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# Roman bound captives: symbols of slavery?

by Ralph Jackson<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

In 1999 Don Bailey contributed a characteristically engaging paper to a volume dedicated to Gertrud Seidmann (Bailey 1999). Its subject was a tiny figure of a bound captive finely carved in chalcedony. Almost a decade previously Catherine Johns had taken interest in another bound captive, on that occasion a small bronze figurine, of Roman date, probably from Britain, though sadly unprovenanced (Figs 1, 3, 8; n° 15)<sup>2</sup>, and one of her excellent and inimitable sketches of the piece (Fig. 2, left) is attached to the registration document. In acquiring the figurine for the Department of Prehistoric and Romano-British Antiquities Catherine secured the Museum's third

example of a type then represented by only six other pieces. It is that type of Roman bound captive that is the subject of this short paper, my modest but heart-felt offering to Kaye and Don, best of friends and colleagues.

In 1992, through the good offices of Bill Milligan of Norwich Castle Museum, I was sent, amongst other pieces for identification, a splendid example of one of these captives, from Ingoldisthorpe, Norfolk (Figs 3, 9; n° 9). I became fascinated by the very distinctive iconography of this small group of tiny figural bronzes and began to gather, serendipitously, information on existing and new finds. Many other pressing projects intervened, and little progress was made. Then, in 2001, Sue Byrne,



Fig. 1 — The bound captives in the British Museum collections (n°s 2, 11, 15). Photo: © The British Museum.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Prehistory and Europe, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG. [rjackson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](mailto:rjackson@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Numbers are those used in the catalogue.

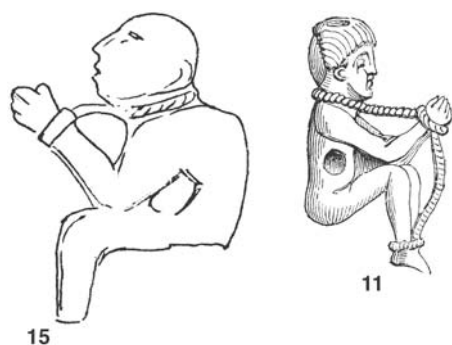


Fig. 2 — Left: Registration sketch of the unprovenanced bound captive n° 15. Right: Roach Smith's published drawing of bound captive n° 11, from London. Images © The British Museum.

of Gloucester City Museum, brought a couple of objects for opinion. One of them, from Frocester Court Roman villa, proved on close inspection to be another bound captive (n° 7), fused by its corrosion products to the central axis of a 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD military belt-plate, a singular but indisputable association (Fig. 7). Events again diverted me, and only now have I pulled together the various strands to present an interim account – a short catalogue prefaced by a few observations and speculations. Although my search has spanned many years, therefore, I cannot pretend it has been exhaustive, and I imagine the catalogue will soon be supplemented by additional examples, while my comments will for sure be quickly modified, if not entirely superseded.

The figurines are small bronze castings, in the range 35-50 mm high, which depict a crouched or seated man, apparently naked, with drawn-up haunches and flexed arms, hands clasped in front of the face, tightly bound by a chain or rope which encircles and links his neck, wrists and ankles. They are further distinguished by a vertical perforation through the back and a horizontal aperture through the side. The earliest discovery was an example from London (Figs 1, 3, 8; n° 11), probably found during construction work in the City between 1835 and 1854. It was acquired by the British Museum in 1856 as part of the collection of Charles Roach Smith, who had published it in his *Catalogue of the Museum of London Antiquities* (London 1854), 8, n° 17. A good line-drawing (Fig. 2, right) clearly showing the figure's distinctive tonsure accompanied his short description: 'This diminutive piece of art seems, from the perforations through the side and head, to have formed an accessory figure to a group, or it may have been merely an ornament, or possibly a child's toy'.

A few years later the Museum purchased a second example, from Brough, Cumbria (Figs 1, 3, 8; n° 2), succinctly characterised in the acquisitions register as 'captive, rude work'. Jocelyn Toynbee was similarly unimpressed by the quality of craftsmanship of both the Brough and the London captives noting, however, that

while 'the features are wholly barbaric. Yet the prisoners attract us, none the less, by their air of naïve pathos' (Toynbee 1964, 120). Without commenting on the purpose of their perforations, of which she may not have been aware, she described them simply as 'miniature figurines' under the rubric 'realistic rendering of barbarians and other ethnic types', 'a favourite theme of Graeco-Roman genre art' (*ibid.* 119).

At about the same time three further examples, from Austria, were published, two from Carnuntum and one from Vienna (Fig. 3; n°s 3-4, 14; Swoboda 1964, 98; Fleischer 1966, 44-5; 1967, 150-151). Robert Fleischer's precise and detailed descriptions were accompanied by excellent photographs, together with references to parallels from Strasbourg and Cologne (Fig. 3; n°s 12 and 6), which latter he regarded as probably from the same workshop as one of the Carnuntum figurines. However, he did not make the connection with the British Museum examples, even though they had appeared in the 1951 *Guide to the Antiquities of Roman Britain* and its subsequent editions and reprints. The present paper unites the British and Continental finds for the first time.

## Iconography

The sixteen examples I have identified may be subdivided into three types (Fig. 3), largely on the strength of their differing iconography. There is at present no evidence to suggest chronological or geographical variation between the types.

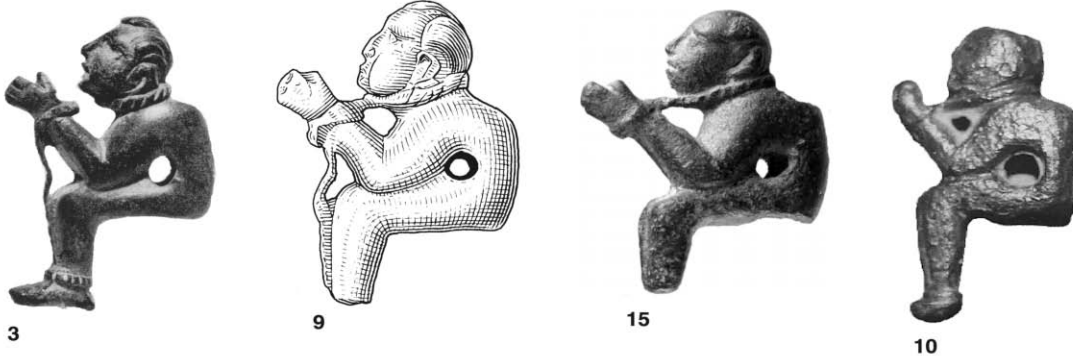
Type I is distinguished by a relative naturalism of physiognomy, bearing in mind the constraints of size and of function. The head, in particular, displays a clear and consistent identity. The sensitively-modelled, up-turned face has a long straight nose, large fleshy ears, expressive, slightly sunken eyes with marked brows, large jowly cheeks, lightly-parted lips and long hair, receding from the temples, with prominent tufts above the ears, brushed back and down the neck. Additionally, the vertical perforation is contrived to avoid the head by setting the torso abnormally far back, giving the figure a distinct and characteristic hunch-backed appearance. The angle of the flexed legs is about 90°-110°.

