

# AN EXCAVATION ON THE ROMAN SITE AT LITTLE CHESTER, DERBY, 1960

By GRAHAM WEBSTER.

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## REPORT ON THE SAMIAN POTTERY

By B. R. HARTLEY.

THIS excavation was carried out from 20 June to 14 July 1960 as an emergency by the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments of the Ministry of Works, for whom I acted as supervisor. I am most grateful to Colonel J. Haslam who acted as my assistant throughout, to all Ministry of Works officials concerned and to the valuable help given by volunteers, many of them members of the Society, in particular to Mr. and Mrs. B. Simmons, Mr. and Miss V. Buxton, Miss H. Waugh, Mr. G. V. Rybot and Mr. S. O. Kay, who gave up their holidays to assist and others who gave help at various times as they were able. Mr. R. G. Hughes of the Derby Museum was also very helpful in many ways. The contractors, Messrs. Ford and Weston Ltd., were very efficient and showed an intelligent interest in the work, and I am especially grateful to the foreman Mr. Alldread and the excavator driver Mr. Drane whose expert skill saved us many man-hours of labour.

### *The Site* (Figs. 1-2).

The work was made necessary by the plans of Messrs. E. H. Pickfords to extend their garage in Old Chester Road. This meant that their new building would extend over the south side of the defences recorded by Stukeley. Messrs. Pickfords very kindly gave permission for a limited excavation which was designed to cut a section across the defences and make a small scale investigation inside them.

Although various casual finds have been made from time to time, very little is known about this Roman site. Its name does not appear in Ptolemy's *Geography* or the *Antonine Itinerary* but it has been assumed that the *Derbentione* which appears in the *Ravenna Cosmography* between *Lutudaron* and *Salinis* applies to Little Chester and that the name is derived from that of the River Derwent.<sup>1</sup> There are two other places of the same name, the fort at Papcastle on the Cumberland Derwent which appears in the same

<sup>1</sup> *Archaeologia*, XCII, 31.

source, and the fort at Malton, Yorkshire, known from the *Antonine Itinerary*.

Of the early antiquarian authorities,<sup>2</sup> the most important is William Stukeley who visited Little Chester twice<sup>3</sup> and published a plan which shows the rectangular site defended by a wall and ditch. These remains were then visible for their whole circuit, although on his second visit in 1725 he reports seeing the wall being blown up by gunpowder for road making. Today there is nothing visible on the ground except the slight change of level and a small fragment of faced masonry in the cellar of an old house which may be part of the east gate. Stukeley gave the dimensions of the site as 600 ft. by 500 ft. and this seems to be a reasonable approximation.

The excavation was made difficult by the presence of 6 to 5 ft. of slag which had been dumped there during the past thirty years. Below this were the drains and cobbled areas of the farm shown by Stukeley. This establishment probably ceased when the property changed hands early in the 19th century, and a map by W. Bemrose and Sons shows the site as an open area. Only a few scraps of post-Roman pottery earlier than 1800 were recorded.

#### *The Defences (Figs. 3-4).*

The main object of the excavation was the study of the defences shown on Stukeley's plan. The stone and cobble foundation of the wall survived and was found to be 8 ft. 9 in. wide. The wall itself had been completely robbed but lying on edge in the robber trench was a large mass of wall core. The explanation of this is found in Stukeley's account of the destruction of the Roman wall by gunpowder. The felling and robbing proceeded from the west and at this point the workmen robbed down to the foundations; these pieces of core had fallen into their trench from the east side and the workmen had not broken and removed them. Behind the wall, in most cases of forts of the 1st and 2nd centuries, there stands a rampart accommodating the spoil from the ditch system and providing an enlarged fighting platform at the level of the patrol track.<sup>4</sup> At Little Chester such a rampart does not appear to have been built. If it had existed, remains of it would have been noticed by Stukeley. In the section (Fig. 4) there is, at the base of the wall, a layer of grey clay, but its precise relationship to the wall is not certain and it may pre-date the wall. This layer has been cut by the robber trench and into this has been inserted a cobbled foundation in brown clay which belongs to the later farm period. One would have expected some trace of building rubble and mortar associated with the construction of the wall, so it is possible that some upper levels have been removed in the farm construction work. The section does not therefore prove conclusively the absence of a rampart but merely indicates this probability and one must wait for a section where more of this vital detail has been preserved.

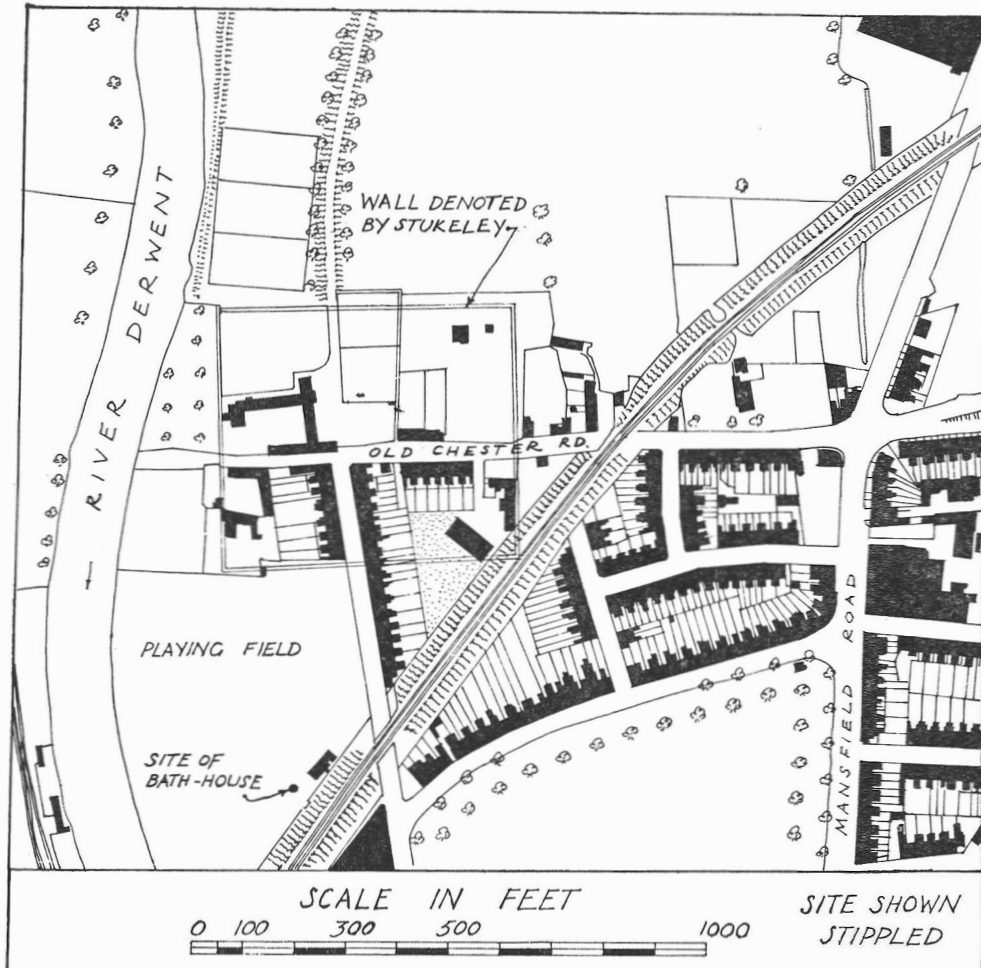
In front of the wall was a ditch of shallow U-shaped profile about 20 ft. wide and 4 ft. deep. It had been cut in the natural gravel which was fairly

<sup>2</sup> Summarized in *V.C.H., Derbyshire*, I, 216-221; see also *D.A.J.*, XXXV (1913), 111-136.

<sup>3</sup> *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1776).

<sup>4</sup> S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Balmildy*, 1922, 12.

loose at this point and the bottom was filled with a black peaty deposit above which was a layer of dark filling. The impression one gained from this was of a very badly cut ditch which was more in the nature of a wide scoop and which had been allowed to attract organic growth and gradually fill up. It



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FIG. 1. Area plan.

might originally have been intended to make the ditch deeper but the gravel could not be cut today to any steeper profile, as the modern water-table is about half-way up the ditch. This fact made it difficult to examine the bottom of the ditch in spite of the provision of a large pump. In a drier season it might be possible to gain more information. Above the filling was a scatter

