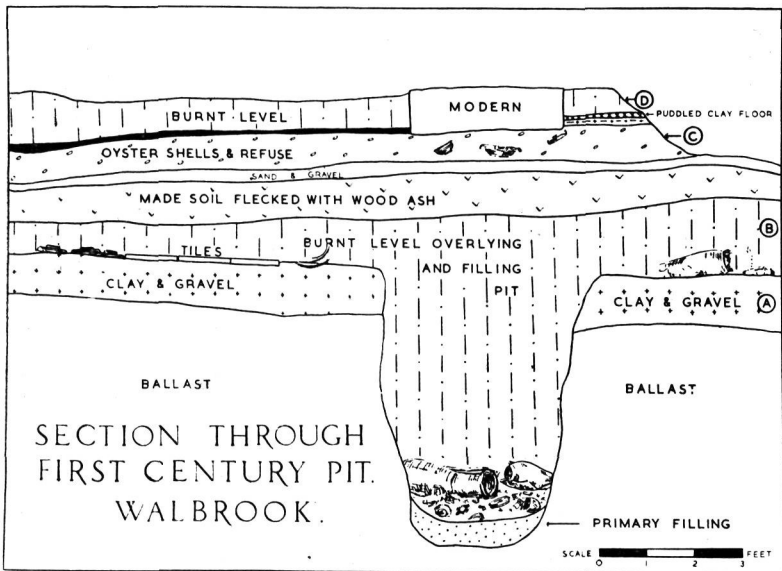


A MID-FIRST CENTURY PIT NEAR WALBROOK

BY I. NOEL-HUME AND A. NOEL-HUME, B.A.

A LARGE building site in the City between Walbrook and St. Swithin's Lane was watched, during 1949-50, by the staff of Guildhall Museum. From the vast quantity of material recovered, the contents of a small number of pits are worthy of special attention, one of which forms the subject of this report.

The pit lay in the rising ground to the east of Bond Court and the south of the site (NAT. GRID REF. 2½ in. map, sheet 51/38, 3243 8095.) The surrounding area had been badly disturbed by the grab and it was only possible in the limited time available, to excavate by undercutting the exposed face. The pit was cut through a level of clay and gravel (A)* into the ballast below. A level of burnt earth (B), containing building materials



filled the pit above the finds, and spread in a 10-16 in. thick layer over the clay and gravel, thus sealing the pit. The burnt level contained part of an amphora, fragments of coarse ware, three Terra Sigillata dishes and three flooring tiles in situ. This was overlaid by a deposit of made soil containing fragments

* The letters in brackets refer to levels shown in diagram above.

of charcoal which, in its turn, was covered by a level of sand and gravel. Above this was a considerable layer of oyster shells about 9 in. in depth (C), which contained a mortarium, coarse ware, glass, fragments of Terra Sigillata and two coins of Vespasian. Above this point, the levels had been cut into by modern building. On the west an undisturbed area showed another level of made ground beneath a puddled-clay floor burnt to a brick-red and covered by a deposit of burnt material 6 in. in depth (D). In a second undisturbed area between two modern footings, level (C) was covered by a thin layer of dark brown earth containing a high proportion of charcoal which was overlaid by the burnt deposit (D). This level yielded stamps of Domitian-Antonine potters.

MATERIALS FROM LEVELS A, B, C AND D.

Level A.

- I. Neck of flagon with quoit shaped mouth in pink ware. Cf. *Colchester*, grave group 21/67, p. 258. 50-60 A.D.
- II. Rim section of Terra Sigillata bowl. Drag. form 24. Claudian.
- III. Fragment of Terra Sigillata lid.

Level B.

