VII.—A ROMAN SKILLET FROM SOUTH SHIELDS.

BY THE LATE ROBERT CARR BOSANQUET, EDITED BY I. A. RICHMOND.

[Read on 30th January, 1935.]

The fine Roman skillet or patera here illustrated (pls. VII, VIII) was shown to the society at its meeting, held 30th January, 1935, by our member, Mr. W. Gladstone Harris, who has since generously placed it in the society's museum on loan. A label attached to it states that it was found "a hundred years ago"-no more exact date is recorded—" on the north sands at South Shields," among what was taken to be the "wreckage of a sailing ship." In any circumstances, much doubt would attend the association of a Roman skillet with a nineteenth-century wreck; in this particular case, the suspicion that the story is to be considered an unfounded guess is conclusively justified by the frequent discoveries of very diverse Roman objects at South Shields sands. There are three localities from which the relics of this period come: Trow Rocks,1 off which dredgings from the vicinity of pons Aelius at Newcastle were deposited after 1902, full of votive coins thrown from the bridge; Herd Sands,2 where coins are

 $^{^1}$ The dredging began after 1902, see NCH xiii, 514: coins due to this are recorded in $PSAN^3$ i, 94, 102, 118; ii, 189; iii, 193; iv, 83, 124, 222, 288; v, 3, 161, 188; vii, 6, 83, 213. 2 Before the dredging commenced, the bowl dedicated to Apollo Anextlomarus was found, $PSAN^2$ iii, 173 (for the reading, see iv, 273; v, 186, and $Eph.\ Epigr.$ ix, 660): also fragments of a second skillet, now at South Shields, $PSAN^2$ iv, 11, and a coin of Faustina (loc. cit.).

supplemented by bulkier objects, such as a second skillet and the votive bowl to Apollo Anextlomarus; and Tynemouth Bar,3 whence come a cheek-piece from a Roman helmet and the shield-boss once owned by Iunius Dubitatus, of the Eighth Legion. The skillet now to be considered might be thought to come from yet a fourth locality: but the north sands are certainly the Herd Sands, and it is interesting to see that relics were being discovered there long before the river dredging began to deposit in Shields waters objects from Newcastle. While the Trow Rocks furnish objects to be dissociated from the famous Roman site at South Shields, the Herd Sands seem to yield deposits more closely to be linked with the Roman site4 on the Lawe, below which these sands lie; and the timbers among which the skillet was found may well have been the relics of Roman weiring or jetty-building. If so, the great intrinsic interest of the skillet would be enhanced by its connexion with an important Roman site.

The society was much interested in the skillet, and exceptionally fortunate in having a vice-president peculiarly fitted to describe it. Bosanquet had made a lifelong study of Roman trade,⁵ tracing its movements by the distribution of its exports, among which paterae are so notable a class. The society's eager request that he should read a paper on the skillet at the April meeting was balked, however, by his untimely death: only the notes were ready, in the form of neat and full jottings for a lecture, without references. They are here shaped into simple form, with references taken from his papers and printed works. Their presentation without extraneous

 $^{^{9}}$ Cheek-piece, $PSAN^{2}$ i, 340-1: shield-boss, $Lap.\ Sept.,\ no.\ 106=CIL\ vii,\ 495.\ Both\ are\ treated\ by\ Haverfield, NCH\ viii,\ 278-80.$

⁴ AA⁴ xi, 81-102.
⁵ Professor Bosanquet had collected a large number of notes on the subject, but unfortunately not in a form suitable for publication. He had, however, contributed two valuable articles on the northern finds, in NCH xii, 41-50 (Prestwick Carr), and PSAS lxii, 246-54. Welsh examples from Abergele, Kyngadle and Ynys Gwytheryn, were treated by him in R. Comm. Anc. Mon. Inventories for Denbighshire, 6-8: Carmarthen, 188-9; Merioneth, 103-4.

adornment will best display and honour the special qualities of his learning, its modesty and breadth.

