

THE ROMAN FORT AT LITTLE CHESTER, DERBY: THE EAST WALL AND RAMPART, 1967-8

by M. BRASSINGTON

THE SITE

The site (Fig. 1:A) formed part of a nursery garden cultivated by the Derby Parks Department at Little Chester, Derby. While cultivating the garden Mr P. J. Potts had located a substantial mortared stone foundation 64' (19.5m) north of Old Chester Road, beside the eastern boundary of the garden. He correctly took this to be the remains of the east wall of the Roman fort (Fig. 1:R) (SK35423755). Permission was subsequently obtained from the officials of the Parks Department to examine this feature, and a section was cut across it during the autumn of 1967 by Mr P. J. Potts, Mr K. Mann and MB. The excavation was continued through the winter by Mr Potts and MB.

THE EXCAVATION

A trench 20' (6.1m) long and 5' (1.5m) wide was cut, commencing at the boundary wall (since demolished) and continuing westwards across the defensive wall, terminating less than a foot from the nursery service road. Later, permission was granted to cut a narrow trench across this service road, increasing the length of the section to 30' (9.14m). A further extension was also cut

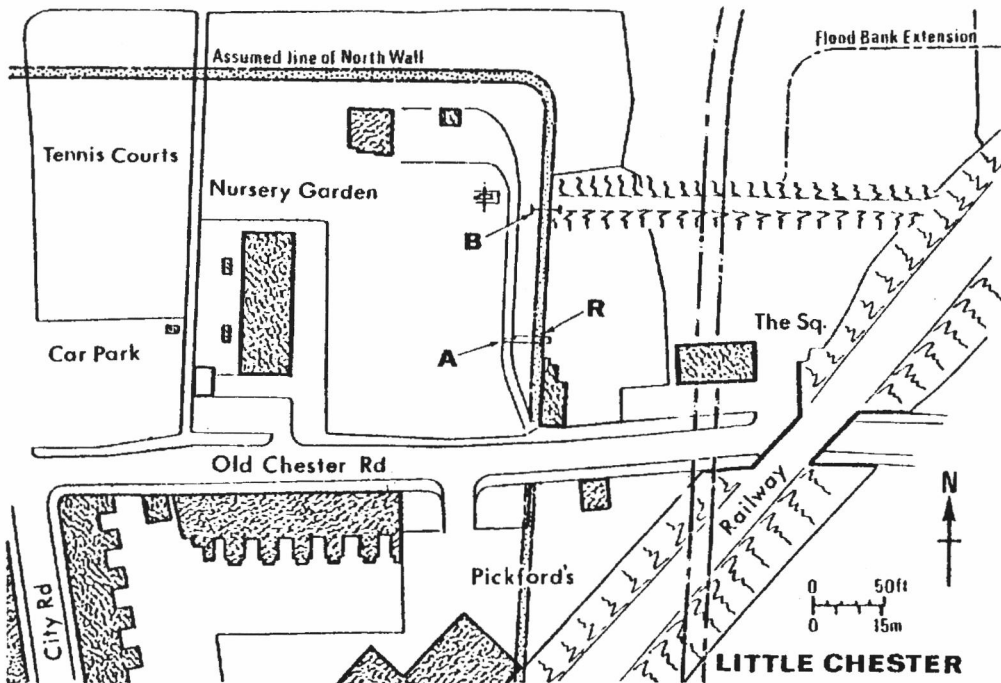


Fig. 1 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: location of site, 1967-71

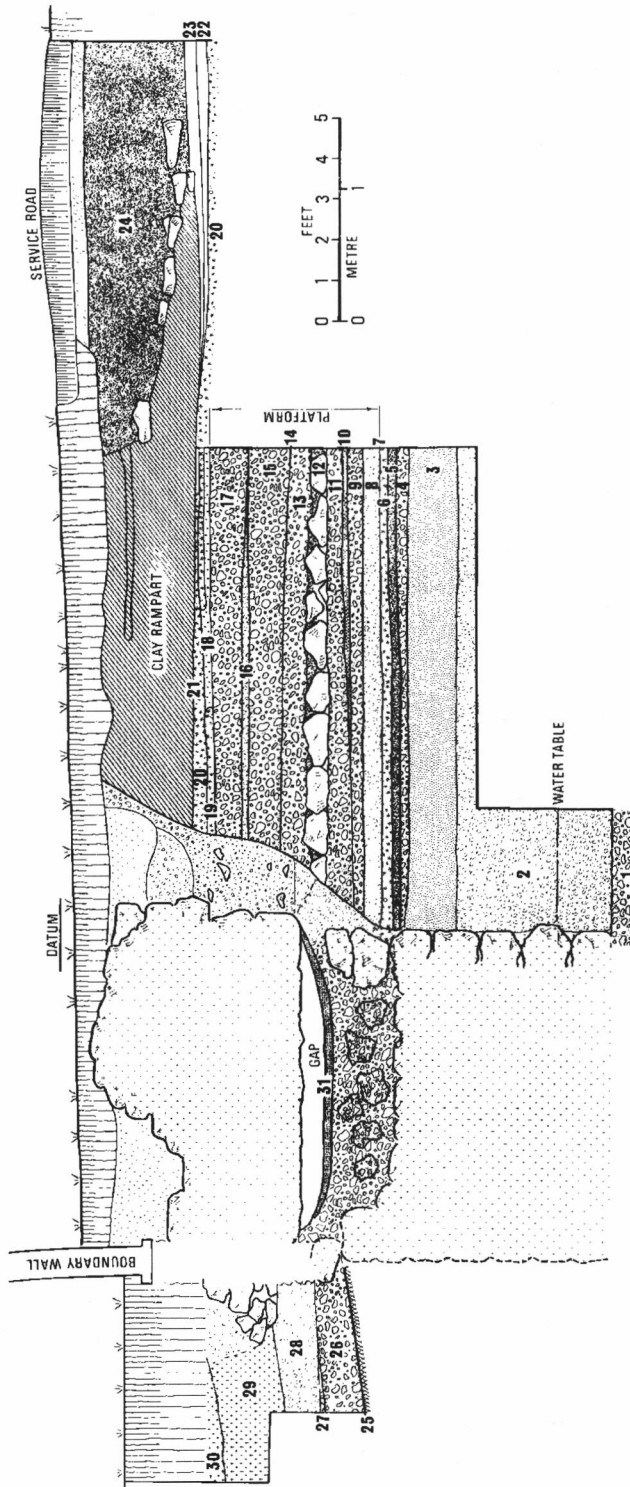


Fig. 2 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: excavated layers (looking south).

eastwards 5' (1.5m) into a private garden immediately over the boundary wall, giving a final section length of 35' (10.7m).

Levels lying beneath the rampart (Fig. 2)

These levels are described in sequence, commencing with layer 1, the lowest reached during the excavation. All depths refer to the distance below the bench mark (Fig. 2).

