

EXCAVATIONS IN TOWER STREET, CHICHESTER, 1965

By ALEC DOWN

Introduction

Early in 1965 the Chichester Excavations Committee was informed that the site of the new County Library Headquarters in Tower Street would be available for investigation for a short time prior to building operations commencing. As the area is near to the Roman buildings known to lie on the west side of the Forum¹ it was decided to take advantage of the opportunity before the site was sealed off for our lifetime.

THE EXCAVATIONS

In view of the very short time available, a mechanical excavator was employed to remove the top four feet of soil and only those areas which seemed likely to yield undisturbed Roman and medieval layers were examined in detail. Two cuts were made (Fig. 1). The area fronting on to Tower Street was left untouched because of the cellars known to exist under the houses lately demolished. Only three areas warranted further investigation, there being much medieval and later disturbance over most of the site. These were:- AREA 1, *Trench A, Eastern end* (Fig. 1). In the eastern half of the trench was a metallated area of flints in clay, 4ft. 6in. below ground level, extending for 30ft. from N. to S., with an average thickness of 1ft. 6in. Oyster shells, tile and pink mortar formed the top dressing, which suggests that it was in use for some time, possibly as a yard at the rear of premises fronting on Tower Street. The layer was cut through by a number of medieval and post-medieval pits. Underneath were layers of clean gravel and yellow clay which formed the top seal for a 13th century rubbish pit.

AREA 2, *Trench A1 and B* (Figs. 1 and 2). At a depth of 4ft. a compact layer of brown earth mixed with yellow clay was found. It was cut away on the N. side by two pits. The layer contained only Roman pottery and there was a considerable amount of painted wall plaster and brick in it. Below this was a deep hole cut into the natural gravel. From its shape it could well have been a very large ditch, or possibly a gravel pit. Unfortunately the bottom was completely cut away by a medieval pit, and it was not possible to follow the feature northward into the adjoining County Council car park. The side of the hole had been undercut in one place, which suggests that if it was originally a ditch it had later been quarried for gravel. The feature cut through a rubbish pit (Fig. 2) dated by samian ware to early 2nd century, and cannot therefore

¹ J. Holmes. 'Chichester: The Roman Town', *Chichester Papers No. 50* (1965), p. 10.

be earlier than this period. The date when it was last open is suggested by a late 3rd century radiate coin found in the silt near the bottom. The fill of the feature above the silt contained a number of sherds of samian ware, none of which is later than mid 2nd century.

AREA 3, *Trench D3 and D4* (Figs. 1 and 2). In the second of the two cuttings (Trench D), at a depth of 5ft., was a thick layer of burnt wood which extended beyond the sides of the trench. Sealed below it were two sherds of samian ware, one of Claudian date and the other pre-Flavian, together with a number of pieces of bronze. The burnt wood was covered by layers of clay, probably put down