- IV. Olla of grey ware with pink surface. It has a short upright, square-cut rim with a groove on the upper edge. A zone of scoring on the shoulder is bounded above by a groove and pronounced ridge and below by two grooves. The vertical scoring gives way at one point to a zone of herring-bone pattern. The body is bulbous and incurves to an almost flat base. Plate
- V. Spindle shaped amphora of reddish clay with a white slip and body smooth and finely potted. The body at the top has a clean cut shoulder from which the neck incurves. The handles, formed by pairing two clay rods, provides a "figure of 8" section. The neck and handles have been deliberately removed, the marks of cutting being clearly visible. The base is incomplete. This type of amphora is characteristically pre-Flavian. Cf. *Camulodunum*, Plate LXX, Fig. 182B. Plate

Terra Sigillata.

- VI. Fragment of upper frieze and rim of Drag. form 29, cf. *Camulodunum*, Plate XXXV, Fig. 8. Pre-Flavian.
- VII. Upper frieze and torus of Drag. form 29, showing cabled festoons enclosing a long stalked spiked rosette, stalked seven digital leaf and detached rosette, with elongated pomegranate tassel between. Pre-Flavian.
- VIII. Upper frieze and rim section of Drag. form 29. Wreathed medallion enclosing goose to left, looking right. Cf. *Richborough III*, Plate XXIII, No. 7. Claudian.
- IX. Base and lower frieze of Drag. form 29 with illegible stamp. Lower frieze with hare and compound stalked scroll decoration. Hare crouching to right in style of MONTANVS of La Graufesenque. Nero-Vespasian. Hare to right, crouching in style of MASCLUS of La Graufesenque, Claudian. Goose to left, head to right in style of PRIMI and SENO. Tiberius-Nero. Compound stalked scroll in style of PATRICIUS Nero-Domitian.
- X. Drag. form 15/17 stamped OF CRESTIO (Crestus of La Graufesenque). Claudius-Vespasian.
- XI. Drag. form 15/17 stamped CARVCATI.
- XII. Drag. form 18 stamped OF MODESTI (Modestus of La Graufesenque). Claudius-Nero.
- XIII. Fragments of Drag. form 24/25, Ritterling 12 and Déchelette 67.

Level C.

- XIV. Mortarium with heavy downbent rim and internal bead, in white ware with particles of white stone on inside. Flavian. Plate
Cf. *Colchester*, Plate LXVIII, Fig. 329.
- XV. Bowl of mica dusted, buff ware. Similar in shape, but larger than *Camulodunum*, p. 265. No. 245, Plate LXXX. Neronian. Plate
Terra Sigillata.
- XVI. Drag. form 18, stamped IVLLINI.M. (Iullinus of Lezoux). Flavian-Antonine.
- XVII. Drag. form 27, stamped OF PATRC (Patricius of La Graufesenque). Nero-Domitian.

- XVIII. Drag. form 27, stamped OF VITA (Vitalis of La Graufesenque). Claudius-Domitian.
- XIX. Crude green glass dish with domed base. Plate
Coins.
- XX. *As* of Vespasian (69-79 A.D.). Obverse—[VESP]-
ASIAN AUG COS [—]. Laureate bust to right.
Reverse—[AEQUITAS] AUGUSTI S.C. Aequitas
standing left holding scales and rod.
- XXI. *As* of Vespasian. 72 A.D. *B.M.C.* 820—Mint of
Lugdunum. Obverse—[IMP CAESAR] VESPAS-
IAN AUG COS IIII. Reverse—PROVIDENT in
exergue, S.C. L in field. An altar.

Level D.

- XXII. Drag. form 27 stamped VITALIS F (Vitalis of La Graufesenque). Domitian-Antonine.
- XXIII. Drag. form 27 stamped MARCELLIVS, of Lavoye, Pont-des Rêmes. Trajan-Hadrian.

CONTENTS OF THE PIT.