Natural strata — Layers 1 to 3

The water table was found to lie at a depth of 12' 3" (3.74m) and the greatest depth reached, in natural river gravel (layer 1), was 13' 7" (4.14m). Overlying the gravel was a deposit of grey clay (layer 2) 3' 9" (1.14m) thick, which commenced at a depth of 9' 10" (3.0m). Above this was 1' 4" (0.14m) of light brown sandy clay (layer 3). All these layers were devoid of artefacts.

First occupation — Layers 4 to 7

Layer 4, 2-3" (5-7.6cm) in thickness, appeared at a depth of 8' 7" (2.6m) and consisted of sand and pebbles. It contained the first evidence of occupation – a body sherd from an amphora which lay directly on the grey clay of layer 3. Lying on top of layer 4 was a dirty and gritty occupation-deposit some 2" (5.1cm) thick (layer 5). This contained a fragment of sheet lead, sherds of amphorae and flagons, and the rim of a large mortarium with a stamp of the Flavian potter, Albinus (Fig. 3:1). Similar stamps have been found in first-century contexts throughout the country. On top of this dirty deposit a floor, 2" (5.1cm) thick, had been laid using pebbles bound together with a red clay (layer 6). Pottery impressed into this floor was covered by a thin ash layer (7). The coarse ware sherds recovered from these two layers (6 and 7) were from a grey carinated bowl, a distorted lid (both probably manufactured locally), at least three rusticated jars, a barbotine beaker and three flagons. Three samian sherds were also found, one from a plain form 18/31 dating to c. AD 120-45 (Fig. 4:2) that provides the *terminus ante quem* for these layers.

Ballast — Layers 8 to 11

These four layers, lying over the first occupation level, formed the foundation for a drainage platform and were devoid of artefacts. The lowest (layer 8) consisted of 5" (12.7cm) of grey sandy clay very similar to the natural clay of layer 2. The two overlying layers of iron pan conglomerate (9 and 11) were separated by a thin band of pebbles and red clay (layer 10).

Drainage platform — Layer 12

Resting on the upper iron pan conglomerate was a platform consisting of close-packed irregular blocks of sandstone. The gaps between the blocks had been carefully bridged over with clay at the top, causing the spaces between the stones to remain free of filling and so facilitate drainage. This dirty sealing clay, which was not a floor, contained a quantity of potsherds. The coarse ware sherds were representative of three rusticated grey ware jars, three painted jars, a large calcite-gritted vessel, a rough-cast beaker, five flagons and some three or four jars in a fine grey or orange fabric. Fragments from at least seven samian vessels were recovered, the most significant being a tiny fragment seemingly of Lezoux micaceous fabric and likely to be of Hadrianic date (Fig. 4:7).

Ballast — Layers 13 to 16

Above the sandstone blocks and the clay cap was 6" (0.15m) of gravel and pebbles (layer 13), the surface of which was partly covered by an insubstantial layer of red clay which had been trampled down to a certain extent, though apparently not to constitute a floor (layer 14). A layer of loose clean gravel lay above (layer 15) and was 10" (0.25m) thick. This was separated from the overlying floor (layer 17) by a tapering layer of grey clay (layer 16), a maximum of 2" (5.1cm) thick. No artefacts were found in these layers, though a single oyster shell was lying on the top of layer 15.

Second occupation — Layers 17 and 18

A gravel and large pebble layer (17) formed a stratum 9" (0.23m) thick, the surface of which had

been trampled down to form a hard-packed floor which dipped to the north. Small fragments of pottery were embedded in the surface. Lying on this floor was a 1" (3.8cm) thick layer of gravel and pebbles (layer 18), in which dirty ill-defined areas hinted at the possibility that it was associated with a wooden-framed structure. Though the disturbance was too great for any firm conclusions to be drawn, it is likely that a structure was dismantled to make way for the substantial building that replaced it.

Third occupation — Layers 19 to 23 (Plate 1a)

The next stratum was of red clay and pebbles 3" (7.6cm) thick (layer 19), which formed the basis of a well-compacted and level pebble floor (layer 20), the limits of which lay outside the excavated area. The portion uncovered extended 5' (1.52m) north-to-south, and 20' (6.10m) east-to-west. A slot, 14" (0.36m) wide, 5" (0.13m) deep and aligned east-west was found in the floor and also cut into its red clay base. There is little doubt that a sleeper beam had at one time rested in it, as the slot retained a rectangular profile. It was filled with pebbles, similar to the rest of the floor, but with the addition of charcoal and fragments of wall plaster and pottery. From this filling a samian fragment was recovered bearing an ovolo which matches the ovolo on a mould of a Lezoux bowl signed by the (X5) potter Catussa, AD 160-190. In all probability, the slot originally held the base of an internal partition that had been removed some years after AD 125 and the slot filled in leaving little trace on the surface of the floor. The compactness of this filling and the appearance of the surrounding floor gave the impression of use over several years after the removal of the partition. Covering the floor was a thin layer of ash (layer 21), which in the western extension divided into two layers, the lower of soil (layer 22) and the upper of charcoal (layer 23), both of which attained a thickness of 3" (8.69cm).

Eastward extension to the section — Layers 25 to 30

With the permission of the tenant, the section was extended by 5' into the private garden immediately over the boundary wall of the nursery garden. Here the present ground level is about 1' (0.30m) below that of the nursery garden. (John Ward notes on his sketch plan of Little Chester [December 1904: now in the Derby Local History Library] that this garden had been levelled. The major part has since been incorporated into the nursery garden and the boundary wall demolished.)

The strata excavated sloped eastwards, probably due to subsidence caused by the proximity of the defensive ditch. At the lowest level, 6' 8" (2m) below the datum, a concrete floor was uncovered (layer 25). This floor, which had been cut through by the later defensive wall, was overlain by a filling of pebbles, clay and sand (layer 26) 6–10" (0.15–0.25m) thick and containing fragments of glass and a few sherds of a rough-cast beaker. Partly covering this layer was a thin deposit of red clay (layer 27) which reached a maximum thickness of 1" (3.8cm) at the eastern limit of the section. Above this was a layer of sandy clay (layer 28) which averaged 9" (0.23m) in thickness. The top of this layer had been cut into by a medieval robber trench. Over this layer and also cut through by the trench was a mixed filling (layer 29) containing many samian sherds and also the rim of a mortarium which fitted a base found under the defensive wall (Fig. 3:40). In the top of this filling was a depression yielding a quantity of plain and decorated samian sherds (layer 30).

The rampart (Plate 1)

The rampart had been constructed with slabs of clay placed in layers directly on top of the ash layer (layer 21). The clay was mainly brown in colour, though occasional slabs of red and grey clay had been used. These different colours indicated that each clay slab was roughly 1' (0.30m) square and 3" (7.5cm) in thickness. No indications of log cordons or timber strappings were found. At the tail of the rampart was a rudimentary retaining wall. The rampart survived to a



Plate 1 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: clay rampart overlying pebble floor.

height of 2' 3" (0.69m) and its remaining width, measured between the inner face of the later defensive wall and the unmortared rubble-stone retaining wall, was 18' (5.5m). The rampart had been cut back when the stone wall was built and its original width must therefore have been in excess of 20' (6.1m).

