

## II: Some unusual Roman antefixes from Chester

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Two antefixes of apparently unique design were recovered from the fortress bath house site during excavations at the junction of Newgate and Pepper Street in 1963/4. One is almost complete and depicts the head of Jupiter Ammon; the other comprises a small fragment depicting a lion's head or mask. Together, they represent examples of a distinct group of antefixes that have been retrieved from a mere handful of sites within the city. None have been recovered from the legionary works-depot at Holt, which produced ceramic building materials for the fortress from the late first century AD. In comparing them with the more common inscribed antefixes of the Twentieth Legion, which are known from both Chester and Holt (where they were made), a number of questions concerning their distribution, dating and possible origin are considered.

### Introduction

**A**ntefixes are terracotta plaques, usually pentagonal or approximately triangular in shape. They bear designs in moulded relief on the front and a half-round clay projection at the back, for luting to an imbrex at eaves-level or at the gable ends of a roof ridge, where they served as decorative or amuletic finials (Collingwood & Wright 1992, 119). In the Archaic and Early Classical periods, antefixes were decorated with masks, palmettes and other designs, which soon became conventional. They were often brightly painted and the subject matter depicted on them was generally related to the religious and social function of the temples and sacred buildings on which they were chiefly used (Blagg 1979, 267).

A different style of ornament developed during the second half of the first century BC, in which the forms continued as before but the decoration changed to include mythological subjects. These new-style antefixes were more commonly found on secular buildings than their predecessors had been (Blagg 1979, 275). They were often used to finish the roof edges of large public buildings. One example, found in both Rome and Ostia, which is thought to commemorate the victory of Augustus at the battle of Actium, could be regarded as a form of propaganda, as well as being purely decorative (Bailey, 1983, 191–2).

Although less common in Italy after the early Empire, architectural terracottas, including antefixes, continued to be made in the provinces, particularly by the army (Bailey 1983, 192). In Britain, as elsewhere, antefix designs were generally apotropaic in character,

bearing motifs that would have been regarded as magical or amuletic (Grimes 1930, 137). The powerful apotropaic properties which were accorded to the images on antefixes is shown by the deliberate deposition of one example at the main entrance of the fortress baths at Caerleon. The antefix, chipped roughly to the round shape of the gorgon's head depicted on it, was set face upwards, directly beneath the paving and immediately within the entrance portal, a very propitious location. This strongly suggests that the antefix had been placed there as a deliberate votive deposit (Zienkiewicz 1986, 201 and 334).

Antefixes seem to have been used rarely on buildings generally in Britain and are recorded at only thirteen sites, seven military and five civilian. Antefixes with moulded inscriptions are even rarer and only occur at military sites (Collingwood & Wright 1992, 119). Of the seven military sites, Caerleon, Chester, Gloucester and Exeter are the only legionary fortresses to have produced antefixes (*but see* endnote 1) and Caerleon is also the only other military site apart from Chester and Holt to have produced antefixes with moulded inscriptions. By far the largest number are those inscribed for the Twentieth Legion *Valeria Victrix* and found either at its fortress at Chester or at Holt, the legionary works depot at which they were made (Collingwood & Wright 1992, 119). Several examples have come from York, including both the *colonia* and the extra-mural settlement, but none from the fortress itself and none are known from York inscribed by either of its legions, the Ninth *Hispana* or the Sixth *Victrix* (*pers comm* Annie Jowett, York Archaeological Trust).

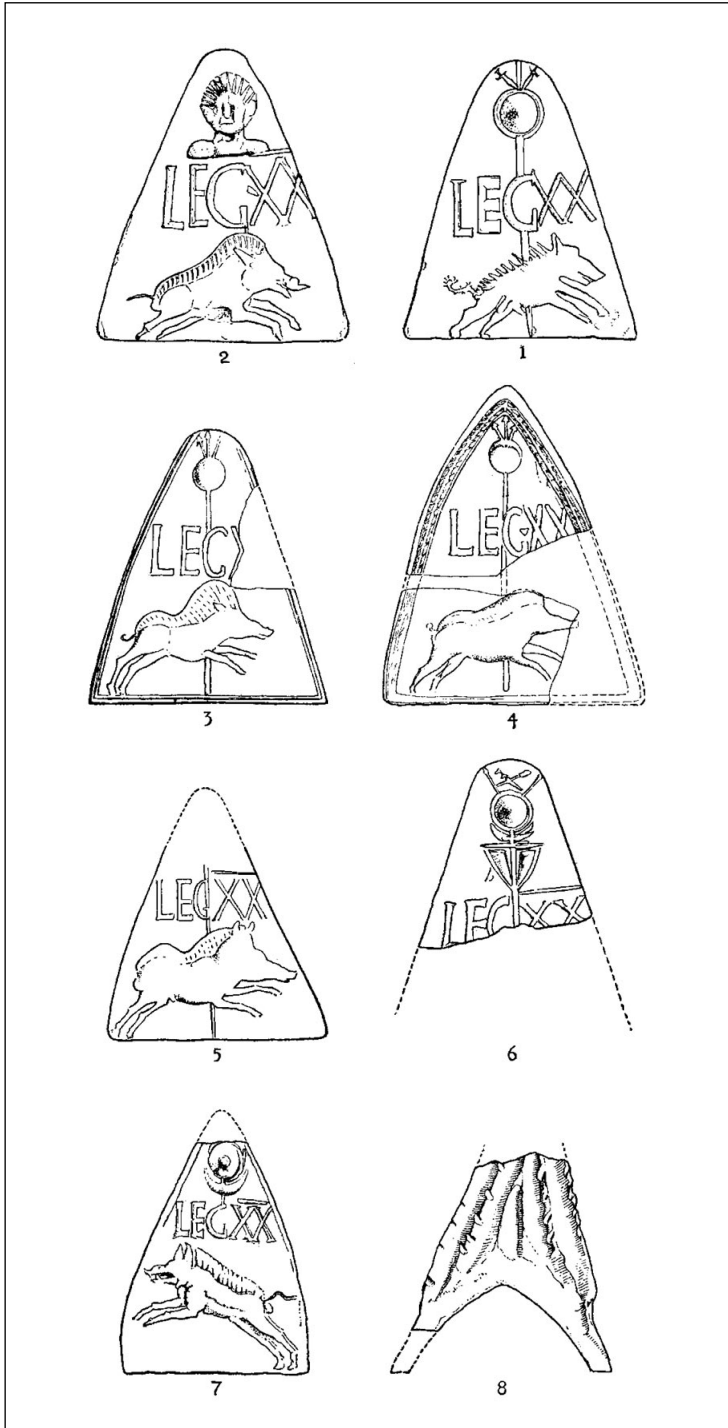
### **Antefixes from Chester and Holt**

Chester is unusual in that it has produced two distinct families or groups of antefixes. The first group is completely military in the content of its design and takes the form of triangular antefixes with rounded or pointed tops, which are inscribed for the Twentieth Legion *Valeria Victrix*. The legion was stationed at Chester from *c* AD 88, following the withdrawal of the Second Legion *Adiutrix*, and it remained there throughout the Roman period in Britain. The Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes, which form the second group, are completely classical in design with no obvious military attributes. They are uninscribed. They bear marked similarities to each other in the detail of their design and style of execution. Both have an outward curving and scalloped apex above the main design. The main part of the lion's head antefix conforms to the triangular shape of the inscribed antefixes. The Jupiter Ammon antefix has vertical sides below the gabled apex, but the similarity of their overall design suggests that they were contemporary (Mason 2002, 48). This group is discussed below.

