

II.—FIGURED SAMIAN FROM BENWELL, 1938.

By ERIC BIRLEY.

[Read on 25th November 1946.]

The following abbreviations are employed :

- AA⁴ *Archæologia Aeliana*, fourth series.
CW² *Cumberland and Westmorland Transactions*, new series.
D. Déchelette's figure-type.
Oswald Oswald's figure-type.

It will be recalled that a chance discovery in 1932 led to the excavation, in the following year, of an original stone-revetted causeway across the ditch of the Vallum, a short distance south of the Wall fort at Benwell-Condercum.¹ At the time of the 1933 excavation it was noted that the gateway astride the causeway had continued in use long after the Vallum ditch had been filled in, and that buildings had been erected on either side of it, above the filled-in ditch; but the primary purpose of the excavation was to ascertain the character of the causeway itself, and neither time nor funds sufficed to permit an extended examination of the later buildings or of the stratification underlying them. Five years later, however, when Benwell Park was giving place to a modern housing estate, the causeway and its immediate surroundings were placed in the custody of H.M. Office of Works, and the Durham University Excavation Committee was entrusted by the

¹ Cf. AA⁴ x, 101, xi, 176f. (pl. xxv shows the position of the causeway in relation to the fort, and fig. 3, p. 180, the portions of the later buildings, A-D, found and examined on that occasion).

Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments with the task of completing the archaeological examination of the site before its consolidation for permanent display as an ancient monument. The excavations of 1938 were under the immediate supervision of the rev. W. L. George; the unexpectedly large yield of stratified finds required so much detailed study that it was not possible for him to produce a report in 1939, but it was hoped that by the spring of 1940 such a report might be completed and laid before this society. *Dis aliter visum*: the outbreak of war interrupted our study of the Benwell finds, and it has not been easy to take up the threads of that study again after seven years; Mr. George is no longer in Durham (where the material was concentrated for study), and has other and more pressing commitments to meet: and the study of the coarse pottery has therefore been entrusted to Mr. J. P. Gillam who, it is hoped, will be able to deal with it within the framework of the wider survey of the Roman pottery of the north of Britain on which he is now engaged. An account of the stratification, and an interpretation of the historical sequence, must obviously await the completion of Mr. Gillam's researches, but there are good reasons for earlier publication of one group of finds, namely the figured samian ware. For one thing, it is most desirable that as much as possible of that material from sites first occupied under Hadrian should be published without delay, in order to give specialists an opportunity for adding to their stock of demonstrably Hadrianic types (by comparing the series from Antonine sites, such as those on the Wall of Pius in Scotland, and noting which styles no longer appear there; though still represented on Hadrian's Wall). I had hoped that the Benwell material might have been drawn and described by Mr. J. A. Stanfield, whose superlative artistry and profound knowledge of this class of material had already been displayed to readers of *Archæologia Aeliana*,² though the bulk of his published work appeared elsewhere;

² Cf. AA⁴ VIII, 204f.; IX, 220f.; XIII, 242f.; XV, 223f. and 348f.

and early in 1939 I placed the whole group in his hands for study. In that case too, however, the outbreak of war compelled the laying aside of the task; and the additional strain of work to the limits of human endurance, which Mr. Stanfield's duties and conscience required of him in the public service, was undoubtedly the cause of his sudden and untimely death early in 1945. It is difficult to express the full measure of the loss which learning has sustained at his passing. I hope to have an opportunity, in due course, of paying full tribute to his qualities as an artist, a scholar and a man; in the meantime I can only emphasize my own sense of loss, and my regret that my own drawings and description of the Benwell material fall so far below his standard: at least, it is a standard that nobody else in this country or abroad has been able to reach. And it is a pleasant duty to add, that Mrs. Stanfield has been good enough to entrust me with the task of preparing his large series of unpublished drawings and his notes for publication, and that in dealing with the Benwell material I have therefore been able to draw on the invaluable wealth of the Stanfield collections.

The group of figured samian dealt with in the present paper includes almost all the material found in 1938, with two important exceptions: two bowls of Dragendorff's form 37 were found, broken but tolerably complete, in the first occupation layer overlying the filled-in Vallum ditch (one of them was a Lezoux bowl in the style of *DIVIXTVS*, the other a signed product of the Rheinzabern potter *IANVS*), and I have not yet succeeded in tracing their present whereabouts; publication of them must await their rediscovery. Apart from them, there are only five scraps which I have left undrawn, none of which deserves publication.³ Taken in conjunction with the figured samian from the excavations

³ Publication of the few pieces found in 1933 (AA⁴ x, 176) seems on balance to be unnecessary; there are not enough to provide a full-page figure, they do not alter the general picture provided by the 1938 series, and they are mostly in so worn and friable a condition that it would not be easy to produce accurate and effective drawings.

in Benwell fort in 1926 and 1927,⁴ the 1938 material gives us a far larger group than has hitherto been obtained and published from any of the forts on Hadrian's Wall; and it may be permissible to draw attention now to certain points which emerge from a study of the group as a whole. It will be remembered that the final excavations on the site of the fort itself⁵ emphasized that the Hadrianic stone fort was the first structure on the site, and indeed they produced an inscription to prove the Hadrianic attribution. That makes the analysis of the earliest pieces in the group of particular interest; for if any of them are typologically pre-Hadrianic, we shall be justified in interpreting them as "survivals," that is to say, stray pieces which had outlasted the bulk of their contemporaries: there is no longer room for us to postulate, on their evidence, the existence of an earlier fort at Benwell.