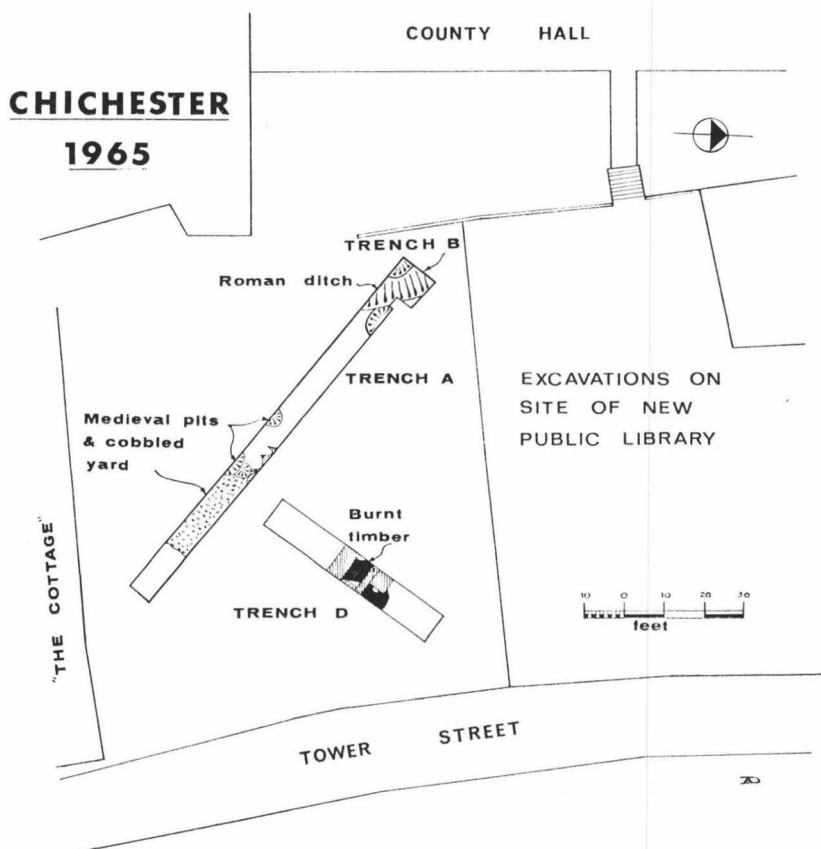


FIG. 1
Plan of the Site

to level up the site. It is not possible to come to any firm conclusions about this layer. Both the sections and the sample of pottery are too small. Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests a period of destruction and levelling up which occurred about the end of the third quarter of the 1st century A.D. Excavations on the site of the new Post Office Telephone Exchange at Chapel Street in 1962¹ showed that there were earlier Roman levels sealed below the gravel spread identified as the Forum. Over these levels, and immediately under the metalling of the Forum was a dark layer of occupation debris. This layer had previously been noted when the Post Office was built in 1935,² and pottery recovered from it then and again in 1962 and 1963 strongly suggests a date of *c.*80 A.D. for the laying-out of the Forum. It is possible that this period of replanning took place after the death of King Cogidubnus, which is unlikely, on historical evidence, to have been later than 80 A.D.³ The burnt layer in Area 3, less than 100 yards from the Forum may well represent part of the same process.

Acknowledgements

It would not have been possible to do this emergency excavation without the co-operation of the West Sussex County Council, and I gratefully acknowledge the very ready help given by the County Architect, Mr. B. Peters, and his staff. The work was carried out in appalling weather by a devoted team of volunteers from the Chichester Excavations Committee, assisted by students from Bishop Otter College and the Field Archaeology Class at the Chichester College of Further Education. Keith and Roger Lintott were responsible for site supervision and Geoffrey Claridge for the photography. I am indebted to Mr. Norman Cook, F.S.A., Keeper of the Guildhall Museum, London, who kindly made a preliminary examination of the samian ware, and to Mr. G. Dannell whose detailed report on certain key sherds is attached. Mr. Ralph Merrifield, F.S.A., also of the Guildhall Museum, examined the coins, and Mr. K. J. Barton, F.S.A., the medieval and later pottery. My thanks are also due to Mr. E. Garnett who drew all the pottery and small finds illustrated in this Report, and to Mr. Barry Cunliffe, F.S.A., who read the draft and made a number of helpful criticisms.

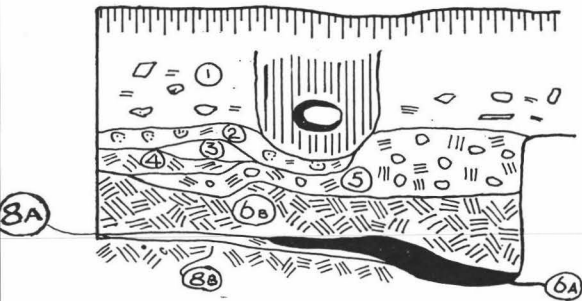
¹ J. Holmes, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 18.

² *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, vol. 76 (1935), pp. 161-170.

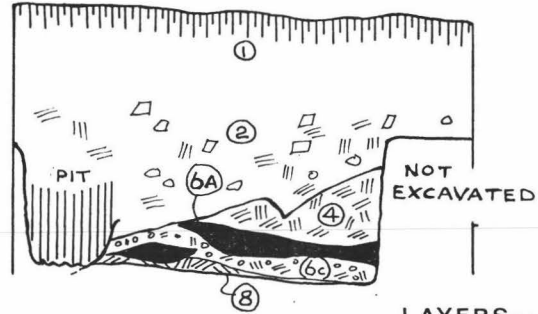
³ *Op. cit.*, vol. 94 (1956), pp. 101, 102.