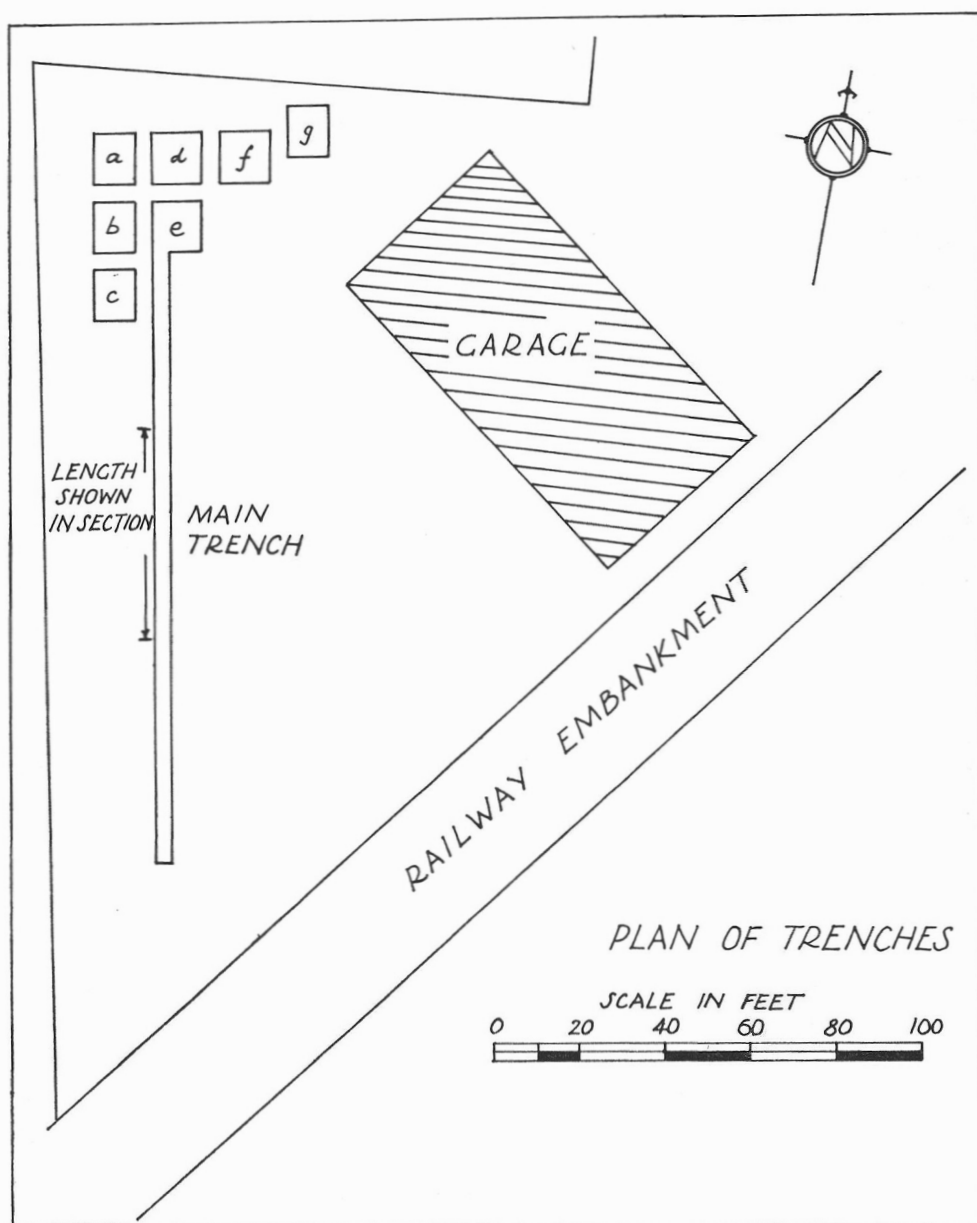


FIG. 2. Site plan.



of stones which probably belong to the disintegration of the wall and its gradual collapse through the centuries.

The section was taken another 52 ft. beyond the point illustrated but no traces were found of other ditches.

#### *Dating evidence.*

Unfortunately no secure dating evidence was found associated with these defences. The pottery from the grey clay filling, which probably, in the absence

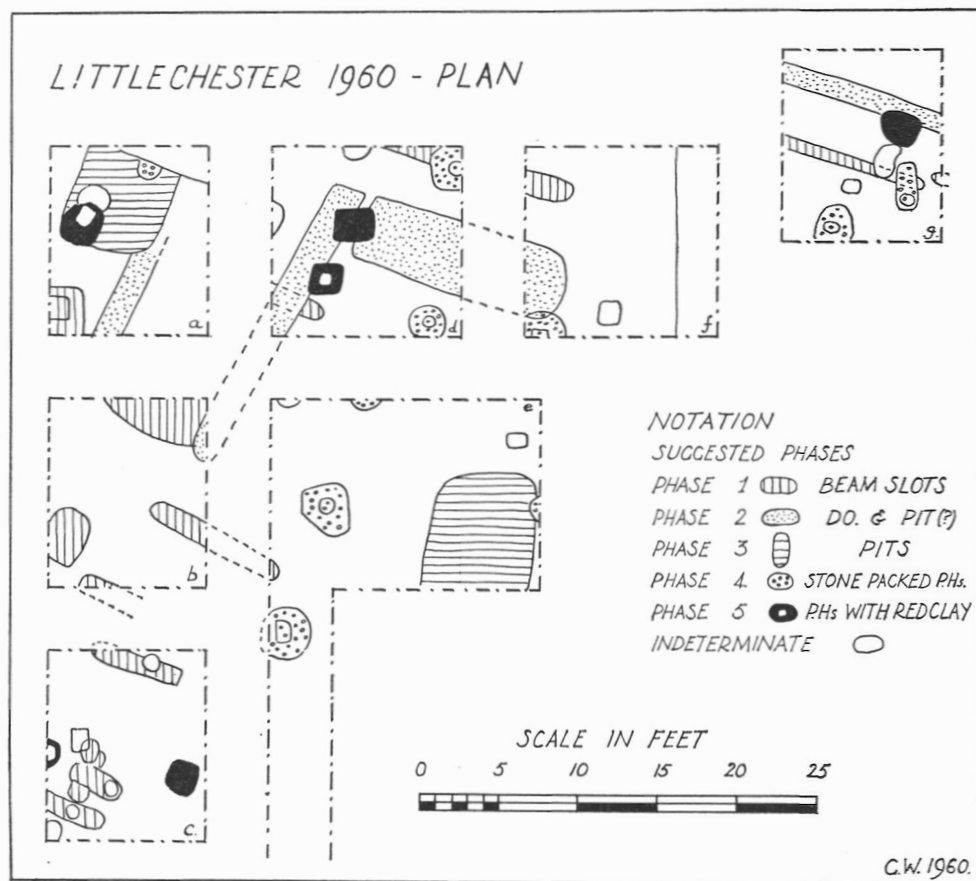


FIG. 3. Plan of excavated area.

of wall building material in it, pre-dates the wall, contained nothing later than the 2nd century. No pottery was recovered from the bottom of the ditch but its upper filling contained 4th century material.

The most important discovery was that the defences overlies earlier periods associated with timber buildings on a different alignment. These were found

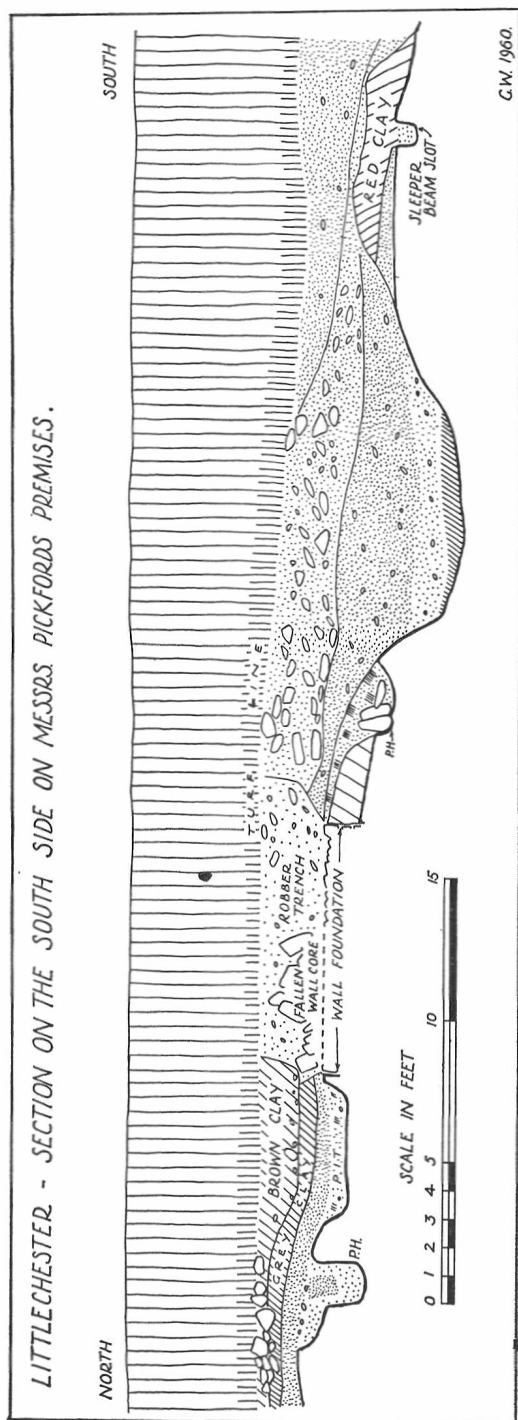


FIG. 4. Section through the defences.



LITTLE CHESTER.  
Wall foundations and fallen wall core.

immediately to the rear of the wall, in front of it and beyond the outer lip of the ditch to the limit of the trench. These features consist of post-holes, sleeper beams and pits similar to those revealed in the larger area explored on the north-west corner of the site. Further consideration will be given to the problem raised by these defences under conclusions below.

### *The Buildings.*

It was anticipated that most of the site would have been occupied with the defensive features and that only in the northern part of it was it likely that any internal buildings would be encountered. Unfortunately the exceptionally wet weather and the time taken to deal with the superficial deposits made it impossible to develop the excavation when, towards its completion, it was discovered that there was a complex of timber structures which bore no relationship to the defences.

The loss of the upper Roman levels in this area meant in fact that there were no surviving features which could be associated with the defended enclosure. Not a single floor level of any period had been left except where they had sunk into a pit, and all the structural elements and pits investigated were below their original ground level. This fact, together with the small size of the area fully excavated, accounts for the difficulty in separating out, dating and identifying these structures. It is possible, however, by correlating the plans and sections at least to demonstrate a sequence of structures and to some extent attempt to link those of similar character (Fig. 5).

### *Chronology.*

There would appear to be at least five phases of construction in the form of features of similar characteristics. It is possible to make a rough chronological assessment by studying the way in which each group has superseded the other.

*Phase 1* consists of a series of parallel, but unconnected, beam slots notably in a, b and c.<sup>5</sup> In c there was a complex of short slots with upright members. The general appearance of this pattern of slots is reminiscent of the foundations of a granary, the feature in c being part of a loading platform. The Fendoch example however shows that the sleeper beams were arranged in a very regular manner.<sup>6</sup> The early nature of these beams in the history of the site is clearly shown in d.

*Phase 2* Forming a convenient group are two broad beam slots in a, b and d together with a shallow rectangular pit in d and f at right angles to them. This pit was full of dark coloured filling but not sealed by a later floor, except disturbed traces of red clay (Section E-F).

