bastion (1880, 27) and noted 'The figure of the lion appears to have been most carefully fitted into the position assigned to it, as does the statue of the soldier, which was in three or four pieces. The head had been broken off at the neck and was found placed, may be purposely, between the ankles' (*ibid.*).

Price's observation of this deliberate placing of the head of the soldier between his legs is interesting in the light of recent work on one of the more unusual burial practices of 4th-century Roman Britain.⁴⁸ The discovery of inhumations of this date with their heads between their feet is increasingly widely reported and this has been suggested as possibly reflecting a punishment for criminal activities. However the arrangement in the bastion of the fragments of the Camomile Street soldier not only parallels this practice but also, because it is in a different context, suggests an alternative interpretation. It is difficult to envisage circumstances in which a 300 year-old statue could be viewed as having criminal associations or being punished for wrong-doing. It may be suggested therefore that 'head between the feet burials' represent not decapitation of a criminal, but rather the reverse, the fate of murderers' victims; the treatment afforded to the statue being a deliberate symbolic act, either in humorous vein or

as atonement for damaging the memorial.

This curious tale is only matched by the rather unusual circumstances in which it seems the monument was originally erected. It is important to view the Camomile Street tomb against a background of the tradition of Julio-Claudian funerary art. Military tombstones first seem to have borne full-length images of the deceased in the early Tiberian period; at first, they were fairly crude, but rapidly developed into an extremely sophisticated provincial artform, reaching its peak with figures like Flavoleius Cordus, Annaius Daverzus (Pl. 2), and Favonius Facilis.⁴⁹ However, by the middle of the 1st century AD, the popularity of these figures seems to have declined with the infantry, although figured cavalry tombstones continue to be found until the end of the century.⁵⁰ By the Flavian period, the figured infantry tombstone was rare, although one well-known example is that of C. Valerius Crispus from Wiesbaden, a legionary from *legio VIII Augusta* who had come to be there through his unit's involvement in Domitian's Chattan war.⁵¹ This Flavian example, unlike those from the Julio-Claudian period, shows the deceased in armour and is rather less sophisticated overall.

The Camomile Street tombstone follows the Julio-Claudian tradition very closely and would appear to fit into this context. On purely stylistic grounds, then, the tombstone might be envisaged as belonging to the period AD 43–70, or even AD 43–50. However, we must turn to internal evidence for the most reliable indications of dating.

The *tunica*, as has been shown above, is not of the sort found on Julio-Claudian tombstones and that by itself would suggest a date during the last quarter of the 1st century AD, or during the early

2nd century; similarly, the *paenula* appears to have become exclusively legionary in the Flavian period.⁵¹ The *gladius* is of the Pompeii type, apparently introduced in the Claudian and almost universal by the Flavian era.⁵³ The ‘apron strap’, if one of four, also suggests a later Claudio-Neronian date, while the absence of a *pugio* would indicate a legionary of Flavian (or later) date. Finally, if the writing-tablets are indeed an indication of clerical duties on the governor’s staff, then a Flavian date would seem to be the earliest possible.

Thus, whilst the tradition of a figured tombstone would appear to be Julio-Claudian, the evidence of the tombstone itself points to a later date, the Flavian period at the earliest. It might further be suggested that, since beards were fashionable in the army under Hadrian⁵⁴ and our soldier is clean-shaven,⁵⁵ then he may well be pre-Hadrianic, an assertion that may be supported by the evidence of the apron strap. On Trajan’s Column, the Chatsworth relief, and the Cancelleria relief,⁵⁶ the apron is noticeably reduced from its original form, almost to the point of being more ornamental than functional, yet the Camomile Street soldier boasts an apron of some length.

The internal evidence of the sculpture itself suggests therefore that the statue is of Flavian date and it is therefore necessary to explain why, if this date is acceptable, the tombstone is executed in a tradition popular during the Julio-Claudian period. The tombstone of Facilis reminds us that Britain was not isolated from the tradition of military tombstones, but it must belong to the period AD 43–60, before the destruction of the *olonia* of Camulodunum by Boudica’s forces, and may even date to the occupation of Colchester by *legio XX*, AD 43–9.⁵⁷ There are, however, no comparable pieces from the years succeeding the invasion period and the

tradition of figured military tombstones did not survive into Flavian times (with a few poor-quality exceptions). With the decline in demand, practised artisans would be few, so that a Flavian tombstone in the Julio-Claudian tradition would most likely not have been executed by one who was familiar with the style. It can be suggested that it was a copy of that old tradition, commissioned as a result of antiquarian interest by a soldier who had seen some of the old tombstones and may well have liked the style and wished to have been commemorated in a like manner.⁵⁸ Although he would have been unable to find one of the original artists, a *beneficiarius* on the staff of the governor would have had the money and influence to commission a sculptor to execute the piece for him, especially if it is borne in mind that the construction of the governor’s palace in London may have brought skilled craftsmen (including sculptors) to the city.⁵⁹