### **Group 1: The inscribed antefixes**

#### *Description*

The Twentieth Legion antefixes are unusual in that they carry moulded inscriptions and lack apotropaic features (with the possible exception of the Holt type 2 antefix). They also feature only military symbols, including the badge of the legion, the wild boar. Romano-British antefixes more commonly bear apotropaic designs, sometimes in the form of a protective deity, which is often Celtic in character (Collingwood & Wright 1992, 119). The Holt type 2 antefix depicts a human head and bust with 'wild radiating locks of hair' above the boar (Toynbee 1964, 429). Grimes suggested that the figure's hair is a 'rayed crown or head-dress', which may have been intended to represent a Celtic sun god (Grimes 1930,



III II.1 Inscribed and other antefixes from Holt (Grimes 1930, 210 fig 58). Scale 1/6

137–8). Toynbee, however, believed that the figure represents a local god, worshipped by the troops and regarded as possessing magical protective qualities (Toynbee 1964, 429).

Seven variations of this type are known from Holt, the legionary works-depot at which they were made (Grimes 1930, 136–9 and fig 58), and examples of all seven types have been found in Chester (*see* III.1). All are inscribed LEG XX; types 1–5 depict a boar running right below the inscription; type 2 bears a bust with a radiate crown above the inscription. On types 1, 3, 4 and 5, behind the boar and the inscription, rises a standard carrying a *phalera* (medallion or badge). On type 1, there are two short swords set radially above the *phalera*. On type 3 there are three arrows or javelins, instead of swords, above the *phalera* and the design is enclosed by a border comprising a double raised line. Type 4 bears the same motifs as type 3 but has a double, braided, raised border. Type 5 has similar motifs to types 1, 3 and 4. On type 6, the standard is more elaborate than types 1, 3, 4 and 5. Above the *phalera*, two short swords are crossed between two larger swords set obliquely on the *phalera*. Below the *phalera* a small *vexillum* (standard or flag) hangs from a triangular frame. Type 7 depicts a moulded boar running left below the inscription, above which are the *phalera* and crescent of a standard (Collingwood & Wright 1992, 120–3).

The only other antefix type recorded by Grimes is his type 8, which is described as part of a triangular finial for the gable end of a roof. It is flanged for insertion under a ridge tile but the flange is broken. The face is decorated with converging notched ridges and is coarsely done (Grimes 1930, 138–9, fig 58, 120). No examples of this type have been found in Chester.

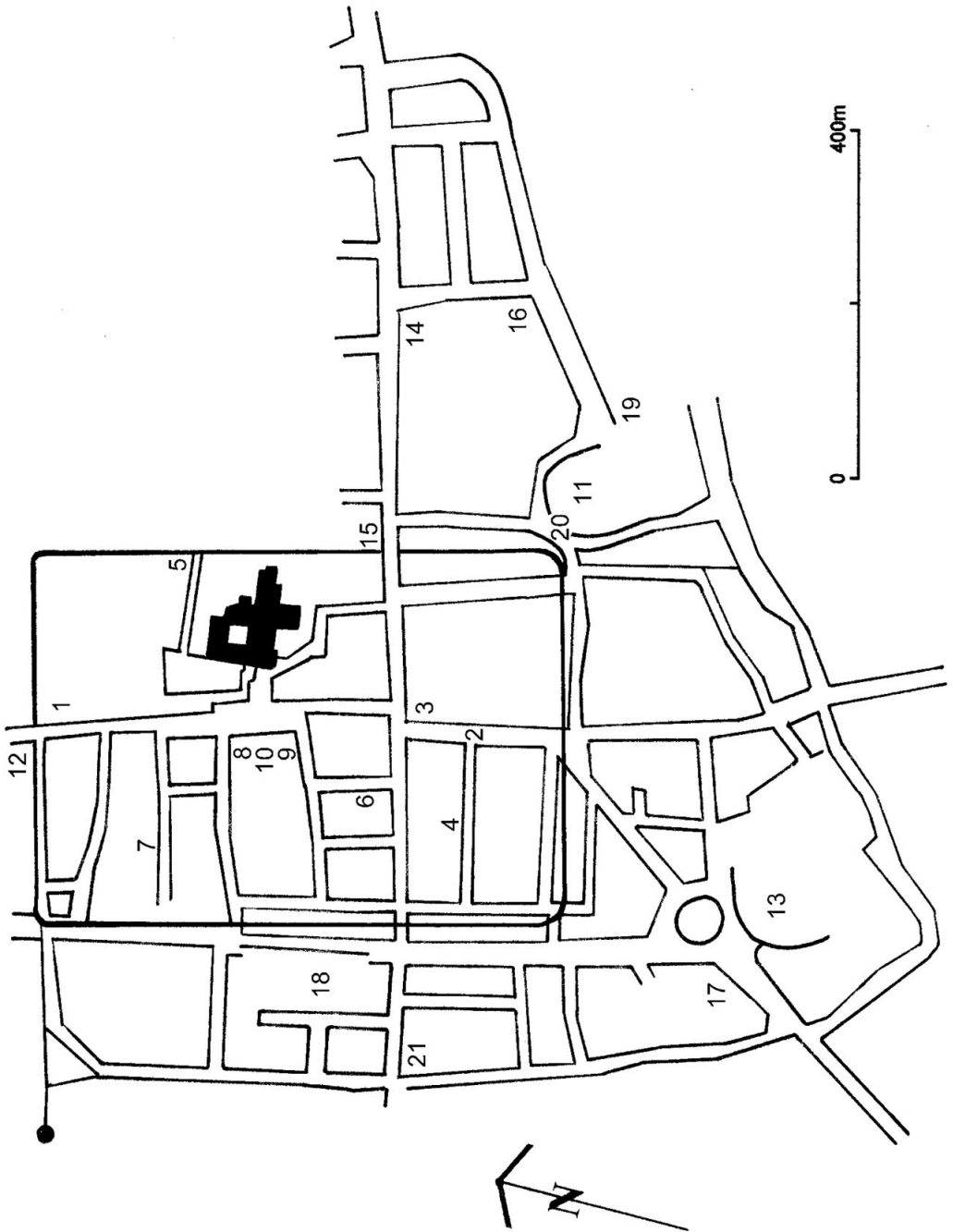
## Key to III II.2

### Fortress sites

1	Abbey Green 1975–8	(type 3 x 1)
2	Bridge Street 1900	(type 7 x 1)
3	21–3 Bridge Street	(unknown type x 1)
4	Commonhall Street 1991	(unknown type x 1)
5	East Wall (north) 1993	(type 3 x 2; type 4 x 1; unknown type x 1)
6	Goss Street 1973	(type 2 x 1)
7	Hunter Street School 1981	(unknown types x 2)
8	Old Market Hall Phase 3 1968	(type 1 x 1)
9	Old Market Hall Phase 5 1968/9	(type 1 x 1)
10	Princess Street 1939	(type 1 x 1)
	Princess Street 1963–4	(unknown type x 1)

### Extra-mural sites

11	Amphitheatre 1968	(type 1 x 1)
12	Blue (?Coat) School 1882	(type 5 x 1)
13	Chester Castle 1853	(type 1 x 1)
14	Foregate St, nr Love Lane 1876	(type 1 x 1)
15	Hope Pole Hotel, Foregate St, 1923	(type 1 x 1)
16	Love Lane/Vicar's Lane junction 1983	(type 1 x 1)
17	Nun's Field 1964	(type 2 x 1)
18	Royal Infirmary 1916	(type 2 x 1)
19	St. John's Church (date unknown)	(type 2 x 1)
20	St. John's Street 1929	(type 1 x 1)
21	Watergate Street/Nun's Road 1933	(type 6 x 1)
	Unknown find spots within the city	(type 1 x 6; type 7 x 2; type 2 x 1)



III II.2 Distribution plan of Group 1 antefixes (after Arundale 1985 fig vi). Scale 1/125 (key overleaf)

### *Distribution*

Find spots of Group 1 antefixes

A total of twenty-seven examples have been recovered from twenty-one sites (see III II.2). A further nine examples have been recovered from Chester but their find spots are unknown (see Table II.1).

