

The Cult of Sulis-Minerva at Bath:

The Religious Ritual of the Patron Goddess at Bath.



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Abstract.

The Roman City of Bath, also known as *Aqua Sulis*, lies in the modern British county of Somerset in the south-east of England. During the Roman occupation of ancient Britain, Bath became a significant Roman town centred on a large religious complex. As the Roman city lies underneath the modern city Bath, excavation of both the temple complex has been difficult. To add further problems, Bath was only mentioned in one ancient source, Solinus. Consequently, there is a large gap in the knowledge we have about Roman Bath and its patron goddess. As such a large Romano-Celtic temple complex, Sulis' cult has important contributions to religion in Roman Britain. Subsequently, studying and understanding Sulis' cult is important to the study of Roman Britain. This thesis discusses features of Sulis' cult and what this may tell us about the goddess's attributes as well as how her cult functioned.

The large Romano-Celtic temple was functional from c.65 to c.400 CE. However, there is evidence which would suggest that Sulis was worshipped by the ancient Britons before the Romans had a permanent presence in Britain. This thesis will place Roman Bath within the wider context of Romano-British history, outlining how it functioned through architecture and evidence for the temple's gradual decline.

Scholarship has agreed that Sulis is a Celtic deity who was worshipped by the Celts before the Roman arrived in Britain. Through Roman religious sensibilities, Sulis was conflated with the Roman goddess Minerva. Most of the physical remains at Bath are architectural features, votive offerings and altars. Many links have been drawn between Sulis and her thermal spring. For example, Sulis-Minerva has been regarded as an important healing divinity and her temple complex a place people can go for healing. This thesis will discuss Sulis and her connection to the goddess Minerva as well as what the goddess's relationship was to the Romans and Britons.

Attention has been drawn to a large cache of 130 Latin *defixiones*, or curse tablets, discovered in Sulis spring. The curses most commonly beseech Sulis to hunt down a culprit and punish them. The *defixiones* constitute an important source of evidence regarding Sulis' attributes. There has been some debate as to the nature of these curse tablets as there have been suggestions that they read more as 'prayers for justice'. This thesis will explore the idea that the tablets acted as a medium for a devotee to ask the goddess for retribution against a perceived wrong. A comparison will be drawn between Bath's curse tablets and other forms of Roman prayers comparing the two. As of now, the *defixiones* contribute a large portion of evidence towards religious life at Bath.

Sulis represents hybridization between two ancient civilizations. On the one hand, Sulis had strong roots to ancient British religion but after Roman occupation her cult became predominantly Roman in form. I will discuss the remaining aspects of Celtic religion at Bath, such as in the Gorgon pediment, and how this was changed under Roman rule.

Introduction

The city of Bath, or *Aquae Sulis* in Latin, is one that has been occupied constantly throughout its existence. During the Roman occupation of ancient Britain, Bath became an important Roman town centred on a large religious complex. Modern Bath lies in the southwest of Britain in the county of Somerset. Today, a large modern town is built where the ancient city once sat. As one of Britain's only thermal hotspots, Bath has continued to draw people to its modern spa complex and still continues to be used today. At the heart of Bath was the temple of the goddess Sulis Minerva. As a goddess, Sulis is mysterious. Bath and its patron goddess do not appear in ancient literature, making the study of the goddess and her temple complex difficult. The only evidence available to scholars has been the physical evidence left behind at the Roman temple. However, the presence of the modern city of Bath has made excavation of the ancient city problematic. Even so, the size of Bath and the intricacy of Sulis' large temple complex highlights a place that was very important to the Britons and the Romans living in Bath. The large Romano-Celtic temple of Sulis Minerva was elaborately decorated and functioned from c.65 CE- c.400 CE. The temple's aggrandizement points to a religious complex that was popular as well as wealthy. Consequently, it is peculiar that we know so little about Bath and the goddess that resided there. As such a prominent Romano-British city, Bath is important in the study of Roman Britain. Most physical remains at Bath are architectural features, votive offerings and altars. Many links have been drawn between Sulis and her hot spring. As hot springs were important places of healing in the ancient world, it has been suggested that Sulis acted as a healer through the properties of her spring.¹

¹ Green (1995) 93.

Bath and Sulis' cult has been the focus of large amounts of scholarship. However, conclusions have been limited by a lack of definitive evidence. There are still many gaps in scholarship about the goddess Sulis Minerva. A lack of evidence has led to speculation about the goddess Sulis and her cult. Although Barry Cunliffe has compiled a comprehensive archaeological report on Bath in his two volumes of *The Temple of Minerva Sulis at Bath*,² most scholarship such as Miranda Green has tended to focus on only a few aspects of Sulis' cult such as the Gorgon pediment or Bath's hot springs. Most scholarship has agreed that Sulis is a prominently Celtic deity who was worshipped by the Celts before the Romans occupied Britain.³ Through her connection to the thermal hot springs, scholars such as Miranda Green have emphasized an important healing aspect of Sulis' cult at Bath.⁴

Furthermore, Cunliffe has the most detailed discussion of Bath's *defixiones* in his publication on the region's archaeology.⁵ Cunliffe's work focuses on all aspects of the *defixiones* with translations and notations considering the inscribed curses. Aside from Cunliffe's consideration, most scholarship regarding Bath is made within a larger discussion of Bath and the goddess Sulis. However, Henk Versnel uses Bath's *defixiones* as examples concerning 'prayers of justice' in the ancient world. Versnel provides an alternative consideration as to the working of *defixiones* in the ancient world. As of yet, there is very little scholarship that specifically discusses Sulis and her *defixiones*. The *defixiones* constitute an important source of information regarding Sulis' divine attributes. The *defixiones* are small inscribed pieces of thin pewter and lead. The curses most commonly beseech Sulis to hunt down a specific culprit and punish them. Interestingly, the curses are commonly made in response to the theft

² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985), Cunliffe (1988).

³ Cunliffe (1988), Green (1996), Mattingly (2006), Henig (2004).

⁴ Green (1991) 20.

⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 59-269.

of an item. Although Bath curse tablets share similarities with curse tablets from around the ancient world, they also differ in a number of ways. In most cases a curse tablet is employed to move the odds of a particular event such as sport into one's favour (at the expense of another person) through supernatural means.

Bath's *defixiones* have led to much speculation about Sulis' attributes as a goddess. The sheer number of tablets found in the spring indicates that the use of *defixiones* was an important part of Sulis' cult. Importantly, Bath is currently one of only two sites which have yielded such a large number of curse tablets, with the other being Uley. Because of the abnormalities of Bath's *defixiones*, alternative considerations have been given to the curse tablets. Scholars such as Versnel have suggested that the curses are actually a form of 'prayer for justice.' A devotee can approach Sulis and ask her for restitution for theft. This contrasts greatly with the curse tablets from the greater ancient world. *Defixiones* such as the ones found at Bath are made in retaliation to a perceived wrong; the *defixiones*' dedicators are looking for restitution through the goddess. The tablets are important pieces of evidence when studying an ambiguous goddess such as Sulis. Furthermore, these forms of prayers are unique to ancient Britain. As of yet, there are no *defixiones* from England that match their Mediterranean cousins. This thesis will seek to explain the goddess Sulis-Minerva's role as deity within Romano-British religion and her importance within Bath's sacred temple complex. I will discuss Sulis' divine attributes through the predominantly material remains and emphasize her role as a judicial deity, capable of crippling her devotee's enemies while also being a powerful healing force due to her sacred spring. This thesis will also examine sulis' identity as both a Roman and British deity.

In my first chapter, I will discuss the site of Bath and place it within a historical context. Currently, we are not able to put a certain date on Bath and when it reached its most prominent period as a Roman temple complex. I will explain how the city Bath functioned and when it was at its most active. I will discuss Bath's role in Roman Britain and what kind of town Bath was. I will examine what Bath has in common with other Roman towns as well as what makes it unique. Furthermore, by examining other parts of Bath we can place a rough date on the deposition of the temple's *defixiones*. The palaeography of the *defixiones* as well as coin hoards place the deposition of Bath's *defixiones* in the third and fourth century CE. I will also discuss when and how Bath ceased to function as a Roman temple complex. Several archaeological finds help to outline Bath's derelictions temple. It is likely that Bath was affected by the same collapse as other parts of the ancient world. Consequently, Bath had a short life span from the height of its power to when it ended.

My second chapter is a study of Bath's *defixiones*. I will outline what constitutes a typical curse tablet in the ancient world and how they evolved and functioned. I will compare Bath's own *defixiones* to those from the ancient Mediterranean and talk about their similarities and differences. Furthermore, I will explain the place of *defixiones* in ancient Britain and how they match up with Bath's own curse tablets. Through the variances in Bath's *defixiones* I will discuss the possibility of them being 'prayers for justice', as Versnel contended. This chapter will also discuss Roman prayer, how it is used and how this is similar to the language on Bath's *defixiones*. Through discussing prayer, I will highlight the thin line between 'magic' and religion in the ancient world. This chapter will highlight the judicial nature of the *defixiones* and how this reflects the relationship between Sulis and her devotees. I will also discuss the *defixiones* as a medium to communicate with Sulis in her spring. Through the *defixiones*, Sulis likely acted as a form of supernatural law enforcement. Furthermore, this

chapter will also discuss the dedicators, or *defigentes*, of the curse tablets. It is likely that they were lower class native Britons due to the nomenclature inscribed on the tablets. Bath's *defixiones* also provide a good example of 'Vulgar Latin' which also highlights the dedicators of Bath's curse tablets. This chapter will outline characteristics of Sulis and why the curse tablets are important to her cult. The sheer number of curse tablets tells us that they occupied an important position in Sulis' cult.

My third chapter explores Sulis as a goddess. This chapter will examine Sulis' divine attributes and her role as the patron goddess of Bath. I will discuss the role of religion in Britain, what religion was like and how this changed under Roman rule. I will discuss the native British as well as the Roman aspects of Sulis' cult. This chapter will explain Sulis' original role as a British deity and how this changed once the Romans took control of her cult. As Sulis was joined with the Roman Minerva a portion of this chapter will explore Sulis' identity as Minerva and evidence concerning Sulis' role as Minerva. For example, the gorgon pediment boasts several iconographic features which can be related to Minerva. Furthermore, most inscriptions identify the goddess as 'Sulis-Minerva.' This chapter will explore evidence at Bath which may reveal potential attributes which Sulis may have possessed. Bath's temple was full of architectural features which may illuminate other divine functions the goddess may have possessed. It is most likely that Sulis' temple functioned in a typical Roman way. I will discuss how Sulis' temple functioned, as well as how rituals were carried out at the temple. This chapter will outline the layout of Sulis' temple complex and how it evolved over time, reflecting the growing popularity of Bath and Sulis' cult. The temple's layout is also suggestive as to how Sulis' cult would have operated.

The goddess Sulis-Minerva was clearly important to the region of Bath as emphasized by her large temple complex. There is very little scholarship which is solely written as a discussion of Bath and its patron goddess. Due a lack of primary literature it is very difficult to draw conclusions about Sulis and her temple. However, Bath is an important example of a large Romano-Celtic temple complex in Britain. Furthermore, Bath's *defixiones* are key examples of how curse tablets can be diverse. The tablets are significant evidence reflecting the relationship between mortal and god in Britain. As other parts of the ancient world do not have *defixiones* such as these, it is important to further study Britain's examples. As a goddess who held such a prominent position, to further study the goddess Sulis-Minerva will help us to understand religion in ancient Britain more fully.

Chapter 1: Bath and Sulis' Temple Complex

As a site, Bath is difficult to place within a historical context. A large majority of Roman Bath lies underneath the modern city, making the study of activities at Roman Bath difficult. There is also very little evidence regarding Bath in ancient literature. Thus, placing Bath within a chronological context is also difficult. Indicators such as pottery sherds and items listed as stolen on the *defixiones* provide evidence as to how city life in Bath functioned aside from the religious. However, there are clues that can be used to outline how the temple of Sulis-Minerva and the city of Bath functioned when the temple was at its height and began to collapse. Celtic coinage would suggest that Sulis had been worshipped at Bath since the British Iron Age.⁶ Evidence such as temple architecture would suggest that Bath's popularity began to climb during the mid-2nd century CE; this popularity reached its peak during the mid-4th century CE.⁷ Bath's prominence as a Roman temple complex was brief in comparison to others in the ancient world and by the 5th century Bath had ceased to function as a Roman temple complex. In this chapter, I will outline a historical context for the Roman city of Bath. Firstly, I discuss Bath's possible function as a small Roman town and how this is different from other parts of the ancient world. I outline historical events in Roman Britain that may have affected the city's growth and then its fast decline. I also discuss points of physical evidence that highlight certain points in Bath's history, such as, the palaeography of Bath's *defixiones* and the presence of pottery and pewter at Bath. It is likely that Bath's fall was structured similarly to other Romano-British cities. As a result, I will prove that Bath had an active temple complex from c. 65 CE-C. 400 CE and prove that although Bath becomes prominent fast, its popularity as a temple complex had a short life span.

⁶ Green (1986) 155.

⁷ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 179.

The History of *Aquae Sulis*.

If c.175 CE marks the beginning of the deposition of *defixiones* at Bath, then it is consistent with the beginning of Bath's second period and the aggrandizement of the temple complex.⁸ Bath's second period is dated to the late second or early third century, corresponding consistently with Tomlin's dates for the Old Roman Cursive *defixiones* in Bath. Importantly, Bath's sacred spring became vaulted and sealed during this period.⁹ The establishment of the chamber represented a religious shift in Sulis' temple and an increase in Romanization. The Romans were generally religiously tolerant towards conquered peoples provided they were not closed groups or societies.¹⁰ Consequently, under Rome ancient Britain was hugely diverse. For example, Britain retained the majority of its native gods such as Coventina and Nodens.¹¹ The number of Celtic deities associated with bodies of water was numerous. For example, the goddess Coventina was also worshipped through a cistern.¹² Similarly to that of Sulis, Coventina's cistern was the centre of her shrine.¹³ However, Coventina's shrine was open air as opposed to vaulted.¹⁴ Goddesses such as Sequana and Sirona also occupied similar shrines built around sacred springs.¹⁵ However, Sulis' spring was unique in its vaulted chamber. Although it is likely the inclusion of the vault reflected a change in Sulis' cult it may also simply be that Sulis was more popular and therefore had more benefactors. Sulis' vaulted spring may also have been a reflection of Bath's growing wealth. Sulis' spring received its roof at the same time the temple complex underwent its growth during the

⁸ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 65.

⁹ For my discussion on restrictions placed on Sulis' spring see chapter 3.

¹⁰ Salway (1981) 665.

¹¹ Mattingly (2006) 215.

¹² Coventina's shrine was not on the same scale as Sulis' own shrine.

¹³ Aldhouse-Green (2004) 206.

¹⁴ Allason-Jones (1996) 107.

¹⁵ Lewis (1966) 48.

temple's second phase.¹⁶ Similarly to Sulis, goddesses such as Coventina retain their identities as Celtic deities.¹⁷ However, unlike Sulis they were not equated with Roman deities such as Minerva. British water goddesses were typically portrayed as nymphs in keeping with their aquatic associations. Although Coventina, Sequana and Sirona all receive a large quantity of votive offerings, Sulis is the only 'water' goddess who includes *defixiones* in her cult.

Furthermore, under Rome Britain developed plenty of purely Classical cults, non-British cults: an example appears in Chichester with an inscription dedicated to Minerva and Neptune.¹⁸ Bath has similar dedications to Classical gods such as Diana and Mercury.¹⁹ Of all the Classical gods Mercury appeared to be the most popular amongst the Britons.²⁰ Furthermore, eastern gods also became popular in Britain especially towards the second and third centuries CE.²¹ The advent of *defixiones* may represent a shift in how Sulis was worshipped, evolving from a patron healing spirit of a spring to a goddess who responds to and answers curses, as the dedication of curse tablets became common practice.²²

The second period of Bath's expansion has been dated to the second century CE. Periods of little resistance from Britain's native population helped with the Romanization of Britain. Romanization would have allowed for Roman buildings such as the Romano-Celtic temple to be built in Britain's Roman cities. In addition, Romanization would have helped facilitate the

¹⁶ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 178.

¹⁷ Aldhouse-Green (2004) 206.

¹⁸ Salway (1981) 666.

¹⁹ Although Minerva is worshipped at Bath, she is always worshipped in conflation with Sulis.

²⁰ Green (1986) 36.

²¹ Salway (1981) 667.

²² Roman religion in Britain will be further discussed in chapter 3.

spread of Roman religion easily incorporating Roman religion and culture into Britain's southeast region.

By the second century CE, southern England was more settled than its northern counterpart was. The distribution of Romano-Celtic temples in England shows a large congregation of temples in Britain's south (fig. 1). Furthermore, Romano-Celtic temples rarely appear within Roman Britain's militarized zone in northern Britain.²³ Colin Haselgrove notes that the distribution of religious centres in England is due to political centralization, with separate groups of Britons unified under Roman rule.²⁴ Before Roman rule, Britons lived in groups who were distinct from one another. Within ancient Britain the Celts lived in regional groupings instead of being unified as a country.²⁵ However, under Roman rule client kingship was promoted in Britain to further Roman ambitions. Roman client kingship meant that previously separate groups of people became unified under Roman rule. As South East Britain was closest to the continent, it was the first to be brought under Roman control and therefore the first to become politically centralized by Rome. It is important to note that there is no formal date for a 'Romanized' Britain. The process of fusion between Celtic and Roman religion was gradual and occurred over time. The Celts had been exposed to Mediterranean culture before the Roman invasion by Caesar in 55 BCE.²⁶ However, the first great upheaval of British culture came with Claudius' invasion in 43 CE.

Ancient Britain became more peaceful following the *Iceni* rebellion led by Boudicca in c.60 CE as the Romans consolidated their territory rather than expanding to the north. After this

²³ Mattingly (2011) 225.

²⁴ Haselgrove (2004) 24.

²⁵ Mattingly (2006) 51.

²⁶ Mattingly (2006) 47.

period, emphasis was placed on consolidating already conquered land rather than expanding Roman territory north. The years following Boudicca's rebellion saw Bath's first period of construction in c.69 CE.

David Mattingly notes that regions under British rule tend to display similarities and continuities.²⁷ Continuity is reflected in Britain's south-east region with the distribution of temples. The presence of public amenities such as temples reflects peace in a region as Romanized towns could be constructed without interruption from native British rebellions. The second century CE was a relatively peaceful time in Roman Britain. Mattingly notes that the gaps in primary evidence regarding Roman Britain during this period reflect the lack of unrest in Roman Britain, noting that problems during Hadrian's reign were confined to 117-120 CE.²⁸ Warfare between Britons and Rome during this time was periodic and in short bursts rather than covering decades. Hadrian's Wall separated the highly Romanised southern region of Britain from the wild north. Consequently, there was little development of Roman temples and public buildings north of Hadrian's Wall.

Small-inscribed altars seemed to be preferred in England's northern areas, suggesting that the army worshipped in ways different to civilians.²⁹ The mobile nature of the Roman Army meant that it was hard to establish a permanent cult site for worshipping their deities. Small altars were a quick way to worship one's god.³⁰ It was also common for the Roman army to establish portable altars. Although sacrificial altars were commonly permanent, for a group constantly moving a portable altar would be more convenient. A portable altar may appear in

²⁷ Mattingly (2006) 128.

²⁸ Mattingly (2006) 116.

²⁹ Mattingly (2011) 231.

³⁰ Mattingly (2006) 215.

the form of a small metal tripod.³¹ As there were few settled Romano-British towns in Northern England, portable altars explain why there is less evidence for Roman religious practice in England's northern regions. Britain was slow to urbanize compared to other parts of the ancient world. Unlike other Roman provinces, urbanism was not well established and there was no clear administrative system to adapt under Roman rule.³²

The height of urbanization occurred in Britain during the second century CE.³³ The spread of temple complexes in Britain matches that of urbanization. Under Roman rule, major towns fell under three categories: *coloniae*, *municipia* and *civitates*.³⁴ However, although Roman towns were developing in Britain, their development had started late. Consequently, British towns never reached the size of other Roman towns such as Pompeii, Herculaneum or Ostia.³⁵ *Coloniae* were towns of Roman citizens founded on conquered territory for military veterans. *Municipia* were also important towns under Roman rule; ex-magistrates here had the right to acquire citizenship.³⁶ The *civitates* were chief towns of a distinct people; these were defined ethnically and geographically. Although they were of lower status to other towns, they fulfilled the functions of a local government and stimulated the local economy.³⁷ There were also small towns which were administratively dependent on a *colonia*, *municipium* or *civitas* centre. Britain's smaller towns tended to have a more individual function. For example, a small town may have been a site dedicated exclusively to producing pottery. Small settlements could also be religious centres.³⁸ In addition, the native elite in

³¹ Ekroth (2009) 82.

³² Mattingly (2006) 255.

³³ Jones (2004) 187.

³⁴ Salway (1981) 574

³⁵ Reece (1980) 78.

³⁶ Salway (1981) 112.

³⁷ Webster (1980) 20.

³⁸ Mattingly (2006) 286.

Britain were encouraged to contribute to Britain's Romanization. Tacitus notes that when Romanizing the Britons the general Agricola would, 'adiuvare publice, ut temple fora domos extruerent', 'assist communities, to erect temples, market-places, houses.' (Tacitus. *Agricola* 21).

Bath, however, is difficult to place into one of these categories. As Roman Bath lies beneath modern Bath, discerning Bath's function in Roman Britain aside from the religious can be challenging. From what current evidence suggests, Bath was a small town settlement with a specifically religious function. Mattingly notes that most 'small towns' had a very specific function; this function could be specifically economic or religious.³⁹ From current evidence, Bath lacked urban aspects that made up larger town complexes, such as the public amenities of fora, administrative centres, and workshops that typified large Roman towns.⁴⁰ In typical Roman urbanism, the forum with appendant buildings constituted the city centre. Flanking the forum is usually a range of other civic buildings, such as markets, law courts, public baths and temples.⁴¹ Notably, the roads in Roman towns were organized around buildings. Roman cities were generally aligned on a rectangular grid.⁴² Bath also had a formal street grid. These settlements can often have multiple temple complexes. Richard Brilliant notes that Roman streets were organized through a network of major and minor streets intersecting at right angles with quadrangular blocks of *insulae*, apartments.⁴³

³⁹ Mattingly (2006) 286.

⁴⁰ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 10.

⁴¹ Brilliant (1974) 67.

⁴² Brilliant (1974) 58.

⁴³ Brilliant (1974) 59.

Michael Jones states that a typical Romano-British city was organized into settlements of about fifteen hectares.⁴⁴ These cities often have a variety of building types housing corporate activity and industrial production. Typically, a large Romano-British city contained at least one public amenity. When looking at the distribution of cities in Britain, most large towns (*coloniae* or *civitates*) commonly have two or three public buildings; these are commonly fora, basilica complexes, theatres and bathhouses (fig. 2). The town of Viroconium Cornoviorum provides a good example of how a Roman town was laid out (fig. 3).⁴⁵ Viroconium exemplified the organized town layout with a road system separating the city into districts, showing the city's planning. In addition, it has many of the public buildings which are associated with a Romano-Celtic town. It potentially has two fora with one lying adjacent to a bathing complex. Furthermore, there are four temple complexes and an amphitheatre. Similarly, to most Roman towns, Viroconium's public amenities all lie at the centre of the city. The forum and bathing complexes lie adjacent to each other at the city centre. The city was also divided into quadrants similar to those found in more traditional Roman cities. In addition, the city of Londinium provides a good comparison to Viroconium (fig. 4).⁴⁶ Similarly to Viroconium, the city of Londinium was also divided into separate quadrants with public amenities built near the centre.

Unlike the cities of Viroconium and Londinium, it is likely that Bath fell into the category of 'smaller towns' with specific functions. Consequently, Bath's city plan differed from the layout of larger cities such as Viroconium and Londinium. For example, Bath had a central religious focus as a town. Barry Burnham notes that urban growth in Roman towns can be

⁴⁴ Jones (2004) 164.

⁴⁵ Jones (2004) 174.

⁴⁶ Mattingly (2006) 273.

distinguished by the presence of a central area.⁴⁷ Traditionally, the forum and basilica lie at the centre of a Roman town. However, in small Romano-British towns this does not seem to be the case.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, Bath did have public amenities in the form of its public bathing complexes, the largest of which lay adjacent to the temple complex. Yet, as with many ‘small towns’ in Britain, the centre of Bath was focused around a religious complex: The Temple of Sulis-Minerva. Thus, Bath’s primary purpose was mostly likely a religious one. This is clear even in the city’s Latin name, *Aquae Sulis*. Bath’s roads all converge upon Sulis’ temple complex, complementing the temple’s centrality at the site and emphasizing its dominance at Bath. In terms of size, Bath was significantly smaller than normal Roman settlements. Furthermore, Bath was surrounded by various *civitates* and a *colonia* at Gloucester where Mercury’s temple is located in the Roman town Uley. Larger towns such as these meant that supplies could fill the regions need for manufacturers and large markets. Consequently, Bath was able to develop into a small town developed around a religious precinct. As previously mentioned, it is unlikely that Bath had a forum. Furthermore, there is no evidence for urban housing within the site of Bath. Cunliffe notes that due to the architectural scale that a forum or basilica complex demands, it is unlikely that either were built at Bath.⁴⁹

The wall around the township of Bath has also been the focal point of discussion. There have been various theories as to what the wall’s purpose was. There is no specific date given to the construction of Bath’s outer wall. Cunliffe suggests that the wall was constructed during the third century CE.⁵⁰ It is not unusual for ‘small towns’ in Britain to have fortifications, a large majority of these do so. By the end of the second century CE it was common for both large

⁴⁷ Burnham, Wachter (1990) 29.

⁴⁸ Burnham, Wachter (1990) 29.

⁴⁹ Cunliffe (1971) 66.

⁵⁰ Cunliffe (1971) 78.

and small British towns to include defences surrounding them.⁵¹ It can be difficult to discern why so many of Britain's Roman towns incorporated surrounding walls. The defence against hostile forces would have added some incentive to build large walls around towns. For example, the Boudican revolt saw the destruction of three defenceless towns. The failure to protect these cities may have encouraged citizens to build more formidable defences around their cities. Rebellions such as Boudicca's may help to provide an explanation as to why Britain built such extensive walls around their cities. Furthermore, the walls would have been helpful in later revolts. The wall enclosed the majority of the Roman city of Bath with the temple complex in the centre. As far as archaeological evidence suggests, there were no extra-mural buildings outside of Bath's walls.

K. R. Dark notes that Bath may have been a *temenos*, a piece of sacred land assigned as an official domain often dedicated to gods.⁵² Although Sulis' spring was the most prominent of sacred springs in Britain, it was not the only one. The idea of sacred bodies of water was just as prominent in Celtic religion as it was in Roman. Similarly to the ancient Britons, the Romans believed that natural features such as springs, caves and lakes became the residences of deities and in turn were revered.⁵³ Typically, these were made into *temene* (sacred space) and were entered only for cult practice. The Romans' treatment of natural *temene* is mirrored by the British reverence of natural features. Consequently, British sacred springs were straightforwardly converted into Roman temple complexes. Bath's wall marks the territory which is the sacred area of Sulis. Sulis' prominence at Bath would lend some weight to Dark's hypothesis. Cunliffe also hypothesizes the wall's potential as a sacred boundary to the

⁵¹ Mattingly (2006) 326.

⁵² Dark (1994) 254.

⁵³ Scheid (2003) 73.

gods.⁵⁴ In sum, archaeological evidence would therefore suggest that Bath was most likely a religious settlement. As a large religious settlement, Bath's predominant purpose was the worship of the goddess Sulis. Consequently, it would be justified to deposit such a large cache of *defixiones*.

Dating Bath's *defixiones*.

The distribution of *defixiones* in England is similar to that of Romano-Celtic temples. As of now, *defixiones* have been found predominantly in England's southern region with the highest percentage found in Bath and Uley. As the dedication of *defixiones* was a Mediterranean practice, it is logical that curse tablet dedication would only occur in England's south as Roman religious practice may not have been firmly cemented within the militarized zones. Urban centres, small towns and rural communities have a high rate of *defixiones* deposition; however, curse tablets did not seem to be deposited on military sites.⁵⁵ In contrast, *defixiones* rarely occur within military communities.⁵⁶ If British curse tablets represent a means of communication between a deity and a *defigens* then a lack of temples may represent a lack of focal point such as a well or spring. For example, Sulis' curse tablets are deposited in the goddess' spring that is seen as the goddess' home and best place to communicate with her. The same can be said of other deities such as Mercury at Uley and the goddess Sequana. As there were fewer Roman temples in Britain's northern territories, there may have been focal points between a deity and mortal. Bath lies well within England's Romanized south, which explains the high degree of Roman religious practices. In addition, British *defixiones* were all deposited within a temple complex.

⁵⁴ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 10.

⁵⁵ Mattingly (2006) 311.

⁵⁶ Mattingly (2011) 233.

The decayed state of Bath's *defixiones* makes it difficult to draw any conclusive evidence regarding dating and content. Roger Tomlin discusses the difficulties associated with studying and translating Bath's *defixiones*.⁵⁷ Notably, many of Bath's *defixiones* were awkwardly written and semi-legible (Tab. Sul. 6, 16, 40, 75, 77). However, the tablets' physical condition is the worst impediment to their study. The *defixiones* would have been inscribed with a sharp point; however, over time the scratches have faded to the grey colour of the *defixiones* making them difficult to read. It is important to remember that the *defixiones* were only read once before they were discarded into Sulis' spring. Importantly, Bath's *defixiones* were made as private inscriptions intended to be read only by the *defigens* and the goddess Sulis. Consequently, many of the tablets' inscriptions were not deeply incised and wore away over time. Unlike public inscriptions, private inscriptions such as *defixiones* were not made to last, and are often unintentionally preserved.⁵⁸ For example, Bath's *defixiones* were preserved by the collapse of the spring's reservoir. However, Tomlin suggests that the majority of Bath's *defixiones* can be dated by comparing the incised Latin on the *defixiones*.⁵⁹ Bath's curse tablets are inscribed in a cursive Latin style. The style in which Latin was inscribed changed over time; this can be an important clue as to when objects that are difficult to accurately date, such as *defixiones*, were first created.⁶⁰ Notably, Francisco Lloris notes that cursive Latin script with smaller letters was common in private documents.⁶¹ Other examples of cursive Latin can be found on personal letters, poetry and private documents such as shopping lists. As *defixiones* were not made to be read by a large public audience, Lloris' hypothesis accurately applies to Bath's own *defixiones*, particularly when compared to

⁵⁷ Culiffe (1988) 84.

⁵⁸ Lloris (2015) 89.

⁵⁹ Cunliffe (1988) 73.

⁶⁰ Bruun, Edmondson (2015) 16.

⁶¹ Lloris (2015) 89.

the large inscriptions on Bath's publicly dedicated altars. Alternatively to the untidy writing on the curse tablets, Bath's altars were inscribed with large capital print making them easy to read.

In addition, the size of Bath's *defixiones* makes translating and perceiving the inscriptions difficult. The largest *defixio*, tablet 58, measures 159 by 100 mm (Tab. Sul. 58). But in most cases, the curse tablets are able to fit comfortably in an adult's palm. Furthermore, Tomlin's dating system excludes the *defixiones* which do not have an obvious handwriting style as the lack of handwriting style makes them difficult to decisively date.⁶² Consequently, 29 of Bath's tablets are undated. For example, many of the tablets are written in capital letters. Tablet 1 one simply states "ABCDEFX" (Tab. Sul. 1) while Tablet 2 states two names "Britivenda Venibelia" (Tab. Sul. 2). Only a few of the tablets written in capital letters are as simple as this; many have complete sentences and elaborate formulae.⁶³ For example, tablet 4 states:

qu[i] mihi VILBIAM in[v]/olavit sic liquat com[o](do) aqua. . . qui eam [invol]avit
vacat Velvinna ex[s]\upereus Verianus Se/verinus A(u)gustalis Com/itianus Minianus
Catus Germanill[a] Iovina.

