

ROMAN POTTERY FROM LITTLE CHESTER

By M. BRASSINGTON

A. THE SQUARE

IN the spring of 1967 a quantity of Roman pottery was recovered by Mr. J. Potts and the writer from a service pipe trench 10 ft. long by 5 ft. wide. The trench was mechanically excavated at the south-east corner of a block of flats, then under construction, on the north side of Old Chester Road, Little Chester, Derby. The area (fig. 1), formerly known as "The Square", lies in the angle formed by the presumed junction of the Roman road running N.N.E. and the Roman predecessor of Old Chester Road.

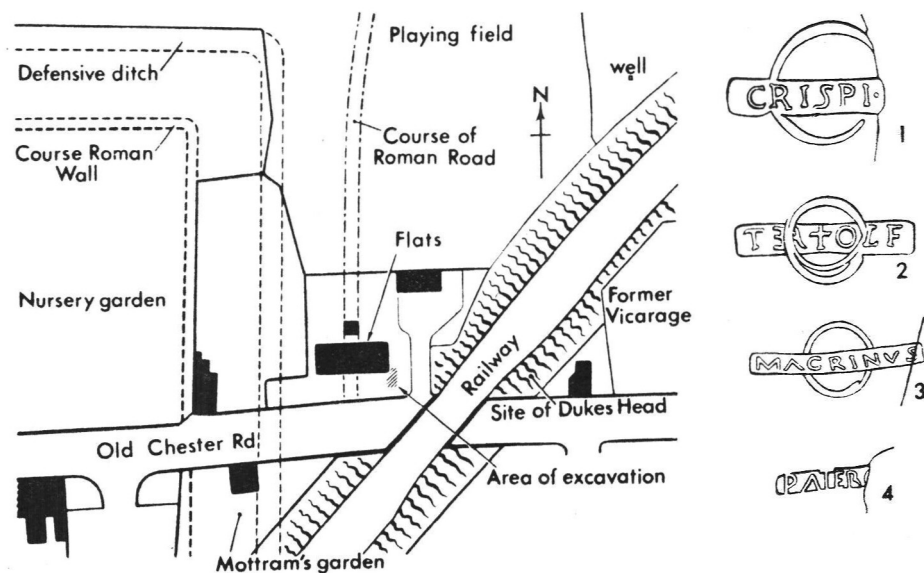


FIG. 1. Site plan, with samian potters' stamps (1/1).

The Roman layers, which began 12 in. below ground level, were disturbed, but two charcoal layers were discerned some 2 in. thick; these contained pottery some of it heavily burnt. Together with the samian pottery were many hooked rim mortaria sherds, seven with potters' stamps; these will be dealt with in a later report. Other coarse ware included sherds of grey ware jars, black-burnished cooking-pots and dishes and pieces of a large calcite-gritted bowl. A rim of a frilled tazza in cream ware burnt on the inner side and a large pinched flagon neck in buff fabric were also found. No structures were noted.

A black-burnished cooking-pot, complete with the exception of part of the rim, was found by workmen while digging a drain in the driveway a few feet to the east. It is similar in shape to Gillam 138¹ but with a thin wall and wavy line around the neck.² A worn dupondius of Domitian, datable to A.D. 87, was also found adhering to a badly corroded coin thought to be of the reign of Hadrian.³

Amongst the material recovered by Mr. J. Potts from the flats foundation trench spoil heap were two lids in an orange Derbyshire ware fabric, one originally 5½ in. in diameter; these apparently are the first examples found in this ware (fig. 2).

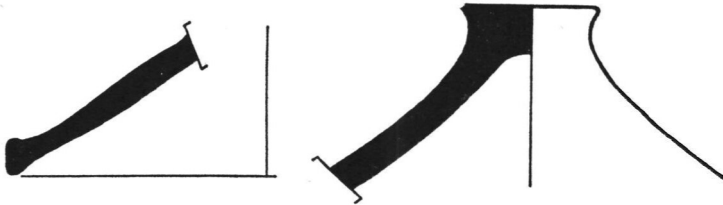


FIG. 2. Derbyshire ware lids (1/2).

The pottery found during the construction of the railway bridge in 1875 and also that from Mr. Mottram's garden⁴ which is immediately opposite the new flats (fig. 1) was described by John Ward (*D.A.J.*, XI (1889) 81). Stukeley mentioned a hoard of coins, seven score, found in the grounds of the Duke's Head alehouse, the site of which is now covered by the railway bridge and embankment on the north side of the road.