AREA 3

TRENCH D4 SECTION A-A



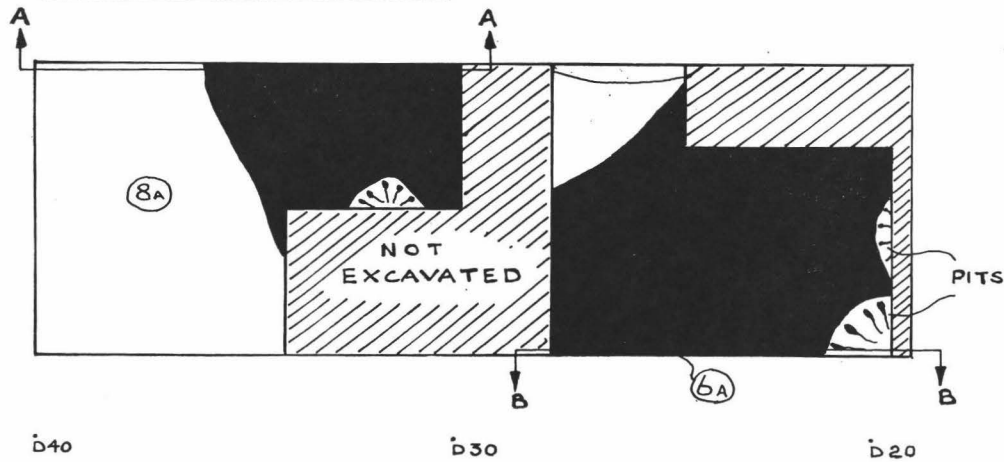
TRENCH D3 SECTION B-B



LAYERS - D3 & D4

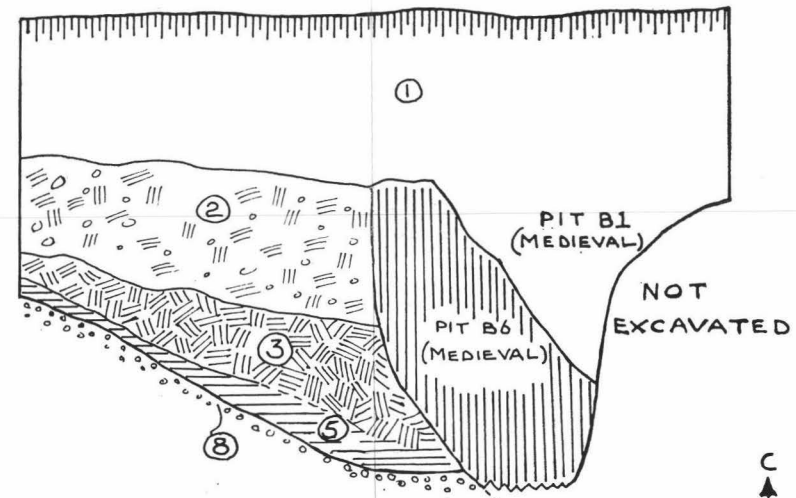
- 1 Topsoil
- 2 Yellow clay with mortar
- 3 Dirty clay with grit
- 4 Brown clay
- 5 Brown clay with sandstone
- 6a Burnt timber
- 6b Brown clay
- 6c Dirty grey clay with flints
- 8a Grey clay
- 8b Yellow clay (natural)

TRENCH D3 & D4 PLAN



AREA 2

TRENCH A1 (PART) & B. SECTION C-C



LAYERS

- 1 Topsoil
- 2 Yellow clay & Roman wall plaster
- 3 Yellow gritty clay
- 5 Clay silt
- 8 Gravel

