PEVENSEY CASTLE

PLAN SHEWING THE EXCAVATIONS-1907

Scale of feet

Plate D.
EXCAVATIONS AT PEVENSEY, 1906-7.

By L. F. SALZMANN.

Few ancient sites in Sussex deserve exploration more than the Roman military station of "Anderida," the present outer court of Pevensey Castle. As far back as 1852 an attempt was made to excavate this site, but the work had to be abandoned owing to lack of financial support. Such excavations as were then made were carried out in a haphazard and unscientific manner and the results were of little value. Since that time the project of thoroughly exploring this important Roman settlement has been often mooted, but it was only in the autumn of 1906 that circumstances permitted the work to be begun under the direction of a Committee formed for that purpose. The land being pasture, work could only be carried on between the end of October and the beginning of April, but during that time much was done to throw an interesting light upon the nature of this fortress.

Careful attention was devoted to the examination of the great wall which forms so imposing and picturesque a feature of the ruins. A shaft was sunk against the inside face of the wall on the north, some 50-ft. west of the cattle shed. The shaft was 12-ft. long by 6-ft. wide; it passed through 3-ft. of débris before reaching the highest course of facing stones at present in situ, for on the inside the upper part of the wall has throughout its circuit been stripped of its facing stones, and the preservation of the lower layers is only due to the accumulation of soil which has raised the level of the ground inside the wall at this point 10-ft. 6-in. above the level outside. At a depth of 9-ft. from the present surface an off-set was reached 6-in. wide and 13-in. deep, corresponding with the upper chamfered plinth running
round the exterior of the wall. At the base of this off-set was the foundation proper; this was composed of layers of chalk and flint, 3-ft. 8-in. in depth, and projected 1-ft. 6-in. beyond the off-set, or 2-ft. from the surface of the wall. Below this was a layer of puddled clay, and the southern or inner side of the foundation rested against a bank of natural, undisturbed clay, which rose considerably as it receded from the wall.

This shaft was sunk close to a great crack running from top to bottom of the wall, and this crack proved to extend eastwards through the middle of the foundation for some 11-ft. It was presumably due to the subsidence of the ground on the outside, owing to the draining of the marshes, as a result of which this portion of the wall has an outward inclination of 16-in. at the top.

A trench was next cut, 170-ft. east of this shaft, across the portion of the wall which has fallen outwards, and this proved most instructive. The wall in falling split into three portions; the lowest of these slid bodily 9-ft. or 10-ft., and now lies at an angle of 40°, appearing some 2-ft. or 3-ft. above ground, as shown in the accompanying section. At a depth of 3-ft. the inner greensand plinth and first row of facing stones were found in situ. Below this came 9-in. of a concrete composed of flints in mortar, followed by 2-ft. 3-in. of flints imbedded in fine chalk. This foundation, when removed, was seen to have rested on red puddled clay, imbedded in which were found four oak stakes, of which the two best preserved were pointed and about 3-ft. 6-in. long. On the inner side a bank of clay had evidently been thrown up against the face of the wall to a height of some 4-ft. or 5-ft. above the plinth.

The examination of the walls was completed by sinking a shaft on the outside at the junction of the wall and that bastion which is crowned with the remains of a Norman tower. Here oak stakes were again met with in the red clay upon which the foundations rest, but they were much more decayed than the others, owing no doubt to their having been exposed to the action of the air through the sinking of the ground, the surface of which is now nearly 2-ft. below the bottom of the lower
PEVENSEY CASTLE

Plan and Section of Foundations of fallen wall on N. side

Datum: 25 feet above Ordnance H.W. level

Scale of Feet

1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Road

Present

Level

Fallen wall

Yellow and mottled clay with chips of greenish chalk

Oyster and mussel shells

Lim of Trench

Stakes in clay

Plan

Pevensey Castle

Ditch

Transect Line

East
plinth stone, which marks the ground level in Roman times. The foundation, which does not project beyond the lower plinth, was found to consist of three distinct layers of flints with chalk between them, to the depth of 3-ft.; upon this was a layer of concrete, 9-in. thick, made of flints set in hard mortar, upon which the lower plinth stones rest. Immediately below this layer of concrete were a number of long cavities running right through the wall and bastion, as shown in the plan. These had clearly contained massive timbers, nearly 11-in. thick, but owing to the ground having sunk when the marsh was drained the wood had been exposed to the air and has rotted away completely. This bastion marks a turn in the wall, that is to say, the wall to the west of it is not in a line with that portion of the wall to its east. From the direction of the foundations it is clear that it was at first intended to build the east face of the bastion at right angles to the eastern part of the wall, but eventually both faces were set at right angles to the western portion.

