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The Funerary Relief of a Vintner

from Ince Blundell Hall

In the entire history of antiquarian collecting in Great Britain, Henry Blundell, Esq. (1724–1810) must surely qualify as the country's foremost collector, having amassed over four hundred antiquities for display at his estate, Ince Blundell Hall in Lancashire[1]. The majority of these works now form part of the collections of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, having been acquired by the Liverpool Corporation in 1959. Only one year later, Ince itself was sold to a religious order.

Blundell devoted considerable energy and a large part of his life to the acquisition, examination, cataloguing and exhibition of his ancient works of art. Unfortunately, among his vast array were many mediocrities, some of which were also poorly restored. Scathing assessments of their deficiencies have always overshadowed the really interesting and fine pieces, leaving us with a negative picture of Henry Blundell as a collector who lacked real discernment.

A few astute scholars, however, have urged critics to take a fresh look at his collection, leaving aside the undistinguished examples so that the merits of truly superior and interesting sculptures can shine through[2]. With exactly such a selective appraisal in mind, this article will examine a single, notable funerary marble. It is of particular archaeological importance and certainly deserves closer investigation.

The sculpture illustrates scenes from a vintner's everyday life[3] (figs. 1 and 4–7). At a time when the average English collector preferred the straightforward identifications and meanings, conveyed by highly estimated examples of statuary and portraits of ancient celebrities, bas-reliefs were not in great demand. Their arcane and complex imagery made comprehension at a glance difficult and posed both intellectual and aesthetic challenges.

[1] For Blundell's collecting activities, the displays of his marbles and the fate of the collection from his death to the present see J. Scott, The Pleasures of Antiquity. British Collectors of Greece and Rome (New Haven and London 2003) 147–54. Also I. Bignamini / C. Hornsby, Digging and Dealing in Eighteenth-Century Rome I (New Haven and London 2010) 239 f.; The online Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press 2004) www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2712. For Blundell's travels abroad: J. Ingamells, A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701–1800, compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive (New Haven and London 1997) 101 f.

[2] A. Michaelis, Ancient Marbles in Great Britain (Cambridge 1882) 100 f. 334 f.

[3] For descriptions and interpretations of the relief see Michaelis (last note) 397 f. no. 298; B. Ashmole, A Catalogue of the ancient marbles at Ince Blundell Hall (London 1929) 108 f. no. 298; C. C. Vermeule, AJA 59, 1955, 137; M. Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire I, 2nd ed. rev. P. M. Fraser (Oxford 1957) pl. 33, 2; White, Farm Equipment 115 f. pl. 10b; Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 45; 71; J. K. Whitehead, Biography and Formula in Roman sarcophagi (Diss. Yale 1984) 285 f.; Tchernia/Brun, Le vin romain 76 fig. 94.

However, Henry Blundell purchased a considerable number of reliefs, and simply through his recognition of their value and importance, he proved himself well ahead of his time and its tastes[4]. The vintner marble was among Blundell's choicest specimens. He proudly displayed it in his purpose-built museum, an imposing one-third scale version of the Pantheon standing adjacent to his manor.

Our earliest knowledge of the relief goes back to nearly four hundred years ago, when an artist drew a relatively faithful illustration of it in the world's first systematic corpus of visual evidence from antiquity, the »Museum Chartaceum« of Cassiano Dal Pozzo, created in the early seventeenth century[5] (fig. 3). Blundell also recorded it in his first catalogue, »An Account of the Statues, Busts, Bass-Relieves, Cinerary Urns, and other Ancient Marbles, and Paintings, at Ince«, printed 1803 in Liverpool. He identified the individual activities depicted and suggested a meaning for their representation: »It seems uncertain what this bass-relief was intended to represent. From the busy scene of squeezing grapes, carrying amphorae, the wine tubs, &c. it is called a vintage. On one side is apparently a marriage: on the other are several children with books; from whence some call it the different stages of life«[6]. For Blundell's second catalogue, »Engravings and Etchings of the Principal Statues, Busts, Bass-Reliefs, Sepulchral Monuments, Cinerary Urns & c. in the Collection of Henry Blundell Esq. at Ince«, edited in Liverpool 1809 and 1810, he commissioned an illustration of the marble, although many details were omitted and some activities haphazardly depicted (fig. 2).

The panel is two feet high and more than one yard large[7]. The material is the marble from Carrara[8]. The Ince sculpture is heavily weathered, as is apparent especially in the eroded faces. A small portion of the top right corner shows restoration, and there are two oblong dowel holes for attachment at the top edge of the relief. A plain, narrow border runs around the top and right side of the relief, while a wide, unembellished strip at the base provides a ground line for the carvings. The back of the relief has been left rough; two holes at the top show where the marble had been attached to the wall of the tomb. At Ince, the slab was displayed in the Pantheon, where it was placed atop a sarcophagus and propped up against the wall.