<sup>5</sup> The layers of the main trench were given a serial number preceded by the letter LP (Little Chester — Pickfords). When the grid was developed each square was distinguished by a letter (see Fig. 3).

<sup>6</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, LXXIII (1938-39), Fig. 9.

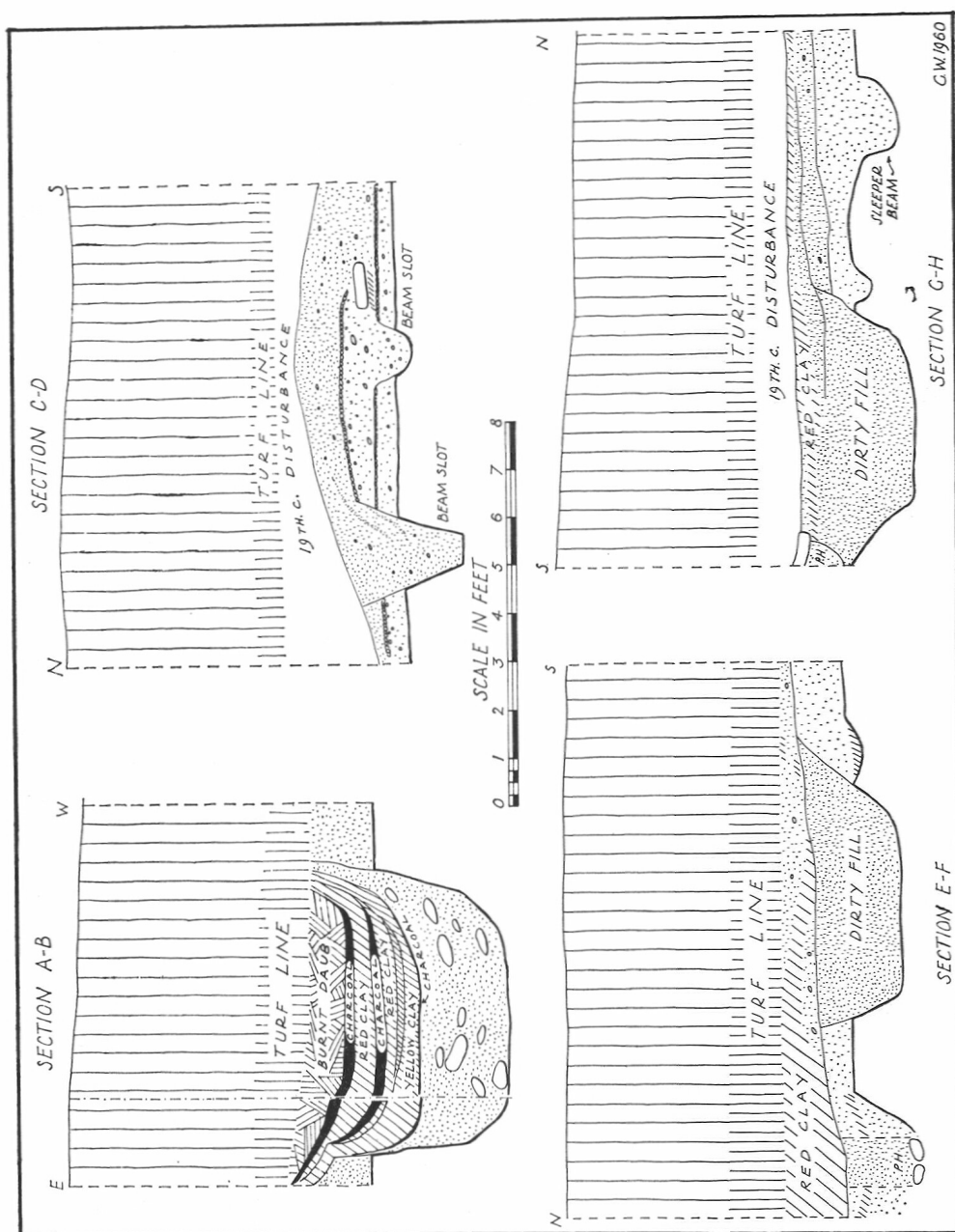


Fig. 5. Sections A-B, C-D, E-F, G-H.

- Phase 3* is represented by two large rectangular pits, at least 8 ft. x 7 ft., in a and e. Section A-B clearly shows one of these and is also the only evidence for clay floors, a sequence of which had collapsed into the pit. The uppermost level of floor is also associated with a destruction deposit which included burnt daub.
- Phase 4* Cutting into the side of the pit in e was a series of ten post-holes, all of which were packed with stone, but they need not all be contemporary except those forming an alignment across the middle of the site at about 18 ft. intervals.
- Phase 5* Another very distinctive series of six post-holes which seem to be very late in the sequence were identified by having a hard packed red clay foundation and bearing in most cases the impress of the bottom of a post. No clear pattern in their arrangement is evident.

There were a number of other features, mainly post-holes, but their lack of characteristics and isolated positions make it difficult to place them in any sequence. In the north-east corner of a there was the edge of a deep pit which had been filled with small fragments of animal bones which are considered in detail below.

Although a considerable amount of pottery was recovered, the absence of any sealing layers makes the problem of dating these sequences very hazardous. One of the exceptions to this state of affairs is the pit in e. A sequence of clay floors had collapsed into the pit and here at least there is the possibility of drawing some conclusions. In the pit filling itself (layers 9, 10 and 12) were Antonine sherds including some samian (Figs. 6, 8, nos. 9 and 37; coarse pottery Fig. 10, no. 5). A small amount of pottery was also recovered from the burnt daub above the uppermost clay floor (layers 4, 5 and 6) and the samian (nos. 34, 40, 42 and 47) and coarse wares all dated to the end of the 2nd century. There is little doubt that the last three phases of the sequence must be placed in the second half of the 2nd century.

The large pits and slots of (d.3) Phase 2 also produced pottery, but here it was unsealed and also included Antonine samian (nos. 39 and 45). The critical sherds for Phase 1 were found in the southernmost slot in c (c.4) and in one of the parallel slots in b (b.3). The first of these is Antonine, and the other c. A.D. 145-160 (Fig. 7, no. 21). There is therefore no single feature in this part of the site which has produced pottery exclusively earlier than the middle of the 2nd century. It does not necessarily follow that all the features are of that date since the filling of the slots has come from upper levels, falling in as the timbers decayed or were removed, and the considerable disturbance all over the site has meant the displacement of much of the pottery.

Throughout the site there were a few recognizable Flavian sherds but the only group, a small one, was found in a beam slot north of the wall in the main trench (LP 20) and two vessels of which are illustrated (Fig. 10, nos. 13-14).

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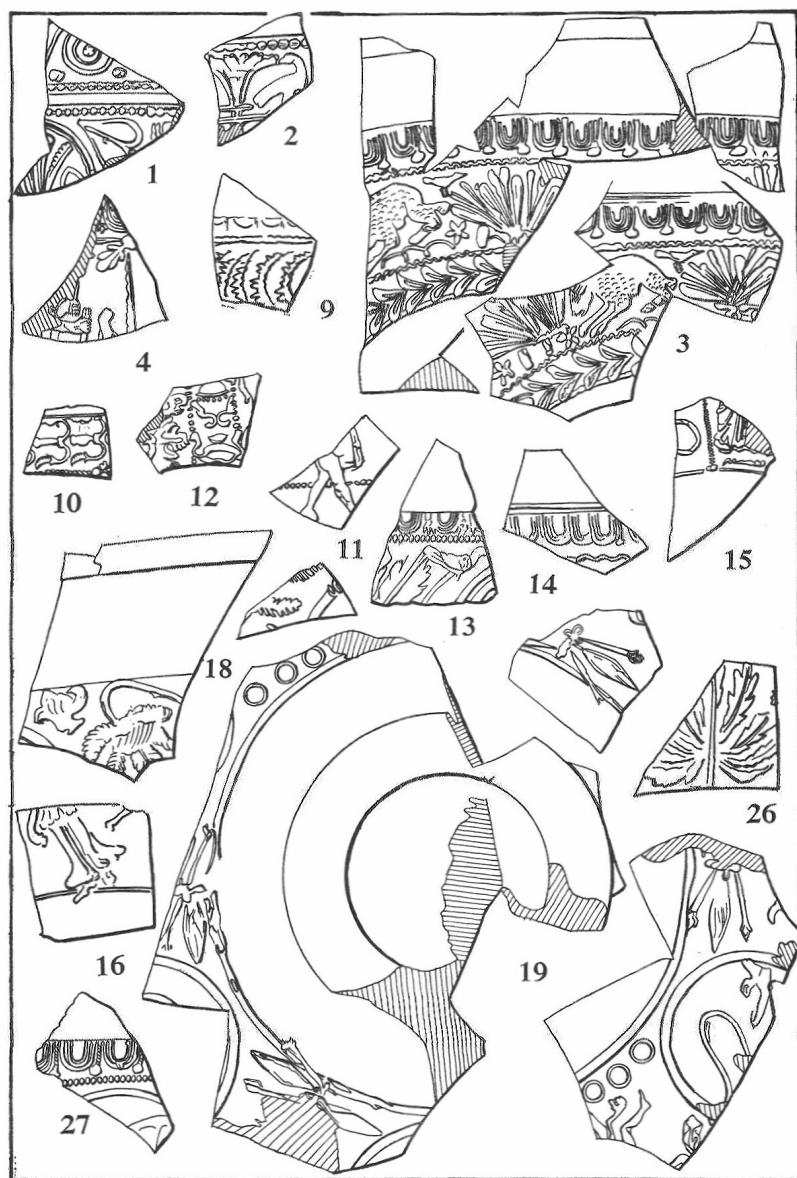


FIG. 6. Samian pottery (1/2).



## Coins.

1. A *sestertius* of Trajan (*R.I.C.*, 534) (A.D. 98-117) somewhat worn (unstratified).
2. An *as* of Hadrian (*R.I.C.*, 719) somewhat worn (found on the outer lip of the ditch below the red clay which sealed the sleeper beam slot).

