

LONDON & SPAIN

ROMAN POTTERY, FOUND AT LITTLE CHESTER, DERBY, JULY & AUGUST, 1886.

BECHTOLD & SONS, PHOTO-LITH.

Roman Remains at Little Chester.

BY W. THOMPSON WATKIN.

IN digging the foundation for some cottages,* in the summer of 1886, at Little Chester (Derventio), Mr. A. Seale Haslam found several specimens of Roman pottery, at depths varying from three to four feet from the present surface. These are represented on Plate VI.

No. I. is a vessel $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, and $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches in width at the widest part. It is of pale light red ware, and from this fact, combined with the shape, it is probably of local manufacture.

No. II. is $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, and $5\frac{3}{8}$ inches at the widest part. It is of a dull brown colour. It is rudely ornamented with diagonal lines, scratched upon it with some sharp instrument, forming a sort of lozenge pattern. As in other examples, these lines commence a little below the neck of the vessel. This vessel, though not of the orthodox "Upchurch" colour (a bluish black), seems decidedly of Upchurch ware. It strongly resembles the largest in Mr. Knight's group of Upchurch vessels in *Celt, Roman, and Saxon* (first edition plate opposite p. 210), and its colour is similar to three other vessels from the same site, engraved in colour in *Intellectual Observer*, October, 1865, pp. 161 and 163. When found, this vessel was about half full of calcined wheat.

No. III., which is about 4 inches high, is a bowl $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter in its widest part, and of a grayish colour. It is also

*The site of these finds can be identified, as Mr. Haslam has given to the cottages the name of "Roman Camp."

probably Upchurch ware. A good example of this class of vessel was found at Manchester, and its shape is a common one.

No. IV. is a fragment of a vessel of rather rude work, which seems to be of Upchurch ware likewise. It is 4 inches by 4 in its greatest dimensions, and darker in colour than No. III. It has a rude ornament of bands and triangular punctures.

Nos. V. and VI. are portions of "Samian" bowls. Both have the "festoon and tassel" pattern as a band in their upper portion. No. V. has the nude figures of a male and female, with a portion of a third male figure. It has been described as a "bathing scene," which seems probable. The size of this fragment is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 4, whilst that of No. VI. is $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $3\frac{1}{4}$. The latter has a representation of a hunting scene.

No. VII. is the neck of a large one-handed water jar of cream colour externally, and probably of local manufacture. It is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

At the same time and place some coins* were found, twelve of which were sent to me by the Rev. Dr. Cox for examination. I found them to be as follows:—

DOMITIAN. 2nd brass.—*Rev.* obliterated.

ANTONINVS PIVS. 2nd brass. — *Rev.* BRITANNIA.

Figure of Britannia seated to *l.*, with spear, &c. S. C. in exergue.

VICTORINVS. 3rd brass.—Two examples. *Rev.* of both obliterated as to legend. Both bear a standing figure to *l.*

3rd brass.—A coin which, by its style, is about the same age, *i.e.*, that of "The Thirty Tyrants," *circa* A.D. 265-270. *Obverse* totally obliterated. *Rev.*

ANNONA. AVG. Annona standing to *l.*

CARVS. 3rd brass.—*Rev.* PAX. EXERCITI. Peace standing to *l.* In exergue P. xxi.

ALLECTVS. 3rd brass. — *Rev.* PROVIDENTIA. AVG. Providence standing.

* The station of Derventio, or Little Chester, has been very prolific of coins of widely different dates, proving that the station was occupied during nearly the whole of the period of the Roman sway in Britain. See *Derbyshire Archaeological Society's Journal*, Vol. vii., pp. 75-8.

CONSTANS. 3rd brass (or rather in size a minim).—*Rev.*
 VICTORIA. D D. AVGG. NN. Two Victories, facing
 each other, holding wreaths. In exergue TRS.

There were also three "second brasses," which, by the style, are of early emperors, apparently between Domitian and Commodus, but the legends, etc., are totally obliterated. A fourth excessively worn may be Roman, but it is difficult to judge. A Scotch halfpenny of Charles II. was found on the same site. The Roman coins range over 250 years. Except that of Carus, they are in bad condition. Coins of this emperor are rare in Britain.

