

ACCOUNT OF RECENT DISCOVERIES OF ROMAN REMAINS
AT GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX.

COMMUNICATED BY THE LORD BRAYBROOKE, F.S.A., VICE-PRESIDENT.

NUMEROUS interesting vestiges of the ancient occupants of the Roman Station at Great Chesterford have lately been brought to light, to which I have great pleasure in calling the attention of the Institute. The field of curious investigations in which so many valuable relics of Roman times have been discovered, in the course of excavations systematically carried out on the site of ICIANI for some years past under my direction, appears to be almost inexhaustible; the following observations may prove acceptable as a sequel to the notices which from time to time I have communicated to the Society.

The first results of the explorations which I have caused to be made during the last winter were comparatively unproductive. In the month of November my workmen came upon an extensive cemetery situated to the north of the Station, and about 200 yards distant from its limits. Here, in the course of excavations prosecuted during six weeks, not less than seventy interments were discovered; and at first I entertained the hope that having been a burial-place at a late period, when cremation was discontinued among the Romans, I might find that it had possibly been used also in early Anglo-Saxon times.¹ This expectation however was not realised. Some fragments of Roman pottery, third

¹ In this instance the interments were undoubtedly those of Roman occupants, probably of the lower orders of the community, and it may deserve consideration whether the practice of cremation was extended to individuals of the more humble or servile classes. In a locality, however, which may have been occupied successively by inhabitants of various races, and differing in their usages, vestiges either of a pre-Roman

or a post-Roman character might reasonably be expected. Among my latest acquisitions may here be noticed an interesting urn of early British fashion, with the usual chevrony scored ornament covering its upper margin. It was found near Roman remains in digging gravel at a short distance from the station, and measures about 13 inches in height, diameter 11 inches.

brass coins, bone pins, &c., were the only relics by which the interments were accompanied.

In the course of January, a remarkable sepulchral deposit was disinterred by some labourers employed in digging gravel on the north side of the Station, and at about 200 yards outside the line of the ancient walls which once surrounded the site known as the Borough Field. Of some of the most interesting relics thus brought to light, and now preserved in my Museum at Audley End, I have much satisfaction in placing before the readers of this Journal the faithful representations by which this account is illustrated.² The most valuable object among the remains thus brought to light, and of which no example had previously occurred in the course of my researches, is an *ampulla* of transparent greenish-coloured glass, in remarkably perfect preservation. (See woodcuts.) The smaller Roman vessels of this description have commonly been designated lachrymatories, but they may more correctly be described as *unguentaria*, having most probably been used as receptacles for perfumes, or possibly for some other usual accompaniment of the funeral deposit.³ The specimen here figured measures $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter at the mouth, and $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches at the bottom. It seems to have been formed by being blown in a mould, as indicated by a slightly impressed circle on the under side of the base. It will be remembered that among glass vases and remarkable sepulchral relics found by the late Mr. Gage Rokewode in the *bustum* within one of the greater barrows at Bartlow, Essex, opened in 1835, a long-necked glass vessel occurred almost precisely resembling this in form and dimensions; it appeared to have been closed with a bituminous substance, portions of which remained on its neck. It is figured in Mr. Rokewode's Memoir in the *Archæologia*.⁴ A similar *ampulla olearia* was also found in the barrow opened at Bartlow in 1840; the interior, in this instance, was stained with the dregs of some liquid.⁵ In

² With the principal Roman relics found, as above described, and brought for exhibition at the meeting of the Institute in London, on March 2, a beautiful series of coloured drawings, by the accurate pencil of Mr. Youngman of Saffron Walden, were displayed, illustrative of the vases, &c., of which the originals could not be conveniently

removed from Audley End for the inspection of the Society.

³ See Sir William Gell's observations on oils and perfumes preserved in such *ampulla*.—*Pompeiana*, vol. i. p. 111.

⁴ *Archæologia*, vol. xxvi. p. 304, pl. 33, fig. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.* vol. xxix. p. 4.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES FOUND AT GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX.



Ampulla of Glass, found with an Interment near the Station.

Height $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter at the base, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

1845 a discovery of Roman sepulchral remains occurred near the station at Colchester, as described in the Journal of the British Archæological Association, consisting of a large fictile *diota*, in which were deposited a cinerary urn, two lamps, a number of iron nails, and a vessel of pale green glass, of the same form as those already described as found in Essex.⁶ Another, disinterred at Newbury, is figured in the same Journal, 1860, p. 34.