SAMIAN POTTERY. *Report by B. R. Hartley.*A. South Gaulish (Fig. 6).<sup>7</sup>

1. (LP 1). Form 29 with continuous scrolls of Flavian type in both zones. The general style is reminiscent of bowls from the workshop of IVCVNDVS (cf. Knorr — *T.S. Gefässe des ersten Jahrhunderts*, 1952, Taf. 31). c. A.D. 75-85.
2. (LP 1). Form 29, burnt. Both the plant and bird (D.<sup>8</sup> 1009) are characteristic of the latest bowls of this form made at La Graufesenque. c. A.D. 75-85.
3. (LP 1: LP 9). Form 37 — eight fragments joining into two pieces from the same, small bowl. The freestyle scene with hare (D. 949) and bird (D. 1040?) is similar to many late S. Gaulish ones, but I do not know a precise parallel on any signed bowls. c. A.D. 80-105.
4. (LP d 1). Form 37 with typical late panelled decoration and with a corner leaf which occurs on moulds stamped by MASCVVS (Knorr 1952, Taf. 37). Diana, D. 63 a. c. A.D. 85-105.
5. (LP 5), 6 (LP a 1), 7 (LP 1) and 8 (LP 9) are all scraps from late S. Gaulish bowls of the same date as no. 4 (not illustrated).
9. (LP e 12). Knorr 78 or, less probably, Déchelette 64. The fabric seems to be S. Gaulish, but the decoration (overlapping impressions of the edge of a medallion stamp, probably) does not help. However, the piece is almost certainly late 1st or early 2nd century.

## B. Central Gaulish (Figs. 6-9).

10. (LP f 5), 11 (LP d 3) and 12 (LP g 8). Three small fragments of form 37, probably from different bowls, in the style of DRVSVS I (Stanfield's X-3, *Central Gaulish Potters*,<sup>9</sup> Pl. 10 ff.) who worked at Martres de Veyre (*Ogam* XII, 27). The only figure is O.<sup>10</sup> 592.

This potter's work is common in Britain and appears regularly in forts abandoned when Hadrian's Wall was built. A single sherd from a Flavian II pit at Newstead (Curle, *Newstead*, 213, 6) demonstrates activity before about A.D. 105, while the large number of his bowls in the London Second Fire (*Antiq. J.*, XXV, 63 ff.) and one from Birdoswald suggest that he was still at work in the early 120's. c. A.D. 100-125.

13. (LP f 5). Form 37 with one of the rosette-tongued ovolos used by the early potters of Martres de Veyre and also found on the early work of SACER and his associates. This seems to be Martres fabric, and M. J. R. Terrisse has found bowls with similar scrolls there. c. A.D. 110-130.
14. (LP 16). Form 37. A botched ovolo with zig-zag line below, as used by GELENVS (*C.G.P.*, Pl. 65: this reading of the name is confirmed by two recent finds). GELENVS was a Hadrianic potter whose work appears occasionally at sites believed to have been abandoned when Hadrian's Wall was built (Malton, Bainbridge and, probably, Catterick), but it is absent in Scotland, so a date c. A.D. 120-135 or 140 seems certain.

<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to Mr. Donald Macreth for drawing most of the samian.

<sup>8</sup> Déchelette, *Les Vases céramiques ornés de la Gaule romaine*, 1904.

<sup>9</sup> Hereafter referred to as *C.G.P.*

<sup>10</sup> Oswald, *Index of Figure Types on Terra Sigillata*, 1936-37.



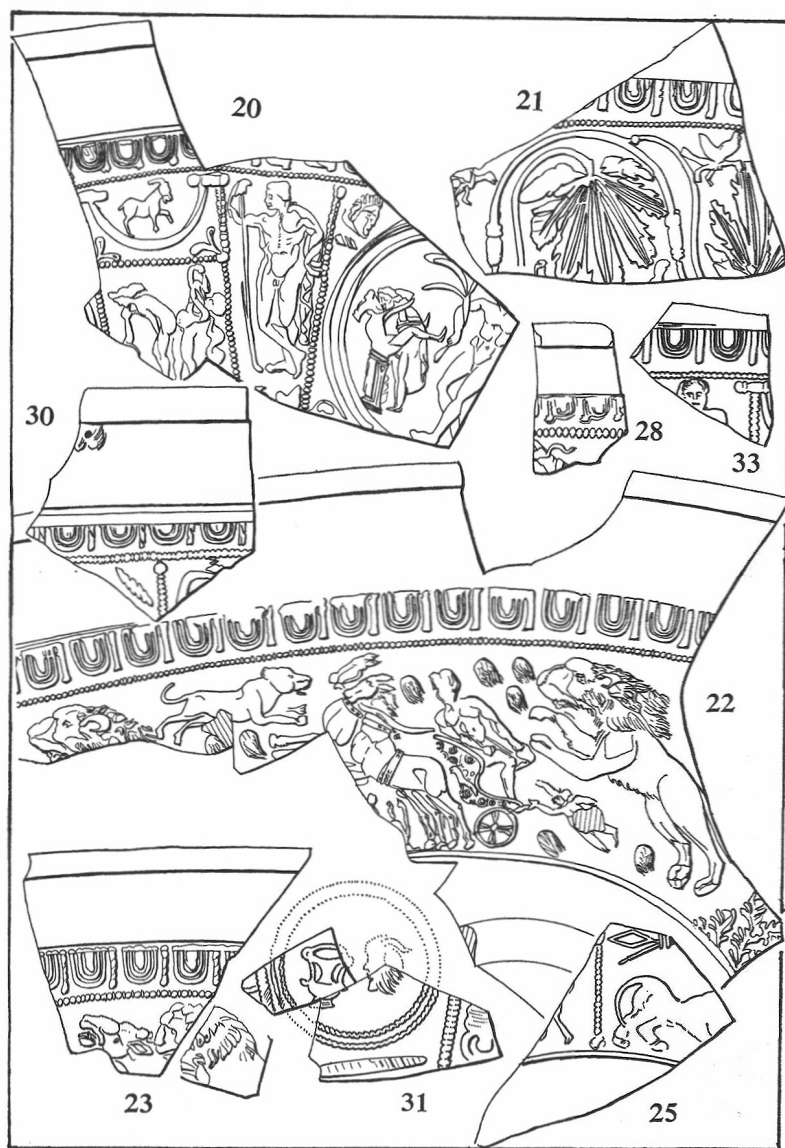


FIG. 7. Samian pottery (1/2).

15. (LP f 5). Form 37. A small fragment with the very fine beads used on bowls finished by IOENALIS and also by DRVSVS II and BIRRANTUS. The Pudicitia (O. 926 A) is not recorded for any of these potters, but the large ring and loose astragalus are known to have been used by DRVSVS II, and this is likely to be his work. None of his bowls has been found in Scotland, and a basically Hadrianic date is certain. However, I do not know any recorded sherds *certainly* earlier than A.D. 125, though one from an Antonine I construction level at Corbridge is perhaps likely to have reached the site before its abandonment *c.* A.D. 125 (*Arch. Aeliana*, 4th ser., XXXI, Fig. 14, 19 — there tentatively assigned to IOENALIS, but in fact from the same mould as a signed DRVSVS II bowl at Doncaster). A few sherds in the London Fire Group also look like his work (*Antiq. J.*, XXV, 71, no. 35; 73, no. 43), so emergence in the early 120's is not improbable.
16. (LP a 1). Form 37 with dull red glaze. The figure-type is a Minerva (O. 77). Probably Hadrianic, but there is not quite enough for certainty.
17. (LP 8). Form 37 with an ovolo of Trajanic type (not illustrated).
18. (LP a 1, a 8). Form 37. Two fragments from a bowl with continuous scroll incorporating an unusual serrated leaf favoured by one of the potters under Stanfield's X-6 class (*C.G.P.*, Pl. 74). But the style is not his and unfortunately the ovolo was sheared off when the rim was added, so the origin and date remain obscure, though the fabric and glaze best match known early Antonine pieces.
19. (LP a 1, a 2, a 4). Eight fragments in two joining pieces from the lower part of a bowl of form 37 with an unusual continuous scroll. There are stylistic connections with a potter, perhaps SERVVS I, represented in the Birdoswald Alley (*Cumberland and Westmorland Antiq. and Arch. Soc. Trans.* 2, XXX, 179, Fig. 4) and at Slack (*Yorks. Arch. J.*, XXVI, Pl. XXI, O). But both the trifold ornaments were used by PVGNVS (*C.G.P.*, Fig. 45, nos. 1 and 4), and the bowl is perhaps likely to be from his workshop. Probably Antonine.
20. (LP d 2, d 4). Form 37. Five joining fragments, probably giving the complete scheme of decoration in the three surviving panels. Figure-types: goat, D. 889; erotic group, O.B. variant; man, D. 331=O. 581 in a larger version; mask, O. 1337 A; erotic group, O.H. variant; Apollo, D. 55. Unfortunately the ovolo is badly blurred. The chevron, in the corner of one of the panels, which looks as though it might be diagnostic of the potter, occurs in the same position on bowls from Wroxeter and *Verulamium* (unpublished), but the three bowls have nothing else in common. However, there is no doubt of the Antonine date.
21. (LP b 3). Form 37 with a continuous scroll of a kind used by SACER in his late work (*C.G.P.*, Pl. 83, 8) and by PAVLLVS. This bowl is probably from a mould signed by PAVLLVS found at Lezoux and now in Roanne Museum (unpublished). It has a slightly reddish glaze that I have noted before on PAVLLVS bowls. Antonine, probably *c.* A.D. 145-180.
- 22-24. These bowls, all form 37, belong to a common Antonine class that has never been satisfactorily studied. They have an ovolo similar to, and usually confused with, CINNAMVS ovolo 3 (*C.G.P.*, Fig. 47). It differs from it in having a 6-beaded tongue with horizontal divisions between the beads, though the beads rarely show clearly. The left side of the ovolo core is always damaged. This ovolo was used by PAVLLVS on the Roanne mould (see no. 21) and other stamped pieces, and it also seems to occur on a Corbridge bowl with a plain ware (finisher's stamp) of AVENTINVS (*C.G.P.*, Pl. 156, no. 3, with Fig. 46, 2). While no doubt other potters were involved — few of the bowls with this ovolo are signed or stamped — it is convenient to refer the bowls to a PAVLLVS