Very few sherds were found securely stratified within the rampart clay, the only significant piece being from a plain samian Curle 11 bowl. Lying on the tail of the rampart, and mixed in with gravel and pebbles, was a large mass of building débris (layer 24) which contained fragments of *opus signinum* flooring, tiles, burnt clay, charcoal and a large quantity of potsherds mixed together. This material is likely to be débris from the building that the rampart displaced, which had been thrown onto the rear of the defences as the simplest means of disposal. Excavation of this deposit (layer 24) was made extremely difficult by the presence of iron salts which had consolidated it into a hard compact mass of iron pan, thus obscuring any stratification within it.

The latest date for a coarse ware sherd is a mortarium fragment found in layer 24 which carried the stamp of the Midland potter *ICOTASGUS* (retrograde) (Fig. 3:16), who is considered by Mrs K. F. Hartley (*pers. comm.*) to have worked in the period c. AD 135-70.

Construction trench and foundations for the defensive wall

In order to construct the massive defensive wall the sloping front of the clay rampart had been cut away and a deep trench dug for the foundations. This foundation consisted of at least seven courses of pitched sandstone blocks which continued downwards from a depth of 6' 6" (2.00m) to at least 13' 7" (4.1m) below the bench mark. It was not possible to determine with certainty the true depth of the foundation due to difficulties caused by the water table. The two upper

courses existed as pitched blocks only at the sides; the space between them was filled with smaller pieces of sandstone set in clay.

It was evident that erosion of the sides of the construction trench had taken place after the laying of the foundations. Silt containing samian and coarse ware had fallen in on top of the pitched sandstone foundations (layer 31). This was confirmed by a mortarium base from the silt which fitted a rim recovered from layer 29 (Fig. 3:40), a stratum lying in front of the wall. Thus despite the fact that second-century samian was found underneath the stone wall it cannot be used as dating evidence for that structure.

The silt had been allowed to remain and a bed of cement spread over it, into which the sandstone blocks of the defensive wall had been set. In places, the pitched footing had settled after the construction of the wall, causing a gap to develop below the wall. Such a gap fortunately coincided with this section, allowing the above-mentioned pottery to be recovered and the underside of the wall to be examined.

The defensive wall

The defensive wall was solidly constructed. Large irregular sandstone blocks set in concrete formed the core. The roughly-dressed inner facing stones had survived almost to ground level, but all the facing stones had been robbed from the outer face. Investigation of the outer face was hampered by the unstable state of the modern boundary wall, which at the time of excavation stood on the outer edge of the remaining wall core. The original width of the wall was therefore difficult to ascertain but was certainly around 9' (2.74m); the width from the boundary wall to the inner face of the defensive wall was 8' 6" (2.59m). No dressed stone was found amongst the



Plate 2 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: robber trench.

loose rubble in the robber trench against the outer face. However, an outer facing stone was found *in situ* in the west wall of the fort during the excavation of the west gate conducted by Miss R. Annable in 1968 (Annable and Wheeler 1985). This was a tapering block of gritstone with the broad and outer face trimmed rectangularly to 18" (0.46m) wide and 7" high (0.19m). It is now in Derby Museum.

Robber trenches (Plate 2)

A presumed robber trench dug alongside the inner face of the defensive wall was apparently of medieval date. It had been back-filled with a mixture of sandstone rubble, mortar, soil, fragments of Roman roofing tiles, a few Roman pottery sherds and some small fragments of medieval pottery, including the handle of a green glazed jug. At this time an intrusion had been made westwards into the rampart, forming a scoop that had been back-filled in a similar manner to the main trench. Although the rough inner wall facing stones remained *in situ* up to ground level, the filling of the trench indicated that stone robbing was the purpose. Undoubtedly, the wall at that time stood above ground level and stones would have been removed from it. A second narrow trench, probably exploratory, had been cut into the filling of the medieval trench, close to the inner face of the wall. This trench was found to contain nineteenth-century pottery. A trench had been dug alongside the outside face of the wall to facilitate the removal of the gritstone facing.

THE POTTERY

Coarse ware from Layer 5

Fig. 3, no. 1 Mortarium rim in hard creamy-buff fabric carrying the stamp of the potter Albinus. Mrs K. F. Hartley (*pers. comm.*) gives the working period of this potter as c. AD 60–90 and states that he is by far the most prolific mortarium maker stamping his vessels – over 350 of his stamps are known from sites throughout England, Wales and Scotland. His kilns have not yet been found, but his wares can be attributed to the extensive potteries between Verulamium and London, including the kilns known at Brockley Hill and Radlett (cf. Frere 1972, 371-2, nos. 1-12).

Coarse ware from Layer 6

Fig. 3, no. 2 Carinated bowl in a hard grey fabric, 7" (17.7cm) in diameter across the rim. Probably of local manufacture (cf. Brassington 1971, fig. 5, nos. 1-8).

Fig. 3, no. 3 Jar rim in a hard smooth grey fabric.

Fig. 3, no. 4 Distorted lid in a hard grey fabric, 6" (16.5cm) in diameter, probably of local manufacture.

Samian pottery from Layer 6

Fig. 4, no. 1 Form 37. Winged Victory, Déchelette (1904), 481=O.814, ovolo of Mercato or Biragillus. South Gaulish, c. AD 85-100.

Fig. 4, no. 2 Form 18/31. Wall sherd with carination; a thin-walled example. Lezoux micaceous fabric, probably Hadrianic or early Antonine.

Fig. 4, no. 3 Form 27. Fragment of a rim with a well-rounded upper curve. South Gaulish, possibly Flavian.

Coarse ware from Layer 12 (platform drainage layer)

Fig. 3, no. 5 Jar base in a discoloured grey fabric with dark grey external patches.

Fig. 3, no. 6 Body sherd from a rusticated grey ware jug.

Fig. 3, no. 7 Body sherd from a rusticated jar in a light grey fabric, slightly burnt.

Fig. 3, no. 8 Fragment of a jar base in an orange coloured fabric with a pinkish core. The fabric is similar to no. 9 and this base possibly forms part of the same vessel.

Fig. 3, no. 9 Body sherd from a painted jar some 8" (20cm) in diameter, with an orange fabric and pinkish core. Orange-brown decoration.

Fig. 3, no. 10 Body sherd from a painted jar in a light orange fabric with a light grey core and white painted decoration.

Fig. 3, no. 11 Fragment from a rough-cast beaker in an orange fabric with a dark brown colour-coat.

Fig. 3, no. 12 Body sherd with faint incised decoration, roughish fabric and a black surface.

