



Notes on some Roman Remains found in the City and its environments

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CINERARY URN AND LACHRYMATORY.

DURING the Roman occupation of Deva, Cherry Orchard, which is just $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the City cross, was undoubtedly a burial place of the Romans. As it will be remembered, a few years ago four urns were discovered¹ in that locality, and are now in the Society's Museum. It is with much pleasure we have been able to add a fifth example from the same district, which, together with its contents, forms the subject of this communication.

The urn in question was brought to the Museum, on December 18th, 1897, by a workman, who stated that it was found by a companion of his, during some excavations in Stock's Lane, Boughton. It occurred just below the surface of the ground, with the mouth covered by a flat piece of glass, and was filled with charred bones. The flat covering-glass and contents were thrown away, and only the urn preserved; the man being offered an extra reward if he could regain the glass and bones, repaired to the place of discovery. On returning an

¹ *Journal Chester Archaeological Society*, Vol. III., p. 264, figs. 1-4.

PLATE 2.

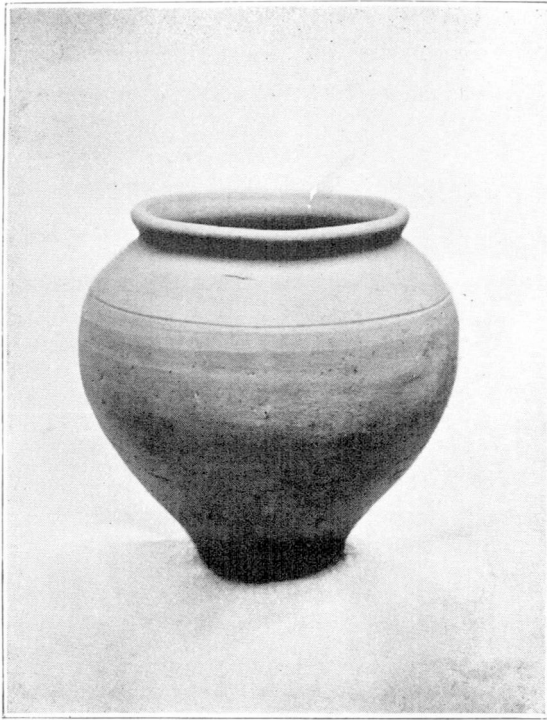


FIG. 1.—Roman Cinerary Urn, from Boughton.

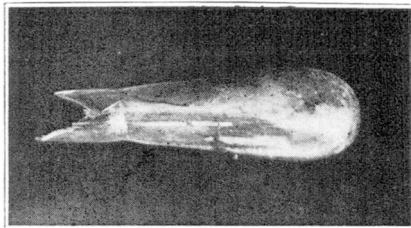


FIG. 2.—Roman Glass Lachrymatory, from Boughton.

From Photographs by the writer.

hour or so later, to my surprise, he brought with him a quantity of the bones, together with a delightful little glass *lachrymatory*; but the plate of glass which covered the mouth of the urn was, unfortunately, not recoverable.

The Urn (plate 2, fig. 1) has undoubtedly been fashioned on the potter's wheel; is of elegant shape, and well proportioned, and of a dark ochreous-grey color; the texture resembles Upchurch ware, of which it is probably an example. A glance at the illustration will at once show its salient character and design; it only remains to give the dimensions. Its greatest height is 8 inches, diameter $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, width at base $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and at the mouth $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches; the measurements, in inches, are all outside. Unfortunately it has two small fractures on the bulbous portion—accidental injuries received at the hands of the workman. Otherwise it is in splendid preservation, and forms a valuable addition to the Society's Collection.

The *Lachrymatory* (plate 2, fig. 2) is a precious little relic, and the only one of its kind found in the City or its environments; and, although I have not seen many specimens of these funereal vessels, it appears to be of an unusual type. Its shape is decidedly claviform; widest at the base, where it is obtusely and evenly rounded; the imperfect neck, scarcely narrower than the upper portion of the vessel, has a decided basal constriction. The color is pale pearly-green, and on its inner surface are four longitudinal opaque greyish streaks, evidently defects in its manufacture. Its greatest length is $2\frac{6}{10}$ inches (originally it was undoubtedly much longer); width of neck, $\frac{4}{10}$ ths of an inch; of greatest diameter, $\frac{8}{10}$ ths of an inch. It occurred inside the urn; but whether it originally contained the tears of the sorrowing friends of

the deceased, some unguent or scent, is a matter for conjecture. We have no facts to go upon.