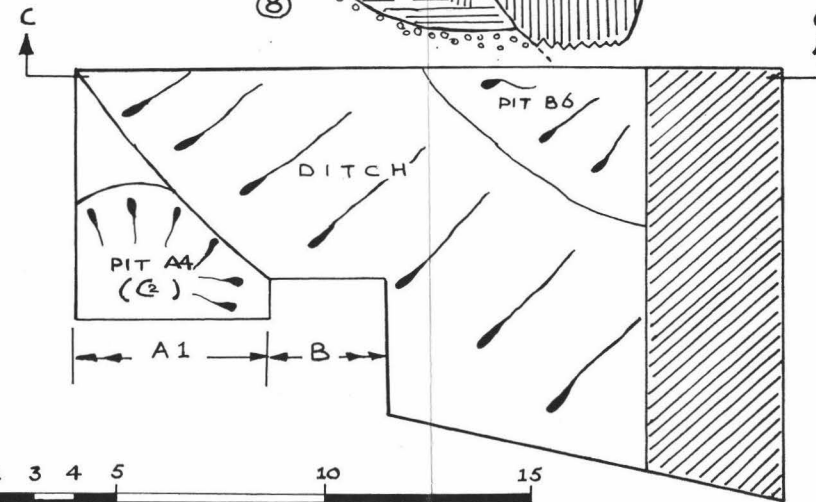


FIG. 2

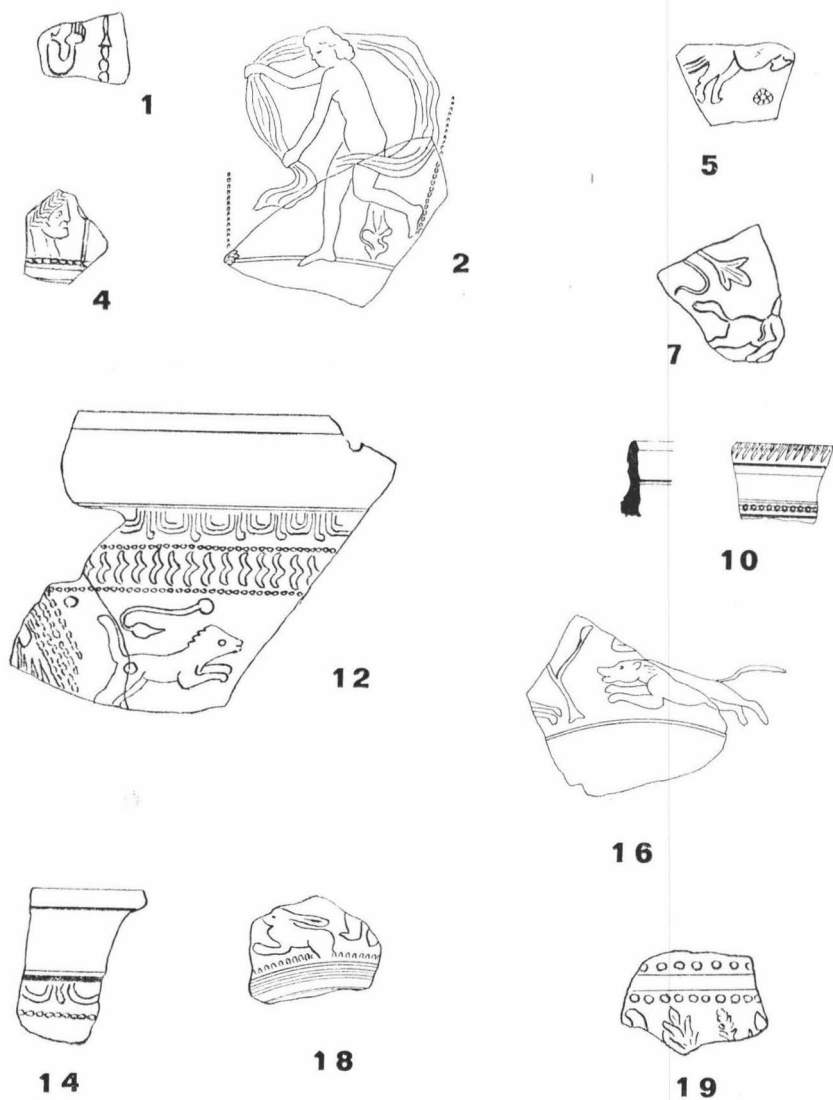


FIG. 3

Figured Samian Ware. Nos. 1-7 Area 2 (Ditch). No. 10 Area 3. Nos. 12-19
Miscellaneous. Scale: 1/1

THE FINDS¹

¹ The following abbreviations have been used in this section:—*Ant. J.*—*Antiquaries Journal*; *Camulodunum*—C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum* (Soc. of Antiquaries Research Report xiv, 1947); *C.G.P.*—J. A. Stanfield and G. Simpson, *Central Gaulish Pottery* (1958); *O and P*—F. Oswald and T. D. Price, *An Introduction to the Study of Terra Sigillata* (1920); *Oswald*—F. Oswald, *Index of Figure-Types on Terra Sigillata (Samian Ware)* (1936-7); *R.I.C.*—H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage* Vol. 2 (1926), pp. 101, 197; *S.A.C.*—*Sussex Archaeological Collections*.

THE SAMIAN WARE (see Fig. 3), by G. DANELL

AREA 2 (Layers refer to Fig. 2, section C-C).

Layer 2

1, 2. Dr. 37. Probably both fragments from the same vessel. The high relief and thick, light brown slip, together with unerased guide lines suggest the work of BVTRIO, as do the figure types of the Danseuse (*Oswald*, 360) and Bacchus, 578c. (*C.G.P.*, p. 61; *Oswald*, p. 52).