SAMIAN POTTERS STAMPS (fig. 1)

The stamps were identified by B. R. Hartley and Miss B. M. Dickinson. Nos. 3, 4 and 5 were found in the flats' foundation trenches.

1. CRISPI[M]. CRISPUS. FORM 27. Burnt black. A little known potter, possibly Central Gaulish, after A.D. 140.
2. TERTIOLF. TERTIOL. FORM 27. The ligatured letters are E-R and T-I. Central Gaulish but probably not Lezoux. This die is found on a form 27 at London, 18/31R at Gt. Weldon, 38? at Moulins Museum and form 37s at Le Mans in Antonine styles suggesting a date c. A.D. 140-170.
3. MACRINVS. FORM 33. No site evidence for this stamp but the same die appears on two form 80s at Lezoux and this and the evidence from his other dies suggest a mid to late Antonine date.

¹ *Archaeologia Aeliana*, XXXV, fourth series, 1957, 235.

² A complete cooking-pot was found when the foundations of the houses, within the walled area, were dug on the south side of Old Chester Road (*D.A.J.*, X (1888), pl. IV, 2).

³ Coins in the possession of Mr. J. Potts. The legend on the obverse of the dupondius is [IMP CAES DOMIT AV]G GERM COS XIII CENS PER P[P], bust to the left with radiate crown.

⁴ This ground became a car park for Pickford's garage after the demolition of the house on 19 October 1968.

4. PATER[CLINI OF]. PATERCLINUS. FORM 31. Lezoux. Stamps occur on Hadrian's Wall and in reoccupied Pennine forts. His decorated ware does not suggest the end of the 2nd century. *c.* A.D. 155-180.
5. (Not illustrated) [PRI]SCVSF. PRISCUS. FORM 31. There are several examples of this die recorded from Lezoux, on forms 31R, 79R and 15/31 and another die occurs at Forden Gaer in Wales. The site evidence and that of the forms on which his dies appear suggest an Antonine date of *c.* A.D. 160-190.

FIGURED SAMIAN (fig. 3)

The illustrated sherds are all form 37

South Gaulish

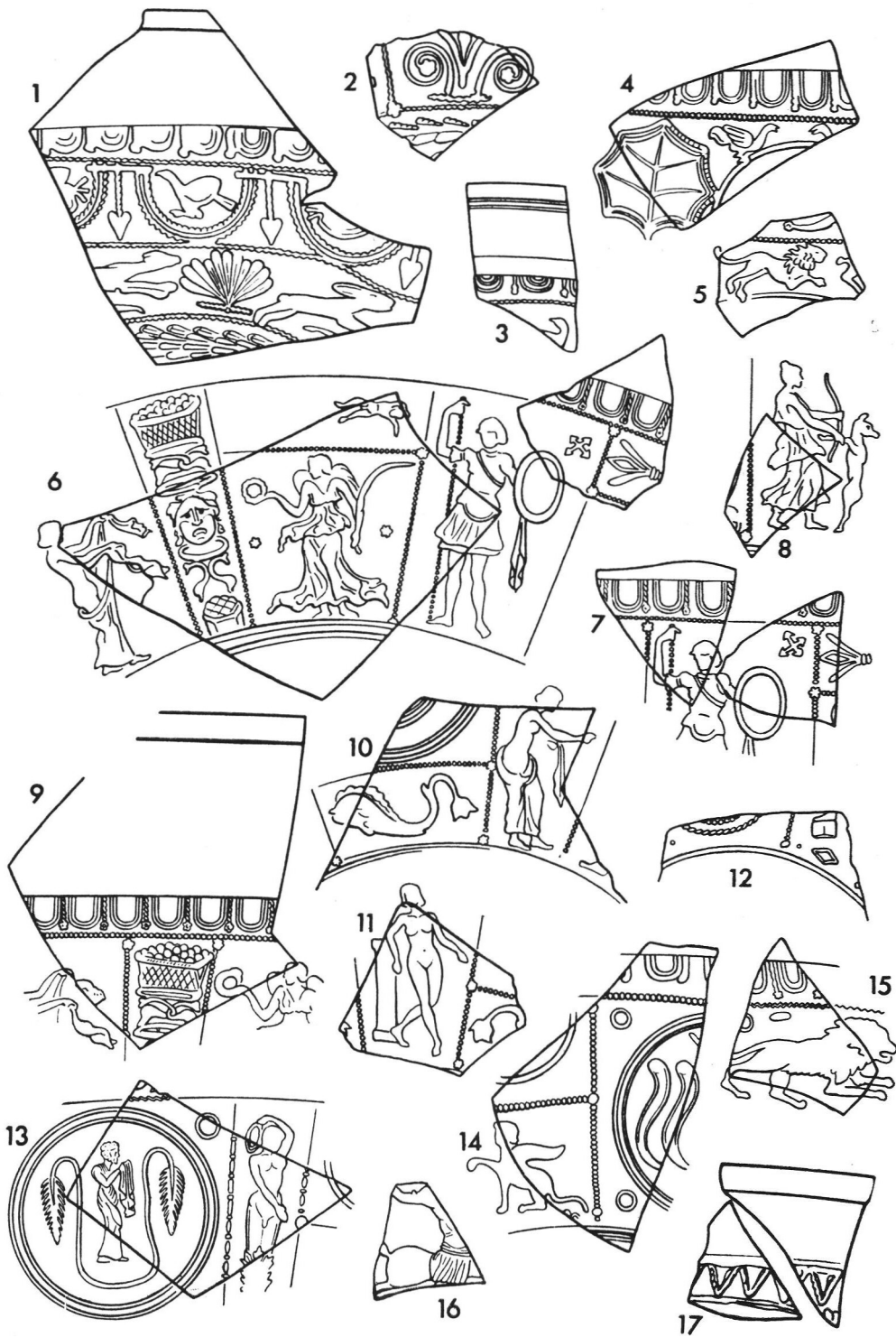
1. Bowl in the style MERCATO and very like a 37 in *Knorr 1919, 98*. Textbild 47, with the same ovolo, dog with nose up O.1925, hare O.2074, but with different double festoons and pendants *c.* A.D. 90-110.
2. Bowl fragment with scrolls and basal wreath *c.* A.D. 90-110.⁵
3. Bowl rim, ovolo and bird. *c.* A.D. 80-100.⁵