The bones are of the usual fragmentary character, but from their size I gather they are those of an adult person. They—for the most part—consist of the large bones, such as the tibiæ, fibulæ, &c.; but there is no trace of the wood forming the funeral pyre, which is all the more strange as we usually find it abundantly in the grave-mounds and urns containing the remains of pre-historic man.

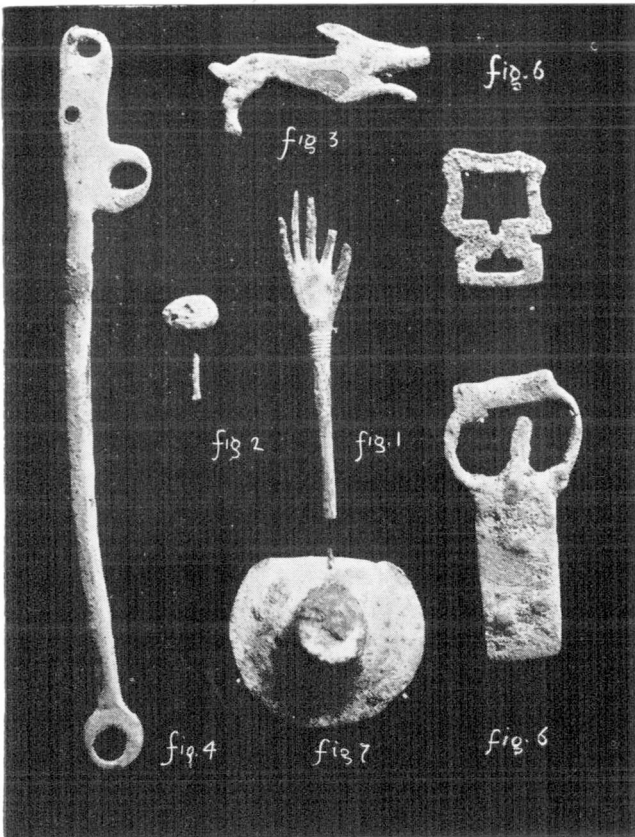
BRONZE PIN (plate 3, fig. 1).

In the ordinary types of bronze pins the head is generally flat, and more or less circular, and bears—as a decoration—a few simple lines etched upon its broad flat surface. The example before us, however, departs entirely from the commoner types in having the head carved in the form of a human hand; the workmanship being of a highly artistic and graceful character. The shaft, which is widest at the base, is not quite perfect, and the probabilities are that, originally, it was as long again. It was found near the rock, at about 9 feet from the present ground surface. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898. Length, $2\frac{4}{10}$ ths inches.

BRONZE PIN (plate 3, fig. 2).

This is chiefly of bronze, with a portion of the head of composition. What remains of the shaft is slender, and of uniform thickness throughout; the bronze portion of the head is saucer-shaped, and filled with a composition resembling plaster of paris, but dark in color; it is of a rounded convex form, and bears upon its surface a faint trace of a dull red-colored pigment. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898; 9 to 10 feet from surface.

PLATE 3.



Roman Objects in Bronze, from Hunter Street.

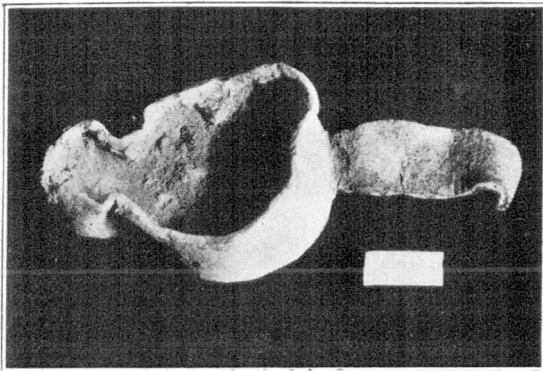


FIG. 8.—Roman Lead Lamp, from Hunter Street.
(The length of label indicates one inch.)

From Photographs by the writer.

BRONZE FIBULA (plate 3, fig. 3).

This is of exceptional interest as being of a rare type, and, although of rather rude workmanship, evidently from the long square shape of the beast's snout, is intended to represent the wild boar, which it will be remembered was the ensign of the Twentieth Legion (*Legionis XX., V.V.*), which garrisoned Deva for so long a time.

The Scandinavian Archæologist, F. R. Martin (Kongl. Vitterhets Hi. Antiyvitets Manads, plate 19, figs. 43, 44), figures two fibulæ of the same type, the only difference being, that in his examples, a rabbit is depicted in both cases; and, although of the same rude workmanship as the Chester example, I have no doubt whatever as to the animal they are intended to represent. I make this reference as it has been suggested our specimen bears a great resemblance to a rabbit; but it does not, and I do not think I have erred in ascribing it to the boar.