(a) *The earliest pieces.*

South Gaulish products are still represented; nos. 10 and 39 are both assignable to La Graufesenque, and so is the fragment reproduced in Mr. Petch's report on the excavations of 1927, AA⁴ v, pl. xviii, 7. That is to say, perhaps two per cent of the whole series from the site comes from southern Gaul, whose potteries are generally held (rightly, in my opinion) to have closed down by *circa* A.D. 100. The occurrence of their products at Benwell or other Hadrianic sites⁶ does not necessarily invalidate that conclusion, for it is a commonplace that the closing years of their activity witnessed a very large output indeed; and it would not therefore be surprising if a small proportion of that output lingered on in use into the early years of Hadrian. More noteworthy at Benwell is the complete absence of the typically Trajanic class of Central Gaulish

⁴ AA⁴ iv, 169f.; v, 59f. and 63f.

⁵ AA⁴ xix, 1f.

⁶ Wallsend: *Northumberland County History*, xiii, 486; 48a (Willowford east) turret: CW² xxvi, 449f. (the vessel here had been broken and repaired with rivets).

wares, of the schools of LIBERTVS and IOENALIS, DONNAVCVS and RANTO, or the potters (their names still remain to be discovered) whose work is characterized by the use of such decorative details as the ram's-horn wreaths or the anchor pattern.⁷ Such wares, too, have been noted as "survivals" on Hadrianic sites,⁸ but it is in deposits of the immediately preceding period that they are normally met with. The 1938 group, however, does include a number of pieces with close affinities to the Trajanic group, such as nos. 1-18 and 45-47 in particular; indeed, before Mr. Stanfield's detailed analysis of the Trajanic potters had been made, any of these pieces might well have been assigned, on typological grounds, to that period. But the case is altered now, all the more so with the demonstration of a date *circa* A.D. 125 for the forts of Hadrian's Wall, and the expansion of the series of figured samian from those forts; thus, the potter G. IULIVS VIBIVS, to whom nos. 1-5, 45 and 46 may be assigned without hesitation, is also represented at Birdoswald and Housesteads, as well as at milecastle 48 (Poltross Burn) and the detached fortlet at Cardurnock, west of Bowness on Solway.⁹ It is possible to assign a Hadrianic date to some 28 out of the 110 pieces of the 1938 series; that is to say, about a quarter of the whole group is Hadrianic, and the remainder (less the two South Gaulish pieces) is to be assigned to the time of Antoninus Pius or later.¹⁰

⁷ Cf. *Journal of Roman Studies*, xxv, 59f.; the pre-Hadrianic deposits from Corbridge, by contrast, have yielded a large and interesting series of this class of material.

⁸ E.g. Birdoswald: *op. cit.*, pl. XIX, 2, and two unpublished fragments.

⁹ A note on this potter and the distribution of his wares in Britain and on the continent will be found in the report on excavations at Cardurnock, to appear in CW² XLVII.

¹⁰ Hadrianic: nos. 1-18, 20-23, 44-49; the attribution of no. 92 remains open to question; on balance I am inclined to attribute it to the school of SARTO, and the time of Hadrian, but it may be South Gaulish and pre-Hadrianic (unfortunately it is in a much abraded condition, and it is no longer possible to use its glaze or surface texture as evidence).

(b) Later Central Gaulish ware.

Later Lezoux ware is well represented, providing 59 or 60 pieces; that is to say, it forms over 50 per cent of the whole group and three-quarters of the post-Hadrianic material. Few of the pieces call for detailed comment, and most of them can be matched, for example, by specimens from the Antonine Wall in Scotland. But particular attention may be directed to nos. 36, 37 and 40-43 which, with the Rheinzabern piece, no. 38, represent the latest material distinguishable among the filling of the Vallum ditch, and so provide evidence for the period after which it was eliminated at this site; detailed discussion must be reserved until the large group of coarse pottery from the ditch-filling has been studied in detail, but it may be noted that the figured samian suggests that the filling took place nearer A.D. 160 than 140.

(c) East Gaulish ware.

Rheinzabern, as usual, is best represented of the East Gaulish potteries, with nine or ten pieces;¹¹ two or three pieces come from Trier (these may well date from the time of Severus, thus constituting the latest items in the whole group¹²); La Madeleine is represented by nos. 101-103 and 109, while no. 110 is attributable to Lavoyè; no. 105 is certainly East Gaulish, but I am not in a position to assign it to a specific pottery. The products of La Madeleine and Lavoyè in particular have seldom been noted in any quantity in Britain, but Corbridge has produced a reasonably large number of pieces attributable to them, and it would be well worth while for the British material as a whole to be studied and published; in passing, I may note that the dating of the periods of activity of those and the other East Gaulish potteries is still in need of reasoned demonstration, and that it will certainly prove to be somewhat later than has usually

¹¹ Nos. 33, 93-100 and 106; nos. 94 and 95 probably belong to the same vessel.