Central Gaulish

4. Leafy scroll and birds with ovolo 4 in the style of ATTIANVS. *S. & S.*,⁶ pl. 87, 21. *c.* A.D. 130-160.
5. Lion O.1404, with the stem of a vine scroll; slightly burnt.
6. Panelled bowl with figure-types, dancer O.353, tier of baskets and mask not previously recorded for Advocisus style, victory O.809, little dwarf O.703 and the rare warrior O.141 = D.92. This sherd appears to be from the same mould as that illustrated in *S. & S.*, pl. 114, no. 33, found at Corbridge. Accompanying piece with the unusual crossed thunderbolt, the triple leaf and Advocisus ovolo 1. Style of ADVOCISVS *c.* A.D. 160-190.
7. Two fragments from the same bowl as no. 6 with repetitive figure of warrior O.141 = D.92 and crossed thunderbolt which is a duplication of the single thunderbolt.
8. Slightly burnt fragment possibly from bowl no. 6 with figure-type Diana O.106.
9. Rim of a panelled bowl with dull slip, tier of baskets and mask flanked presumably with the figure-types dancer O.353 and victory O.809.
Advocisus ovolo 1. Style of ADVOCISVS, compare with ACAVNISSA (*S. & S.*, pl. 80, 16) who was an early associate potter.
10. Base of a panelled bowl with dolphin O.2394 and figure O.324, Burnt. *S. & S.*, pl. 114, 28 and 36. Style of ADVOCISVS. *c.* A.D. 160-190.
11. Same bowl as no. 10, burnt black, female figure-type O.293A.
12. Base of a bowl in the style of CINNAMVS. *S. & S.*, fig. 47, 1. *c.* A.D. 150-180.
13. Panelled bowl in the style of ALBVCIVS with figure-types O.930 and O.1207A. *c.* A.D. 150-190.
14. Panelled bowl in the style of DOECCVS. Medallion and sphinx O.857. *c.* A.D. 160-190.
15. Lion O.1497B with ovolo and detail 1 of the potter X-5. *S. & S.*, fig. 16, 1. *c.* A.D. 125-145.
16. Fragment of free style bowl with brilliant slip, figure-type horseman O.245. Possibly Cinnamus, Antonine period.

⁵ Dated by Mr. B. R. Hartley.

⁶ Stanfield and Simpson, *Central Gaulish Potters*.



78'67.

FIG. 3. Samian pottery from the Square (1/2).