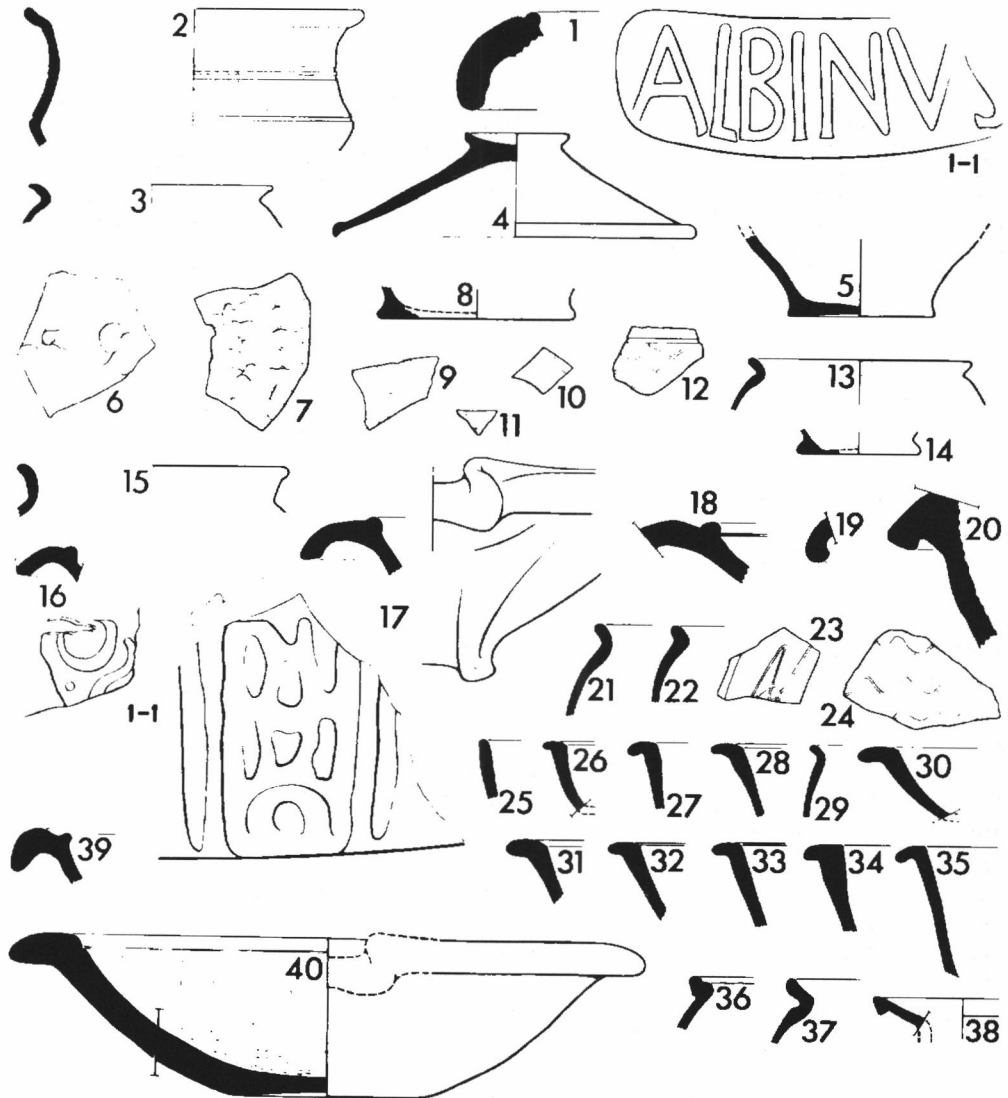


Fig. 3 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: coarse ware (at scale 1:4).

Fig. 3, no. 13 Jar rim in a burnt hard light grey fabric.

Fig. 3, no. 14 Jar base fragment in a hard light grey fabric, possibly part of no. 13.

Not illustrated

a Fragments from at least five flagons, body sherds from rustic and grey ware jars, a calcite-gritted vessel and other miscellaneous pottery.

Samian pottery from Layer 12 (identified by Dr Grace Simpson, *pers. comm.*)

Fig. 4, no. 4 Form 37. A basal wreath of pointed leaves with grass-tufts and tiny leaf tips in a horizontal panel, c. AD 75-90.

Fig. 4, no. 5 Form 15/17. Quarter-round moulding only. South Gaulish, presumably Flavian.

Fig. 4, no. 6 Form 18. Probably the dense red fabric of Les Martres de Veyre. Central Gaulish, late Flavian or Trajanic.

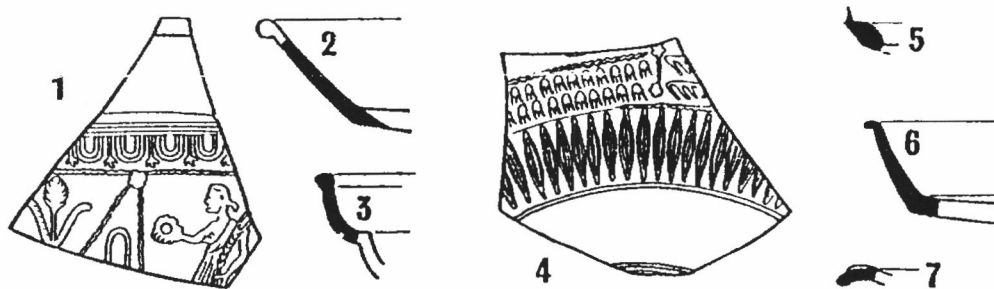


Fig. 4 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: samian, nos. 1-7 (at scale 1:2).

Fig. 4, no. 7 Form 35. A tiny rim fragment, so it is difficult to be certain, but the fabric seems to be micaceous and the gloss suggests a good Hadrianic Lezoux slip.

Not illustrated

b Three rim fragments, two South Gaulish and one Central Gaulish.

Coarse ware from Layer 19

Fig. 3, no. 15 Rim of a BB1 ware cooking pot. No wavy lines appear on the neck.

Not illustrated

c Fragments of two grey ware vessels and a flagon in cream coloured fabric.

d Body sherd of a large amphora, found lying on the surface of layer 19.

Samian pottery from Layer 19

Not illustrated

e Rim fragment from a slender-walled form 18 (small size). Very smooth, especially inside. The pinkish fabric has the 'speckles' of a Flavian La Graufesenque body.

f Eight small fragments forming part of the base of a samian dish, form 18, micaceous fabric.

Samian pottery from Layer 20

Not illustrated

g Two rim fragments found on the floor surface. Probably from a form 37. Coarse grained micaceous Lezoux fabric of Hadrianic/Antonine period.

h Samian bowl fragment found in the beam slot, form 37, bearing an ovolo which matches that on a mould of a Lezoux bowl signed by the X5 potter Catussa of Lezoux, c. AD 160-190.

Mortaria from Layer 24 (overlying the clay rampart)

Fig. 3, no. 16 *Icotasgi* (retrograde). Fragment of a mortarium rim in a light grey fabric with a cream surface, carrying part of the stamp of Icotasgus. Dated to AD 135-70 by K. F. Hartley (*pers. comm.*).