The fastenings at the back are of the "safety-pin" arrangement, the basal or hinged portion for the reception of the pin being formed of two right-angle flanges, having a small central hole for the reception of the rivet; and the flange for the reception of the pointed end of the pin is L shaped, with the free end slightly curved over and inwards, giving additional security. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898. Length, $1\frac{6}{10}$ inches; 7 to 10 feet from surface.

BRONZE FIBULA (plate 3, fig. 7).

A very singular form, and appears to have been enamelled on the central prominence. On the side opposite to that shewn in the photograph is a central,

obconical, prominence; and equidistant between it and the margin is a distinct raised concentric ring. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898. Depth from surface, 7 to 10 feet; diameter, $1\frac{4}{10}$ inches.

BRONZE BEAM OF STEEL-YARD (plate 3, fig. 4).

The only example of its kind found in Chester. Judging from the worn nature of the hole below the point of suspension, the instrument appears to have been in use for some considerable time. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898. Length, $5\frac{3}{10}$ inches. 7 to 10 feet from surface.

BRONZE BUCKLES (plate 3, figs. 5 and 6).

Fig. 5 (the upper example) is of a form commonly met with; but fig. 6 is of a more unusual character, and, at first sight, appears of modern manufacture. As it occurred from 7 to 9 feet below the surface, and in proximity with other Roman objects, I have little doubt as to the period to which it belongs. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898. Length, 2 inches.

DOMESTIC LAMP (plate 3, fig. 8).

This is in lead, and closely resembles the example found in the new Park, Chester, which is also in the Society's collection. The base is quite flat, and its outline broadly pyriform, but is strongly constricted towards the apex, forming the lip for the reception of the wick. The sides are thinner than the base, and spring at right-angles from it, but are slightly sloping inwards at the top. The strap-shaped handle is of a uniform width and thickness throughout. The whole exterior bears evident traces of having been painted with a dull-red color; and if I mistake not the interior bears evident

traces of the fat that was used to give the light. There is nothing very elegant in the design of this vessel; but we are more than pleased to be able to add so valuable an addition to the collection. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898; 7 to 10 feet below surface. Length, $6\frac{1}{10}$ inches; handle, $2\frac{3}{10}$ inches; greatest diameter, $2\frac{6}{10}$ inches; weight, 1 lb. 5 oz.

GLASS VIAL (fig. 9).

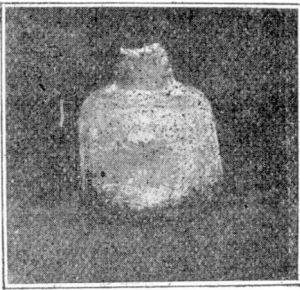


Fig. 9.

This is roughly cube-shaped, but slightly widest at the base; and each of the four sides has a shallow circular depression, and all the angles are rounded. The neck is very narrow, compared with the size of the base, and, although imperfect, does not appear to have been much longer than at present. It is of the usual green color; is very thick in the bulbous portion, but the neck is thinner. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898; depth from surface, 7 to 9 feet. Height, $1\frac{5}{10}$ inches; greatest width at base, $1\frac{1}{10}$ inches.

COINS.

FIRST BRASS OF TRAJAN, 96-117 A.D.; in fair preservation; inscribed:—

Ob:—IMP. CAES. NE(RVA). AV(G). TRAIAN.
(C?) AVG. GER. DAC. P(ARTH?) COS . . .

Rev:—S.P.Q.R. OPTIMO PRINCIPI.

S. C.

The Emperor seated, and before him a female with two children. The reverse agrees very well with

one described by Ackerman,¹ which he says is rare. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898; near surface of rock, and associated with the objects described above. Presented by Mr. J. D. Siddall.

THIRD BRASS OF CONSTANTINE. Two specimens in very indifferent condition. Locality: Hunter Street, 1898; in the same stratum as above.

The excavations in Hunter Street also produced many fragments of Samian ware, amphoræ, and roofing tiles, which offer no special feature worthy of comment. It may, however, be of interest to add, that all the Roman finds occurred near the surface of the rock, and were well separated from the mediæval and more recent remains which were found in the same locality. Had the excavations been more extensive, I have little doubt that many interesting objects would have been brought to light.

¹ *Roman Coins*, p. 219.

