**Taught MA - Epigraphy**

**Seminar – ‘*Instrumentum domesticum*’**

This week we shall be looking at the unglamorous side of epigraphy, texts that are often highly abbreviated, and sometimes mass manufactured. Epigraphers and archaeologists commonly use the term *instrumentum domesticum* to refer to a whole range of portable objects with inscriptions on them. According to Roman law, the phrase refers to any item essential for activities linked with production (*Digest* 33.7). For example, a farm’s *instrumentum* includes things like tools (ploughs, mattocks, hoes), working-animals (oxen), and personnel (stewards, overseers). The word *instrumentum* is used in opposition to *ornamenta*: *instrumentum* are essential, whereas the latter are purely for pleasure.The *instrumentum* can equally be part of a bathhouse, farm, or home.

The following types of artefact are included in *CIL* XV, the volume devoted to *instrumenta*: stamps and painted inscriptions upon *amphorae*, stamps on bricks, tiles, *dolia* (large pottery storage vessels, usually embedded in the ground), and other building materials and transport containers, lamps, pottery table- and kitchenware, glassware, metal objects (whether gold, silver, bronze, iron, pewter, or lead), seals, signet-rings, and gems. The fascicles of *RIB* II have an even wider range of objects from Roman Britain, including oculist stamps, and even a set of panpipes. In general, the objects can be divided into two main categories, namely, vessels for storing or transporting other goods (such as *amphorae*, *dolia*, and wooden barrels), and objects that exist in their own right (such as fine pottery, bricks and tiles, and lead ingots). It excludes (?rightly?) writing on coins, writing-tablets, *ostraka* (sherds of pottery), papyrus, and parchment. The phrase does not exclusively refer to inscribed objects, but in cases where we find inscriptions, they can relate to production, distribution, and ownership.

This week we shall be considering what the functions of these inscriptions are, and whether there are any similarities in the use of writing on different types of objects. Is *instrumentum domesticum* a useful category to think with? Is graffiti a useful term, and is it helpful to define graffiti as texts written on surfaces not designed for writing? Are there other ways of distinguishing graffiti from other types of text (eg in ink, stamped)? What functions are fulfilled by the inscriptions? Is there any chronological continuity between the Greek and Roman worlds? Such questions have been rigorously debated in the last couple of decades, and the debate continues.

Each student should present a summary of the physical characteristics of the type of object you have chosen, the typical kinds of inscriptions found on them and their medium (eg whether stamped or painted), and the function(s) of writing on the objects (consider eg at what stage of the object’s life the inscription is created). Please illustrate your discussion with examples of individual inscriptions. We shall end with a discussion of the extent to which we can extrapolate functions of inscriptions between different types of object.

**Basic reading for all:**

\*Pucci, G. (2001) ‘Inscribed *instrumentum* and the ancient economy’, in Bodel, J., ed.,

*Epigraphic Evidence* 137-52

McLean, B.H. (2002) *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman*

*Periods* pp.200-14

\*Cooley, A.E. (2012) *Cambridge Manual of Latin Epigraphy*

Greene, K. (1986) *The archaeology of the Roman Economy* [DG 85.G7]

Lassère, J-M. (2007, 2nd edn) *Manuel d’épigraphie romaine* vol. I pp. 440-55

\*Harris, W.V., ed. (1993) *The inscribed economy* [HC 39.I57 oversize]

**Supplementary reading:**

Dip into some of the following to find examples of your category of object:

* **Rome/Italy:**

*CIL* XV

* **Pompeii:**

Ciarallo, A. and De Carolis, E., eds (1999) *Pompeii. Life in a Roman Town* (Electa,

Milan) [DG 70.P7]

Claridge, A. and Ward-Perkins, J.B. *Pompeii AD 79* [ N 5769.R6]

Cooley, AE and Cooley, MGL (2004) *Pompeii A Sourcebook*

* **Britain:**

*RIB* Vol. 2 [CN 590.C6]

**1. Lead water pipes (*fistulae*)**

What information is contained on lead pipes? Why are some stamped, but not others? Does the stamp relate to the process of manufacturing the pipe, property ownership, or ownership of water rights? Do the stamps ever go beyond a purely functional purpose?

Bruun, C. (1991) *The Water Supply of Ancient Rome* [TD 216.B7]

Bruun, C. (2000) ‘Senatorial owners of what?’ *JRA* 13: 498-506

Bruun, C. (2010) ‘Onomastics, social history and Roman lead pipes’, *Arctos* 44 [@academia.edu]

Bruun, C. (2012) ‘Stallianus, a Plumber from Pompeii (and Other Remarks on Pompeian Lead Pipes)’ *Phoenix* 66: 145ff

Bruun, C. (2010) ‘Instrumentum domesticum e storia romana: le fistule iscritte di Campania’, in ed. L. Chioffi, *La Mediterranea e la storia*

**2. Brick and tile stamps**

Why were bricks and tiles stamped? Why are some stamped, but not others? How can we account for the chronological distribution of stamps? Are they purely relevant to the internal demands of the brick/tile industry? Do they ever act as a quality guarantee?