Fig. 3, no. 17 Mortarium trademark. In a dense, very hard, muddy-brown fabric with a thick slate-grey core. There is no trituration grit on the fragment. This certainly appears to have been misfired and is likely to be a waster. A second stamp from the same die was found at Templeborough. A third stamp has been found at Little Chester (Birss and Wheeler 1985, 12). The date of this potter is likely to be mid-second century. K. F. Hartley (*pers. comm.*).

Fig. 3, no. 18 Mortarium rim in a hard grey fabric with a rough orange/purple coloured surface. Similar in profile to a rim found at The Square (Brassington 1980, 42, no. 571), which is considered to be a local product.

Fig. 3, no. 19 Mortarium rim fragment, cream with a pink core.

Fig. 3, no. 20 Mortarium rim in a hard grey fabric with a thick discoloured greyish-white slip. The vessel is crudely made and the interior surface has broken away. Possibly a local product.

Black Burnished ware from Layer 24

Fig. 3, no. 21 BB1 cooking pot rim 6" (15cm) in diameter.

Fig. 3, no. 22 BB1 cooking pot rim (distorted) 5" (14cm) in diameter.

- Fig. 3, no. 23 BB1 ware dish base.
 Fig. 3, no. 24 BB1 ware dish base with wavy line decoration on the underside.
 Fig. 3, no. 25 BB1 ware dish rim 7" (18cm) in diameter.
 Fig. 3, no. 26 BB1 ware dish 5" (13cm) in diameter with latticed external decoration.
 Fig. 3, no. 27 BB1 ware sherd 6" (16.5cm) in diameter with latticed external decoration.
 Fig. 3, no. 28 BB1 ware sherd 8" (20cm) in diameter with latticed external decoration.

Coarse ware of BB1-type fabric from Layer 24

- Fig. 3, no. 29 Jar rim 4" (10cm) in diameter. Grey BB1-type fabric with latticed external decoration.
 Fig. 3, no. 30 Dish 8" (20cm) in diameter with light grey BB1-type fabric, undecorated.
 Fig. 3, no. 31 Dish 8" (20cm) in diameter with partly oxidised BB1-type fabric and looped external decoration.
 Fig. 3, no. 32 Rim fragment, brownish-grey BB1-type fabric with looped external decoration.
 Fig. 3, no. 33 Rim 7" (18cm) in diameter with light-grey BB1-type fabric and looped external decoration.
 Fig. 3, no. 34 Bowl 10" (25.5cm) in diameter with an oxidised grey BB1-type fabric and latticed external decoration.
 Fig. 3, no. 35 Bowl 8" (21.5cm) in diameter with an oxidised BB1-type fabric and latticed external decoration.

Other coarse ware from Layer 24

- Fig. 3, no. 36 Calcite-gritted cooking pot 6" (7.5cm) in diameter. Fawn coloured fabric, blackened externally.
 Fig. 3, no. 37 Jar rim 5" (13cm) in diameter with a hard light-grey fabric and a polished outer surface.
 Fig. 3, no. 38 Flagon lip 3" (9cm) in diameter with a smooth cream coloured fabric.

Not illustrated

A single Derbyshire ware body sherd.

Figured samian from the deposit overlying the tail of the rampart (Layer 24)

- Fig. 5, no. 8 Form 37. In the style of Criciro. Boar O.1666 with wavy line border. Ovolo, Rogers 1974, B185 badly impressed. *c.* AD 140-60.
 Fig. 5, no. 9 Form 37 burnt. In the style of Attianus. *c.* AD 120-140/5.
 Fig. 5, no. 10 Form 30. In the style of Doccalus. Figures and arcades, Perseus O.233. See Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 93, no. 23. *c.* AD 130-50.
 Fig. 5, no. 11 Form 37 burnt. In the style of Secundus. Sheep O.1857A, putti O.417. *c.* AD 120-40.
 Fig. 5, no. 12 Form 37. In the style of Sacer. See Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 83, no. 17. *c.* AD 120-140/5.
 Fig. 5, no. 13 Form 37. Brilliant gloss. In the style of Sacer. Ovolo 1. See Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 84, no. 14. *c.* AD 120-140/5.
 Fig. 5, no. 14 Form 30. In the style of Sacer. *c.* AD 120-140/5.
 Fig. 5, no. 15 Form 37.
 Fig. 5, no. 16 Form 37. Partly burnt. Drusus II. Hare O.2116, Lyon O.1423, Nude man O.63. See Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 89, nos. 12 and 15. *c.* AD 125-40.
 Fig. 5, no. 17 Form 37. Docilis. The panelled decoration is arranged vertically with wavy border lines similar to the signed sherd shown in Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 91, no. 8. The figure types are Diana O.106 and a variant of the nude man O.677. The decorative details are Stansfield and Simpson 1958, fig. 24, nos. 1 and 2, also a smaller version of no. 10. The blurred double-bordered ovolo, tongue and rosette, is probably ovolo no. 1. *c.* AD 130-50.
 Fig. 5, no. 18 Form 30, slightly burnt. In the style of Donnaucus. Bacchus O.571. Inverted Y-shaped motif. See Stansfield and Simpson 1958, fig. 11, no. 7.
 Fig. 5, no. 19 Form 37, burnt. Style of Docilis. *c.* AD 130-50.
 Fig. 5, no. 20 Form 37, slightly burnt. Fawn O.608 deeply impressed, ornament similar to Rogers 1974, S 73.
 Fig. 5, no. 21 Form 37, slightly burnt. Gladiator deeply impressed, possibly the same bowl as No. 20.
 Fig. 5, no. 22 Form 37, slightly burnt. Ovolo similar to that used by the potter X4, Igocatus.
 Fig. 5, no. 23 Form 37. Deeply impressed.