3. Coarse orange-red fabric, bright orange slip. Apparently from a flanged bowl similar to *O and P*, pl. lxxi, No. 16. This ware is similar in colour to the general range of 1st century Lezoux products, but the paste is not micaceous. Vessels made from similar coloured clays also appear in Trajanic-Hadrianic contexts, and perhaps this period is more likely for the present piece.

4. Dr. 29. Thin pink fabric, dull red slip. The head (*Oswald*, 1322) appears flanked by an upright pomegranate stalk on the right. The author has discussed this figure-type in *Ant. J.*, xlv, pp. 147-152, and it suffices to say that this sherd fits well with the series there attributed to ALBVS, and should be compared with *op. cit.*, p. 148, fig. 3; the pomegranate is that of the lower zone.

5. Dr. 30. Probably style of DIVIXTVS. Lion (*Oswald*, 1404) above small wreathed ring; both details appear on work of CRICIRO (*C.G.P.*, pl. 117 No. 7); Antonine.

Layer 3

6. Rim of Dr. 18; Flavian. 7. Sherd of Dr. 37; late 1st century.

Layer 5

8. Dr. 31. Smooth, deep red fabric and slip; stamped — — M; Hadrian-Antonine.

AREA 3 (Layers refer to fig. 2, sections A-A and B-B)

Layer 8a

9. Rim of Dr. 27; pre-Flavian.

10. Loeschcke 8 type. The small example of rim approximates closely to type IIb in *Camulodunum*, p. 184, fig. 43, No. 4. Fabric is pink and the slip fine, light brown, glossy. It is not quite so orange as the standard Arretine fabric, though closer to it than early South Gaulish wares, and may be either an Italian product, or one of the so-called 'Provincial Arretine' wares of, as yet, unsettled provenance. Claudian at the latest.

Layer 6c

11. Plate stamped by the potter MONTANVS; who appears to have worked in the period Nero-Vespasian, and probably worked earlier rather than later.

Miscellaneous (from medieval and later pits)

12. Dr. 37. Late South Gaulish product in panel decoration showing a lion (*Oswald*, 1394). The ovolo is similar to one used by PAVLLVS (*Knorr*, 1952, Taf. 50), although in the present example the tongue seems to bend very slightly to the right; late Flavian.

13. Dr. 37; Claudius-Nero. 14. Ovolo in the style of IVSTVS; Antonine.

15. Rim of Dr. 29; Flavian.

16. Dr. 37 in Martres de Veyres fabric. The surface is typically eroded, but it would appear that a dog to the right of a tree is chasing a stag; Trajanic-Hadrianic.

