In this book, Hella Eckardt offers new insights into literacy in the Roman world by examining the tools that enabled writing, such as inkwells, styli, and tablets. Literacy was an important skill in the ancient world, and power could be, and often was, exercised through texts. Eckardt explores how writing equipment shaped practices such as posture and handwriting, and her contextual analysis of burial data shows interesting age, gender and status patterns, with considerable numbers of women and children interred with writing equipment. The volume offers a comprehensive review of recent approaches to literacy during Roman antiquity and adds a distinctive material turn to our understanding of this crucial skill and the embodied practices of its use. At the heart of this study lies the nature of the relationship between the material culture of writing and socio-cultural identities in the Roman period.

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# CONTENTS

- **List of Plates**  page viii
- **List of Figures**  ix
- **List of Tables**  xiii
- **Acknowledgements**  xv

## PART I  UNDERSTANDING LITERACIES, MATERIAL CULTURE AND PRACTICE IN THE ROMAN WORLD

1  **INTRODUCTION: LITERACIES, POWER AND IDENTITIES**  3
   - Approaches to Ancient Literacies  4
   - Literacies in the Roman World  9
   - Understanding Material Culture and Identities  14
   - Conclusion  16

2  **THE PRACTICALITIES OF LITERACY: WRITING IMPLEMENTS IN THE ROMAN WORLD**  21
   - Writing Implements Used on Wax and Lead  22
   - Writing in Ink: Media and Implements  27
   - Conclusion  40

3  **LITERACY AS TECHNOLOGY AND PRACTICE**  41
   - Who Wrote in the Roman World?  42
   - From Object to Practice: How and Where Were Writing Implements Used?  45
   - Conclusion  49

## PART II  A CASE STUDY

4  **MATERIALS AND PRODUCTION**  53
   - Inkwell Materials  54
   - Metal Inkwell Production  59
   - Makers’ Names  61
   - Conclusion  66
CONTENTS

5 METAL INKWELLS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE 68
   Typological Discussion 69
   Related Forms 98
   Chronology and Conclusion 105

6 A PRACTICE TURN: THINKING ABOUT INKWELL USE 108
   Portability and Double Inkwells 108
   Volumes and Materials 109
   Conclusion 112

7 THE SPATIAL AND SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF INKWELLS 114
   Social Distribution: Who Used Inkwells? Site Level Analysis 118
   Social Distribution: Who Used Inkwells? Context Level Analysis 123
   Conclusion 135

PART III WRITING EQUIPMENT IN FUNERARY CONTEXTS AND THE EXPRESSION OF IDENTITIES 137

8 LITERACY AS PERFORMANCE: SELF-PRESENTATION OF THE EDUCATED ELITE? 139
   Depicting Writing Equipment as a Badge or Symbol 140
   Depicting the Act of Writing: Provincial Elites 146
   Depicting Elites with a Scribe in Attendance 149
   Conclusion 149

9 LITERACY AND THE LIFE COURSE: GENDER 154
   Female Literacy 155
   Inkwells from Female Graves 158
   Inkwells from Male Graves 165
   Conclusion 173

10 LITERACY AND THE LIFE COURSE: AGE 176
    Children’s Education from Written Sources and Iconography 177
    Inkwells from Children’s Graves 182
    Inkwells from Adult Double Burials and Family Groups 187
    Conclusion 189

11 LITERACY, THE BODY AND ELITE IDENTITIES: WRITING AND STATUS 190
   Graves with Sets of Writing Equipment – Professional Scribes? 190
   Graves with Game and Accounting Equipment 200
   Professional Identities: Doctors and Other Healers 204
   Graves with Objects Associated with Grooming 208
   Conclusion 220
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 CONCLUSION. WRITING EMPIRE THROUGH MATERIAL CULTURE</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Work</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLATES

Color plates are to be found between pp. xvi and 1

3.1 Portrait of Ezra from the Codex Amiatinus
3.2 Matthew in the ninth-century Ebbo Gospel
4.1 Inkwell from Vaison
5.1 Double inkwell from Trieste
5.2 Complete enamelled vessel of Type Johns from Elsenham
5.3 Almost complete enamelled flask from London
6.1 Size differences in copper-alloy and Samian inkwells from Drnovo
7.1 Writing set from Marktoberdorf
8.1 Still life with writing equipment showing a hexagonal inkwell from Pompeii, Praedia of Julia Felix
8.2 Reconstruction of the office of a legionary commander
8.3 Theca depicted in the Notitia Dignitatum for the praetorian prefect of Illyricum
11.1 Inkwell from a doctor's grave at Mérida
11.2 Grave containing an inkwell of Type Boeselager and grooming objects from Cologne Friesenplatz
FIGURES

1.1 The materiality of writing: lead curse tablet from Uley with RTI (Reflectance Transformation Imaging) visualisation to show surface details and writer’s ductus

2.1 Seal-box from an inkwell grave at Ergolding and stylus tablet <WT30> from London Bloomberg

2.2 (a) Wax spatula types and (b) stylus types after Manning

2.3 Terminology employed in this book illustrated on an inkwell from Nijmegen

2.4 (a) Copper-alloy pen from South Shields, (b) bone pen from Carnuntum and (c) and (d) pen/ox-goad from Vindolanda

2.5 Inkwell, folding ruler/measure, dividers, pen knife, wax spatula, stylus and bone ‘ruler’ from a grave in Berlingen

2.6 Reconstruction of a container for scrolls and a monument from Juvenanum/Torricella Peligna

2.7 Funerary monument of L. Cornelius Atimetus

2.8 (a) Copper-alloy case for styli and possibly parchments from Taranes, (b) leather writing set from Egypt and (c) writing set depicted on the Lauricius grave monument, San Lorenzo Rome

3.1 Vindolanda tablet 291.2 showing the different handwriting styles of a scribe and Claudia Severa

3.2 Writing set held under the left arm on a monument from Maria Saal

4.1 Bone ‘inkwells’ from Vaison and Brindisi

4.2 (a) Samian inkwell, (b) ceramic inkwell from Aquileia and (c) and (d) glass inkwells from Colchester and Xanten

4.3 (a) Silver inkwell from Aquileia, (b) lead inkwell from Mautern and (c) pewter inkwell from Bath

4.4 Possible Roman inkwell from the antiquities market and hexagonal lid from Xanten

4.5 Inscribed lid from Zurzach; stamps on inkwell bases from b = Ristissen; c = Krefeld Gellep; d = Aquileia and e = Nijmegen

4.6 Map of stamped inkwells

5.1 (a) and (b) Early inkwells from Haltern and Comachio; (c) and (d) Elegant early double inkwells from Picenum and ‘Athens’
5.2 Inkwells of Type Biebrich from (a) Asciburgium, (b) Ljubljana and (c) the Magdalensberg

5.3 Distribution of inkwells of Type Biebrich. The Roman Empire's boundaries are shown at its greatest extent under Trajan, post-dating the floruit of this type

5.4 Grave altar of Manius Servius Primigenius from Aquileia

5.5 Lid designs on Type Noll inkwells from Salzburg and Nijmegen

5.6 Lids of a Type Noll inkwell from London and probably from Carnuntum

5.7 Decoration on inkwell bodies of Type Noll from (a) and (b) Nijmegen, (c) Inota, (d) Mérida and (e) Terlizzi

5.8 Inkwells of ?Gaulish type with punched decoration and flange around the dip hole from (a) Nijmegen, (b) Caerwent and (c) Carnuntum

5.9 Inkwells with decorated bodies and/or stamps from (a) Nijmegen, (b) London, (c) Günzenhausen, (d) Nida and (e) Sopron

5.10 Inkwells with rotating aperture cover from (a) Bonn, (b) the Saalburg and (c) inkwell of Type Boeselager from Krefeld Gellep

