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Headhunting and amphitheatre combat in Roman London, England: new evidence from the Walbrook Valley

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Title

Headhunting and amphitheatre combat in Roman London, England: new evidence from the Walbrook Valley

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Abstract

In 1988, the disarticulated human remains of forty Roman individuals were discovered at 52-63 London Wall, London. Examination of the sample using techniques employed by forensic anthropology and entomology found that some of the material had been deposited in open waterlogged pits. The majority of the sample was adult males who had evidence for multiple peri-mortem blunt- and sharp- force injuries; many also had healed injuries, suggesting that violence was a common feature of their life. Despite the fact that this material was recovered from an industrial area in the upper Walbrook valley of London, the evidence for trauma, their context and associated archaeological and environmental evidence reveals that these deposits are markedly different from other published examples of human remains from the Walbrook stream and River Thames, and may represent the remains of headhunting by the Roman army and/or defeated gladiators

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