Type II is characterised by its diminutive size (about 32-35 mm), by a more stylised and varied treatment of the physiognomy, by the position of the vertical perforation, which emerges from head and buttocks, and by a more acute angle of the flexed legs – about 65°-75°.

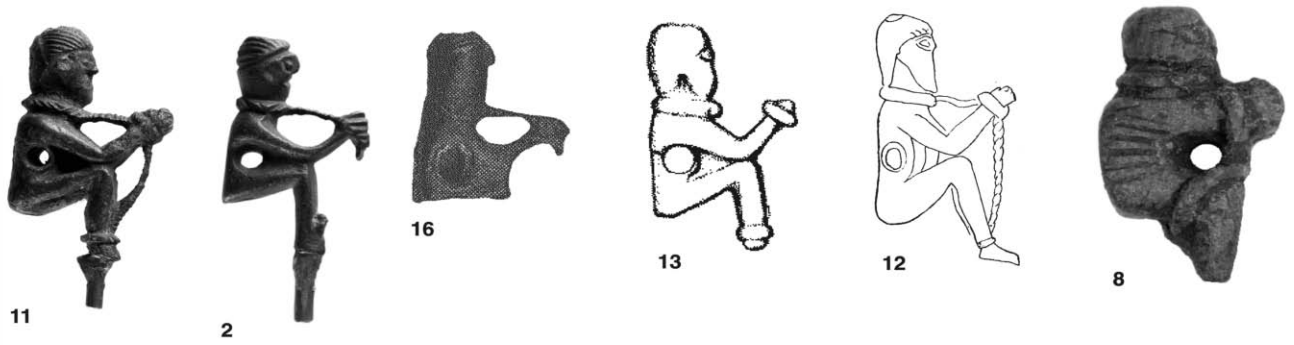
Type III consistently depicts a very hirsute captive, whose voluminous, mane-like, wavy hair, merged with a full bushy beard, projects an image of a hairy barbarian with distinctly leonine features. The bound hands, pressed close against the chin, are heavily stylised in curious contrast to the feet, which are treated more naturalistically. There is a vertical socket, with no exit at the head, rather than a two-ended perforation, and the flexed legs have an obtuse angle of about 110°-130°.

Roman bound captives: symbols of slavery ?

**Type I**



**Type II**



**Type III**

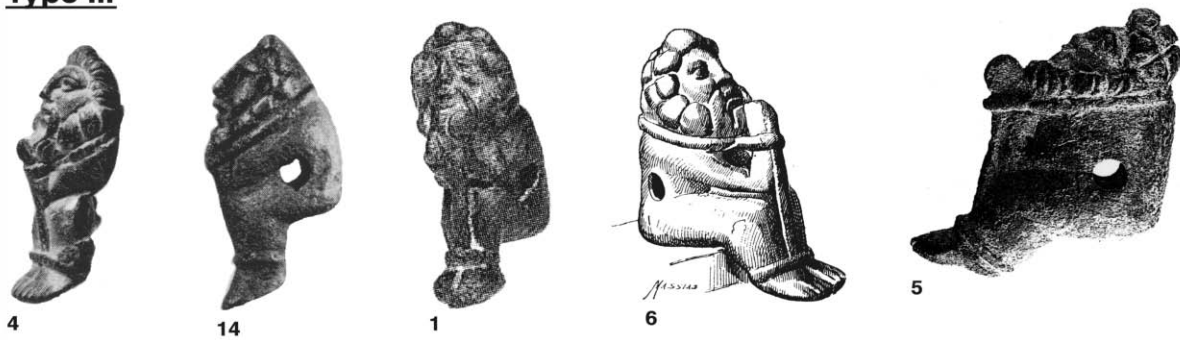


Fig. 3 — Typology of bound captives. For n° 7 see Fig. 7. (n°s 2 and 11 have a modern mounting rod below the feet). Drawing: Stephen Crummy; © The British Museum 2005.



Fig. 4 — Captives depicted in low-relief on one of the column bases from the *principia* of the legionary fortress at Mainz Kastlich. Later 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Mainz, Landesmuseum, Inv. S.269. Photo: author.

The Type I figurines, albeit a small sample, are very consistent and distinctive. What is the source of the image? Was it intended to portray an ethnic or racial type, or would it have triggered a particular perception of slavery? Krierer (1995, 224) epitomises the Carnuntum example (n° 3) as ‘captive; barbarian; painful suffering’ (*Gefangenschaft; Barbar; schmerzliches Leiden*). Without garment or hat, the usual signifiers of origin, there are few clues, and I have found no obvious parallel in Roman provincial art or in theatre iconography.

The Type II figurines are much more schematic and less uniform than Type I, yet they clearly depict a different kind of face. Notable is the tonsure, with hair brushed back from the forehead in straight strands and, in the case of the London example (n° 11), shaved behind the crown. The Strasbourg captive (n° 12), as also, perhaps, those from London and Thonock (nos 11 and 13), appears to sport a beard. The Type II facial imagery is not inconsistent with that of North-west European barbarians (e.g. the pair of captives on the sculptured distance slab of Legio XX Valeria Victrix from Hutcheson Hill, Bearsden: Keppie 1998, 81-2, plate V, 9), and comparison may also be made with the chained captives shown on one of the celebrated sculpted column bases from the *principia* of the legionary fortress at Mainz (Fig. 4; Thompson 2003, 10, 38-9, fig. 3).

The Type III figurines, like Type I, are distinctive and consistent. They show an intentionally equivocal image which combines and blurs human and animal (leonine) features, presumably to underscore the paradigm of the wild, ferocious barbarian captured and tamed by Rome



Fig. 5 — Barbarian captives as depicted on the reverse of silver *denarii* of Julius Caesar. Left: c. 49 BC (*RRC* 452; *PCR* 216; *BM C&M* 1867, 1-1, 1267). Right: c. 46 BC (*RRC* 468; *PCR* 232; *BM C&M* 1843, 1-16, 646). Photos: © The British Museum.

(cf., e.g., *RIB* 201, the tombstone of Longinus Sdapeze from Colchester, which includes a crouched ‘animalised’ barbarian and further equivocal human/animal imagery on the gable: *Journal of Roman Studies* 18 (1928), 212, pl. XXIII; Goldsworthy 2003, 67). Such an image would have reinforced ideas of Roman subjugation and control of human and animal worlds. Significantly, perhaps, it would also have given visual form to the conflation of slaves with animals, a notion routinely encountered in Roman literature (Bradley 2000).

In commenting on the iconography of the figurines Fleischer (1966, 44), like Toynbee, remarked that the image of a captured barbarian was a popular motif in Roman art. However, what neither of them specified is that the Roman images of captive barbarians almost invariably depict a figure with wrists alone bound, and those generally not in front but behind the back (see, e.g., Thompson 2003, fig. 4; Fleischer 1967, 148-150, pls 107-108, nos 200-201). Furthermore, those figures, which are frequently associated with trophies and include both men and, less often, women, are usually shown standing, occasionally seated or kneeling, but not crouched (Fig. 5). Thus, while conforming broadly to the normal Roman imagery of captured barbarians, our diminutive bronze bound captives are both significantly different and distinctive, most strikingly in their posture and in the frontal linked triple-shackling of neck, wrists and ankles. They were evidently intended to communicate a different but particular visual message, and I suggest that that message was an overt, indeed naked, reference to slavery.