Table II.1: Group 1 antefixes from Chester: quantification of types

<i>Holt type</i>	<i>No from Chester</i>	<i>Fortress sites</i>	<i>Extra-mural sites</i>	<i>Find spot unknown</i>
1	15	3	6	6
2	5	1	3	1
3	3	3	0	0
4	1	1	0	0
5	1	0	1	0
6	1	0	1	0
7	3	1	0	2
Unknown types	7	7	0	0
Total	36	16	11	9

Antefixes inscribed for the Twentieth Legion are widely distributed within the fortress and the extra-mural settlement (see III 2), although the total number recovered is small. Although less carefully modelled than the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes and lacking their fine detail, the sketchy quality of the illustrations in Grimes does not do them full justice (Grimes 1930, 210 fig 58). There is a wide range in both quality and detail from the well-executed modelling of type 7, for example, to the more poorly-executed modelling of types 3 and 5 (Grimes 1930, 138). Some of the examples used to illustrate the types in Grimes included fragments with very worn and blunted details, which often comprised the sole representative of a particular type (Grimes 1930, 138).

### **Group 2: The Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes from Chester**

#### *Description of the Jupiter Ammon antefix*

Jupiter Ammon was the principal deity of the Graeco-Roman world. He represents a conflation of the chief gods of the three major Mediterranean civilisations — Roman Jupiter, Greek Zeus and Egyptian Amun. Jupiter is typically represented in Roman art with thick, flowing curly hair and beard and carrying his distinctive attributes, a sceptre and a thunderbolt. In his manifestation as Jupiter Ammon, he sports the curled-down ram's horns of the Egyptian god, Amun. Rare examples of the Jupiter Ammon image also occur on coins and pottery vessels from Britain (Toynbee 1964, 29 and 398).

The central part of the antefix is filled by an *aedicula* (a shrine, small house or room, a niche) composed of two spirally-fluted columns supporting a rounded arch. Just below the arch are leaf sprays. Similar sprays flanking another centrally-placed, spirally-fluted

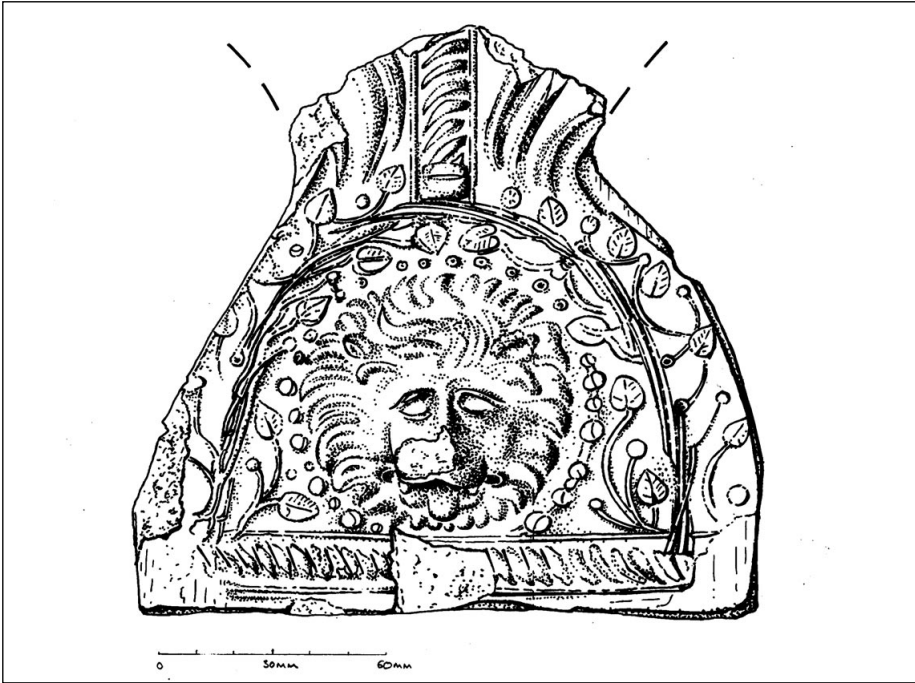


III II.3 Jupiter Ammon antefix from 25 Bridge Street 2001; the upper portion is missing  
(photograph by David Heke)

column fill the apex of the tile. Within the *aedicula* is a large-scale Jupiter Ammon mask, which is completely classical in style. A conventional palmette fills the apex and the curling stems form a scroll-like decoration, which creates an outward-curving scalloped edging at the top of the antefix (see III II.3).

#### *Description of the lion's head antefix*

The lion's head antefix is strikingly similar in design to the Jupiter Ammon type. The main part of the antefix bears the head of a lion, which is shown with its tongue protruding. Such imagery is frequently intended as a sign of aversion (Arundale 1985, 18). A horizontal spirally-fluted column forms a border along the bottom edge. A series of leafy tendrils arise from either end of the column and these entwine to form an arch around the lion mask. A spirally-fluted column issues from the centre top of the arch. As with the Jupiter Ammon antefix, a conventional palmette fills the apex and the curling stems form a similar scroll-like decoration, creating a distinctive, outward-curving scalloped edging at the top of the antefix (see IIIs II.4 and II.5).



III II.4 Lion's head antefix from Goss Street 1973; the upper portion is missing (drawn by P H Alebon).  
Reproduced by kind permission of Chester Archaeological Service, Chester City Council. Scale 1/2



III II.5 Upper fragment of lion's head antefix from 25 Bridge Street 2001 with distinctive scalloped edging (photograph by David Heke)



The occurrence of Jupiter Ammon as an image on an antefix appears to be unique to Chester, although the use of a lion's figure is also seen on antefixes from Novaesium, where it is thought to represent the badge of the Sixteenth Legion *Gallica* (Blagg 1979, 278; Chantraine et al 1984, 39).

Although less common in Chester than the inscribed antefixes, the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes conform to the more usual type in that they bear apotropaic designs, although the motifs they bear are quite different in style to those from military and civilian sites in the rest of Britain (Toynbee 1964, 431). Few examples of either type have been found in Chester and none have been recovered from Holt (*see* Table II.2). It could be argued that this, together with their fine detail and expert craftsmanship, perhaps suggests that they were not made there (Arundale 1985, 11, 23; Mason 2002, 48; Ward 1998, 44).