May he who has stolen VILBIA from me become as liquid as water. . . who has stolen
it [or her]. Velvinna, Exsupereus, Verianus, Severinus, A(u)gustalis, Comitianus,
Minianus, Catus, Germanilla, Jovina.
- Tab. Sul. 4.

Unfortunately, the capital letters on the tablets make them difficult to date. A singular *defixio* provides a date stating, 'ad fontem deae Suli(s) prid(i)e idus Apriles', 'at the spring of the

⁶² Tomlin's system of dating *defixiones* is one that has been individually created and is specific to Bath's *defixiones*. His dating technique does not reflect one used to date all *defixiones*. *Defixiones* also differ in subject and form depending which region they come from. Tomlin's system is made to date tablets based on the handwriting of Bath's worshippers, for most of whom Latin was not their first language.

⁶³ For a comprehensive list of Bath's *defixiones* written in capital text see Cunliffe (1988) 107- 144.

goddess Sulis on the twelfth of April' (Tab. Sul. 94).⁶⁴ Unfortunately the tablet does not provide a year for when it was deposited, highlighting one of the difficulties with studying Bath's *defixiones*.

The 130 *defixiones* found at Bath can be divided up based on the Latin on the tablets. In addition to the 29 texts written in capitals, seven of the *defixiones* are illegible or still rolled up. Tomlin dates the remaining 94 tablets under Old Roman Cursive (ORC) and New Roman Cursive (NRC).⁶⁵ The Old Roman Cursive is dated to c.175-275 CE, placing Bath's *defixiones* deposition roughly a century after the Roman temple complex was erected in c.69 CE. NRC inscriptions were used on the tablets from the fourth century onwards. Consequently, these represent a much smaller number of Bath's cache. When comparing ORC and NRC, there is a clear change in the form of Latin letters when they are inscribed. At Bath, a transition from ORC to NRC is prominent as there is a clear change in the form of Latin lettering (fig. 6, 7, 8). The form of the tablets' Latin provides the only way to place the *defixiones* within a context. Comparing the two forms of Latin is useful to discern a rough timeline of when Bath's *defixiones* were being deposited in Bath's sacred spring.

The first text style is in the ORC style. Tablets 30 through to 93 have been classified as ORC. Out of Bath's cache of *defixiones*, 63 of these are in the ORC style making up the majority of Bath's cache. Similarly to Bath, the large number of ORC texts is reflected in other groups of *defixiones* and Latin texts.⁶⁶ Thus we can see a trend in the development of Latin palaeography. Although the formulae and curses on Bath's *defixiones* are diverse, there

⁶⁴ Unfortunately tablet 94 is the only example of dating on one of Bath's *defixiones*.

⁶⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 73.

⁶⁶ Cunliffe (1988) 73.

is a strong consistency in the inscribed Latin, which is highlighted through the handwriting inscribed on the tablets since there is a standard format for the way individual letters are inscribed on the *defixiones*. Yet, it is also important to note that untidy handwriting should be taken into consideration when reading Bath's *defixiones*. In addition, when discussing ORC and NRC I am not describing the texts mentioned in capitals as these have no form of cursive to analyse, although Barry Cunliffe has created referencing tables so we can discern individual letters on Bath's *defixiones* (Fig. 5, 6, 7, 8).⁶⁷ When referring to the table, the numbers descending represent which tablet is being represented while the letters to the right highlight which letters appear on the *defixio* and what the letters look like. However, these tables solely represent the Latin on Bath's *defixiones*.⁶⁸

In Bath's ORC *defixiones*, the Latin letter 'a' is often transcribed in two strokes. On the legible *defixiones* the letter 'a' is inscribed the same in almost every instance (fig. 6, 7). The use of two strokes is clear in many examples where the lines do not meet. Furthermore, the Latin 'b' is written in either two strokes or in one loop. In examples from Bath, 'b' is always inscribed in two strokes (fig. 6). Double stroke lettering is evident in most of Bath's ORC *defixiones*. For example, a seemingly simple letter such as 'c' is most commonly inscribed in two strokes. However, certain letters rarely occur in Bath's texts. The letter 'k' only occurs in a single curse tablet (Tab. Sul. 53); however, 'k's were rare in the Roman alphabet as it is a Greek character. Yet, the letter 'k' is used in the word '*Merkurio*' and '*Markelinum*' referring to the god Mercury and a man named Macellinus. Due to the poor state of the *defixio* and the semi-literate nature of many of Bath's *defigens*, these may be spelling mistakes. Furthermore,

⁶⁷ Cunliffe (1988) 91-94.

⁶⁸ See Cunliffe (1988) 91-94 for the tablets.

the use of Vulgar Latin is common in Bath's *defixiones*. Consequently, the 'k' may be an 'r' or 'c' that was poorly inscribed on the tablet.

The 18 NRC texts are scarce when compared to the large number of ORC texts and of *defixiones* written completely in capitals.⁶⁹ The NRC *defixiones* can be dated to c. 275-400 CE probably leaning closer to the fourth century due to their small number.⁷⁰ During the fourth and fifth centuries CE, NRC texts are particularly rare. Consequently, it can be difficult to draw consistent trends. NRC writing is distinguished from ORC by its changing letterforms. Although in some examples of NRC *defixiones* there are remnants of ORC lettering which show a transition from ORC to NRC letter forms, the transition is rare at Bath.⁷¹ Examples of letters 'a' and 'm' provide interesting examples of NRC Latin. The NRC 'a' is usually made using one stroke, the 'a' forming a closed loop creating an 'a' that is close to its English equivalent. The 'm' in NRC is made with one smooth stroke instead of the multiple strokes which are common in ORC tablets. Some can be identified through unique formulae. Tablet 66 provides an interesting example of a transition between ORC and NRC. While the tablet is almost completely inscribed in ORC, the first line is inscribed in NRC (Tab. Sul. 66). It is likely that Tablet 66 provides an example of a transitional *defixiones* probably dating to c.275-300 CE. The author was likely trying a new writing technique before reverting to one that was familiar.

⁶⁹ Cunliffe (1988) 86.

⁷⁰ Cunliffe (1988) 88.

⁷¹ Cunliffe (1988) 88. Tomlin notes that the division between ORC and NRC in Bath's *defixiones* is very clear. He notes that there was not a large transitional period between the two texts.

Despite a change in writing style, the *defixiones* at Bath continue to ask the goddess to punish thievery. A contemporary setting can help to identify a NRC curse tablet. For example, Tablet 98 states ‘*Seu gentilis seu Christianus*’, ‘Whether pagan or Christian’. The use of *Christianus* helps to place the tablet within the fourth century by highlighting the growing presence of Christianity in Roman Britain.⁷² In fact, the growth of Christianity in Britain has been one of the reasons attributed to Bath’s decline from the mid fourth century onwards.⁷³

Importantly, the use of ORC and NRC Latin on curse tablets can provide details as to when *defixiones* were predominantly placed at Bath. By comparing Bath’s *defixiones* with those found in other Roman provinces, a rough date can be placed defining when written curses became common at Bath. In terms of ORC Latin, a *defixio* found at Caerleon provides one of the earliest examples of British curse tablets (RIB 323, fig. 9).⁷⁴ The subject matter of the tablet is the same as that of Bath, revenge for the theft of clothing. Yet, the writing appears to be a lot earlier than Bath’s own tablets. Comparison with alternative forms of Latin such as the Dacian wax tablets highlights the fact that Bath’s *defixiones* are from a much later period.⁷⁵ When compared to other contemporary forms of Latin, it can be summarised that Caerleon’s tablet is likely from the late first century CE or early second century CE. However, Bath’s ORC examples are dated to around c.175-275 CE placing them later than Caerleon’s example.⁷⁶

⁷² Cleary (2004) 422.

⁷³ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 184.

⁷⁴ Collingwood & Wright (1965) 120.

⁷⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 88.

⁷⁶ As of yet there have been no other *defixiones* excavated from Caerleon. As Caerleon was a Roman fortress it is unlikely many other *defixiones* will be discovered as curse tablets did not typically get deposited in military locations.

Separating Bath's *defixiones* into ORC and NRC Latin helps to date the tablet. Although we cannot date the tablets written in capitals we are able to place a rough date on the remainder. The majority of the tablets are written in ORC Latin and can be dated to c. 175- 275. However, the NRC minority are much later most probably dating from the late fourth to the early fifth century CE. It is important to note that ORC tablets were probably still dedicated alongside the NRC equivalents. The presence of NRC implies that *defixiones* may have been deposited at Bath right up until the fifth century CE.⁷⁷

The use of metal at Bath.

As a metal, lead is flexible allowing it to be rolled up or folded as displayed in many curse tablets. This aspect is important as it keeps the curse message as well as the person being cursed a secret from society's prying eyes. Lead was both cheap and easily made into sheets thin enough to inscribe using a stylus or knife, while being more durable than other writing materials such as papyrus or wood.⁷⁸ Durability was important, especially if a text was to survive in a body of water. There are many further advantages to using lead. Lead would have melted at lower temperatures than bronze and could be made into thin sheets with ease. Furthermore, lead was also important for sympathetic magic.⁷⁹ Pliny the Elder remarks on the availability of lead in Britain noting in his *Natural History*, 'Nigro plum ad fistulas lamnasque utimur, laboriosius in Hispania eruto totasque per Gallias, sed in Britannia summon terrae corio adeo large, ut lex interdicat ut ne plus certo modo fiat.' 'Black lead which we use to make pipes and sheets is excavated with considerable labour in Spain and

⁷⁷ Cunliffe (1988) 97.

⁷⁸ Cunliffe (1988) 81.

⁷⁹ I discuss this further in chapter 2. Within Bath's cache only tablet 4 has an example of sympathetic magic stating that the victim should 'become as liquid as water' (*Tab. Sul.* 4). Sympathetic magic may not have been regularly practised at Bath.

through the whole of the Gallic provinces, but in Britain it is found in the surface-stratum of the earth in such abundance that there is a law prohibiting the production of more than a certain amount' (Pliny. *Nat.* 34.49). According to Pliny, lead was plentiful in Roman Britain and much easier to obtain than in other regions of the Roman Empire.

However, the majority of Bath's *defixiones* were not made from a pure lead alloy. Many of Bath's curse tablets were diluted with tin or copper alloys. As Cunliffe notes, most of Bath's *defixiones* are closer to pewter than lead.⁸⁰ Unfortunately other British tablets have not been analysed and we are unable to discern if Bath was unique in the use of pewter *defixiones*.

There is no evidence to suggest that tin, copper or pewter had any magical properties that could be used with sympathetic magic.⁸¹ It is more likely that Bath's tablets were not made of standardized lead for pragmatic reasons. For example, pewter was more readily available in the ancient world, more durable and importantly, cheaper than lead. Michael Fulford meanwhile discusses the evidence of silver, lead, copper and tin mining in Britain. Stamped ingots provide the primary evidence to these activities in Britain.⁸² Silver was regularly sent back to Rome while cheaper metals such as lead and copper were consumed within the province.⁸³ Lead and pewter were readily available within Britain for creating things such as *defixiones* and the water pipes for Bath's large bathing complex.

In addition, pewter was commonly used in many of Bath's metal vessels, notably inscribed *paterae*. Similarly to Bath's *defixiones*, many of these were inscribed, often as dedications to

⁸⁰ Cunliffe (1988) 82.

⁸¹ Unfortunately there is not really any primary evidence regarding the use of sympathetic magic in the ancient world.

⁸² Fulford (2003) 317.

⁸³ Fulford (2003) 318.

Sulis. Currently there are 23 vessels recovered from Bath, 20 of them being made from pewter.⁸⁴ These vessels were plates (*RIB* 106), dishes (*RIB* 99), jugs (*RB* 100), and most commonly pans (fig. 10).⁸⁵ The pewter pans found at Bath were different from Roman *paterae* which were commonly used for libations. These pans were much deeper than that of a typical Roman *patera*, and these pewter pans would have been able to store more liquid in them. There are shallower pewter ‘plates’ amongst Bath’s vessel hoard, but, when compared to the pans, the plates are plain in decoration and carry no inscriptions. Interestingly, Tomlin describes Bath’s pewter pans as ‘*paterae*’ in his discussion of the vessels’ inscriptions.⁸⁶ Seven of the pans have inscriptions. All of the inscriptions read ‘*Deae Suli Minervae*’ ‘To the goddess Sulis Minerva’ (*Britannia* xii 23) or ‘*Deae Suli*’ ‘To the goddess Sulis’ (*Britannia* xii 19). The inscriptions firmly identify the *paterae* as votive offerings to Sulis. Furthermore, the inscribed *paterae* are often accompanied by decoration. When compared to the plainer pewter vessels, Tomlin may be justified in his assumption that these are *paterae*.

While many of the vessels can be considered ‘household objects’, the distribution of pewter vessels likely represents ‘votive’ deposition rather than actual pewter use as they were found in Sulis’ spring.⁸⁷ The distribution of pewter in Britain was very uneven.⁸⁸ For example, Roman towns that provide evidence of vessel manufacture may yield few finds. Pewter vessels tended to appear further away from cities where vessels were created or mining occurred. Romano-British pewter manufacturing towns are traceable through the waste left behind by manufacturers. For example, the distribution of moulds, tin alloy and pewter scrap

⁸⁴ Cunliffe (1988) 9. Three of the recovered vessels are made of bronze or silver. Two of them have inscriptions that identify them as votives for Sulis.

⁸⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 55.

⁸⁶ In their descriptions and illustrations of the pewter vessels Nigel Sunter and David Brown refer to Tomlin’s *paterae* as ‘pans’.

⁸⁷ Beagrie (1989) 191.

⁸⁸ Hatcher & Barker (1974) 10.

alludes to the creation of pewter vessels at a site.⁸⁹ A map created by Neil Beagrie highlights the distribution of pewter manufacturing scrap wares in Roman Britain (fig. 11).⁹⁰ Beagrie's map notes that the highest amount of pewter manufacturing scrap was found in areas surrounding modern Bristol. Yet, when comparing a map of manufacturing finds to distribution of pewter vessels, the largest caches of pewter vessels are found between modern London and Cambridge. Pewter vessels have been most commonly found in wells, rivers and ponds, following a common practice of votive deposition in England which is clearly also the case at Bath. However, unlike other Romano-British pewter deposits, Bath is a short distance from Bristol where moulds, tin alloy and pewter scraps were found. Furthermore, the distribution of pewter manufacture is also important. There was a large concentration of pewter around the Bath area.⁹¹ For the mass production of curse tablets, a cheap and easily malleable metal would have made the process of creating curse tablets much faster.

The rich pewter content of Bath's votive offerings can help place a rough date on Bath's *defixiones*. In his analysis of the Romano-British pewter industry, Beagrie notes that the majority of Romano-British pewter was retrieved within a late Roman context with a proposed date of c.250- 410 CE.⁹² John Hatcher's consideration of British pewter also notes that British pewter was manufactured between c.250- 420 CE.⁹³ Interestingly, the dates for British pewter manufacture are similar to the dates Cunliffe suggests for Bath's *defixiones*. Similarly to Roman votive offerings, the majority of pewter is deposited in England's southern region.

⁸⁹ Beagrie (1989) 178.

⁹⁰ Beagrie (1989) 177.

⁹¹ Beagrie (1989) 178.

⁹² Beagrie (1989) 175.

⁹³ Barker, Hatcher (1974) 10.

The tablets from Vindolanda provide a good example of ORC Latin in Britain and can be compared to the handwriting on Bath's own tablets. Vindolanda's tablets were made out of wood with a thin covering of wax. Over time the wax eroded leaving only the wood, however, the writers inscribed with enough force to leave marks on the wood.⁹⁴ The *defixiones* and Vindolanda tablets are different in form and purpose, however, the act of inscribing is similar in both *defixiones* and wax tablets. Both the Vindolanda tablets and Bath's *defixiones* are invaluable as examples of ORC and its development. However, the Vindolanda tablets are dated to c.90-120 CE meaning they were made before Bath's curse tablets.⁹⁵ Through the use of lead and tin, however, Bath's *defixiones* conform to the traditional material used for creating curse tablets.⁹⁶

In contrast to those at Bath, the Vindolanda tablets are both personal and administrative documents.⁹⁷ Additionally, the Vindolanda writing tablets are dated much earlier than Bath's *defixiones*. Alan K. Bowman notes that the Vindolanda tablets were created shortly after c. 90 CE.⁹⁸ The dates are important as, by the dates proposed for Bath's *defixiones*, c. late 2nd-5th century CE, Latin palaeography had changed. Bowman and Thomas mention Bath's *defixiones* in their consideration of Vindolanda ORC; they concede that Bath's inscribed Latin is different from that of Vindolanda's, noting that the two make a poor palaeographic comparison.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the techniques used for inscribing lead and writing on wood would have slightly differed, creating different letter forms. finally, the Vindolanda tablets

⁹⁴ Bowman (1994) 8.

⁹⁵ Bowman (1994) 10.

⁹⁶ Graf (1997) 133.

⁹⁷ Bowman, Thomas (1994) 18.

⁹⁸ Bowman (1994b) 6.

⁹⁹ Bowman, Thomas (1994) 48.

were inscribed by Roman soldiers and officials.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, the handwriting is far more practised than the semi-legible inscriptions on Bath's *defixiones*.

The differences between the Latin inscribed on Bath's *defixiones* and the script on the Vindolanda tablets highlights the changing ORC script (fig 12). Bath's curse tablets have letters that deviate in form from the Vindolanda tablets. For example the use of the letter 'n' differs greatly between the two sets of texts. While the 'n' in the Vindolanda tablets resembles the modern day 'n' in form (fig. 12), the Latin 'n' on Bath's *defixiones* resembles a reverse y-shape (fig. 6, 7). Furthermore, the use of the letter 'e' in Bath is different to that of earlier ORC Latin (fig. 6, 12).¹⁰¹

When Roman Bath ended.

It is notable that Bath seemed to have reached its high point by the middle of the 3rd century CE. The only ancient text to mention Bath is Solinus' *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*. Unfortunately Solinus' account of Bath is very brief stating, 'quibus fontibus praesul est Minervae numen, in cuius aede perpetui ignes numquam canescunt in fauillus, sed ignis tabuit uertit in globos saxeos.' 'over these springs Minerva presides and in her temple the perpetual fire never whitens into ash but as the flames fades turns into rocky lumps' (Solinus. *De Mirabilibus Mundi XXII*). Solinus confirms that Sulis was regarded the primary deity at Bath and the patron goddess of the hot springs, at least in Roman eyes. The perpetual fire is also an interesting statement and alludes to constant vigilance over Sulis' temple complex.

¹⁰⁰ Bowman (1983) 27.

¹⁰¹ Tomlin (1988) 87.

Notably, when Solinus visited Bath during the third century CE the temple was fully functional and prevalent.

While the third century CE saw Bath's height as a religious site due to peaceful times, Britain's fifth century is one that is full of discord. By the fifth century CE Roman rule in Britain had passed its peak and entered a precarious period leading towards an era in Britain without Roman guidance. Ian Wood notes that the beginning of the end of Roman rule can be linked to the revolts in Britain which concluded with the elevation of Constantine III as emperor in c.407 CE.¹⁰² However, from 410 CE the Britons existed without any Roman authority. With receding Roman interest in Britain, it is likely that the maintenance of public buildings in Ancient Britain was in short supply. Despite the absence of Roman control, British towns continued to function after the Romans left.¹⁰³

Cunliffe suggests that the decline of Roman Bath was prolonged and uneven depending on which parts of the town were being affected.¹⁰⁴ Regardless, by the middle of the fifth century Bath's temple and bathing were abandoned and no longer in use.¹⁰⁵ The popular opinion held is that the prominence of Christianity meant that traditional Greco-Roman religion was phased out. Bath did not appear to be immediately converted to Christian purposes.¹⁰⁶ In Bath's case many other factors such as political disunity, economic decline and Celtic rebellion led to the temple's decline in maintenance and eventual abandonment. Bath fits into larger patterns throughout Roman Britain portraying the decline of Roman culture and

¹⁰² Wood (2004) 432.

¹⁰³ Gerrard (2007) 149.

¹⁰⁴ Cunliffe (1971) 91.

¹⁰⁵ Cleary (1989) 131.

¹⁰⁶ Wood (2004) 428.

influence. An eighth century Anglo-Saxon poem, *The Ruin*, describes the state of Bath during this period.¹⁰⁷ *The Ruin* notes, ‘Wondrous is this masonry, shattered by the Fates. The fortifications have given way, the buildings raised by giants are crumbling. The roofs have collapsed; the towers are in ruin..... There is rime on the mortar.’¹⁰⁸ The poet describes Roman ruins that have fallen into disrepair, a state of affairs which was not uncommon in Anglo-Saxon Britain. The poem does not specifically mention Bath by name, though it does mention ‘The wall enfolded within its bright bosom the whole place which contained the hot flood of baths’: Bath is the only known Roman bathing complex built around thermal springs in England. Interestingly, Cunliffe notes that *The Ruin* matches his hypothesis on how Bath’s temple and bathing complexes fell into disrepair.¹⁰⁹ Presumably *defixiones* stopped being deposited after this period. Within large towns, public amenities were being abandoned and disused. Furthermore, deterioration in the maintenance of roads and drains highlights the neglect of Roman cities.

In terms of religion, pagan cults reached their peak in the 4th century CE. After 300 CE Roman religious complexes followed the same pattern as public buildings and baths. Over the course of the 4th century, there was a decrease in the number of temples in Roman Britain.¹¹⁰ Many scholars such as David Mattingly and Richard Reece suggest that the Romanized town system had failed as early as the third century CE.¹¹¹ However, this is not suggesting that towns in ancient Britain had collapsed by this period but rather that they did not follow a strictly Roman form. Mattingly argues that life in towns became more related to ‘individual

¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately the author behind the *The Ruin* is unknown. There is also no specific date that the text was published.

¹⁰⁸ Rime is an ice that forms on objects through rain and fog.

¹⁰⁹ Cunliffe (1971) 95.

¹¹⁰ Cleary (1989) 119.

¹¹¹ Mattingly (2006) 325, Reece (1980) 77.

power' than 'civil authority'.¹¹² One of the key pieces of evidence for Mattingly's hypothesis is the state of public buildings in British towns. For example, the forum and basilica complex in Silchester was given over to metalworking by the end of the third century.¹¹³ Similarly, the basilica complex in Caerwent was demolished and replaced with a metal workshop similar to that in Silchester.¹¹⁴ In other cases, public buildings in towns such as Wroxeter and Leicester were simply not replaced after they had fallen.¹¹⁵ In ancient Britain there is a notable loss in civic spaces, but Roman public buildings were reused rather than abandoned, emphasizing the continuation of urban British life.

The reason for the dilapidation of public buildings in part stems from a lack of funding from the local elite. Interestingly, British urban elite continued to follow a Roman pattern of design and decoration.¹¹⁶ The furnished state of personal homes is at odds with the continuing disuse of civic amenities. It seems, therefore, that the urban elite were funding personal expenditures rather than public. Reece's hypothesis regarding the collapse of the Roman-British town is similar to Mattingly's. Reece suggests that a revival of town life was impossible due to the establishment of a provincial structure based on villas and villages.¹¹⁷ In terms of religion, this meant that large temple complexes did not receive the funding they needed to maintain their grandeur.

Ken Dark discusses the role of the elite in the survival of pagan religion during late antiquity. Dark notes that there was a pagan religious elite while Christianity flourished within Britain's

¹¹² Mattingly (2006) 325.

¹¹³ Mattingly (2006) 336.

¹¹⁴ Mattingly (2006) 336.

¹¹⁵ Mattingly (2006) 326.

¹¹⁶ Mattingly (2006) 339.

¹¹⁷ Reece (1980) 78.

lower class during the fourth century CE.¹¹⁸ However, Dark's hypothesis does not seem to apply in the case of Bath. Although sites such as Bath clearly received attention from elite classes and military personnel, there was also a large amount of activity from the lower classes as well. When evaluating *defixiones*, it is clear that they were mainly deposited by the lower class, often British citizens, as is clear at temple sites such as Uley and Bath.

Sulis' temple complex fell into disuse around the same time as other temple complexes in Britain. Chronologically it is difficult to place a fixed date on Bath's end as a Roman site. Nonetheless, Bath's temple precinct, Sulis' temple complex, began shrinking from c.350 CE when the focus was restrained to the inner precinct of the temple.¹¹⁹ For example, the stylobate leading toward the temple complex's altar courtyard was dismantled and the colonnade surrounding the temple and courtyard was also dismantled giving the complex a far more secular appearance. The decaying state of Sulis' religion is further emphasized by the dismantling of the great outdoor altar, which represents one of the temple's most important religious monuments.¹²⁰

In addition, layers of cobbling and soil can tell us about Bath's dilapidation. From the late fourth century onwards the temple was built on a series of superimposed floors as soil began to accumulate in Bath's inner precinct.¹²¹ Although silting was occurring, Bath's temple precinct remained in use and cobbling was used to create pathways. Eventually soil gathered on the cobbling and once too much accumulated a fresh layer of cobbling was added to create

¹¹⁸ Dark (1994) 38.

¹¹⁹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 184.

¹²⁰ Gerrard (2007) 159.

¹²¹ Cunliffe attributes this to the blockage of gutters and drains.

a new pathway. Within these layers rubble, debris and pottery sherds were trapped creating useful pieces of evidence for dating Bath's final phase as a Roman temple. According to Cunliffe, the constant reflooring raised the level of the precinct by nearly a metre higher than the original paving.¹²² Importantly, this meant that many monuments and altars in Bath's courtyard were slowly buried.

In terms of religion, the continued decay of the temple's buildings and facilities is seen in sedimentary levels and the material used to remake pathways and floors.¹²³ In many cases, Bath's buildings were deconstructed to be used in the new paving. Cunliffe reports that a piece of the temple's column was found in the pathing.¹²⁴ It is clear that in Bath's later period repurposed building material was used to create the cobbling which maintained the flooring and paving. Importantly, Bath's religious buildings were being deliberately demolished.¹²⁵ The demolition of the rest of the temple complex meant that thieves could gain access to the lead and iron clamps which kept the blocks in place. Furthermore, the buildings may have been demolished to reuse the metal and stone. The intentional demolition of such a previously important religious site highlights the waning influence of Greco-Roman religion in later fourth century CE Britain.

Evidence suggests that Sulis received offerings up until the fifth century CE. It is useful to return to the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Ruin*. To support this Cunliffe suggests that Sulis' temple complex became the victim of flooding from the spring. In a way Bath collapsed from

¹²² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 72.

¹²³ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 169.

¹²⁴ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 185.

¹²⁵ Gerrard (2007) 159.

the inside out. If Cunliffe's hypothesis is true, then Bath's religious and recreational functions, arguably the city's primary features, were the first to fall into disrepair. However, there are ways in which we can discern the years that Bath was a functional township. One of the most convenient ways to place Bath into a chronology is through its pottery. In their consideration, Sarah Green and Christopher Young note that the significance in pottery from Bath lies in its lateness.¹²⁶ Fortunately, Bath was a well-maintained site up until the fourth century CE. Consequently, there is little evidence pottery-wise from before the fourth century.

The majority of pottery excavated from Bath is dated to its final period of Roman usage. Fortunately, the sedimentary layers of Bath's final period mean that the pottery sherds are relatively well preserved. Accordingly, we know that the temple complex continued to function at least in part despite the decline in the second half of the fourth century.

Unfortunately, however, much of the pottery found at Bath is in poor condition; this makes discerning any figural decoration difficult. The pottery recovered from Bath was almost exclusively made in a local British style (although influenced by Mediterranean examples in form and purpose).¹²⁷ Notably, from the third century CE onwards pottery was made solely in England rather than imported from the continent; this is reflected in a lack of Samian ware.¹²⁸ A large number of Bath's vessels include fabrics from recognised Romano-British pottery industries such as those in Oxford, New Forest and Alice Holt.¹²⁹ The kilns for each of these types were close in proximity to Bath so transport would not have been difficult.

¹²⁶ Green, Young (1985) 157.

¹²⁷ Taken from my own tallies of the fabrics used in Bath's pottery. My tallies were taken from data found in Cunliffe, B. (1985) *The Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath Volume 1: The Site*. Oxford: Oxford Committee for Archaeology, p 143-161.

¹²⁸ Fulford (1973) 164.

¹²⁹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 146.

Thirteen examples of the late pottery recovered from Bath can be attributed to kilns from Oxford; there are also seven New Forest vessels and six vessels from Nene Valley.¹³⁰ However, as time progressed both the Nene Valley and New Forest kilns were displaced by Oxford workshops. The same trend is apparent in Bath; at the beginning of the middle fourth century CE Oxford and New Forest ware were found in relatively similar amounts. However, by the beginning of the fifth century CE only Oxford examples were being discovered alongside the local ware.

The vast majority of Bath's pottery was made from local fabrics and kilns. Because the modern township of Bath is inconveniently built on top of the Roman city, it is hard to find evidence that reflects economic activity at Bath. Mattingly suggests that it is not uncommon to find marketing activities in religious sanctuaries.¹³¹ A prominent sanctuary like Bath would have likely included some form of economic activity; the presence of local pottery highlights this. Bath's pottery consisted of an assortment of pottery types including jugs, jars, beakers, flagons, mortaria and bowls.¹³² As far as we are able to tell, none of Bath's pottery boasted inscriptions which would identify them as votive offerings. It is most likely that they were manufactured for storage and carrying goods. However, some of the pottery was painted with simple designs such as rosettes and geometric designs. Paul Tyers suggests that Bath local ware fits into a distribution pattern where a local kiln produces a particular pot which is widely distributed; the form and fabric is then copied by local workshops which then mass-produce imitations.¹³³ Such imitation pottery is reflected at Bath through the reduction of wares from notable kilns such as New Forest. Over the third and fourth centuries CE, pottery

¹³⁰ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 146.

¹³¹ Mattingly (2006) 290.

¹³² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 153.

¹³³ Tyers (1976) 77.

from foreign workshops decreased at Bath. However, the production of local wares continued to rise until the late 5th century. The economic decline in England during the fourth century may have prompted a decline in sources of pottery supply. Consequently, local ware imitations were made to replace the absence of notable pottery kilns. From the middle of the fourth CE, pottery was in decline with a reduction in the number of vessel shapes and a decline in decorative techniques.¹³⁴ For example, fine ware pottery gave way to strictly coarse ware.

The pottery from Bath's late period is useful for creating a context for Bath's history. Pottery continued to be used at Bath right up until the end of the Roman Period. Interestingly, although Bath's religious complex was going through a rapid decline, pottery continued to be used at the site. The decline in pottery is important when highlighting Bath's decline: pottery from large kilns declined while plainer local wares were created in their place. Consequently, we can identify that despite the temple's decay, some sort of activity continued at the temple complex. However, we cannot identify how much of this is religious as Bath's religious decline was clear through the temple's dereliction.