Upraised, open, weapon-less hands were an accepted gesture of supplication, while clasped hands were an acknowledged sign of unconditional surrender. The former is vividly depicted on Trajan’s Column in the great ‘surrender-scene’ of Decebalus and the Dacians before Trajan (Lepper & Frere 1988, 117, pls LIV-LV, scene lxxv, casts 193-199), while the latter is described by Cassius Dio in his account of the appearance of the Dacian envoys in Rome in AD 102/3:

‘The envoys from Decebalus, upon being brought into the senate, laid down their arms, *clasped their hands in the attitude of captives*, and spoke some words of supplication; thus they obtained peace and received back their arms.’ (Cassius Dio 68, 10).

Decebalus’ envoys employed the powerful symbol of captivity to reach peaceful terms. Others were not so fortunate and bound or chained captives – manacled prisoners – were standard Roman images of a defeated enemy. As a part of the victor’s booty they were considered a legitimate means of obtaining slaves for onward sale and/or allocation to victorious soldiery (Harris 1980, 121-2; Wiedemann 1981, 106). According to Thompson (2003, 238) wrist manacles and ankle fetters were used for temporary captivity, while neck-shackles were employed for those taken on the road to market, as illustrated on the reliefs from Nickenich and Amphipolis (Thompson 1994, illus. 24-27). Examples of padlocked manacles with

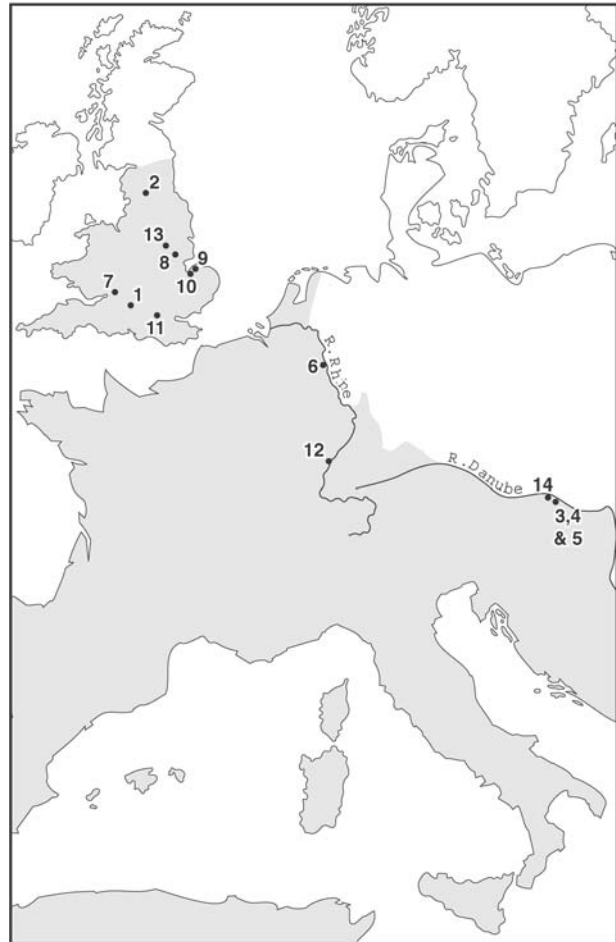


Fig. 6 — Distribution of provenanced bound captive figurines in relation to the Roman Empire and its northern frontier. Drawing: Stephen Crummy; © The British Museum 2005.

linking chains, most notably, for present purposes, the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD Künzing type, dramatically represented by the very extensive 3<sup>rd</sup> century hoard from the type-site, are illustrated in Thompson’s comprehensive paper on slave-shackles (1994, 97-127, esp. illus. 49-50).

## Distribution, context and date

Of the sixteen catalogued examples ten are from Britain and six from sites along the Rhine/Danube *limes* (Fig. 6) – three from Carnuntum (Type I and two Type III) and single examples from Vienna (Type III), Strasbourg (Type II) and Cologne (Type III). The eight provenanced examples from Britain are quite widely distributed – two from Lincolnshire (Type II), two from Norfolk (Type I) and single examples from London (Type II), Abingdon (Type III), Frocester Court (Type III) and Brough (Type II).

Frustratingly, all except for one of the sixteen figurines are either casual finds, early finds with few or no recorded finding circumstances, or finds made by metal detecto-

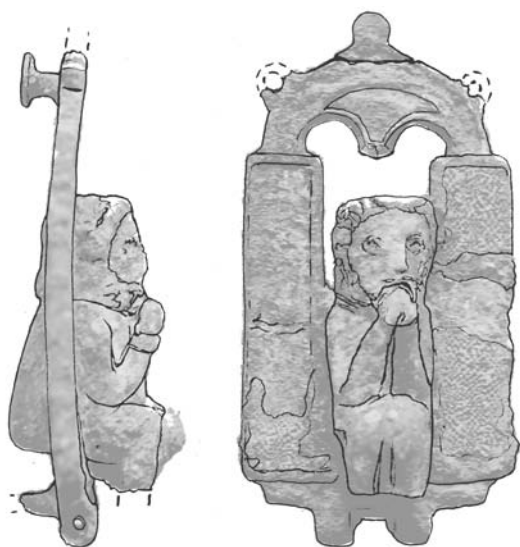


Fig. 7 — Combined photo and interpretive sketch of front and side views of the bound captive from Frocester Court, n° 7. Actual size. The figurine, fused within the long axis of a 3<sup>rd</sup>-century AD hinged belt-plate, is framed by the plate's millefiori enamel-inlaid side panels. Photo: Sue Byrne.

rists. The exception is the Type III variant from Frocester Court (Fig. 7), excavated by Eddie Price in 1997. That example provides us with a site of known status – a villa; a dated context – a 4<sup>th</sup>-century AD ditch fill (in which, however, the figurine was probably residual); and an intimate association with a 3<sup>rd</sup>-century AD military belt-plate. Considerably less certainty attaches to the site status of the figurine found near King's Lynn, but the close proximity of that find to a 'horse-and-rider' figurine is at least suggestive of a shrine or temple context. Strikingly, however, all eight remaining examples from recorded sites of known status are from sites with Roman military garrisons:

- *Carnuntum* was the base of Legio XIV Gemina Martia Victrix from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. An extensive *canabae* developed around the fortress, while 5 km to the west the civil settlement became a *municipium* under Hadrian and a *colonia* under Septimius Severus.

- Vienna (Vindobona) was garrisoned by Legio X Gemina from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The fortress was of especial importance in the Marcomannic Wars of Marcus Aurelius, and Vindobona was also a *statio* of the Danube Fleet (*classis Histrica*). An adjacent civil settlement was elevated to municipal status in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

- Strasbourg (Argentorate) was the base of Legio VIII from the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century it was exposed to barbarian attack and its defences were strengthened in the mid 4<sup>th</sup> century. Ultimately the *canabae* were given up as the civilian population moved in to the fortress.

- Cologne (Colonia Agrippinensis) was the command-

centre of the Rhine frontier, a veteran colony which became a prosperous city with a large mercantile port and retained its importance in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries despite exposure to barbarian attack.