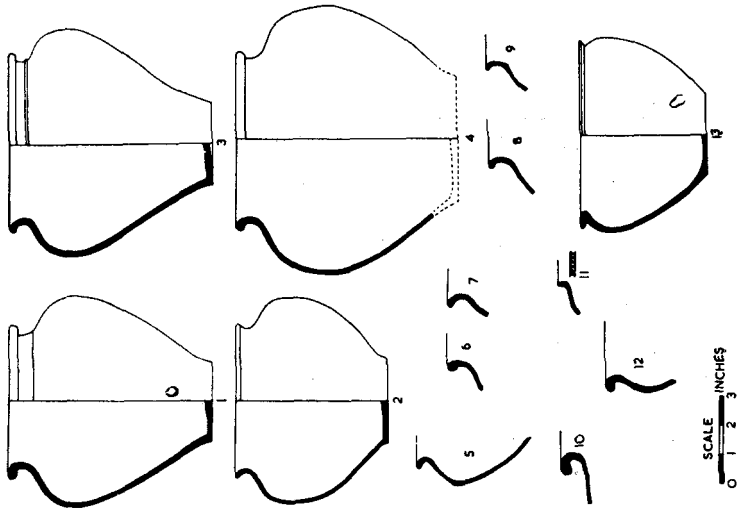
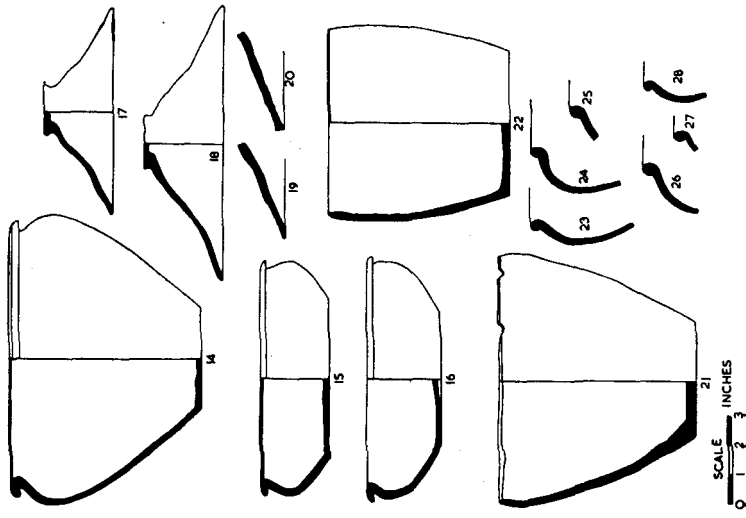
The bottom of the pit contained a layer of dark brown filling from which finds, No. 46 and 58, were recovered. Above this lay the bulk of the objects which included all the Terra Sigillata and coarse pottery. The amphora lay across the coarse pots which seem to have been crushed by its weight. The neck of the ewer had been broken, apparently by falling on to the amphora which was itself cracked. The rest of the pit above the pottery was filled with a burnt deposit containing building materials, wall plaster and iron slag, continuous and identical with level "B." It would appear that much of the pottery was broken by falling into the pit and it is possible that the deposition of most of it was connected with the sacking of London at the time of the Boudiccan rising of 61 A.D.

The bulk of the coarse kitchen wares (Nos. 13-19, 21-24) have the same paste and are similar in technique, and would seem to be the output of a single potter. The three Terra Sigillata cups (Nos. 47-49) are of a thin paste and fine workmanship and provide a striking contrast to the coarse wares from the pit.

Everted and Rolled Rimmed Bowls and Ollae.

1. Olla with off-set neck and rolled, undercut rim. The paste is grey and the surface sandy, while the slightly rising base shows signs of pulling. *Colchester*, Plate LV, No. 239. Grave group 40-70 A.D.

2. Globular bowl of hard grey ware with everted, slightly rolled rim and pronounced shoulder. For a series of similar bowls see *Corfe Mullen*, page 46.



3. Olla of sandy grey ware with recurved rim, short neck and rudimentary cordon. Polishing appears on the shoulder and in narrow bands on the body.

4. Bowl with everted and rolled rim of hard grey ware. There is a faint vertical scoring on the body and polishing on the rim. Base missing.

The pit also contained eight rim sections of similar bowls and ollae (Nos. 5-12). No. 12 is of rough grey ware and forms part of a wide-mouthed bowl.

Folded Rimmed Bowls.

13. Bowl of dark grey sandy ware with flat folded rim on gently curved shoulder.

14. Wide bowl of rough grey ware with folded rim, on which are two grooves suggesting rudimentary reeding.

Shallow Bowls.