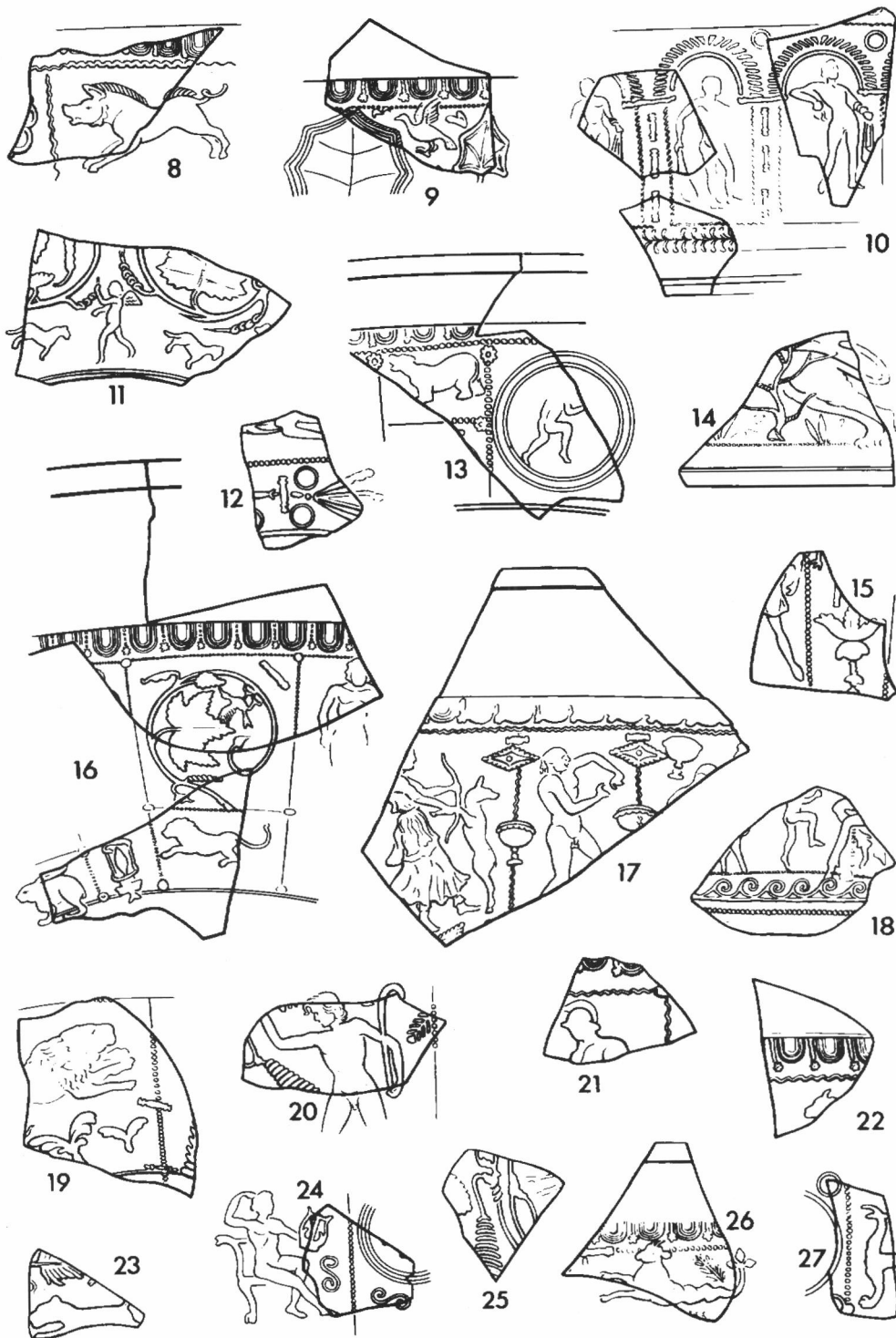


Fig. 5 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: samian, nos. 8-27 (at scale 1:2).

- Fig. 5, no. 24 Form 37. Large S potter. Apollo O.84. *c.* AD 125-45.
- Fig. 5, no. 25 Form 37, deeply impressed and burnt. Possibly the same bowl as No. 23. Ornament similar to Rogers 1974, S73.
- Fig. 5, no. 26 Form 37, slightly burnt. Sacer. Sea bull O.42. *c.* AD 120-140/5.
- Fig. 5, no. 27 Form 37. Sacer. Apollo O.84. Same bowl as No. 13.
- Fig. 6, no. 28 Form 37, burnt.
- Fig. 6, no. 29 Form 37, burnt. The 'Ranto' style (Rogers 1974, X-9). The dolphins are like Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 31, no. 366 with the Rogers 1974, ovolo B38 as Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 33, no. 387. *c.* AD 120-35.
- Fig. 6, no. 30 Form 37. Acanthus similar to Rogers 1974, K16.
- Fig. 6, no. 31 Form 37, burnt.
- Fig. 6, no. 32 Form 30. Ram's horn detail Rogers 1974, G375, *cf.* Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 36, no. 424.
- Fig. 6, no. 33 Form 37, brilliant gloss. Pediment, Rogers 1974, U269 used by Cettus, Sacer and Attianus.
- Fig. 6, no. 34 Form 30. The small circles suggest the style of Donnaucus.
- Fig. 6, no. 35 Form 37, burnt.
- Fig. 6, no. 36 Form 30, burnt. *Cf.* Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 44, no. 509 and pl. 50, no. 597.
- Fig. 6, no. 37 Form 30, slightly burnt.
- Fig. 6, no. 38 Form 30, burnt. Style of Ioernalis. Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 40. *c.* AD 100-20.
- Fig. 6, no. 39 Form 37, burnt. Slanting corded tongue with petalled rosette, Stansfield and Simpson 1958, fig. 18. X6 potter. Ovolo 2. Wavy line border. *c.* AD 125-50.
- Fig. 6, no. 40 Form 37. Potter X2. Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 9, no. 118. *c.* AD 100-20.
- Fig. 6, no. 41 Form 37, burnt. The rosette, Rogers 1974, C133. *c.* AD 100-40.
- Fig. 6, no. 42 Form 37, burnt. Potter of the Rosette, Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 21, no. 259. *c.* AD 100-20.
- Fig. 6, no. 43 Form 37. Drusus II. Brilliant gloss, slightly burnt. Sphinx O.853. *c.* AD 125-50.
- Fig. 6, no. 44 Form 37. The foot-shaped detail is similar to Rogers 1974, U192, used by the potter X-9 (see no. 29 above), also used by Criciro, see Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 118. *Cf.* Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 116, no. 18 and pl. 28, no. 334.
- Fig. 6, no. 45 Form 37, burnt. Seated Bacchus O.571.
- Fig. 6, no. 46 Form 37. Hercules O.783 was used by Criciro but the beaded rosette suggests the style of Donnaucus, fig. 11 no. 1 of Stansfield and Simpson 1958, 42.
- Fig. 6, no. 47 Form 37.
- Fig. 6, no. 48 Form 37, burnt. Criciro see Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 117, no. 6.
- Fig. 6, no. 49 Form 37.
- Fig. 6, no. 50 Form 30, burnt.

Plain samian from the deposit overlying the tail of the rampart (Layer 24)

Samian dishes predominated with 22 bases, many of which were burnt. These were mostly of form 18/31 with five carrying potters' stamps (see below). Forms 36 and Curle 15 were represented by one rim-sherd each. There were also five cups of form 27 and one rim from a form 33.

Potters' stamps (Layer 24)

Identified by B. R. Hartley (*pers. comm.*).

Fig. 6, no. 51 SILVI F (Die Xxh)

From one of the rare dies of Silvius of Lezoux and only otherwise known from Wilderspool and Eijsden (Holland). He has many similar dies, however, and they occur not uncommonly in deposits, and on forms, suggesting the period *c.* AD 125-45.

Fig. 6, no. 52]VI OF on form 18/31 This stamp can be matched with other stamps of Silvius, now with fair certainty. There is only one other example in Britain of this die, which I think is involved on a form 18/31 at Leicester. There are ten examples in Lower Germany. A Hadrianic date seems certain in view of this, but to be sure one should estimate *c.* AD 125-45.