Summarizing the results of these three trenches, we see that the edge of the clay hill, or island, was first cut away, exposing a flat bed some 15-ft. broad; the ground being marshy and liable to slip was anchored by driving in oak stakes; a footing of clay and flints was then put in to the depth of 3-ft., and in some places, especially, it would seem, at points where the wall takes a turn, massive timbers were laid across; then came 9-in. of concrete, and on this the wall, 12-ft. 3-in. in thickness, of rubble core, faced with greensand blocks from the Eastbourne quarry, rising to a height of about 28-ft. Inside a clay bank seems to have been thrown up against the wall.

With the walls may be considered the gates. Of these there seem to have been four, and two of them were examined during the season. The east gate is of the simplest construction, being merely an arched hole pierced straight through the wall, without guard chambers or other defences. This entrance is still in use, though now filled in with a flight of steps and an arch of modern
Plate 10.

EAST GATE.
Showing Roman Sill, 5-ft. below present Path.

FOUNDATIONS OF NORTH WALL.

PEVENSEY CASTLE EXCAVATIONS.
PEVENSEY CASTLE

Plan of the North Postern

Scale of feet

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Fallen Roman wall
lying on its face

Outside face of wall

Sycamore tree

Ash tree

Wall in situ

Inside face of wall

Cow Lodge

Limit of excavation
brickwork. By sinking shafts on either side of the path and tunnelling underneath it, the Roman sill was found 5-ft. below the present level. The width of the ancient gateway was approximately 10-ft. and the height about 11-ft. The floor of the gate was of concrete, and in the north-west angle was a cavity 10-in. deep for a wooden door post.

The north postern was of a much more remarkable character. In the case of this gate the passage through the wall was not straight, but curved, as shown in the accompanying plan, the opening on the outside being to the east of that on the inside. The facing stones were unfortunately missing in several places, so that, while the general plan of the gateway was clear, exact measurements could not be obtained. It was, however, obvious that the inner opening was considerably wider than the outer, the former being probably about 7-ft. 6-in. wide and the latter about 4-ft. 6-in. These measurements, arrived at from an examination of the remains, were further confirmed by the following fact: the post of the inner door seems clearly to have been on the east, the door opening inwards, as a raised mass of concrete or mortar at the western angle must have been intended as a stop; supposing the outer door to have opened inwards, having its post on the west (and the design of the gateway indicates this), there would have been just, and only just, room for the two doors to be opened at the same time (7-ft. 6-in. + 4-ft. 6-in. = 12-ft.). The elaborate design of this gateway possessed considerable defensive value and appears to be unique in England, though curved entrances are not unknown in fourth century forts on the Continent.

Turning from the consideration of the great wall to the examination of the area within it, a number of shafts (marked A—G on the general plan) were sunk to ascertain the most promising spot on which to start operations. As a result, rather over 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) acres to the north of the path, extending from the east end of the fallen wall some 333-ft. westwards, was enclosed for examination. This site was chosen partly because of certain indications at F and G,
NORTH POSTERN, FROM WEST.

NORTH POSTERN, FROM NORTH.

PEVENSEY CASTLE EXCAVATIONS.
EXCAVATIONS AT PEVENSEY.

which suggested the existence here of a path from the north to the south postern, partly from the greater wealth of pottery and other objects found here, and partly from the greater ease with which this portion of the site could be uncovered. The whole area within the walls may be divided into high and low ground; the high, which includes the whole of the eastern half and encroaches on the western, slopes off into the lower in a manner suggestive of a "tip," and excavation proved that such is its nature. All this high ground has been artificially raised since the Roman period by a "tip" or "dump" of clay. Consequently in many places as much as 4-ft. or 5-ft. of clay, containing practically no remains, would have to be penetrated before the level of Roman occupation could be reached, enormously increasing the labour and expense, whereas in the lower ground the difficulty was avoided.