At far left, beneath the remains of a vine stalk with grape leaves, stands a woman, clad in a tunica and palla and shod with shoes. Poised on a rocky ledge, she lifts her cloak with her left

4 For some of Blundell's bas-reliefs see E. Angelicoussis, Mitt. DAI Rom 111, 2004, 239–277.

5 British Museum, Franks vol. I fol. 88 no. 97. See C. C. Vermeule, Transact. Am. Philo. Assoc. 50, 1960, 15 no. 97. In general see The Paper Museum of Cassiano Dal Pozzo, Quaderni Puteani 4 (Milan 1993); Ingo Herklotz, Cassiano Dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts (Munich 1999). The marble will be included in the forthcoming publications edited by Amanda Claridge, The Paper Museum of Cassiano Dal Pozzo, series A, part III.

6 P. 105 no. 326. For Blundell's catalogues see Scott (note 1) 151–54.

7 H. 59 cm. × L. 94 cm. × D. 11 cm.

8 See Gabriele Borghini (ed.), Marmi antichi (Rome 1992) 248 no. 95 [Maria Cristina Marchei].

9 For the history and practices of viticulture in antiquity see R. J. Forbes, Studies in Ancient Technology III (_Leiden 1965) 72–80; White, Roman Farming 229–246; White, Farm Equipment 112–117; K. D. White, Greek and Roman Technology (London 1984) 224; J. J. Rossiter, Phoenix 35, 1981, 346–353; Brun, Le vin et l'huile 25–121; Tchernia/Brun, Le vin romain; S. J. Fleming, Vinum. The Story of Roman Wine (Glen Mills PA. 2001). For an interesting reconstruction of a cella vinaria see Tchernia/Brun, Le vin romain 91–107. J. W. Humphrey et al., Greek and Roman Technology. A Sourcebook. Annotated Translations of Greek and Latin Texts and Documents (London, New York 1998) 116–20, includes selections from ancient writers on this topic. Pliny (nat. 14) and Lucius Junus Moderatus Columella (De re rustica) provide the best technical accounts of wine-making. The space devoted to viticulture in the latter's treatise (Book 3; part of Book 4; and about half of Book 12) underlines the importance of this crop to the Roman economy.

10 This is the ›yoked‹ vine (vitis iugata, canteriata), see White, Roman Farming 232 fig. 2e, which shows only one stake with the vine arranged in fork shape. See also White, Farm Equipment 19–23.

11 For dolia see White, Farm Equipment 114 f. 144–147; Brun, Le vin et l'huile 79–83. Dolia could not be turned on the wheel and so were difficult to construct. The jars did not have a standard measure.

12 For a photograph of dolia with their covers, discovered deeply buried in the ground in the Villa Regina in the vicinity of Pompei, see Brun, Le vin et l'huile 80.

Fig. 1 Liverpool, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Ince Blundell Collection, funerary relief of a vintner.

hand; her right hand clasps that of a bearded man facing her (fig. 4). He wears boots and a loose tunic with a small cloak draped over his left arm. In his left hand, he holds a scroll. Behind him springs up a vine stalk in full leaf. The comparatively large size of the couple indicates that they are the principal subjects of the carving, and in this context, we can conclude that they are the proprietor of the vineyard and his spouse[9].

To the right of the couple, two thick, sinuous vine stocks appear, lashed onto a pair of stakes with a cross-piece (iugum), along which the shoots have been trained laterally[10] (figs. 5 and 6). Artistic license prevailing over farming realities, the main stocks (without any support) illogically sprout upward, spreading out with large vine leaves and grape clusters.

Vines require a greater degree of maintenance and control of the environment than most other ancient crops. The regular attentions of a vine-dresser (vinitor) were necessary to control the luxuriant habit of the plant so that it produced the maximum of fruit-bearing shoots. Workers' chores consisted of vine pruning, root-pruning, stock-cleaning, moulding, shaping and tying, trimming of the leaves and many other operations before the final stage of the vintage (vindemia) was reached in the autumn.

Framed by the main branches of the vines are three vast jars or dolia, covered with flat, wooden lids (opercula), arranged one above the other in a column using the flattened perspective employed by the sculptor throughout[11]. At left, three more containers are similarly stacked (the middle one is uncovered) and another lies at the lady's feet. At the far right of the relief's lower edge there are two more jars; the lower dolium has no cover. To keep them cool, dolia were usually sunk one-half or two-thirds into the ground. On the Ince marble, most are represented partially embedded in the soil – especially noticeable on the vessel in the middle, which rests on a prominent, rocky projection[12].

To the right of the proprietor and his wife, are carved small figures of workmen, clothed in short, girt tunics, busily engaged in various activities. One worker kneels on the edge of a dolium, using a flagon to transfer wine into an amphora encased in wickerwork being held by his assistant. The flagon is unusual, as a ladle would ordinarily have been used for decanting. Wine that could not keep long was drunk ›young‹ – dipped straight from the dolium into wineskins, while a vintage, that would improve with age and increase in value, was transferred to amphorae to mature.