### *Distribution*

#### Find spots of Group 2 antefixes

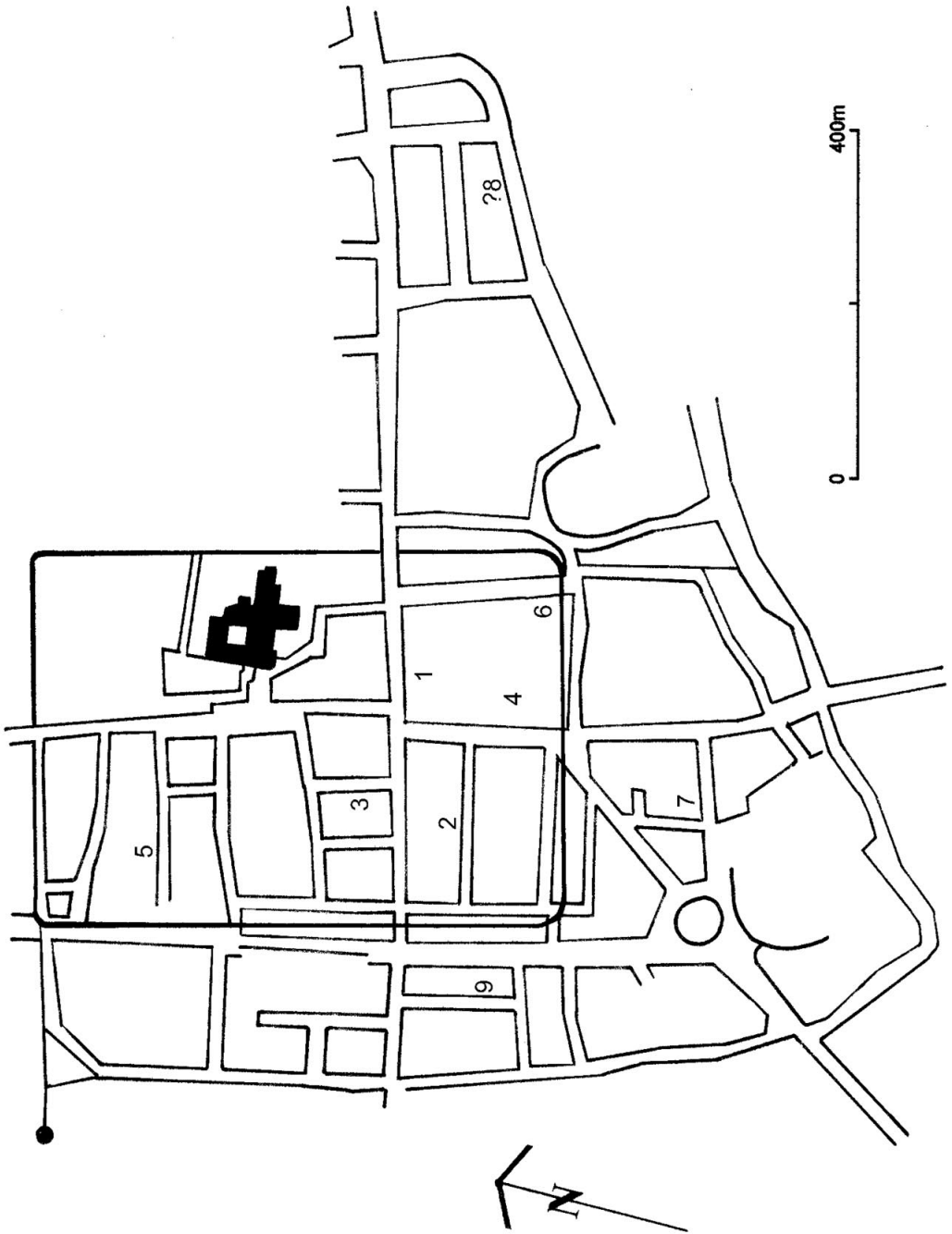
A total of fifteen examples have been recovered from nine sites (*see* III II.6 and table II.2). The unfortunate fact that none of the antefixes were recovered from secure contexts means that it is difficult to associate them with particular buildings or to assign them to specific periods of construction or occupation in the areas in which they were found.

Table II.2: Group 2 antefixes from Chester: quantification of types

<i>Type</i>	<i>Fortress sites</i>	<i>Extra-mural sites</i>	<i>Find spot unknown</i>
Jupiter Ammon	8	1	0
Lion's head	4	2	0
Total	12	3	0

Antefixes of both types are scattered around the fortress and the extra-mural settlement, although there is a significant cluster in the south-east quadrant of the fortress, possibly suggesting an association with the fortress baths (*see* III II.6). The Goss Street find could originate from the *principia* but the origins of the other examples within the fortress are less clear, as are those from the extra-mural settlement. It is possible that the Jupiter Ammon antefix recovered from the ?City Baths in 1899 represents the deposition of rubbish from within the fortress.

A comparison of the distribution patterns of the two groups shows some similarities and one quite obvious difference. Nine examples of the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes have come from the quadrant of the fortress largely occupied by the fortress bath house with the supposed officers' quarters to the north and barracks in the south-east corner. However, none of the inscribed antefixes have been found in this area, with the possible exception of a single example of type 7, found in an unspecified location in Bridge Street in 1900 (*see* III II.2 (p. 27)). Only a handful of sites have produced examples from both groups, namely the barracks at Hunter Street School 1981 and Goss Street 1973, and the Commonhall Street area (which is occupied by granaries, barracks and probable officers' houses). The inscribed antefixes are more widely distributed in the extra-mural settlement, occurring on all sides of the



III II.6 Distribution plan of Group 2 antefixes (after Arundale 1985 fig vi). Scale 1/125

fortress, although only one example has been recovered from the northern extra-mural area, close to the north gate. A concentrated group also occurs in the centre of the fortress, in the area occupied by the elliptical building and the south-west corner of what is thought to be a large stores building to the east of the elliptical building. There have been no examples of Group 2 antefixes from this area. Apart from noting the similarities and differences between the two groups, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the distribution patterns, as the small number of antefixes recovered undoubtedly represents only a small proportion of the original numbers.

When comparing the buildings associated with antefixes at other sites in Britain, it is perhaps notable that the legionary fortress bath houses at both Exeter and Caerleon have produced relatively large numbers of antefixes. Indeed, at Exeter, apart from a single example found elsewhere in the fortress, all the antefixes from the site came from the bath house (Zienkiewicz 1986, 333–4). The only sites where antefixes are associated with specific buildings comprise the legionary fortress bath house, tribunes' houses, *principia* and barracks, as well as the extra-mural baths building at Caerleon; the legionary fortress bath-house at Exeter; and the legionary fortress barracks/military buildings and *colonia* buildings at Gloucester. Antefixes are not known to be associated with any particular buildings at Dorchester, York or Colchester (although one may have come from a timber building with painted plaster walls (Crummy, P 1984, 130–2) and another may have come from a bath house, possibly associated with the fortress (*pers comm* Philip Crummy, Colchester Archaeological Trust), at Colchester.

At some sites, antefixes are associated with the original construction of grand public buildings (eg the fortress bath houses at Caerleon (Zienkiewicz 1986, 333) and Exeter (Bidwell 1979, 149; Zienkiewicz 1986, 333–4)). At others, they are largely associated with periods of rebuilding, in which original timber structures were replaced with more permanent stone buildings (eg Novaesium (Baatz 2000, 152–3) and Period IV at Colchester (Hawkes & Hull 1947, 348)). At other sites, however, they seem to be associated with earlier timber phases (eg Dorchester (Bellamy 1993, 174)) or with both early timber and later stone phases (eg Caerleon (Boon 1984, 9; Zienkiewicz 1993, 127 and 139)).