Examples might doubtless be cited of the occurrence of this accessory to the sepulchral deposit in Roman times, in other parts of England; a specimen of precisely similar type has been recently found at Newark near Gloucester, in a leaden coffin of the Roman period, of which a description has been published by the Rev. S. Lysons.⁷ I am also indebted to my friend, Sir John Boileau, Bart., for a drawing of a bottle of the same form found at Pompeii, and now in his collection at Ketteringham Park, Norfolk.⁸

It is scarcely requisite to observe that glass vessels of the Roman age are comparatively of great rarity in this country, having been imported, doubtless, from foreign parts, whilst their fragile nature has necessarily precluded the possibility of their frequent preservation, to the present time, in such perfect condition as the remarkable example found by the gravel-diggers at Chesterford. I may here advert to the remarkable discovery of five *ampullæ oleariæ* which occurred about 1816, in levelling a mound called Metal Hill, at Meldreth, Cambridgeshire. These are now in my Museum; they were found deposited in a square leaden coffin, accompanied by a bronze armlet, a bone pin, and a small brass coin of Cunobeline. Metal Hill appeared to be a natural eminence, not a barrow. None of these little vessels, however, precisely resemble in form that recently added to my collection.

Another object found with the interment at Chesterford, and here figured, is a fictile lamp, of pale brick-red coloured terra-cotta, in perfect preservation: it measures $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length, and the diameter, at the widest part, is $2\frac{1}{4}$

⁶ Journal Archaeol. Assoc. vol. i. p. 239.

⁷ The Romans in Gloucestershire, p. 47. London, Hamilton, Adams and Co, 8vo. A map is given showing the vestiges of the Roman age in and near Gloucester, including the recent discoveries at Newark.

⁸ This type does not occur among the glass vessels figured by Montfauçon, tom. iii. pl. 79, p. 146. A somewhat similar *ampulla* is figured in the Rev. E. Trollope's Illustrations of Ancient Art from Pompeii, &c., pl. 36, fig. 9. It is, however, of smaller size, and longer in the neck, than the example above cited.

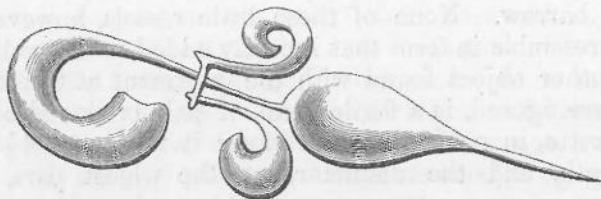
inches. (See woodcut.) The opening above is somewhat remarkably large, but it does not appear that it was closed



Roman Lamp of Red Ware, found at Chesterford.

by a cover. Fictile lamps are of comparatively rare occurrence with Roman remains in this country, but other examples are preserved in my Museum at Audley End.

The deposit was accompanied also by several vessels of Samian and other wares; of the former may be noticed a small plain cup (diameter $4\frac{1}{8}$ in. depth 2 in.), bearing the impress of the potter, the mark—PAVLLI. M.—which had previously occurred at Chesterford, but in that example the two letters—LL—resemble in form the minuscule Greek Lambda.⁹ Also a *patera* of red ware without ornament in relief, bearing the stamp—VACIRO—which had not previously come under my observation; this specimen of Samian measures $7\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter, and $1\frac{3}{4}$ in height. Two other *pateræ* were found, one of them impressed with the mark—PAVLI. MA., and the other, which measures $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, and 4 inches in height, is decorated around the rim with a very remarkable ornament in high relief (see



woodcut), apparently applied to the surface of the dish in thick paste or slip, whilst the clay was still moist. The resemblance of this ornament to the mediæval fleur-de-lys

⁹ Mr. Roach Smith gives—PAVLIVS · F. and PAVLIANI · M.—Illustrations of Roman London, p. 105.
—PAVLI · M.—PAVLLI · M.—PAVLLVS · F.

is well deserving of notice, and I am not aware that any precisely similar type of decoration has hitherto been noticed; the nearest approach to it is shown on an unique *mortarium* in Mr. Huxtable's collection.¹

The following vases were also found;—a small urn of coarse grey ware, diameter 3 inches, height $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches; two bottles of white ware, each being formed with one handle, and measuring $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height; and a large *olla* of dingy-grey ware, measuring 9 inches in height, 8 inches in diameter, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches at the mouth.