The patera itself is a large one, which bears, however, all the appearance of having been cast in one piece. On consultation with Professor J. A. Smythe, of the Department of Metallurgy, Armstrong College, the editor got confirmation of this view, with the proviso that a final determination of the point could only be reached by cutting a section, as was obviously undesirable on this fine specimen. It was evident to Professor Smythe that the handle and base had been cast, in heavily leaded bronze containing some ten or twelve per cent. of tin; while it looked as if the bowl were of the same metal. The impressions still visible on the bowl and the base would suggest that the whole had been cast by the cire perdue process well known to the ancients, in a clay mould from a matrix turned on the wheel.

The vessel has a massive handle, bordered by a broad sweeping groove, which tails out to nothing on the rim and unites at the other end with the still deeper groove, worn through with usage, surrounding the circular expansion of the handle. The stem of the handle is plain: the expansion has a convex section, ornamented on the outside by a cable-mould and on the inside by a thick raised collar, forming the rim of the hole for suspension. The handle merges with the bowl, which has a sharply everted rim, well-developed neck, and a bold shoulder. The shoulder is marked by a decorative cordon, between two incised lines at the top, and one thin raised band at the bottom. These contain a pattern of superimposed pointed leaves, broad and narrow, springing from the raised band and separated by the incised stem of a conventional flower, made by punching an equilateral triangle of three little crescents a side. Three incised lines mark the beginning of a spreading foot-stand, which conceals a massive armature of four concentric rings, all boldly

⁶ Poll. x, 189, τὸ πήλινον, δ περιείληφε τὰ πλασθέντα κήρινα.

moulded with big flanges, and all except the second from . the centre deeply incised on the lower surface. The centre is occupied by a little cup-like concave ring; the purpose of such rings being to strengthen the base and to diffuse heat. On the inside of the bowl the base is plain, except for one raised ring and a little central cup,7 resembling that on the lower side.

So detailed a description of the patera is warranted, because few are better preserved than this one. Yet the objects themselves were common: every household is likely to have possessed such a pan.8 Legionaries also each display one9 as part of their kit, in the parade which opens the campaigns carved upon Trajan's Column. Thus, it is not surprising that the use of these vessels was as varied as their distribution. Roman cookery10 demanded as common operations, the boiling of stews," soups or gravies and decoctions of wine. The cooking skillets therefore occur in sets, often provided with strainers; 11 while vessels to be kept untainted, for use with wine, are sometimes marked with a thyrsus, 12 the fir-cone staff of Bacchus. Less common are those which belonged to toilet sets,13 associated with body-scrapers and used to

Cf. an Arlon relief (Espérandieu, Bas-reliefs de la Gaule, v, 4097) where a family sit at table, a cooked fowl before them. A square bottle and a patera are seen on a shelf above, in readiness for a later stage.

9 Cichorius, Die Traianssäule, Taf. vii, sc. iv.

⁷ The inside surface of the bottom of the inner cup bears a regular indentation, very like the central point of a chuck from a lathe. This presumably is reproduced from the original mould, prepared from a turned wooden matrix. A valuable article upon ancient metal-turning lathes is contributed by Pernice to Jahresheft d. Österreichischen Archäol. Inst. 1905, 51-60, but it is doubtful how far they were used for paterae.

¹⁰ On Roman cooking, see Apicius, De re coquinaria, and the delightful paper by H. C. Coote, Archæologia, xli, 283-324, The cuisine bourgeoise of ancient Rome.

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11 For northern finds of strainers, see Berwick. Nat. Club, 1889, 530-31 (from the Coquet), and CW^1 xiii, 164 (Clifton, near Penrith).