This hypothesis may help to explain some of the unusual features of the tombstone, such as the use of two different kinds of stone in its construction (if the proposed reconstruction is accepted) and their unusual method of interlocking,⁶⁰ the Flavian military equipment on what would appear to be a Julio-Claudian monument, and the presence of a soldier in London before it was given a garrison. Most importantly, however, it makes the consummate skill of the sculptor more readily understandable: the realism, the ‘tricks’ to emphasise certain points, and the attention to detail. Indeed, close comparison of this tombstone with others of the genre from the Rhineland suggests that it was amongst the finest, certainly on a par with Annaius Daverzus or Flavoleius Cordus.

Conclusions

The figure of the Camomile Street soldier almost certainly belongs to a dismantled tombstone and it has been the purpose of this paper to emphasise that it was a rather extraordinary monument and one of the most important sources in any attempt to understand and reconstruct Roman military clothing.

If the soldier was a *beneficiarius consularis* in the Flavian period and commissioned his tombstone from a master craftsman, then his monument must have been as unique when it was constructed as it is now. By a quirk of fate, this unusual figure was preserved for us during the construction of the bastions around London's wall, coincidentally throwing some light on the rites connected with decapitated corpses.

However he is interpreted, the Camomile Street soldier remains one of Roman Britain's most fascinating enigmas, at the same time as he is one of its most interesting works of art.