East Gaulish

17. Form 37 rim. Ricken, 1942 Taf 10, 6 for sherds. Fischer, 1963, 287, Rq for ornament. REGINVS of Rheinabben. *c.* A.D. 160-200.

The figured samian agrees well with material from the new vicarage site some 400 ft. to the east and with other recent finds. There is much Antonine samian and this supports previous evidence that the greatest intensity of occupation occurred during the period *c.* A.D. 160-200.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Mr. K. Mann for photographing the illustrations, to Dr. Grace Simpson, who had previously supplied me with the details of sherds nos. 1 and 17, and to Mr. B. R. Hartley who made several additions to the samian section.

B. NURSERY GARDEN

Coarse pottery was recovered by Mr. J. Potts during the laying of a water pipe through the nursery garden, cultivated by the Parks Department, at Little Chester in 1966 (SK 354376).

A trench, some 2 ft. deep, was cut running in a northerly direction commencing near the north-east corner of the ground belonging to the old people's flats (*D.A.J.*, LXXXVII (1967), 41, fig. 2). No structures were noted in this trench, but Roman coarse pottery was found scattered fairly uniformly along it. In the cross-trench aligned east-west some 7 ft. to the south of the south-western corner of the house was a thick red clay layer, some 18 in. deep, which continued eastwards giving way to 12 ft. wide loose pebble layer adjacent to the south-eastern corner where an inscribed flagon neck was found (*D.A.J.*, LXXXVII (1967), fig. 13, no. 18).

All the pottery (fig. 4) found was in an excellent state of preservation and belongs mostly to the late 3rd and 4th century. Two pieces of mortaria from the Derwent House garden, which is situated to the west of the nursery garden, are included for convenience.

Mortaria

Identified and dated by Mrs. K. F. Hartley. From the Hartshill-Mancetter potteries unless otherwise stated:

From the Derwent House garden

1. Flanged mortarium. Cream fabric, buff-coloured slip on inner and outer sides, large black grit. Slightly burnt. Nene valley 3rd-4th century.
2. Wall-sided mortarium. Off-white fabric light cream slip, brown grit. Hartshill-Mancetter fabric, late 3rd century.

From the nursery garden

3. Hammer head mortarium. Light cream fabric, buff slip, orange-brown painted zig-zag decoration on the rim, black grit. *c.* A.D. 250-320.