- London combined the roles of city and port as well as retaining a military garrison.

- Brough-under-Stainmore (Verteris) was an auxiliary fort which, as evidenced by a large assemblage of lead sealings, was an important centre for the collection and re-distribution of various military commodities and supplies in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

At present, dating of the figurines is essentially intrinsic apart from the Frocester Court example (Fig. 7; n° 7). That figurine, perhaps already lacking the lower part of the legs, had been deliberately wedged along the axis of a highly-decorated lugged and hinged belt-plate, in the open space left by the breaking away, accidental or intentional, of the central bar. Breakage of the central bar seems to have occurred quite commonly on this type of plate, which dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, and is found across the Empire from Britain, along the Rhine-Danube frontier, to Syria (Bishop & Coulston 1993, 152-3, fig. 108, nos 1 and 4). It seems very probable that the figurine was added to the belt-plate to enhance a damaged plate or to change its appearance and/or meaning, while the belt, to which it was attached, was still in its original use. That would only have been really satisfactory, visually, if the plate was used in a vertical or near-vertical position, when the captive would be seen seated between a pair of polychrome 'columns' – the plate's rectangular side panels inlaid with a fine 'micro-mosaic' brown on yellow millefiori enamel. As it happens, evidence in support of such a notion comes from the fort at South Shields, where four plates of this type, including a hinged plate and one plate lacking its central bar, were found linked together by chains connecting the lugs, with their long axis orientated vertically (Allason-Jones & Miket 1984, 94-6, pl. VI, 3.10), as though for use on a broad belt, perhaps with a pendant hanging from the hinged plate. In addition, the three surviving central bars of the South Shields plates incorporate a pair of three-dimensional boars' heads, so a figural iconography would not be without precedent. The alternative is to suppose a secondary use, no longer discernible, for the Frocester plate and captive.

The 3<sup>rd</sup>-century date of the Frocester belt-plate, which tends to accord with the probable 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century date of the Brough assemblage (n° 2), may be broadly and cautiously applied to our series of captive figurines. Independently, without knowledge of the Frocester find, Krierer (1995, 224) has dated the Carnuntum Type I captive (n° 3) as 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century and has given a slightly wider bracket, 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century, to the Carnuntum Type III example (n° 5). It is to be hoped that new finds will sharpen the chronology.



## Function

The function of the figurines remains enigmatic and evidence for the purpose of the perforations (Fig. 8) equally elusive, despite the discovery, mostly by metal detectorists, of a further eight examples in Britain since 1990. Both Roach Smith and Fleischer appreciated the significance of the perforations but were hard-pressed to ascribe to them any specific function. Clearly the figurines were to be secured in an upright position by means of a peg or dowel in the vertical perforation: they were part of a composite object, probably a decorative mount. The peg is likely to have been made of wood or other organic material or, perhaps, of iron. The lack of any certain surviving remains in the perforation favours the former. It is, at least, pretty clear that the figures were not directly fixed to a copper-alloy component, for there is no sign of any surviving tin-lead solder – the normal Roman bonding medium for copper-alloy components – either in the perforations or on the underside. Evidence for use of the horizontal perforations varies between the types. The purposeful, circular perforations of Type II were clearly intended for use, but the less regular apertures of Types I and III may not have shared the same function. Similarly, there is variety in the angle of the flexed legs which is likely to have reflected the shape of the object on which the figures sat. The angle for Type II is most acute – about 65°-75°, that for Type III most obtuse – about 110°-130°, with Type I in between – about 90°-110°.

Setting aside the question of basic physical function we might contemplate the wider purpose of these little figurines. Attention has already been drawn to their distinctive though diminutive iconography, the portrayal of bound and manacled prisoners, an essential image of enslavement. We should not reject the possibility that they were of purely decorative intent, even if the subject matter may be unappealing to modern sensibilities. After all, the grossest images of gladiatorial combat and criminal execution were considered suitable for floor- and wall-decorations in both public and private spaces in the Roman world. Slavery, like amphitheatre events, was an everyday norm, an integral part of Roman social structure, and bronze images of slaves include oil-flasks in the form of a young slave sleeping on a strong-box (e.g. that from Aldborough, Yorkshire: British Museum 1966, 54, n° 14, pl. XVIII, 14; Bishop 1996, n°15). The bound captives may, therefore, be regarded as belonging to a range of genre objects. However, it is conceivable that they had a more focused purpose relating to the market in slaves.

As already seen, the distribution of the recorded figurines outside Britain is exclusive to the Rhine-Danube *limes* and is concentrated at strategic points along that

Fig. 8 — The British Museum's bound captives (n<sup>os</sup> 15, 11 and 2) showing the vertical and horizontal perforations. (n<sup>os</sup> 2 and 11 have a modern mounting rod beneath the feet.) Photos: © The British Museum.

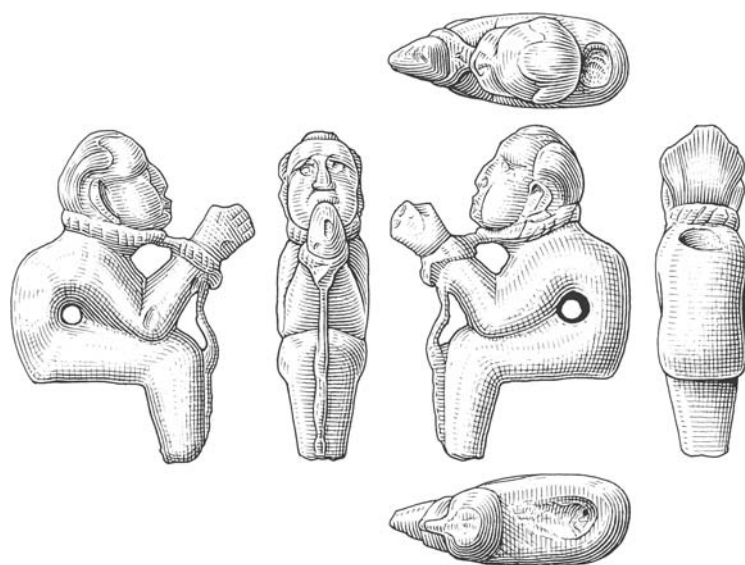


Fig. 9 — The Type I bound captive from Ingoldisthorpe, Norfolk, n° 9. Actual size. Drawing: Meredydd Moores; © The British Museum 2005.

frontier. In fact, all the sites are places with an interface between military and civilian communities, and if we add the British finds from Brough and London then eight of the nine figurines from sites of known status fall into this category. These are precisely the places where we might expect to encounter the initial stages of the enslavement of war-captives.