In addition, over the span of its Roman use, the site became a repository for a large collection of coinage. Most of the coinage was found in the sacred spring pointing to the use of coins as a votive offering to Sulis.¹³⁵ The decoration of coinage can provide useful evidence pertaining to the date when the coins were dedicated. Furthermore, coinage helps to identify what periods saw the heaviest amount of activity at Bath as well as the most offerings. Although we cannot say that *defixiones* were dedicated on the exact same dates, coinage may

¹³⁴ Tyers (1996) 76.

¹³⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 281.

help to outline a trend in dedications at Sulis' spring. The periods with the largest amount of coinage were likely Bath's busiest time. Coin deposits at Bath have been dated back to Bath's Pre-Roman era suggesting that coin votives had been a common form of offering to Sulis.¹³⁶

The coins themselves date to c.10-40 CE when the British king Cunobelin reigned.

Unfortunately, like many artefacts recovered from the sacred spring, the coins have been badly corroded by Bath's spring water. Furthermore, the Celtic coins are the earliest offerings found in the city of Bath. It is clear, though, that coinage from after c.260 CE was discovered in huge quantities.¹³⁷ The large amount of coinage fits within the period where Bath' temple complex saw a high amount of activity. Consequently, the third century onwards seemed to be the period when Sulis was receiving the highest amount of offerings.

The practical lifespan of Bath's own temple complex ended with the collapse of the spring reservoir, which effectively ended the deposition of *defixiones* in Bath's spring complex.

Through the demolition of the temple complex and the dereliction of the site, Bath fell into disrepair. Furthermore, the dereliction of Roman temple complexes coincides with the date attributed to the NRC tablets. Consequently, this may be why Bath has so few NRC tablets in comparison to ORC *defixiones*. The NRC tablets may represent the *defixiones* from Bath's final days.

One of the hypotheses associated with the end of Roman Britain was the 'native revolts' which took place c.340-410 CE.¹³⁸ From c.360-400 CE, Picts and Scots began raiding the

¹³⁶ This is a very small deposit when compared to the large hoard of Roman coinage which was discovered at Bath.

¹³⁷ Walker (1988) 281.

¹³⁸ Jones (1996) 244.

frontier line causing destabilization in the province of Briton. Thus, the backdrop for political discord was formed. It is likely that this destabilization occurred with the rising of three usurpers Emperors, Marcus, Gratian, and Constantine III. Michael Jones notes that barbarian revolts played a significant role in the end of Roman Britain.¹³⁹ As Gaul began to revolt Constantine III drew forces from Britain to settle the Gauls as well as to conquer Italy. Although Constantine succeeded in Gaul, he failed to take Italy. Jones notes that due to the lack of troops, and the troops' lack of faith in their leaders, the early 5th century CE saw the end of Roman authority in Britain.¹⁴⁰ Through Roman political conflict the Britons were able to remove the yoke of Roman authority.

Notably, primary sources reflect the Roman abandonment of imperial Britain. In his *Historia Brittonum* Nennius notes,

‘Hucusque reganverunt Romani apud Brittones ccccviii annis. Brittones autem deiecerunt regnum Romanorum neque census dederunt illis neque reges illorum acceperunt, ut regnarent super eos, neque Romani ausi sunt, ut venirent Britanniam ad regnandum amplius, quia duces illorum Brittones occiderant.’

‘Hitherto the Romans had ruled the British for 409 years. But the British overthrew the rule of the Romans, and paid them no taxes, and did not accept their kings to reign over them, and the Romans did not dare to come to Britain to rule anymore, as the British had killed their generals.’ (Nennius. *Historia Brittonum* 28).

The constant raids and destabilization had created an opening to reject Roman rule in Britain. As a consequence there was a rejection of the previous romanization of Britain. Without Roman rule Romano-British temple complexes began to collapse. Romanized cults such as Bath had ceased to function. From the early 5th century onwards Britain was no longer a Roman province.

¹³⁹ Jones (1996) 246.

¹⁴⁰ Jones (1996) 248.

Conclusion.

To conclude, Bath's temple complex is very difficult to date. Many of the hypotheses surrounding the town of Bath, the temple complex and the cult of Sulis-Minerva are made by comparing Bath to other Romano-British towns and temples as well as examining the physical evidence at Bath. Bath fitted into a small group of Roman towns that often had very specific functions with the town built around an economic or religious building. Due to the size of Bath, many of the typical features of a Roman city do not exist at Bath. For example, Bath lacks Roman public amenities such as a forum. The wall around the city Bath likely acted as a *temenos* outlining the sacred boundary of Sulis' precinct. As a continuation of its Celtic roots, Bath most probably existed as a religious town with its focus on Sulis' cult. It is likely that Bath's period of most prominence started in the 3rd century CE and lasted through until the 5th century. The palaeography on Bath's *defixiones* helps to place Bath within the previously mentioned chronology. The Old Roman Cursive is fitting for private Latin texts from the ancient world, while the New Roman Cursive tablets were most likely from the temple's last days. The far smaller amount of New Roman Cursive attests to the collapse of the temple. Furthermore, coin hoards found in Bath's spring help to highlight Bath's periods of use. Through the destabilization of Roman Britain and changing religious sensibilities Bath was abandoned as a Roman temple complex. However, Bath continued to be inhabited right up until the modern era. Although portions of Bath, predominantly the temple and bathing complexes, have been uncovered a large portion of the city still remains buried underneath Bath's modern city. Consequently, there is still much to learn about the Roman town of Bath.

Chapter Two: Prayers or curses? A study of Bath's *defixiones*.

Bath's *defixiones* have aspects which contrast with what are considered 'traditional' curse tablets. Because the *defixiones* were written on tablets and then deposited in a spring, it is easy to consider Bath's tablets as a form of *defixiones*. However, on closer inspection, there are several elements which set *defixiones* such as Bath's apart from 'typical' curse tablets. In his consideration of *defixiones*, H. Versnel suggests that several tablets should not be regarded as curses but instead prayers for justice. Although they resemble *defixiones*, tablets such as Bath's should form a new category altogether. Versnel places Bath's *defixiones* under the category of 'judicial prayers' or 'prayers for legal help.'¹⁴¹ When regarding Bath's *defixiones*, one can see why the label 'prayer for help' is appropriate. Solinus asks Sulis for her aid stating:

Deae Suli Minervae Solinus dono numina tuo maniestati paxsam balnearem et paleum nec permittas somnum nec sanitatem <.> ei qui mihi fraudem fecit si vir si femina si servus si liber nissi [<s>s]e retegens istas species ad templum tuum detulerit li[beri sui vel son sua et qui.¹⁴² deg. ei quoque xe. so,mi, nec sanitatem n al<u>leum et reli<n>quas nissi ad templum tuum istas res retulerint.

Solinus to the goddess Sulis Minerva. I give to your divinity (and) majesty (my) bathing tunic and cloak. Do not allow sleep or health to him who has done me wrong, whether man or woman, whether slave or free, unless he reveals himself and brings those goods to your temple.
- Tablet. Sulis. 32.

Solinus' prayer to Sulis is not only an appeal for the goddess' help, but also a request for justice as he feels he has been wronged. Therefore, Versnel's consideration is well grounded as Bath's *defixiones* are different in many aspects to other tablets.

Solinus' plea is not the only prayer from Bath to address the theft of personal belongings. In

¹⁴¹ Versnel lists 7 points which help to highlight how 'judicial prayers' are different from *defixiones*. See *Magika Hiera* (1991) 68.

¹⁴² Here the tablet is badly damaged. Holes in the *defixiones* make translating them difficult.

fact, the majority of Bath's *defixiones* deal with cases of theft. A victim who has had his property stolen asks for the goddess' help in the retrieval of his (or her) stolen property. However, if the stolen goods cannot be returned, an alternative form of justice is the punishment of the thief. As previously noted, these 'prayers' were placed in Sulis' spring so as to communicate directly with the goddess. Interestingly, there is not a single piece of evidence to suggest Bath's tablets dealt with another form of cursing other than judicial. However, Bath's judicial prayers are not a phenomenon that is unique to Bath. Notably, a similarly large cache of tablets found in Uley, England, provide a good comparison to Bath's own *defixiones*. Like Bath's, Uley's *defixiones* ask a deity (Mercury) to recover stolen goods from a thief. A tablet found in a temple dedicated to Mercury provides a useful comparison to Bath's own tablets:

Side A: Deo Mercurio Cenacus queritur de Vitalino et Natalino filio ipsius
d[e]iumento quod eraptum est. Erogat deum Mercurium ut nec ante sanitatem

Side B: habeant ni<s>i ni<s>I repraese[ntaverint mihi iumentum quod r[apuerunt et
deo devotionem qua[m] ipse ab his exostulaverit.

Side A: Cenacus complains to the god Mercury about Vitalinus and Natalinus his son concerning the draught animal that was stolen. He begs the god Mercury that they will not have good health...

Side B: ...until they repay me promptly the animal they have stolen and (repay) the god the devotion which he himself has demanded from them.¹⁴³

Although not identical to Bath's *defixiones*, Uley's *defixiones* also address cases of theft: Mercury is asked to hunt down the thief and force compensation from him. Notably, the majority of *defixiones* found in Britain all fit into a category of curses against thievery.¹⁴⁴ Barry Cunliffe notes that there is not a single instance of a curse which is directed against charioteers or lawsuits in British curse tablets. Curses against theft, which were so common

¹⁴³ Britannia 10 (1979) p. 342, no. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Cunliffe (1988) 60.

in Britain, were not the predominant topic for curses in the rest of the ancient world. Lindsay Watson notes that revenge curses can be used to appropriate the functions of the law code.¹⁴⁵ If one felt that the law could not provide satisfaction to the wronged, it was instead possible to turn to the gods for help. As I will explain later in this thesis, those most likely to turn to Sulis for legal representation seemed to be Bath's lower socio-economic classes; this is revealed by the names of Bath's *defigens* as well as the Latin inscribed on the tablets. While it is correct to read Bath's as 'prayers for justice', they should still be considered as a category of *defixiones*. Bath's tablets still conform to several characteristics that are common of *defixiones* such as where they were deposited and the punishments inscribed on the tablets. This chapter will prove that Bath's curse tablets are an example of a British adaptation of Greco-Roman *defixiones*.

Vulgar Latin on Bath's *defixiones*.

Bath's tablets are an important source of Vulgar Latin from a Roman town in Britain. Jozef Herman defines the term 'Vulgar Latin' as 'the spoken language of people who were scarcely influenced at all by literary tradition'.¹⁴⁶ He refers to a form of Latin which is common and 'colloquial'. Generally, Vulgar Latin is inscribed the way it would be spoken in a conversation. Vulgar Latin differs from literary Latin in many ways, although for brevity's sake I will only mention differences that are relevant to Bath's *defixiones*, which were not written as high literature. Furthermore, the evidence available in Britain pertaining to written Latin is fragmentary, making it difficult to distinguish a pattern in British Latin. The range of available epigraphic evidence from Roman Britain has greatly increased over the with the discovery of a cache of letters inscribed on wood from Vindolanda. The Vindolanda tablets

¹⁴⁵ Watson (1991) 6.

¹⁴⁶ Herman (2000) 7.

provide a source of evidence for colloquial Latin written in Britain.¹⁴⁷ These letters differ from Bath's tablets as they are not intended as religious pieces of writing. However, they provide further examples of Latin which was not written as Classical or later literary Latin.

As Bath was a provincial town on the fringes of Rome's Empire, it is expected that the Latin used would vary from that used in Rome. Colin Smith's consideration of British Latin is important when discussing Bath's *defixiones*. Smith notes 'that even uncultured writers of graffiti and *defixiones* were conscious of the learned and classical tradition means that we have no real Vulgar Latin texts for Britain.'¹⁴⁸ Therefore, we should not regard the Latin inscribed on Bath's tablets as incorrect but rather as 'intrusions' onto the Classical Latin. Although vulgar terms may be spelt differently from Classical Latin on British tablets, the terms fit correctly into a sentence. Due to lack of literary evidence in many cases, it can be difficult to discern what constitutes 'typical' Latin in Roman Britain. Although Bath's *defixiones* share many common features with other tablets (especially British) it can be very difficult to know if the terminology or spelling is typical in Britain. All we can say for certain is that many features of Bath's *defixiones* do differ from Classical Latin.

When discussing the intrusion of Vulgar Latin into Classical Latin it is important to remember the highly formulaic nature of the *defixiones*. Language in Bath's tablets often includes variations of similar phrases.¹⁴⁹ For example, one of the most common phrases found on Bath's *defixiones* is, 'devoveo eum [q]ui caracellam meam involaverit si vir si femina si servus si liber' 'I curse him who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether man or woman, whether slave or free' (Tab. Sul. 10). The catch-all phrase on tablet 10 is a feature

¹⁴⁷ Bowman (1994) 1.

¹⁴⁸ Smith (1983) 936.

¹⁴⁹ Cunliffe (1988) 63.

that is prevalent in many of Bath's *defixiones*, an aspect which may have been used to help cast a wide net over potential victims, especially if the dedicator did not know the identity of the thief. Examples of tablet 10's catch-all formula can be found on several of Bath's *defixiones* emphasizing the heavy use of catch-all formulae on Bath's curse tablets (Tab. Sul. 32, 36, 49, 52, 71, 100). So, we can see how this aspect of cursing was highly formulaic due to the regularity in which the phrase appears.¹⁵⁰ Importantly, identifying the victim is an aspect which also appears in *defixiones* outside of Bath. At the site of Uley, for example, *defixiones* also include the formulaic phrase 'si vir si mulier si servus si liber' 'whether he is man or woman, slave or free'.¹⁵¹ The two *defixiones* have notably similar phrasing with respect to this aspect, highlighting the formulaic language. The formula 'whether man or woman' predominates only amongst British examples of *defixiones* and rarely occurs outside of Britain.¹⁵²

As most curse tablets in Britain were mainly concerned with theft it would make sense for the formula targeting unknown thieves to appear mainly on *defixiones*. In connection to Vulgar Latin, the use of formulaic phrasing makes inscribing *defixiones* much easier, especially for those who had not received a high level of education. Consequently, the correctness of Bath's *defixiones* when compared to Classical Latin may result from the use of formulaic sentences. Hence Vulgar Latin terms can be placed within a sentence structure, resulting in the 'intruding' aspect. When considering Bath's *defixiones*, we should not immediately regard them as completely original but as drawing instead on a common stock of language. In

¹⁵⁰ Cunliffe (1988) 67. Cunliffe notes that variations of the 'si vir si femina' formula appear in around 11 examples of Bath's legible *Defixiones*.

¹⁵¹ Britannia 10 (1979) p. 343, no. 3.

¹⁵² This is true of all the *defixiones* I have examined. The traditional Greco-Roman tablets tend to have a specific victim in mind when dedicating their curse. For example, one would know which rival in love they would want to bind. Conversely, identifying a thief is difficult as they are usually unseen when stealing. A catch-all formula is important as it identifies a variety of suspects to the deity ensuring the deity examines everyone.

this way, original names, stolen items, verbs and deities can be inserted into the formulae to create *defixiones*. Often these inserted names and terms are spelt in a vulgar way or are Celtic derivatives.

Notably, many words on Bath's *defixiones* have vulgar spelling. For example, Tablet 65 has inscribed on it: 'Minerve de Suli Donavi' (Tab. Sul. 65). On the tablet, the name Minerva takes the dative singular case becoming *Minervae* as the tablet has been dedicated to Minerva. However, because of vulgar spelling *Minervae* becomes *Minerve*; the same is true for *de* which is a vulgar term for *deae*. Smith notes that it is common for the diphthong *AE* to be pronounced or written with an *E*. Similarly, the 'ER' in certain words is replaced with an *AR*.¹⁵³ A large inscribed plate includes a list of names which highlight the use of *AR* rather than *ER* (Tab. Sul. 30). The text lists both *Patarnianus* and *Matarnus*, terms which have been identified by Cunliffe as vulgar forms of *Paternianus* and *Maternus* which are identified by Smith as common cognomens in Roman Britain.¹⁵⁴ The vulgarization of diphthongs such as *AE* is not unique to Bath's *defixiones*, as similar examples have been found all over Britain.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, bilingualism has an important influence on the language which is inscribed on objects such as *defixiones*. There is little evidence to suggest that Britons had an established form of transliteration. Consequently, there is evidence of native British writing before Roman occupation. So, Latin quickly became the primary form of writing in Roman Britain. Nonetheless, ancient British culture and identity persisted through the influences that came with Roman occupation. As is apparent even in Bath, Sulis retained her British name and

¹⁵³ Smith (1983) 899-901.

¹⁵⁴ Smith (1983) 898-899.

¹⁵⁵ Herman (2000) 106.

existed in tandem with Minerva rather than having her identity completely usurped by the Roman goddess. The most notable inclusion of British culture discovered on Bath's tablets is the use of personal names. British names such as '*Veloriga*', '*Brigomalla*' and '*Aessicuna*' appear on *defixiones* and highlight the Celtic use of *defixiones* (Tab. Sul 53, 30, 98). The use of Celtic proper names in inscriptions is usually indicative of native units within the Roman army, or in Bath's case, the cult site of a local deity.

David Mattingly notes that in pre-Roman Britain only small shrines were being built on sacred spaces.¹⁵⁶ With the arrival of the Romans, however, large temple complexes were built, often on the location of traditional British cult sites.¹⁵⁷ Importantly, the inclusion of British names confirms Smith's theory about British fluency in Latin. Attention should be drawn to Tablet 14 as it has been considered to be ancient British written in Latin (Tab. Sul. 14). The fragmentary text combined with a lack of knowledge of ancient British makes Tablet 14 untranslatable, but the tablet is an important source for bilingualism in Roman Britain. It is notable moreover, that the text includes more than just a list of British names and may reflect an attempt to write a curse completely in the British language.¹⁵⁸ The bilingualism present in Bath's tablets shows that at least some of those depositing tablets into Sulis' spring were most likely Britons.

As noted above, one of the identifying features of the Latin used in Bath is the inclusion of words which have been considered Vulgar Latin. These words have been identified 'vulgar' because they appear rarely, or never, in the works of Classical authors. The most common of

¹⁵⁶ Mattingly (2006) 306.

¹⁵⁷ The relationship between Roman religion and Celtic will be discussed later.

¹⁵⁸ Cunliffe (1988) 128.

these is *involare* ('to steal'); this verb appears in 30 instances of readable curse tablets. *Involare* replaces verbs, such as *corripere* or *aufferre* which are more commonly used to describe the action of stealing.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, the nouns employed on some of Bath's tablets reflect irregularities in the Latin used. For example *caracalla* is used to say 'cloak' rather than a more common term such as *lacerna*. This is because terms such as *caracalla* have their roots in the Celtic language which helps to explain their lack of prevalence in Latin.¹⁶⁰ For example, the *caracalla* was a hooded cloak which was most markedly worn by the Gauls and Celts.¹⁶¹ Consequently, '*caracalla*' fits into the list of Vulgar Latin terms and Celtic words which are prevalent in Bath's *defixiones*.¹⁶² Markedly, many of Bath's tablets include a variety of words which have been considered Celtic derivatives. For example, a small number of Bath's tablets use the word *baro* for man instead of *vir* which occurs more frequently in *defixiones*. Only Tablets 44, 57 and 65 make use the word *baro* for man. Although the use of this term is a rare occurrence, it does highlight the variety that bilingualism brings to Vulgar Latin. Consequently, this usage shows that at least some of Bath's tablets were petitions from local Britons.

***Defixiones* from around the Ancient World.**

Before discussing the judicial aspects of Bath's *defixiones*, it is important to discuss what has come to be considered as a 'traditional' curse tablet. David Jordan describes curse tablets as 'inscribed pieces of lead, usually in the form of thin sheets, intended to bring supernatural

¹⁵⁹ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968) 212, 449.

¹⁶⁰ Cunliffe (1988) 76.

¹⁶¹ Smith (1875) 240.

¹⁶² The *caracalla* is a Gallic hooded cloak which Cassius Dio claims originated in Germany and was made fashionable in Rome by the Emperor Aurelius Antonius Bassianus (aptly nick-named Caracalla due to his use of the cloak) during the second century CE. Bassianus made the *caracalla* standard issue for Roman soldiers (Cassius Dio. *Roman History* 79.3.3). The *lacerna* was shorter than the *caracalla* and hoodless. The *lacerna* had a variety of uses ranging from military wear to protecting Roman citizens from the rain (Pliny. *NH* 28.60.225).

power to bear against persons or animals.’¹⁶³ Jordan provides a basic summation of what curse tablets have been assumed to do. A victim’s name was inscribed onto the tablet by the author of the tablet or *defigens*, and then deposited to begin the curse.¹⁶⁴ However, this chapter will demonstrate that *defixiones* were more diverse than Jordan suggests. Curse tablets first appeared in Greece during the 5th century BCE and were very basic, usually including only the name of the intended victim with limited references to verbs for binding or cursing and only occasionally was a deity invoked.¹⁶⁵ In many of these cases there was no explicit verb to ‘bind’ or ‘curse’. A curse from Selinus emphasizes the simplicity of early *defixiones*:

The tongue of Eucles and the tongue of Aristophanis and the tongue of Angeilis and the tongue of Alciphron and the tongue of Hagestratos. The tongues of the advocates of Eucles and Aristophanis.
- SEG 26- 1113,¹⁶⁶ CT. 49.¹⁶⁷

The tablet is very basic, noting only the victim and the body part which was to be restrained. The act of cursing is implied rather than specifically stated. By contrast, curse tablets found during the Roman period boasted variations of intricate formulae (in both Greek and Latin) with far more detailed curses than their predecessors did.¹⁶⁸ A 4th century CE Greek curse tablet, found in Rome, can be compared with the Selinian one above to emphasize the development of curse tablets in the ancient world:

Eulamon, restrain, Ousiri Ousiri APHI OUSIRI MNE PHRI,... and archangels, in the name of the underworld one, so that , just as I entrust to you this impious and lawless and accursed Cardelus, whom his mother Fulgentia bore, so you may bring him to a bed of punishment with an evil death, and to die within five days. Quickly! Quickly!

¹⁶³ Jordan (1985) 206.

¹⁶⁴ Faraone (1991) 5. Faraone uses the term *defigens* to name the dedicator of *defixiones*.

¹⁶⁵ Gager (1992) 5.

¹⁶⁶ *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (1976) 26-1113. See this reference for the original Greek inscription.

¹⁶⁷ Gager (1992) 139

¹⁶⁸ Versnel (1991) 60. Versnel notes that isolating Greek from Latin *defixiones* is a hindrance as Greek material is heavily influential on Latin *defixiones*.

Spell: You, Phrygian goddess, nymph goddess. Eidonea [ADONAI] NEOI EKATOIKOUSE, I invoke you by your..., so that you may help me and restrain and hold in check Cardelus and bring him to a bed of punishment, to be punished with an evil death, to come to an evil condition, him whom his mother Fulgentia bore. And you holy Eulamon, and hold characters, and holy assistants, those on the right and those on the left, and holy Symphonia[?]. These things have been written on this (Eulamon, restrain, OUSIRI OUSIRI API OUSIRI MNE PHRI) tablet made from a cold-water pipe, so that, just as I entrust you to this impious and accursed and ill-fated Cardelus, whom his mother Fulgentia bore, bound, tied up and restrained, Cardelus whom his mother Fulgentia bore, that you may so restrain him and bring him to a bed of punishment, to be punished and to die an evil death, Cardelus whom his mother Fulgentia bore, within five days, because I invoke you by the power that renews itself under the earth, the one that restrains the circles and...

- DT 155.¹⁶⁹

The Sethian curse tablet is far more detailed than its predecessor and the tablet's inscribed contents are far longer than its forerunners, mostly due to the highly repetitive formulaic language on the tablet.¹⁷⁰ For example, it repeats several times 'Cardelus whom his mother Fulgentia bore', a phrase which provided a means to identify the victim. Furthermore, later *defixiones* often place the victim under the control of a divinity. In early examples, deities are only rarely invoked on curse tablets and not in this much detail. By the 1st century BCE, *defixiones* such as the Sethian one were well attested throughout the ancient world with examples found in Egypt, Rome, Greece, Gaul and Britain.¹⁷¹ Examples of curse tablets have been dated as late as the 4th century CE showing that they were used over a long period.¹⁷² Despite the development of *defixiones*, they all generally serve the same purpose. Namely, that the outcome of a particular event is brought about in favour of the *defigens*. A desired outcome was brought about by crippling or in rare cases, killing a rival. The use of

¹⁶⁹ Audollent (1904) 208, no. 155.

¹⁷⁰ This *defixiones* is noted as the 'Sethian Tablet' due to Wunsch's argument that the Egyptian god Seth is represented on the tablet. On the Sethian tablet a figure is represented with a man's body with a Donkey's head which falls in line with the iconography associated with Seth. However, Gager also suggests that this could simply be a *daimone* tied to the horse racing. The Sethian tablet is important due to its good condition which makes it easy to read. The long inscription provides detailed insight into *defixiones* from the imperial age.

¹⁷¹ Ogden (2002) 10.

¹⁷² Ogden (2002) 210.

defixiones in the ancient world is varied as there were numerous reasons for a *defigens* to dedicate a *defixio*.

As curse tablets developed they became far more specific and specialized. Daniel Ogden notes that from the second century CE several new types of *defixiones* appear. These include ‘erotic-attaction’ curses, circus curses and athletic curses.¹⁷³ Ogden notes that the specialization of *defixiones* makes it easier to categorize them.¹⁷⁴ For example, the Sethian tablet fits into the category of highly specialized curses made to influence a specific, often competitive, aspect of society. Importantly, Ogden goes on to note that *defixiones* such as Bath’s begin to appear around the third and fourth centuries CE.¹⁷⁵ As a result, the question is raised as to whether Bath’s *defixiones* should be regarded exclusively as prayers for justice or whether they fit into a larger context of the development of *defixiones*.

Within the ancient world, prayers and curses were not mutually exclusive aspects of society. The tendency to separate the two is a modern construction of ancient religion. It is important here to highlight the difficulty in differentiating curse from prayer as both have functions which overlap. Both prayers and curses invoke the gods. Yet, as Watson suggests, ‘It is by no means clear that a distinction was clearly recognised between praying and cursing.’¹⁷⁶ Watson notes that prayers were typically addressed to particular deities, although curses were not strictly bound to this convention.

¹⁷³ Ogden (1999) 4.

¹⁷⁴ Collins (2008) 65.

¹⁷⁵ Ogden (1999) 5.

¹⁷⁶ Watson (1991) 4.

The power of prayer in the Roman world.

The Romans' relationship with their gods was contractual, legal and pragmatic. Ritual lay at the centre of Roman religion and through sacrifice and prayer the *pax deorum* was maintained.¹⁷⁷ The gods would protect a person or state if their worship was properly maintained.¹⁷⁸ Prayer was an important aspect of keeping the *pax deorum* and accompanied ritual practices such as sacrifice. John Scheid states that prayers were often made as imperatives to be understood as official instructions by a magistrate.¹⁷⁹ An example of prayer can be found at the beginning of Marcus Varro's *Rerum Rusticarum*. Varro states he will:

Et quoniam, ut aiunt, dei facientes adiuvant, prius invocabo eos, nec, ut Homerus et Ennius, Musas, sed duodecim deos consentes; neque tamen eos urbanos, quorum imagines ad forum auratae stant, sex mares et feminae totidem, sed illos XII deos, qui maxime agricolarum duces sunt.

And since, as they say, the gods aid those who ask, I will call on first, not the Muses, like Homer and Ennius, but those twelve councillor gods; but not those urban gods, whose gold gilt statues stand in the forum, six males and as many females, but those twelve who most of all are the guides of farmers. (Marcus Varro. *Rerum Rusticarum* 1.1-4).

Varro invokes the gods that benefit the growth of a farm in the countryside:

Primum, qui omnes fructos agri culturae caelo et terra continent, Iovem et Tellurem; itaque, quod ii parentes magni dicuntur, Iuppiter pater appellatur, Tellus terra mater. Secundo Solem et Lunam, quorum tempora observantur, cum quaedam seruntur et conduntur. Tertio Cererem et Liberum, quod horum fructus maxime necessari ad victum; ab his enim cibus et potio venit e fundo. Quarto Robigum ac Floram, quibus propitiis neque robigo frumenta atque arbores corrumpit, neque non tempestive florent. Itaque publice Robigo feriae Robigalia, Florae ludi Floralia institute. Item adveneror Minervam et Venerem, quarum unius procuratio oliveti, alterius hortorum; quo nomine rustica Vinalia instituta. Nec non etiam precor Lympham ac Bonum Eventum, quoniam sine aqua omnis arida ac misera agri cultura, sine successu ac bono eventu frustration est, non cultura.

First, then, I invoke Jupiter and Tellus, who, by means of the sky and the earth, embrace all the fruits of agriculture; and hence, as we are told that they are the

¹⁷⁷ Scheid (2003) 18.

¹⁷⁸ Warrior (2006) 6.

¹⁷⁹ Scheid (2003) 98.

universal parents, Jupiter is called "the Father," and Tellus is called "Mother Earth." And second, Sol and Luna, whose courses are watched in all matters of planting and harvesting. Third, Ceres and Liber, because their fruits are most necessary for life; for it is by their favour that food and drink come from the farm. Fourth, Robigus and Flora; for when they are propitious the rust will not harm the grain and the trees, and they will not fail to bloom in their season; wherefore, in honour of Robigus has been established the solemn feast of the Robigalia, and in honour of Flora the games called the Floralia. Likewise I beseech Minerva and Venus, of whom the one protects the oliveyard and the other the garden; and in her honour the rustic Vinalia has been established. And I shall not fail to pray also to Lympha and Bonus Eventus, since without moisture all tilling of the ground is parched and barren, and without success and "good issue" it is not tillage but vexation.

- Marcus Terentius Varro. *Rerum Rusticarum* I. 5-6.

Varro provides an example of how deities were invoked in Roman prayer, often for a specific purpose. Although the deities are invoked together, they are called on for their individual attributes which are beneficial in agricultural terms. For example, Minerva is called in her role as the provider of olive groves. Tibullus states a prayer to protect his fields writing:

Di patrii, purgamus agros, purgamus agrestes: uos mala de nostris pellite limitibus.

Gods of our fathers, farms are cleansed, the farmhand cleansed. You gods drive evils from our boundaries!

- Albius Tibullus. 2.1.17-20.

Specific gods are called to perform a protective function emphasizing the practical nature of Roman prayers. Yet, prayers to the gods were also made for nefarious means.¹⁸⁰ The historian Velleius Paterculus notes that before his suicide the consul Merula prayed to the gods and ‘quos saepe pro salute rei publicae flamen dialis precatus erat deos, eos in execrationem Cinnae partiumque eius tum precatus optime de re publica meritum spiritum reddidit.’ ‘implored the gods to whom, as priest of Jupiter, he had formerly prayed for the safety of the state, to visit their wrath on Cinna and his party. Thus did he yield up the life which had served the state so well.’ (Velleius Paterculus. *Compendium of Roman History Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 2.22. 2). Merula’s prayer demonstrates that there were darker aspects to prayer

¹⁸⁰ Burris (1930) 105.

as the gods could be invoked to avenge a perceived slight or to bring down political enemies. In this respect, prayers are very similar to the *defixiones* which were found in Sulis' sacred spring. Prayers for revenge in the ancient world, although beneficial to the user, were harmful to the victim, emphasizing a place where curses and prayers could intersect.