## Key to III II.6

### Fortress sites

- |   |   |                                      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | 25 Bridge Street 2001                         | (Jupiter Ammon x 3; lion's head x 1) |
|   | Brown's basement 1960                         | (Jupiter Ammon x 1; lion's head x 1) |
| 2 | Commonhall Street 1848                        | (Jupiter Ammon x 1)                  |
| 3 | Goss Street 1973                              | (lion's head x 1)                    |
| 4 | Grosvenor Garage, north of Pepper Street 1942 | (Jupiter Ammon x 1)                  |
| 5 | Hunter Street School 1981                     | (Jupiter Ammon x 1)                  |
| 6 | Newgate/Pepper Street 1963/4                  | (Jupiter Ammon x 1; lion's head x 1) |

### Extra-mural sites

- |   |                                |                     |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 7 | Castle Street 1976             | (lion's head x 1)   |
| 8 | ?City baths, Union Street 1899 | (Jupiter Ammon x 1) |
| 9 | Nicholas Street 1974           | (lion's head x 1)   |

## Catalogue of Group 2 antefixes

### *Catalogue of Jupiter Ammon antefixes from Chester*

Nine examples of the Jupiter Ammon antefix have now been found in Chester, eight within the legionary fortress. The find spot of catalogue entry 2 is disputed, but may lie within the eastern extra-mural settlement (*see below and* III II.6). Catalogue entry 6, not previously assigned with confidence to either type, is now thought to belong to this group. The catalogue is organised in chronological order of discovery.

1. An almost complete example with an integral imbrex-shaped back projection, which could have been abutted to an *imbrex* (Brodrigg 1987, 29). The scallop edging on the top right edge of this antefix is worn away. The bottom left edge of the antefix is also worn. There are traces of lime wash in the crevices of the design and also on the exterior and interior surfaces of the imbrex-shaped back projection, of which part of the right edge and the end are broken. H: 204 mm; W: 143 mm; unstratified. From Commonhall Street, 1848. (Watkin 1974, 221; Smith 1850, 321). The site lies just to the south of the fortress granaries with barracks to the south and senior officers' houses to the east. Currently on display in the Newstead Gallery of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.
2. Complete except for the top scalloped section; H: 175 mm; W: 144 mm; unstratified; Accession no: 143.R.1900. The find spot of this example is unclear, as there are two possible locations. The favoured find spot is the site of the 1899 excavations for the construction of the City Baths in Union Street, which would place the antefix in the eastern extra-mural settlement. A great quantity of Roman finds was recovered from a roughly U-shaped ditch, which extended almost due north from Union Street to a distance of *c* 215 feet (65.5 metres). The ditch was thought to have been a Roman defensive ditch (Newstead 1901, 93–4). The alternative location, given by the donor of the antefix to the Grosvenor Museum, was the site of 'Mrs Vernon's' shop in Northgate Street. Newstead was disinclined to believe this, however, and favoured Union Street as the actual find spot (Newstead 1901, 99).<sup>2</sup>
3. A fragment from the bottom right hand section. The right side of the face is intact but the upper right portion is worn away down to the ram's horn (Arundale 1985, 39). H: 103 mm; W: 101 mm; unstratified. From the Grosvenor Garage, Pepper Street, 1942. The site lay 176 feet (53.6 metres) northwards from the frontage of Pepper Street and intersected Pepper Street 103 feet (31.4 metres) from the southeast corner of St Michael's church (Newstead 1948, 63). There is no mention of the antefix fragment in Newstead's account of the finds from the site (Newstead 1948, 63–4). It is probable that this example originates from the fortress bath house. (Unpublished).
4. A complete example, although it was found broken into two pieces and restored on discovery. As with the examples from the fortress baths and Commonhall Street, this antefix also contained traces of white lime wash, visible in the crevices of the design; H: 207mm; W: 145 mm; unstratified. From Brown's Basement, 1960.<sup>3</sup>
5. An almost complete example, of which only the bottom left corner is missing. It is coated with lime wash. The nose is chipped and the right eye is hollowed out. Both

the left top of the mouth and the left side of the head are missing. Part of a supporting imbrex-shaped projection is attached to the back of the antefix (Arundale 1985, 40). H: 207mm; W: 145mm; Newgate/Pepper Street 1963/4; Context: (RB); Unphased; SF 73. Newgate /Pepper Street 1963/4. The construction of the bath house is thought to have begun *c* AD 76 or 77. The antefix was recovered from an unphased, probably Roman, context immediately east of the east wall of the Roman hypocaust. No other finds were recovered from this context.

6. A tiny edge fragment with spiral fluting and double raised border (Arundale 1985, 43). H: 28 mm; W: 40 mm; Hunter Street School 1981; Context: (408); SF: 1319. This example is more likely to be from a Jupiter Ammon antefix as this type has a double raised border below the horizontal spiral fluting along the bottom edge. The lion's head type only has a single raised border at this point. The site lies in the area of barrack blocks aligned E/W located in the north-west quadrant of the fortress, with rubbish disposal on open ground to the east of the barracks and a possible hospital or stores building to the north of the principia. The earliest activity on the site is the ?Flavian timber barracks, occupied by Legion II *Adiutrix* in the late first century AD. The barracks were rebuilt in the early second century and again in the early third century AD. Rubbish disposal to the east of the barracks began in the late first to early second centuries AD. The earliest timber phase of the ?stores/hospital dates to the late first/early second century AD, followed shortly afterwards by the first Stone Phase (Strickland 1983b, although the antefix itself is not mentioned). The antefix was found in a post-Roman context.
7. Face fragment broken diagonally. The left side of the face is intact from immediately below the left eye, across the bridge of the nose to the right corner of the bearded chin. The very bottom edge of the left ram's horn is also present. A short section of horizontal spiral fluting survives along the bottom edge, as well as the stalk and base of a leaf in the bottom right corner, just above the horizontal fluting. The piece is chipped and fairly abraded. The fabric is hard, bright orange and sandy with abundant quartz inclusions and a harsh feel. It is closely comparable to Chester (Holt) fabric 152. H: 63mm; W: 61mm; Th: (max complete): 25mm; 25 Bridge Street 2001; Context: (367); post-Roman phase; SF: 8417. The site lies within a possible extra *scamnum* between the fortress baths to the south and ?tribunes' houses to the north. The earliest phased activity on the site dates to the late first/early-mid second century AD. It is probable that much of the unphased Roman material from the site originated either in the bath house or in the tribunes' houses. (Unpublished).
8. Upper fragment (top scalloped section) only. Complete from just above the top of the right-hand spirally fluted, vertical column to half way up the incurving side of the first scallop edging on the right. H: *c* 90mm; W: *c* 105mm; Th: 48mm; 25 Bridge Street 2001; Context: (341); post-Roman phase; SF: 8418. (Unpublished).
9. An almost complete example with an integral imbrex-shaped back projection. The top scalloped section is broken off as is the bottom left corner, below the mouth. The piece is very abraded and bears traces of white limewash on all surfaces, including

broken edges, which suggests that it results from reuse rather than from an original decorative coating. The back projection forms a pointed gable at the top. There are traces of burning on the left edge of the antefix. The fabric is hard, bright orange and sandy with abundant quartz inclusions and a harsh feel. It is closely comparable to Chester (Holt) fabric 152. H: 155mm; W (max complete): 130mm; Th (max complete): 25mm. Back projection: H: 115mm; W: 120mm; Th: 22mm. 25 Bridge Street 2001; Context: (1177); post-Roman context; SF: 8932. (Unpublished).

The shape of this antefix differs to the example from Brown's basement 1960 (cat no 2) in that this piece has waisted (inward-curving) sides which have been knife-trimmed to shape, although the mould or stamp used to impress the design appears to be identical. The knife trimming has removed the upper parts of the leafy tendrils half way up the main part of the antefix on the right-hand edge. These leafy tendrils are clearly visible on both the left and right-hand edges of the antefix from Brown's basement 1960. In fact the knife-trimmed, waisted shape is consistent on all the other examples which include this part of the antefix (ie cat entries 1, 2 and 5); it is only the example from Brown's 1960 (cat entry 4) which is different.