By the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD large-scale warfare for conquest of new territory was a rare event and there was a corresponding fall in the volume of war-captives coming onto the slave market. Julius Caesar's enslavement of, for example, 53,000 of the Aduatuci in 57 BC (*de Bello Gallico* 2.33) was very much a thing of the past. However, smaller-scale warfare continued and yielded lesser, though still significant, numbers of prisoners for enslavement, while exceptional circumstances occasionally resulted in very substantial numbers, notably Trajan's Dacian Wars of AD 101-6, and the suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt in AD 135. In the west the tribes beyond the British and Rhine-Danube frontiers continued to be an intermittent source of slaves. Fighting in Britain occurred sporadically through the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, while Marcus Aurelius resolved serious trouble on the Danube frontier in the Marcomannic Wars of the AD 170s. For his campaigns in AD 171-3 he was based at Carnuntum (where he wrote the second book of his *Meditations*), and it was at Vindobona that he died in AD 174. The following year 5,500 auxiliary cavalry, part of a larger contingent of defeated Sarmatians, were sent to Britain (Cassius Dio 72, 16).

The process of enslavement of war-captives started

with the military – indeed, on occasion individual soldiers were recipients of slaves as part of their share of the spoils of war. The military transacted *sub corona* or *sub hasta* with slave traders who transported their human wares away from the frontiers, in many instances selling them on to slave merchants who then sold the slaves individually or in batches at slave markets for re-distribution throughout the empire (for images of this process see, e.g. Thompson 2003, figs 9, 10, 88). Thus, while the slave markets tended to be in centres away from the frontiers, as at Rome, Puteoli, Ostia, Capua, Brundisium and Aquileia, as well as at many smaller towns and fairs, the primary transactions for those enslaved through warfare necessarily occurred at or near the places of capture (Harris 1980, 124-6). Carnuntum, Vindobona and Argentorate were strategic military strongholds with mercantile communities, Cologne and London prosperous provincial capitals with large ports, while at Brough the fort in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD appears to have had a specific role as a central collecting point and re-distribution centre for various military supplies (Holder 1982, 96, 119-22). All were well-placed to fulfil a role in the initial stages of slavery<sup>3</sup>.

Archaeological evidence of slave transactions in Roman Britain has been considerably enhanced by a recently-published writing-tablet from London which has shed fascinating new light on slavery in the city in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Tomlin 2003). It is one 'page' from the deed of sale of a female slave named Fortunata, who, at some time between c. AD 75-125, was bought by Vegetus, assistant slave of Montanus, who himself had been slave and deputy of the Imperial slave Iucundus. The tablet

<sup>3</sup> For further details of the slave trade see Bradley 1999 and 2003, Harris 1999 and Scheidel 2003.



significantly enhances the information previously gleaned from the celebrated, but less clear, earlier finds from London of a tombstone set up by Anencletus, 'slave of the province' (*RIB* 21), and a business letter on a stylus tablet discussing *inter alia* the sale of a slave (Richmond 1953). Between them the two writing-tablets confirm the actuality of slave trafficking in Roman London, an activity that has rarely left direct and unequivocal evidence (for a rare surviving image, from Capua, of the sale of a slave see Thompson 2003, fig. 12). Further epigraphic evidence for the slave trade, significantly from Dacia in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, was found in three more examples of sales contracts on writing-tablets from Verespatak in Transylvania (Wiedemann 1981, 109-10). Harris (1980, 131) suspects the presence there of professional slave-dealers (*mangones*) since all three sellers had non-Dacian names. A century earlier the *mango* C. Aiacius P. f. Stel. was buried in Cologne (*CIL* XIII. 8348).

Since there is little doubt that slave trading occurred in London, Cologne, Strasbourg, Vienna and Carnuntum it is conceivable that our bronze bound captives, which vividly epitomise enslavement, comprised some sort of emblem, a symbol of slave trading perhaps, that would have been instantly and readily recognised irrespective of nationality or level of literacy. Certainly it is hard to believe that they did not have some close connection with the operation of the Roman slave trade even if it is perhaps too fanciful to suggest that they were specifically the insignia of slave-traders.

## Catalogue

### 1. Fig. 3. Near Abingdon, Oxfordshire; Type III.

Present location unknown, presumably in private hands. Said to have been found "near Abingdon, Oxon, 1997". Details of finding circumstances not known, but likely to have been found with a metal detector. Included in Bonhams Antiquities auction, Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1999, Lot 298. The entry in the sale catalogue (p. 84, 3/4 view photo on p. 168) describes the object as 'A Romano-British bronze seated figure of a bearded captive, tied with rope around the neck, hands and feet, circa 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, 13/4 in (4.4 cm), minor damage, perspex mounted.'

Height 44 mm.

The seemingly complete figure is seated or crouched, with drawn-up haunches and apparently hunched shoulders. The disproportionately large head has voluminous mane-like hair, which merges with a full, bushy beard and a long drooping moustache. The nose is prominent, while the parted lips and sloping eyes impart a distinctly mournful expression. A rope or chain encircles the neck and the wrists, which are clasped together under the chin. The rope descends in front of the shins to encircle (or link with a shackle on) the bare feet at the ankles. No clothing is depicted. There is an aperture in the side.

### 2. Figs 1, 3, 8. Brough-under-Stainmore (Verteris), Cumbria; Type II.

British Museum, Department of Prehistory and Europe, 1874, 3-28, 42. Part of a collection of 120 objects, mainly small

bronzes, the majority of them Roman military artefacts (including inscribed lead sealings), mostly of 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD date, described as 'Found in the neighbourhood of Brough, Westmorland, some of them evidently from Kirkby Thore.' Neither the precise date and place of discovery nor the context/finding circumstances of the figurine is known. Purchased from Bryce M. Wright by the British Museum in 1874. Probably 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. British Museum 1951, 53-4, n° 2, pl. XV, 2; Toynbee 1964, 120, pl. XXXII, c (in which the figurine is wrongly provenanced as Brougham).

Height 31.9 mm. Head to bottom 25.6 mm.

Width 19 mm.

Maximum thickness (at shoulders) 10.7 mm.

Diameter of vertical perforation : at head 3.2 mm.

: at bottom 3.9 mm.

Weight 11.6 g (including modern mounting rod).

Complete, except for the feet, broken at the ankles, and the section of rope between wrists and ankles. The figurine is in good condition with a thin stable brown patina, in places disclosing the underlying golden-coloured metal. In modern times a slender brass rod has been soldered to the underside of the ankles for display purposes.

The figure is very schematically rendered and the workmanship indifferent. It shows a crouched or seated man, with drawn-up haunches, bound with a rope or chain that encircles his neck, wrists and ankles. Although the form is reasonably well-observed the head is disproportionately large. The stylised hair is shown brushed back in lines, the beady eyes comprise small round pellets within slightly irregular hollows, the ears, too, are represented simply by small irregular hollows, the nose is beak-like and the mouth is a broad horizontal slit. The flexed arms and legs, undivided and schematised, with elbows on knees, are depicted essentially to show their position. Details of the forward-thrust clasped hands are restricted to a grooved representation of interlocking fingers. The twisted rope encircling the neck has been comparatively carefully depicted, but it is shown more schematically where it extends forward from the neck to the wrists. In the most vulnerable position, where it ran free from wrists to ankles, it has broken away (in antiquity) leaving only stubs at top and bottom. The angle between hams and calves is about 75°.

The vertical perforation that runs from head to base is of circular cross-section, as is the horizontal perforation, running from side to side, with which it intersects. Neither of the perforations nor the figure's underside preserves any evidence of a fastening medium or of wear.