Notably, judicial *defixiones* such as Bath's feature many of the characteristics of certain gravestones. These stelai are inscribed with curses made to protect the graves from violation. For example, one notes, 'I Idameneus built this tomb to (my own) glory. May Zeus utterly destroy anyone who disturbs it' (*IG XII*, 1 737).¹⁸¹ Similarly, to judicial tablets such as Bath's, the gods are invoked only in response to an offence made to a dedicator, or in this case, the deceased. The tomb violator is cursed only if he violates the tomb. In a judicial sense, even if the violator is not caught by the local authorities, the deceased can be assured that a deity will punish the violator's transgression. Similarly at Bath, if the thief is not caught, the goddess will surely punish him. *Defixiones* did have characteristics common to prayers. A *defigens* clearly asks a deity to afflict a victim with various illnesses that assure the suffering of the victim. Furthermore, the formulaic language of *defixiones* fits in with the precise nature of Roman ritual and prayer. Greco-Roman and British examples of *defixiones* often had specific means of invoking a deity on a tablet as well as the stock language used when addressing the invoked deity. Importantly, the similarities between *defixiones* and Roman prayer highlight the difficulty in distinguishing magic from religion as the two were not mutually exclusive. In Rome, the use of *defixiones* acted as a private form of religion, highlighting the variation of religious function in Rome.

Peter Salway notes that prayer for a specific objective to a specific god was central to ancient

¹⁸¹ *Inscriptiones Graecae* (1895) Volume XII, 1, 737. Also see Lattimore (1962) 109.

life.¹⁸² Such specificity in prayers was a common feature in the worship of local gods such as Sulis. British *defixiones* highlight the relationship as Celtic deities were commonly revered on a local basis. Regularly, in British *defixiones* a single Romano-Celtic deity was invoked to retrieve a stolen object or, if the invocation fails, to punish the thief. In this sense, *defixiones* appeared as a contractual relationship between the *defigens* and the deity who was invoked on the tablet. In many cases the deity is promised a portion of the stolen goods, if they are returned, as an *ex-voto* for the deity's assistance (*RIB* 306).¹⁸³ As previously mentioned, the preoccupation with the restitution of thievery adds a legal characteristic to British *defixiones*. Bath's *defixiones* share the same prayer-like aspects as the greater *corpus* of British *defixiones*.

Yet, *defixiones* did have unique aspects which are not apparent in most prayers. A large proportion of *defixiones* address rivalry in the theatre or in sports. Often a *defigens* attempts to bind the limbs of a race horse in order to stop the horse from racing.¹⁸⁴ The act of binding limbs and people is an aspect which is characteristic of *defixiones*. For example, a curse tablet which was recovered from Rome asks a nymph, Eidonea, to restrain a victim of the curse:

I appeal to you Phrygian Goddess and Nymph Goddess Eidonea in this place that you restrain Artemios, also called Hospes, the son of Sapeda, and make him headless, footless and powerless with the horses of the Blue colours and overturn his reputation and victory.

- Wunsch, *Sethianische*, no. 29.¹⁸⁵

The anonymous dedicator hopes to influence the outcome of the races in his favour by invoking Eidonea to restrain the limbs of the chariot driver Artemios. Similarly, the action of

¹⁸² Salway (1993) 484.

¹⁸³ This aspect is not even common amongst British *defixiones*, although the stolen objects may have been implicitly devoted to the deities upon their return. There is no evidence to suggest that altars were made as an *ex-voto* for fulfilled curses on tablets.

¹⁸⁴ Gager (1992) 65.

¹⁸⁵ Wünsch (1898) 40, no. 29.

binding is used to influence matters of love. Erotic *defixiones* were used to bind rivals of love or to prevent the marriage of one's love interest. One tablet from Greece notes:

I bind Theadora in the presence of one at Persephone's side and in the presence of those who are unmarried. May she be unmarried and whenever she is about to chat with Kallias and with Charias-- whenever she is about to discuss deeds and words and business. Whatever he indeed says. I bind Theadora to remain unmarried to Charias and (I bind) Charias to forget Theadora, and I bind Charias to forget Theadora and sex with Theadora.
- DTA 78.¹⁸⁶

It is clear that the *defigens* wishes to keep the object of his affection, Theadora, away from a suitor as well as trying to influence the suitor, Charias, into keeping his distance from Theadora. Rather than simply paralyzing a victim's body part, the act of binding in later *defixiones* also binds the victim to the divinity tasked with cursing the victim. For example, Theadora is bound to Persephone and Eulamon has had Cardelus entrusted to him. In these examples, most of the curse's power comes from a deity (or deities). Furthermore, the dedication of people to deities was already an established convention of prayer. Livy describes the dedication and sacrifice of Decius Mus along with the opposing army to the *Manes* and *Terra* in order to secure victory for Rome (Livy. *Ab Urbe Condita Libri* 8. 6. 9). The convention of dedicating a victim to the gods may have been an aspect which *defixiones* later borrowed from other forms of religion such as prayer. As previously noted, early *defixiones* simply identified a part of the body to be bound. However, *defixiones* differ tonally as they were used to dedicate a personal enemy or rival to a deity often considered chthonic. Furthermore, the *defixiones* differed from conventional religion and prayer as *defixiones* would often be unleashed upon a fellow citizen. As such, the application and intention of *defixiones* made them appear to be bad.

¹⁸⁶ Gager (1992) 90, no. 22.

The formulae and subject of *defixiones*.

Defixiones whether British, Roman or otherwise, drew from a pre-existing stock of religious formulae and verses.¹⁸⁷ But these formulae were adapted to suit the purpose of the *defigens* using a *defixio*. For example, imperial *defixiones* were used to address private concerns such as rivals in love as well as the addition of binding victim's limbs. Furthermore, the addition of *voces mysticae*, foreign gods and other 'magical' phenomena to *defixiones* shows an adaptation of traditional religion rather than an entirely new aspect of the supernatural world. Additionally, the syncretistic nature of Roman religion meant that characteristics from foreign cultures were added. Graf also appropriately notes that the verses and formulae found in curses tablets can also be found in other religious activities such as prayer.¹⁸⁸

Versnel has suggested that the terms 'entrusting', 'dedicating' or 'handing over' the victim is a way of referring to the gods' jurisdiction and influence.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, Scheid notes that the *defixiones* acted a form of 'votive contract' between the *defigens* and the deity invoked.¹⁹⁰ The contractual aspect of later *defixiones* is similar to the legal nature of Roman religion. The legal relationship is clear between Bath's *defigentes* and the goddess Sulis. Hence, through the dedication to a deity a curse received more supernatural clout due to the power which came with the close proximity to a deity. By dedicating the victim to a deity, the *defigens* gains assurance that the curse will work. Through both their similarities and differences to conventional prayers, *defixiones* can be regarded as a specialized form of prayer.

¹⁸⁷ Graf (1991) 197.

¹⁸⁸ Graf (1991) 197.

¹⁸⁹ Versnel (1991) 90.

¹⁹⁰ Scheid (2003) 105.

In contrast, Cunliffe recognises the lack of ‘religious language’ present in Bath’s *defixiones*.¹⁹¹ Bath’s tablets are inscribed with a variety of stock formulae, but there is no strictly set form on how to address Sulis through a *defixio*. It is important to note that ‘formulaic’ does not mean that each tablet was identical with no room for individuality; rather, similar phrases were employed in the tablets’ creation. For example, some of Bath’s tablets simply list names (Tab. Sul. 2), while others include intricate formulae designed to cast a wide net over a variety of suspects (Tab. Sul. 44). The large variety of formulae suggests a freer composition than the specific rituals or prayers which are common in Roman religion. However, the function of ‘devoting’ a victim to Sulis is a ‘prayer-like’ aspect which Bath’s curse tablets share with other *defixiones* and Roman Prayer.

Bath’s *defixiones* share many similarities with their cousins from other parts of the ancient world. One tablet uses the term *devoveo*, meaning ‘I curse.’ (Tab. Sulis. 10). Similarly, tablet 99 uses the verb *execro* meaning ‘I curse’ (Tab. Sulis. 99); in both instances, the victim curses the thief. This point is interesting as at least, to some petitioners, Bath’s tablets acted in the form of *defixiones*. Yet, relatively few of Bath’s tablets curse the victim. Typically punishment is placed in the hands of the goddess.

The majority of Bath’s *defixiones* are very similar in form to other *defixiones*. Bath’s tablets were inscribed pewter sheets which were rolled or folded before being deposited into Sulis’ spring (fig. 13). Bath’s *defixiones* incorporated many features of curse tablets. For example, several of Bath’s *defixiones* had curses inscribed with the Latin written in reverse (Tab. Sul.

¹⁹¹ Cunliffe (1988) 70.

44, 61, 62, 98, 99). The act of writing the curse backwards was common amongst curse tablets all over the ancient world.¹⁹² By reversing the text, Bath's *defixiones* become more difficult to read achieving a form of 'secret text'. Additionally, tablet 4 includes an example of sympathetic magic. This refers to using the medium of the tablet or its deposition site to influence the curse. So tablet 4 notes, 'qu(i) mihi VILBIAM in(v)olavit sic liquat com(o)(do) aqua.' 'May he who has stolen VILBIA from me become as liquid as water' (Tab. Sul. 4).¹⁹³ The 'water' refers to the water in Sulis' spring; the *defigens* was using Sulis' spring to increase the power of the curse. The use of sympathetic magic, although not uniform, is very common amongst Greco-Roman *defixiones*. For example:

As these names are chilled, so let the name, the soul, the passion, the mind, the spirit, the reasoning of Eros be chilled.
- D.R. Jordan. 'Agora', no.1 (1975).

However, the most striking resemblance is the way in which the victims were punished on Bath's *defixiones*. Similarly to other *defixiones*, Bath's *defixiones* will often transfer, or dedicate, the thief into the goddess' possession. In many of Bath's *defixiones*, the *defigens* chooses to 'give' the thief to Sulis rather than the item which was stolen. For example, Tablet 61 notes, 'Lovernisca d(onat) eum qui sive v(ir)i sive femina s(i)ve puer sive puella qui mafortium involaverit', 'Lovernisca [gives] him who, whether man or woman, whether boy or girl, who has stolen her cape.' (Tab. Sul. 61). Similarly to the Sethian Tablet and the erotic tablet, Lovernisca places an unknown thief into the power of a deity. However, the thief was not bound as Cardalus and Theadora were but given to Sulis as if the person were

¹⁹² Ogden (1999) 29.

¹⁹³ Tablet 4 is the only tablet in Bath's cache which uses sympathetic magic in its composition. There is also doubt as to whether Vilbia refers to a woman or whether is a spelling error made by the author. There are no other curse tablets in Bath's cache referring to people as the objects stolen. Cunliffe notes that the short list of suspects for a stolen love would also be shorter than the list on tablet 4. (see Cunliffe [1988] 4).

an item.¹⁹⁴ The act of binding or giving a victim to a deity does not make him a divine slave to the deity but rather, as previously mentioned, places him under the control of the deity. Furthermore, if the thief is given to a deity such as Sulis, the deity's attention is drawn to the existence of the thief. In theory, the invoked deity would then pursue the thief and exact the curse which was inscribed on the tablet.

Differences between Bath's *defixiones* and examples from the Mediterranean.

Conversely, Bath's *defixiones*, along with other British variants, lacked several features which were typical in imperial curse tablets. Primarily Bath's *defixiones* lacked *voces mysticae*, which were a series of distorted words which Gager notes can cover up to ninety percent of a tablet.¹⁹⁵ Fritz Graf has suggested that *voces mysticae* were a list of secret names or epithets which belonged to the divinity invoked.¹⁹⁶ The knowledge of these 'secret names' acted as credentials which added to power to the *defigens* and *defixio*. It has been argued that the *voces mysticae* are used to bind a divinity to one's will. *Voces mysticae* are present on the Sethian *defixio* mentioned above. The tablet notes 'Ousiri Ousiri APhi OUSIRI MNE PHRI' with three of the words appearing in a mystic language (DT. 155).¹⁹⁷ Similarly, *defixiones* from Hadrumentum in North Africa highlights the use of *voces mysticae* stating, 'HUESSE[M]IGAD[O]N IA[O] BAUBO EEAEIE' (DT 295).¹⁹⁸ Notably, in both tablets the *voces mysticae* appear in large writing. This aspect may function to add power to the *voces*

¹⁹⁴ The verb *donat* 'he/she gives' is used on the majority Bath's *defixiones*. *Donat* appears in its third person, singular present as *Lovernisca* refers to herself in the third person on Tablet 61.

¹⁹⁵ Gager (1992) 7.

¹⁹⁶ Graf (1991) 192.

¹⁹⁷ Audollent (1904) 208, no. 155.

¹⁹⁸ Audollent (1904) 409, no. 295.

mysticae and seize the chosen deity's attention. The *voces mysticae* were considered particularly helpful when coercing a deity to curse someone.¹⁹⁹

Many Greco-Roman *defixiones* included such *voces mysticae*. However, the lack of *voces mysticae* in Bath's tablets emphasizes the legal nature of the *defixiones*. Rather than binding Sulis, she is being petitioned for help. The highly legal structure of Bath's and British *defixiones* generally make the use of *voces mysticae* and other religious language unnecessary. In addition, the hyper-correct grammar found in British Vulgar Latin meant that there was little room for strings of 'secretive names' or 'unintelligible' writing. Consequently, British *defixiones* such as Bath's have a distinct lack of *voces mysticae* found on their tablets.

British *defixiones* differ tonally from Greco-Roman equivalents in that they lack the selfish motives often present in traditional curse tablets. In British curse, tablets the identification of the thief also highlighted the thief's guilt in the eyes of the *defigens*. In a judicial sense, British dedicators were identifying the people who had wronged them and placing them under the deity's judgement. Deities such as Sulis would in turn hunt down the criminal who was brought to their attention. Consequently, *defixiones* such as Sulis' highlight characteristics of *defixiones* which can be interpreted as a judicial appeal to a deity for help, displaying the versatile nature of *defixiones* and prayers and how the two categories may intersect.

¹⁹⁹ Graf (1991) 191.

Cunliffe notes that the ‘legalism’ in Bath’s *defixiones* is more striking than their ‘religiosity’.²⁰⁰ There was great variation of formulae in Bath’s tablets, from simply listing the names of suspect thieves on the *defixio* to detailed inscribed instructions as to how Sulis should punish thieves. Some tablets ask that the thief to pay with his blood while others do not; such variety suggests that there was no strict ritual when approaching Sulis to recover items. Furthermore, Cunliffe remarks on the legalism of Bath’s *defixiones* noting the use of verbs which reflect a legal petition.²⁰¹ Notably, the tablets include the use of legal terms such as *vindicere*, to exact reparation or to avenge (Tab. Sul. 35) or *satisfacere*, to give satisfaction or make amends (Tab. Sul. 94).²⁰² In addition, catch-all phrases such as *si vir si femina* and *si servus si liber* reflect a legal attempt to identify criminals to Sulis the judge. Notably, tablet 97 curses anyone who ‘keeps silent or knows anything about’ a stolen silver ring (Tab. Sul. 97). Those with knowledge of the ring’s theft were punished for not coming forward with information. As previously stated, Bath’s *defixiones* are more notable for their legal than their religious language. Consequently, Bath’s tablets acted as a specialized legal petition to a goddess from those who have no legal representation elsewhere.

In many cases Bath’s tablets simply state ‘the name of the thief is given’ (Tab. Sul 15, 16).²⁰³ In Tablets such as 15 and 16, the stolen object and the name of the thief are not written down but implied. Christopher Faraone suggests that simplistic *defixiones* such as Tablets 15 and 16 were accompanied by verbal incantation and during this incantation the name of the thief and the stolen object were given.²⁰⁴ Faraone’s theory is possible at Bath as there are many

²⁰⁰ Cunliffe (1988) 70.

²⁰¹ Cunliffe (1988) 70.

²⁰² *Satisfecere* is commonly used in the formula *sanguine suo satisfacere*, to amend with one’s blood. This was a common formula across British *defixiones*.

²⁰³ Interestingly, the name of the thief is not present on the *defixiones* as is suggested. It has been noted by scholars such as Faraone and Gager that the name of accursed was invoked orally on the *defixiones*. This may have been the case with tablets 15 and 16.

²⁰⁴ Faraone (1991) 4.

examples of *defixiones* which simply include a list of names. For example, Tablets 30 and 51 simply list various names without a statement of cursing or a description of the lost item (Tab. Sul. 30, 51).²⁰⁵ On such ambiguous *defixiones* it is difficult to discern whether or not the thief was given to Sulis as there is no statement saying that the *defigens* was doing so. In many cases, the *defigens* may not know the name of the thief or have a specific suspect in mind. By stating ‘the name of the thief is given’ the *defigens* may be noting that although they do not know the identity of the thief, Sulis may know the thief’s identity. Alternatively, to Faraone’s hypothesis, *defixiones* such as 15 and 16 may simply present shorter means of the thief is identified through long catch-all formulae such as those in tablets 32 and 36 (Tab. Sul. 32, 36). When the names of potential criminals are listed the *defigens* likely thought it was important that Sulis knew the identity of the criminal to be hunted. It was therefore not always necessary to include elaborate inscriptions detailing the thief’s punishment.²⁰⁶ This aspect of Bath’s *defixiones* is reminiscent of much earlier examples of curse tablets such as a tablet found in Attica which notes, ‘All the choral directors and the assistant choral directors with Theagenes, both the directors and the assistant choral directors’ (DTA 34).²⁰⁷ Similarly to Bath’s tablet 30, a list of victims is given with the act of cursing implied. In this way, some of Bath’s *defixiones* are reminiscent of earlier curse tablets with the *defigens* showing knowledge of an earlier, more simplistic, tradition of cursing.

The reason thieves were placed under Sulis’ influence was because it provided the means for Sulis to track them. For example Tablet 65 notes:

²⁰⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 146. Tablet 30 is inscribed on a pewter plate and is the only example of a plate used a curse tablet in Bath’s cache of *defixiones*. The medium of the plate is pewter keeping in line with Bath’s other *defixiones*. However, Cunliffe notes that the plate has the most elegant Latin from all the texts from the spring.

²⁰⁶ Faraone (1991) 4. Faraone suggests that both the oral and written aspects *defixiones* were developed at the same time.

²⁰⁷ Gager (1992) 49, no. 1.

Minerv(a)e de(ae) Suli donavi furem qui caracallam meam involavit si ser(v)us si liber si baro si mulier hoc donum non redemat nessi sangu(i)n[e] suo.

I have given the thief who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether slave or free, whether man or woman. He is not to buy back this gift unless with his own blood.
- Tab. Sul. 65.

In Tablets 61 and 65 the thief is committed to Sulis due to stolen items. Furthermore, Tablet 65 states that the thief will pay for his indiscretion. Rather than simply harming the victim, Sulis was expected to act as a kind of supernatural law enforcer who would find the thief. If the item cannot be returned to its owner, Sulis is expected to punish the thief, often by making the thief reimburse the item with his blood. Consequently, the thief is placed under Sulis' jurisdiction and judgement as the thief is punished only if the stolen items are not returned. Sulis' invocation differs to that of other deities who are summoned specifically to do harm to an unsuspecting victim.

Similarly to common *defixiones*, Sulis' victims are subjected to various forms of gruesome punishment. Furthermore, Bath's *defixiones* subjected thieves to a large variation of curses ranging from a simplistic list of names to detailed accounts of how Sulis should deal with the thief and stolen goods. In this way, curses inscribed on Bath's cache are suggestive of other *defixiones*. Gager notes that commonly a *defixio* would seek to impact negatively the health of the victim.²⁰⁸ Through a *defixio*, the victim was often subjected to various ailments such as illnesses, impotency, sleeplessness and mental disability. Many of these afflictions are used to punish Bath's thieves. For example Tablet 54 notes:

N[on il[l]I p]ermittas nec sedere nec iacere [ne]c ... a[m]bulare n[ec] somn[um nec] sanitatem [?cu]m quontocius consumas.

²⁰⁸ Gager (1992) 21.

You are not to permit [him] to sit or lie [or... or] to walk [or] (to have) sleep [or] health. [since] you are to consume (him) as soon as possible.
 - Tab. Sul. 54.

The *defigens* asks Sulis to punish a thief with a range of ailments which impact the health of the thief. Tablet 54 can be compared with an Athenian law tablet which notes ‘Let Eutuchianos grow cold and not be in condition this coming Friday’ (Jordan, *Agora* no. 1).²⁰⁹ Notably, both tablets attempt to affect the health of victims highlighting similarities between the two groups of *defixiones*.

Although Bath’s *defixiones* and ‘traditional’ *defixiones* share similar variations of punishments, Bath’s tablets differ tonally. Bath’s *defigentes* ask that Sulis punishes her victims gruesomely; in contrast with common Greco-Roman *defixiones* such punishment is reactionary. In most cases the thief is only punished because he has stolen something from the owner. In turn, a curse is incited on the behalf of the *defigens*. Versnel notes that illness caused by supernatural forces was a powerful motivator to return stolen goods.²¹⁰ In doing so, the thief would have the chance to cure the affliction placed on him by an avenging deity. However, if the item was not returned (the likely case) the *defigens* could take comfort in Sulis’ punishment of the thief.

Furthermore, if the stolen goods could not be returned Sulis was commonly asked to reimburse the item through the thief’s health. Amongst British *defixiones* it is common for a stolen item to be paid for with the thief’s blood.²¹¹ Bath’s tablets are no exception to this

²⁰⁹ Jordan (1975) 246. The *defixio* is too fragmentary to know what the *defigens* wanted Eutuchianos to ‘not be in condition’. The curse’s location has led Jordan to believe that Eutuchianos was a rival in the law courts.

²¹⁰ Versnel (1991) 84.

²¹¹ Versnel (1991) 84.

formula as many of Bath's *defigentes* ask for blood as repayment for lost items. Likewise, In Tablet 99 Deomiorix asks Sulis to punish the thief who robbed his house, asking, 'inveniat sanguine et vitae suae illud redemat' 'let him buy it back with (his) blood and his own life' (Tab. Sul. 99). Similarly to the use of illness, the thief pays with his health to ensure the *defigens* is compensated for his loss. In many cases the punishment is made to fit the crime. Tablet 44 describes the theft of a bronze vessel and curses the thief to 'spill his own blood into the vessel itself' (Tab. Sul. 44). Moreover, the act of filling the vessel with blood would make the item less useful.²¹² Consequently, if the vessel remains missing it becomes tainted and useless to other thieves who may acquire it.

Additionally, curses in 'traditional' *defixiones* were often final and irrevocable with no option for the thief to repeal or remove the curse. In contrast, Sulis' curses are often provisional. For example, Tablet 45 notes:

Side A: Deae Suli.[... ..]. Is qu[i

Side B: si servus si liber <si> qui<s> cumq[ue] erit non illi permittas nec oculos nec sanitatem nisi caecitatem orbitatemque quoad vixerit nisi haec ad fanum [

To the goddess Sulis... whether slave or free, <if> whoever he shall be, you are not to permit him eyes or health unless blindness and childlessness so long as he shall live, unless [he...] these to the temple.

Tab. Sul. 45.

In this case the thief is only punished if the stolen item is not returned to Sulis' temple.

Tonally, Bath's *defixiones* lack the unprovoked attacks which characterize most *defixiones*. In most cases, Bath's *defigens* are more interested in the safe return of the stolen item rather than making sure that the thief suffers. As Tablet 45 emphasizes, the thief's health is affected only if he does not return the stolen items to Sulis' temple. In this way, Bath's tablets can be

²¹² Tablet 44 is the only example of Bath's cache of *defixiones* to include the violation of the stolen item.

seen to align with ‘judicial prayers’ rather than curses, as Sulis is petitioned to find a thief and the item he or she stole, with punishment as the consequence only if the item cannot be returned.

Furthermore, Cunliffe notes that Bath’s *defixiones* did include elements of sacrifice.²¹³ As previously mentioned, Bath’s thieves were dedicated to Sulis for punishment. This aspect of the *defixiones* is reminiscent of the function of sacrifice as the thief’s life becomes Sulis’ property. The frequent mention of blood payment in Bath’s *defixiones* may also be a reference to sacrifice. Both Sulis and the *defigens* benefit from blood sacrifice as the stolen item is recompensed to the *defigens* while Sulis receives the blood of the thief, or the thief’s livelihood. It is worth noting, however, that the idea of blood payment is not unique to Sulis’ *defixiones*. The action of ceding an item to the deity is a characteristic which is common amongst ‘judicial prayer’ tablets.²¹⁴ Within Britain it was common for a British *defigens* to turn over their stolen property to a deity to retrieve. For example, a tablet addressed to Nemesis states:

Domna nemesis do tibi palleum et galliculas qui tulit non redimat ni[si] vita
sanguinei sui

Lady Nemesis! I give you this cloak and these shoes. May the person who has worn them not buy back (them) except with his own life and blood.
-*Magika*, no. 100.²¹⁵

Nemesis has been given possession over stolen property to exact an appropriate punishment from the thief. Additionally, the tablet addressed to Nemesis tablet shares a common interest with Sulis’ *defixiones* in ‘blood payment’ for a stolen item. The idea of buying an item back

²¹³ Cunliffe (1988) 70.

²¹⁴ Gager (1992) 175.

²¹⁵ Versnel (1991) 198, no. 100.

with the thief's blood is a common motif in British curse tablets with various deities asked to reimburse an item with blood, for example, Mercury.²¹⁶ In a legal sense, blood payment is an appropriate punishment for an unreturnable item in a supernatural court overseen by a deity.

Bath's *defixiones* conform to broader British characteristics as Bath's *defigentes* will often dedicate their stolen items to Sulis. Accordingly, Sulis is asked to retrieve a variety of items from suspected thieves. For example Tablet 8 notes:

[d]eae Sulis donavi [arge-]ntiolos sex quos perd[idi] a nomin[i]bus infrascr[i]tis deae exactura est Senicia(n)us et Saturninus <sed> et Ann[i]ola carta picta persc[ripta]

I have given to the goddess Sulis the six silver coins which I have lost. It is for the goddess to exact (them) from the names written below. Seniciacus and Saturninus and Anniola.

- Tab. Sul. 8.

In Tablet 8, the sum of stolen money becomes Sulis'. As a result, the *defigens* has made the slight against him also an offence to Sulis' divinity as by dedicating the stolen objects to Sulis they have become sacred objects. Consequently, recovering the stolen item was not only a human issue but one of divine concern. As the thief has stolen sacred objects from a deity, the crime is far worse than stealing from a human. Thus, the punishment is worse. The act of stealing a deity's property may justify the harsh punishments which are inscribed on the *defixiones*. Ceding of stolen goods to a divinity also emphasizes the judicial aspects of Bath's *defixiones*. The stolen goods are clearly identified with Sulis, who was then expected to recover the items from the thief. By identifying the item, Sulis knows what she is looking for. Tablet 62 goes to great lengths to specify the stolen item stating, '*perdedi la[enam] [pa]lleum sagum paxsum*' '(my) Italian/Greek/Gallic cloak (and) tunic (Tab. Sul. 62). Similarly to identifying victims, Tablet 62 ensures that all possibilities are taken into

²¹⁶ Hassall, Wright (1973) 325, no. 3, *Britannia* 4 (1973) no. 3 p. 325.

consideration when identifying the stolen cloak. The item is also placed under Sulis' jurisdiction through its cession into Sulis' possession.

In many British examples however, the deity invoked on a *defixio* is often given only a portion of the stolen item in exchange for help. For example, a tablet from Nottinghamshire donates to Jupiter 'one-tenth of the sum when he pays it' (*JRS* 53).²¹⁷ The act of giving a portion of the stolen item is distinctive to British *defixiones* and can be seen in many examples, (*JRS* 48²¹⁸, no. 3, *DT* 106).²¹⁹ Having said that, as previously noted by Cunliffe, the spilling of blood or the dedication of the thief may have been payment enough. Furthermore, many of Bath's tablets compel the thief to return the stolen items to Sulis' temple complex (Tab. Sul. 10, 32). The ex-votive offering may be implied when the stolen item returns to the temple.

Similarly to the variety of formulaic language, the places where *defixiones* were deposited varied. This depended on which forces were invoked on the tablets. Curse tablets were deposited in graves, chthonic sanctuaries and bodies of water.²²⁰ These sites were notable for their connection with the underworld and chthonic forces which were popular in Greco-Roman *defixiones*.²²¹ The same variation of deposition sites is clear all over the ancient world. For example, in ancient Britain, *defixiones* addressed to various divinities have been found in temples, wells and sacred springs. In many cases they were placed in the location they were made to affect. For example a curse tablet made to bind chariot racers could be

²¹⁷ Turner (1963) 123.

²¹⁸ Audollent (1904) 159, no 106.

²¹⁹ Wright and Richmond (1958) 150, no. 3.

²²⁰ Ogden (2002) 210.

²²¹ Faraone (1991) 9-10.

placed on the hippodrome floor.²²² There was no standardized placement of curse tablets; they were placed where they were thought to work best.

Bath's tablets are no exception to this as they were only found in Sulis' sacred spring, which lay within the centre of her temple complex. The placement of Bath's *defixiones* makes sense in legal terms, as placing the *defixiones* within the deities' sacred boundaries helps to legitimize the cession of potential thieves or, in Sulis' case, stolen property over to the care of the goddess. As Sulis' sacred spring was the focal point of her power, placing the tablet here meant that the *defigens* could maximise their connection to Sulis as well as the amount of influence Sulis has on the curse. In addition, Ogden suggests that 'prayers for justice' such as Bath's could be placed in non-chthonic sanctuaries and be addressed to 'ordinary divinities.'²²³ However, as little is known about Sulis there is no easy way to discern whether Sulis is a chthonic entity or not. In addition, it is clear that 'prayers for justice' did not exclude chthonic entities as deities such as Hermes and Nemesis who have been invoked in a similar way to Sulis (*Magika*, no. 100).²²⁴

In addition, Greco-Roman curse tablets differ tonally from British equivalents. In most Greco-Roman tablets the victims are bound, impeding their success and therefore ensuring (in theory) the dedicator's own desired attainments. In this way *defixiones* had a selfish tone as they existed predominantly to further the author's own aims by inflicting pain on a victim. Aside from personal gain, there is no other reason to dedicate a curse tablet. In most cases the author has no previous grievance with the victim inscribed on the curse tablet. Furthermore,

²²² Gager (1992) 18.

²²³ Ogden (1999) 15.

²²⁴ Versnel (1991) 198, no. 100.

the *defigens* provides no statement defending the action of dedicating *defixiones*. The selfish tone of curse tablets can further be emphasized in the interaction between the *defigens* and deities who were invoked on the *defixiones*. Versnel notes that the divinities that were typically invoked on *defixiones* were chthonic or had a strong connection to the underworld, death or magic.²²⁵ John Gager supports Versnel's consideration, noting that the most commonly invoked deities on *defixiones* are Hermes, Hekate, Persephone, Hades and Gaia. Latin equivalents included a very similar list of divinities noting Mercury, *Manes*, Jupiter, Pluto, Nemesis and various water nymphs.²²⁶

As the previously mentioned *defixiones* demonstrate, curse tablets became far more syncretic as time progressed, incorporating a wide variety of foreign deities. Egyptian and Jewish deities were particularly popular in Rome.²²⁷ The predominant reason for including foreign deities was that they embodied chthonic aspects that matched their Greco-Roman counterparts. The partiality for chthonic entities parallels the dark nature of the deities and the dark work of curses rather than a connection with death. Many of Britain's *defixiones* are syncretic in nature. Large portions of British *defixiones* are dedicated to Celtic deities, such as Sulis, who are in turn equated to a Roman deity. Sulis' connection with Minerva provides one example.

The Relationship between *defigentes* and deities on curse tablets.

In Bath, however, the relationship between deity and *defigens* does not appear to be traditional. In most cases the deities invoked on traditional Greco-Roman *defixiones* are

²²⁵ Versnel (1991) 64.