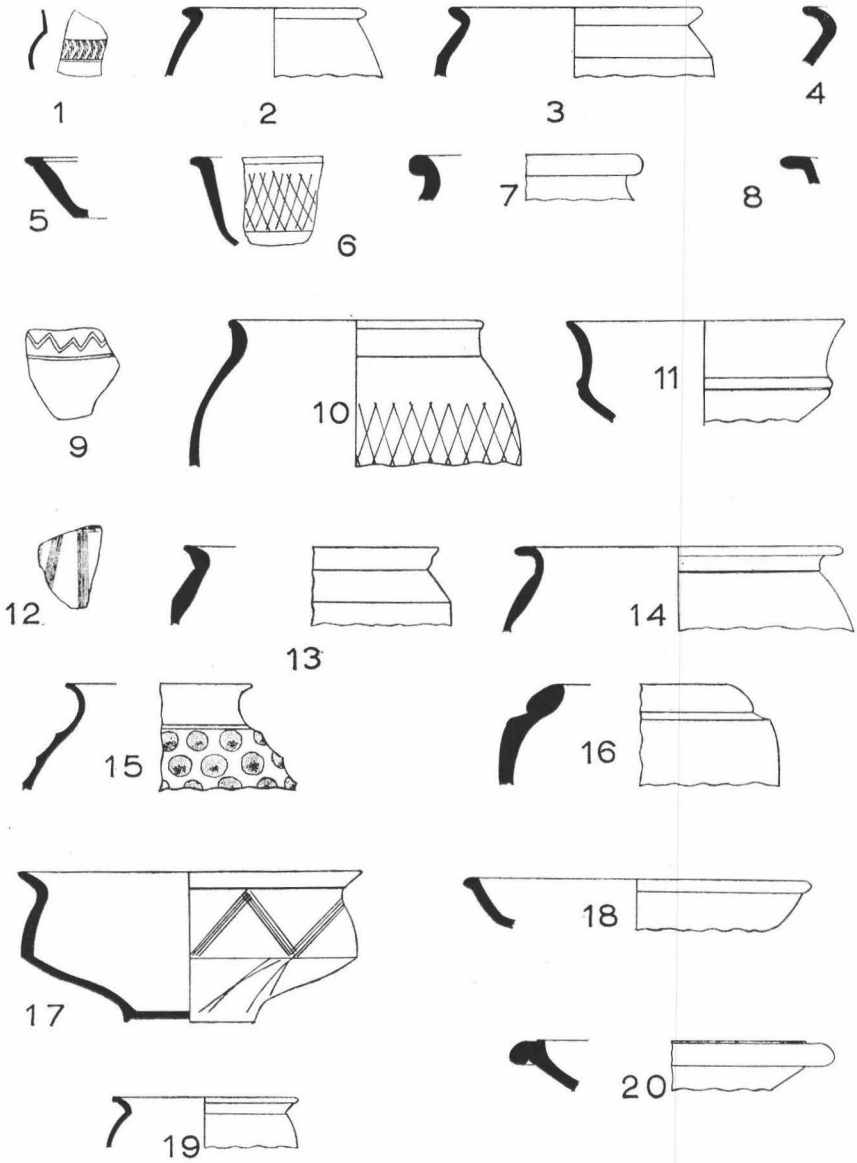


FIG. 4

Roman Pottery, Area 2. Nos. 1-9—Ditch, Nos. 10-20, 2nd century pit
Scale: No. 2- $\frac{1}{2}$. Remainder 1/1

17. Dr. 35/36. Smooth brown-red slip and fine thin pink paste. Almost certainly Nero-Flavian.

18. Dr. 37. Orange-red dull slip, dark red paste; very overfired; the sherd is unusually heavy. Mr. B. R. Hartley has observed this type of almost vitrified fabric from Hadrianic deposits. The rabbit or hare forming the extant decoration is so poorly impressed as to be of uncertain attribution.

19. Dr. 29. Large bead rows either side of central moulding over mixed foliage; Claudius-Nero.

THE COARSE WARE (see figs. 4 and 5)

AREA 2. Ditch (Layers refer to fig. 2, section C-C)

Layer 3

1. Fragment of beaker with rouletted decoration. Fine grey paste with metallic, dark grey slip.

Layer 5

2. Grey ware. 3. Grey ware with traces of white slip inside lip. 4. Grey ware. 5. Platter in grey ware; smooth finish inside (see *Camulodunum*, pl. I, 28a).

Layer 7

6. Grey ware with black burnished surface and lattice decoration. 7. Grey ware (*S.A.C.*, 95, p. 144, fig. 12 (7)). 8. Grey ware. 9. Sherd of hard grey ware with shallow tooled decoration.

AREA 2. Early 2nd century pit (fig. 2, pit A 4)

10. Necked jar in grey ware with shallow tooled lattice decoration. The shoulder, neck and lip have been lightly burnished.

11. Grey ware bowl with burnished exterior; horizontal tool marks on wall. See *S.A.C.*, 94, p. 135, fig. 12 (2), for type.

12. Fragment of beaker in grey ware with dark grey slip; deep vertical combed decoration below a line of punch marks.

13, 14. Grey ware. 15. Narrow-mouthed jar in grey ware with applied decoration *en barbotine* (*S.A.C.*, 80, p. 183, fig. 7 (32a) and p. 185).

16. Grey ware carinated bowl with thickened rim. 17. Grey ware carinated bowl with everted rim and shallow tooled decoration.

18. Grey ware platter. 19. Small beaker in buff ware with everted rim and dark grey slip. 20. Buff ware mortarium; related to *Camulodunum*, pl. lxxii, 193a.

AREA 3 (Layers refer to fig. 2, sections A-A and B-B)

Layer 3

21. Bead rimmed jar in fine grey paste with dark grey slip (*S.A.C.*, 94, p. 128, fig. 9(2) and p. 129).

Layer 8a

22. Fragment of base in heavily gritted dark grey paste. 23. Small fragment of thin red ware with external white slip. (Nos. 22, 23 are not illustrated).

Miscellaneous (from *post* Roman layers; see fig. 5)

24. Grey ware bead rimmed jar; *S.A.C.*, 94, p. 128, fig. 9(2). 25. Grey ware cavetto rimmed jar. 26. Grey ware dish with flat rim, undercut and pulled down.