The area enclosed was thoroughly explored by a series of trenches running in various directions. Each trench was carried down to the surface of the natural clay, and careful notes of all peculiar features were made. A series of sections of the more important trenches is given on the accompanying plate, from which it will be seen that, generally speaking, after about 6—12-in. of brown, loamy surface soil, often containing a certain quantity of fragments of post-Roman pottery, &c., a layer of blacker earth, usually about 2-ft. 6-in. deep, is met with. This black earth, which owes its colour to the presence of charcoal, ashes and other organic matter, contains throughout its depth objects of the Roman and Romano-British periods, mingled in the upper part with remains of mediæval date. The line of demarcation between the brown and the black earths is not always distinct, and within the black no stratified layers assignable to distinct periods are to be found. The surface of the natural clay is very irregular in places, but it does not seem possible to assign any reason for most of the shallow holes and dips which occur, seemingly without method. Another puzzling feature is the fact that at the northern edge of the dump of super-posed clay the black earth appears
to have been heaped up to form a kind of ridge or bank.

The trenches revealed no foundations nor any trace of permanent buildings, but there were found a number of hearths composed of fragmentary Roman tiles laid flat, and usually having one of two boulders on their north side. From the discovery of pieces of half-baked clay bearing the impress of wattles in the immediate neighbourhood of several of these hearths, it seems safe to believe that they were the central hearths of wattle-and-daub huts. Traces of nine of these tile hearths (numbered T₁—T₉ on the plan) were found in the western portion of the area, where they were clearly set out in lines parallel with the wall, at a distance of about 18-ft. from centre to centre. In one or two cases there was a kind of floor of mortar and greensand chips round the hearth, and traces were also found of shallow ditches dividing the different hut areas. It is very difficult to assign a date to these lines of huts, which appear to have extended some distance, as other examples were found in trenches xiv. and xvii. in the eastern part of our enclosed area. Some of the hearths were upon the natural clay, while others had several inches of black earth below them, but over all there had accumulated a considerable depth of black earth, indicating a fairly lengthy period of occupation subsequent to their disuse. They may have belonged to an encampment of the workmen engaged in building the wall, or they may have been the huts of the Abulci, the Gaulish auxiliaries who garrisoned "Anderida," or they may even possibly have belonged to the "classiarii Britannici," the British marines, who appear to have temporarily connected with this as with the other fortresses of the Saxon shore. Conjecture is easy, but certainty seems at present impossible, and it may be doubted whether further excavation will throw much more light upon the subject.

During the progress of the work great quantities of objects belonging to various periods were unearthed. As neolithic remains are recorded to have been found at Pevensey, it was hoped that some traces of this early
PEVENSEY CASTLE EXCAVATIONS.
SECTIONS OF TRENCHES.

Surface soil, shown thus □□□□□□
Yellow & mottled clay, shown thus □□□□□□
Black earth, shown thus □□□□□□
Natural clay, shown thus □□□□□□

Datum Line: 25 ft above Ordnance (High Water) Datum
Vertical Scale, double horizontal, throughout.
settlement would be discovered, but although a very careful look-out was kept no worked flints were found, nor any pottery which could be assigned to this period, nor did any of the great quantity of bones found show distinct trace of having been split for the purpose of extracting the marrow in the way characteristic of the Stone Age. As, moreover, Roman remains were found consistently upon the surface of the natural clay, it is clear that in the area examined there was no pre-Roman settlement sufficiently extensive to leave any definite *stratum* of deposits.

Amongst the Roman remains mention may first be made of the coins, as their evidence is of some value for dating the period of occupation. Some thirty bronze coins were found; they were apportioned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gallienus [A.D. 254—268]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudius Gothicus [268—270]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probus [276—282]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carausius [287—293]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximianus [292—311]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantius [292—306]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena [died 328]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantine I. [307—337]</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? Constantine II. [337—340]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantinopolis [fourth century]</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbs Roma [fourth century]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constans [337—350]</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentinian [364—375]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain [fourth century]</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecipherable</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this list it will be seen that the main period of occupation would appear to date, at earliest, from the end of the third century, and this is supported by what we know of the history of Anderida and also by the character of the other remains found. Amongst the innumerable fragments of pottery turned up there is little that can, and practically nothing that must, be assigned to an earlier date than the third century. True "Samian" (*terra sigillata*) is, as we might expect, present in very small quantities; only one potter's mark was found, and that unfortunately imperfect, only the first two letters, *MA.*, remaining. A small fragment
of a "deversorium" may also be mentioned as being of a type usually associated with the second century. Several types of "pseudo-Samian" red wares occurred, one variety of which there were numerous examples having a pale body painted a sealing wax red, with scrolled decoration in white. Many specimens of the red wares were ornamented with impressed patterns, and part of a cup or bowl decorated with horizontal bands, formed of small rectangular compartments, each containing some simple design of dots and lines, as well as some smaller fragments of similar type, is characteristic of the fourth century pottery from the district of Marne. Another interesting fourth century ware, of unknown origin, is represented by two bowls (figs. 10 and 11); they are of a cream paste, coloured brown and ornamented with impressed perpendicular bands of circles, alternating with crescents.