### 3. Fig. 3. Probably Carnuntum, Austria; Type I.

Petronell, Schlossmuseum. Other than 'wohl in Carnuntum gefunden' (Fleischer 1966) no details of finding circumstances and context are recorded. Thus, the figurine may be either from the fortress or from its flourishing *canabae* or from the nearby extensive civil settlement, the *municipium Aelium Carnuntum* under Hadrian, promoted to *colonia Septimia* under Severus. A military context, while probable, therefore, cannot be assured. Swoboda 1964, 98, Taf. XIV, 4; Fleischer 1966, 44, n° 67; 1967, 150-151, n° 202, Taf. 109; Krierer 1995, 224, Stte 06, Taf. 151, 482. Dated to the end of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century AD by Krierer (1995).

Height 48 mm.

The figurine, which is skilfully and naturalistically modelled, has a dark green patina and is complete except for the short stretch of rope between the neck and wrists. It depicts an apparently naked man held captive by a rope or chain (its twist clearly rendered) which encircles and links his neck, wrists and ankles. The man is seated or crouched, with feet, legs, arms and hands clasped together. The angle between hams and calves is

approximately 90°. The elbows rest on the thighs, and the hands, with separately modelled thumbs and incised finger divisions, are thrust forward, below and in front of the chin. The head, disproportionately large, and the upturned face are sensitively and expressively modelled, with a distinctly pained expression. The nose is long and straight, the ears large and fleshy, the eyes slightly sunken with markedly sinuous brows, the cheeks large and 'jowly', and the mouth open, with lightly parted lips. The long hair, receding from the temples, and with prominent tufts above the ears, is brushed back and down the short neck.

The figure's hunch-backed appearance is largely a product of the need to accommodate a vertical circular-sectioned perforation in the back, with openings at top and bottom, behind the head and beneath the buttocks. The perforation partially intersects a horizontal space that links the ovoid opening between arm, leg and torso at each side of the figure.

#### 4. Fig. 3. Carnuntum, Austria; Type III.

Museum Carnuntinum, Inv. n° 12034 (purchased). Found in 1942 at Bad Deutsch Altenburg. No further details of finding circumstances/ context recorded. Fleischer 1966, 45, n° 68; 1967, 151, n° 203, Taf. 109.

Height 40 mm.

The figurine, with dark green patina, is complete at the front but has suffered extensive loss at the back. It shows a highly-stylised, tightly-trussed male figure with a distinctly sad aspect and almost leonine appearance. The figure is seated or crouched, with drawn-up haunches and hunched shoulders. The disproportionately large head is finely detailed and carefully modelled, its up-turned face framed by a mass of wavy swept-back hair which merges with the full, bushy beard. The forehead is low, the triangular nose long and prominent, the hollow expressive eyes naturalistically depicted, with brows, lids and pupils, the cheekbones high, the mouth open, with lightly parted fleshy lips and a bushy drooping moustache. Only the ears are absent – invisible within the mass of hair. A shackle-like rope or chain, its twist rudimentarily rendered, encircles the neck and wrists and drops between the shins to encircle (or link with a shackle around) the ankles. The feet, legs, arms and hands are pressed close together, with elbows on knees. The tiny, stylised hands, secured immediately below the bearded chin, contrast with the feet which are broad and naturalistically shown with accurate toe divisions. Breakage at the rear, with the loss of the thighs, buttocks and lower back, appears to have occurred in the region of the intersection of vertical and horizontal perforations.

#### 5. Fig. 3. Carnuntum, Austria; Type III

In private hands. Circumstances of discovery not recorded. Kandler 1976, 137, Taf. 9, 3; Krierer 1995, 224, Site 07, Taf. 151, 483-4. Dated 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD by Krierer (1995). Height not known to author.

The figurine, apparently complete, depicts a highly-stylised, tightly-trussed, seated or crouched male figure, with head sunk deep into the hunched shoulders. The disproportionately large head has thick voluminous hair, the locks only roughly rendered with transverse grooving, which merges with a bushy, ruff-like beard. Krierer (1995) sees, in the up-turned face, with its low forehead and long nose, a sad aspect engendered by the contorted, down-turned mouth and intensified by the large eyes with their deep-set pupils. A rope or chain encircles the neck and the wrists, which are clasped together at the chin, and drops in front of the shins to encircle the ankles. The feet, legs, arms and hands are pressed close together, with elbows on the knees. The angle between the hams and calves is approximately 130°-140°. The torso is simply rendered, with no clothing depicted, and the clasped hands, in particular, are very stylised as small plain discs. A horizontal perforation links the circular opening

enclosed by arm, leg and torso on both sides of the figure.

#### 6. Fig. 3. Cologne (Colonia Agrippinensis), Germany; Type III.

Formerly in the collection of Julien Gréau, which was auctioned in Paris from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 1885. Present location not known to the author. Other than 'Trouvé à Cologne' the finding circumstances are not recorded. Gréau had assembled his extensive collection in the thirty years prior to 1885. Froehner 1885, 240, n° 1129 (with two drawn views at approximately actual size); Reinach 1897, 201, n° 1 (with a drawing after one of Froehner's).

Height 43 mm.

Described by Froehner as 'Prisonnier barbu (de nationalité gauloise ou germanique), assis par terre, le cou pris dans un carcan, les chevilles liées à un poteau planté entre les pieds, les mains attachées au montant du carcan.' Reinach captioned his figure solely 'Dace ?'

The figurine, seemingly complete, shows an apparently naked man, seated or crouched and tightly bound. His disproportionately large head is sunk deep into the shoulders. The up-turned face is framed by a mass of mane-like hair, the locks quite rudimentarily rendered, which merges with a full, bushy beard and a long, thick, drooping moustache. The nose is large, triangular and distinctly leonine, the eyes deep-sunk with drilled pupils, and the mouth part-open, thick-lipped and down-turned, giving the face a somewhat mournful aspect. A stylised rope or chain encircles the neck and the wrists, which are clasped together in front of the chin, and descends between the forearms and shins to encircle the ankles. Feet, legs, arms and hands are pressed closely together, with elbows on knees. The care with which the feet are depicted, showing clear toe divisions, contrasts with the stylised simplicity of the undifferentiated hands. A horizontal perforation links the circular opening enclosed by arm, leg and torso on both sides of the figure.

#### 7. Fig. 7. Frocester, Gloucestershire; ?Type III, variant.

In private hands. Found during excavations at the Roman villa site at Frocester Court by Mr Eddie Price in August 1997. It was brought to the author at the British Museum, for identification, in November 2001 by Sue Byrne of Gloucester City Museum. The context was recorded as a ditch behind the entrance wall amongst roof tile chippings. Context date supplied: 4<sup>th</sup> century AD; but the date of the belt-plate to which the figurine is corroded in intimate association is 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

Height 40 mm. Head to bottom 34 mm.

Width 21mm.

Maximum thickness (at shoulders) 16 mm.

Belt plate: Length 67 mm. Width 37 mm. Thickness 3 mm.