I may remark in regard to the discovery, the details of which I have described, that, in the course of my excavations at Chesterford, I have examined two Roman cemeteries in close proximity to the spot where the deposit in question was lately brought to light, and several interments had come under my observation in that locality. Among them must be specially mentioned that of a corpse accompanied by not less than 200 large brass coins, found in 1847, deposited in a bronze *trulla* pierced to serve as a strainer. These coins are of Caligula, Claudius, Vespasian, and other Emperors, Sabina, Faustina, sen., and Faustina, jun., that of most recent date being a coin of Commodus, (A.D. 180—192). This remarkable discovery, which has been noticed in my "Sepulchra Exposita," occurred during the construction of the Newmarket Branch Railway now disused.²

Having described the various Roman relics by which my Museum has been enriched, from the deposit thus disinterred during the operations of the gravel-diggers to the north of the Station, I will now proceed to relate certain discoveries recently made at Chesterford by my own workmen, within sight of the spot where the interment above noticed was found. In a former volume of this Journal I gave an account of the examination, under my direction, of not less than forty-five of the mysterious deep circular shafts, such as have occurred near other Roman sites, namely, at Ewell in Surrey, in London, Winchester, Richborough, Lincoln, &c. They have been designated "rubbish-pits" by some antiquaries, whilst others have sought to trace in these singular

¹ Figured in Mr. Roach Smith's Memoir on the Red Glazed Pottery of the Romans, Journal Archaeol. Assoc. vol. iv. p. 13.

- See Sepulchra Exposita, by the

Hon. R. C. Neville, 1848, 8vo. (privately printed), p. 95. The bronze *trulla* is also figured in this Journal, vol. v. p. 235.

depositories the *favissæ* formed near temples in ancient times, according to Varro, or the *puticuli*, thus described by Urbicus, a writer of the fourth century,—“sunt in suburbanis loca publica, in opum destinata funeribus, quæ loca *culinas* appellant.” My workmen have recently met with several shafts of a similar nature to those which I have before described in the Borough Field at Chesterford.³ Of three of these depositories the following account may be interesting to those who investigate the *arcana* of the Roman period in Britain.

The first of these shafts measured only 10 feet in depth ; it contained few remains of Roman pottery. At the bottom of the pit, however, was found a perfect *patera* or large dish of lustrous black ware of unusually good quality.

The second shaft measured also 10 feet in depth ; it produced a considerable quantity of fictile fragments ; some of these having been reunited, I have obtained a *patera* of plain Samian ware, the potter's mark defaced ; an *operculum*, or cover of an urn, of coarse red ware, an object comparatively of rare occurrence ; and two portions of a Samian bowl, with ornaments in relief of very good character, and bearing the potter's mark.

In the third of these singular depositories, measuring 15 feet in depth, and 5 feet in diameter, an unusual abundance of broken pottery was found, accompanied by several *fictilia* in a perfect state. This shaft was remarkable not only on account of the large quantity of remains of that nature which it contained, but for the multiplicity of objects deposited. In none of these receptacles have I found so large a variety of Roman ware, consisting of broken *amphoræ*, *cylices*, *diotæ*, *mortaria*, *ollæ*, *pateræ*, *pocula*, &c. ; of these vessels many were entire, or were easily capable of being restored in their perfect forms. Among these I may especially mention portions of two large bowls of Samian ware, with ornaments in relief of very spirited design and good execution. On one of these bowls are represented, in circular compartments, deer with large spreading antlers resembling those of the moose-deer ; between each circle appear two figures running at full speed, one of them being apparently a naked winged genius, the other is shooting with a bow,⁴ the ends of which

³ Archæol. Journal, vol. xii. pp. 109, 126.

⁴ Compare the bow, of remarkably small proportions, in the hand of the

figure known as Rob of Risingham.—Horsley, Brit. Rom. Northumberland, No. xciv. See also this Journal, vo xiii. p. 312.

are singularly recurved. It may deserve comparison with the bows, similar in this peculiarity regarding their extremities, borne both by Apollo and Diana on the remarkable silver *lanæ* found at Corbridge, and now in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland. A gilt cast in plaster from that unique example of Roman plate, taken probably about the time of its discovery near the banks of the Tyne in 1735, exists at Audley End. There are traces of the potter's impress upon the bowl last described ; it cannot, however, now be deciphered. The other example of Samian, with designs in relievo, is likewise ornamented with circular compartments, in each of which is a figure seated on a kind of throne, and holding a lyre. In each of the intervals between these circles is introduced a naked female figure leaning on a short column, with a little floating drapery. There is also a third figure resembling an athlete. Upon the fragments of this example of Samian ware there are two potter's marks, a circumstance not undeserving of notice, the letters being in both instances incuse and inverted. One of these marks, placed in a perpendicular direction, although fractured, may probably be read MARTIALIS, a name found repeatedly on examples of Samian ware in England ; the second, placed near the lower margin of the ornamented part of the bowl, bears the letters R E P.