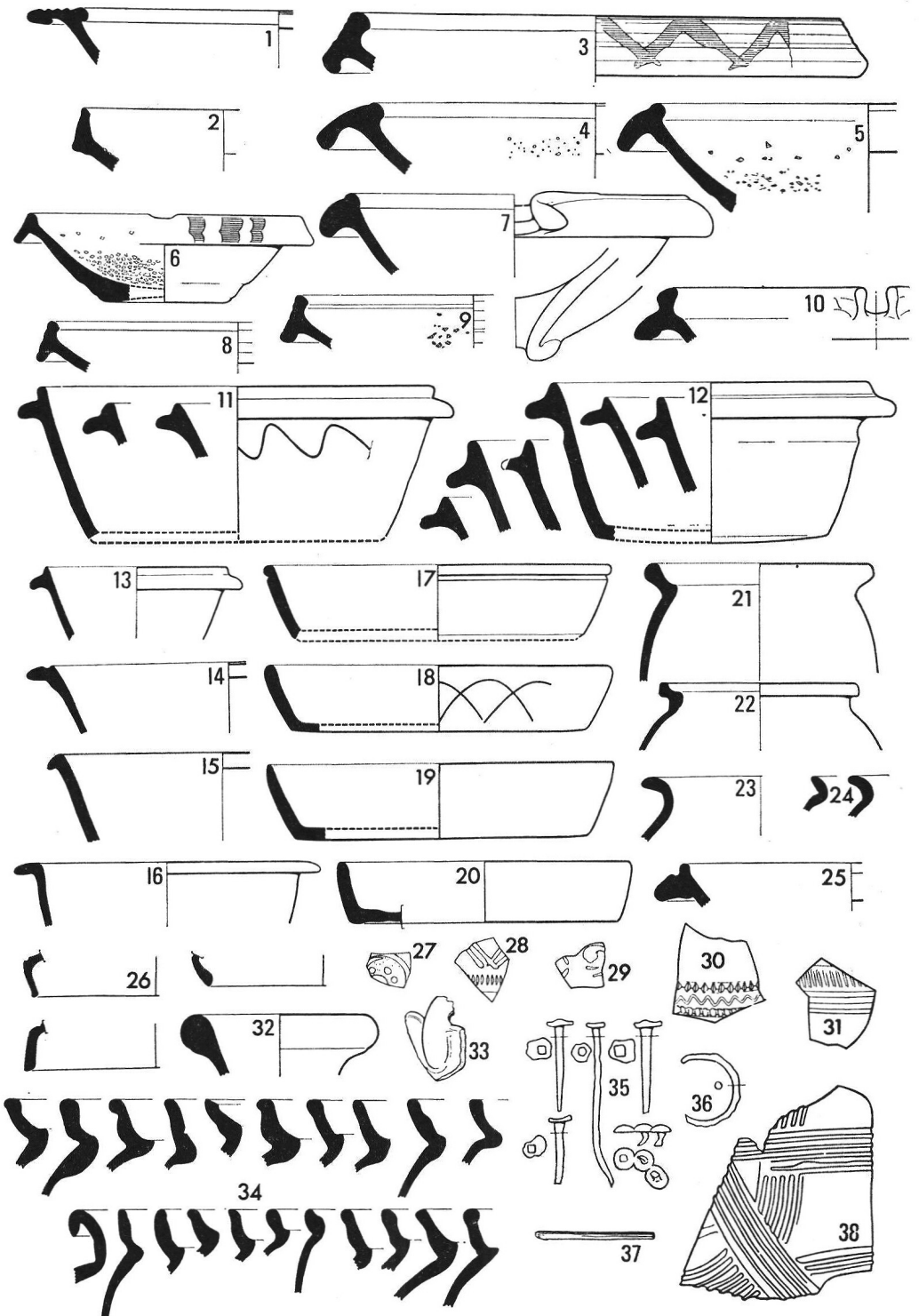


FIG. 4. Miscellaneous pottery and objects from the nursery garden (1/4).

4. Hooked rim mortarium. Off-white fabric cream slip, black and brown grit. 3rd century.
5. Hooked rim mortarium, buff fabric, orange slip, dark brown grit. *c.* A.D. 270-330.
6. Hammer head mortarium, off-white fabric with pinkish core, cream slip. Painted dark brown wavy vertical strips on rim. Brown grit. *c.* A.D. 280-350.
7. Hooked rim mortarium, off-white fabric, remains of cream slip on nozzle. Sparse dark brown grit. *c.* A.D. 280-330.
8. Hammer head mortarium, off-white fabric, brown grit. *c.* A.D. 280-350.
9. Hammer head mortarium, blue-grey fabric with cream core, buff slip with exterior of rim blue-grey. Dark brown grit. *c.* A.D. 280-350.
10. Mortarium, cream fabric, buff slip, dark brown grit. Fourth century. Origin uncertain, possibly midland.

Other coarse ware

11. Flanged bowls, black burnished, 4th century.
12. Flanged bowls, smooth lead-grey fabric, 4th century.
13. Small flanged bowl, grey fabric, 4th century.
14. Bowl in grey fabric.
15. Black-burnished bowl.
16. Black-burnished bowl (two rims).
17. Black-burnished dish with beaded rim.
18. Plain rim dish, black-burnished (two others in smooth grey fabric).
19. Plain rim dish, smooth lead-grey fabric.
20. Plain rim dish, dark brown metallic colour-coated, cream fabric.
21. Cooking-pot, grey fabric, sooty exterior.
22. Jar, grey fabric, rough lead-grey surface.
23. Cooking-pot, dark grey fabric, sooty exterior.
24. Grey ware rims.
25. Flanged colour-coated bowl, chocolate coloured orange fabric. Possibly Nene valley potteries. *c.* A.D. 350-400.
26. Castor box rims brown colour-coated.
27. Brown colour-coated body sherd with white slip decoration, cream fabric.
28. Rouletted dark olive colour-coated body sherd with cream slip decoration, orange fabric.
29. Orange colour-coated body sherd with white slip decoration, whitish fabric.
30. Grey ware body sherd, hard grey fabric.
31. Grey ware body sherd, grooved and rouletted.
32. Amphora rim, buff coloured fabric.
33. Dark brown indented colour-coated body sherd with remains of handle, cream fabric, blue-grey core.
34. Derbyshire ware rims.

Miscellaneous articles

35. Iron nails.
36. Part of iron ring.
37. Slate pin.
38. Box flue tile.

C. A SAMIAN BOWL

In 1915 J. C. Cox presented to the Derby Museum a number of curios amongst which was half of a large decorated samian bowl found at Little

Chester (DM. 596'15). A description of this vessel is given below with the permission of the Curator.