NOTES

- The author's interest in the soldier from the Camomile Street bastion has its origins in a wish to study the sculptural evidence for Roman military equipment in the 1st century AD, particularly in Britain and the Rhineland, with a view to assessing the accuracy of provincial artists when depicting the equipment of the army.
- For which see either Cichorius (1927) or Lehmann-Hartleben (1926).
- On the dating of the Cancelleria relief see Magi (1945, 141–2; cf. McCann, 1972). For that of the Chatsworth relief, see Strong (1907, 235–6).
- Shorter: soldier from Mannheim (originally from Gustavsburg) – Esp. 412 (Germ.); Longer: Licaius from Wiesbaden – Esp. 16 (Germ.)
- See Shaw (1982a,b) and Wilson (1938) for the *sagum* and *paenula*; however, neither of these consider the *paenula* to be oval, but examination of the sculptural evidence, particularly the Camomile Street soldier, proves that it was in fact so (cf. C. Faltonius Secundus – Esp. 5798; Esp. 5840; Firmus – Esp. 6207; Q. Petilius Secundus – Esp. 6253). Shaw's interpretation of the Camomile Street soldier's cloak is unlikely (1982b, 54).
- On the hood, see Price (1880, 31–2); RE *Paenula* (2280,1).
- Magi (1945, Tav.3); see Suetonius *Galba*, 6,1 – cited in RE *Paenula*.
- Robinson (1975, Pl.201) – this relief in fact shows the *paenula* hitched up onto the shoulders, but allowed to hang to its full length at the front and rear of the soldier.
- Pulled back over both shoulders: C. Faltonius Secundus – Esp.5798; Firmus – Esp.6207; pulled back over one shoulder: Chatsworth relief, to expose the *gladius* of the centurion (Pl.15).
- Very few depictions of the *paenula* show the method of fastening, but the Camomile Street soldier would appear to be the only case where button-and-loop fasteners are intended.
- Brooches are shown on the cloaks (in this case, the *sagum*) of Flavoleius Cordus (Esp.5835) and Annaius Daverzus (Esp.6125) – personal observation by the author, September 1982.
- RE, *Paenula*, 2280, 47–66; Price, 1880, 33; I owe the comments about the likely structure of the garment to my mother, Mrs. J. M. F. Bishop, who examined photographs of the Camomile Street figure.
- The *paenula* was generally dark in colour – RE, *Paenula*, 2280, 33–8; cf. Shaw, 1982b, 54; a sculpture showing a soldier (?) wearing a *paenula* has recently been found in Castleford, West Yorkshire, upon which there are apparent traces of green paint.
- See, for instance, the tombstone of an unknown soldier from Bonn, the handle of whose *gladius* is offset from the blade (Esp.6252) – personal observation by the author, September 1982.
- For handguards and pommels see Fellmann, 1966.
- There is an example of ivory from Aldgate (Chapman and Johnson, 1973, Fig. 22, 12 & Pl. 5).
- Common in the inlaid decoration of belt-plates, e.g. Brailsford (1962, Fig. 4, A77; A104; A108; A109).
- See Ulbert (1969, Taf.17, 21–2; 28).
- E.g. Brailsford (1962, Fig. 1, A15 & A14); Webster (1979, Fig.30, 59 & 60).
- See Ulbert (1969, especially 115–8).
- Francis Grew and Nick Griffiths have suggested that the strap is not in fact an 'apron strap' as such, but merely surplus material from the belt (cf. below, note 25), citing the Pula relief as evidence (Ulbert, 1969, Taf.29). However, another relief from Pula (UNA No.77) shows a belt and *pugio*, but on this example the surplus material from the belt is divided into four, only one strap of which passes through the buckle. All four straps are adorned with studs and finished with lunate terminals, so it is clearly meant to be an 'apron'. Thus, whilst the strap of the Camomile Street soldier could be excess material from a belt, it could also still be an apron strap. The legionary C. Castricius wears a similar apron, but with five straps, on a tombstone from Budapest/Aquincum (Robinson, 1975, Pl.470).
- See Zadoks-Josephus Jitta & Witteveen (1977, Pl. 33, 29 or Pl. 30, 1).
- See Fingerlin (1981).
- Esp.5790; personal observation by the author, September 1982.
- Esp. 6125; this feature is also found on the tombstone of Flavoleius Cordus (Esp. 5835) – personal observation by the author, September 1982.
- Annaius Daverzus, Esp. 6125: eight straps with sixteen studs; Flavoleius Cordus, Esp. 5835: at least six straps with at least twenty-one studs; Firmus, Esp. 6207: six straps with ten studs; Licaius, Esp. 16 (Germ.): six straps with ten studs; Largennius, Esp. 5495: eight straps, four of which have seven studs, four have eight – personal observation by the author, September 1982.
- Unknown infantryman, Esp. 5840: four straps with seven studs; Genialis, Esp. 5850: four straps with five studs; Valerius Crispus, Esp. 11 (Germ.): four straps with nine studs; unknown infantryman, Esp. 465 (Germ.): four straps with nine studs – personal observation by the author, September 1982.
- Personal observation by the author, September 1982; Lindenschmit (1858–1911, Bd.2, Heft 10, Taf. 4,2) for the only complete example of an apron strap; cf. the terminals of Annaius Daverzus' apron.
- The scroll and writing-tablets in Roman funerary sculpture deserve detailed study, for there are a number of examples. Particularly relevant here are the memorials of Oclatius from Neuss (Noelke, 1977, 10–14), a *signifer* of the *ala Afrorum*, and C. Valerius Valens from Corinth (Kos, 1978), a *miles* of *legio VIII Augusta*. Oclatius' scroll and tablets are virtually identical to those of the Camomile Street soldier.
- On the form of the grant of citizenship to auxiliaries, see Holder, 1980.
- On the conditions of retirement and its benefits see Watson (1969, 147–51); it is conceivable that the bonus of a deceased soldier would be paid to his estate, but there is no evidence to support this.
- Watson, 1969, 122–3; RE, *Missio*, 2052, 28 – 2053, 34.
- This is not the place to go into the complex subject of the *honesta missio*; although the *honesta missio* and the grant of citizenship were to become inextricably linked under Claudius, grants of Roman citizenship to auxiliaries being only sporadic before his reign (Holder, 1980, 46–8). The frequent appearance of the scroll on auxiliary and legionary tombstones of the 1st century AD cannot, therefore, be put down to the grant of citizenship. Dr Kennedy has suggested that the soldiers may in fact be holding prayer scrolls, since there are difficulties in associating the *honesta missio* with death in service.
- A similar role has been suggested for C. Valerius Valens (Kos, 1978), a legionary of *VIII Augusta* (then based in Moesia), whose tombstone was found in Corinth. Although he carries writing-tablets, he is just described as *miles* in the inscription.
- Whilst *cerae* signified clerical duties (and are therefore depicted in the possession of *signiferi*, *optiones*, and detached *militēs*) the association of another attribute, e.g. a standard or staff, is apparently crucial to the precise definition of the status of the deceased.
- The *optio* Caecilius Avitus (RIB 492; Webster, 1979, Pl. XI) carries a set of *cerae* with vertical lines towards either end, again suggestive of binding.
- Unfortunately, this point is best argued from negative archaeological evidence, although Valerius Crispus from Wiesbaden – Esp.11 (Germ.)