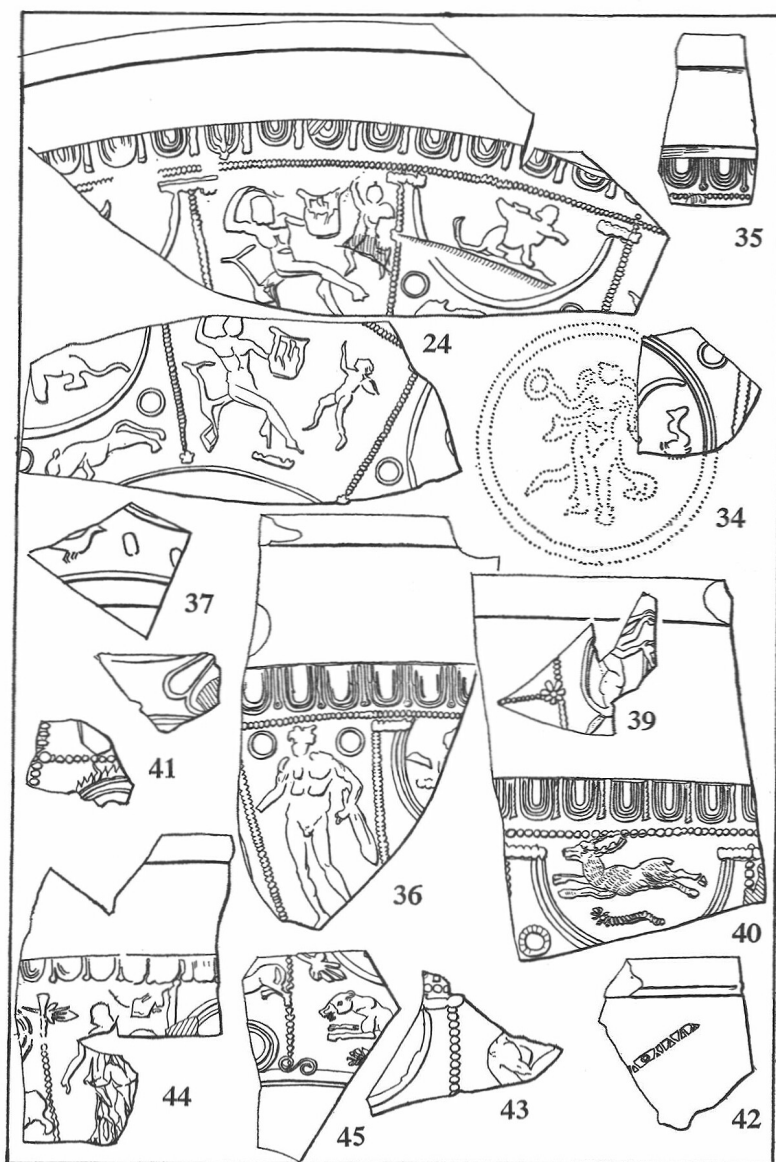


FIG. 8. Samian pottery (1/2).

Group. There is a regular repertoire of figure-types and minor details that occur again and again, some common to the PAVLLVS Group and CINNAMVS, but the schemes of decoration are usually less formal, and often more crowded, than those used by CINNAMVS. In general, there is more variation in the glaze than with CINNAMVS, and many of the bowls have a high, slightly yellowish, finish.

22. (LP f 2). Eight joining fragments from a freestyle bowl with brilliant glaze. The figure-types are: lion, D. 768; dog, O. 1943; chariot, D. 573=O. 1159. PAVLLVS Group ovolo. The buds in the field are particularly common in the Group's work.

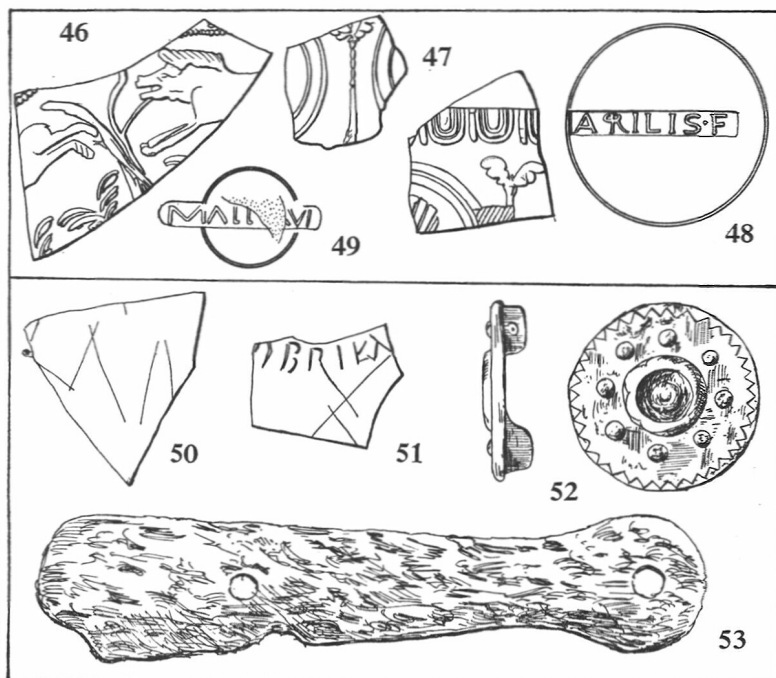


FIG. 9. Samian pottery (1/2), samian stamps (1/1), graffiti (1/2), brooch and iron object (1/1).

23. (LP g 7, g 8). Three fragments of another freestyle bowl with O. 1450 and O. 1491. An old find from Little Chester (1913) is from the same mould and adds D. 402, D. 798 and O. 1633 H (two fragments illustrated).
24. (LP f 2). Two pieces from a panelled bowl with PAVLLVS Group ovolo, giving almost the complete scheme of decoration. I have noted several bowls with the same, or closely similar scheme of decoration, here including: sphinx, O. 857; bear, D. 820; Apollo, O. 83, variant used frequently by the PAVLLVS Group (cf. *C.G.P.*, Pl. 156, no. 6); cupid, O. 417 or 419; sphinx, O. 854. Moderately high glaze, poor workmanship.

There is little dating evidence for the Group, though there is a sherd from an Antonine I context at Newstead (*Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, LXXXIV, 27, 8),

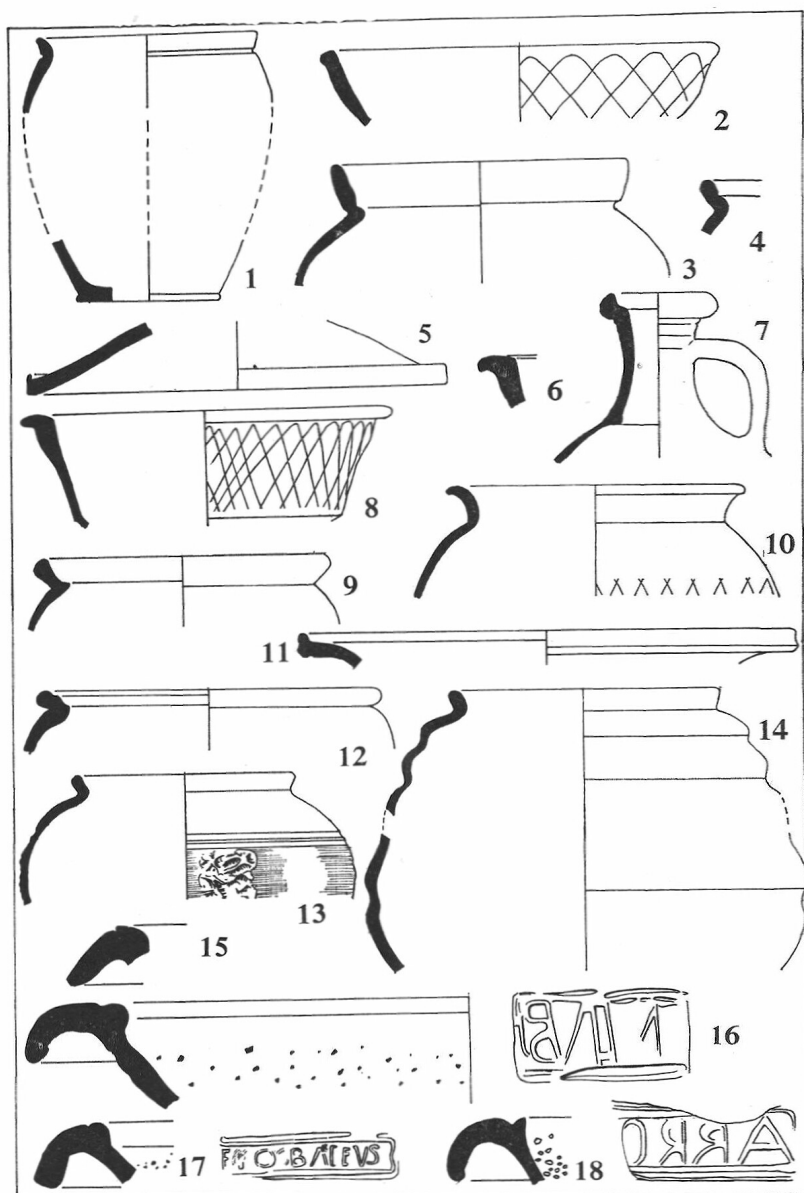


FIG. 10. Coarse pottery (1/4).

and it is worth noting their absence from the Pennine forts thought to have been reoccupied *c.* A.D. 160. On the other hand, the presence of a stamped PAVLLVS bowl in the Wroxeter Gutter (Atkinson, *Excavations at Wroxeter* 1923-7, Pl. 35, G. 6) shows that he was at work after A.D. 160, and probably as late as A.D. 170-175.