**General studies**

Adam, J-P. (1994) *Roman Building: materials and techniques*

Anderson, J. (1991) ***The Thomas Ashby Collection of Roman brick stamps in the***

***American Academy in Rome* – esp. intro**

@Bloch, H. (1947) ‘The Roman Brick-Stamps not Published in Volume XV 1 of the

"Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum"’, *HSCPhil* 56: 1-128

Bodel, J. (1983) *Roman Brick Stamps in the Kelsey Museum* (google book) – esp. intro

Harris, W.V., ed. (1993) *The inscribed economy* [HC 39.I57 oversize]

Peacock, D. (1982) *Pottery in the Roman World*

McWhirr, A. (1979)***Roman brick and tile: studies in manufacture, distribution, and use***

***in the Western Empire***

@Mango, C. (1950) ‘Byzantine brick stamps’, *AJA* 54.1: 19-27

@Purcell, N. review article in *JRS* (1981) 214-15

**Specific examples**

@Betts, I. (1995) ‘Procuratorial tile stamps from London’, *Britannia* 26: 207-29

@Bloch, H. (1959) ‘The Serapeum of Ostia and the Brick-Stamps of 123 A. D. A New

Landmark in the History of Roman Architecture’ *AJA* 63.3.: 225-4-

@Kurzmann, R. (2005) ‘Soldier, civilian, and military brick production’, *OJA* 24.4: 405-

14

**3. Terracotta lamps**

Why were lamps stamped? Do the stamps relate to production or distribution? Are the result of ‘branch-offices’?

Harris, W.V. (1980) ‘Roman Terracotta Lamps: The Organization of an Industry’ *JRS* 70:

126-45

Harris, W.V., ed. (1993) *The inscribed economy* [HC 39.I57 oversize]

**Excavated samples:**

@Broneer, O. (1930) ‘Terracotta lamps’ *Corinth* 4.2

@Davidson, G.R. et al. (1943) ‘Small objects from the Pnyx 1’, *Hesperia Supplement* 7:

1-172 (esp 40ff)

@Howland, R.H. (1958) ‘Greek Lamps and Their Survivals’ *Athenian Agora* 4

@Perlzweig, J. (1961) ‘Lamps of the Roman Period: First to Seventh Century after

Christ’ *Athenian Agora* 7

**4. Fineware (incl. *terra sigillata*)**

Look out for ‘craftsmen’s signatures’+ stamped inscriptions relating to production of the object. Leave aside the use of text as labels within images.

Harris, W.V., ed. (1993) *The inscribed economy* [HC 39.I57 oversize]

Peacock, D. (1982) *Pottery in the Roman World*

**Excavated samples/ collections:**

Rotroff, S.I. (1991) ‘Attic West Slope Vase Painting’, *Hesperia* 60: 59-102

Brown, A.C. (1968) *Catalogue of Italian terra sigillata in the Ashmolean Museum*

[NK 3850.A8]

Oswald, F. (1931) ***Index of potters' stamps on terra sigillata "Samian ware”***

**[**NK 3850.O8**]**

@Atkinson, D. (1914) ‘A hoard of Samian ware from Pompeii’, *JRS* 4: 27-64

@*The Athenian Agora* vol. 32 (2008) *Roman Pottery – Fine-ware imports*

**5. Amphorae**

Find out the difference between *tituli picti* and stamps, in terms of their form and content.

Harris, W.V., ed. (1993) *The inscribed economy* [HC 39.I57 oversize]

Peacock, D. (1982) *Pottery in the Roman World*

Paterson, J. (1982) ‘“Salvation from the sea”: amphorae and trade in the Roman West’,

*JRS* 72: 146-57

@Theodore Pena, J. (2007) *Roman Pottery in the Archaeological Record*

**Excavated samples:**

@Grace, V.R. (1956) ‘Stamped wine jar fragments’, *Hesperia Supplement* 10 *Small*

*Objects from the Pnyx*: 2: 113-270

**Blázquez, J.M., et al. (1992) *Excavaciones arqueológicas en el Monte Testaccio***

***(Roma): memoria campañia 1989* [**DG 66.E9]

**@Blázquez, J.M. (1992) 'The latest work on the export of Baetican olive oil to Rome and**

**the army’, *G&R* 39.2: 173-88**

Whitbread, I.K. (1995) *Greek transport amphorae* [NK 4650.A6]