The figurine is corroded and damaged, lacking the feet, ankles and lower calves and the top of the head. The figure is that of a tightly-bound man, seated or crouched, with drawn-up haunches and hunched shoulders. The disproportionately large head has thick wavy hair, a full bushy beard and a moustache. Corrosion obscures much of the detail on the up-turned face, but a long triangular nose and deep-set eyes can be discerned. The legs, arms and hands are pressed closely together, with the elbows resting on the knees. The rope or chain which encircled and linked the neck, wrists and ankles is largely destroyed or obscured by corrosion, but it can be discerned at the wrists, where it binds the clasped hands in front of the chin. A perforation runs vertically through the figure's torso with openings at the head and buttocks.

**8.** Fig. 3. Harmston, Lincs; ?Type II, variant.

In private hands. Details of finding circumstances not known, but likely to have been found with a metal detector. Recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, PAS n° DENO-9632F6.

Height 40.38 mm. Head to bottom 30 mm.

Width 24.06 mm.

Maximum thickness 12.7 mm.

Weight 36.68 g.

The figurine, with green patina, lacks the feet and ankles. It is rather schematically rendered, showing a tightly-bound seated or crouched man with lightly hunched back. The head and facial features appear damaged and worn. Clearly depicted is the rope that encircles the neck, links and binds the wrists, drops down onto the knees and coils back round the thigh and under the knees. The (fore-shortened) arms are thrust straight forward, and the large clasped hands are grooved at their distal end to represent the interlocked fingers and thumbs. A very distinct series of five horizontal hoops on the figure's side was presumably intended to represent either ribs or clothing. The angle between the hams and calves is approximately 90°. A horizontal aperture links the circular opening between arm, leg and torso at each side of the figure. Flattening at the head and buttocks probably disclose the position of a vertical perforation through the figure's torso.

**9.** Figs 3, 9. Ingoldisthorpe, Norfolk; Type I.

In private hands. Metal detector find in, or before, 1992. It was brought to the author at the British Museum, for recording, in June 1992 by Bill Milligan of Norwich Castle Museum.

Height 43.5 mm. Head to bottom 33.5mm.

Width 32 mm.

Maximum thickness (at shoulders) 12.5 mm.

Diameter of vertical perforation approximately 5 mm.

Weight 46.7 g.

Complete, apart from the feet, which are broken away just above the ankles. Otherwise the figurine is in very good condition, with a fine, stable, dark brown patina, only lightly pitted and blistered in a few places.

The figure depicts an apparently naked man, seated or crouched, and bound by a rope or chain which encircles and links his neck, wrists and ankles. His feet, legs, arms and hands are clenched, with his elbows resting on his thighs. The torso is stylised, particularly the back, which, in order to accommodate a vertical perforation and avoid it passing through the figure's head, is set unnaturally far back, but the limbs and head are realistically and naturalistically portrayed. The head is especially carefully modelled and is very distinctive. The hair, brushed back, is thick and long but recedes from the temples; the ears are large; the forehead prominent and lightly bulbous; the eyes deep-set with marked brows; the nose long with bulbous nostrils; the lips full, and the cheeks especially plump and 'jowly'. The hands are more simply depicted, though the thumbs (now chipped) are rendered and there are incised finger divisions. The rope encircles the neck, links to the bound wrists and snakes down towards the missing ankles. It is carefully depicted with the twist visible in most places.

The vertical perforation through the figure's back, of sub-circular cross-section, is mostly blocked with an iron-stained sandy concretion. It is not possible to determine whether the concretion is the remains of an iron component. The flattened form of the underside of the calves, thighs and buttocks appears to have been contrived to facilitate the 'seating' of the figurine onto something. The angle between hams and calves is about 105°.

**10.** Fig. 3. Near King's Lynn, Norfolk; Type I, variant.

In private hands. Metal detector find from a site, about 5 miles east of King's Lynn, which also yielded a bronze rider figure from a horse-and-rider figurine (information kindly provided by Paul Murawski). Listed in Murawski 2003, 80, code I11-0109, where it is erroneously included in a section entitled 'Celtic figurines and fasteners', illustrated by a single photo (profile view) and described as 'Captive figure, 43 mm, surface a little ragged, but a very rare example.'

Height 43 mm.

The figurine appears to be substantially complete, though the metal, which is pitted, eroded and iron-stained, appears to have lost most, or all, of its original surface. The head and face are particularly badly affected, but the seemingly very simple, reduced form of hands and feet may also be a product of corrosion. The figure portrayed is an apparently naked man, seated or crouched and distinctly hunch-backed, bound by a rope or chain, which encircles and links his neck and wrists and then descends close in between the arms and legs down to the ankle binding. His hands, arms, legs and feet are pressed close together, with elbows on knees and clasped hands thrust forward in front of the chin. The angle between the hams and calves is approximately 90°. A perforation runs vertically through the figure, with openings through the head and buttocks, and intersects with a horizontal aperture linking the sub-circular opening between arm, leg and torso on both sides.

**11.** Figs 1, 2, 3, 8. London; Type II.

British Museum, Department of Prehistory and Europe, 1856, 7-1, 20. Part of the collection of over 5000 objects, mostly from London, purchased by the British Museum in 1856 from the antiquary Charles Roach Smith (1807-1890). Roach Smith began serious collecting in the mid 1830's 'during the progress of the recent extensive alterations made in the city of London'. Neither the precise place and date of discovery nor the context/finding circumstances of the figurine is known. Smith 1854, 8, n° 17; British Museum 1951, 53-4, n° 3, pl. XV, 3; Toynbee 1964, 120, pl. XXXII, d.

Height 34.2 mm. Head to bottom 29.2 mm.

Width 19 mm.

Maximum thickness (at shoulders) 12.8 mm.

Diameter of vertical perforation: at head 3.1 mm.

: at bottom 3.4 mm.

Weight 19.9 g. (including modern mounting rod).

Complete. The figurine is in good condition, with a stable olive-brown patina, only sparsely pitted and lightly accreted. It is well cast and carefully finished. In modern times a slender brass rod has been soldered to the underside of the feet for display purposes.

The figure is naturalistically portrayed within the limits of its size and form. It shows an apparently naked, crouched or seated man, with drawn-up haunches, bound with a rope or chain at neck, wrists and ankles. From front and back the torso is well-observed with realistically-depicted shoulders, waist and hips. The realism of the side views is sacrificed to the provision of a horizontal perforation. The head, disproportionately large, is carefully modelled, with pellet-like eyes in hollow sockets, a simple nose, small circular ears (one corroded away) and a strong chin. Corrosion obscures the region of the mouth. The hair, brushed back in straight lines from the forehead, finishes in a clear line just behind the crown, beyond which the back of the head is smooth indicating a shaved scalp. The flexed arms and legs, with elbows resting on raised knees, are both shown as one unit though in profile they are well modelled. The angle between hams and calves is approximately 65°. Corrosion has removed part of the surface of the forward-thrust clasped hands, but

simple incised finger divisions are visible. The feet are only rudimentarily shown and may be broken. A rope encircles the neck, extends forward to bind the wrists and runs free from the wrists to encircle the ankles. The twist of the rope is clearly depicted at neck, wrists and ankles, more schematically so on the intervening stretches.

A slender perforation that runs vertically through the back of the figure is of circular cross-section. It intersects with a horizontal perforation, also of circular cross-section, and with flanged openings, that runs from side to side. Both perforations appear to have been functional, but neither preserves any visible evidence of a fastening medium or of wear. On the underside, a slight ridge running between the hams from the opening of the perforation to the calves is likely to have had a functional (fastening) purpose.