It has been suggested, with much probability, that where more than one mark thus occurs, as occasionally found upon highly decorated Samian, one of them may indicate the name or mark of the maker of the vase, the other that of the decorator or the workman of superior class by whom the designs in relievo were supplied.

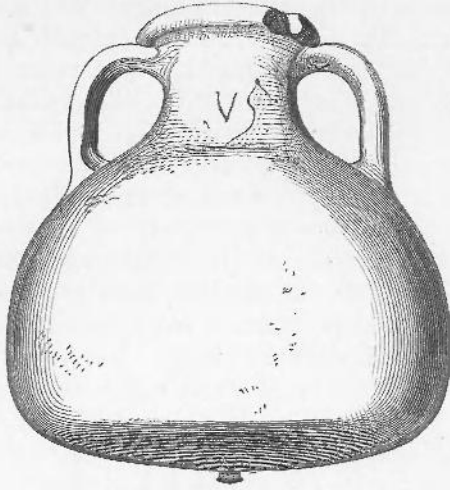
With the fragments of fictilia above noticed was found a plain dish of Samian ware, impressed, not very distinctly, with the stamp DONATVS, (or possibly DONATV-M), a name which occurs in Mr. Roach Smith's list of marks found in London ; it has been found, also, elsewhere in this country. Another Samian *patera*, with ivy-leaf ornaments in relief around the margin, bears an impress hitherto undecyphered. There was also here disinterred an urn of pale red ware, of very unusual form, and having a small flat knob or button at its base, so that it could not stand erect upon a flat surface, and must have been placed upon a stand, or a flat fictile ring, such as was found with it, with a perforation to receive the

excrescence, the purpose of which has not been ascertained. This vessel, unique as it is believed in this country, may have been used for warming liquids, and have been supported by a tripod, possibly, or *foculus*, under which embers might be placed. It measures $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, $22\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference, and the diameter of the mouth is 3 inches. Upon the neck are coarsely traced with a point, apparently whilst the clay was in a moist state, the characters—vs—(see woodcut), probably indicating the liquid contents of the vessel. With the *ficilia* above described were also found a dish of black or dark grey ware, of unusually large dimensions, measuring 13 inches in diameter, and another of rather smaller size, with rudely scored ornament inside; these vessels resemble in form the modern stand used for a flower-pot. There were also portions of plain Samian vessels, with the marks—JUSTI. MA.—C(APITO)LINVS.(?)—MAXIMA. and part of the handle of a large *amphora* of white ware, bearing the



impress here figured (original size).⁵ It is remarkable, on account of the letters being incuse, instead of in relief, as usually found on the stamped handles of *amphoræ*, &c.; they may have been produced in this instance by one of the bronze stamps, the intention of which has been the subject of much discussion. Altogether ten vases of various forms have been reconstructed from the fragments brought to light in this prolific shaft. The bronze handle of a key was found, terminating in an ornament formed of three scrolls or loops, similar to that of a perfect key formerly found in my excavations at Chesterford. The most remarkable relic, however, here exhumed remains to be noticed; this is a *lar*, or bronze statuette of a river-god leaning upon an urn, from which flows a stream of water. Although it has suffered much from oxidation, which has rendered the surface carious and irregular, possibly through the action, as it has been

⁵ Mr. Roach Smith gives—MVN (?) on amphoræ found in London.—Illustrations of Roman London, p. 88.
MELISSAE—and MELLISSE—among marks



Vase of pale red ware, a diota or lagena.

Height $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



Ring of Terracotta, found with the Vase, and possibly intended to serve as a stand for it.

Diameter 3 inches.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES DISCOVERED AT GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX.



Bronze Figure of a River-God.

Height, nearly 4 inches.

supposed, of fire, this little figure has considerable artistic merit, and even in its damaged condition surpasses in character of design any object of its class which has come under my observation in previous researches. (See wood-cut.) A small cylindrical pedestal of bronze was found with it, upon which it had originally been fixed, but the solder had become disunited. The statuette measures $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length; the height of the pedestal is $1\frac{7}{8}$ inch, and its diameter $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch. A bronze pin, resembling a probe, found at the same time, may also deserve notice. Roman *lares* in a recumbent attitude appear to be of rare occurrence. Caylus gives a bronze recumbent figure of Mercury, and one of Venus or a nymph (Recueil, t. iii. pl. 43). The only representation of a river-god found in England is, I believe, the stone statue at *Cilurnum*, figured in Bruce's Roman Wall, p. 147.