12 Cf. NCH xii, 31, Prestwick Carr, at the Blackgate.

13 RCB notes a fine example from the Musée Calvet, Avignon, found in association with a strigil, and once fitted with it on to a ring; cf. also Willers, Neue Untersuchungen über die römische Bronzeindustrie von Capua und von Niedergermanien, Hannover, 1907, pl. vi, 2, from Siscia, now at Zagreb.

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heat oil for anointing or water for a shave. Rarer still are the silver skillets for ritual use in shrines,14 or for service on the tables of the rich.15 The private soldier, however, from whose kit the South Shields example may so well have come, was embarrassed by no complicated choice. His single skillet would serve all purposes alike.

The general form of such objects was dictated by their use and fixed by its very simplicity. Yet there was room for variation in detail, and for change in the centres of manufacture producing an article so widely employed. Both types of change find their readiest Roman analogy in the history16 of the so-called Samian ware, which was once produced in Tuscany and later in centres across the Alps, where it acquired new form and content. manufacture of Roman glass¹⁷ tells a similar tale. Accordingly, it is no surprise to find that skillets also changed in form, and that their manufacture passed from the great Campanian houses, like the Ansii or Cipii, into the hands18 of a Draccius, a Boduogenus or a Nigellio beyond the Alps. This is the process implied by the form of our skillet.

A start may be made from Campania, where a mean date for skillets by the Ansii and Cipii is established by their common occurrence at Pompeii, where they were buried by the volcanic eruption in A.D. 79. These firms used a variety of stamps. Those of the Cipii begin with

¹⁴ Cf. northern hoards from Capheaton, Archæologia, xv, 393, pls. 30-33; B.M. Guide to Roman Britain, 90, figs. III-I2; JRS xiii, 99; and from near Backworth (true find-spot doubtful), AA¹ ii, 167; Arch Journ., viii, 35-44; Hodgson, Hist. Northumb'l'd., iii, 440; B.M. Guide to Roman Britain, 62, figs. 78, 79.

15 Cæsar B.C. iii, 96, for use even in camp, by senior officers.

16 Oswald and Pryce, Terra Sigillata, 3-34.

17 Kisa, Das Glas in Altertume, 446-70; Harden, JRS xxiv, 50-54.

18 Draccius CIL xiii, 10027, 22; a Villeurbane, nr. Lyon=St.-Germains, 13690; b Corseul, now at Rennes; c Macon; d at Troyes, then at Reims; e Lyon, stamp DRAC. ... noted by RCB; f Prestwick Carr, NCH xii, 49; Boduogenus, Archæologia, xxviii, 436, pl. 25, from Little Shallows, Prickwillow, in the B.M.; Nigellio, CIL xiii, 10027, 31, Chalain d'Isoure (Loire) now at Montbrison, and CIL xii, 5698, from Annemasse, now at Annecy. Annecy.

P.CIPI, and end with different names, 19 as Hilaris, Hymnus, Isocrysus, Nicomachus, Polybius, Princeps, Saturinus and Tantalus. The ANSI stamp²⁰ goes with Diodorus, Epaphroditus and Phoebus. Here the common name denotes ownership in the firm, the variants the different slaves or freedmen working in different shops, in the regular method of Roman multiple producers.21 The wide extent of the market thus served is attested by the frequency of these paterae in Britain, and beyond the limits of the Empire. It is evident that skillets formed a staple commodity in a wide-spread export trade.

The pattern of skillet which these firms were producing was simple and severe in all the three elements which create the object, namely, handle, bowl and base. Each of these elements has an interesting evolution of its own, but the handle is the most sensitive to change, and may be studied first. The first-century handles current in Britain were of two shapes, definable as "oar-shaped" and "fan-tailed," both economical and simple forms. particular problem was presented by the need to supply this expansion with a hole for suspension, and was solved by piercing it with holes or slots of various types, or by supplying a little loop at the end, decorated with swans' heads. The swan loop was quickly simplified into a lunate orifice within a circle, and in the Flavian age became a full circular hole, included within a circular expansion at the end of the handle. So simple a pattern was to oust all others in the everyday forms: but the ornate swan-necks

puterae.

