

Archaeology in the City: January - February 1976

D.U.A.

THIS is the first in a series of quarterly reviews of work undertaken by the Department of Urban Archaeology of the Museum of London in the City. Everything in these interim reports must be regarded as provisional until the excavations have been completed and fuller study made of the finds.

Roman Forum, S.E. Corner, Fenchurch St. (A. Boddington)

Three areas have so far been excavated on the small, but highly important, S.E. corner site in the angle of Fenchurch St. and Lime St. On the W. side a machine trench gave a section 10m long and 2m deep resembling that obtained by Brian Philp to the W in his 1968 excavation, including a burnt layer interpreted there as the Boudiccan Fire. On the E side a N/S trench found a small building's E wall, of clay on flint rubble foundation, aligned N/S, dated A.D. 60-80 and destroyed between A.D. 80 and 100 in a similar fire. With it was a gravel surface to the E, punctuated by slightly later drains. In the third area, E/W behind Fenchurch St., a series of court-

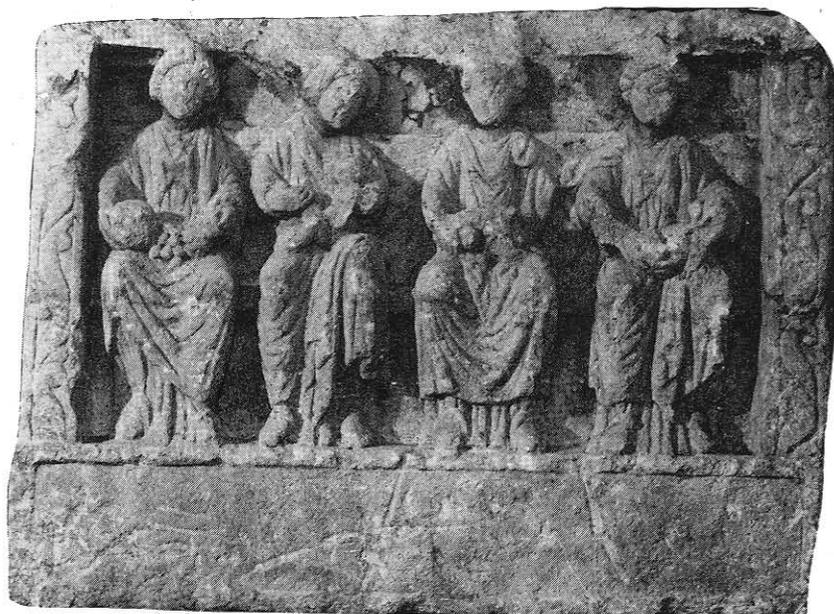
yard floors were found north of a substantial rag-stone wall seen briefly under the street itself, presumably the E/W front of the Hadrianic forum. These courtyard levels overlay a second building of clay on flint rubble, similar to that in the E trench, and of the same date, aligned E/W some 2.5m N of the Hadrianic wall. Just N of this wall were the substantial buttresses and S wall of the church of St. Dionys Bachchurch, first mentioned c. 1200, of chalk, occasional rag and occasional Roman brick, as one might expect. Excavation continues.

Trig Lane (M. Harrison)

The series of timber and stone medieval waterfronts continue to be elucidated. The 15th c. stone wall's exterior face has been uncovered in the N/E corner, where after turning north along the side of the excavation it proceeds W after a gap which may indicate a property boundary. Inside this wall traces of three successive timber wharves have now been uncovered, one reused as the foundation for a building which has now almost totally been removed. A

A bas relief of the four goddesses found in the Roman riverside wall.

(Photo: Trevor Hurst, Museum of London, D.U.A.)



substantial 13th c. waterfront has been revealed; it resembles that at Custom House in its braces and base-plates.

Roman riverside wall, Baynards's Castle (C. Hill)

The westernmost piece of the wall excavated during 1975 was uncovered in January. It was a large block of masonry, probably forming the start of the S.E. corner of the Roman City. Seven more sculptured stones were found, bringing the total to over fifty. These may have originally formed part of one monument, possibly a small triumphal arch, reused in the foundations of the wall in the late 3rd or early 4th century. The photograph illustrates one of the finest stones, depicting four mother goddesses. They hold, left to right, a large loaf and grapes; a baby; a small (?) dog, and fruit or cakes. Four figures, instead of three, is unique. Number three lays her left hand reassuringly on the right shoulder of number four.

G.P.O. Newgate St. (A. Thompson)

Over 210 skeletons have now been excavated from the churchyard of St. Nicholas Shambles, and part of the church plan recovered. Beneath are Roman levels which are producing large fragments of wall plaster. At the N end of the site the brickearth, when

checked for further features, produced a pit with interesting pottery — prehistoric, or possibly very early Roman — from apparently natural layers. The site is notable in that over a very large area we have remains of early Roman ditches, a mid- or late Saxon timber building, and medieval pits, church and graveyard, thus providing a detailed history from the earliest times (perhaps in the Bronze Age) to the present.

Smaller sites (J. Schofield)

A small watching brief department is monitoring building work on several sites, and brief excavations have been carried out at Lombard Court and Skinners Hall. At Seal House the Roman waterfront has been traced in pile-holes and dendrochronological samples taken for comparison with New Fresh Wharf, excavated in 1974-5 and now being prepared for publication. At Billingsgate Bath House J. Maloney has finished restoration work on the private Roman bath-house. Observations continue at Milk St., Peninsula House, Lovat Lane, St. Mary-at-Hill, and Cannon St.

The larger sites are always in need of volunteer help, and would welcome offers of assistance on a part-time or week-end basis. Please ring either Trig Lane, 01-236 1946, or G.P.O. 01-606 8666.

Letters

ROMAN URN FROM CAMDEN

I WAS particularly interested in the article 'Roman Camden' by Brian Robertson (Spring 1975 edition of the London Archaeologist, p.253/4) the references to three cinerary urns discovered at Grays Inn Road.

I have in my possession a further example found there in 1937 which proved, after enquiries made of Brian Robertson and the Museum of London, to be hitherto unrecorded.

The urn is of dark brown fabric with incised band and 'fingernail' decoration high on the shoulder. It can be ascribed to about the second half of the 1st century A.D.

The measurements of the vessel are:—height 12½ in. (31 cm); maximum diameter of body 11 in. (28 cm); internal diameter of everted rim 5½ in. (14 cm); base diameter 4½ in. (12 cm).

A label on the base reads—ROMAN CINERARY URN
FD. OP. GRAYS INN ROAD ON JULY 2/ 1937.
28 Rothesay Avenue, DAVID LEWIS.
Wimbledon Chase, SW20 8JU.

ROMAN COARSE POTTERY

I AM WORKING on a study of the distribution of the Romano-British coarse pottery produced in the Farnham (Surrey) region. I would, therefore, like to know of any large groups and all stratified groups of Romano-British pottery from the London suburbs which are available for study. Please contact me at the Institute of Archaeology if you have any such pottery that I could examine.

Institute of Archaeology, MARTIN MILLETT
University of London,
31-4 Gordon Square, WC1H 0PY



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