15. Shallow bowl of rough grey ware with folded rim which is polished and is grooved on the inner edge.

16. Shallow bowl of similar shape and paste to above but with more pronounced groove at rim and slightly rising base.

Lids.

17. Lid of grey sandy ware with plain rim, conical in shape with pinched-up hollow finger-grip in centre.

18. Large lid of sandy grey ware, of similar form.

There are two other fragments of lids of similar ware and shape to Nos. 17-18 (the larger only being drawn No. 19).

20. Fragment of lid, hard brown paste with grey surface, square cut rim.

"Rimless" Ollae.

21. Olla of similar paste to Nos. 13-19. Rim and possible shoulder have been removed in antiquity. Part of a second olla of similar paste and form was found in the pit.

22. Nearly straight-sided bucket shaped ollae of similar paste to above. The rim has been removed in antiquity and part of a ridge on the inner edge remains as in No. 15.

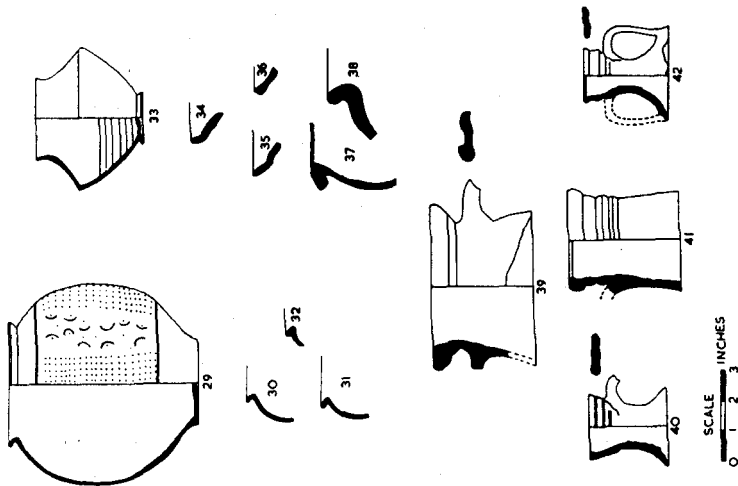
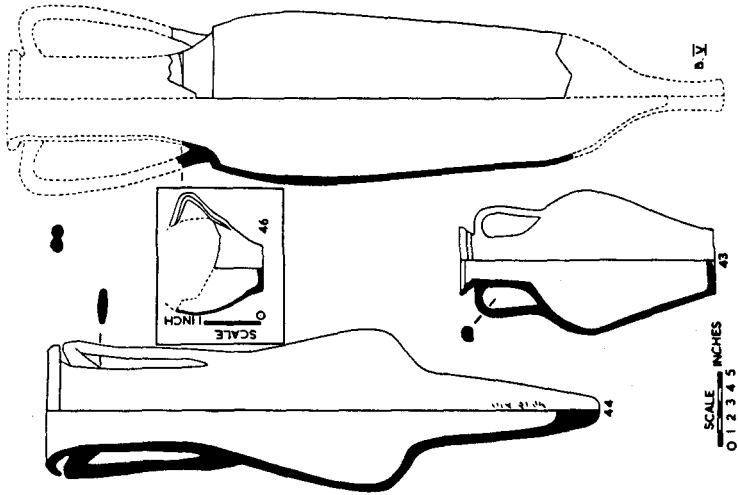
Bead Rimmed Ollae. Nos. 23-28.

The pit also yielded rim sections of six bead rimmed ollae which, although differing in shape and paste, all have polished shoulders. No. 23 and 24 are of a similar paste to the group 13-19, 21-22, and the shoulders are marked by a shallow groove which is typical of native bead-rimmed ollae of the Claudian period.

Hawkes and Dunning, page 288, Fig. 28, No. 1. No. 21 from this pit has a similar groove, and may well have terminated in such a rim. Nos. 25, 26 and 27 are of a smoother paste than the group referred to above, and lack the groove. No. 28 is a smaller pot of better workmanship, having a cordon and groove below a fine bead.