²²⁶ Gager (1992) 12.

²²⁷ Collins (2008) 72.

coerced or ordered into carrying out the curses which were inscribed in *defixiones*.²²⁸ For example a Greek *defixio* commands Hermes to bind a pimp and his working women:

I bind Theon, himself and his girls and his trade and his work-opportunities and his work and his speech and his deeds. Underworld Hermes, perform this act of restraint and keep reading this so long as these people live.
- DT 52.²²⁹

Hermes is told rather than asked to perform the curse which was inscribed on the tablet. Most notably the last sentence conveys to the reader that the curser expects Hermes to keep the binding on Theon in place indefinitely in order to make Theon's life miserable. Hermes is coerced into cursing Theon as he cannot rest until he does the *defigens*' bidding.

Consequently, we can see how a divinity can be forced into applying a curse to a victim. The Sethian curse tablet similarly orders its comprehensive list of deities into binding the chariot racer; notably the *defigens* asks the divinities to hurry with the cursing stating, "Quickly! Quickly!" (DT 155).²³⁰ Graf notes that the coercing of gods has become a defining property of magic.²³¹ Although *defixiones* drew from common religious tradition, the coercion of deities seems out of place when compared to the typical status quo between mortal and god. The imperative tone of these *defixiones* shows little reverence for the divine status of the deities. Furthermore, the deity is not promised a votive offering nor a token of thanks in the event that the curse is not fulfilled. Consequently, *defixiones* highlight a strange reversal of the religious 'status quo' with mortals making demands upon a deity. As such, the self-serving tone of the *defixiones* is well represented through the *defigens*' relationship with the divinities he invokes.

²²⁸ Ogden (1999) 45.

²²⁹ Audollent (1904) 87, no. 52. Ogden (2002) 215, no. 177.

²³⁰ Audollent (1904) 208, no. 155.

²³¹ Graf (1997) 222.

In addition, the *defigens*' demanding nature towards an invoked deity contrasts with the highly pragmatic nature of Roman religion. Notably, Versnel states that *defixiones* use the 'minimum criteria' of prayer, a point emphasized through the imperative tone of common curse tablets.²³² As a result, the normally contractual nature between deity and mortal is missing from traditional curse tablets. Deities such as Ousiris and Eidonia noted in the Sethian curse tablet above are ordered to restrain a victim without any form of *votum* to the deity. When considering Bath's own *defixiones* Sulis is almost exclusively invoked on the tablets; the only variation occurs when Sulis was invoked together with Minerva. Notably there are few instances where specialized terms of imprecation are used in Bath's *defixiones*.

Defixiones which use an imperative tone and language highlight a sense of urgency in the curse on the Sethian tablet.²³³ The *defigens* wants Cardelus to be crippled within five days. By compelling the deity rather than asking, the *defigens* gains assurance the curse will be carried out faster. Faraone supports this view, noting that coercion of a deity was often used as a prompt when the divinity did not act quickly enough.²³⁴ As previously mentioned, the *voces mysticae* may have represented alternative names or epithets of deities. In turn, the *voces mysticae* bring the *defigens* closer to the invoked deities.

Fritz Graf has suggested that a higher divinity must be invoked in order to manipulate lower beings such as the *daimones* or the *aoroi*.²³⁵ Returning to the Sethian tablet, the tablet invokes the god Osiris before noting 'and archangels, in the name of the underworld one' (*DT* 155).²³⁶ As the greater Egyptian deities Osiris, Mnevis and Apis are invoked, the *defigens* is also able

²³² Versnel (1991) 61.

²³³ See page Chapter 2, page 53 for a discussion on the Sethian curse tablet.

²³⁴ Faraone (1991) 194.

²³⁵ Graf (1997) 226.

²³⁶ Audollent (1904) 208, no. 155.

to invoke lower supernatural beings such as the archangels. Furthermore, as Osiris is the Egyptian god who presides over the afterlife, the *defigens* is able to make a direct connection to the ‘underworld one’.²³⁷ This hierarchy is apparent in other examples such as one which invokes the ‘*daimones*’ in connection with Kronos and Typhon (*DT* 295).²³⁸ Importantly, this supernatural hierarchy only became prominent during the Roman imperial age, as a result of extensive fusion between Roman, Greek and other foreign religions.

Conversely, the coercion of deities and reversal of the *status quo* between god and mortals is missing in British *defixiones*. In most cases the deities who are invoked on British tablets are ‘petitioned’, ‘addressed’ or ‘entreated’ rather than ordered. Furthermore, the idea of a supernatural hierarchy is not a feature of British *defixiones* as only a single deity is summoned. The beginnings of the texts on the tablets from Bath highlight their first contrast with typical *defixiones* as the first words are important when establishing the relationship between goddess and invoker. Versnel notes that supplication and submissive language are rare in *defixiones*.²³⁹ Sulis’ dominance over the petitioner is made clear from the start of many of Bath’s *defixiones*. She is invoked respectfully with full reverence given to her status as a deity. For example, on Tablet 10 Sulis is invoked; ‘Docilianus Bruceri deae sanctisiim(a)e’, ‘Docilianus (son) of Brucerus to the most holy goddess Sulis.’ (Tab. Sul. 10). Tablet 10 highlights the relationship between Sulis and her petitioners. By addressing Sulis as ‘holy’, Docilianus clearly acknowledges Sulis’ divinity and in turn, her superiority to him. Sulis is addressed with various titles which refer to her divine status. For example, Sulis is invoked with titles such as ‘Goddess Sulis’ (Tab. Sul. 8), ‘Lady Goddess’ (98) and ‘Sacred Majesty’ (35). In judicial tablets the deity retains the dominant role in the relationship with

²³⁷ Gager (1992) 70. Gager notes that the ‘underworld one’ is almost certainly a reference to the spirit of the deceased.

²³⁸ Audollent (1904) 409, no. 295.

²³⁹ Versnel (1991) 61.

the *defigens*, a point which may be linked to the judicial role which is expected of deities in judicial prayer tablets.

In other tablets the status quo is made more vivid. Tablet 35 notes:

Deae Sul[i] Minervae rogo [s]anctissimam maiestatem tuam u[t] vindices ab his [q]ui
[fra-] [ude]m fecerunt ut ei[s per-] mittas nec s(o)mnum [nec []]. []. .[

To the goddess Sulis Minerva. I ask your most sacred majesty that you take
vengeance on those who have done (me) wrong.
- Tab. Sul. 35.

Although the petitioner is not named, clearly the individual is addressing Sulis. As such, Bath's tablets exemplify a traditional relationship between goddess and mortal. The author is submissive to the goddess. By entreating the goddess to help, rather than commanding her, all the power to punish the criminal lies with Sulis. As such, the *defigens* is entirely dependent on the goddess when seeking justice. Through the *defixiones* Sulis presides as a judge either by retrieving the stolen item or appropriately punishing the thief. As such, the *defigens* must approach Sulis in respectful terms. The judicial aspect contrasts to the coercive relationship between the deity and petitioner in traditional curse tablets. However, as with previous *defixiones*, Bath's tablets draw their power directly from Sulis.

Dedicators of Bath's *defixiones* express a clear sentiment that they have been wronged by someone. The injustices suffered by a victim are almost always mentioned on Bath's tablets. One tablet notes, 'Minerv(a)e de(ae) Suli donavi furem qui caracallam meam involavit', 'To Minerva the goddess Sulis I have given the thief who has stolen my hooded cloak' (Tab. Sul. 65). The victim feels affronted through the theft of his cloak. The situation is important as it provides a justification for invoking Sulis to avenge his wrong. This situation provides a clear contrast to *defixiones* placed within other categories. Tablets such as Bath's reflect a need to

avenge an offence rather than furthering one's aims in politics or to cripple a rival. However, Bath's tablets should not be disregarded completely as *defixiones*, since distinguishing prayer from curse and the occult from religion can be difficult.

Typically, Bath's *defixiones* begin much like letters which the victims address to Sulis, often stating their own names in the process. For example, Tablet 32 states 'deae Suli Minerv(a)e Solinus', 'Solinus to the goddess Sulis Minerva' (Tab. Sul. 32). The author of a curse tablet identifying himself is fairly irregular within the realm of *defixiones*. In doing so, the author has revealed his name on the tablet. Such personal identification is contrary to the secretive nature of *defixiones*. But in a prayer, especially one aimed at fixing a slight, it is important to identify oneself as the supplicant in need of the deity's aid. The *defigentes* lodge their complaints with Sulis, but Sulis must carry out the punishment at her will and when she chooses. The victim appeals to Sulis as one would to a magistrate, a point which highlights the formulaic nature of Bath's *defixiones*. Although such formulae keep in line with previous curse tablets, they also highlight the aspects of Bath's 'prayers' which make them different. For example tablet 34 notes:

Deae Suli Minervae Docca dono numina tuo pecuniam quam [c.5 a] misi id est (donarios) (quinque).

Docca to the goddess Sulis Minerva. I give to your divinity the money which I have lost, that is five denarii.

- Tab. Sul. 34.

Rather than an anonymous dedication, the victims often (although not always) name themselves on the tablet, emphasizing their victimization at the hands of thieves as well as absolving themselves of negative implications when dedicating *defixiones*. The *defigentes'* self-identification on the *defixiones* is indicative of votive offerings as the dedicators of *vota* were not usually anonymous. This highlights a difference between Bath's *defixiones* and

those found in Rome because curse tablets were often anonymously deposited. In addition, similarly to votive offerings it was appropriate for the *defigens* to name themselves when dedicating a petition to the goddess. This further emphasizes the submissive tone of the *defigens*' approach to the superior deity.

Furthermore, Docca has identified the item which was stolen, in this case five denarii, so that Sulis could attempt to find the money which was stolen. More commonly, however, the stolen object was identified rather than the victim. Similarly to victims noted in *defixiones* from Bath and other sites, the stolen objects are often ceded to the goddess. For example Docca gives her five denarii to Sulis (Tab. Sul. 34). In contrast, regular *defixiones* were dedicated anonymously with the name of the *defigens* purposefully omitted from the curse. In this way the *defigens* avoids repercussions if the curse is discovered. By not naming oneself, one could avoid counter curses and other legal ramifications from deities, another *defigens* or the spirits of the deceased.

Additionally, a small cache of seven metal *paterae* were dedicated in Sulis' spring and addressed to the goddess. However, the honorifics used on the *defixiones* are different. The tablets use flattering terms such 'holy' (Tab. Sul 10) and referring to her majesty (Tab. Sul 32). Terms such as these make the *defixiones* read much like a letter. Yet, the majority of dedicated vessels use simpler titles when compared to *defixiones* such as, '*Deae Suli*', 'to the goddess Sulis' (Inv. no. 641)²⁴⁰ or '*deae Suli Minervae*', 'to the goddess Sulis Minerva' (Inv. no. 478).²⁴¹ Furthermore, Sulis had many altars dedicated to her by visitors to her temple.

²⁴⁰ Cunliffe (1988) 56.

²⁴¹ Cunliffe (1988) 57. The metal *patera* dedicated at Bath give no indication what they were dedicated for. They simply state 'To the goddess Sulis', consequently we cannot know if this is conjunction with the

Similarly to the *paterae* Sulis is addressed as a deity. The majority of altars were dedicated to Sulis to ensure the health and safety of soldiers (*RIB* 143). These were often done by a freedman who was grateful for his manumission from slavery and had ‘willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow’ (*RIB* 147).²⁴² Vow fulfilment was one of the most common reasons to dedicate an altar to Sulis, and this formula appears on the majority of Sulis’ altars. Altars were also simply made as an offering to the goddess (*RIB* 151). Dedications such as *paterae* and altars did not resemble personal letters to Sulis as the *defixiones* did. Consequently, they lacked the legal and personal tone of Bath’s curse tablets.

Although dedications such as the *paterae* and altars were dedicated for different purposes from Bath’s *defixiones*, the way in which they were dedicated to the goddess is very similar. The goddess was approached respectfully and the item was dedicated with no act of coercion or exploitation. Consequently, rather than simply being deposited into Sulis’ spring, Bath’s *defixiones* may have served as dedications to the goddess. This ensured that Sulis received the *defigens*’ petition for restitution and helped to pass the *defixiones* into the goddess’ realm of influence.

Defixiones provided Bath’s residents and visitors with a medium to contact Sulis as a means of recovering stolen objects and gaining restitution for that theft. The size of Bath’s cache of curse tablets is much larger than those commonly found in other parts of the ancient world. In most cases, curse tablets were deposited on an individual basis.²⁴³ The *defigens* would place his *defixio* with little regard to places where other people may have deposited theirs. By

defixiones or for another reason. Aside from the *defixiones* and *patera* there were no other inscribed *votums* found in Sulis’ spring.

²⁴² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 129.

²⁴³ Ogden (1999) 15.

contrast, the deposition of curse tablets at Bath was focused on Sulis' spring. Furthermore, the huge number of *defixiones* found in Sulis' spring suggests that the spring was a customary and accepted place to petition Sulis.

The *defigentes* of Bath.

Through Bath's *defixiones* we are able to discern the kinds of people who were primarily visiting Sulis' temple and dedicating tablets. Roger Tomlin notes that by making a comparison between the names the tablets preserve and the items which are listed as stolen we can discern who was visiting Bath's temple complex.²⁴⁴

The items which were listed as stolen on Bath's *defixiones* were small in size and easily carried. There is no evidence to suggest that large amounts of property or sums of wealth were stolen from Bath. These items were primarily personal belongings which had a practical use. For example, seven of Bath's legible tablets mention the theft of cloaks. Furthermore, bathing tunics, bracelets, rings and gloves are also noted amongst the objects which have been stolen. It is likely that garments would have been stolen by patrons who were visiting Bath's bathing complex which lay directly next to Sulis' temple. Small amounts of coinage are also mentioned amongst the items stolen from Bath; the amounts being 5 *denarii* (Tab. Sul. 34) and various amounts of silver coins (Tab. Sul 54, 8, 98).²⁴⁵ The objects stolen from Bath were easily portable, meaning that stealing them was not a hard task. From the various items which have been noted as stolen we can discern the fact that many of the thefts at Bath can best be described as 'petty theft'. Mattingly describes the objects stolen as 'relatively

²⁴⁴ Cunliffe (1988) 79.

²⁴⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 80.

minor losses'; it is true that the victims did not lose anything of great wealth.²⁴⁶

The humble nature of the objects stolen may tell much about the clients of Bath's temple and bathing complexes. The relatively small amounts of money that have been noted as stolen or lost suggest that the victims were not particularly wealthy. Furthermore, the thefts could have occurred due to a lack of proper protection of one's personal belongings while bathing. In the ancient world, if one was wealthy enough, the person could afford an attendant to watch his possessions while bathing. Petronius mentions this aspect of Roman culture in his *Satyricon*, when a slave is flogged for losing his master's clothes at the baths (Petronius. *Satyricon*. 30). Although it is not possible to know whether slave attendants were common at Bath, it is reasonable to assume that the victims of theft as inscribed on the *defixiones* were not able to afford an attendant to monitor their possessions. On the other hand, their loss may simply have resulted from bad luck.

Additionally, there are instances when household objects were stolen from the property where the victim was living. Tablet 99 notes 'execro qui involaverit qui Deomiorix hos(i)patio suo perdiderit.' 'I curse him who has stolen, who has robbed Deomiorix from his house.' (Tab. Sul. 99). We cannot know whether or not Deomiorix was a resident of Bath or just visiting the bath complex, but it is likely that break-ins occurred in Roman Bath. Similarly, Civilis insinuates that his ploughshare was stolen, 'si (qui) vomerem Civilis involavit ut an(imam) suam in templum deponat' 'If anyone has stolen Civilis' ploughshare (I ask) that he lay down his life in the temple' (Tab. Sul. 31). Civilis' tablet is not only notable for the theft from his property, but it also tells us that Sulis had devotees outside of Bath. As Civilis owned a ploughshare it is unlikely he lived within the town of Bath. Furthermore,

²⁴⁶ Mattingly (2006) 315.

Cunliffe has suggested that tablets 49 and 62 note the theft of horse blankets.²⁴⁷ The point supports the evidence that people were traveling from the region outside Bath. Importantly, the tablets highlight the fact that the rural population of Britain travelled to Bath to make dedications to Sulis. One of the reason Civilis visited Bath may have been to gain restitution for the theft of his ploughshare.

Conclusion.

Bath's *defixiones* occupy an interesting position in Roman religion; they share many features which are reminiscent of curse tablets from other parts of the ancient world. In both kinds of tablets a *defigens* uses the tablet to affect a victim through supernatural means. This effect was often achieved by appealing to a deity and placing the victim within the deity's care and influence. However, Bath's tablets are more complicated than simply being used to gain a supernatural advantage over a rival. In most of Bath's *defixiones* the punishment inscribed on the tablet is provisional; the victim is only punished if he has stolen a belonging or failed to return that belonging. Tonally, Bath's *defigens* make it clear that they are dedicating *defixiones* because they feel they have been victimized through the theft of their possessions and Sulis is invoked either to retrieve their items or to punish the person (or persons) responsible for the theft. In this way, Sulis is invoked as a form of supernatural law enforcement and judge, first finding the thieves and then punishing them. Consequently, Bath's *defixiones* could be considered as 'judicial prayers' or 'prayers for justice'.

²⁴⁷ Cunliffe (1988) 80. Although a rare word, Cunliffe notes that *caballarius*, meaning horsemen, is derived from the Vulgar Latin word *caballus* which means horse. As *caballarem* appears as the object of theft it is unlikely that it translates to horsemen. Due to the mention of clothing earlier in the tablet, Cunliffe suggests a textile context for *caballarem* hence his translation into 'horse blanket'.

Furthermore, the judicial aspects of Bath's *defixiones* fit into a larger context of British curse tablets as most British curse tablets address cases of theft similar to Bath's.

Additionally, these tablets are an important source of Vulgar Latin in Britain. Bath's examples of Vulgar Latin are important as they provide evidence as to who Bath's *defigentes* were. The use of Vulgar Latin and the items listed as stolen highlight the lower socio-economic background of Bath's *defigentes*. In the under-policed fringes of the Roman world less affluent individuals such as the majority of Bath's *defigentes* may have felt they had better representation by appealing to divinities such as Sulis rather than the local magistrates. As such, Bath's *defixiones* held an important legal role amongst Bath's inhabitants, which contrasts with the self-serving and vicious nature of *defixiones* which are found in other parts of the ancient world. Bath's *defixiones* were an important medium used for calling the goddess Sulis to address injustices against her devotees.

However, distinguishing religion from magic is difficult in the ancient world. Although Roman prayers could be used to ensure the growth of one's crops, they could also be employed to bring the wrath of the gods onto one's enemies. The formulaic language of *defixiones* is similar to the ritualized nature of Roman religion. In a way, *defixiones* were an adapted form of private Roman religion and could be altered depending on context. For example, the Sethian curse tablet addressed rival charioteers. British *defixiones* are undeniably different from Greco-Roman equivalents but there are also many reminiscences of earlier *defixiones*. Consequently, Versnel is right in assuming that the 'prayers for justice' such as Bath's should be contained within their own category. However, this could be its own category of specialized *defixiones* rather than an entirely separate aspect of Roman religion.

Chapter 3: The Cult of Sulis-Minerva and the goddess' divine attributes.

Although Sulis is regarded as the patron goddess of Bath, there is very little evidence regarding her characteristics and how her cult functioned.²⁴⁸ Sulis has been described as a healing goddess due to the hot springs around which her temple complex revolved. The cache of 133 *defixiones* highlights a goddess who, by a *defigens*, was beseeched to exact retribution for a perceived wrong which was often theft. Due to a lack of evidence, little else is known about the goddess Sulis aside from her connection to Bath's thermal springs and the cache of *defixiones*. Consequently, hypotheses as to Sulis' divine attributes are predominantly drawn from physical evidence. Although originally a Celtic deity, Sulis became conflated with the goddess Minerva through Roman *interpretatio*. Evidence from Bath's temple complex such as the Gorgon pediment confirms Sulis' connection with Minerva. The majority of evidence we have regarding Sulis comes from Roman religious iconography, as much of the Sulis' Celtic origins have been replaced by Roman religious culture. In this chapter I will discuss Sulis' role at Bath's temple complex and how her cult may have functioned. This chapter will argue that Sulis was a hybrid goddess, representing by British and Roman religious ideals. However, due to the predominance of Roman religious iconography and architecture and the lack of British material evidence, it can be difficult to separate and identify British religious practice from the Roman. This chapter will also discuss the British adaptation of Roman religious culture and iconography, such as the *defixiones* and Gorgon pediment, and how this affects Sulis' representation as a goddess.

The lack of evidence regarding cult activity at Bath.

Unfortunately, there is little to no evidence regarding the function of Sulis' cult and the

²⁴⁸ Green (1996) 93.

characteristics of the goddess. However the large number of *defixiones* found in Sulis' sacred spring suggests that they were an important function of Sulis' cult. A cache of *defixiones* on Bath's scale was highly unusual in the ancient world.²⁴⁹ As yet, there have been no other locations where *defixiones* or dedications to the goddess Sulis have been found. Furthermore, Sulis fits into a larger motif of Celtic deities being worshipped on a specifically local basis; Sulis was revered only within the region of Bath as she was tied to the sacred spring of Bath.

There is not a lot of firm evidence for ritual activities taking place at Bath before the Roman-British era.²⁵⁰ The study of Bath's history has been impeded by the city's continuous use. Roman Bath was built over Pre-Roman Bath. Similarly, the modern city of Bath has impeded the research of Roman town of Bath. Scholar's such as Miranda Green and Barry Cunliffe note that there is possible evidence of pre-Roman worship in the form of a causeway of gravel approaching Sulis' spring from the south-west.²⁵¹ However, a single causeway does not provide the most solid indication of Iron Age worship as it could simply indicate settlement of the site. Nevertheless, a set of eighteen Celtic coins constitute the earliest offerings deposited in Bath's spring and can provide more solid evidence than the gravel causeway. Yet, there has been some contention over the dating the coins. Cunliffe suggests that it is reasonable to suggest that the coins can be dated to c.30 BCE.²⁵² Lyn Sellwood dates the coinage to c.51 BCE- c.30 BCE.²⁵³ Interestingly, the Celtic coin horde only accounts for coin deposits a century before Bath's Roman temple complex was built. 18 Celtic coins and a gravel causeway do not provide solid evidence identifying pre-roman activity at Bath.

²⁴⁹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 60, Gager (1992) 177, Mattingly (2006) 40, 311. The Temple of Mercury at Uley provides the only comparison, a similarly large cache of *defixiones* was found there. The majority of these have not been translated or published. Consequently, we do not have a precise number of how many have been found.

²⁵⁰ Cunliffe (1988) 177. Due to the construction of the Roman temple complex it is difficult to fix a precise date of Bath's Iron Age origins.

²⁵¹ Green (1995) 93.

²⁵² Cunliffe (1988) 279.

²⁵³ Sellwood (1980) 130.

Consequently, there is no solid record of pre-Roman Iron Age activity at Bath; this makes it difficult to discern Sulis' role in Britain's pre-Roman world.²⁵⁴

Iron Age British offerings do not provide much in the way of clues as to how Sulis was worshipped before Britain's Roman occupation. Traditionally, Celtic religion before Roman occupation was far less material as the ancient Britons did not have anthropomorphic representations of their deities. The dwellings of Celtic deities were specific natural features such as lakes, rivers and forests.²⁵⁵ Furthermore, the Britons had no form of writing leaving no literary evidence of religious ritual or mythological cycles in Ancient Britain.²⁵⁶ Most of our evidence for Iron Age British religion comes from Roman sources.

In his *Bellum Gallicum*, Caesar comments on the religion of the Celts. He discusses the rites of the ancient druidic order noting that the druids were 'divinis intersunt, sacrificia publica ac private procurant, religiones interpretantur' 'concerned with divine worship, the due performance of sacrifices, public and private, and the interpretation of ritual questions.' (Caesar. *Bellum Gallicum* 6.13). According to Caesar, the Celts observed strict ritual observance similarly to the Romans. Gods and natural spirits were closely intertwined within the private and public life of the Britons. A pragmatic approach was taken when the gods must receive offerings in order to give divine blessings. Caesar elaborates on this transaction when discussing human sacrifice: 'quod, pro vita hominis nisi hominis vita reddatur, non posse deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur' 'They believe, in effect, that, unless

²⁵⁴ This does not mean Sulis was not worshipped during Britain's Iron Age rather; there is not enough evidence to know how Sulis was worshipped.

²⁵⁵ Webster (1986) 23.

²⁵⁶ Webster (1986) 23.

for a man's life a man's life be paid, the majesty of the immortal gods may not be appeased' (6.16). Caesar goes on to discuss human sacrifice including the burning of victims in a wicker man. By the time Sulis' temple was constructed in the first century CE, however, the order of the druids had been exterminated along with many of their practices such as human sacrifice. Yet, many of the Celts' traditional practices such as outdoor worship and pragmatic ties with their gods were easily assimilated by the Romans.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the predominant contributor to our knowledge of Celtic religion comes from the Roman military. Consequently, our view on ancient British culture has a potential for distortion. Sources such as Caesar should not be taken at their face value. W. Jeffrey Tatum notes that Caesar described his conquest of the Gauls, Germans and Britons as a great expedition of the far northern parts of his known world.²⁵⁷ For example, Caesar uses ethnography to emphasize his own Roman identity by contrasting it with the foreignness of the Britons and Gauls. Caesar comments on their use of chariots, emphasizing the backwardness of British warfare.²⁵⁸ When describing the Britons, Caesar creates an image of ubiquitous tattooed warriors stating:

Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem, atque hoc horridiores sunt in pugna aspect; capilloque sunt promisso atque omni parte corporis rasa praeter caput et labrum superius.'

'All the Britons, indeed, dye themselves with woad, which produces a blue colour, and makes their appearance in battle more terrible. They wear long hair, and shave every part of the body save the head and upper lip.
(Caesar. *Bellum Gallicum* 5. 14).

Caesar describes the stereotypical British barbarian. He portrays a singular body of people with the same cultural practices. In truth, the Britons were highly regionalized people each

²⁵⁷ Tatum (2011) 75.

²⁵⁸ Mattingly (2006) 34.

with their own cultural identity.²⁵⁹ Caesar's distortion portrays the Britons like the rest of Rome's barbarian enemies with a large amount of embellishment. Like many Roman tales of foreign countries and cultures, Caesar's Gallic Wars was made for a Roman audience. While praising his own campaigns Caesar also presents the Britons in a way which was understandable to a Roman literary audience.²⁶⁰

The Romanization of ancient British religion.

Caesar used his *Bellum Gallicum* to paint the Gauls and Britons as worthy enemies of Rome by emphasizing the differences between the Celtic peoples and the Roman. By creating a worthy enemy in Caesar's self-promotion of his conquests of Gaul and Britain. One of Caesar's purposes for describing the Celtic religion was to emphasize the difference of the Celts when compared to Roman practices. Caesar particularly emphasizes this difference through his description of human sacrifice (Caesar. *Bellum Gallicum* 6. 16). However, while presenting the Gauls as alien, Caesar also makes them appear more civilized through his description of their religion. Caesar notes that the druids were one of two groups of account and dignity in Gaul (Caesar. *Bellum Gallicum* 6.13).²⁶¹ Aldhouse-Green notes that Caesar's commentary is one of respect for a highly organised group of religious leaders.²⁶²

Caesar also comments on the Roman gods most frequently worshipped by the Gauls.²⁶³ He notes that among the Gauls, Mercury was worshipped the most. However, Apollo, Mars,

²⁵⁹ Mattingly (2006) 51.

²⁶⁰ Mattingly (2006) 34.

²⁶¹ The other group Caesar describes are the knights.

²⁶² Aldhouse-Green (2010) 33.

²⁶³ Although Caesar refers the Gauls when discussing the druids, he notes that the Gauls learn the rites of the Druids from the British and they would often to travel to Britain to learn the druidic practice (Caesar. *Gallic*

Jupiter and Minerva were also commonly worshipped with the same attributes as their Roman equivalents (Caesar. *Bellum Gallicum* 6.17). The Gauls were exposed to Greco-Roman culture before the Britons as Roman Britain lay on the fringes of the Roman Empire. Consequently, Roman deities such as Mercury and Minerva had more time to take root in Gallic culture. However, Caesar's observations can be applied to the Britons. For example, Mercury remained a popular deity within Roman Britain and took on various epithets and epithets such as Mercury Andescocivoucos.²⁶⁴ Mercury's predominance is also reflected among *defixiones* as Mercury was the most commonly invoked god. Caesar's description of a Romano-Gallic Pantheon is problematic. As emphasized by Miranda Aldhouse-Green, the Gauls were unlikely to have accepted the Roman Pantheon of gods so wholeheartedly as early as Caesar's conquest of Gaul.²⁶⁵ Caesar may have also been attempting to rationalize the vague religion of the Celts through *interpretatio*. However, there must have been some degree of religious hybridization between Celtic and Roman gods as by the first century CE Roman ritual was the predominant form of worship in Britain. Although a god may have a Celtic name, it was worshipped in a Roman style.²⁶⁶

Furthermore, Britons received a similar stigma even in the later centuries CE.²⁶⁷ Pliny compares the Britons to the Persians noting: 'Britannia hodieque eam adtonita celebrat tantis caerimoniis ut dedisse Persis videri possit.', 'Even today Britain practices magic in awe, such grand ritual that it might seem she gave it to the Persians' (Pliny the Elder. *Naturalis Historia* 30.4). Britain's 'otherness' is compared to that of the Persians as Pliny compares the Celtic

Wars 6.13). Consequently, we can assume that druidic rites would have been the similar all over the Celtic world.

²⁶⁴ Green (1986) 36.

²⁶⁵ Aldhouse-Green (2010) 34.

²⁶⁶ Other forms of religion were not as prominent as Roman religion as they lacked the same amount of material evidence left behind by the Romans.

²⁶⁷ Aldhouse-Green (2010) 24.

druids to Persia's *Magi*. Romans, such as Caesar and Pliny, clearly saw Britain as a foreign country that was both edgy and dangerous.

Through interaction with the Mediterranean east and particularly the conquering of Roman Britain, Celtic deities gained anthropomorphised forms through Roman *interpretatio*.²⁶⁸ Tacitus notes that *interpretatio* was 'the interpretation of alien deities and of the rites associated with them' (Tacitus. *Germania* 43). Consequently, anthropomorphic representations of Celtic deities were heavily influenced by Roman iconography. Miranda Aldhouse-Green notes that interacting with the supernatural world in Britain became solidified by the Romans.²⁶⁹ The Romans formalized religious architecture, ritual and the use of repetitious religious iconography for religious identification. However Roman *interpretatio* in Britain is complicated as it does not represent a complete Roman takeover of British religion.

Although religious ritual became Roman, it did not mean that native British deities took second place to the Roman pantheon.²⁷⁰ For example, the majority of Latin religious inscriptions refer solely to British deities. David Mattingly provides figures which state that 169 out of 246 religious inscriptions refer singly to British deities.²⁷¹ The Romans were clearly aware of the power of local British divinities. Goddesses such as Coventina and Sirona were the focus of extensive worship.²⁷² Furthermore, many British gods were linked with a Roman counterpart such as Sulis-Minerva. However, Mattingly emphasizes that the

²⁶⁸ Mattingly (2006) 218.

²⁶⁹ Aldhouse-Green (2008) 194.

²⁷⁰ Webster (1986) 41.

²⁷¹ Mattingly (2006) 215.