Fig. 6, no. 53 [SACR]APO F (Die 11e) Sacrapo or Sacirapo (the form of the name seems to be

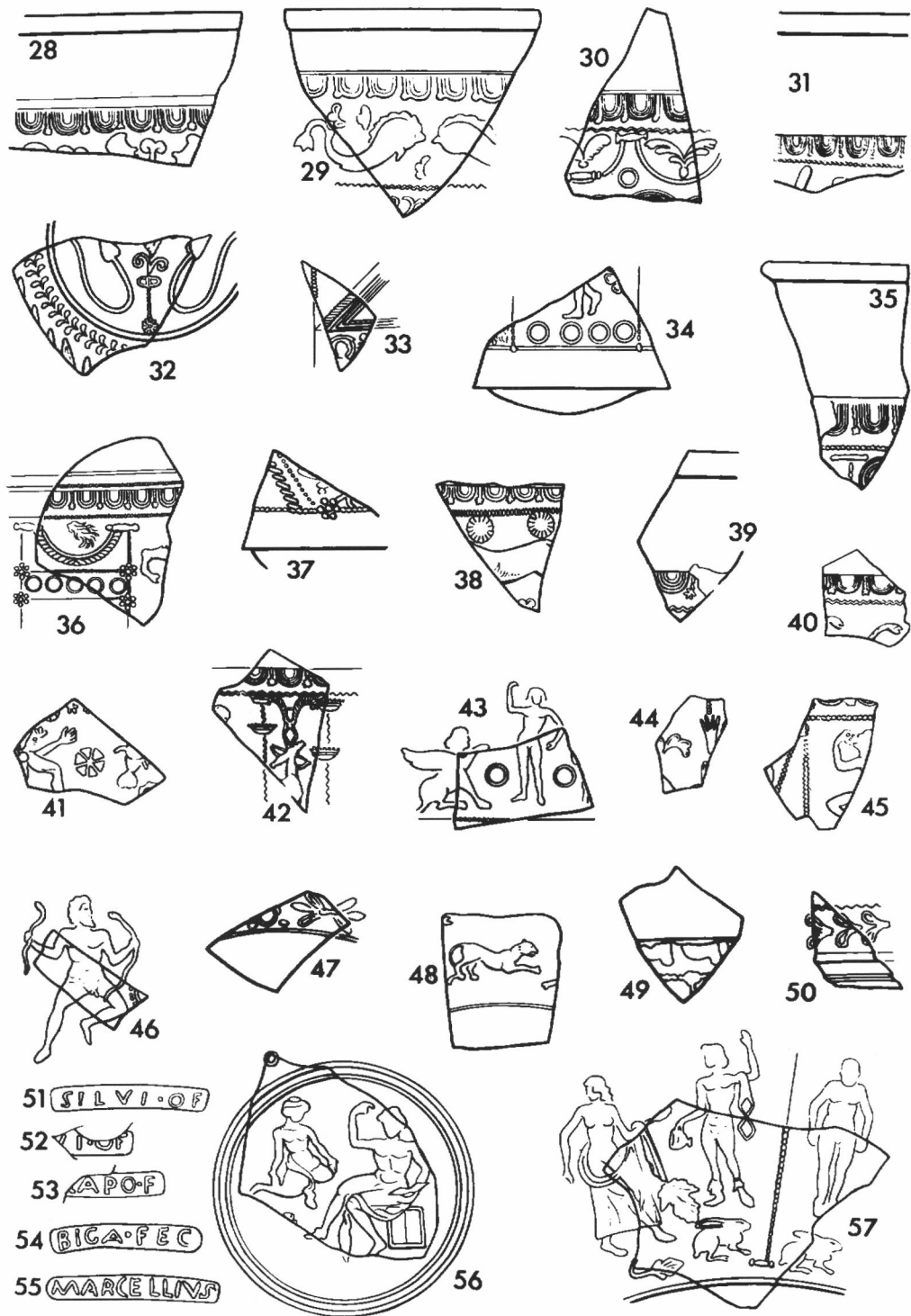


Fig. 6 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: samian, nos. 28-57 (at scale 1:2, except stamps—1:1).

interchangeable) worked in Central Gaul, probably, but not quite certainly, at Lezoux. Evidence for him from dated sites is rare, but again combines with the forms used to suggest a Hadrianic-Antonine date.

Fig. 6, no. 54 BIGA FEC on form 18/31. From Lezoux (not South Gaulish as Oswald thought). Other examples from Wroxeter 1927–7, pit 15; and Hadrian's Wall. (There are many form 27s, though very few form 33s). Hadrianic. c. AD 120-40.

Fig. 6, no. 55 MARCELLIVS on form 18/31 or 31 From Lezoux (in a Hadrianic-Antonine group). The form suggests c. AD 125-155.

Mortaria from Layer 29

Fig. 3, no. 39 Mortarium in a pinkish fabric with a grey core and roughish cream-coloured surface. A product of the potteries between London and Verulamium. Trajanic-Hadrianic.

Fig. 3, no. 40 Mortarium rim in a hard reddish-orange fabric with white grits. 'Raetian' type, dated Flavian-Trajanic. Fits with the base from layer 31 under the defensive wall. Similar to the products of Holt and Wilderspool.

Figured samian from Layers 29-30

Fig. 7, no. 58 Form 37. The style is close to that of Birrantus (see Stansfield and Simpson 1958, 90.1). Mercury O.530, Pudicitia O.926A, lion O.1495A, panther O.1503, Aesculapius O.907, open-mouthed panther in medallion O.1517. c. AD 125-50.

Fig. 7, no. 59 Form 37. Gladiator O.1002 with the motif and five-pointed rosette on the ovolo tongue of the large S potter. c. AD 125-45.

Fig. 7, no. 60 Nude man O.677, same bowl as no. 59.

Fig. 7, no. 61 Lion and large S motif, same bowl as no. 59. c. AD 125-45.

Fig. 7, no. 62 Form 37. Peleus O.883. South Gaulish.

Mortaria from Layer 31 (under the defensive wall)

Fig. 3, no. 40 Mortarium base fitting the rim from layer 29 (see above).

Figured and decorated samian from Layer 31 (under the defensive wall)

Fig. 7, no. 63 Form 37. Possibly Pan O.714=D416, like Knorr 1907, Taf. XII;1. South Gaulish. Late first century.

Fig. 7, no. 64 Form 37. Beaded border and rosette, high gloss, see Stansfield and Simpson 1958, fig. 21, no. 10, a detail of Acaunissa. c. AD 125-50.

Fig. 7, no. 65 Form 37. Victory O.814, charioteer O.1161, dancing satyrs O.722 and O.646, Diana O.103, Bacchus O.597. A product of Banassac. c. AD 90-100.

Fig. 7, no. 66 Form 37. Possibly Germanus' tree tips, as in Curle 1911, 213, no. 8. Probably South Gaulish. c. AD 65-80.

Fig. 7, no. 67 Form 37. Venus O.331A, style of Cinnamus with the same medallion as Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 160, no. 35 and Kenyon 1948, fig. 9, no. 21.

Fig. 7, no. 68 Form 37. Catull... , the X5 potter of Lezoux. Lion O.1497G, Minerva O.126A. From the same mould as Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 67, no. 4. c. AD 125-45.