29. *Pink Ware.*

Oblique rimmed beaker of hard buff ware with a pinkish slip, decorated with alternating rectangular panels of small clay studs and panels of crescents and isolated studs. A sherd



of a similar beaker appears in *Silchester*, 1938-39, Fig. 11, No. 8. Claudian. Among other sherds of this ware are rim sections of three similar beakers, Nos. 31-33.

Carinated Beaker.

30. Carinated beaker with plain rim, concave shoulder, sharp

angle and convex lower half. The foot-ring is thin but pronounced; the base is raised and grooved beneath. The paste is thin and brown, the surface being bitumen coated and highly polished.

"Sub-Belgic" Platters. Nos. 34-36.

Nos. 34 and 35 are of polished light grey ware. For a similar sherd to No. 34 see *Camulodunum*, page 224, Fig. 48, No. 9. No. 36 has a darker surface and is more highly polished.

Misc.

37. Rim section of bowl with thick down-bent rim, hard, brittle, sandy grey clay. There is a girth groove, and on the rim are three ridges. Bowls of a similar type appear in *Richborough III*, Plate XXXIV.

38. Rim section of large storage jar of thick coarse grey ware similar to Nos. 13-19, 21-22 and 23-24.

Flagons and Amphorae.

39. Thinly potted neck of an amphora of fine pink paste with flat ringed mouthpiece. Cf. *Hofheim*, page 306.

40. Neck of a single-handed flagon of orange paste covered with a white slip.

41. Neck of a large flagon with rim thickened outwards and splayed sharply inwards on the inside. The vessel is of white ware and there are traces of a four ribbed handle.

42. Neck of small cup-necked flagon of white coated grey ware. Similar flagon necks appear in *Hofheim*, page 291, Abb68.

43. Tall double-handed ewer in buff ware with slightly cup-shaped mouth.

44. Amphora of white ware with tall straight-sided neck and flattened, single-reeded handles. The body is bulbous and sags on to the spike which has an ante-cocturam, incised inscription. Read by R. P. Wright as VII I DA III (*Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. XLI, p. 145, No. 30).

45. Lower portion of two handled jar in white ware. It has a foot-ring and the base rises steeply within. A small hole has been drilled in one side near the top. Ht. 31 cm. Diam. at waist 37 cm. Diam. at base 15 cm. Not illustrated.

Model.

46. Model cup or jug of thin, fine orange ware. It has a crudely applied handle, the base of which is smoothed down the

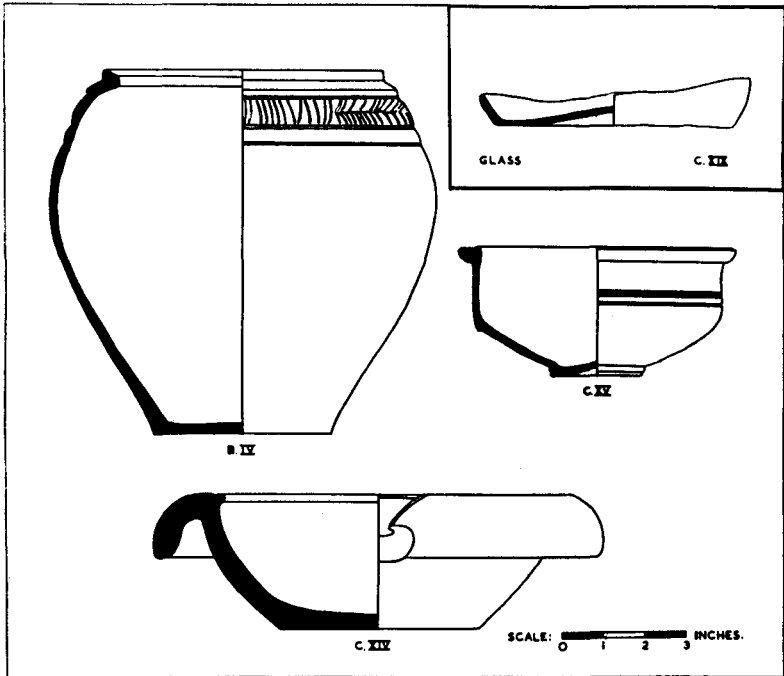
side of the vessel. The base has an incised ring in the centre. (Recovered from primary filling of pit.)