The bowl (fig. 5) is of form 37 decorated with alternate free style panels; it is poorly potted having a dull matt slip that has broken away round the edges of the decoration. Monsieur J. Terrisse considers that it is in the style of the Martres de Veyre pottery, but he is surprised by the variety of the figure-types. On the base under the slip is a possible signature or accounting mark but it is very indistinct.

The figure-types are from left to right: Horseman O.251, D.159. Panther (in festoon) O.1521, D.798. Wild boar O.1666, D.834. Bear O.1588, D.808. Horseman with beaded spear O.251, D.159. Lion O.1404. Deer O.1822 *EE*. Leaping panther (in festoon) O.1507, D.787. Panther O.1521, D.798. Bear O.1588, D.808. Horseman with beaded spear, O.251, D.159. Little bear O.1627, D.820. Lion O.1396.

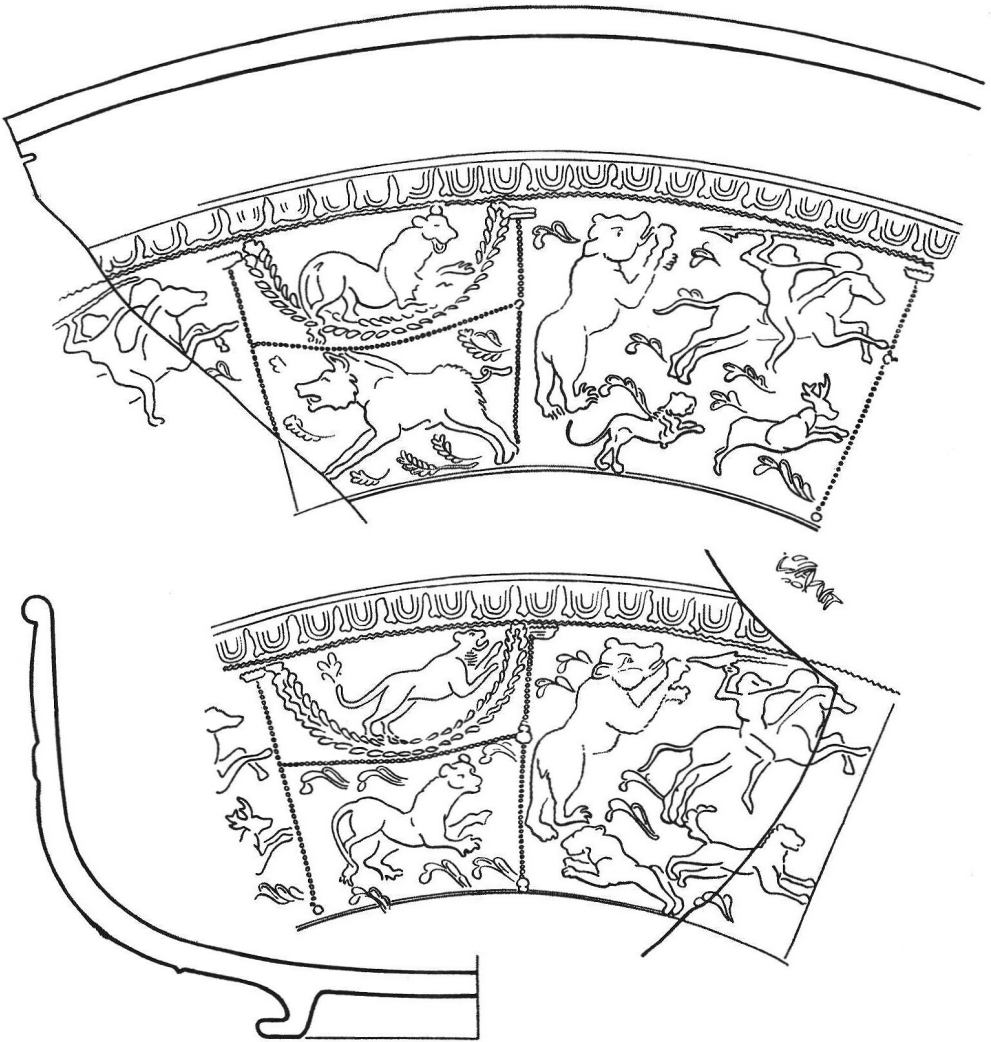


FIG. 5. Samian bowl (1/2).