### *Catalogue of lion's head antefixes*

Six examples of the lion's head antefix have been found in Chester, four within the fortress and two in the extra-mural settlement (see III II.6). The catalogue is organised in chronological order of discovery.

1. Complete except that the bottom right hand corner is missing. Traces of white lime wash can be seen just above this break (Arundale 1985, 41). H: 200 mm;<sup>4</sup> unstratified. From Brown's Basement 1960, where the only complete example of a Jupiter Ammon antefix found so far was also recovered (see above). The site lies near to the possible location of the commander's residence. [Unpubl].
2. A small fragment only with tendril and leaf decoration. H: 80mm; W: 53mm. Newgate/Pepper Street 1963/4; Context: Sup 13; Unphased; SF: 98. The construction of the bath house is thought to have begun c AD 76 or 77. The antefix came from a mixed context of Roman, medieval and post-medieval finds.
3. Complete except that the top scalloped part is broken off. Part of an imbrex-like projection is attached to the back (Arundale 1985, 42). H: 154 mm; W: 164 mm; Goss Street 1973; Context: A (566), F 375; unphased; SF 3255. The site is an area of barracks immediately west of the *principia*. The earliest activity is represented by three phases of a timber building datable to the late first century; the first Stone Phase dates to the early second century AD. (Wilson 1975, 240 and Plate XXI; Strickland 1983a, front cover illus.; Strickland 1984, 30). Currently on display in the Newstead Gallery, Grosvenor Museum, Chester.
4. A fragment from the upper portion only. H: 89 mm; W: 108 mm; Nicholas Street 1974; Context: C (1); SF: 99; post-Roman phase. The site lies in the extra-mural settlement to the west of the fortress. The buildings were probably domestic in

character (Jones *forthcoming*). The earliest activity on the site is Timber Phase I, probably late first to early second century AD in date; the Stone Phase probably dates to the second half of the second century AD.

5. A fragment from the upper part only. Arundale notes that the spirally fluted column, which rises from the top of the lion's head, is slightly flawed, possibly as a result of having been double stamped (Arundale 1985, 42). Alternatively, it may have become blurred if pulled from the mould before it was sufficiently dry. H: 88 mm; W: 97 mm; Castle Street 1978; unstratified; SF: 1. The site lies in the extra-mural settlement to the south of the fortress, where structures interpreted as a possible Roman posting house or *mansio* were located (Mason, 1980, 60 and fig 36 no 250). The earliest activity on the site is Timber Phase I dated between *c* AD 75–80; the first Stone Phase begins just before *c* AD 120.
6. A fragment from the upper part only with knife-trimmed scallop edging and part of the pointed gable of an integral back projection (broken). Chipped and abraded. The fabric is hard, bright orange and sandy with abundant quartz inclusions and a harsh feel. A slightly darker, self-coloured slip/wash coats the upper moulded surface. H: 71mm; W: 97mm; Th (max complete): 37mm; 25 Bridge Street 2001; Context: (974); SF: 8773. The site lies within a possible extra *scamnum* between the fortress baths to the south and ?tribunes' houses to the north. The earliest phased activity on the site dates to the late first/early-mid second century AD. It is probable that much of the unphased Roman material from the site originated either in the bath house or in the tribunes' houses. The antefix was recovered from a post-Roman context. (Unpublished).

## Discussion

Apart from the example from the fortress baths described above, which is completely coated with lime wash, traces of white lime wash are recorded on three other of the Jupiter Ammon and on one of the lion's head antefixes. It is curious why lime wash was applied to these antefixes as it clearly obscured the fine detail of the design (*see* III II.7). The lime wash may have been purely decorative — to contrast with the red clay roof tiles. On the other hand, it may have been intended to protect the antefix from weathering or possibly even to reflect the sunlight — as a symbolic attempt to ward off evil spirits (Arundale 1985, 14–15). Paul Bidwell also notes the presence of white wash on an antefix from Caerleon and suggests that this may have been the preparation for painted decoration (Bidwell 1996, 26). It is perhaps notable that this lime wash coating has so far not been found or noted on any of the Group 1 antefixes from Holt or Chester (Arundale 1985, 15).

## Origin of the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefix designs

The moulded decoration on antefixes often represented a continuation of earlier Greek and Italian patterns. It is possible that the lion's head antefix, for example, is a continuation of the original moulded terracotta lion's mask commonly used to decorate an early architectural feature known as a continuous *sima*. This was a vertical moulding that rose from the end of the lowest course of flat roof tiles, pierced at intervals with a spout for the run-off of rainwater. The open mouth of the lion's mask formed the opening for the spout (Blagg 1979, 270). From classical Greek architecture in both early Doric and Ionic temples, 'the raking

cornice is almost always crowned by a continuous gutter or sima, in early times made of terracotta... This lateral sima was always pierced with holes to let out the rain-water: the holes were usually masked by heads of lions, but other forms occur, including rams' heads and plain tubular spouts. These openings were usually placed at frequent intervals, but in early Doric temples there was often only one lion-head spout at each corner. Often there was no sima at the side and a row of upright ornaments called antefixes was placed along the cornice; originally these masked the ends of the 'covering tiles' which protected the joints between the 'rain tiles', whereas the sima was formed by turning up the edges of the rain tiles. Antefixes are combined with unpierced lion-heads at the four corners in the later temple of Aphaia in Aegina and in the Parthenon. Antefixes are rare in Ionic, except as ornaments on the top of a sima: the same scheme is found in Doric' (Robertson 1943, 48–9).



III II.7 White lime wash covers the surface of the Jupiter Ammon antefix from Newgate/Pepper Street 1963–4 (photograph by David Heke)



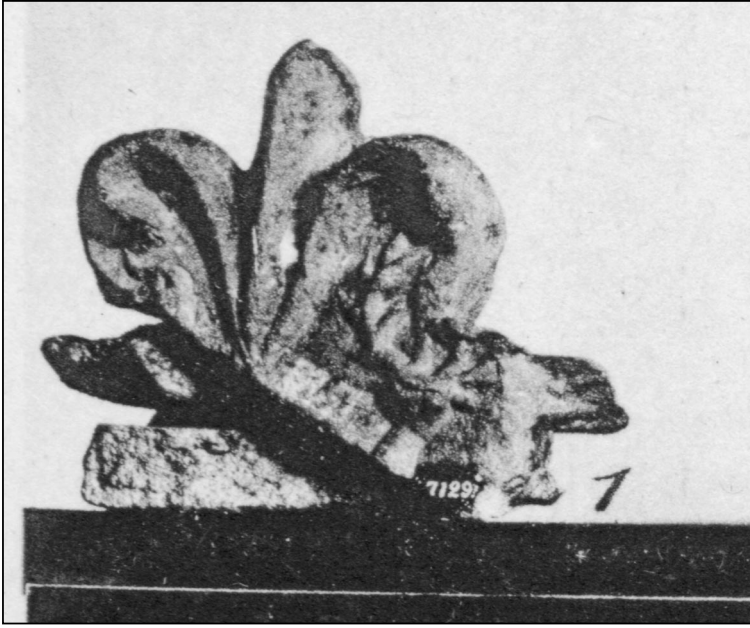
The lion's figure also appears on antefixes from the legionary fortress of Novaesium, (Neuss-Dusseldorf), lower Germany, which provide the closest continental parallels to the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes from Chester. Here, a fine collection of antefixes shows the continued regular use of the palmette, either as the sole decoration or with a lion's figure or a human head superimposed (Blagg 1979, 278; Lehner 1904, 306–310 and tafel xxii) (see Ill II.8). They are thought to be associated with the Sixteenth Legion *Gallica*, which was stationed at Novaesium from AD 43–69 (Chantraine et al, 1984, 39; Grimes 1930, 137 footnote 2). There is a strong similarity with both the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes in the scalloped edging and scroll-like decoration, formed by the curling stems of the palmette, in the upper portion of a lion antefix from Novaesium, which is illustrated in Chantraine et al 1984, 39, fig 21, and also in two examples illustrated in Lehner 1904, tafel xxii figs 1 and 5 (see Ills II.9 and II.10). The fortress at Novaesium was erected about AD 40, originally in timber. Stone barracks were constructed about AD 55 and were rebuilt shortly after the Batavian revolt of AD 69/70. The legionary fortress was abandoned around AD 100.