At the top of the relief, a vineyard hand strides to the right, carrying a supposedly full amphora on his left shoulder. Clay amphorae were the universal packaging of the ancient world. They were fashioned into various shapes for the storage and transport not only of wine, but also of numerous other products, such as oil, olives, fish sauces (garum or liquamen), honey, vinegar and medicinal products[13]. All such vessels have features in common: a mouth narrow enough to be corked; two opposing vertical handles; and usually a tip or knob at the base serving as a third handle to steady the heavy vessel when pouring.

Both Ince amphorae have long, slim, pear-shaped bodies, cylindrical necks, and unusually flat bases, but they differ in detail[14]. The vessel above has a thick, plain rim with heavy, squared-off handles attached at the rim and on the shoulders; the container below shows a bell mouth with a thick, short rim and its rounded handles bend sharply to the flared neck.

[13] For amphorae, their history, production and trade see White, Farm Equipment 122–25; V. Grace, Amphoras and the Ancient Wine Trade (Princeton 1979); D. P. S. Peacock / D. F. Williams, Amphorae and the Roman economy. An introductory guide (London and New York 1986); J.-J. Aubert, Business Managers in Ancient Rome. A Social and Economic Study of Institores, 200 B. C. – A. D. 250 (Leiden 1994) 244–76.

[14] The actual shape and flat bottom compares best with M. H. Callender, Roman Amphorae with Index of Stamps (London 1965) 281 fig. 1 (Dressel no. 29); A. Tchernia, Le vin de l'Italie romaine. Essai d'histoire économique d'après les amphores (Rome 1986) 253–259; Peacock/Williams (note 13) 180 class 42.

[15] Cf. a similar scene from the erotes friezes of the Casa dei Vettii, Pompeii, see LIMC III (1986) 1019 no. 546 s. v. Eros / Amor, Cupido [N. Blanc / F. Gury]; Brun, Le vin et l'huile 103.

[16] For the trulla see White, Farm Equipment 192 f. no. 35.

[17] Pliny (nat. 33, 45) writes that »the best wine has nothing added«. This was also the opinion of Columella (De re rustica 12, 19, 2): »for that wine is most excellent which has given pleasure by its own natural quality.« Both Pliny (nat. 14) and especially Columella (De re rustica 12, 19–24) give detailed accounts of the ingredients and methods for preserving wine. See also J. L. Prickett, A scientific and technological study of the topics associated with the grape in Greek and Roman antiquity (Diss. Univ. Kentucky 1983) 55–56; Tchernia/Brun, Le vin romain 110–147.

Fig. 2 (opposite page) Etching of the Vintner Relief. From Engravings and Etchings at Ince (1809/1810).
Fig. 3 (above) Drawing of the Vintner relief from the Museum Chartaceum, early seventeenth century.

Being of porous material, wine amphorae were coated with sealants, such as pine pitch, wood tar and resins. Osier casings protected their relatively thin clay walls from breaking. All amphorae required airtight stoppers to close their mouths and protect the contents. Bungs were made of raw clay, cork or wood. Since none of these provided a perfect seal, each would be smeared over with a heavy layer of lime-based mortar or beeswax. With a capacity of just over six gallons, the amphora was a standard container admirably suited both for storage prior to sale and transportation by sea to distant markets.

At the bottom right of the panel, a wine-tasting scene is illustrated; it shows a prospective buyer just about to make a purchase[15]. A man in a loose tunic stands behind a dolium; holding in his left hand a ladle (trulla)[16]. He offers a sample from the vineyard to a similarly dressed man on his right. The customer stands with his left hand at his side, perhaps holding a wine jug (the vessel is too damaged to identify, and evidence of this detail in the Dal Pozzo drawing is unreliable, see fig. 3). His right hand holds a wine cup poised near his mouth in a pensive gesture; perhaps he is considering the wine's bouquet before tasting and then placing his order.

Although the best wines were ideally left unaltered, boiling and a wide range of flavourings were added to keep it longer, to mask deteriorating wines and to produce new tastes[17]. When wine was inadequately preserved – no unusual thing in ancient Italy – it turned to vinegar, a by-product of secondary fermentation. Romans described spoiled wine as sour (acor). One of the reasons that vintners favoured allowing grapes to ripen as long as possible on the vine was to increase the sugars in the fruit; fermentation then yielded a wine whose higher alcohol content resisted deterioration.