25. (LP d 1). Form 37. A panelled bowl, possibly by the PAVLLVS Group. Cupid, O. 417/9 (as on no. 24); panther, D. 797.
26. (LP g 7). Form 37 with large scroll including a leaf used by SACER in his late work. Probably Antonine.
27. (LP g 8). Form 37, probably with large scroll. The ovolo is not (*pace* C.G.P., 264 under no. 2) exclusive to CINNAMVS when associated with beaded borders, but was also used by SACER (*Saalburg Jahrbuch*, IX, Taf. 27, 1). The fabric of this piece fits SACER better. Probably early Antonine.
28. (LP a 3). Form 37, probably by CRICIRO, with small ovolo (perhaps C.G.P., Fig. 33, 3) and serpent on rock, O. 2155. Probably early Antonine.
29. (LP c 4). Form 37, ovolo only. Probably CINNAMVS ovolo 3 (not illustrated).
30. (LP d 2). Form 30 by CINNAMVS. Ovolo 3 and spindle (C.G.P., Fig. 47, nos. 3 and 4); candelabrum, D. 1115, with a lead-rivet mend.
31. (LP d 2, g 7). Form 37 in the style of CINNAMVS. The Pan mask, D. 675; crater (C.G.P., Fig. 47, 6; candelabrum, D. 1113A and striated spindle of D. 1109 are all attested for him. CINNAMVS probably worked *c.* A.D. 145-180.
32. (LP a 1). Form 37 with continuous scroll, probably by CINNAMVS (not illustrated).
33. (LP a 3). Form 37, panel decoration with man, D. 523, almost certainly CINNAMVS (ovolo 3).
34. (LP e 6). Form 37. Panels including large medallion with Victory, D. 474 and Dolphin, D. 1057. The same scheme occurs on a stamped CINNAMVS bowl (C.G.P., Pl. 158, no. 22).
35. (LP f 2). Form 37 with rounded ALBVCIVS ovolo (C.G.P., Fig. 35, no. 2). Brilliant glaze. Antonine, perhaps early.
36. (LP 6). Form 37 with an ovolo common to PATERNVS and ALBVCIVS. Mercury, D. 335; sea-bull, D. 29. Probably by PATERNVS and *c.* A.D. 150-180.
37. (LP e 12). Form 37 with fragment of continuous scroll, bird, D. 1037, and birds in the field. Perhaps by the PAVLLVS Group, but the fabric is unusually orangey.
38. (LP e 2). A tiny fragment of form 37 with a small dolphin, similar to D. 1057, used exclusively by SECVND(VS?), who made many of the bowls with straight line below the ovolo that are often assigned to PVGNVS (e.g. C.G.P., Pl. 155, no. 22) (not illustrated).
39. (LP d 3, 8). Form 30, a small bowl with large 7-pointed rosette and the rare dancer, D. 221. Not assignable, but clearly Antonine.
40. (LP g 2, e 4). Form 37, three joining fragments, two of them burnt. This can be matched closely with a stamped MERCATOR bowl (C.G.P., Pl. 146, no. 10) which has the same stag, O. 1784. *c.* A.D. 160-190.
41. (LP a 1). Form 37. Two fragments with characteristic DOECCVS motifs. *c.* A.D. 160-190.
42. (LP e 4). Form 37. Rim only, with the finisher's stamp MOXIMA, known on the rims of bowls with DOECCVS-like decoration (C.G.P., Pl. 152). *c.* A.D. 160-190.
43. (LP 1). Form 37 attributable to CASVRIVS (cf. C.G.P., Pl. 135, no. 34) with D. 344. *c.* A.D. 160-190.

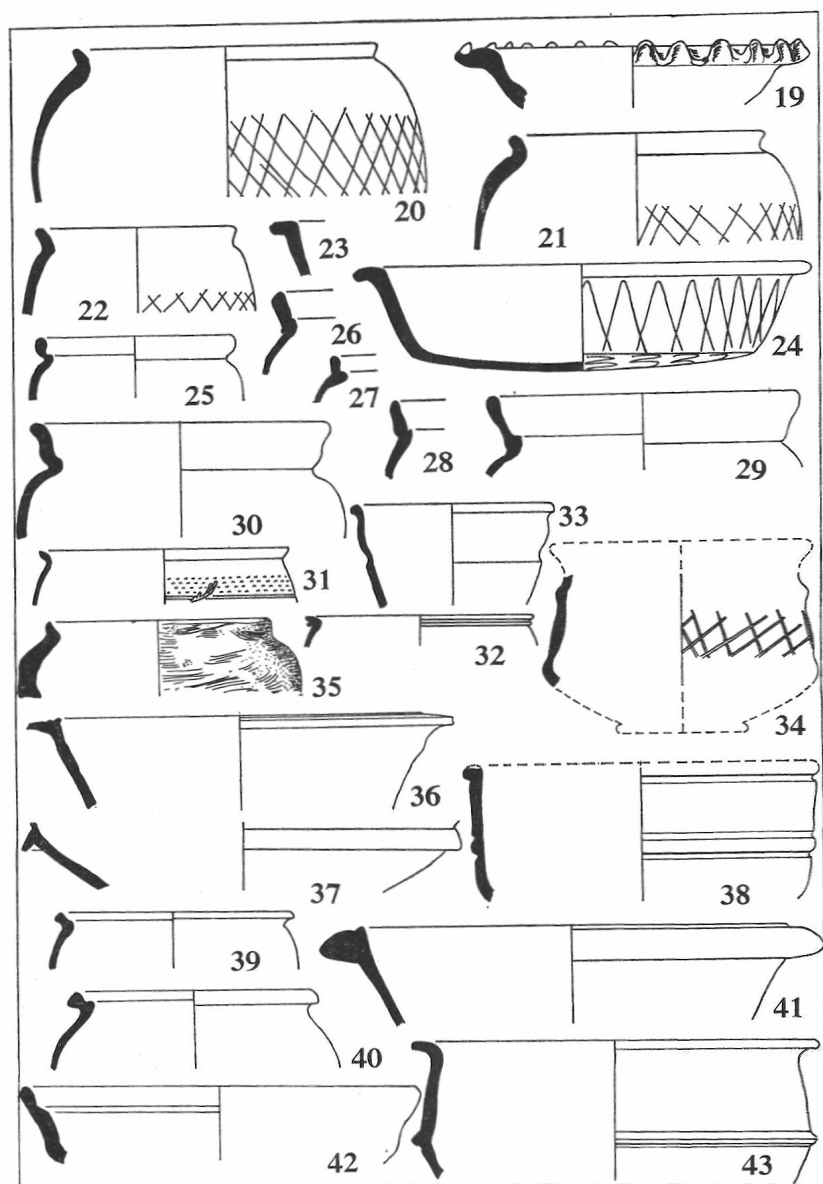


FIG. II. Coarse pottery (1/4).

44. (LP 1, a 1). Form 37. Four joining burnt fragments of a bowl by CETTVS, the Small-S Potter. Minerva, O. 126B. There is no doubt that CETTVS was a late Antonine potter: the sherd attributed to him found in an Antonine I context at Newstead (*Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, LXXXIV, 27, 6) has to be discounted, as it is clearly not his work. *c.* A.D. 160-190.
45. (LP 8, a 4, d 3). Three fragments from another form 37 by CETTVS, with leopard, D. 805, and bear, D. 820 (only one illustrated).
46. (LP g 2). Form 37 with an unusual freestyle scene including a boar, D. 833/4; part of a deer, D. 869?; a conventional tree, and acanthus leaves. The potter cannot be named, though he is likely to have been an early Antonine one to judge by the fabric and details.

*C. East Gaulish (Fig. 9).*

47. (LP d 2 and e 4). Two fragments, one heavily burnt, from the same form 37 in Rheinzabern fabric. The ovolo, large medallion and acanthus-topped bead row may be matched in the work of BELSVS (Ludowici-Ricken VI, *Die Bilderschüsseln der römischen Töpfer von Rheinzabern*, Taf. 110, 14. Late 2nd century).

*D. Potters' Stamps.*

48. (LP a 8). Stamp on a form 18/31R or 31R APRILIS·F. Oswald's Aprilis (*Index of Potters' Stamps*, 19) probably includes two potters, one almost certainly South Gaulish and Flavian. The date of the other, here in question, is uncertain. This die is attested at Bavai (f. 27), London (f. 18) and *Verulamium* (f. 80?). If the identification of the last is correct, Antonine date is certain but the other records suggest caution. The fabric of the Little Chester piece would be more at home in an early 2nd century context.
49. MALL[ ]VI on a form 33 (LP 1). The only recorded stamps beginning MA... and ending ...VI are some of MALLVRVS (Oswald, *Index*, 181, MALLVRVI). Dr. Oswald later changed his mind and took the final letter as S. Re-examination of the Leicester and London examples is needed; meanwhile they are best accepted as MALLVRVI together with the Little Chester piece, where the final letter is clear. Stamps on f. 79 and from Bar Hill demonstrate Antonine activity and there is no apparent reason for Oswald's earlier dating.

In addition, the following scraps are not worth detailed comment:

LP e 2, f. 37 rim, probably Trajanic.

d2, d3, 9, 1, a1, g7, c2, g2, d2, c4, a2, all apparently Antonine.

*General Comments.*

Although there is comparatively little South Gaulish ware, it agrees well with the previous Little Chester material and closely matches the series from the Derbyshire and Yorkshire Pennine forts, so an Agricola foundation date seems certain.

The early Central Gaulish ware *could* all be Trajanic or early Hadrianic, though a few pieces (14-16) could have been made after A.D. 125. However, there is a marked lack of Hadrianic pieces and of the early work of Hadrianic-Antonine potters, so there would seem to be a strong probability of a break in occupation or, alternatively, of a drastically diminished use of the excavated part of the site.