To British potteries may be assigned a number of fragments of "Castor" ware, some with conventional patterns in white slip and others with raised designs. The largest piece of this ware found was the upper part of a vase decorated with the favourite design of two dogs chasing a hare or rabbit, executed with a certain barbaric vigour. Closely allied to this ware, but probably of German or Low Country origin, was a dark chocolate ware with raised "scale" ornament, of which a great part of one vase, as well as portions of others, was recovered. The Hampshire potteries of the New Forest were represented by a few small pieces of a thin black "thumb vase" and some fragments of the peculiar metallic brown ware.

Most, however, of the distinctly Roman earthenware was of the black or grey varieties, the finer specimens exhibiting the bands of dark colour and pencil-like markings characteristic of the Upchurch potteries. For the most part the articles of this black ware were intended for culinary and domestic use, two of the commonest forms being the bowl (fig. 4) and shallow cup (fig. 6). Other shallow cups with handles (figs. 5 and 9) occurred, though less frequently, as well as saucer-shaped
Plate 13.

TILE HEARTH. (Tn.)

TRENCH No. XIV.
Showing dumped clay above black earth, and layers of shells.

PEVENSEY CASTLE EXCAVATIONS.
EXAMPLES OF ROMAN POTTERY FOUND AT PEVENSEY.

Nos. 1-7 and 9, Vases and Bowls of black or grey ware.
No. 8, Ring-shaped object of grey ware.
Nos. 10-13, Bowls of red ware.
vessels and a great number of vases and jars of simple design but not without artistic merit. A remarkable piece of hard grey ware, forming part of a circular ring (fig. 8), is conjectured to have been a stand for a small amphora and appears to be unique. Of interest also are a number of fragments of perforated colanders for straining vegetables. With these may be mentioned, though they are not of black, but of red and cream coloured ware, the "mortaria" or shallow bowls with small pebbles set on their inner surface to assist the grinding of food; these were present in considerable variety.

Quantities of a very coarse, gritty, reddish brown earthenware occurred; some of these fragments were undoubtedly of post-Roman, mediæval date, but the age of others may be considered problematical. In a few instances where ornamentation exists on examples of this class the simple patterns of wavy lines and dots closely resemble those in use during the "late Celtic" period. There are also some specimens with the "pinched ribbon" ornament almost exactly similar to some "late Celtic" vessels exhibited in the British Museum; but at the same time it is certain that this ornament was also in common use during the Middle Ages, so that, with one or two exceptions, the whole of these specimens may be considered of post-Roman manufacture.

As with the pottery so also with the tiles, fragments were abundant, but no whole specimen was brought to light. The pieces of tile presented innumerable varieties of "combing;" one or two pieces were marked out into diamond-shaped tesserae, and one example was covered with a raised lattice (or impressed diamond) pattern. There were also instances of bricks and tiles bearing the imprint of the feet of animals that had trodden upon them while still in a plastic state. But while these were of little interest, it was amongst the tiles that the historically most important finds were made.