Another continental parallel comes from Vindonissa, where one antefix type depicts a conventional palmette with curling, scroll-like stems, which form a shallow, scalloped edging to the apex of the tile (Ettlinger 1962, 62–3). The legionary fortress at Vindonissa was established by the Thirteenth Legion *Gemina* c AD 16–17 and the fortress was abandoned c AD 101.

A much earlier example of the use of a lion's head to decorate antefixes comes from an early first-century BC villa at Sette Finestre, Cosa, in Etruria, where antefixes depicting palmettes in relief and lion's heads were used to decorate the superstructure (Blagg 1979, 275).



Ill. II.8 Antefixes of the Sixteenth Legion *Gallica* from Novaesium (Neuss) in Lehner 1904, tafel xxii. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Rhineland Federal State Museum, Bonn). Not to scale.



III II.9 Detail of upper fragment of lion antefix from Novaesium (Neuss) in Lehner 1904, tafel xxii no.1. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Rhineland Federal State Museum, Bonn). Not to scale.

Apart from Chester, the only other cited British example of a lion's head 'antefix' is a fragmentary example from the Strand, in London. Jocelyn Toynbee, who referred to this piece in her 1964 volume, felt that it must have had a continental origin (Toynbee 1964, 431). However, the original description of the find suggests that it is not in fact an antefix but a lion-head spout from a terracotta sima.<sup>5</sup>

Jupiter Ammon was the chief god of the Graeco-Roman world and his image was used in the civic buildings of ports in the northern Adriatic, the region where the section of the fleet from which Legion II *Adiutrix* was raised had its base (Mason 2001, plate 25). The Emperor Vespasian (AD 69–79), who gave the Legion the honorific title of *pia fidelis*, in recognition of its support, was saluted as the 'son of Ammon'. Vespasian and his supporters would, therefore, have had a good reason to adopt the Jupiter Ammon image and this could explain its presence in Flavian Chester. However, the Jupiter Ammon image also appears in Britain on a bronze coin of Cunobelinus and on pottery vessels from York and Canterbury. A finely-modelled head of the bearded, ram-horned god occurs on the rim of a large clay pot from York and as a boldly-modelled frontal mask with thick curly hair and beard, just below the rim, on a face pot from Canterbury (Toynbee 1964, 29 and 398; Green 1978, 28).

In Britain, there was a fusion of the many different cults and practices belonging to the different racial groups living in the province and the three major elements were Oriental, Classical and native Celtic (Green 1977, 297). Jupiter Ammon equates the Egyptian sun god with the Roman sky god and the ram horns are an example of the essential theriomorphism (animal representation in art for cult purposes) in Egyptian cult expression,



above: III II.10 Detail of upper fragment of lion antefix from Novaesium (Neuss) in Lehner 1904, tafel xxii no.5. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Rhineland Federal State Museum, Bonn). Not to scale.

even when tempered by the classical aversion to the portrayal of gods in animal form (Green, 1978, 28). The ram-horned head of Ammon, equated in the Roman period with Jupiter, is among the Egyptian material that represents true theriomorphism (Green 1977, 301). Ancient Egyptian theriomorphic cult-imagery persisted in some form throughout the Roman period. In Roman Britain there were two main sources of eastern religious influences — the army and merchants.

David Mason has suggested that the choice of the lion as an accompanying emblem to the Jupiter Ammon antefixes could have been because the lion was the zodiacal sign of Jupiter. (Mason 2002, 50). Interestingly, it has also been suggested that the classical lion-head waterspouts of Greece and Italy, the possible forerunners of the lion's head antefix, were made in allusion to the rising of the Nile, which takes place when the sun enters the zodiacal sign of Leo (Cuming 1871, 522).

### **Dating of the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes**

Extraordinarily, we have no secure dating evidence for any of these antefixes. All the known examples recorded from Chester were recovered either as stray finds or as residual or unstratified finds from recent excavations.

David Mason has recently argued that the high quality of the moulds from which they were cast, and the exceptionally fine detail of their common overall design, demonstrates not only that these two antefix types were contemporary, but also that they were probably early in date. He feels that their absence from The Twentieth Legion's works-depot at Holt (c AD 90–240) is

significant and, also, that they are too fine to have been of local civilian manufacture. For these reasons, he suggests that they may have been made by the Second Legion *Adiutrix*, which was based at Chester from approximately the mid-70s AD until AD 87. It is also possible that individual examples or small batches of these antefixes were brought to Britain when the legion was posted here (Mason 2002, 48). In describing the Jupiter Ammon antefix found at Commonhall Street in 1848, Jocelyn Toynbee suggested that the piece, or the mould for casting it, was most likely to have been imported from the Continent (Toynbee 1964, 431).

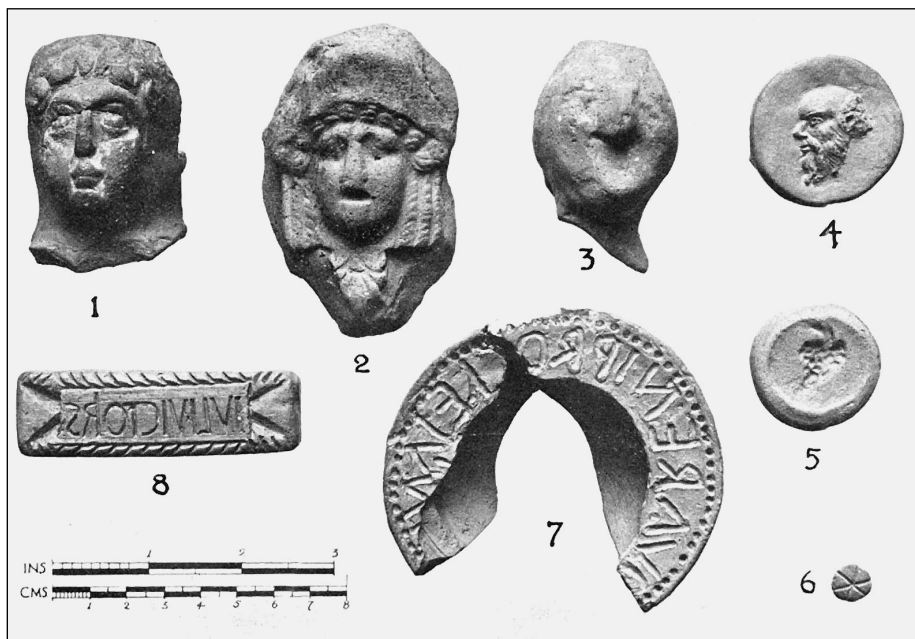
However, it can also be argued that there are close stylistic similarities with the decoration found on the so-called 'legionary ware' vessels from Holt. The small rosette to the right of the vertical fluted column in the upper part of the lion's head antefix (see III II.4), for example, although worn, appears to be closely similar to the rosette stamp from Holt as depicted in Grimes 1930, fig 57 facing p 210 (see III II.12). Similar rosettes, palmettes and small fluted columns also appear on the stamped wares from Holt (Grimes 1930, fig 77, 228). As well as the rosette stamp described above, other fired clay stamps from Holt attest to the fine and detailed workmanship that was carried out at the site. These include a circular stamp with the head of Silenus (an old and drunken companion of Bacchus) in low relief of 'excellent modelling and workmanship' (Grimes 1930, 130 and fig 57) (see III 11). There is also a circular stamp depicting a bunch of grapes. As with the Silenus head, no example of the use of this stamp has been found (Grimes 1930, 130 and fig 57). All three stamps were recovered from the waste around tile kiln 3 (Haverfield 1916, 231). There is also a mask in 'tile-red' ware with a plain and slightly concave back, which was probably 'intended for application to a pottery-vessel' (Grimes 1930, 130). It shows a female face wearing a head-dress over elaborately curled hair, which falls in ringlets to below the chin. The eyes and mouth are open but the features appear worn in the photograph. Grimes describes the piece as 'fairly good work' (Grimes 1930, 130 and fig 57 facing p 210) but from the photograph, it is clear that it is well crafted and finely detailed (see III II.12). As with the stamps, there are no other known examples of this mask. All these pieces easily bear comparison with the excellent modelling and workmanship of the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes and it does not seem beyond the realms of possibility to suggest that they could also have been made at Holt.