It is difficult to suppose that the shafts in which so varied an assemblage of objects had been deposited, evidently with some care, and including objects of so much interest and in perfect condition, should have been merely, as some antiquaries have conjectured, rubbish-holes, or depositories like *favissæ*, into which worthless refuse was thrown.

Before I conclude these observations, I may take occasion to mention certain other relics obtained from shafts in immediate proximity to those already noticed. Among these are two circular pieces of lead, about $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, and nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in thickness, perforated in the centre; they may have served as weights; also a pin of jet, of fine quality, and well polished; the head is cut in facets; in its present state this pin measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, but part has been broken off. I may, moreover, notice a broken Samian bowl, with figures of men, lions, and other animals, and marked with two potters' stamps, namely (CI)NTVSMVS · F · which had previously occurred at Chesterford, and ALBVCI, in letters of much larger size than the former; this mark is in relief, placed horizontally among the figures. Several interesting specimens of other kinds of ware have also been added to my collections, including an example of the peculiar kind of pottery sprinkled with fine *spiculæ*, almost resembling gold dust; some remarkably worked fragments of Castor wares with hunting subjects, stags, greyhounds, &c., in high relief, embossed in slip; other portions with ornaments in colour, &c.; a vase of dark-coloured ware, of unusual form (see cut), also two *amphoræ*, broken into numerous

fragments, now skillfully adjusted together ; the forms of these vases are of considerable elegance, and they have been admirably reproduced by the pencil of Mr. Youngman of Saffron Walden. One of them measures 24 inches in height, the other, $17\frac{3}{4}$ inches.¹⁴ (See woodcuts.) On the upper part of one of these are faintly traced characters which have been thus decyphered—PISI MIISI, (?) possibly indicating, as in a former instance, the capacity of the jar, or the nature of its contents, which may have been some kind of wine prepared with pitch,—*vinum picatum*, or made from grapes which had a natural flavour of pitch, as mentioned by Pliny and Martial. Pliny describes also an oil made from pitch,—*oleum pissinum*, and another oil, obtained from pulse,—*pisinum*, was used by the Romans. The ancient scorings of the description here noticed, occasionally occurring upon Roman urns, appear well deserving of attention ; they may serve to show the extent to which certain foreign luxuries of the table were imported into this country in Roman times. I am not aware, however, that any similar *graffiti*, if the term may be admissible, have hitherto been described in this country, with the exception of that upon a little urn found in Sussex, and figured in a previous page of this volume.¹⁵

My museum has lately been enriched during the last winter by some other curious specimens of Roman glass, besides the *ampulla* already described ; these have been found in the same locality, in digging gravel on the north side of the station. They are unfortunately in very fragmentary condition, but the restoration of their forms has been effected, and some of the specimens recently obtained are here figured. (See woodcuts.) One of these is a tall four-sided bottle with one handle ; it measures 8 inches in height. At the bottom are the letters in relief—A. P., probably the initials of the maker, within a circle, and produced by the mould in which these ancient vessels of glass were for the most part blown. The Abbe Cochet has given a considerable number of types of glass vessels found in the north of France,¹⁶ and he notices several of the marks of the ancient *vitriarii* ; relics of this description are comparatively rare in

¹⁴ An amphora almost identical in form and dimensions is preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, in the collection of antiquities chiefly formed by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. It was found at Shefford.

¹⁵ See p. 81, and Sussex Archæol. Coll.