²⁷² Green (1996) 99, 102.

name pairing of Roman and Celtic gods only made up 26 percent of Latin religious inscriptions in Britain.²⁷³ Consequently, Roman deities could not completely replace the deeply rooted British spirits.²⁷⁴

Sulis fell into a similar pattern as other Celtic deities; physical evidence suggests that by the late first century CE Roman ritual was the predominant form of worship at Bath.²⁷⁵ By keeping names such as Sulis, traditional culture was acknowledged but the deity was mostly worshipped through a Roman lens. However, Bath's *defixiones* and altars predominantly invoke Sulis rather than 'Sulis-Minerva' or 'Minerva-Sulis'.²⁷⁶ Tablet 65 is the only example where the name Minerva is invoked before that of Sulis (Tab. Sul 65). Although Sulis was conflated with the Roman goddess Minerva and received a Roman style temple complex, her Celtic name was still invoked over that of her Roman one.

The role of the gods in Celtic mythology is also important. Similarly to Celtic religious ritual, there is very little evidence which reveals the nature of the Celtic gods. The British deities were less clearly defined than their Greco-Roman counterparts, as sculptural representation and written dedications were alien to the ancient British.²⁷⁷ Consequently, it is difficult to define the role of Celtic deities within a larger pantheon of gods such as in Greco-Roman worship. Many Celtic gods seemed to share very similar attributes. For example, deities such as Sulis and Coventina had their cults firmly rooted within a spring or well.²⁷⁸ Furthermore, there was no clearly defined hierarchy to Celtic divinities, perhaps due to the highly

²⁷³ Mattingly (2006) 215.

²⁷⁴ Webster (1986) 42.

²⁷⁵ Cunliffe (1985) 65.

²⁷⁶ Cunliffe (1988) 70.

²⁷⁷ Salway (1993) 469.

²⁷⁸ Green (1996) 99.

regionalized nature of Celtic cults as some deities were only worshipped in specific locations. The point is significant, as when the Britons came to imitate the Romans' form of worship, classical representations of gods and inscriptions predominated. Sulis' cult is influenced by and expanded under a classical bias. Peter Salway notes that classical representation may be used to express British themes which are foreign to the Roman world.²⁷⁹ When discussing an ambiguous goddess such as Sulis, it is important to keep Salway's theory under consideration.

The structure and layout of Bath's Romano-Celtic temple complex.

Classical representation was important in the initial formation of Sulis' temple complex. Sulis' cult occupied a large temple area; the size was particularly unusual for the worship of Celtic deities. Evidence such as dedicated altars and inscriptions from patrons suggests that Bath's temple had many benefactors.²⁸⁰ As a result, the temple may have been unusually grand for a temple found in Roman Britain. Sulis' tetrastyle temple was originally built during the late Neronian or early Flavian principates (65- 75 CE) in the Classical style (fig. 14).²⁸¹ The temple was originally a small Roman prostyle building which was raised on a high podium and accessed via stairs. The *cella* was fronted by four Corinthian columns which are also present on the large front pediment.²⁸² The strictly Mediterranean form of Sulis' first temple complex suggests that ritual was altered to become largely Roman with little Celtic influence.²⁸³ As Michael Lewis correctly notes the more religion was influenced by the

²⁷⁹ Salway (1981) 666.

²⁸⁰ Sulis' various dedications are discussed later in this chapter.

²⁸¹ On the architectural development of Bath's temple see Cunliffe (1985) 33. For a chronological summary see page 177.

²⁸² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 179.

²⁸³ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 179.

Romans, the more ambitious and elaborate the ornamentation would be on a temple.²⁸⁴

Romanization during the temple's first period may explain how Sulis became connected with Minerva as the Romans would have coupled a foreign deity with no physical definition to a familiar Roman equivalent.

However, the development of Sulis' temple suggests a change in the way Sulis-Minerva was worshipped. From the second century CE Sulis' temple underwent extensive alterations (fig. 15). The basic layout of Sulis' temple was Roman in form. The temple favoured a Roman orientation facing towards the east.²⁸⁵ The temple was built on a raised podium which was a typically Roman characteristic.²⁸⁶ In addition, the temple's prostyle structure was altered to include a raised ambulatory which surrounded the temple (fig. 15-A). The temple featured a large courtyard in front of the temple complex with a raised altar. The altar suggests the act of outdoor sacrifice which fits with the Greco-Roman religious tradition. Furthermore, the temple's frontally located stairway was flanked by two smaller rooms which may have been subsidiary shrines.²⁸⁷ The extra shrines may have been added to accommodate an increase of offerings as Sulis' *cella* did not increase in size.

The structure of Sulis' temple indicates that ritual probably followed a characteristically Roman format. A set of stairs led to the *pronaos* (porch) of Sulis' temple where rituals would have taken place.²⁸⁸ Behind the *pronaos* was the temple's *cella* which would have housed Sulis' cult statue. Sacrifices would have been performed outdoors on the temple's outdoor

²⁸⁴ Lewis (1966) 10.

²⁸⁵ Lewis (1966) 32.

²⁸⁶ Scheid (2003) 71.

²⁸⁷ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 180.

²⁸⁸ Scheid (2003) 71.

altar positioned in front of the temple complex (fig 15). Bath's temple complex had a large courtyard for crowds to gather for public sacrifices.

Traditionally, the Celts worshipped the forces of nature in the open air; they did not house their gods.²⁸⁹ The Celts did not have temples until they made contact with the Greco-Roman world.²⁹⁰ Through both Roman and Celtic influence British temples began to develop a unique style appealing to both cultures. Although Bath is very 'Roman' in form, there is some Celtic influence. Bath's temple began to transform from a purely Roman temple to one which included hybridized Romano-Celtic aspects. For example, the temple's raised concentric ambulatory created the characteristic 'double square' plan of the Romano-Celtic temple (fig 15-A).²⁹¹ The ambulatory surrounded the temple's *cella* creating an outdoor characteristic which matched Celtic sensibilities.²⁹² Celtic deities were traditionally embodiments of natural features, for example, Sulis and her spring.²⁹³ It was not uncommon for Romano-Celtic temples to incorporate these natural features as central features in the layout of their temple complex.²⁹⁴ As a result, the temple's orientation around a sacred spring was not uncharacteristic for a Romano-Celtic temple.²⁹⁵

A spring which housed a goddess was commonly placed as the central focus of the goddess' temple complex; this is clear in Sulis' case as not only the temple, but the city of Bath was orientated around her sacred spring. Other goddesses, such as Coventina, were housed in

²⁸⁹ Webster (1986) 107

²⁹⁰ Lewis (1966) 4.

²⁹¹ Lewis (1966) 8.

²⁹² Mattingly (2006) 282.

²⁹³ Lewis (1966) 4.

²⁹⁴ Mattingly (2006) 307.

²⁹⁵ Allason-Jones (1996) 107.

temples with a similar orientation.²⁹⁶ In Coventina's case, her well replaced the *cella* of the temple.²⁹⁷ In both Sulis and Coventina's cases, their respective bodies of water acted as the primary receptacles for their offerings.

Although much of Sulis' temple remains hidden beneath the modern township of Bath, excavations have yielded some evidence of Bath's ritual functions. For example, a large outdoor altar occupied the centre of the temple complex's courtyard (fig. 15). The altar was highly decorated with images of deities such as Bacchus (fig. 16-A), Hercules (fig. 17-C) and Jupiter (fig. 17-A). Interestingly, the altar had no images of Minerva or Sulis. The altar was most likely dedicated to Sulis as there is little evidence to suggest alternative deities were venerated at Bath.²⁹⁸ In addition, the altars' placement in the centre of courtyard meant that it would have been used in outdoor sacrifices. Sulis' altar conforms to the highly decorated forms of altars found throughout Roman religion. Within Bath there are various examples of inscribed altars dedicated to the goddess.²⁹⁹ Furthermore, outdoor sacrifices keep in line with the conventions of Roman religion as sacrifices were made in open space in front of the public.³⁰⁰ In addition, Bath's main altar was located in front of Sulis' temple complex. The altar increased in size from the second century CE onwards emphasizing the temple's

²⁹⁶ For Coventina see Allason-Jones (1996) 107. For the goddess Sequana see Green (1996) 91. And lastly, Sirona is discussed in Green (1996) 102. These three goddesses provide alternative examples to Sulis when discussing temple complexes revolving around springs or wells.

²⁹⁷ Allason-Jones (1996) 107.

²⁹⁸ There are three curse tablets which have been dedicated to deities other than Sulis (Tab. Sul 33, 53, 97). They tablets ask for Mars and Mercury to carry out the curse. However, there is not enough evidence to state confidently that Mars and Mercury were fully worshipped at Bath, although as Bath has not been fully excavated there still may be a chance more evidence could be uncovered. There are also representations of other deities such as Luna (fig. 21) and Diana, Cunliffe (1985) 131, present at Bath.

²⁹⁹ I discuss these in chapter 2 page 82- 83.

³⁰⁰ Scheid (2007) 263.

growing popularity.³⁰¹ An increase in offerings and altar size would reflect the increase in popularity of Sulis' temple complex.

The Celtic features of the temple complex were less noticeable than the Roman. Sulis' prominence at Bath is the clearest display of the temple's British heritage. Furthermore, as previously stated, Sulis' spring remained the centre of worship. Similarly to the Ancient Britons, offerings continued to be deposited into Sulis' spring. Although whole human figures were rare in Celtic art, the head was a common motif in Celtic art and religion.³⁰² Bath's Gorgon conforms to the Celts' artistic representations of heads (fig. 18). The Gorgon has oval shaped eyes as well as a flat nose. The figure has long hair and a beard which completely surround the Gorgon's head (fig. 18). The Gorgon strongly resembles head representations of Celtic gods. Celtic representations of the head such as Bath's Gorgon are common when portraying deities.³⁰³ For example, small representations of males show a masculine head with a beard and flowing long hair.³⁰⁴

Bath's Gorgon pediment: A hybridization of Roman and Celtic religion.

Bath's temple did retain some traditional Celtic iconography. The Gorgon pediment also reveals a distinctly Celtic identity (fig. 18). Primarily the Gorgon is male not female, as is emphasized by the Gorgon's moustache, beard and furrowed eyes brows.³⁰⁵ Bath's Gorgon is consistent with depictions in ancient Greek art. The Gorgon is bearded with long hair and a

³⁰¹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 183.

³⁰² Green (1996) 138.

³⁰³ Green (1986) 46.

³⁰⁴ Henig (1995) 39.

³⁰⁵ Richmond, Toynbee (1955) 104.

pair of wings similar to Gorgons depicted in Greek art.³⁰⁶ However, the Sulis Gorgon lacks the monstrous and feminine appearance of other Gorgons. Bath's Gorgon depicts the face of a solemn elderly male. The representation of Bath's Gorgon has led to alternative ideas about what the pediment portrays. One hypothesis is that the Gorgon represents Bath's legendary King Bladud in the guise of a divinity.³⁰⁷ Traditionally, Bath was founded by Bladud who made the city's hot springs suitable for bathing. When discussing the founding of Bath, Geoffrey of Monmouth notes that Bladud placed Bath under the protection of Minerva (Geoffrey of Monmouth. *Historia Regum Britanniae* 2.30). Additionally, Bladud was responsible for the eternal fire at Bath which Solinus also mentions in his brief description of Bath's layout (Solinus. *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* 22.10).³⁰⁸ The Gorgon's wings are consistent with Bladud's reputed ability to fly.³⁰⁹ However, wings are not common attributes in representations of Celtic deities.³¹⁰ Care should be taken regarding the source's reliability. For example, Bath's temple complex can only be dated as far back as Rome's Neronian age (c. 65 CE).³¹¹ Consequently, it is more likely the Romans were responsible for Minerva's presence at Bath rather than Bladud. Archaeology would suggest that the pre-Roman bath was solely a sacred spring with no large buildings.

Other interpretations of Bath's Gorgon include the head of Oceanus.³¹² The 'wave-like' hair of the Gorgon is a representation of the ocean's hair. The tritons emphasize this oceanic aspect. However, I disagree with John Hind's interpretation, as Bath's Gorgon is far more suited to iconography associated with the Gorgon. For example, there are snakes tangled in

³⁰⁶ Marinatos (2000) 48.

³⁰⁷ Fear (1992) 223.

³⁰⁸ It should be noted that Geoffrey wrote his history of Britain's kings during the 1130s.

³⁰⁹ Interestingly, Bladud met a death similar to Icarus as he crashed into Apollo's temple at Trinovantum and was instantly killed (Geoffrey. 2.30).

³¹⁰ Fear (1992) 223.

³¹¹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 178.

³¹² Hind (1996) 358.

the Gorgon's beard and the head is flanked by wings. Oceanus is usually portrayed in Celtic and Roman art with horns and beard sprouting seaweed rather than wings.³¹³ Furthermore, the presence of a Gorgon is more fitting with Sulis' connection with Minerva. Firstly, the pediment on which the Gorgon resides is ornamented with iconography associated with Minerva (fig. 19). In Roman representations of Minerva, the goddess is typically portrayed with her Gorgon-decorated cuirass.³¹⁴ When Minerva was introduced in Britain she arrived with the imagery of a goddess wearing her helmet, Gorgon-cuirass and wielding a spear.³¹⁵ Several British goddesses such as Brigantia adopted Minerva's iconography when their images were created.³¹⁶ However, unlike Sulis, goddesses such as Brigantia have become regarded as British goddesses of war. It has been contentiously suggested that the Gorgon is a male representation of Sulis.³¹⁷ Yet, Sulis' connection with the female goddess Minerva, as well as the goddess's address as '*dea*' makes this unlikely.

The temple also had a focus on solar imagery which appealed to both Celtic and Roman religious sensibilities. The sun had an important role in both Roman and Celtic religion as a giver of life.³¹⁸ Bath has solar imagery throughout its temple precinct. For example, Bath's Gorgon pediment is crowned with a small representation of the sun (fig. 18).³¹⁹ Cunliffe suggests that this may mean that the Gorgon may in fact be a representation of the sun god Sol.³²⁰ Green also notes that the Gorgon's hair is wavy evoking images of the sun's rays.³²¹ However, aside from the pediment's crown there is no more evidence to suggest that the

³¹³ Brilliant (1974) 139.

³¹⁴ Shearer (1996) 81.

³¹⁵ Green (1996) 36.

³¹⁶ Green (1996) 36.

³¹⁷ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 116.

³¹⁸ Webster (1986) 32.

³¹⁹ The connection between the sun and healing at Bath's temple complex will be discussed later in this chapter.

³²⁰ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 116.

³²¹ Green (1996) 97.

Gorgon is a representation of the sun. Due to the large amount of iconography associated with Minerva, it is far more likely the pediment boasts a Gorgon of Celtic origin.

Furthermore, the Façade of the Four Seasons portrays Luna and anthropomorphic representations of the seasons which were closely tied to the phases of the moon (fig. 20, 21).³²² The Façade is known for its anthropomorphic representations of the four seasons.

The solemn male-like appearance of Bath's Gorgon contrasts with Gorgons in Greco-Roman myth. Yet, the Gorgon has snakes tangled in his beard keeping in line with the iconography which is associated with gorgons. Like many of Bath's features, the Gorgon pediment is a fusion of Celtic and Greco-Roman artistic features. The subject matter, the Gorgon, is a figure from Roman myth. However, the Gorgon is rendered in a Celtic style. The Gorgon's lentoid shaped eyes, wedge-shaped nose and frowning brow portray a clear Celtic style in the portrayal of the Gorgon.³²³ Moreover, the pediment's focus on the Gorgon emphasizes the Celtic religious focus on the head. The ancient Britons held the human head in high reverence as they believed the head held the essence of someone's being.³²⁴ Furthermore, the head was also believed to house a person's soul, making it an important symbol of divine power and closely linked to the Celtic spiritual world. Consequently, Bath's Gorgon occupies a monumental position in Bath's temple architecture. In addition, the Gorgon is encircled by two floral wreaths. The use of vegetal motifs is popular amongst Celtic and Roman symbolism which displays status and divinity.³²⁵ However, the Gorgon appears to be the only artistic feature on the pediment, and at the temple complex, which is a strictly Celtic artistic feature.

³²² For Cunliffe's discussion on the Façade of the Four Seasons see Cunliffe (1985) 123- 128.

³²³ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 115.

³²⁴ Webster (1986) 39.

³²⁵ Green (1996) 122.

Bath's Gorgon does have Classical themes sculpted in. The serpents in the beard and the wings are an acknowledgement of Classical themes and help to identify this Celtic head as a Gorgon.³²⁶ The Gorgon is consistent with imagery associated with Minerva and her myths. The circular wreaths around the Gorgon are representative of the Gorgon's place on Minerva's aegis or shield (fig. 19). Although linked with Minerva through myth, snakes were also potent symbols of healing within Roman religion.³²⁷ Consequently, the Gorgon's snakes would not have been out of place at a healing sanctuary such as Bath. However, there is no serpent iconography anywhere in the temple complex aside from those in the Gorgon's beard. The presence of snakes in the Gorgon's beard may not have provided a connection Minerva Medica. Instead, the snakes may simply be iconography that is typically associated with a Gorgon. Bath's Gorgon would have created a powerful image to visitors entering Bath. The large pediment is a symbol of Bath's prosperity as well as an acknowledgement of Minerva's patronage at Bath. Importantly, artistic representations such as Bath's Gorgon reflect a primarily Romanized cult which incorporates surviving Celtic motifs and nods to Celtic religious sensibilities. The pediment was most likely made to aggrandize Bath while its iconography notifies visitors that the temple complex they were entering belonged to Sulis-Minerva.

Sulis' Minervan attributes: The conflation of two goddesses.

Bath reveals a goddess who has both Roman and Celtic identity. As previously mentioned, Sulis gained her anthropomorphised form from the Romans hence equating her with the

³²⁶ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 115.

³²⁷ Ogden (2013) 317.

goddess Minerva. The only representation of Minerva found at Bath is a large bronze head which once belonged to a larger statue (fig. 22).³²⁸ The hole in the back of the head marks the place where Minerva's Roman helmet once sat (fig. 23). The presence of Bath's Gorgon pediment is consistent with Minerva's Mediterranean iconography (fig. 18, 19).³²⁹ Both the Greek Athena and the Roman Minerva were equipped with an aegis bearing the Gorgon's head. Furthermore, the Gorgon pediment includes various iconographic features which highlight a connection with the Roman Minerva (fig. 19). The pediment boasts a helmet on the bottom left, matching Minerva's established iconography and her role as a goddess of strategy (fig. 19). Furthermore, the Gorgon's outer wreath boasted a small owl (fig. 19). Similarly to the military helmet, the owl complements Minerva's traditional iconography.³³⁰

A Roman temple was usually built to commemorate a single attribute of a god, as is the case with Minerva Medica's temple built on Rome's Esquiline Hill to venerate the goddess's patronage of medicinal craft.³³¹ However, Bath gives no indication that Sulis was worshipped for just one specific attribute.³³² Aside from her connection with Minerva, there is no record of Sulis having any epithets connected to her name. Conversely, Sulis fits into a larger group of Celtic deities revered on a local basis.³³³ Sulis' power as a deity was linked with her sacred spring. Accordingly, there has been no evidence of Sulis' cult outside of Bath. Localized deities such as Sulis tend to have their power centred in one region.³³⁴

³²⁸ Although the bronze statue may have once been the cult statue of Sulis-Minerva, this is as of yet, unproven.

³²⁹ Shearer (1996) 7.

³³⁰ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 115.

³³¹ Scheid (2007) 154.

³³² Roman deities were commonly worshipped for a range of reasons rather than one characteristic alone.

³³³ Henig (2004) 224.

³³⁴ Salway 1981) 666.

It is also necessary to examine Minerva's aspects and to compare these to Sulis. There is very little evidence linking Minerva and Sulis aside from inscriptions. The most prominent evidence we have are the *defixiones* which often refer to the goddess as 'Sulis' or 'Sulis-Minerva' (Tab. Sul 10, 32, 34, 35). Similarly to the *defixiones*, many of the votive *paterae* are dedicated to 'Sulis-Minerva'.³³⁵ In addition, Bath's bronze head of Minerva as well as the Gorgon pediment provide physical evidence regarding Sulis' relationship to Minerva. However, this is the only definitive evidence we have connecting the two goddesses.

As previously mentioned, Bath has distinct iconography in relation to Minerva; for example, the presence of the Gorgon and the Victories on Bath's pediment. In this context, Ann Shearer discusses the Gorgon's protective properties. In many cases the Gorgon appears on the outside of buildings.³³⁶ In this way the Gorgon's gaze acts as a protective ward against evil spirits.³³⁷ Shearer's hypothesis may have some weight as Sulis' judicial attributes fit well with a Gorgon who has protective properties, as Bath was a place of healing. The *defixiones* portray a goddess who was believed to have protected her devotees by avenging the wrongs which were inflicted on them. Furthermore, many of Sulis' altars were dedicated as votive offerings for the safety of an individual. For example, one such altar states '(D)cae Suli pro salute et incolumita(te) Mar(ci) Aufid(i) (M)aximi c(enturionis) leg(ionis) VI Vic(tricis) (A)ufidius Eutuches leb(ertus) v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) M(erito)', 'To the goddess Sulis for the health and safety of Marcus Aufidius Maximus, centurion of the *Legio VI Victrix*, Aufidius Eutuches, his freedman, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow' (RIB 143). Various other altars repeat the same formulae; a freedman dedicates an altar to entreat Sulis

³³⁵ Cunliffe (1988) 55.

³³⁶ Shearer (1996) 68.

³³⁷ Wilk (2000) 150.

to safeguard his former master or to thank Sulis for her protection (RIB 144, 147). Similarly to asking Sulis to punish a victim, one could ask for the goddess' protection to keep someone from harm.

Within Rome, Minerva was an important patron of arts and crafts. Furthermore, the creation of *defixiones* was tied with industry and crafts.³³⁸ Minerva's patronage of crafts is relevant at Bath as the goddess could be seen as a patron of medicinal craft. Likewise, medicinal craft was widely accepted within Celtic godhood; deities such as the Irish Brigit emphasized healing and healing craft.³³⁹ In addition, Miranda Green notes that the martial traits of a deity such as Minerva were transmuted into guardianship against disease.³⁴⁰ At Bath this is visible in the various martial motifs such as the helmets and winged Victory figures on the Gorgon pediment. The Gorgon is heraldically flanked on either side by two winged Victory figures standing on globes; this is consistent with the Greek Athena's relationship with Nike (fig 18, 19).³⁴¹ It is clear that the sculptors used a large amount of Roman imagery when portraying Sulis. Consequently, it may be likely that Sulis came to incorporate many of Minerva's characteristics and functions. Cunliffe discusses the potential for the winged Victory figures as symbols of victory over illness.³⁴² In conjunction with Sulis' thermal springs, Cunliffe's hypothesis may be correct. Sulis' association with Minerva Medica may support Cunliffe's theory as Minerva was a healing deity in the Roman mind.³⁴³ The symbolism would have been important when promoting the sanctuary as one of healing.

³³⁸ Shearer (1996) 78.

³³⁹ Webster (1986) 110.

³⁴⁰ Green (1996) 94.

³⁴¹ Shearer (1996) 8.

³⁴² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 115.

³⁴³ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 115.

Iconography particular to Minerva such as the helmets and winged Victories feed into Minerva's martial characteristics. Sulis' martial characteristics can be applied to her punishment of victims inscribed upon the *defixiones* as she is often asked to deliver brutal punishments to the victims described on the tablets. Bath's *defixiones* emphasize the goddess' martial abilities in her punishment of the victims inscribed on the curse tablets.

Sulis' role as a healer is emphasized by most scholars due to the medicinal properties attributed to Bath's hot springs.³⁴⁴ As well as a sacred spring, Bath had a large bathing complex attached to the southern end of the temple. Sulis, the Celtic embodiment of Bath's hot springs was equated with the goddess Minerva. Sulis' clear popularity promoted her interpretation as a primary deity such as Minerva. Other than Sulis, in most cases Celtic water divinities were usually interpreted by the Romans as nymphs. For example, Coventina appears in the form of a nymph in Carrawburgh.³⁴⁵ Although Sulis was not identified as a nymph, Bath was not without aquatic imagery. For example, two figures believed to be tritons are believed to be located on either side of Bath's Gorgon pediment (fig. 24).³⁴⁶ However, due to the poor condition of the pediment it is difficult to see the tritons. Consequently, it is difficult to confirm that there are representations of tritons on the pediment. Although they would be fitting with Bath's spring and bathing complex, they don't match the Minervan iconography of the rest of the pediment.³⁴⁷ Bath's sacred springs as well as its bathing complex were significant features of the temple. Consequently an important connection between water and healing may be drawn.

³⁴⁴ Cunliffe (1988) 102, Green (1995) 93, Shearer (1996) 84.

³⁴⁵ Mattingly (2006) 215.

³⁴⁶ Richmond, Toynbee (1955) 99.

³⁴⁷ Smith (1983) 122.

There is, however, a lack of ex-voto offerings at Bath. It was common for a supplicant to dedicate ex-voto offerings to the divinity once they had been cured. However, the dedication of votive offerings may have fallen out of prominence by the time. Normally, these ex-votive offerings took the form of the body part which was cured.³⁴⁸ At Bath, however, only a pair of ivory breasts and a bronze breast could be considered ex-votive offerings. Furthermore, the altars dedicated to Sulis do not mention any of the dedicators being cured by Sulis' divinity. Importantly, Cunliffe and Green both note that anatomical ex-votive offerings fell out of popularity in Rome from the end of Rome's Republican period.³⁴⁹ Consequently, the lack of ex-votive offerings should not be taken as a suggestion that Bath was not a healing shrine.

A possible connection to the sun: Sulis' solar attributes.

As well as Bath's large number of ex-votive offerings, there was some iconographic evidence suggesting that Bath had a healing function. For example, Sulis may have been associated with the sun: the top of Sulis' Gorgon pediment is crowned with a sun, and Green argues that Sulis' name was philologically linked to the proto-Indo-European word for sun.³⁵⁰ The proto-Indo-European word for sun is *sehaul*.³⁵¹ Within greater Celtic religions the sun held important healing properties.³⁵² These are illustrated by the cults which worship the god Apollo.³⁵³ The presence of the sun would help to explain the goddess' heated pools and emphasize their divine healing properties. Religiously, the sun was also important to the Celts. The spoked wheel was a symbol which was commonly associated with the sun in

³⁴⁸ Scheid (2003) 100.

³⁴⁹ Cunliffe (1988) 360, Green (1995) 95.

³⁵⁰ Green (1996) 33.

³⁵¹ Mallory, Adams (2006) 128.

³⁵² Green (1991) 20.

³⁵³ Green (1991)

ancient Britain.³⁵⁴ A pewter vessel dedicated to Sulis also had an image of the sun engraved onto the bottom, but other than this vessel, Sulis appears to have received no other votive offerings with sun motifs.³⁵⁵ Unfortunately, physical evidence does provide much support to the theory Sulis was a solar goddess.

The sun and water also share important links. Green notes that the water, sun and healing were all closely tied each other in the Celtic world.³⁵⁶ Green's hypothesis does carry some weight. Visually, water reflects the light of the sun making it sparkle in the light.

Furthermore, both the sun and the water are essential to life. To the people of the ancient world, the sun's influence was present in hot springs such as Bath's.³⁵⁷ Due to the sun's heat, the connection to Bath's hot springs would make sense. Both the sun and the hot spring renew life with their heat. Arguably, the hot springs' main source of healing was their natural minerals.

The presence of the sun symbolism would normally contrast with the dark nature of *defixiones*. In this case, though, the cult of Sol Invictus had a prominent judicial role in Roman religion from the third century CE, derived from his role as an all-seeing god.³⁵⁸ J. Strubbe notes that, similarly, sky gods such as Helios, Zeus Olympios and Selene were invoked in curses which protected tombs.³⁵⁹ These gods were known for their judicial qualities and their ability to see all crimes. If one disturbed the remains in the tomb then

³⁵⁴ Green (1996) 148.

³⁵⁵ However, as Bath is still not fully excavated it is likely that there are more offerings to be found. Aside from the *defixiones*, Sulis' spring has not yielded a large sum of offerings. Consequently, it is hard to draw evidence from votive offerings alone.

³⁵⁶ Green (1991) 20.

³⁵⁷ Green (1991b) 119.

³⁵⁸ Stephenson (2009) 36.

³⁵⁹ Strubbe (1991) 46.

similarly to victims on Bath's *defixiones*, the tomb desecrator would be punished. In addition, Helios and Sol are often invoked in curse tablets which are categorized as 'prayers for justice'.³⁶⁰ Such judicial qualities attributed to the Greco-Roman sun religion are consistent with those demonstrated by Sulis. Sulis oversaw the retribution of crimes against her followers as Sol did with his.

Furthermore, another of Bath's pediments includes an image of the goddess Luna (fig. 21). Cunliffe suggests that pediment originally stood above the Façade of the Four Seasons.³⁶¹ Luna can be identified by her iconography. The goddess has copious amounts of hair and is draped. The moon crescent behind Luna's head and the whip used to drive her ox-drawn chariot (fig. 21). Luna's presence at Sulis' temple is plausible, and highlights the judicial and healing characteristics attached to Sulis as a goddess. Luna was an important deity within the Roman Pantheon; she provided a means to keep track of the year via the phases of the moon (Virgil. *Georgics* 1. 5-6). Importantly, Luna was also a potent symbol of fertility, growth and life (Cicero. *De Natura Deorum* 3. 119). Luna's fertility symbols are similar to the rejuvenating attributes found in both the sun and the water.

Bath's solar and lunar iconography fits into a greater architectural trend occurring during the third and fourth centuries CE. Depictions of the moon were never far away from those of the sun. Sol and Luna often appeared opposite each other on Roman architectural features. The Arch of Constantine which was built c.315 CE is an appropriate comparison to Bath's own

³⁶⁰ Strubbe (1991) 46.

³⁶¹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 126. Cunliffe only guesses at the pediment's original location. The Luna pediment was originally found in three blocks. When matched with the Façade the proportions fit. The moon also had a strong connection with the changing of seasons. Consequently, Luna's presence above the personification of the four seasons would be appropriate.

celestial iconography.³⁶² Sol and Luna appear on the arch as tondos with Luna on the arch's western side and Sol on the arch's east. Cunliffe suggests a similar layout within Bath's temple precinct, noting that the Façade of the Four Seasons faced a southern portico with an image of Sol on it.³⁶³ Similarly to the Arch of Constantine, Bath's portrayal of Sol and Luna depict the two deities in tandem. Sol Invictus became a mainstream deity and cult in the third century CE.³⁶⁴ The proposed dates for the prominence of Sol Invictus' cult match the development of Bath's temple complex.

Although Sulis may have similarities with Luna such as healing properties as well as judicial aspects *defixiones*, there is no solid evidence to suggest that the two were closely connected. As Green and Cunliffe have emphasized, there may have been a Celtic connection through the sun through the heat of the spring but at this point it is difficult to draw to a solid conclusion about Bath having aspects of a sun cult. Bath's representations of the sun are minimal and images of Luna and the seasons were probably made to beautify the temple complex.

Sulis as a judicial deity.

Sulis' role as a magistrate is further emphasized in her altars. Many of Sulis' altars are dedicated on the completion of a vow. Various vows were made by freedmen asking Sulis to protect their previous masters (RIB 143, 144, 147). However, most altars do not describe what kind of vow has been completed, only that it was completed. For example, one such

³⁶² Stephenson (2009) 156.

³⁶³ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 127.