- has not visible *pagin*, nor does the unknown infantryman from Baden-Baden – Esp.465 (Germ.) – both of which are Flavian; cf the Chatsworth relief. However, C. Castricius, probably dating from the end of the 1st century, does have a dagger (Robinson, 1975, Pl. 470).
37. Mentioned in a report of the Library Committee, dated 7 March 1881: ‘... one of the spandrils found was the missing one from the previous excavation.’
38. Almost certainly from the Bishopsgate cemetery, Marsden (1980, 46); O. S. (1981); cf Morris (1982, Map 7).
39. Firmus (Esp.6207), Annaius Daverzus (Esp.6125), Rufus Sita (RIB 121), Longinus Sadapez (RIB 201); see Gabelmann (1972, 108–9).
40. Esp. 5949, 6003, 6101, 6207, 6294, 6435, 6459, 6487, 6548, 6549, 6551 are a few examples taken from Esperandieu’s work.
41. As is apparent on the feet of Flavoleius Cordus, Annaius Daverzus, and most other military tombstones: only in exceptional cases, as with the altogether unusual stone of Cn. Musius (Esp. 5790), were the *caligae* straps carved.
42. RIB 492; illustrated in Webster (1979, Pl. XI). Merrifield (1983, 77) suggests that the Camomile Street soldier was an *optio*.
43. All but a few centurions wore their swords on their left-hand side. Those that did include Favonius Facilis (Phillips, 1975, Pl. IX), Q. Sertorius Festus (Robinson, 1975, Pl. 442), the central figure on the Chatsworth relief (Pl.5): a possible exception is Valerius Allinius – Esp.473 (Germ.) who may be a centurion: he wears the *gladius* on his right and holds what might be a *vitis* in his left.
44. Marsden (1980, 83); Salway (1981, 162–3). Although there were troops stationed there beforehand at various times during the early development of the site, (Merrifield, 1983, 36–9); much of the military equipment from the Walbrook – Webster (1960, 85–6) – is Claudio-Neronian in date) and it has been suggested that the procurator may have been based in London with a small force of troops (Hassall, 1973, 234).
45. The question of the cost of tombstones is tackled by Duncan-Jones, (1974, 79–80 for Africa, and 129–30 for Italy), but note that he calculates the prices as a fraction of each soldier’s pay before deductions; see Watson (1969), on the matter of stoppages, savings, and spending money. The tombstone of Classicianus (RIB 12) is one of the only examples of early funerary art in London, but no comparable figured tombstones are known. During the early post-conquest period, most such pieces can be associated with *legio XX* and its auxiliaries, whilst campaigning units do not seem to have erected tombstones (although it could just be that they have not been found). Could it be that *legio XX* brought the necessary craftsmen with it at the time of the invasion?
46. Waurick, 1971. One of the soldiers on the Cancelleria relief appears to be carrying a *beneficiarius*’ lance (Magi, 1945, Tav.3). The post of *beneficiarius procuratoris* is also a possibility (von Domaszewski, 1908, 66–7), but the *officium* of the governor, given its size and complexity (Watson, 1969, 85–6), seems more likely.
47. Richmond (1963, 3) demonstrates that the tombstone of Favonius Facilis was painted, since traces survive.
48. Salway (1981, 706–7) considers the rite briefly; it is dealt with in greater detail by Harman *et al.*, (1981, especially 164–8).
49. Gabelmann (1972) deals with the development of figured military tombstones.
50. Gabelmann (1972, 115–8).
51. Esp.11 (Germ.).
52. The auxiliaries on Trajan’s Column all wear the *sagum*.
53. Ulbert (1969, 118–9).
54. Beards were worn before Hadrianic times (RE, Bart, 33, 59 – 34, 6) so this is not really reliable evidence.
55. Although, in certain lights, there is the suggestion of a moustache at the corners of the top lip; nevertheless, there is no surviving trace of a beard.
56. Trajan’s Column: Lehmann-Hartleben, (1926, Taf.10, XIII); Chatsworth: Pl.3; Cancelleria relief: Magi, (1945, Tav.3).
57. Phillips, (1975, 102; cf. Frere, 1978, 87).
58. I understand that Francis Grew and Nick Griffiths have reached a similar conclusion over the tombstone of C. Castricius in a forthcoming paper. (1983).
59. The date of the construction of the palace is usually described as late 1st to early 2nd century (Marsden (1980, 90); Morris (1982, 158) suggests a Flavian building initiative c. AD 80–90; cf. Salway (1981, 161–2)). The range of craftsmen who must have been employed constructing the ‘palace’ at Fishbourne shows that master craftsmen were in demand at this period, Todd (1981, 137); cf. Salway (1981, 749–50).
60. The niche being integral with the figure, but separate from the arch, is unusual, to say the least; the top of the soldier’s head displays the remains of the niche in the form of a wedge shape in the soldier’s hair. This tombstone clearly falls into Gabelmann’s Group IV, a ‘niched’ stone (Gabelmann, 1972, Bild 42).

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Esp. E. Espérandieu *Récueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule romaine* (Paris, 1907-38).
- Esp. (Germ.) E. Espérandieu *Récueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Germanie romaine* (Paris, 1931).
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