*In addition to the coins forwarded to Mr. Watkin, there were seven other brass coins, apparently Roman, that are absolutely illegible and corroded away; a Scotch halfpenny of Charles II.; and a thin piece of brass metal bearing on one side a crown surmounting an heraldic rose (the arms of the county of Derby), and the initials D. V. C. The last proves to be a button, with the shank on the other side worn away. It was thought that this might have been from the uniform of some Sheriff's officer of the past, the High Sheriff being termed *Vice-Comes* in official Latin, and sometimes appending to his name in the two last centuries the initials V. C. But Mr. Watkin's surmise seems far more probable, namely, that it was a uniform button of the old volunteer movement of the beginning of this century, and that the initials stand for "Derbyshire Volunteer Corp."

Besides the coins, there were two fragments of metal found, one a small, much corroded piece, that may have formed part of a brass bracelet or the rim of a coin; the other a flat piece of broken brass, about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ long by 1 inch broad, the use of which it would be idle to conjecture.

There was also unearthed a small crescent-shaped brass fibula or brooch, the pin of which is broken. It is only $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch in length. The surface of the crescent is slightly raised at the edges, and it bears traces of having carried a red enamel. It has been a charming little ornament when new.

* For this and for the next two paragraphs the Editor is responsible.

*Two portions of querns or hand-mills were found at the same time and place. They are both of millstone grit, the larger being of much coarser material than the smaller.

The largest (fig. 1) measures 20 inches in diameter, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick at the edges, and 3 inches at the centre. The circular hole in the centre is $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter.

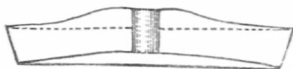


FIGURE 1.

The smaller one (fig. 2) measures 16 inches in diameter, is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick at the edges, and 4 inches in the centre. The circular hole in the centre is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter.

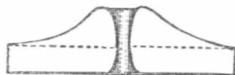


FIGURE 2.

In vertical section the grinding surface of the larger one presents a gentle swell towards the centre, the curve forming a shallow double ogee. That of the smaller one is more precipitous, and the centre conversely circumscribed to form a boss of some 3 or 4 inches in diameter. The under surfaces are roughly flaked (no tool marks being visible) into shape; that of the larger one is concave and truly wrought, while that of the smaller one is roughly flat. The sides also present a difference—that of the larger stone is extremely well and truly executed by “pecking” (as has been observed in this issue of the *Journal* with regard to the Haddon Field’s quern), and instead of being vertical it is on the taper, like that of a bung, the top surface representing the grinding surface of the stone. The smaller stone has undergone such long use, that the original shape of its side is obliterated.

The central hole of the larger stone is of equal diameter throughout, and it is of good workmanship; that of the other stone is peculiar, it seems to have been roughly ground out from

*The description of the querns has been kindly supplied by Mr. John Ward.

both surfaces with some conical instrument until the two holes met, the result being that while it is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter at the surfaces, it is reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in the middle.

There can be little doubt that these are the lower stones of two querns, and that the pins that carried the upper stones were inserted in the above mentioned holes, the only difficulty being the awkward shape of that of the smaller stone. The boss of the smaller one, described above, suggests a corresponding hole or depression in the missing upper stone; the long use that this lower stone shows signs of having undergone having worn down the rest of its surface to its present condition.

The question naturally suggests itself, why are the upper stones of these two querns, and of so many others that have been discovered, missing? Was it not a frequent custom to use some hard non-gritty stone for the upper stones? If so, one upper stone might wear out many lower ones, which would then be discarded, and found in greater abundance.

The quern fragment from Haddon Fields (Plate II. of this volume) is of a ruder and more lumpy character than those of the Roman station at Little Chester.*

* In Sainter's *Rambles Round Macclesfield* is a lithograph and brief description of a quern found at Danes Moss. It resembles the Little Chester examples in lightness of appearance.