³⁶⁴ Stephenson (2009) 76.

altar states ‘Priscus Touti f(ilius) lapidaries(s) cives Car(nu)tenus Su(li) deae v(otum) s(oluit) l(ibens) m(erito)’, ‘Priscus, son of Toutius, stonemason, a tribesman of the Carnutes, to the goddess Sulis willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow’ (RIB 144). On the completion of a vow, an altar is dedicated to Sulis in order to mark this. In addition, a *defixio* from Sulis’ spring is dedicated as a sanction against perjury. The tablet notes:

Uricalus Do[c]ilosa ux[or] sua Docilis filius suus Docilina Decentius frater suus
Alogiosa nomina<a> eorum qui iuraverunt <qui iuraverunt> ad fontem deae Suli(s)
prid(i)e idus Apriles quicumque illic periuraverit deae Suli facias Illum sanquine sui
illud satisfacere.

Uricalus, Docilosa his wife, Docilis his son and Docilina, Decentius his brother,
Alogiosa: the names of those who have sworn at the spring of the goddess Sulis on the
12th of April. Whoever has perjured himself there you are to make him pay for it to
the goddess Sulis in his own blood.
- Tab. Sul. 94.³⁶⁵

Tablet 94 emphasizes Sulis’ role as a judicial deity. Those who have broken oaths are punished in a fashion similar to thieves. Dedications are made to Sulis when oaths are completed while perjurers were punished.

Sulis’ healing attributes can be compared with her role as a destroyer which is emphasized by Bath’s *defixiones*. Sulis clearly shows aspects of duality as a part of her cult. Sulis’ hot spring would have had important healing properties for those who bathed there. However, the *defixiones* display Sulis’ more harmful side. While the goddess was able to restore health, she was more than capable of taking health away. Due to the inscriptions on Bath’s *defixiones*, we know that Sulis’ worshippers expected her to cripple the health of and even take peoples’ lives (Tab. Sul 10).³⁶⁶ In contrast, there is no written evidence at Bath which notes healing as a part of the temple’s function; this is implicit due to Bath’s hot springs.

³⁶⁵ Tablet 94 is currently the only tablet in Bath’s cache which punishes perjury.

³⁶⁶ In Tablet 10 Sulis is asked to take the life of the thief Brucerus. Furthermore, the goddess is also asked to inflict Brucerus with both impotency and insomnia. Tablet 10 is a strong reminder that while Sulis could heal, she was also capable to of crippling health or taking life.

Sulis' discretion when smiting was dependant on people's behaviour. For example, criminal activity such as stealing or perjury was punished by Sulis. Yet, Sulis was kind to those who were sick. However, Sulis is not the only deity who incorporates aspects of duality in their characteristics. It is common for many deities to both help and harm mortals.

Most deities have a range of attributes which help to define their characters. In many cases gods are able to both give and take. Gods who had seemingly beneficial attributes were also capable of wrath. For example, the god Apollo was capable of both healing and destruction.³⁶⁷ As a god with solar attributes, Apollo presents an appropriate comparison to Sulis. Contrasting with this, Sulis' cult seems to acknowledge a variety of different characteristics.

Religious evidence from Bath's sacred spring.

The development of Sulis' sacred spring highlights the continuing change of the goddess' religious rites. During Bath's second period (c. 2nd century CE), Sulis' sacred spring was enclosed within a vaulted chamber (fig. 25). Previously, the spring was visible from the raised temple as well as from the sacrificial altar giving an open atmosphere to the temple complex with the spring being easily approachable by the public (fig. 14). The spring's new chamber restricted water and human access to the spring. However, the reason behind the vault's construction is unclear. Green notes that the addition of the vault may have been an attempt to make Sulis' cult more remote and mysterious, therefore increasing the religious

³⁶⁷ Ferguson (1989) 15.

experience.³⁶⁸ The transition to a vaulted chamber would have also placed more emphasis on the spring as a place intended for worship. The entrance to the spring was directly connected to Sulis' altar. Accordingly, any religious ceremonies in the courtyard would have direct access to the spring. As previously mentioned, Sulis was traditionally the spirit of the spring and the vaulted chamber would have provided a far more appropriate 'home' for the goddess than an open spring. Consequently, the vaulted entrance mediated a transition between the secular world and sacred world. Within the vaulted chamber it was possible to contact the goddess as is seen on Bath's *defixiones*.

Interestingly, the vaulted spring's construction date coincides with Cunliffe's proposed date for when the *defixiones* began to be deposited at Bath. This change in Sulis' religion may reflect the chthonic aspect which is associated with *defixiones*. As discussed in previous chapters, the deities typically associated with *defixiones* have chthonic attributes.³⁶⁹ However, the presence of *defixiones* at Bath should not be taken as a definitive answer to Sulis' attributes. As previously mentioned in this chapter, sources of water such as rivers and springs were important to Celtic religious practice. Similarly important was the role the earth played in conjunction with these springs. Places where the water flowed from the earth were held in special reverence.³⁷⁰ The Celts believed that these were the homes of powerful spirits such as Sulis. Sulis has a clear connection between the earth and her aquatic attribute; her connection to the chthonic realm is highlighted by her spring.

It is likely that Bath's vaulted spring was built to commemorate a goddess whose popularity

³⁶⁸ Green (1995) 94.

³⁶⁹ See Chapter 2 page 74 of this thesis for a larger discussion on the connection between chthonic deities and *defixiones*.

³⁷⁰ Webster (1986) 107.

has risen over the years. Furthermore, the presence of a vaulted chamber draws attention to the centre of Sulis' power and could be seen as a part of the temple's beautification rather than an acknowledgement of Sulis' chthonic nature. It is far more likely that Sulis' spring was enclosed as a way to add more grandeur and mystique to Sulis' temple complex. It is unlikely *defixiones* were deposited in Sulis' spring because she was a chthonic goddess. It is more likely that the *defigentes* were approaching Sulis as the most powerful divinity in Bath's region. By invoking Bath's patron goddess on the *defixiones*, the *defixiones* were more likely to gain more supernatural clout.

The spring's development highlights a more personal form of worship towards Sulis. The discovery of a life size bronze head portraying Minerva suggests that there were sculptural representations of Sulis around her precinct.³⁷¹ It is unknown where the bronze statue of Minerva once stood or whether it once stood in the temple's *cella*.³⁷² While it is the finest surviving sculpture from the temple, it is impossible to say whether it was the cult statue.³⁷³ In fact, there may not have been a cult statue: in many cases, Romano-Celtic temples took a secondary place to sacred springs and groves, and small offerings to the deity were typically deposited in the spring rather than near a cult statue.³⁷⁴ The inclusion of four square piers scattered around the edge of the spring may indicate the inclusion of cult statuary within the sacred spring (fig 25-B, C, D, E). The four square bases and three circular bases within the spring may have supported statuary alternating between columns.³⁷⁵ The square bases were

³⁷¹ There is no evidence to suggest that Sulis was represented and anthropomorphized before Roman occupation of Britain. Consequently, Sulis' iconographical features likely matched those of Minerva. Only the head remains with the rest of the statue (including Minerva's helmet) missing.

³⁷² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 114.

³⁷³ There is no evidence to suggest whether the head once belonged to Sulis' primary cult statue or another representation of the goddess from another part of the precinct.

³⁷⁴ Lewis (1966) 5.

³⁷⁵ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 42.

made by placing rectangular blocks on top of each other and sealing them with mortar (fig 26).³⁷⁶ Cunliffe notes that the bases had well tooled joints to fit the blocks together.³⁷⁷

However, the tops of the bases do not have marks or grooves to hold a statue in place. Cunliffe suggests that this is because the top layers of the bases have been removed.³⁷⁸ Statuary in Sulis' spring may have been dedications made by Sulis' worshippers to honour the goddess; their placement in the sacred spring would not be out of place considering the spring was Sulis' primary receptacle for offerings.

Sulis' spring was likely the centre point of the goddess' religious complex. In British tradition Sulis was the embodiment of the spring, as was reflected in the temple orientation.

The temple complex, courtyard and bathing complex were built around the spring.

Furthermore, votive offerings made to the goddess were exclusively deposited within the spring. Consequently, the spring was the focal point for communicating with the goddess and it would make sense for an angry *defigens* to lodge complaints with the goddess here.

However, combined with the restricted access to the spring, the inclusion of cult statuary would have increased the majesty of the spring as Sulis' place of worship. Consequently, the religious aspects of Sulis' shrine were changed drastically. The chamber was accessible only through a single entrance from the temple's courtyard. Cunliffe has noted that this door may have been utilized exclusively by priests to approach the spring while the public approached from the south viewing through three windows (fig 25-A).³⁷⁹ These restrictions on Sulis' spring would have made the space more sacred, as only temple staff was allowed access to the spring. Green suggests that religious officials restricted access to the temple to exercise

³⁷⁶ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 42.

³⁷⁷ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 42.

³⁷⁸ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 42.

³⁷⁹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 50.

more control over the goddess.³⁸⁰ Votive offerings from the public may have been made through the three windows at the southern end of the spring. Alternatively, the priests may have placed all offerings within the spring. However, Cunliffe's consideration is guesswork as there is no evidence to suggest that the public were not allowed to enter the spring through the entranceway, although enclosing the spring did mean that space was restricted, limiting the number of people who could visit.³⁸¹ The windows may have been placed so the springs could be seen from the bathing complex which lay adjacent to Sulis' temple.

The sacred spring's entranceway connected to the courtyard of the temple (fig. 15). The entranceway may have connected the spring to the altar so that religious processions could reach the spring from the altar. Considering the spring's prominence at Bath and Sulis' strong ties to the spring, it would make sense to include the spring in religious rituals.

The only written evidence on Sulis comes from inscriptions dating to Bath's period of Roman occupation.³⁸² These inscriptions predominantly appear on votive offerings found within the spring such as the *paterae* and the *defixiones*. Less frequent are the inscriptions found on tombstones and altars. Many of Bath's inscriptions highlight the fact that Bath had many benefactors who dedicated altars to Sulis. Many of these altars were gifted to the goddess and do not specify whether they were dedicated to commemorate the fulfilment of a vow or as a monument to the deceased. For example, an altar simply notes, 'Quintus Pompeius Anicetus Suli', 'Quintus Pompeius Anicetus to Sulis' (RIB 148). It is not entirely certain why Quintus has dedicated his altar to Sulis. It was not uncommon to dedicate altars to deities without stating a reason. For example, an altar in Chedworth simply notes 'To Lenus Mars' (RIB

³⁸⁰ Aldhouse-Green (2004) 200.

³⁸¹ Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 50.

³⁸² Cunliffe and Davenport (1985) 178.

126). These altars were probably dedicated by a deity's more affluent worshippers.

Furthermore, inscriptions found on tombstones and altars are particularly useful as they highlight some of the ritual functions at Sulis' temple. For example, one tombstone notes 'Dis) M(anibus) G(aius) Calpurnius (R)eceptus sacer dos deae Sulis vix(it) an(nos) LXXV Calpurnia Trifo sa l(i)berta(a) coniunx f(aciendum) c(uravit)', 'To the spirits of the departed; Gaius Calpurnius Receptus, priest of Sulis, lived 75 years' (RIB 155). Furthermore, there is evidence of an augur at Bath on a dedicated altar noting, '(D)ae Suli pro salute et incolumite (te) Mar(ci) Aufid(i) (M)aximi leg(ionis) VI Vic(tricus) (A)ufidius Eutuches Leb(ertus) v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).', 'To the Goddess Sulis, Lucius Marcius Memor, augur, gave this gift' (RIB 142).³⁸³ It is not surprising that Sulis' temple was attended by priests and diviners. Unfortunately, these inscriptions provide some of the only evidence of the ritual which took place at Bath. Consequently, there is little evidence to suggest how many priests and augurs worked at Bath and no evidence describing what rituals took place at the site Bath. Consequently much has been left to speculation and comparison with other Romano-Celtic cult sites.

Bath's sacred spring was the focal point for votive offerings to Sulis. The spring lay at the centre of Bath's temple complex and seemed to be the most acceptable place to approach Sulis. During the second to fourth centuries CE, the spring received its highest volume of *defixiones*.

³⁸³ We cannot tell whether or not Lucius worked in Sulis' temple or was just passing through.

The number of *defixiones* found in Sulis' spring suggests that Bath's *defigentes* must have believed that the *defixiones* worked. It has been noted that Sulis continued to be petitioned for up to two hundred years. To Bath's lower class, Sulis acted as a supernatural magistrate who presented a better chance of restitution than an actual magistrate. Sulis' magisterial role is emphasized through her persecution of criminals and wrongdoers emphasized through the curse tablets' inscriptions.³⁸⁴ The *defixiones* address Sulis as if they are a petition. A *defigens*, most commonly someone who was robbed, asked the goddess to consider the case and to punish the thief if she thought punishment was deserved. Importantly, Sulis was not commanded by a mortal. The question of whether or not a thief deserved punishment lay with Sulis. In this way, Sulis' judicial qualities are clear.

Conclusion

Although Sulis was clearly the most prominent goddess at Bath, there is limited evidence describing the site. Consequently, it is difficult to discern what attributes Sulis has a goddess and which rituals took place at Bath. Due to the size of the temple complex and the elaborate ornamentation we know that Sulis' cult and temple complex were prosperous. Sulis' temple was built in the Romano-Celtic style emphasizing a degree of hybridization between Roman and British cultures. Although most of the temple's iconography and basic layout were Roman, the temples' orientation around Sulis sacred spring and the Celtic Gorgon on Bath's pediment were an acknowledgment of ancient British culture. Her connection to Bath's hot springs has led many to believe that one of Sulis' functions was the role of a healing goddess. It is likely that Sulis had a role as a healer at Bath, within Celtic religion the role the deities of

³⁸⁴ For a more elaborate discussion of the *defixiones* judicial qualities please refer to chapter 1 of this thesis.

springs and rivers were primarily female deities.³⁸⁵ As noted above, Celtic water deities have often been associated with healing attributes. To the Roman mind, Sulis' connection with a thermal spring would have given the impression of a potent healing divinity. In addition, the sheer number of *defixiones* suggests that they were a central function of Sulis' cult. The *defixiones* at Bath believed they could approach Sulis with their grievances (often theft) and sought retribution from the goddess. The presence of the *defixiones* notes that Sulis was believed to be able to take a life or severely cripple someone. Sulis was able to both heal and take health away from mortals. In addition, grave stelae attest to the presence of augurs and at Bath. Bath's Gorgon pediment as well as inscriptions on dedicated items such as the *defixiones* reveals a definite connection with the Roman goddess Minerva. Although Sulis was conflated with Minerva, she may have meant different things to her Roman and British worshippers. To the Romans, Sulis may have been a British Minerva Medica with extensive healing properties. As most of Bath's *defixiones* were British, Sulis may have acted as a judicial divinity they could approach for help. Several scholars such as Green and Cunliffe have explored the possibility that Sulis was a solar goddess. Although there are representations of Sol and Luna around Bath, there isn't enough evidence to draw a solid connection between the goddess Sulis and Sol. Although we can draw conclusion about Sulis' cult and the temple's ritual, there is still much we don't understand. Continuing to study Bath is important for gaining an understanding of Romano-British cults.

³⁸⁵ Green (1996) 90.

Conclusion

The Romano-British town of Bath was a prevailing part of Britain's Roman past. The large temple complex has provided an example of the aggrandizement of temple complexes in Britain. The Gorgon pediment has become a powerful symbol of Bath's Roman history. Today Bath remains a busy city still centred on the temple of Sulis-Minerva. The temple was to worship a powerful goddess Sulis-Minerva who represented a fusion of both British and Roman religious culture. However, the excavation of Bath has proved to be difficult due to the modern city limiting the amount of evidence which can be used to research the Roman town of *Aquae Sulis*. Furthermore, Bath is only cited in one piece of Classical literature and an Anglo-Saxon poem. Consequently, there are next to no first-hand accounts of what life was like at Bath or what actions were taking place at the temple of Sulis-Minerva. Sulis is most commonly recognized for her thermal hot springs as well the large cache of 130 *defixiones* discovered in the spring. Consequently, Sulis has been thought to be a healer and an avenging force. In this thesis I have discussed what Bath may have been like and the type of goddess which made her home at the centre of Bath.

My first chapter explained the chronology of Bath. Bath is considered a Roman 'small town' in England. As a 'small town', Bath fitted into a wider range of smaller cities with specific functions built throughout Roman Britain. Bath's own function was most probably religious with the town centred on Sulis' temple complex and sacred spring. Most of Bath's physical remains are of a religious type. However, much of the wider city of Bath still remains unexcavated and still has the potential to yield more evidence of Bath's city life. It is likely that Bath began its life as a Roman temple in c.65 CE as a basic Roman temple complex. Over the years of habitation, Bath became larger and more prominent as reflected in its

growing architecture and various dedicated altars. It is likely that Bath reached the height of its power as a Roman city in the third century CE. But Bath's prominence was short lived since, like the rest of Roman Britain, Bath began to decline after the mid fourth century CE. By the fifth century, Bath's temple complex was derelict and ceased to function as a Roman temple. Due to political discord in Rome and changing religious practices in the ancient world, Bath became more difficult to keep afloat. Bath's final decades are captured through sedimentary levels in the court yard as trapped pottery sherds and discarded waste help to date Bath's last years. Furthermore, coin hoards help to date when Bath was at its most prominent as a site. The palaeography of Bath's Latin can help place a rough date on the *defixiones* and when they were being deposited in Sulis' spring. The *defixiones* can be divided into two separate types of Latin which are Old Roman Cursive and New Roman Cursive. The Old Roman Cursive tablets make up the large majority of Bath's cache and these have been dated by Cunliffe to c.175-275 CE. The deposition of the Old Roman Cursive tablets occurred during the busiest period of Bath's existence. The large majority of tablets were being deposited when features such as the dome were placed over Bath's sacred spring. The New Roman Cursive tablets were far fewer than their Old Roman counterparts. This may reflect the decline in Bath's temple complex as offerings ceased to be made at the spring. Although Bath went through a surge in popularity it was not long until it declined like the rest of Roman Britain during the fifth century CE.

Chapter Two was a discussion of the large cache of *defixiones* which was recovered from Sulis' spring. Bath's curse tablets have been the focus of speculation as they, like other British *defixiones*, differ in tone and subject from what has been considered the norm for Greco-Roman *defixiones*. The intention of *defixiones* was to influence the outcome of an event through invocation of a particular deity or deities. Curse tablets were often used to bind

rivals in the courts, in love, and very often in sports. Curse tablets were often very highly formulaic and developed over time to become intricate in their means of cursing, often invoking both foreign and local deities to carry out the curse inscribed on the tablet. However, Bath's *defixiones* do have differences to examples associated with the Mediterranean. The majority of Bath's *defixiones* (and those of other British equivalents) dealt with cases of theft. A *defigens* would dedicate a curse tablet to Sulis asking the goddess to recover the stolen item or exact restitution against the thief. All British examples deal with cases where a *defigens* has felt wronged by someone and has consequently gone to a deity where they feel justice would best be received. Due to these differences scholars such as Versnel have suggested that *defixiones* such as Bath's are a form of 'prayer for justice' rather than an outward curse tablet. Versnel's conclusion does hold some ground. Bath's *defigentes* approach Sulis as supplicants and ask the goddess rather than coerce her into aiding them. Sulis' divine status is acknowledged. Furthermore, Bath's *defixiones* do include legalistic language and the thief is given to Sulis as if having been surrendered into her jurisdiction for punishment. This creates an interesting dynamic between *defigens* and deity. However, the line between prayer and cursing is thin in the ancient world and the two may not be completely mutually exclusive. Often prayers were intended to bring harm against an enemy similarly to a *defixio*. Bath's *defixiones* shared a lot of consistencies from curse tablets from the Mediterranean. The gruesome punishments inscribed on the tablets as well as the form of Bath's *defixiones* match their Mediterranean cousins. By rolling up the tablets and inscribing them backwards, they could not be easily read by a stranger's prying eyes. The majority of people dedicating curse tablets at Bath were native Britons. Consequently, although Bath's *defixiones* function similarly to prayers they may also be an ancient British form of a Mediterranean practice.

Chapter Three focused on the goddess Sulis as well as her cult at Bath. Sulis fitted into a group of British deities who were offered cult on a specifically local basis. Sulis' power and identity were tied to the spring and Bath and the city itself. Thus, there is no evidence to suggest that she was worshipped elsewhere in the ancient world. Furthermore, there is little to no evidence highlighting explaining Sulis' cult in pre-Roman Britain. Importantly, most iconography concerning Sulis is made through a Roman lens. Although Sulis' temple was originally built in the form of a classic Roman temple, over time it took on the Romano-Celtic form which was typical of Roman temples in England. Sulis' popularity is reflected in the ongoing process of aggrandizement of the temple and the intricate decorations. On balance, it is most likely that the ritual and practice at the temple was observed in the Roman way. Inscriptions provide evidence as to both a priest and augur in ancient Bath. However, there were also some surviving traditions from the British past captured at Bath. Although Sulis was joined with the Roman goddess Minerva as 'Sulis-Minerva', the name Minerva always followed that of Sulis. The healing power of Sulis' spring suited that of Minerva Medica back at Rome. The healing aspect of Sulis is emphasized by the goddess' thermal spring and bathing complex. Furthermore, Bath boasted various Celtic-influenced artistic features such as the famous gorgon pediment, which boasts various iconographical features which are associated with the Roman Minerva. Many of Bath's features such as the *defixiones*, on the other hand, do not seem to match the attributes of Minerva as she was not a goddess often invoked on curse tablets. Furthermore, Sulis received various offerings such as dedicated altars, coins and *paterae*. Like most deities, it was likely that Sulis had several characteristics as a divinity. She may have meant different things to the native Britons and visiting Romans as she was rooted in both cultures. There is no evidence to suggest that only a single attribute of Sulis was worshipped at Bath. The problem of minimal evidence means there is no way to state expressly what kind of practices happened at Bath. Despite Sulis'

ambiguity is clear she was an important divinity to the people of Bath and as the city's patron deity she held a special place in the heart of Bath.

The patron goddess of the city of Bath is one that is shrouded in obscurity due to a lack of sources. Several suggestions have been made as to what kind of goddess resided in Bath, mostly based on Sulis' connection with the Roman Minerva, the thermal spring and the large cache of *defixiones*. It is likely that all of these played an important role in how Sulis' cult functioned and all of these say something about the goddess herself. The 130 *defixiones* highlight a goddess who was capable of giving harmed devotees restitution for a wrong made against them. The Gorgon pediment also emphasizes a strong Roman connection with Minerva. *Aquae Sulis*, or Bath was clearly an important Roman town in Britain. The large size of the temple and the rich decoration show its prominence. Britain clearly had a unique take on the Mediterranean curse tablets and they were adapted to suit the needs of people in Britain. Although Bath's tablets could be regarded as prayers they also share a number of traits in common with *defixiones*. Britain's *defixiones* may be a development on Mediterranean examples by a native population who thought they had better legal representation from a deity than a local magistrate. There is still much we do not know about the temple at Bath and its patron goddess. Thus, the continued study of Bath and Sulis-Minerva are important when understanding ancient Britain and how it changed during Roman rule.

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Image List.



Figure 1. Map showing the distribution of Romano-Celtic temples in Britain. Image: Mattingly (2011) 225.

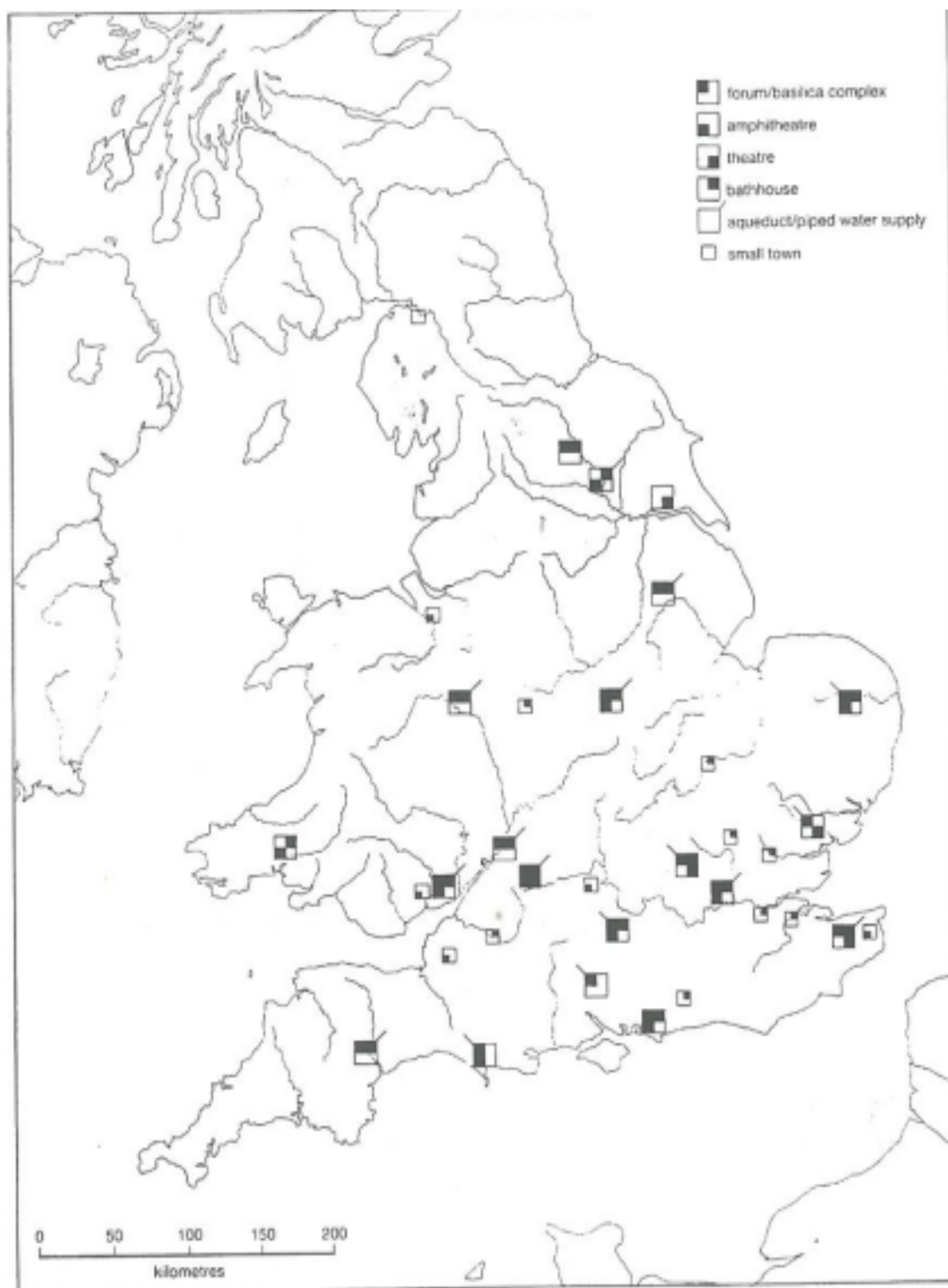


Figure 2. Map of selected Romano-British cities and their size groupings. Image: Jones (2004) 177.



Figure 3. The Romano-Celtic town of Viroconium Cornoviorum, Britain, 125-400 CE.
Image: Jones (2004) 165.