Salt, resin, pitch, ashes and peppercorns had preservative benefits, whereas chalk and marble dust were added to lessen acidity. Honey, calamus, fenugreek, wormwood and myrrh, together with a variety of other herbs and spices, improved taste and concealed sour wine. Since excessive use of additives was widespread, epitomised by Pliny's complaint (nat. 14, 130) that »so many poisons are employed to force wine to suit our taste«, the Ince marble's buyer was quite right to insist on sampling a batch of wine before parting with his money.

Nearby, against the extreme right hand border of the relief, stands a man in a loose tunic; he bends his right arm, turning the hand toward his shoulder; in his left hand he holds a scroll (fig. 7), perhaps an account book of the vineyard's yield. Since he merely oversees the activities

and has the attitude of one in control, he could be the estate manager. However, because he is bearded and larger than the surrounding figures, the image is most probably another depiction of the owner.

At the upper right corner of the marble, a projecting tiled roof shelters the same vintner, who this time appears seated behind a long, low table. The sculptor's intentionally distorted perspective tilts the table top forward, making the objects on it visible. Here financial calculations are taking place. A similar scene, in which a group of men are depicted calculating the grain yield, is illustrated on the famous Roman monument of the wealthy baker, Marcus Vergilius Eurysaces (fig. 8) and suggests that the proprietor and two assistants on the Ince marble are in the process of reckoning the profits by checking recorded expenditures against earnings[18]. Clad as before, the vintner uses his left hand to leaf through the pages of an open book, perhaps a sales ledger, which lies on his lap. His right rests on the table top, where several indistinct objects – probably a money purse and writing utensils – are scattered.

At the end of the table and to the vintner's left, stands a smaller, tunic-clad figure – clearly a clerk – who also holds an open book; this may contain a list of the articles purchased for the operation of the vineyard. His right hand touches an oval plate placed before the owner, in which lie two round, flat objects – surely a money purse and coins. Standing at the upper end of the table, another employee, similarly dressed, unrolls a scroll and converses with his boss; perhaps he is relating the number of amphorae in stock. The scene's composition is derived from sculptural motifs depicting bankers and money changers, that were frequently featured on funerary reliefs erected to honour those who dealt with financial matters[19].

Against the upper border, we see two square tablets with frames; the one at the right contains a snake slithering upward, surrounded by eight small holes arranged into an inverted V-shape. This is an abbreviated representation of a lararium. The serpent, a ubiquitous feature in Roman domestic religion, represented various things: it might be the genius loci; it was sometimes used as a simple apotropaic device; and it could also be a symbol denoting good fortune[20]. The eight perforations denote eggs – symbols of fertility and good luck – which also had properties to avert evil, since they contained the promise of new life[21]. In household shrines offerings made to serpents include eggs[22]. The adjacent square is divided into quarters, each containing a circle with a deeply carved cavity. Within this context the circular cavities may be unused storage containers oriented on their sides, as seen on the facades of Eurysaces' monument[23].

The surviving portion of the Ince panel vividly tells the story of the wine's transfer from the grower to the retailer. The entire scene is set within the open wine-maturation (cella vinaria). Clearly, the owner of the vineyard is both a vintner and a dealer in wine – and probably quite

18 P. Ciancio Rosetto, Il sepolcro del fornaio Marco Virgilio Eurisace a Porta Maggiore (Rome 1973) 42 pls. 26, 1; 27, 2; Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 107.

19 R. Amedick, Die Sarkophage mit Darstellungen aus dem Menschenleben. Vita Privata auf Sarkophagen. Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs I 4 (Berlin 1991) 113 f. See e. g. an illustration of the proprietor changing money, which is depicted on a sarcophagus in the Palazzo Salviati, Rome Inv. 609, see ibid. 156 f. no. 214 pl. 111, 3. Cf. also a sarcophagus lid in the Catacomb di Novaziono, where, flanked by shepherds and their flocks, the scene illustrates the financial administration of an estate: ibid. 114 no. 134 pls. 111, 4. 112, 4–6.

20 D. Orr, Roman domestic religion. In: ANRW II 16, 2 (Berlin et al. 1978) 1572–1575; Th. Fröhlich, Lararien- und Fassadenbilder in den Vesuvstädten. Mitt. DAI Rom Ergh. 32 (Mayence 1991) 56–61. 165–169. In his Satires (1, 113–114), the 1st c. A. D. poet and satirist of Etruscan origin, Aulus Persius Flaccus, writes that it was the habit of merchants to paint two snakes on the front of their shops, marking them as sacred so as to deter youths from urinating on their establishments, see L. Canali ed., Persio Satire (Milan 2007) 28 f.

21 RE XVIII 2 (1942) 1889 f. s. v. Ova (Fiehn); Orr (last note) 1508.

22 Cf. e. g. the painted lararium from Casa dei Cervi, Herculaneum, NA 8848, which shows a snake entwined around an altar on top of which are a pine cone and an egg, see Fröhlich (penultimate note) 61; 303 L121 pl. 13, 2.

good wine, as it is not being sold from stocks held by a wholesale middleman, but direct from the vineyard in amphorae.