It has been argued that the absence of these antefixes from Holt indicates that they were not made there. However, this is also true of some of the pottery vessels, which were



clearly produced in Holt fabrics but which are only present at Chester (Jones 1997, 10). There are also published and unpublished examples of legionary tile stamps from Chester which are not present at Holt (Grimes 1930, 139, footnote 3). The mass of tile and pottery found on a kiln site includes many wasters or rejects. Their surface colour, finish, hardness and even shape does not necessarily correspond to the output of the kilns (Swan 1984, 129). The reverse can also apply, as is

III II.11 Detail of stamp depicting the head of Silenus (reproduced from Grimes 1930, fig 57 no 4). Not to scale.



III II.12 Stamps and masks from Holt, especially nos 2, 4, 5 and 6 (reproduced from Grimes 1930, fig 57)

demonstrated by the presence of unused potters' stamps (*described above*), as well as other forms that are apparently unique to Holt. Without any secure dating evidence for the antefixes, it is impossible to know if they were produced as a limited batch intended for a specific destination or destinations, such as a particular building phase of the fortress bath house. As the greatest number have come from this area of the fortress, one could perhaps speculate that the other examples from the fortress and the extra-mural settlement may indicate a later, scattered reuse of antefixes originally intended for a specific location (such as the fortress baths). They would have been regarded as desirable objects, not only for their decorative quality but, even more so, for their apotropaic properties.

It should also be noted that the place where the antefixes were produced was not necessarily the place where the prototype (die), from which the moulds were made, was evolved. Both moulds and prototypes could have remained in use for a number of years and the final stage of production, the making of antefixes from the moulds, was not necessarily contemporary with the second stage, the making of the mould from the prototype. Each stage in production could have been carried out at a different place from the rest. Nor can it be assumed that antefixes of identical types were made at the same time (Blagg 1979, 271). The presence of two antefixes of identical type at Caerleon and Exeter, for example, has shown that a time period of fifteen to twenty years may elapse between the use of the same mould at two quite different locations (Boon 1984, 3; Zienkiewicz 1986, 332).

A microscopic examination of selected examples of the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes, shows a close similarity with the local tile and pottery fabrics. The fabric is generally bright orange in colour and is coarsely tempered with quartz, which gives a

rough surface feel. It seems highly likely, therefore, that these antefixes were made locally, if not at Holt itself, and were not imports from the continent, as has been suggested by Toynbee, although it could be argued that the prototype or the moulds themselves were imported (*see above*). It is doubtful if fabric analysis would be able to pinpoint the source of the antefixes to a specific local industry, although it should at least prove possible to determine whether or not they were indeed made from the local Cheshire clays.

If both the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes are Flavian, it is possible that they could be associated not so much with high-status buildings but with buildings that were made of stone from the beginning. On the other hand, the *principia*, a possible source for the Goss Street lion's head antefix, was originally built of timber and it has been assumed that the majority of Roman timber buildings were roofed with shingles rather than with tiles. It is perhaps possible that the major buildings of the early fortress, whether they were built of timber or of stone, may have had tiled roofs with associated terracotta antefixes as ornament either for the gable ends or the eaves.

The absence of these antefixes from Holt could indicate that they are earlier in date than the legionary works-depot, or that they post-date Holt, or that they are contemporary with Holt but were made somewhere else. Margaret Ward, for example, has argued that the superior quality of the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head types, in comparison to the inscribed antefixes of the Twentieth Legion, suggests the presence of tile kilns at a location other than Holt, probably close to the fortress, at which they were produced (Ward 1998, 44). Both Grimes and Toynbee felt that they were so different in type to the inscribed antefixes that they must have been imported from the continent (Grimes 1930, 137; Toynbee 1964, 431). However, it can also be argued that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence when it comes to the non-appearance of the Jupiter Ammon and lion's head antefixes at Holt. Grimes points out in his report on the excavations at Holt that there is probably a lot more of the site still to be excavated (Grimes 1930, 12–13). It is possible that additional kilns and associated waste dumps are awaiting discovery.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Collingwood and Wright include London and Caistor St Edmund in this list of thirteen sites (Collingwood & Wright 1992, 119). However, the only published reference to an antefix from London can probably now be discounted as the piece appears to have been misidentified (*see note 5*). Nor has it yet proved possible to locate a published example of an antefix from Caistor St Edmund, Norfolk. The seven military sites are Caerleon, Chester, Exeter, Gloucester, Holt, Lanchester (Durham) and Templeborough (S Yorkshire). The six cities listed by Collingwood and Wright are \*Caistor St Edmund, Colchester, Dorchester, \*London, Silchester and the *colonia* at York. (*\*but see above*). However, Colchester should also be classed as a military site as antefixes have been recovered from the legionary fortress as well as from the town (Crummy, P 1984, 130–2).
- <sup>2</sup> Newstead's note in the Museum Accession register states that the donor had purchased the antefix from the (unnamed) workman who had originally found it in 1899, which was the date of the excavations in Union Street. This probably explains why he favoured this site above the one given by the donor.
- <sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the antefix could not be found in the museum store, so it was not possible to verify the details or check the dimensions.
- <sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the antefix could not be found in the museum store, so it was not possible to verify the details or check the dimensions.
- <sup>5</sup> It depicts 'a lion's face, wrought in a bold and effective style, in red terra-cotta, discovered ... on the north side of the Strand, near Temple Bar ... [It was probably] once attached to the front of the cornice of the entablature of some Roman building of importance; and ... when perfect there was an aperture through the mouth, to permit the rain which fell on the roof to flow off into the street ... [It was] a classic gargoyle, of which examples are not unfrequently seen among the architectural remains of Greece and Italy. Those who desire to examine such ancient waterspouts may do so in the British Museum, where there are three elegant cornice-tiles of terra-cotta from Athens, the fronts of which are embellished with the honeysuckle pattern, and each having in its centre the head of a lion with the mouth perforated' (Cuming 1871, 522).

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