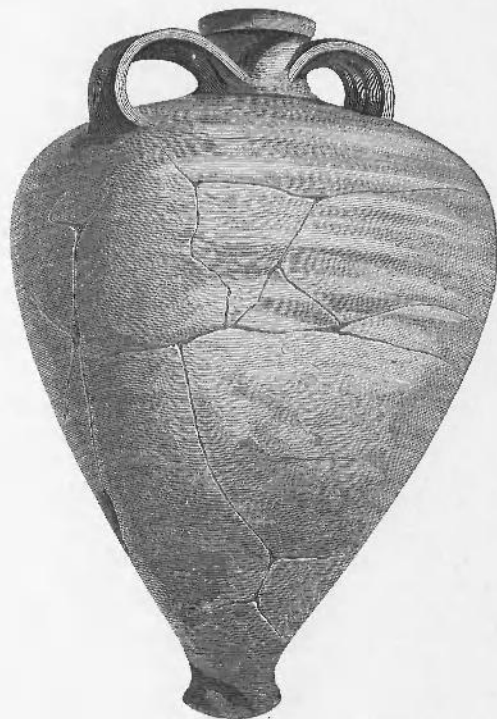
vol. xi. p. 133. It is to be regretted that a relic of the same period found at Chesterford, and likewise bearing scored markings, is no longer to be found, namely, a tile with an incised inscription, given in Gough's Edit. of Camden, vol. ii., p. 141.

¹⁶ Normandie Souterraine.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES FOUND AT GREAT CHESTERFORD.



Wine-vessel, diota or orca, of white ware.
Height 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

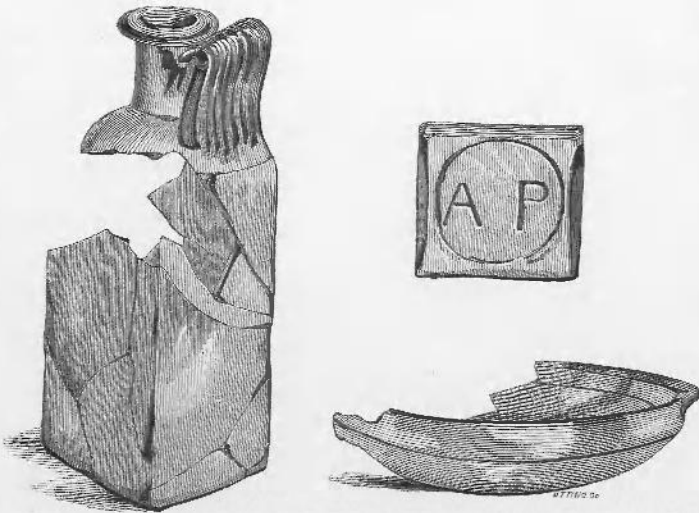


Wine-vessel, diota or lagena, of white ware.
Height 24 inches.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES FOUND AT GREAT CHESTERFORD, ESSEX.



Vase of dark-coloured ware. Height 7 inches.



Glass Vase, bearing the maker's initials A.P. moulded in relief, height 8 inches and a broken saucer, or catinum.

this country, and even in fractured condition they are in no slight degree deserving of notice. The vessel which I have described was found in the Borough Field, Chesterford, in April last, and also two other relics of the like material, a *patina* or saucer, measuring in its imperfect state 6 inches in diameter (see woodcut), and a bowl with a recurved lip, resembling certain vessels of the Anglo-Saxon period, to which it may possibly belong. My museum has likewise been enriched by an example of unusual type, but in very fractured state: it measured, when perfect, about 6 inches in height, diameter $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches; it is of very thin pellucid glass. Two vessels of glass, similar in form, but each furnished with a flat reeded handle, which does not appear in the specimen found at Chesterford, were discovered by Mr. Gage Rokewode in 1832, in one of the Roman sepulchres at Bartlow.¹⁷ Lastly, may be mentioned the remains of a four-sided glass vase, with one handle, measuring about 6 inches in height, of a type which occurred there, and has been noticed elsewhere also with Roman remains.

In concluding this brief statement of recent results of explorations at the remarkable Roman site, where so large an assemblage of interesting relics have from time to time been disinterred, I may mention the acquisition of two valuable coins lately added to my cabinet. One of these, found in a garden in the village of Chesterford, is an example in remarkable preservation of the rare type of Cunobeline, bearing on the reverse a helmeted head to left, with the legend—CVNOBIL. Reverse, a boar; in the exergue—TASC·FIL. A similar coin in imperfect condition, found at Chesterford, previously existed in my collection. The second, recently obtained, is in less desirable preservation; it presents the head of Cunobeline, apparently without the helmet; on the reverse is a horse galloping; the legend is the same as that which occurs on the coin before described. The rarity of such numismatic relics, and also their historical importance, now more truly appreciated by the archæologist, has induced me to place on record the acquisition of these highly interesting coins of the sovereign of the Iceni.

The Central Committee desire to acknowledge, with much gratification, the kind liberality of Lord Braybrooke in presenting to the Institute the illustrations which accompany the foregoing memoir.

¹⁷ Archæologia, vol. xxv. p. 7, pl. iii.