The marble has been sheared off on the left side. The lack of a frame, the dissimilar tooling of the edge, and the fragmentary vine shown to the left of the lady demonstrate that there was originally another section. It is highly probable that the vintner and his wife originally stood at the middle of the panel. Conventions of design symmetry dictate that the missing portion's size equalled that of the right half, and extrapolation produces a total length of five feet for the original carving[24].

Logic tells us that the lost relief section must have illustrated activities of viticulture and vintaging preceding the wine's storage, sampling and accounting of the vineyard sales, and it must have also been visually compatible with the approach of the extant relief. To maintain balance, the missing fragment surely replicated the scheme of the vine tendrils in the middle area of the preserved relief. The scenes would have been executed in the same style and altered perspective as in the remaining sculpture. Activities suggested for inclusion are the most important stages in viticulture preceding fermentation: the harvesting of the grapes; the transportation of the fruit; and the extraction of the grape juice.

Rooted in an everyday, mercantile environment, the marble is structured to be understood as a clear and concise, episodic story. The client who commissioned the relief belonged to a specific stratum of Roman society that encompassed artisans, small shopkeepers and merchants. They were mostly freedmen, former slaves who, by having themselves portrayed at their occupation, manifested a robust pride both in their vocations and achievements – equivalent to the Puritan work ethic[25].

The Ince vintner panel differs in one important respect from the portraits and relief statues seen on tombs of the late republic and early imperial times. On these monuments the wearing of a toga emphasized the newly-acquired status of Roman citizenship, whereas vocational reliefs, like that of the vintner's, generally belong to a later period. Although created for the same social class, they highlight a different aspect of personal achievement. Having established their citizenship, freedmen then strove to invest their occupations with prestige, for the lasting status of the deceased arose from respect for his skill, endeavour and the fiscal fruits these bore.

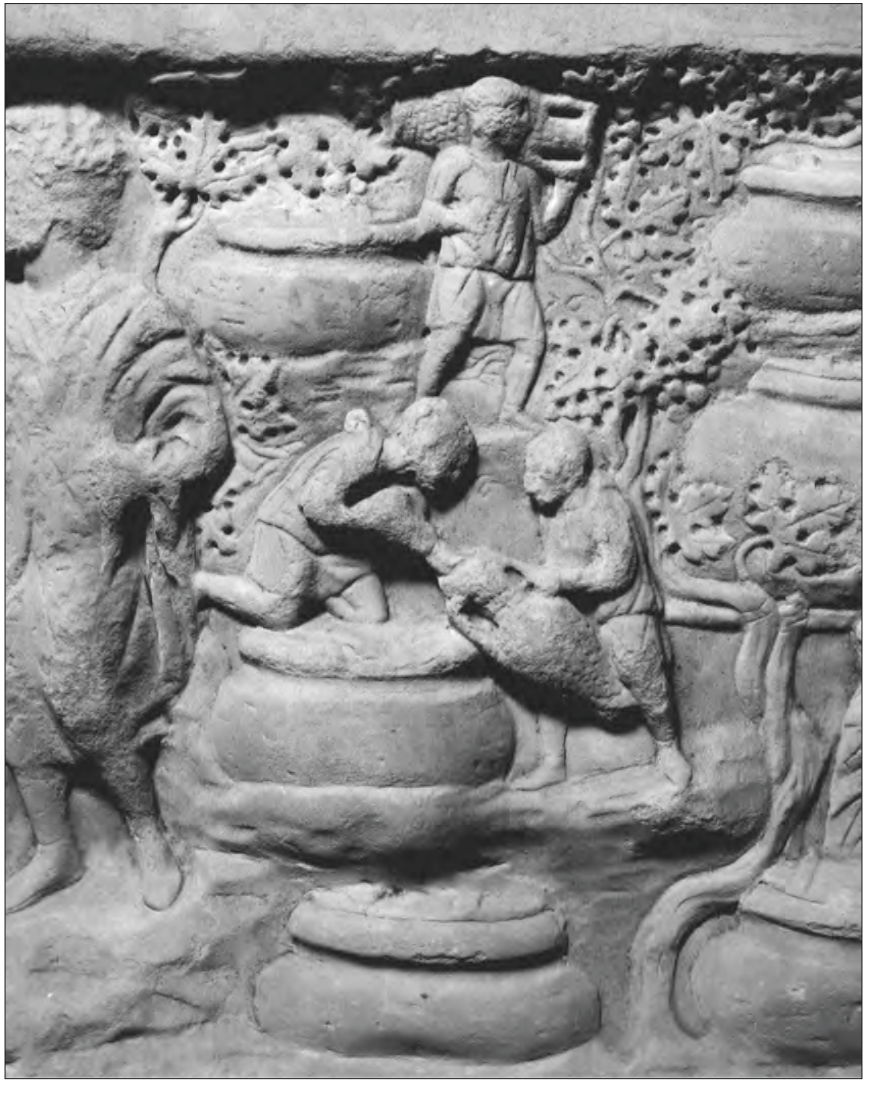
Sepulchral art referring to occupations of the dead appeared sporadically in the Hellenistic period, and became more common in the Roman era, when all social classes slowly became more affluent[26]. These memorials proliferated around the mid-first century A. D., reaching a peak in both number and quality during the first half of the second. The Ince panel's date is probably slightly later. Evidence for this can be seen in the flat modelling of the grape leaves without any overlapping, in the schematic lines that indicate the veining of foliage, and in the copious use of