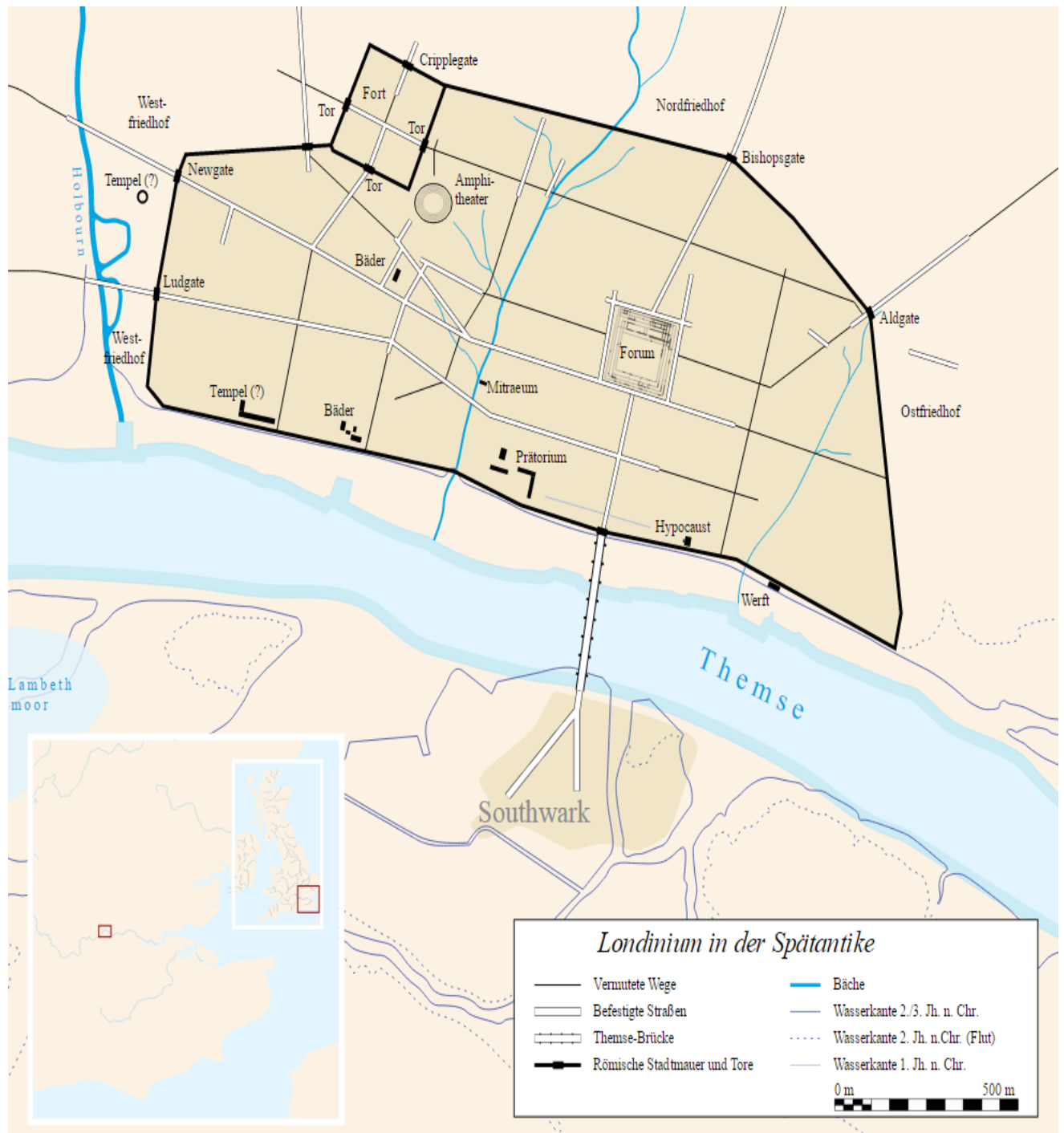


Figure 4. The Roman City of Londinium. Image:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Londinium_400_AD-en.svg.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
1	A	B	C	D	E															X
2	A	B		D	E				I	L		N				R		T	V	
3	A			D	E				I		M	N	O			R	S	T	V	
4	A	B	C		E		S	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
5	A	B	C	D	E	F			I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	
6	A			D	E		S		I	L	M	N			Q	R	S	T	V	
7	A		C				G	H	I			N	O					T	V	
8	A	B	C	D	E	E			I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
9	A		C	D	E		G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P		R	S	T	V	
10	A	B	C	D	E	F	S		I	L	M	N	O	P		R	S	T	V	X
11(i)	A		C		E	E			I	L					Q	R	S	T	V	
11(ii)	A	B		D	E				I							R		T		
11(iii)			C						I		M				Q				V	
12(i)	A				E				I	L	M	N	O		Q	R	S	T	V	
12(ii)				D	E						M					R	S			
12(iii)	A				E				I		M	N					S	T		
13	A			D	E				I	R	M	N	O			R	S	T	V	
14	A	B	C	D	E				I	L	M	N	O			R	S	T	V	
15	A			D	E				I	L	M	N	O		P	R	S	T	V	
16	A			D	E	F			I	L	M	N	O		Q	R	S	T	V	
17	X		C	D	E		G		I	L	M	N	O				S	T	V	
18	A		C	D	F				I		M	N	O			R			V	X
19	A			D	E				I		M	N				R	S	T	V	
20(ii)					E						M				Q			T	V	
24	A				F				I					P			S	T	V	

Capital-letter texts

Figure 5. Tabulation of Capital letters in Bath *defixiones*, Tablets 1-24. Image: Cunliffe (1988) 91.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
30	λ	α	κ		ϕ	ϕ	ς		ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π		ρ	σ	τ	υ	
31	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ	ϕ			ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π		ρ	σ	τ	υ	
32	λ		ε	δ	ϕ	ϕ	ς	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ		
33	λ		ε	δ	ϕ				ι	λ	μ	ν	ο			ρ	σ	τ	υ	
34	λ		ε	δ	ϕ				ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π		ρ	σ	τ	υ	χ
35	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ	ς	η	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο			ρ	σ	τ	υ	
36	λ	α		δ	ϕ		η	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π		ρ	σ	τ	υ	
37	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ			η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ		χ
38	λ	α		δ	ϕ	ς	η	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ		χ
39	λ	α			ϕ				ι	λ	μ	ν	ο		ρ	σ	τ	υ		
40	λ			δ	ϕ		η		ι	λ	μ	ν	ο		π		ρ	σ	τ	υ
41	λ		ε	δ	ϕ		η	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ		
42	λ		ε	δ	ϕ	ς			ι			ν	ο				ρ	σ	τ	υ
43	λ			δ					ι	λ		ν	ο	π				ρ	υ	
44	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ	ς	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ			
45	λ		ε	δ	ϕ	ς	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ			χ
46	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ	ς	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο			ρ	σ	τ	υ		
47	λ	α	ε		ϕ		η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ			χ
48	λ				ϕ	ς	η		ι	λ	μ	ν	ο		π			ρ	υ	
49	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ				ι	λ	μ	ν	ο		ρ	σ	τ		υ	
50	λ		ε	δ	ϕ				ι			ν	ο			ρ	σ	τ		
51	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ				ι	λ		ν	ο	π		ρ	σ	τ	υ	
52	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ	ς		η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο		ρ	σ	τ	υ		
53	λ		ε	δ	ϕ	ς			ι	λ	μ	ν	ο			ρ	σ	τ	υ	
54	λ	α	ε	δ	ϕ	ς	η	ι	λ	μ	ν	ο	π	ρ	σ	τ	υ			

ORC texts (i)

PC1

Figure 6. Tabulation of Old Roman Cursive letters in Bath's *defixiones*, Tablets 30-54. Image: Cunliffe (1988) 92.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
55	7		l	a	r		z		1	l	m	y	r	c	u	p	s	r	v	
56	λ			u	r	j			1		m	y	o			r	s	r	v	
57	7	j		u	e				1	l	m	y	o		q		j	t	v	x
58	λ	B	f		E				1	2		N	o			A	r		v	
59	7		l	a	G		h	1			M	o		q	p	j	t	v		
60	7	2	l	u	r			1	l	m	y	o	x	u		r		v		
61	λ		1		v	7		1	2	m	y	o	1	u	r	7	v			
62	λ	l	l	u	r	e	f	2	1	2	m	y	o	u		u	1	r	v	x
63	7	2	l		r			1	l	m	u			q	p	j	t	v		
64	7		l	u	r	e	f		1	l	u	v	o	7			1	t	u	
65	7	2	l	d	e	f	u	h	1	2	m	y	o		u	p	j	t	v	
66	7	j	r	u	v	f	o	h	1	2	m	y	o	u	q	m	1	t	v	
67			l		v															
68	7		l				h	1	l		y	o					1		v	
69	λ		u	v				1	2	m							1		v	
70	7		r		e			1	2	m	y	o	u		u				v	
71			l	u	r	j		1		m					u	p	j	t	v	
72	7		r					1								u		t	v	
73	7			r							y	r							v	
76	λ			u	r	q					v				u	p	j	t	v	
77	7		l					1						7			1	t	v	
78		2						1	2								1	t	v	
79	1		l		o		h		1	m	y				q	p	j		v	
80				u				1	2	m	y	o								
81	7		u								y				q			r	v	

ORC texts (ii)

102

Figure 7. Tabulation of Old Roman Cursive letters in Bath's *defixiones*, Tablets 55-81.
Image: Cunliffe (1988) 93.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X
5			c	l	i				l		m		o				v			
64	7		✓		f				l	l	✓	o	7	u		✓	t	u		
65	7	2	c	d	e	f		h	l	l	m	h	o		d	7	7	7	u	
66					e									p		r	✓		u	
94	7		c	7	e	h	5		l	l	m	h	o	7	7	h	7	7	u	x
95	7	b	c	d	e				l	l	m	n	o			7	7		u	
96	7	b	c	d	e				l	l	m	n	o	p		7	7	7	u	
97	7	b	c	d	e	h	5	h	l	l	m	n	o	p	7	7	7	7	u	x
98	7	b	c	d	e	h	5	h	l	l	m	n	o	p	7	7	7	7	u	x
99	7		c	d	e		5	h	l	l	m	n	o	p	7	7	7	7	u	x
100	7	b	✓	d	e	f	5	h	l	l	m	n	o	p	7	7	7	7	u	
101	7				e		5		l	l	m	n		p		7	7	7	u	
102					e	f			l	l	m	h		p		7	7	7	u	
103	7		c	d	e	f			l		m	n	o	p		7	7	7	u	
104	7		c			f			l		m	n	o				7		u	
105			i	u		5	5		l	l	m	n	o	p		7	7	7	u	
107									l		m				7					u

NRC texts

MET

Figure 8. Tabulation of New Roman Cursive letter forms in Bath's *defixiones*, Tablets 5, 64-107. Image: Cunliffe (1988) 94.

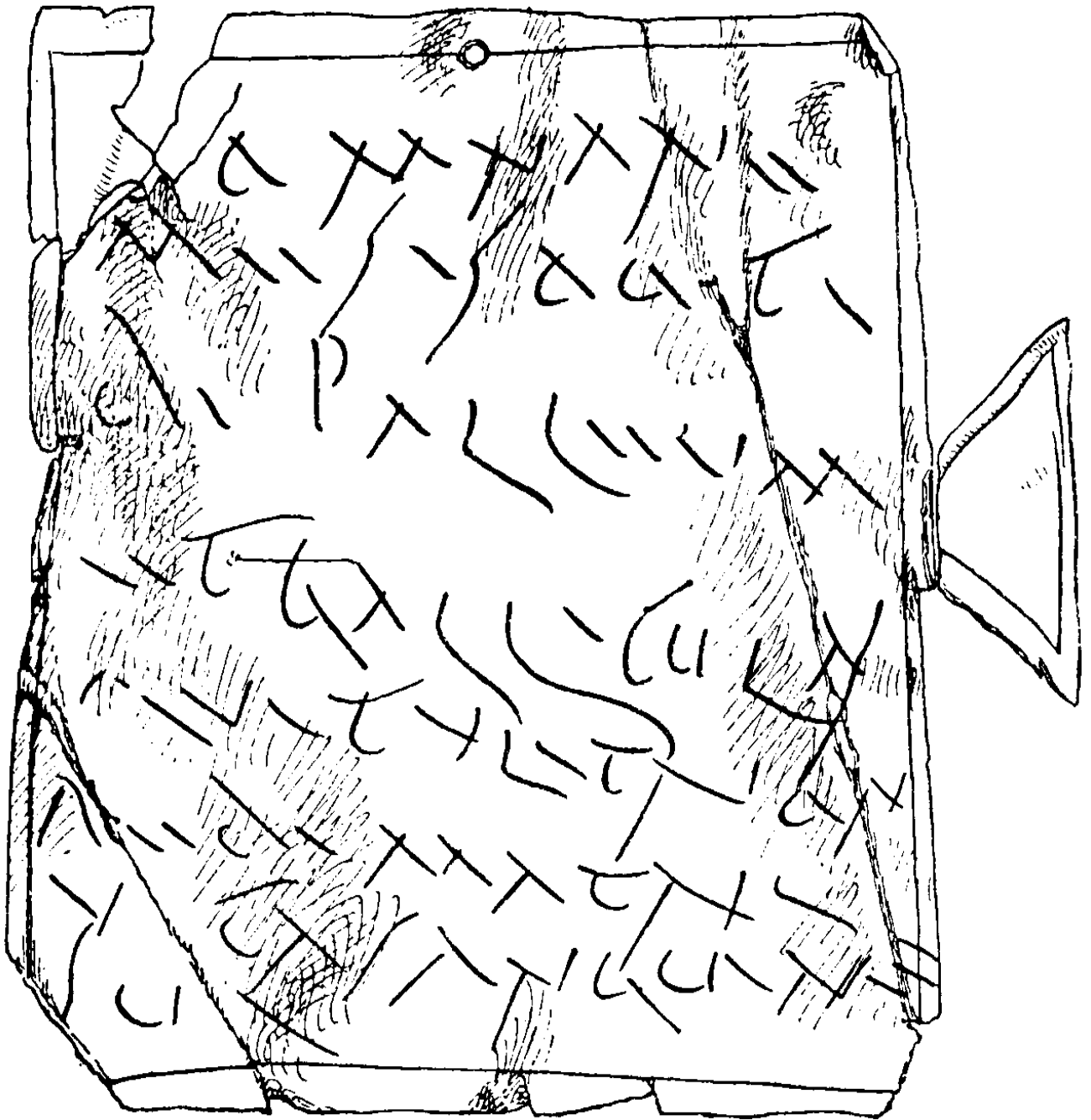


Figure 9. *Defixiones* found in Caerleon, RIB 323, Wales. C. 43-150 AD. Image: Collingwood, Wright, (1965).



Figure 10. Pan shaped Pewter vessels, Bath. Image: Cunliffe (1988) 47.

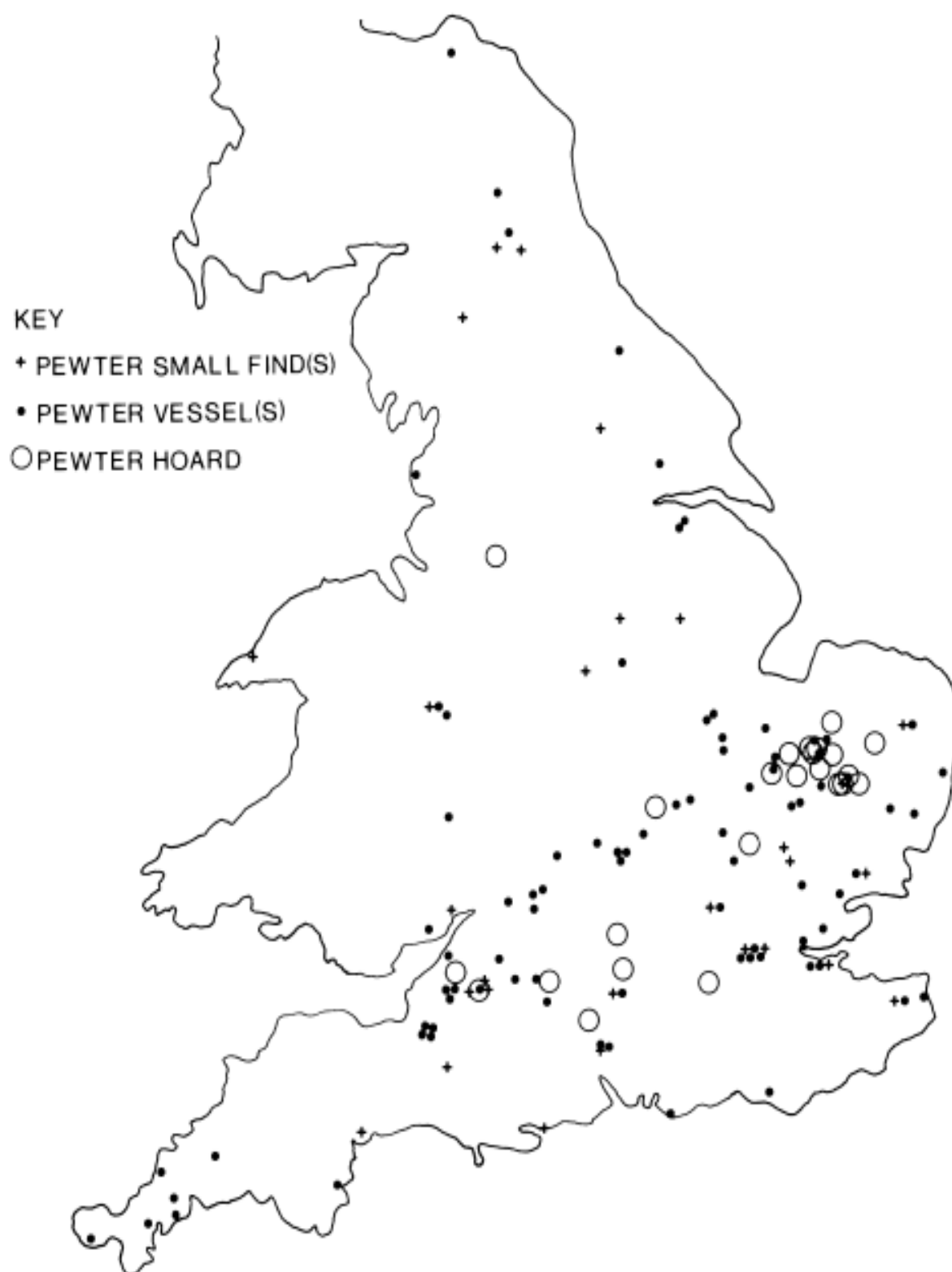


Figure 11. Map showing the distribution of Pewter manufacturing scrap wares in Roman Britain. Image: Beagrie (1989) 177.



Figure 13. A lead curse tablet from Bath, Tab. Sul 52, Bath. Image: Cunliffe (1988) 274.

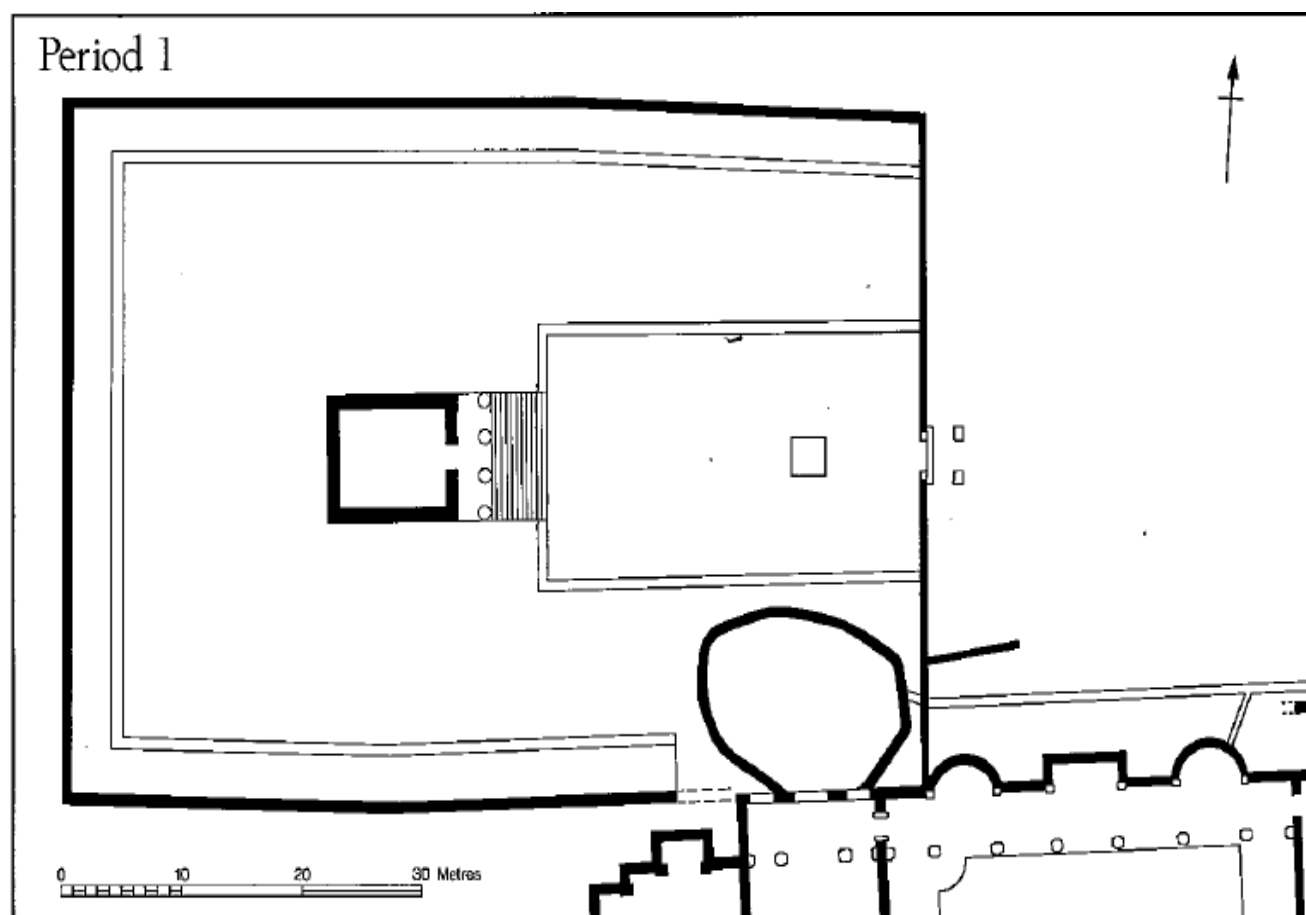


Figure 14. Temple of Sulis Minerva, Bath, 65- 75 CE. Image: Cunliffe (1985) 178.

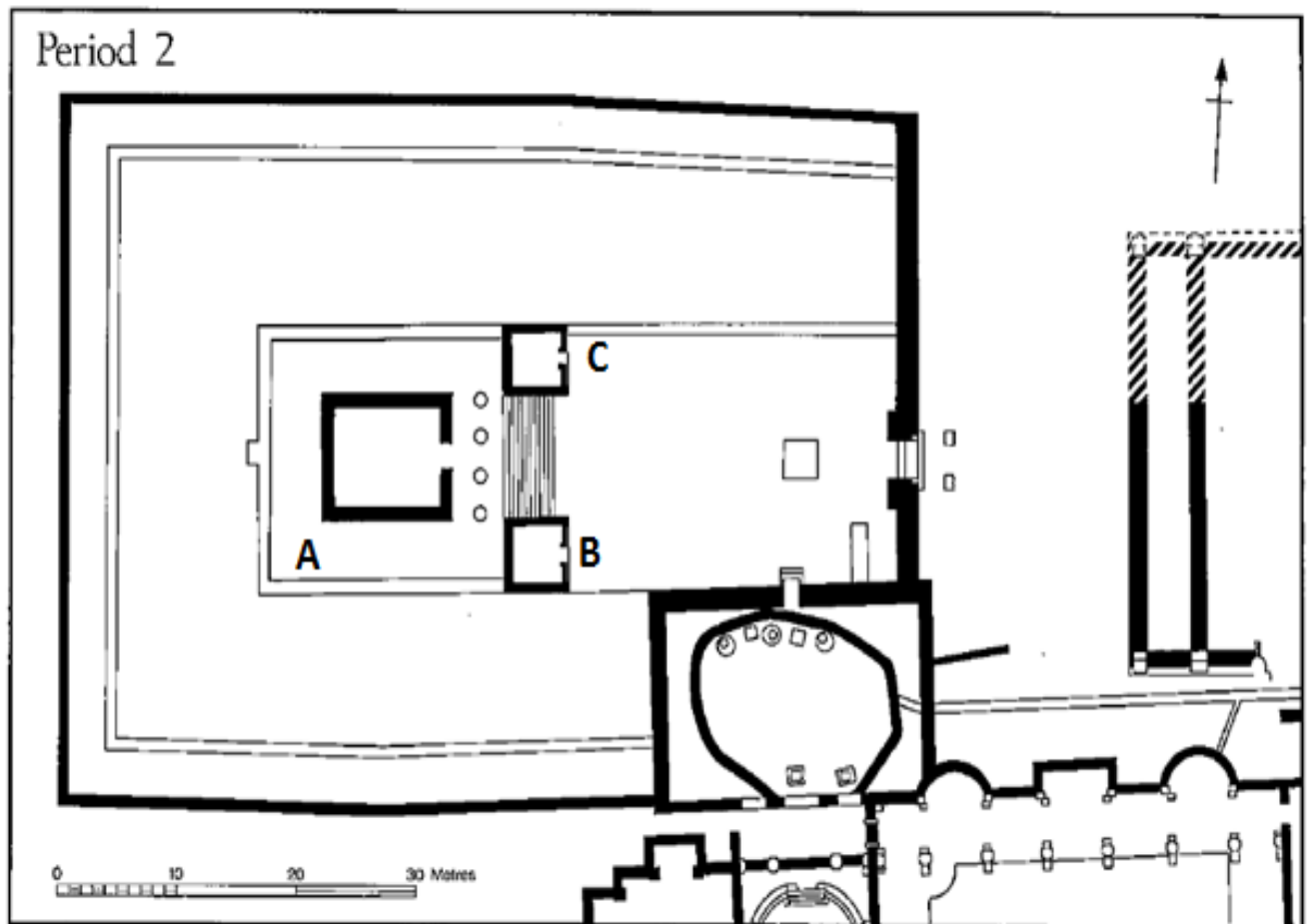


Figure 15. The temple of Minerva Sulis, Bath, c. 2nd Century CE. Image: Cunliffe (1985) 179.



Figure 16. Altar Corners of Sulis Minerva portraying Bacchus and an unknown female figure, Temple of Sulis-Minerva, Bath, c. 65-75 CE. Image: Cunliffe (1985) 226.



Figure 17. Altar of Sulis portraying Jupiter and Hercules, Temple of Sulis-Minerva, Bath, c.65-75 CE. Image: Cunliffe (1985) 227.



Figure 18. Romano- Celtic Gorgon Pediment, Temple of Sulis Minerva, Bath, c. 2nd century CE. Image: Cunliffe (1985) 215.



Figure 19. Bath's Gorgon Pediment with iconography associated with Minerva, Temple of Sulis-Minerva, Bath, c. 2nd century CE. Image: James McBurney.

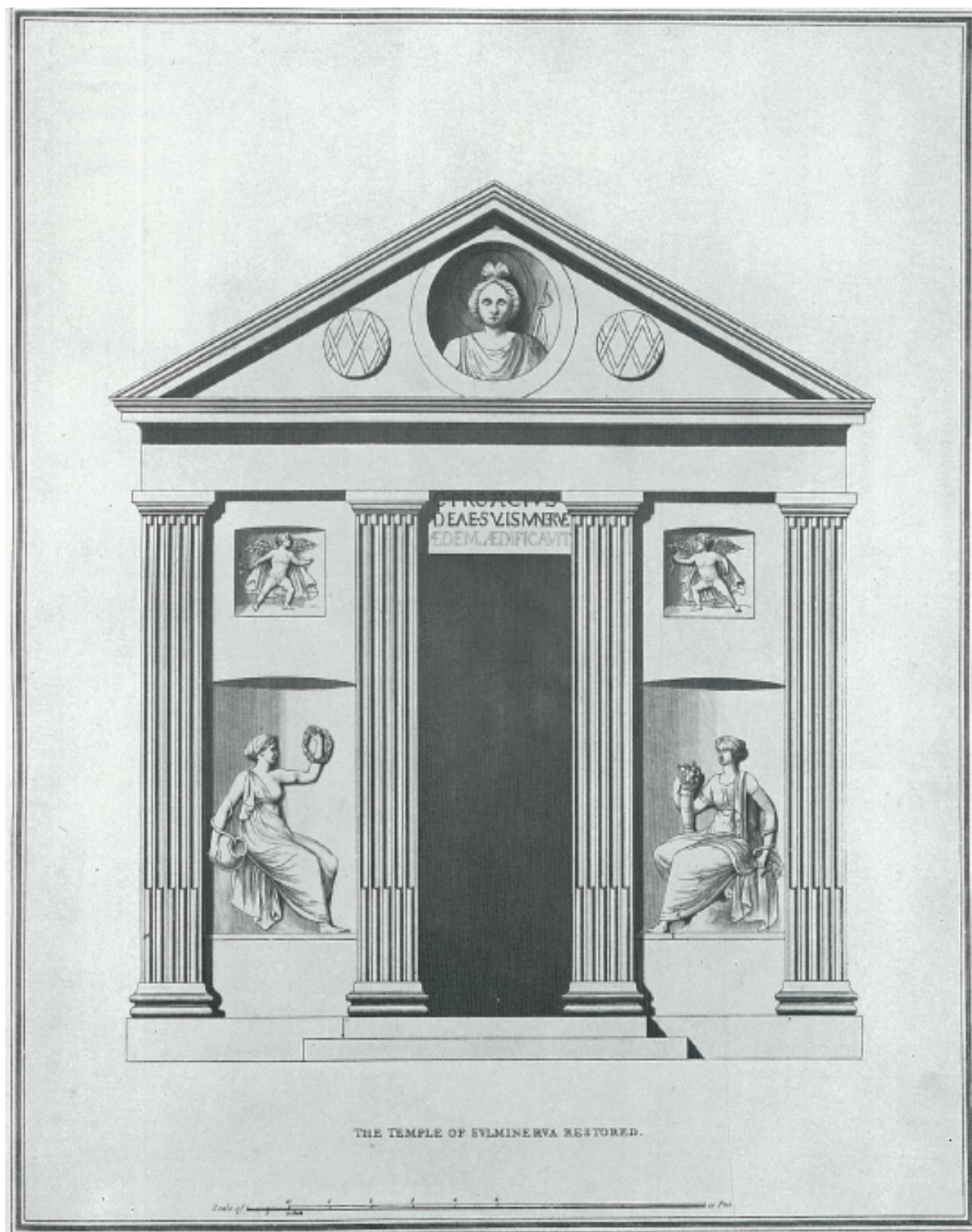


Figure 20. *The Façade of the Four Seasons*, Temple of Sulis-Minerva, Bath; restoration drawing by S Lysons, Bath. Image: Cunliffe (1985) 213.

21.

Figure



Representation of Luna, Temple of Sulis-Minerva, Bath, c. second century CE. Image: James McBurney



Figure 22. Bronze head of Sulis Minerva, Temple of Sulis-Minerva, Bath, c. 65-75 CE.
Image: <http://teakdoor.com/1880136-post11.html>.



Figure 23. The back of Minerva's bronze head displaying where the helmet once sat, Temple of Minerva-Sulis, Bath, c.65-75 CE. Image: James McBurney.



Figure 24. Romano- Celtic Gorgon Pediment highlighting the 'Triton', Temple of Sulis Minerva, Bath, c. second century CE. Image: Cunliffe (1985) 215.

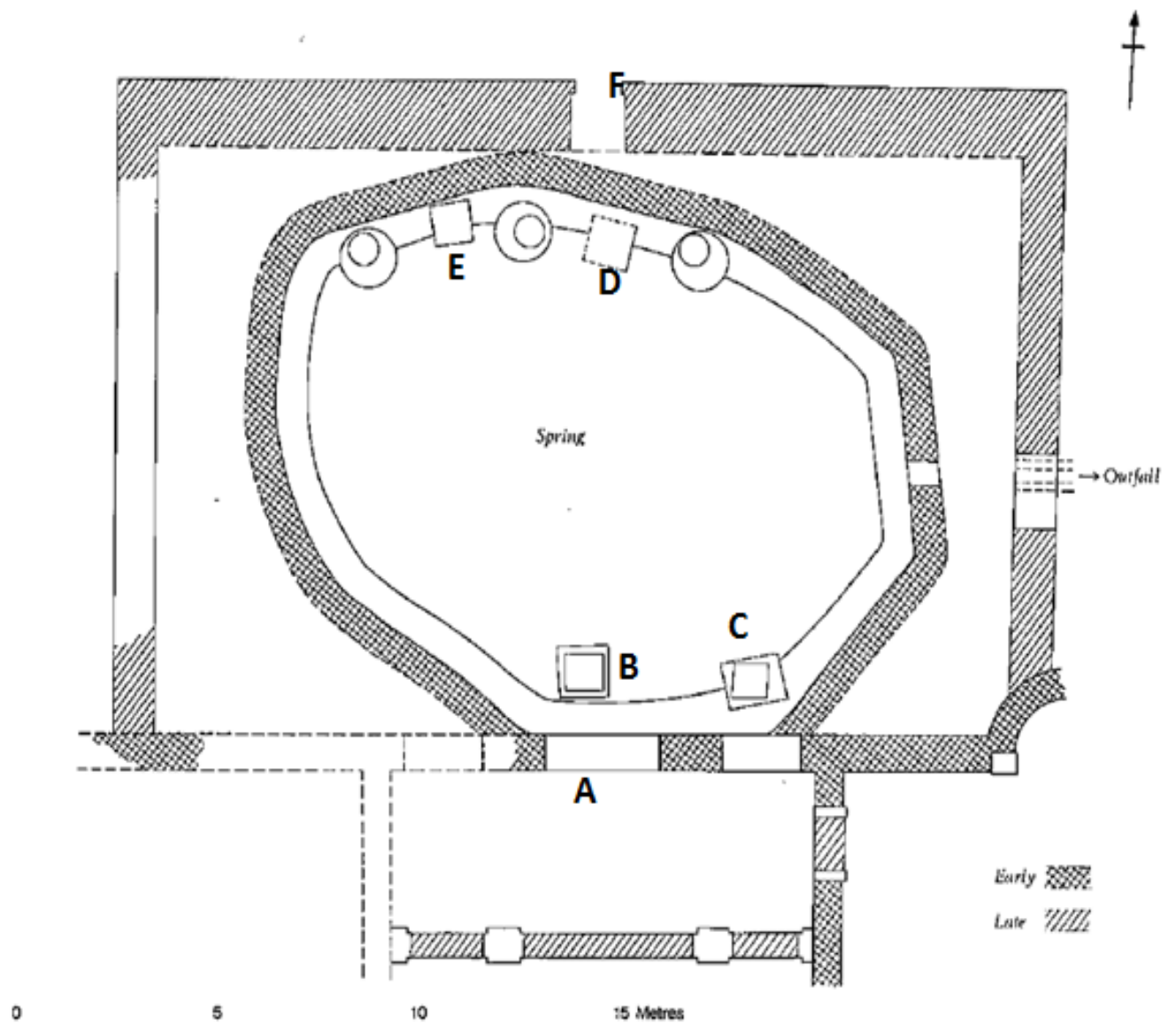


Figure 25. The spring of Sulis, Temple of Sulis Minerva, Bath, 2nd century CE onwards.
Image: Cunliffe (1985) 37.



Figure 26. Square base from the Sacred Spring of Minerva, Temple of Minerva Sulis, Bath.

Image: Cunliffe (1985) 206.