20 Treated by Blinkenberg, Mém. Soc. R. Antiq. d. Nord, 1900, 308-10, to which may be added pans by Epaphroditus from a Dalheim and b, c, Grimmlinghausen, CIL xiii, 10027, 6; and by Diodorus, from Ohlweiler (=Bonn Mus., 16050) and the R. Waal (CIL xiii, 10027, 5 b, c).

21 Barrow, Slavery in the Roman Empire, 98-129.

¹⁹ A large literature centres about these products, first treated by Undset, Bull. dell' Inst. Arch. (Rome), 1883, 235, and by Mowat, Bull. Epigr., iii, 267, and Haverfield, Arch. Journ., xlix, 228-31. The most up-to-date treatment is in Willers, op. cit. (see n. 13 above), and Die römischen Bronzeeimer von Hemmoor, Hannover, 1901. Professor Bosanquet had continued to collect examples, and these are to be considered in a posthumous paper on the Stittenham and other Yorkshire

continued to inspire gay designs on the elaborate ritual skillets, for long after they had disappeared from the commoner vessels. Turning then to paterae found in Britain, three²² from Glyn Dwfrdwy, by Corwen, serve to illustrate (fig. 1) the experiments. The first exhibits a "fan-tail" handle with trefoil piercing, 23 as at Naples, Colchester, Abergele, and Sheffield (from the Witham). The second has the swan loop,24 as at Naples, Zagreb, and Fichtenberg, with later developments on elaborate vessels from Stittenham, Prickwillow and Colchester. The third has the simplified loop within a circle,25 as at Naples, Zagreb and Berlin. The relatively early date of this hoard, not later than Flavian times, is emphasized by the absence of these features from the later first-century hoard26 of Ynys Gwytheryn, Merionethshire, or from the Northumbrian²⁷ vessels of Prestwick Carr, and the Scottish hoards²⁸ of Ruberslaw or Lamberton Moor. Equally, a glance at our South Shields patera will show how far it is removed from these types. It belongs to a later stage of evolution.

If, then, the form of our handle would indicate a date considerably later than the first century, its decoration gives a closer indication of date and school. Reference has already been made to the thyrsus ornament, intended to denote that the vessel should be used for wine. Among the emblems of Bacchus, this was most obviously adapted

²² R. Comm. Hist. Mon. Inventory, Denbighshire, 6-8; see also Arch.

²² R. Comm. Hist. Mon. Inventory, Denbighshire, 6-8; see also Arch. Camb., lxxxii, 139-40.

²³ Naples, R. Museo Nazionale, seen by RCB; Colchester, JRS xxii, 212, pl. xxxvii, 2; Abergele, R. Comm. Hist. Mon. Report, Denbighshire, pp. 6-8; Sheffield, PSAL xvii, 272. The vessel was dredged out of the Witham in 1908, four and a half miles above Lincoln (RCB notes).

²⁴ Naples, R. Museo Nazionale, 77616, illustrated in photograph, Sommer, 11116; Zagreb, from Siscia, seen by RCB; Fichtenberg, Berlin Antiquarium, I g 809; Stittenham, now at Cas. Howard, Archæologia, xli, 325, pl. xv, I, 2; Prickwillow, see n. 18 above; Colchester. An interesting fusion of fan-tip and loop is B.M., no. 51, 18-13, 157, from Vaison

²⁵ Naples, 77617=2508, Sommers photograph, 11116; Zagreb, from Siscia, noted by RCB; Berlin, in the Antiquarium, no. 583.

²⁶ R. Comm. Hist. Mon. Report, Merionethshire, 305.

²⁷ NCH xii, 41-50, by RCB; AA² xv, 159-66, by Hodgkin.

²⁸ Ruberslaw, PSAS xxxix, 219; Lamberton Moor, ibid., 367; both treated by RCB in PSAS lxii, 251.