[23] Scholars have offered various explanations for the circular forms on Eurysaces' memorial: as objects used in baking, such as vents for an oven; grain measures or storage vessels; and grinding, kneading and cooking machines. See Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 106 f. no. 33; D. E. E. Kleiner, Roman Sculpture (New Haven 1992) 105; Peterson, Freedman 110–114, with full bibliography.

[24] About 156,7 cm.

[25] Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen offers a comprehensive study of the monuments. His catalogue is arranged according to vocational callings. For a discussion of this social class, representational types, formats and chronological development see Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 6–12; 54–56; 59–64; J. H. D'Arms, Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome (Cambridge and London 1981) 149–171; N. Kampen, Image and Status. Roman Working Women in Ostia (Berlin 1981); Petersen 114–117; M. George, Social Identity and the Dignity of Work in Freedmen's Reliefs. In: E. D'Ambra / G. P. R. Métraux (eds.), The Art of Citizens, Soldiers and Freedmen in the Roman World (Oxford 2006) 21–29.

[26] Illustrations of tools of the deceased's vocation predominated in the 1st c. A. D.; occupational scenes became increasingly more popular during the course of the 2nd c. A. D.



Figs.4–7 Liverpool, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Ince Blundell Collection, funerary relief of a vintner.

bore holes to define the serrated edges of the leaves. Such a carving style assigns the marble to the mid-Antonine era, about 160–170 A. D.[27]

The marble bears striking similarities not only to grave memorials with scenes depicting former occupations of the dead, but also to shop signs that advertised the wares or services available to passers-by. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the question of the original purpose of the Ince panel – funerary or commercial – has arisen in past scholarship[28]. The couple's gesture – the dextrarum iunctio – was the conventional gesture to designate the concordia of a married couple, already common on grave reliefs showing portraits of freedmen[29]. It settles the issue: the Ince relief was a sepulchral memorial. An epitaph to the couple would have been added in paint along the lower, broad strip of the relief, and the marble affixed either on the interior or exterior of a tomb[30].

Depictions that characterised the dead as entrepreneurs rather than as ordinary ›blue collar‹ workers were very rare in Roman art. One of the closest parallel to the Ince panel is the large and pretentious tomb of Eurysaces[31] (fig. 8). Erected in late republican to early imperial times, between mid and late first century B. C., its prominent position near the convergence of two main roads of Rome, the Viae Praenestina and Labicana, ensured public notice.

The principal facade of this memorial includes portrait reliefs of the baker and his spouse, while the other three sides of the monument display friezes illustrating the preparation of bread in a bakery and its weighing under official supervision before distribution – presumably to demonstrate that the deceased was an honest, law-abiding citizen[32]. Although much more ambitious in size and social pretensions, Eurysaces' monument offers very similar illustrations of his occupational activities and authority as owner, as well as images of both husband and wife, which closely parallel those of the vintner's memorial.

27 Although of better workmanship, cf. the carving of the foliage on a sarcophagus once on sale at Bernheimer, Munich, dating to 160 A. D., see H. Herdejürgen, Die dekorativen römischen Sarkophage. Stadtrömische und italische Girlandensarkophage. Die Sarkophage des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts. Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs VI 2, 1 (Berlin 1996) 133 f. no. 90 pl. 89, 4.

28 Shop signs were generally of lower quality than funerary pieces. For reasons of durability, grave monuments were usually sculpted, whereas most shop signs were painted, which also explains the small number of extant examples of the latter. For a discussion of the two types see Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 57–59. Illustrations of tools on grave monuments had developed from shop signs; no Greek tradition existed for the representation of scenes from a man's livelihood, see Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 74–81.

29 D. D. E. Kleiner, Roman Group Portraiture (New York 1977) 24; V. Kockel, Porträtreliefs stadtrömischer Grabbauten (Mayence 1993) 49 f.; G. Davies, Am. Journal Arch. 89, 1985, 627–640. Cf. examples of references to the trade of the occupant(s) with the gesture of dextrarum iunctio, see Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 102 f. no. 11; 110 f. no. 20; 121 no. 34; 166 f. no. 91. The insertion of funerary symbols in such scenes could also demonstrate the relief's function, see Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 156 f. no. 79; 199 f. no. 144.