Portions of three different stamped tiles were found. One of these was a small fragment of which nothing
could be made. The second occurred on a flanged roofing tile and is unfortunately imperfect; it consists of an oblong cartouche surrounded by a border (the die was apparently imperfect at the time of its use, as the border is absent on the right side) and divided into two compartments; the lower compartment contains the letters B R, but the upper is unfortunately incomplete (fig. I.); the letter of which a portion remains not being in the centre of the compartment, it is probable that there were two letters here also, and the suggestion may be made that the inscription originally read (fig. II.) CL BR, and was a variety of the CL(assiarii) BR(itannici) stamp found on tiles at Lympne, Richborough and Dover. It is, however, to be hoped that further excavations will yield a complete specimen and settle the question. More interesting and important than this tile of doubtful attribution was the discovery of a fragment of blue black tile or brick bearing the letters ON AVG. Comparison with a perfect example from the same stamp, in the possession of Mr. Charles Dawson, proved the inscription to have read HON AVG ANDRIA. That this refers to the Emperor Honorius (to whom it appears to be the only epigraphic reference yet found in England) can hardly be doubted, while it seems natural to trace a connection between “Andria” and “Anderida,” or “Anderesium,” as it is called by the geographer of Ravenna. Against this we have to set the rare occurrence of place names in such stamps. Possibly the nearest examples are the tiles found in London bearing PPBR LON. It must, however, be borne in mind that the tile is unique in the lateness of its date. The only alternative solution would seem to be that “Andria” was the name of the maker; but the coincidence of the maker having a name so suggestive of
VASE WITH "SCALE" PATTERN.
COLOGNE (?) WARE.

CASTOR WARE VASE.

VASE OF BLACK WARE.
UPCHURCH TYPE.

URN OF BLACK WARE.

PEVENSEY CASTLE EXCAVATIONS.
the "Anderida" in which his tiles were used would be extremely remarkable.

Amongst objects of metal may be noted a large number of iron bolts and nails of various sizes, four keys, a fish hook and a larger hook with a swivel, possibly of later date. There was also a very powerful bit with unusually large cheek rings, and an iron stylus. The most remarkable piece of bronze was a very nice example of a balance, the beam being about 7-in. in length. There was also a fibula of simple but effective design, 2\(\frac{1}{2}\)-in. in length, having a bold arch over the pin, with a cross-bar at the end. Another bronze brooch, more resembling a safety pin, and the pin of a third were found, as well as a ligula and part of the rim of a bronze vessel. Two knife handles of bone were discovered, both having the "dot and circle" ornament, the larger, which is pierced for suspension, having belonged to a clasp knife. The same "dot and circle" pattern occurs on a circular disc of bone with a central hole, possibly a button. Two bone pins with conical heads were found, and also a number of pieces of bone and antlers sawn and partly worked.

It only remains to mention a few miscellaneous relics before passing on to the post-Roman period. Two small glass beads, one cylindrical of a bluish green colour, and the other spheroidal and yellow green in colour, were possibly the most minute objects recovered during these excavations. There were several other pieces of glass, including portions of two vessels with raised moulded ornamentation. Part of an armlet of Kimmeridge shale and a perforated circular lump of clay used as a weaving weight complete the list.

Mention must, however, be made of the various animals identified by Mr. E. T. Newton, F.R.S., F.Z.S., who kindly examined the bones found. The only human bones were some small fragments of a skull; at least two varieties of ox occur—the Celtic ox (bos longifrons) and the larger Romano-British ox; sheep, and possibly goats, horses, red deer and wild boar, of which there were some very fine tusks; hare, three varieties of dog and cat,
probably domestic; also several birds, as common fowl, goose, raven, curlew, plover, woodcock and gull. Shells of oysters, mussels, cockles and whelks were plentiful, and limpets also occurred. In a few examples of earth from undoubtedly Roman levels, Mr. Clement Reid, F.R.S., found peas, barley, wheat, pond weed and violet. He also commented upon the fact that most of the charcoal found was of willow, whereas at Silchester it was mainly of oak.

Amongst the remains of post-Roman date the place of honour must be given to a series of javelin and arrow heads, of various types, including some of crossbow quarrels. Many of these are early and may probably be assigned to the twelfth, if not to the eleventh, century, but others may be of slightly later date. Quantities of coarse earthenware occurred, many of the handles found being roughly ornamented with nail marks. There were numerous examples of "thumb pressed" bases and a great variety of glazes, but the only piece which calls for particular notice is part of a large green-glazed jar, probably of the fourteenth century, ornamented with stamps of a man on horseback and a lion; this seems to have been made at Hastings, judging by comparison with some examples known to have come from the Hastings potteries.

Still later in date are a small iron cannon ball, an excellent specimen of a Charles I. farthing and a penny of George III., without which no excavation is complete. It is only to be regretted that coins of quite modern date were not more abundant, for the season's operations closed with a deficit that threatens to interfere seriously with the next season's work.
Plate 16.

BRONZE BALANCE.

BONE KNIFE-HANDLES.

PEVENSEY CASTLE EXCAVATIONS.