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to the long shape of the handle, and it appears early, as, for example, on the Sheffield example cited above. But the earliest examples, from Zagreb, are not enriched by the elaboration of tendrils at the tips or centres of the staffs, and it is only towards the last quarter of the century that the gay development of these attractive features occurs. But there was, side by side with this, another form of decoration, to which we are introduced by an earlier swan-looped handle from Zagreb. This exhibits a long tapering flowering stem, springing from the termination of the handle; so long, that it might be mistaken for a thyrsus, at a casual glance. Actually, it forms a useful link between the thyrsus and a treatment of the handle as a long panel, whose ends are each decorated with an ovolo. and a rudimentary arabesque. The arabesques represent a last stage in devolution from an earlier decoration of palmettes, ultimately derived from fifth-century metal work by a path not here to be traced. Our earliest relevant examples, the swan-loop handles from Siscia and Fichtenberg, exhibit (fig. 1) only simplified forms, in which the earlier flowers are conventionalized as groups of small scribed circles. It is these circles, increasingly used to indicate the whole pattern, which are the origin of the pattern on our South Shields skillet. At the junction of the terminal ring and the stem of the handle, there is an ovolo, whence spring two little equilateral triangles of three rings a side, with one ring in the field between them. In isolation, this convention, like most of those developed in mass-production, might well seem meaningless; and it must indeed be doubtful what it meant to the workman who put it there. In association with its forerunners, it is seen to be a final stage in devolution. When classical patterns had thus worked themselves out, the stage was set for the Celtic revival.

The immediate analogies for this simplified pattern are not, however, confined to the Danubian area, but have a wide distribution in Gaul and the outlands. Indeed, it

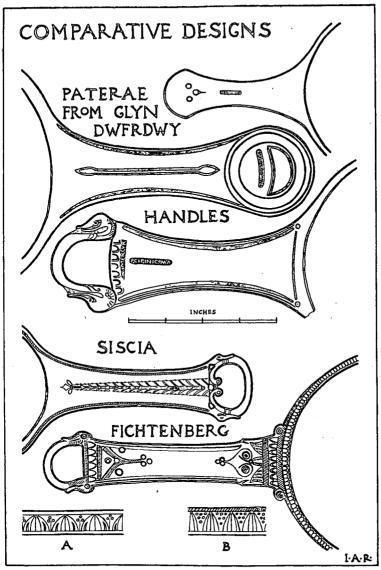


FIG. I.

may be claimed that they have a special connexion with Gallic workshops, where the intermediate stage was certainly being developed. This is represented by two paterae²⁹ now at Copenhagen, one from Ringe (Svenborg) by Nigellio,30 whose work occurs at Annemasse (Savoie) and Chalain d'Isoure; the other, thought to be from Jutland, stamped MATVRVS F. Stockstadt has produced a third,31 marked CANDIDVS F, as at Châlon and Néris. The fuller development on the South Shields patera, has, however, the very closest parallels on three Gallic handles,32 from Verdun-sur-Doubs, Chalain d'Isoure (Loire), and from the river Sienne at Urville (Manche). For these match not only the pattern of triangular rings in all but minute detail, but also provide analogies for the cordon of leaves and flowers on the bowl, presently to be discussed. A later stage, in which the ovolo is omitted and the triangles become more complicated, is represented by the paterae of Talio33 from Pomerania (now in Berlin) and Siebenburgen (now in Vienna), and by an uninscribed example³⁴ now at Marseilles (Château Borély.) On a patera³⁵ at Copenhagen, [Al]picus also uses triangles without an ovolo, and they occur upon a handle of unknown origin in the society's museum. In contrast, an example presenting the ovolo without triangles is known from the island of Wollin,36 at the mouth of the Oder.

Allusion has already been made to the decorative cordon

²⁹ Blinkenberg, op. cit. (see n. 20 above), 311.