30 Evidence exists for both types of display. In the necropolis of the Isola Sacra, Ostia, small terracotta plaques, illustrating the deceased's profession are displayed on some house-tomb facades. See Peterson, Freedman 189–93 fig. 118, for reliefs of a mid-wife and a doctor on the exterior of a tomb. For their use within funerary monuments see F. Feraudi-Gruénais, Ubi Diutius Nobis Habitandum Est. Die Innendekoration der kaiserzeitlichen Gräber Roms (Wiesbaden 2001) 191.

31 The identification of the proprietor's figure usually depends on his supervisory function, see Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 70 f. On the Eurysaces monument see Rossetto (note 18); Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 70; 106–109 no. 18; D. D. E. Kleiner, Roman Sculpture (New Haven and London 1992) 105–109 figs. 90–95; Petersen, Freedmen 87–120.

32 Peterson, Freedman 96 f., highlights the ambiguous evidence, which links the relief portraits and epitaph with the monument.

33 As principally espoused by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, this artistic mode had been directly connected with the lower classes, see Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen 82–91. See also the perceptive discussion of this topic by Peterson, Freedman 10–13.

34 For the economics of vine-growing see R. Duncan-Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire. Quantitative Studies (Cambridge 1974) 39–48; 53–59; 327–333 Appendix 2; 364 f. Appendix 15; White, Roman Farming 241–246; A. Carradini, Opus 2, 1983, 177–204; Fleming (note 9) 27 f. For the importance of wine for the Roman economy see Tchernia (note 14); T. Unwin, Wine and the Vine. An Historical Geography of Viticulture and the Wine Trade (London and New York 1991) 101–31. For an examination of the work force required for vineyards see Aubert (note 13) 162–171.

Fig. 8 Calculating the grain yield. Cast of a detail from the southern frieze of the Tomb of Eurysaces. Rome, Museo della Civilità Romana.

The Ince marble exhibits distortions of size and flattened perspective so that figures, actions and objects – whether near or far, can be seen clearly. The huge size of the dolia, overwhelming the tiny workmen, shows not only the hierarchical importance of the wine over its attendants, but also the scale of the winery – and by inference, the wealth of the owner. This relief is a typical example of ›arte plebea‹[33]. The concept of 'arte plebea' is still alive and well but termed differently. Peterson's book of 2006 defines it as "freed-man art". Kleiner also uses the term in her book on Roman Sculpture. Chief characteristics of this genre are: episodic storytelling, multiple appearances of the protagonist, elevation of his status through increased figure size, and finally, wealth of realistic detail and coarse execution.

Memorials of vocational activities varied considerably in the quality of carving, depending both on the financial means of the purchaser and the abilities of the chosen atelier. As the client's affluence rose, the ›popular art‹ style gave way to finer sculpture. It was customary for Romans to decorate their final resting places with monuments of the best quality their means allowed, and our vintner was clearly wealthy enough to afford a commemorative plaque carved in marble, albeit crudely worked.

For Romans, wine, along with grain and olive oil, formed the backbone of their economy[34]. A new vineyard took several years to produce a crop and so demanded substantial initial capital investment. There were also inherent risks in growing such a weather-sensitive crop, and the financial implications of a drop in wholesale prices in a year of glut, although decent wine could be stockpiled for the future when prices might rise. Moreover, maintaining a vineyard was also intensive labour and required competent overseers. So success as a vintner relied on a heady blend of luck, careful planning, expert husbandry and efficient man-management.

In favourable circumstances, a high level of profit could be made from viticulture, and, if conducted on a large scale, it could transform a man into the Ciceronian ideal of a country squire. The Ince panel, however, does not portray a magnate with a large-scale operation, but rather a modestly successful vine-grower. He proudly and unequivocally announces to posterity both the financial success of his small landed estate, and just as importantly, his legally-recognised

marriage. Although naïve in conception, the vintner's memorial is full of realistic details that engage the viewer through their sense of intimacy and animation. Even in its fragmentary and weathered state, it offers a vivid and delightful insight into ancient Roman life.

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Conclusion. A funerary relief from the collection of Henry Blundell commemorates the life of an owner of a small vineyard. Although of modest stylistic quality, it fascinates by its wealth of detail relating the processes of viticulture. Reliefs showing freedmen often displayed portraits of the deceased and his family flaunting the toga – symbol of their newly acquired status of Roman citizenship, but the Ince marble unambiguously testifies to the vintner's pride in his work. The relief is genuinely exceptional; instead of the depiction of a single object or activity to symbolize the deceased's vocation, it offers an array of activities associated with a winery. Like the friezes showing the detailed process of baking bread on the pompous tomb of Eurysaces, whose vocation amassed him a great fortune, the vintner's relief advertises his entrepreneurship and financial success. The straight forward narrative style, with its flattened perspective and exaggerated proportions for the protagonist, allow for a clear reading of the scenes. Cicero (off. 1, 150–151) claimed that manual labour, business and commerce were by their very nature vulgar activities, whereas an upper class landowner's activities (i. e. agricultural endeavours) were noble. It is therefore ironic that one of the marbles of the aristocratic collector Henry Blundell displayed most proudly was this memorial to the fortune of a lowly vintner.