Fig. 7, no. 69 Form 37 with rouletted decoration. East Gaulish, cf. Johns 1971, pl. 14a. Second century.

Unstratified samian pottery from the nursery garden

Fig. 6, no. 56 Form 37. Albus. Probably from the same mould as Stansfield and Simpson 1958, pl. 120, no. 5. c. AD 150-80.

Fig. 6, no. 57 Form 37. Cetus (small S potter) from Les Martres de Veyre. Dancer O.349, Bacchus O.566, nude O.637, hare O.2057, small leaf detail (Stansfield and Simpson 1958, fig. 42, no. 4, and p. 245, pl. 141), large leaf (new detail). c. AD 135-60.

DISCUSSION

The sherds found in the lowest occupation layers (4-7) were manufactured in the late first century, with the single exception of a body sherd from a samian dish of form 18/31 which is probably of Hadrianic or early Antonine date (Fig. 4:2).

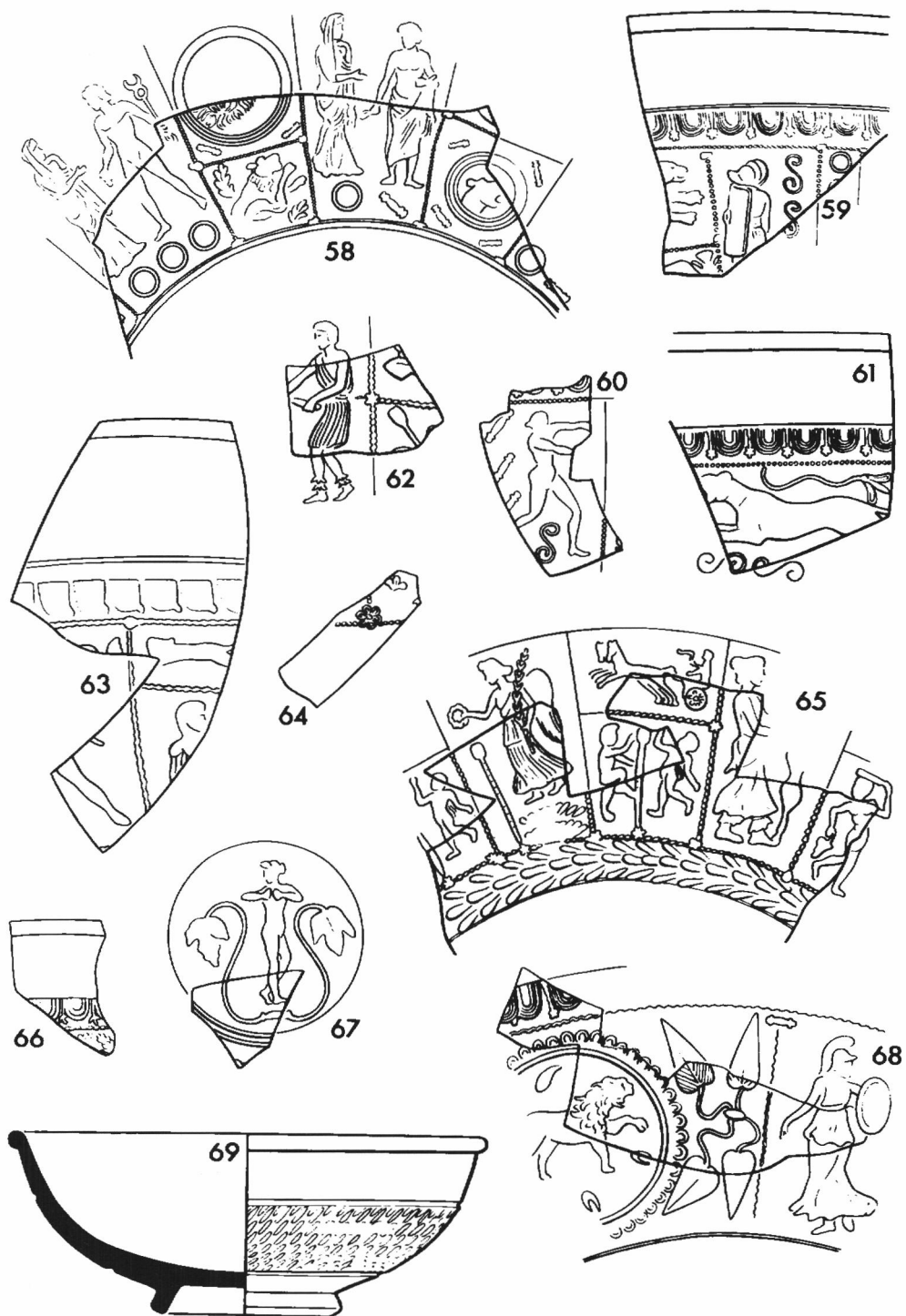


Fig. 7 Roman fort at Little Chester, east wall: samian, nos. 58-69 (at scale 1:2)..

On top of the thin ash layer (7) a building platform had been raised. This was constructed of layers of clay, gravel and sandstone. The only pottery found embedded in this platform was contained in the dirty red clay overlying the sandstone layer. There was no BB1 ware and again all but one of the samian sherds were made in the late first century. The exception was a tiny rim fragment of form 35, the micaceous fabric and gloss of which suggest a Hadrianic date (Fig. 4:7). The concrete floor (layer 25) is probably associated with the first occupation layers (4-7). The strata above it indicate that the platform did not extend this far east.

On the platform a large building had been erected which showed signs of modification or rebuilding. The latest floor had been extended by the removal of an internal partition and the resultant slot filled and compacted by trampling over a long period. A samian fragment from this slot carries an ovolo which matches one used by the potter X5, Catussa of Lezoux, AD 160-190. The extended room was in excess of twenty feet (6m) long, implying that it formed part of a very large building, and if so the platform must also have covered a large area. The northern edge lay somewhere between site A and site B (Fig. 1) and it must have extended westwards over a considerable area of the nursery garden (Brassington 1982, 74).

The evidence suggests that the platform and building were constructed during the reign of Hadrian. The building was destroyed either by hostile action or deliberate clearance and the clay rampart of a large fort placed immediately on top of the burnt remains. (Two sherds of figured samian, form 37, Paternus II, found *under* the clay rampart on the site of the south-east corner of the fort, are dated after AD 160: Sparey-Green) The pottery found, mixed with the building debris, thrown onto the rear of this rampart does not suggest a date of manufacture much later than the mid second century. The latest sherd is a fragment of a mortarium carrying the stamp of the potter Icotasgus, AD 135-70 (Fig. 3:16). The dark earth of the nursery garden contains many samian sherds of Antonine date.

It is not clear why a masonry wall of such strength was required. It may have been part of the defence against the central government in the late third century. In support of this theory, Carausian coins were found, on the Manor House Farm site, amongst the waste stone chippings and mortar associated with the construction of the wall (Sparey-Green; cf. layer 20h).

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