More from the Romano-British poets? A possible metrical inscription from East Farleigh, Kent

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Abstract

A four-line inscription in Old Roman Cursive on a pot base found in excavations in East Farleigh, Kent, in 2010 appears to be written (at least in part) in metre and has close textual similarities with examples from Binchester, County Durham. We describe the new text and then offer some thoughts about the possible relationship of these British texts to extant Latin verse and consider how to interpret the Kentish piece in context. Although much remains uncertain in our understanding of the text, it is a significant addition to our Romano-British corpus.
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In Roman times Britain had as many people as at its peak in the Middle Ages. For four centuries it was an integral part of a single political system that stretched from Turkey to Portugal and from the Red Sea to the Tyne and beyond. Its involvement with Rome started long before the Conquest launched by the Emperor Claudius in AD 43, and it continued to be a part of the Roman world for some time after the final break with Roman rule. ALEXANDER FLEMING

Having witnessed the death of many soldiers from septicemia resulting from infected wounds, after the war Fleming searched for anti-bacterial agents. Unfortunately antiseptics killed the patients' immunological defences than they killed the invading bacteria. Fleming proceeded to isolate an extract from the mouldy bread, correctly identified it as being from the Penicillium genus, and therefore named the agent penicillin. Fleming published his in 1929 in the British Journal of Experimental Pathology, but little attention was paid to his article. Fleming continued his, but found that cultivating penicillium was quite difficult, and that after growing the mould, it was even more difficult to isolate the antibiotic agent. Many runic inscriptions have been preserved on weapons, coins, amulets, tombstones, rings, various cross fragments. Some runic insertions occur in OE manuscripts written in Latin characters. OE poetry constitutes a most precious literary relic and quite a substantial portion of the records in the vernacular. All in all we have about 30,000 lines of OE verse from many poets of some three centuries. The names of the poets are unknown except Cædmon and Cynewulf, two early Northumbrian authors. OE poetry is mainly restricted to three subjects: heroic, religious and lyrical. It is believed that many OE poems, especially those dealing with heroic subjects, were composed a long time before they were written down; they were handed down from generation to generation in oral form.