Ergebnis. Ein Grabrelief aus der Sammlung von Henry Blundell kommemoriert den Besitzer eines kleinen Weinbergs. Obwohl es von mäßiger Qualität ist, beeindruckt es durch seinen Reichtum an Details in der Art der Schilderung der Arbeit bei der Weinherstellung. Reliefmonumente von Freigelassenen zeigen den Verstorbenen und Angehörigen seiner Familie oft zum Zeichen des neuerworbenen Bürgerstatus in der Toga. Die Tafel der Sammlung Ince dagegen schildert nüchtern den Stolz des Winzers auf sein Schaffen. In ungewöhnlicher Weise wird für die Ehrung des Verstorbenen statt eines einzelnen Gegenstandes oder einer isolierten Handlung eine Szenenfolge mit den wichtigen Stationen der Arbeitswelt vor Augen geführt. Das Relief kündet vom unternehmerischen und finanziellen Erfolg des Winzers in ähnlicher Weise wie die Friese am aufwendigen Grabmal des Bäckers Eurysaces in Rom mit der detaillierten Darstellung der Brotherstellung. Der unmittelbar zugreifende narrative Stil mit der vereinfachten Perspektive und der hervorhebenden Bedeutungsgröße beim Protagonisten der Szenenfolge stehen im Dienste einer klaren Ablesbarkeit der Darstellung. Nach Cicero (off. 1, 150–151) sind körperliche Arbeit, Geschäftswesen und Handel ihrem Wesen nach vulgär, das Agrarwesen dagegen ein nobles Betätigungsfeld. Es ist nicht ohne Ironie, dass eines der Skulpturenwerke, das der aristokratische Sammler Henry Blundell in seiner eigenen Sammlung am meisten schätzte, die Tätigkeit eines einfachen Winzers rühmt.

Résumé. Un rilievo funebre dalla collezione di Henry Blundell commemora il proprietario di una piccola vigna. Sebbene esso sia di modesta qualità, colpisce per la ricchezza di dettagli relativi ai lavori connessi con la produzione del vino. Spesso i rilievi dei liberti mostrano il defunto ed i membri della sua famiglia con la toga, quale segno del nuovo stato di cittadini. La tavola della collezione Ince presenta invece il viticoltore, che con asciutta sobrietà, è orgoglioso del frutto del suo lavoro. In maniera inconsueta si onora qui il defunto, mostrando non un solo oggetto o un'unica azione isolata, bensì una successione di scene relative al mondo del lavoro. Il rilievo riferisce del successo imprenditoriale e finanziario del viticoltore in maniera simile al fregio dell'impegnativo monumento funebre del fornaio Eurysaces a Roma, sul quale si osserva una dettagliata raffigurazione della panificazione. L'accattivante stile, narrativo ed immediato, con semplificazione della prospettiva e maggior grandezza del protagonista delle scene, è funzionale ad una chiara leggibilità della rappresentazione. Secondo Cicerone (off. 1, 150–151) il lavoro fisico, gli affari ed il commercio sono di per sè volgari, l'attività in agricoltura invece nobile. Non è senza ironia, che l'aristocratico collezionista Henry Blundell apprezzasse particolarmente nella sua collezione proprio una scultura, che magnifica l'attività di un semplice viticoltore.

Abbreviations

Brun, Le vin et l'huile	J.-J. Brun, Le vin et l'huile dans la méditerranée antique. Viticulture, oléiculture et procédés de transformation (Paris 2003).
Peterson, Freedman	L. H. Petersen, The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History (Cambridge 2006).
Tchernia/Brun, vin	A. Tchernia / J. P. Brun, Le vin romain antique (Grenoble 1999).
White, Roman Farming	K. D. White, Roman Farming (London 1970).
White, Farm Equipment	K. D. White, Farm Equipment of the Roman World (London 1975).
Zimmer, Berufsdarstellungen	G. Zimmer, Römische Berufsdarstellungen (Berlin 1982).

Picture credits. Fig. 1 and 4–7 National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Photography Department. – Fig. 2 Engravings and Etchings of the Principal Statues, Busts, Bass-Reliefs, Sepulchral Monuments, Cinerary Urns & c. in the Collection of Henry Blundell Esq. at Ince (Liverpool 1809–1810) pl. 118. – Fig. 3 London, British Museum. – Fig. 8 Rome, German Archaeological Institute, negative 72.3830 (Singer).