5.11 Inkwells from (a–b) Elsdorf, (c) Cologne St. Severin, (d) Vindolanda and (e) Lamersdorf

5.12 Inkwell with keyhole aperture and lead mask from Duklja and inkwell with keyhole opening from Drnovo

5.13 Highly decorated inkwells from Cologne

5.14 Inkwell with removable lid and chain from (a) Drnovo and inkwell with removable lid without chain from (b) Krefeld Gellep; inkwells with tapering body from (c) Krefeld Gellep and (d) Vindonissa

5.15 The distribution of inkwells with removable lid, with and without chain

5.16 Cylindrical inkwells with and without incised lines from (a) Drnovo, (b) Lank Latum and (c) Chichester and an inkwell with dished and protruding lid from Regensburg

5.17 Unusual inkwells from (a) Qumran, (b) Xanten, (c) Bregenz, (d) Zalaszentgrót and (e) London. Note that the London inkwell may well not be Roman.

5.18 Aperture covers probably of Type Biebrich inkwells from (a) the Magdalensberg and (b) Risstissen. Zoomorphic inkwell aperture covers probably of Type Biebrich inkwells: (c) bird from Zurzach and (d) bee or fly from Kempten.

5.19 (a) Reconstruction of lid and aperture cover, (b) aperture cover from Nijmegen with horse decoration on interior, (c) small aperture cover with flange from Colchester and (d) lid with deep flange from Usk
5.20 ‘Other’ possible inkwell aperture covers and lids from (a) Vindonissa, (b) Magdalensberg, (c) Longthorpe, (d) Augst and (e) stopper from St. Severin Cologne 97
5.21 Panels from enamelled vessels of Type Johns from Caernarfon and Augst 98
5.22 The distribution of Type Johns enamelled vessels 100
5.23 (a) Balsamarium from Nijmegen, (b) large aperture cover from Kempten, (c) silver vessel from Este and (d) silver pyxis or inkwell from Augst 103
5.24 Serrated discs from the Magdalensberg and box fitting from Nijmegen 104
5.25 Reconstruction of a lantern from Herculaneum and lantern burner from Baden 105
5.26 Metal inkwell types through time 106
5.27 Inkwells (and inkwell lids) with context dates (Total: 220) 107
6.1 Estimated volume averages for different types of metal inkwells and for Samian inkwells; note that enamelled vessels of Type Johns are hexagonal and few have published measurements 110
7.1 The distribution of inkwells of Type Noll 116
7.2 The distribution of inkwells of Type Boeselager 116
7.3 The distribution of inkwells with keyhole-shaped opening 117
7.4 The social distribution of inkwells across the settlement hierarchy (Total: 440 inkwells and inkwell lids; objects wrongly identified as inkwells in the literature are not counted here) 119
7.5 The social distribution of inkwells at context level (Total: 440) 123
7.6 Votive deposit from Marktoberdorf containing writing equipment 129
7.7 Inkwells from hoards and rivers and hoards with other writing equipment 130
7.8 The position of inkwells in inhumation graves 133
8.1 Writing set on the funerary monument of Q. Aemilius Rufus from Salona 141
8.2 Inkwell on a Pompeian wall painting 144
8.3 Theca depicted on the Rufius Probianus ivory diptych 145
8.4 A seated male with attending servant from Strasbourg 150
9.1 Woman composing text on a Pompeian wall painting 157
9.2 Burial with inkwell, crossbow brooch and belt from Krefeld-Gellep 172
9.3 Inkwells from the graves of men and women and the basis for their attribution (Total: 42) 174
10.1 Tombstone of a boy from Metz 180
10.2 A girl’s grave from Rome 187
10.3 Three individuals buried with writing equipment at Skopje 188
## FIGURES