27. Grey ware small carinated bowl with concave wall; *S.A.C.*, 94, p. 135, fig. 12(2). 28. Grey ware jar with everted rim trimmed flat at the tip. 29. Flanged bowl of grey, gritted ware, burnished black, with tooled decoration.

30. Jar with turned over rim; grey ware with blue-grey slip on lip and shoulder. *S.A.C.*, 95, p. 144, fig. 12 (14).

31. Mortarium in creamy buff ware with stamp on rim. *Camulodunum*, pp. 255, 256, fig. 53 (33), form 195c.

32. Grey ware shallow bowl with grooved rim. 33. Pale buff ware mortarium. 34. Grey ware; *S.A.C.*, 95, p. 142, fig. 11 (12) and p. 141.

35, 36. Roller patterned flue tiles.

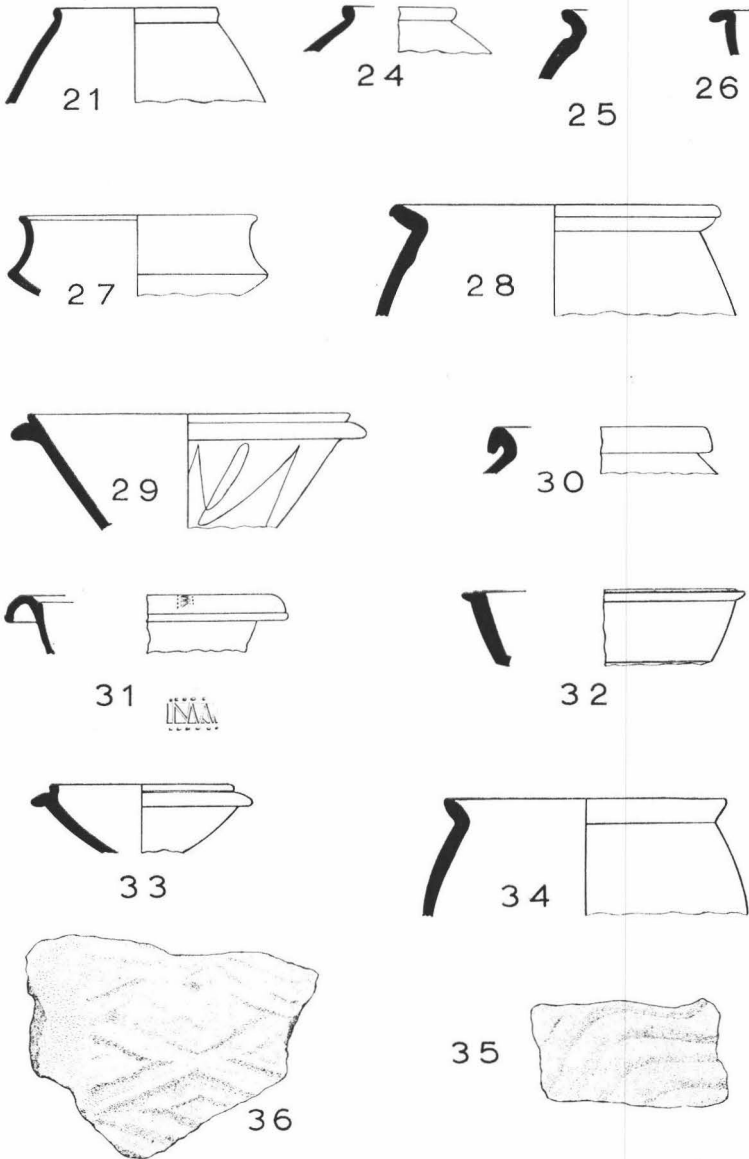


FIG. 5

Roman Pottery, Area 3. No. 21. Miscellaneous: Nos. 24-36
 Scale: Nos. 31 and 33 $\frac{1}{2}$. Remainder—1/1