There is much Antonine samian (18-47), and some of it is by potters believed to have begun work after A.D. 160 (40-45 and 47). As usual, many of the Antonine bowls



cannot be dated closely, but a substantial proportion (18-20, 22-28) seems likely to be early rather than late in the period. These are wares that so far are missing from those forts further north which are considered to have been reoccupied c. A.D. 160 (Bainbridge, Elslack, Ilkley and Malton are the ones with much recorded samian). This may be accidental, but on the whole it seems more probable that Little Chester's history was different.

It would be interesting to know whether the presence of some burnt bowls by late Antonine potters (40, 44 and 47) has any historical significance.

#### *Graffiti* (Fig. 9).

Mr. R. P. Wright has examined these sherds and kindly reports:

50. On a flagon in cream ware (LP b 1) the second line at least of writing but only two letters . .]MA[. . survive.
51. On the shoulder of a small flagon in red ware with a cream slip (LP f 5) probably part of a name F]ABRICA[. . . The word *fabrica* (workshop) seems unlikely on a sherd although it would not be impossible in a vessel used in a fort.

#### *Metal objects.*

52. A bronze, disc brooch (LP e 6) with a central raised ring and a circle of small bosses, decorated in blue enamel with a zig-zag edging on the periphery and probably round the central ring.<sup>11</sup> This is a very common type of brooch which would fit very well into a 2nd century context. A similar example has been found at Wroxeter (*Report on the Excavations at Wroxeter*, 1923-27, Fig. 36 H 85).
53. A flat piece of iron with two holes (LP e 12). It appears to be complete in itself but is obviously part of a composite object probably in wood and iron.

#### *Glass.*

The glass fragments have been examined by Miss Dorothy Charlesworth who kindly reports:

Most of the fragments are bottle glass of the 1st and 2nd centuries but there are also:

1. Fragments of the handle of a flagon in amber-coloured glass of late first-mid-second century type made in the Seine-Rhine area (LP g 3).
2. A ribbed fragment (LP i 4).
3. Fragment of a bowl or beaker in good colourless glass with a wheel-cut line, probably 2nd century (LP i 7).
4. Rim of a flask, infolded at the tip in greenish glass (LP i).

None of the pieces has been illustrated.

#### *Coarse pottery*<sup>12</sup> (Figs. 10-11).

Nos. 1-4 form a group including samian nos. 9 and 37 from e 9, a pit sealed by a sequence of red clay floors. (Phase 3.)

1. A jar with cornice-type rim in a hard, light grey ware with a smooth, dark grey, exterior surface. A similar type of vessel occurred in an Antonine layer at Jewry Wall, Leicester<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 26, nos. 30 and 31).

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to Mr. L. Biek of the Ministry of Works for an X-ray photograph which showed some of this detail.

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Brian Stanley for assistance in drawing the pottery and to Mr. S. O. Kay for comments on the Derbyshire ware sherds.

<sup>13</sup> K. M. Kenyon, *Excavations at the Jewry Wall Site, Leicester*, 1948.

2. A dish with a slight bead rim in black burnished ware decorated with latticed lines, a typical mid-late 2nd century form (cf. *Balmuildy*,<sup>14</sup> Pl. XLVII, nos. 14-18 and XLVIII, nos. 21 and 22).
- 3 and 4. Two examples of Derbyshire ware jar with lid seating. 3. is reddish-purple and 4. reddish-buff. The ware is most distinctive; it is hardly surprising to find examples on the nearest important Roman site to the centre of manufacture.<sup>15</sup> In the original basic study of this ware Mr. J. P. Gillam<sup>16</sup> has very few dated associations and was inclined to favour a late 3rd-4th century dating. It can now be established that production had started by the Antonine period and, as will be evident from other examples below, the range of types was greater than was originally shown.

Nos. 5-11 from large pits and slots (d 3) associated with Phase 2 but unsealed, includes also samian nos. 39 and 45.

5. A lid in hard light grey ware.
6. The rim of a black burnished pie-dish with lattice.
7. A flagon top in white ware with cream slip. The rim with its predominant upper ring and internal seating is a typical Antonine form (cf. *Balmuildy*, Pl. XLIII, no. 4; *Jewry Wall*, Fig. 28, no. 7, and South Carlton kilns,<sup>17</sup> Fig. 8, 2P which can now be considered Antonine).
8. Black burnished pie-dish decorated with lattice.
9. A jar in a light red Derbyshire ware, with a rather shallow rim for the size of the vessel, similar to types from the Hazelwood kilns.
10. A black burnished cooking-pot.
11. A plain samian rim of a Curle Type 15 (cf. Oswald, *Introduction to Study of Terra Sigillata*, Pl. LVI, no. 3).
12. (b 3) associated with Phase 1, and includes samian no. 29, a jar in brown Derbyshire ware with a grey surface, an unusual variation.

Nos. 13 and 14 from a Flavian deposit in the main trench (LP 20).

13. A jar with rustic decoration in hard grey ware. This form of nodular rustication probably belongs to the late 1st-early 2nd century.<sup>18</sup>
14. A jar in a hard, light red, slightly micaceous ware with corrugated body. This corrugated or rippled effect on the shoulder or body of a vessel was used by pre-Roman, Belgic potters in Britain (*Swarling*<sup>19</sup> type 8 and 19; *Camulodunum*<sup>20</sup> type 229). Later devolved forms occur on military sites of the 1st century (cf. *Margidunum*, *Antiq. J.*, XXI (1941), 326, no. 10).

Other pottery not securely stratified. I am grateful for the comments of Mrs. K. F. Hartley on the mortarium stamps.

15. Mortarium rim (LP 17) in a white-cream ware with a darker cream slip.
16. A hooked rim mortarium in a dirty white ware with black grits (LP f 2) with an incompletely impressed retrograde stamp of IVNIVS, a Hartshill or Mancetter potter of the Antonine period, who occasionally stamped mortaria of the Bushe-Fox type 182.<sup>21</sup> This type was present in 3rd century kilns at Hartshill<sup>22</sup> and

<sup>14</sup> S. N. Miller, *The Roman Fort at Balmuildy*, 1922.

<sup>15</sup> S. O. Kay and R. G. Hughes, *D.A.J.*, LXXII (1952), 119-120. Mr. Kay informs me that the distinctive surface texture of this pottery is due to the presence of silica particles in the local clay from which it was made.

<sup>16</sup> *Antiq. J.*, XIX (1939), 429-437.

<sup>17</sup> *Antiq. J.*, XXIV (1944), 129-143.

<sup>18</sup> *Antiq. J.*, XXXVIII (1958), 15-51.

<sup>19</sup> J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Excavation of the Late Celtic Urn-field at Swarling, Kent*, 1925.

<sup>20</sup> C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum*, 1947.

<sup>21</sup> *Excavations at Wroxeter in 1912, 1913*, Fig. 20.

<sup>22</sup> Report forthcoming.

can hardly have been introduced before about A.D. 170. Other dating evidence for IVNIVS is slight, but would be consistent with activity within the period c. A.D. 155-190.

17. A hooked rim mortarium (LP 6) in white ware with dark grey grits and with a stamp of FIGOBATEVS. Stamps of this rare potter have been found at Balmuildy (Pl. XL, no. 13) and Croy Hill, so the general date of his work is not in question. As a waster with this stamp was found at the Hartshill kilns in 1960, it seems probable that he worked there.
18. A hooked rim mortarium (LP g 7) in a creamy-buff ware with a grey surface with white grits and a stamp reading ARRO, retrograde. The only other stamp known comes from Leicester. The name may well be complete, as the stamp ARRO also appears on samian ware (Oswald, *Stamps on Terra Sigillata*, 23). The general characteristics of the two mortaria suggest activity in the Midlands in the first half of the 2nd century.
19. Rim of a frilled tazza in cream ware (LP a 2) with a black carbon deposit on the inside (cf. *Jewry Wall*, Fig. 41, no. 32, from a 2nd century deposit that may well be later than is indicated).
20. A cooking-pot with bead rim and lattice decoration, in grey ware (LP g 8) (cf. *Jewry Wall*, Fig. 26, no. 24; it appears to be Antonine on Hadrian's Wall — Gillam type 118<sup>23</sup>).
21. A similar vessel in black burnished ware (LP 8).
22. A smaller cooking-pot (LP d 2) with an everted rim of an intermediate type which may belong to the middle of the 2nd century (cf. Gillam type 123).
23. Fragment of a black burnished pie-dish (LP a 8).
24. A similar dish with lattice decoration of the side and scribbles on the base (LP g 8).
- 25-30. A range of jars in Derbyshire ware of varying colours from light brown (no. 25) to dark red-purple (no. 29), all typical forms, closely resembling the Hazelwood types, found as follows: 25, LP d 2; 26, LP 8; 27, LP f 5; 28, LP g 3; 29, LP g 7; 30, LP d 6.
31. A beaker in light red ware with a reddish-brown colour coat decorated with rouletting and a stag antler *en barbotine*. (LP g 8.) These vessels appear on the Antonine Wall (*Balmuildy*, Pl. XLIX) and although dated on Hadrian's Wall to c. A.D. 190-240, must have appeared earlier.
32. A beaker with cornice type rim in light red ware with a red-brown colour coat (LP d 4) and could have been the rim of a rough-cast beaker.
33. A small bowl (LP 9) with bead rim and girth constriction in grey ware with a thick, brownish-green, lead glaze. This unusual vessel is a plain version of a Holt type (Fig. 76, no. 9); it possibly came from this works dépôt<sup>24</sup> and is probably early 2nd century.
34. A bowl reconstructed from a body fragment in a rather crude, buff ware (LP 7) with lattice decoration (cf. *Jewry Wall*, Fig. 44, no. 15).
35. A crude, hand-made jar in a black ware (LP 2) seems to be a survival of the native tradition, not uncommon in 2nd century, and later deposits.
36. A bowl in a hard, dark grey ware with a flanged, slightly reeded, rim (LP g 12). This may be part of a carinated bowl from the Flavian layers.
37. Body fragment of a bowl with a flange in a hard grey ware with a dark grey surface (LP b 4) (cf. *Jewry Wall*, Fig. 22, no. 17).