**12. Fig. 3. Strasbourg (Argentorate), France. Type II.**

Location not known to the author. Presumably Musée Archéologique, Strasbourg. Reinach 1924, 287, n° 1 (with a drawing (un-scaled) after *Cahiers d'Alsace*, 1915, p. 659.

Reinach's single drawn profile view is sufficient to disclose that the figurine is of Type II and apparently complete. It shows a stylised, crouched man, apparently naked, with drawn-up haunches, bound with a rope or chain that encircles and links the neck, wrists and ankles. The head is disproportionately large, with apparently bearded face and long hair running down to the base of the neck. The legs and arms are flexed, elbows on knees, and the clasped hands thrust forward in front of the chin. The angle between hams and calves is approximately 70°. The opening of a vertical perforation may be seen on the top of the head, while the circular flanged opening of a horizontal perforation is clearly visible in the side of the figure.

**13. Fig. 3. Thonock, Lincolnshire; Type II.**

In private hands. Metal detector find from a site yielding much Late Iron Age and Roman material. Recorded through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, PAS n° NLM 2845.

Height 33.2 mm. Head to bottom 29 mm.

Width 19.4 mm.

Maximum thickness (at shoulders) 10.9 mm.

Diameter of vertical perforation: at head approximately 3 mm; at bottom approximately 4 mm.

Weight 10.98 g.

The figurine appears substantially complete, though hands and feet may be eroded. The figure is quite schematically rendered, though the form is well-observed within the limits of its size and function. It shows a seated or crouched man, probably bearded, with drawn-up haunches, bound with a rope or chain that encircles his neck, wrists and ankles. Of the linking rope only a small stub just above the ankle survives. The flexed legs and arms, with elbows on knees, are undivided and schematised, but the shoulders, waist, hips and buttocks are a little more realistically depicted. The angle between hams and calves is 70°. The slender perforation that runs vertically through the figure, with openings at head and buttocks, is of circular cross-section, as is the horizontal perforation that runs from side to side, with which it intersects.

**14. Fig. 3. Vienna (Vindobona), Austria; Type III.**

Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Inv. n° MV/SS LXX 10. Found in 1910 at Wien 3., Rudolfsplatz. No further finding details are recorded. Fleischer 1967, 151-152, n° 203 a, Taf. 109.

Height 40 mm.

Diameter of vertical and horizontal perforations, 4-5 mm.

The figurine is complete, but removal of the patina has

resulted in loss of the original surface. It shows a highly-stylised, tightly-bound, apparently naked male figure with a rather distressed expression and almost leonine appearance. The figure is seated or crouched, with clenched limbs, drawn-up haunches and disproportionately large head sunk down into the hunched shoulders. The up-turned face is framed by the bushy, wavy, mane-like hair, divided on the crown, which merges with a full ruff-like beard and thick drooping moustache. The forehead is low, the nose long and straight, the eyes carefully and expressively rendered with brows and drilled pupils, and the mouth partly open with fleshy lips. A rope or chain encircles the neck and wrists and descends between the shins to encircle the ankles. The feet, legs, arms and hands are pressed close together with elbows on knees and tiny, vestigial, hands secured immediately beneath the chin. The feet are rather more realistically shown with simple toe divisions. The angle between hams and calves is approximately 115°. The curving torso accommodates a vertical perforation, from neck to buttocks, which partially intersects a horizontal perforation linking the sub-circular opening enclosed by arm, leg and torso on both sides of the figure.

**15. Figs 1, 2, 3, 8. Unprovenanced, probably Britain; Type I.**

British Museum, Department of Prehistory and Europe, 1990, 10-4, 1. Purchased from Christies in 1990; included in their *Fine Antiquities* auction, Wednesday 11th July 1990, Lot 380, sale catalogue p. 91. No information forthcoming on provenance or finding circumstances, but probably from Britain.

Height 41.1 mm. Head to bottom 30.5 mm.

Width 32.5 mm.

Maximum thickness (at upper arms) 11.7 mm.

Diameter of vertical perforation: at top of back 6.4 mm; at bottom 6.2 mm.

Weight 32.4 g.

Complete, except for the feet. Breakage at the ankles appears to have occurred in antiquity, for the surviving stub has a smooth patinated surface. The figurine is in good condition with a stable grey-olive coloured patina, only sparsely pitted and lightly abraded on the back and lower legs. There is a small area of modern light chafing on the top of the head.

The figure is naturalistically and realistically portrayed except for the torso, which is extended unnaturally backwards giving a distinctly hunch-backed appearance. It depicts an apparently naked man, seated or crouched, with feet, legs, arms and hands clenched, and bound by a rope or chain at the neck, wrists and ankles. The head is carefully rendered, with prominent forehead, large ears, long nose, relatively deep-set eyes, plump jowly cheeks and a lightly down-turned mouth, which gives the face a rather mournful aspect. The hair, brushed back, is long, though receded from the temples, with a prominent tuft above the ears. The hands are more schematically depicted, though the thumbs are rendered and there are simple incised finger divisions. The flexed arms, with elbows resting on thighs, are not otherwise differentiated. A rope encircles the neck, extends forwards to encircle the wrists and is then depicted close in between the underside of the forearms, whence it descends to the top of the forward part of the thighs and continues downwards between knees and shins to the ankles. The twist of the rope is most clearly visible at the neck and between the forearms. The angle between hams and calves is about 110°.

The perforation that runs vertically through the back of the figure is of approximately circular cross-section. At the base a slight rebate at the junction with the underside of the thighs is clearly a functional feature related to the manner in which the object was attached. The interior of the perforation preserves a light soil coating over the patinated metal, but there is no trace of any organic or inorganic component. The vertical perforation

partially intersects the horizontal space that links the irregularly-shaped opening between arm, leg and torso on both sides of the figure. While it is evident that the vertical perforation was functional there is no clear evidence for use of the horizontal space.

**16.** Fig. 3. Unprovenanced, probably Britain; Type II.

Present location unknown, presumably in private hands. Place and circumstances of discovery not known, but likely to have been found in Britain with a metal detector. Included in Bonhams *Antiquities* auction, Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 1995, Lot 133. The entry in the sale catalogue (p. 25, including photo) describes the object as ‘A Romano-Celtic bronze fitting of a manacled prisoner, his body pierced, 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, 1 in. (2.5 cm.).’

Height approximately 25 mm.

A broken example, lacking the feet, ankles and lower legs. A highly stylised and rudimentarily made figurine, showing a seated or crouched man, his arms flexed, with elbows on knees, bound by a rope or chain, its twist simply and clearly depicted, which encircles his neck and stretches forward to bind his projecting clasped hands at the wrists. Only the stub of the rope survives as it descends from the wrists towards the (now missing) ankles. Few details of the face can be discerned, but the hair appears to be brushed back in straight lines from the forehead and to finish quite high up on the back of the head. A marked flattening of the top of the head discloses the opening of a perforation that ran vertically through the figure’s torso and intersected with the horizontal perforation linking the ovoid opening enclosed by arm, leg and torso on both sides of the figure.

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