³⁰ See n. 18 above.

³¹ Stockstadt, ORL xxxiii, 53=pl. vii, 54; CIL xiii, 10027, 13; a Châlon, b Néris.

a Châlon, b Néris.

³² Verdun-sur-Doubs, CIL xiii, 10027, 16=St. Germains 34102; Chalain d'Isoure, Bulletin de la Diane, v, 79, not the example by Nigellio, RCB; R. Sienne, now at Coutances, CIL xiii, 10027, 38, Pude(n)s F.

³³ Berlin, Undset, Bull. d. Inst., 1883, 235; Friedrichs, Antiquarium Catalogue, p. 139; Siebenburgen (Kezdi-Vásárhely), at Vienna, CIL iii, 1640, 4. Pans by Talio were also found at Clifton, Penrith, EE vii, 1168, and CW¹ xiii, 164.

³⁴ Fröhner, Cat. du Musée, no. 827.

³⁵ Usually read . . DICVS, but . . PICVS by Blinkenberg, op. cit. 311, undoubtedly correctly; cf. CIL xiii, 10027, 10, Forêt de Comnièrne, and EE vii, 713. Malton.

piègne, and EE vii, 713, Malton. 36 Ethn. Zeitschrift, xxiv, 497.

on the shoulder. In its earlier form, this is a stiff arcading, not usually associated with the patterned handles, but a later introduction. It is to be seen upon the British examples37 from Stittenham (at Castle Howard), Gloucester (British Museum, Lysons collection), Ribchester, Prestwick Carr (at Woolsington) and Lamberton Moor, and is not uncommon on the continent. But this severe pattern was soon modified by the flamboyant instinct of Gaul, and the arcade was translated into leaves, and enlivened by the insertion of flowers. This is the stage represented by the South Shields example: and it is matched by an example³⁸ from Weissenburg (fig. 1, A), and by those cited from Verdun-sur-Doubs and Chalain d'Isoure (fig. 1, B). The correspondence is here so close as to point to an intimate connexion of our patera in date and school with the Gallic examples.

If further proof of the Gallic association were required it is to be found in the shape of the bowl. The shape, whose rich curves contrast so sharply with the sober lines of the Campanian models, expresses the fundamental antithesis between classic and Celtic design. Among the vessels already mentioned, this shape is common to those³⁹ by Pude(n)s from Urville, by Celsinus and Nigellio at St. Germains, and by Dioratus from Levden: the list may be lengthened by the examples40 from St. Germains

³⁷ Stittenham, at Castle Howard, see Archaologia, xli, 325, pl. xv, figs. 1, 2. Gloucester, B.M.; Ribchester, Vetusta Monumenta, iv, 2, the vessel is not illustrated, but RCB had seen it, copying the arcading and stamp in his notes; Prestwick Carr, NCH xii, 48, no. 10 (at Woolsington), figured p. 47; Lamberton Moor, PSAS xxxix, 367, the arcading is figured on p. 370, fig. 2, and has one little circle between each arcade, exactly as on the paterae from Prickwillow (Archaeologia, xxviii, pl. 25) and Whitehill (PSAS lxii, 248-9, fig. 1, no. 2).

38 Weissenburg, ORL xxvi, 38.

39 Pudens, CIL xiii, 10027, 38; Celsinus, ibid., 10027, 16; Nigellio, 10027, 31; Dioratus, 10027, 21, RCB notes that the reading is certain as against Dressel's and Willers's (op. cit., no. 174) Deoratus, and compares the name Diorata in a Bordeaux inscription, see Holder, Altceltischer Sprachschatz, s.v.

tischer Sprachschatz, s.v. 40 St. Germains 13690=CIL xiii, 10027, 22 a, from Villeurbane, near Lyon; Marseilles, see n. 34 above; Rykenbach, stamped ACA, Mittheil. d. Zür. Antiq. Gessels., xv, pl. iv, fig. 10; Whitehill, PSAS lxii, 248, fig. 1, no. 2.

by Draccius, from Marseilles, unsigned, from Rykenbach (Schwyz) and from Whitehill. An interesting intermediate example, ⁴¹ showing how the first development was at the rim, and that the elaboration of the base came somewhat later, is provided by a vessel from Drielsche near Doornwert, in Holland.