<sup>23</sup> *Arch. Ael.*, 4th ser., XXXV (1957).

<sup>24</sup> *Y Cymmrodor*, XLI (1930).

38. A hemispherical bowl in a light red-buff burnished ware with central cordon, probably in imitation of form 37 (LP a 8). This is similar to the Severn Valley or so-called Glevum wares<sup>25</sup> (cf. *Wroxeter* 1913, Fig. 19, no. 68).
39. Small jar in a hard pink and grey ware (LP b 4).
40. Jar with lid-seating in buff ware (LP 14).
41. Bowl with heavy flange and small bead in light grey ware with a dark grey surface (LP 11). This is a type which does not belong to the normal development of the bead and flange bowl and could be late 2nd century.
42. A dish in soft grey ware with a black exterior surface (LP 14). This is a form which has developed from the Gallo-Belgic platter and is probably from a Flavian layer (cf. *Camulodunum* type 24).
43. A bowl with girth cordon in buff ware with a dark grey exterior surface, slightly burnished (LP d 2) (cf. *Balmildy*, Pl. L, no. 22). It is probably an imitation samian form Ludowici type So (Oswald's *Introduction*, Pl. LXIX, no. 11).

## APPENDIX.

In the north-east corner of Box a the edge of a deep almost vertically-sided pit was encountered and excavated with difficulty. It was packed almost solidly with small fragments of bone.<sup>26</sup> These have been examined by Mrs. Susan Askew who identifies them as follows:

*Ox.*

skull and mandible	5	tarsal	40
scapula	13	metatarsal, proximal end	3
ribs	4	shaft	16
vertebrae	8	distal end	3
humerus, proximal end	33	tibia and fibula, proximal end	21
shaft	23	shaft	9
distal end	32	distal end	27
radius and ulna, proximal end	18	pelvic bones	9
shaft	9	calcaneum	8
distal end	31	astragalus	10
carpal bones	32	phalanges	2
metacarpal, proximal end	4	pieces of long bones	200
shaft	22	unidentifiable	154 +
distal end	6		
femur, proximal end	25		
shaft	17		
distal end	18		

*Sheep (or goat).*

mandible	1	scapula	1
head of femur	1	metacarpal	1
ribs	8		

*Swan or goose.*

wing bone	1
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<sup>25</sup> *J.R.S.*, XXXIII (1943), 15-28.

<sup>26</sup> I am grateful to Dr. I. Cornwall for a discussion on the problems presented by these bones.

The main characteristics of this deposit can be summarized:

1. The bones are with few exceptions of young oxen, many of the bones had separated epiphyses usual in animals under  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old, and there were no fractures or arthritic changes.
2. Most of the bones came from back and front legs.
3. They had all been broken into small pieces, even small bones like tarsals and carpals. It is common to find bones split for the extraction of marrow but this represents a further stage of fragmentation.

Allowing for the needs of the army, the following suggestions are made to account for the deposit:

1. Young oxen were selected for the army primarily for their skins, needed for the leather tents. It has been shown that the best calf-skin was selected for this purpose, each beast providing two panels each 2 ft. by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ft..<sup>27</sup> Thus about 27 calves would be needed for each tent.
2. After being flayed, the beasts were disjointed and the best meat removed for eating. The leg bones could have been partly stripped and then stewed for broth.
3. The bones would then be broken up and boiled down for glue and the final residue deposited in the pit. One is reminded of another but totally dissimilar deposit of bones of aged horses from Verulamium.<sup>28</sup>

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

It was most unfortunate that circumstances prevented any very definite conclusions being reached, but this was the first time an archaeological trench had been cut on the site and as is usual where there has been a long and involved history the problems created by the excavation are likely to be more numerous than any solutions. At least one can now start to think in terms of military and civil occupations and main fort alignments, whereas before the excavation there was only the Stukeley plan and a handful of pottery. One must remember too that the area sampled is very small compared with the total site and any suggestions put forward based on this excavation may well be disproved by further work in other parts of the site.

The occupation of the 1st and 2nd centuries was undoubtedly military. One would imagine that, from what is known of the history of Roman Britain in the middle of the 1st century, the Roman army would have been operating hereabouts during the governorship of Didius Gallus (A.D. 52-58). Cartimandua, the client queen of the Brigantes, had to be restored to her throne following a revolt by her consort Venutius.<sup>29</sup> The brief account given by Tacitus is probably much telescoped and there may have been a series of campaigns involving purely auxiliaries at one stage and a legion at another. Little Chester, holding such a key-position in the strategy of the central zone of the North Midlands, would probably have been occupied. The earliest finds of coins have been made on the other side of the river in Strutt's Park<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> J. McIntyre and I. A. Richmond, "Tents of the Roman Army and leather from Birdoswald", *Cumb. and West. Antiq. and Arch. Soc. Trans.*, XXXIV (1934), 76.

<sup>28</sup> R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler, *Verulamium, A Belgic and two Roman Cities*, 1936, 91.

<sup>29</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 40.

<sup>30</sup> *D.A.J.*, XLIX (1927), 355; LXXIII (1935), 74.

and there may have been a fort here on the higher ground in a more commanding position, but, as the area has now been largely built over, the chances of gaining any further information seem remote. The first occupation of the Little Chester site seems to be during the early Flavian period and this may be connected with the consolidation by Agricola before his northern advance. The evidence of the pottery seems to indicate that the fort was held until the time of Hadrian, but the building of the great northern barrier and the reorganisation of the frontier zone probably meant a forward move and an abandonment of some of the forts now very much in the rear. It is possible that the fort was kept under care and maintenance rather than completely demolished, but one day evidence will be forthcoming which will fill in this gap in the chronology.

The greatest intensity of occupation on the present site occurred during the Antonine period *c.* A.D. 160-200 and during this period many changes took place reflected in the five major structural phases worked out on the site. The most likely historical context into which the military re-occupation of Little Chester would fit is the revolt of the Brigantes *c.* A.D. 154. Pius claims a victory in Britain in A.D. 155.<sup>31</sup> An inscription from the Tyne at Newcastle records the despatch of reinforcements to three legions under Cn. Iulius Verus<sup>32</sup> and there is evidence of the rebuilding of forts in Brigantia including Brough, Derbyshire, in the same decade.<sup>33</sup> Troubles continued in Britain until the end of the century and one expects to find much change and movement of units in Northern England. As there has not been any large-scale planned campaign of excavation on the forts of the area, these details remain to be resolved. Apart from the episode of Clodius Albinus in A.D. 196, it would seem unlikely that there was any substantial withdrawal of strength until the Severan reorganization of the frontiers at the beginning of the 3rd century. Precisely how long the military occupation of Little Chester continued it is impossible to say at present but this suggestion would fit the evidence of the pottery so far recovered. During this period of about fifty years there are these five major structural changes but exactly what this means in terms of rebuilding one cannot yet say. However it is likely that the fort changed its shape and size several times and nothing of this will be certain until the defences are found.

Stukeley's wall, which can now probably be considered as a free-standing structure with a very poor ditch in front of it, comes much later in the story and may belong to the 4th century. No internal structures or levels were found on the site which could be associated with this phase, but there are the few 4th century sherds especially in the ditch filling. The work may be civil and not military, and one is reminded of the last phase of the defences at Templeborough.<sup>34</sup> The wall of Fort III was constructed of reused stones including tombstones and built behind the site of the earlier fort wall into the rampart, presumably where the latter stood at its highest point. The

<sup>31</sup> *R.I.C.*, 930 and 934; Macdonald, *The Roman Wall in Scotland*, 1934, 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Arch. Aetiana*, n.s., XXV, 140 and *E.E.*, IX, 1163.

<sup>33</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, XXXVIII (1902-3), 454.

<sup>34</sup> May, *The Roman Forts of Templeborough*, 1922.

ditch which appears to be associated with the late wall is a shallow V-shape the size of which is very similar to the Little Chester one. Although much of the published pottery from Templeborough is Antonine, there are some later sherds.<sup>35</sup> The difference at Little Chester is that the late defences do not follow the earlier alignment, but it is clear from recent work at Rocester, Staffs.,<sup>36</sup> that here, too, civil defences appear to succeed reduced military ones, though the dating evidence is not very secure. At Wall, Staffs., excavations have revealed the existence of a small fortified enclosure dating from the 4th century,<sup>37</sup> and there are also earlier forts on a different alignment belonging to the 1st century. The known buildings of the town at Wall are outside these defences.

There appears therefore to be at present a growing body of evidence of small late fortified enclosures in the North Midlands area. If they can all be proved to be of mid-4th century date, they would fit into the pattern of civil fortifications elsewhere in Britain.<sup>38</sup> There were serious threats to our island at this time from large concentrations of raiders. The army was by then divided into low-grade garrison troops and mobile field armies of the best men, able to move rapidly to any potential danger area. These walled enclosures along the main roads of the Province would give protection to the local inhabitants and also provide useful strong points for sections of the army in a situation where there was serious danger of being swamped by the large numbers of invaders. While Britain was free of mass movements which brought romanized life to an end in many areas of north-west Europe, there must at times have been serious crises demanding large-scale clearance and punitive action. It is against this kind of background that Stukeley's wall may have to be judged. Much of this is speculation; more sections and excavation are needed at Little Chester before the story can be confirmed and clarified.

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<sup>35</sup> Eg. nos. 195b and 217.

<sup>36</sup> Carried out by the writer in 1961 in the new cemetery in the form of a section near the north-west corner of the fortified area. Report forthcoming.

<sup>37</sup> Information kindly supplied by Mr. J. Gould, the excavator.

<sup>38</sup> *Arch. J.*, CXII (1955), 20-42.