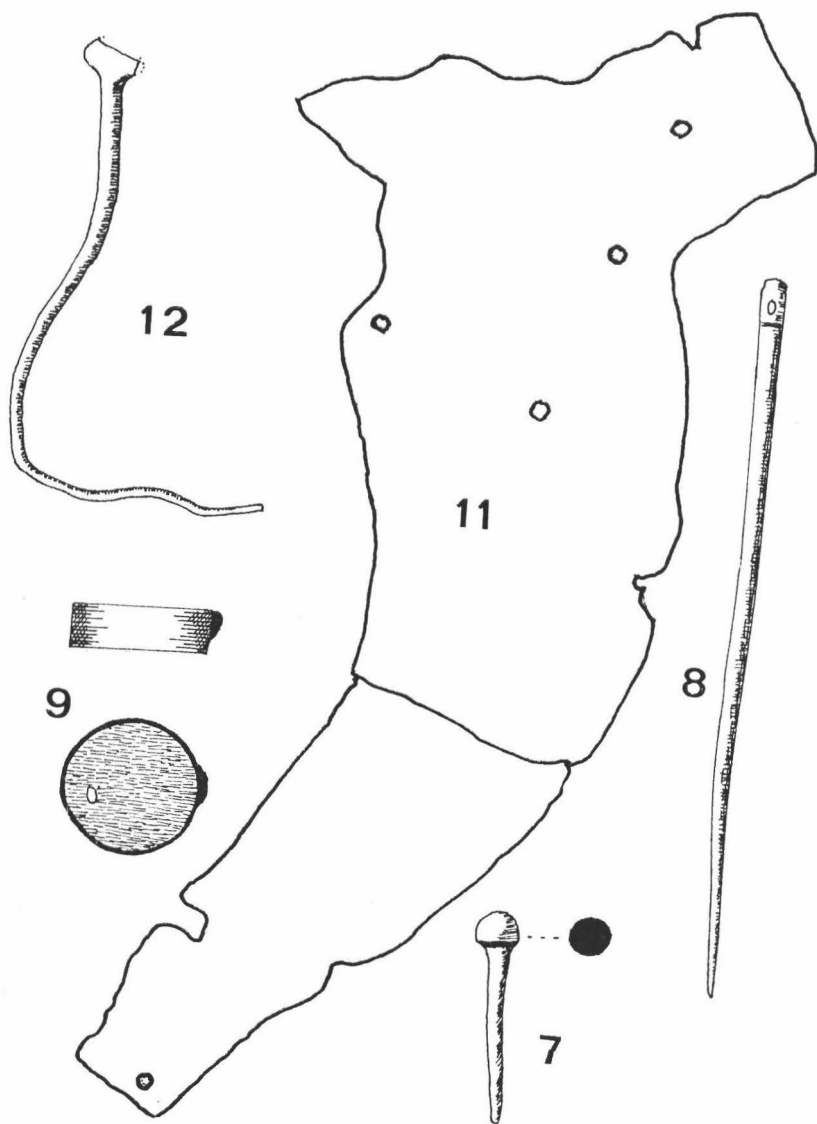


FIG. 6
Small Finds. 1/1

LATER POTTERY

Mr. K. J. Barton, F.S.A., has kindly examined all the medieval and later pottery from the site. This material will be described in a report on *post* Roman pottery from Chichester sites which Mr. Barton is preparing.

SMALL FINDS

COINS

1. *Vespasian* (*Brit. Mus. Cat.* 819). Probably COS IIII SECVRITAS AVGUSTI, c. A.D. 72. Unstratified.

2. *Dupondius* of Vespasian. Mint of Lugdunum, A.D. 72-73. (*R.I.C.* 740). Unstratified.

Obverse—IMP CAESAR VESPASIAN AVG. COS. IIII; head radiate r.
Reverse—Pax standing l. sacrificing out of patera over altar and holding branch.

3. *Dupondius* of Domitian. Mint of Rome (*R.I.C.* 348). From Area 2, layer 5.

Obverse—IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM COS XIII CENS PER P P.
Reverse—FIDEI PVBLICAE SC; Fides standing r. holding corn ears and a basket of fruit.

4. Tetricus I. ? reverse type. Unstratified.

5. Barbarous radiate; minim size; late 3rd century sacrificial implements type. From Area 2, layer 5.

6. Constantine I. *Victoriae laetae* princ. perp. type; mint of London; ? A.D. 317-320. From *post* Roman layer in Area 1.

OBJECTS OF BRONZE AND BONE

7. Bronze pin from *post* Roman layer in Area 1.

8. Bronze needle from Area 3, layer 6.

9. Part of a seal box. Unstratified.

10. Bone gaming counter. Unstratified and not illustrated.

11. Thin sheet of bronze with a number of holes punched through; probably a fitting for a wooden chest. From Area 3, layer 6a.

12. Bronze pin from *post* Roman layer in Area 1.