The development of an elaborate base may thus be taken as yet another criterion of late date. Campanian pans exhibit, as in the Weardale⁴² examples, an undeveloped series of small concentric raised moulds, intended to strengthen a bottom made as thin as possible to ensure rapid boiling. An instance of the half-way stage occurs on the patera⁴³ from Longfaugh, Crichton, where the base is thickened by the provision of a very rudimentary footstand. But it is far removed from the elaborate foot-stand and undercut flanges of the South Shields example.

What date, then, may be assigned to this later Gallic series, of which the South Shields patera forms so notable a member? The durability of metal objects makes it impossible to apply to them calculations based on a short life: and this vessel in particular has seen long service, which was wearing it out before it was lost. Of the two close parallels,44 that from Weissenburg was found with a well-preserved diploma of A.D. 107, while that from Chalain d'Isoure enclosed a hoard of coins ending in A.D. 260. The Rykenbach patera45 is less advanced, but of the Gallic shape, and contained a hoard of coins ranging from Otho to Septimius Severus. Thus, it would look as if the period in which this developed type was in vogue, were the first half of the third century, for the Weissenburg diploma is not likely to have been discarded very early in its life; it was of legal value for a long time. It

⁴¹ In Leyden Museum, where it was seen and copied by RCB, no. $\frac{98}{10}$, 2. $^{42}PSAN^3$ vii, 9-11.

⁴³ PSAS lxii, 249, fig. 2.
44 Weissenburg, ORL xxvi, 38; Chalain d'Isoure, Bulletin de la Diane, v, 1889, 79.
45 See n. 40 above.



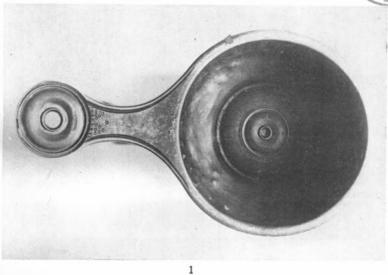


Fig. 1. Scale 1:4

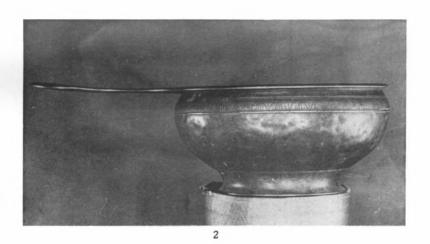


Fig. 2. Scale 1:4

ROMAN SKILLET FOUND IN TYNE.

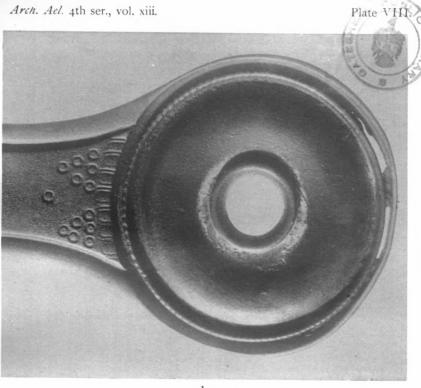


Fig. 1. Scale 1:1



Fig. 2. Scale 1:2 ROMAN SKILLET FOUND IN TYNE.



is perhaps worth adding that this epoch coincides with the most intensive occupation⁴⁶ of the site near which the patera was found; it was at that time that South Shields was provided with the great series of storehouses: if, on the other hand, the vessel was lost from a ship, the harbour was then at the height of its importance.

46 AA4 xi, 99.