11.1 Sets of writing equipment in graves at Aquileia and Duklja  
11.2 Game equipment from Brindisi and Picenum  
11.3 Inkwell from a female doctor’s grave at Vindonissa  
11.4 Strigils from Lank Latum, shears from Nijmegen and amber comb from Nijmegen  
11.5 Grave with grooming and possible medical instruments from Salzburg
## Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Inkwell materials</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Dating evidence for inkwells of Type Biebrich</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Sites with more than ten recorded inkwells</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Inkwells from Pompeii</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Graves identified as female either by osteology and/or on the basis of grave goods</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Graves identified as male either by osteology and/or on the basis of grave goods</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1 Graves of children buried with inkwells</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1 Types of writing equipment associated with inkwells in graves</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2 Graves with both metal inkwells and game/accounting equipment</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3 Objects associated with grooming in inkwell graves</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research on this book began in 2009, and many people and institutions contributed to its completion. When compiling the catalogue, access to collections or information on specific objects was kindly provided by: Susan Walker and Anja Ulbrich (Ashmolean Museum), Martin Maischberger (Antikensammlung Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz), Susanne Willer (Landesmuseum Bonn), Richard Hobbs and George Benson (British Museum), Mark Lewis (Caerleon Legionary Museum), Glynn Davis (Colchester and Ipswich Museum), Francisco Javier Alonso López (Biblioteca Publica del Estado), Friederike Naumann-Steckner and Marion Euskirchen (Römisch-Germanisches Museum Köln), Caroline McDonald (Museum of London) and Michael Marshall and Angela Wardle (Museum of London Archaeology), F. Germán Rodríguez Martín (Museo Arqueológico de la Comunidad de Madrid), Peter Bibinger (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz), Ellen Riemer (Landesmuseum Mainz), Ana María Bejarano Osorio (Consorcio de la Ciudad Monumental de Mérida), Riccardo Berriola and Dr. Sampaolo (Naples Museum), Annelies Koster (Museum het Valkhof Nijmegen), Isabell Immel (Klingenmuseum Solingen), Giandomenico Spinola and Maurizio Sannibale (Musei Vaticani), Barbara and Andrew Birley (Vindolanda) and Richard Bewer and Evan Chapman (National Museums Wales).

Thomas Schierl very kindly provided information on unpublished inkwells from the Corpus der Römischen Funde im Europäischen Barbaricum Deutschland and also further references to continental finds of writing equipment, as did Klaus Frank. Other scholars provided information on related matters, and I would like to thank Michaela Aufleger, Joanna Bird, Rob Collins, Hilary Cool, Glynn Davies, Eleanor Dickey, Carol van Driel Murray, Mark Driessen, Michel Feugère, Jane Gardner, Wolfgang Gaitzsch, Alessandra Giunilia-Mair, Jenny Hall, Michael Marshall, Stuart McKie, Gwladys Monteil, John Pearce, Jennifer Price, Ellen Swift and Angela Wardle. Cherrel Avery provided fascinating information from her practice as a calligrapher.

I thank colleagues at the University of Reading for covering my administrative and teaching duties and Richard Bradley, John Creighton, Duncan Garrow, Roberta Gilchrist and Mike Fulford for thoughts and references. Roberta Gilchrist in particular took the time to make this a much better book than it
would otherwise have been, as did Mike Fulford who read an early draft. The manuscript was also much improved by Nina Crummy’s thorough reading and by the comments of the two anonymous referees. At Cambridge University Press, Beatrice Rehl and Edgar Mendez smoothed the path to publication. The illustrations were produced by Jennifer Foster and Sarah Lambert-Gates.

Several of my current PhD students supported this project: Matt Fittock kindly recorded the Vindolanda inkwells and organised image permissions; Owen Humphreys commented on two draft chapters; and Victoria Keitel helped with volume calculations. This project has used publications from across the Empire, and this was only made possible by many people helping me with translations, notably Ünige Bencze, Heinrich Härke, Carolina de Lima, Elena Martelli and Susan Thomas. Elena Martelli also did a wonderful job securing image permissions from Italian museums. My father Uwe Eckardt helped with library research and the formatting of the bibliography.

The project would not have been possible without the support of a British Academy Mid-career Fellowship (2016); I am very grateful for the time to think through the material fully.

This book is for my youngest nephews Harry, Kai, Julian, Tom and Sam, who are all learning about the power of literacy at the moment, and for Emma, who does a wonderful job teaching it.