Terra Sigillata.

47. Drag. form 27, stamped OF MO (Mommo of La Graufesenque). Claudius-Vespasian.

48. Drag. form 27, stamped PASSEN (Passienus of La Graufesenque). Nero-Vespasian.

49. Drag. form 27, stamped AMAN—? (Amandus of La Graufesenque). Tiberius-Vespasian.



50. Drag. form 18, stamped CASSIVSCAM (Cassius and Camius, date and pottery unknown).

51. Drag. form 18, stamped MANDV. (Mandicus of La Graufesenque). Claudius-Vespasian.

52. Drag. form 18, stamped OF SECVNDI (Secundus of La Graufesenque). Claudius-Vespasian.

53. Drag. form 18, stamped OF BASSICO (Bassus and Coelus of La Graufesenque). Claudius-Vespasian.

54. Drag. form 27, stamped with rosette, cf. *Colchester*, No. 77. Claudius-Vespasian.

55. Fragment of Drag. form 29. Upper frieze of heavily incised gadroons. Lower frieze scroll with ivy leaves and tendril bindings as in *O.P.T.S.*, Fig. 30, Plate XXXII, and lanceolate buds as *O.P.T.S.*, Fig. 74, Plate XXXVII. Style of Bassus and Coelus. Claudius-Vespasian.

Coins.

56. Dupondius of Claudius *M & S* 67. *Obverse*—[TI] CLAVDIVS CAESAR [AVG P.M. TR. P. IMP]. Bare head of Claudius, left. *Reverse*—CERES [AUGUSTA] [SC]. Ceres veiled, seated left holding corn-ear.

57. Dupondius of Claudius. *Obverse*—[TI. CLAVDIVS] CAESAR AVG [PM TR P.] IMP. Bare head of Claudius, left.

Small Finds.

58. Bronze foot in form of claw of a large bird. Above the foot the bronze widens into wing-like projections. These "wings" curve slightly, suggesting that the piece may belong either to an ornate bucket or bowl. A hole between the central talons indicate that the foot was rivetted possibly to a small bronze disc as in *Greek and Roman bronzes*, Plate XCV. (Recovered from primary filling of pit.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- B.M.C.* Mattingly. *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, 1930.
Camulodunum. Hawkes and Hull. *Society of Antiquaries Research Report XIV*.
Colchester. May. *Catalogue of the Roman Pottery in the Essex and Colchester Museum*, 1930.
Corfe Mullen. Calkin. *An Early Romano-British Kiln at Corfe Mullen, Dorset*. *Antiquaries Journal*, XV.
Greek and Roman Bronzes. Lamb. Methuen, 1929.
Hawkes and Dunning. Hawkes and Dunning. *The Belgae of Gaul and Britain*. *Archæological Journal*, 87, 1930.
Hofheim. Ritterling. "Das Frührömische Lager bei Hofheim." *Annalen des Vereins für nassauische Altertumskunde*, 1913.
M. and S Mattingly and Sydenham. *Roman Imperial Coinage*.
O.P.T.S. Oswald and Price. *An introduction to the study of Terra Sigillata*, 1931.
Richborough III. Bushe-Fox. *Society of Antiquaries Research Report*, X.
Silchester 1938-1939. Cotton. *Excavations in Silchester, 1938-9*. *Archæologia*, 92.

Conclusions. This pit is of interest in that it contained a large group of pottery which may be closely dated to the early years of the Roman occupation of Britain.

Unlike the contents of most pits, many of the pots appear to have been complete when deposited. The pit was sealed by a layer of burnt debris which may have been a result of Boudicca's destruction of London, and it is possible that the pots were thrown into this pit during the sacking of the town.