¹² Nos. 104, 107 (?) and 108 (the latter possibly part of the same vessel as AA⁴ v, pl. xx, 1, 32).

been believed.¹³ In this connection, it is perhaps worth pointing out that with the exception of nos. 33 and 38, all the East Gaulish pieces in the present group come from deposits formed after the filling in of the Vallum ditch; and the immediate and perhaps justifiable assumption will be that most of them should be dated later than A.D. 150.

(d) *Signed and attributable pieces.*

It would be inappropriate to include a detailed analysis of every fragment in a paper addressed to others besides specialists; but I may be excused for inserting notes on the three pieces which carry the names of their makers, and on several others which are attributable without hesitation to specific potters, because of the details of their decoration; brief notes will suffice in most cases.

(i) Nos. 1-5, 45 and 46. Almost all the figure-types and decorative details can be matched on vessels signed by the potter G. IVLIVS VIBIVS (cf. note 9 above), but the *rosette* on nos. 2 and 4 has not previously been noted on his bowls.

(ii) No. 8. This fragment shows part of the signature, written normally in the mould and thus appearing in reverse on bowls made in that mould, of the potter PATERCLOS; the decorative details, a *straight wreath* of trifid leaves repeated, and a fine wavy line terminating in a (rather blurred) *eight-bead rosette* recur on a larger piece signed by the same potter, illustrated (not very clearly) in May, *The Pottery found at Silchester*, pl. XXVI, 42; he was closely associated with QVINTILIANVS and GRATVS and, less closely, with BASSVS: his *floruit* may be set nearer 120 than 130.

(iii) No. 9. The greater part of a fairly large bowl, probably assignable to QVINTILIANVS rather than PATERCLOS; note the similar *straight wreath*, *wavy line* and *rosettes*; the *astragali* astride the wavy lines are typical of

¹³ Oswald and Pryce assigned the La Madeleine and Lavoye potteries to the times of Trajan and Hadrian respectively; at Corbridge the associations seem in each case to be Antonine, but it is not yet possible to say from which of the two successive Antonine levels the material at present available came.

both potters; but the *ovolo* seems not to have been recorded for either of them. The principal figure-types persist into the Antonine period, and one or two of them first appear on the products of Trajanic potters; the smaller decorative details confirm a dating on typological grounds to the time of Hadrian. The figure-types are as follows, from l. to r. : small *siren* to front, D.500; *pigmy with spear* to l., D.439; an unidentified figure to r.; *Mercury* to r., D.95; *tripod*, D.1068; *Satyr* to r. but looking l. (cf. D.409); small *bird* to r. but looking l. (cf. Oswald 2294); *leaf pattern*, D.1148; *spearman* to r., lacking his spear, D.626a.¹⁴

(iv) Nos. 11 and 12. Small fragments, exhibiting closely related *ovolos* whose thick, hatched tongues terminate in blurred rosettes, attached rather awkwardly, with *wavy line* below. They may well be the work of one and the same potter, whose style is easily distinguishable, though his name is not yet known; judging by his decorative types, the period of his activity, too, was *circa* 120-130, and he shows certain affinities with the Lezoux potter BASSVS.

(v) Nos. 33, 38, 93-96. Several pieces assignable to IANVS of Rheinzabern; note the *ovolo*; the *notched line* in place of bead-row or wavy line, the characteristic *notched circle* of nos. 94 and 95, and the *trifid leaf* (reminiscent of that on nos. 8 and 9) of no. 33. It seems probable that the *floruit* of this potter should be placed *circa* 140-150, but in this case, too, further study of the material from British sites, long overdue; should enable a more positive dating to be offered.

(vi) No. 37. Fragment showing part of the retrograde stamp OF ATT applied upside down below the decoration, which has been a continuous winding scroll of the type, characteristic of the Antonine period, to which nos. 42, 43

¹⁴ Cf. Oswald's *Index of Figure-types*, p. 13f., for an equation of his type numbers with Déchelette's; the latter's drawings are more exact, and therefore more convenient to use in identifying individual pieces, but Oswald's text is an indispensable guide to identifying the potters who used individual types.

and 82-84 also belong. A case can be made out for assigning the work of ATTIANVS to a period beginning *circa* 120, but the present piece is typologically as late as any of his work that I have seen, and it can hardly have been made before the middle of the second century.

(vii) Nos. 62 and 63. The "snake and rock" motif in the field was used by three different potters, ATTIANVS, CRICIRO and DIVIXTVS; the present piece seems most likely to have been made by the first-named of the three, but this is one of the cases in which it is not yet possible to claim certain identification of the maker.

(viii) No. 64. This piece may be attributed, in the light of the Stanfield collections, to the potter TITIVS, the only one known to have used the *charioteer* to r. here shown (not in D. or Oswald); the *bear* to r. is D.809, and the *leopard* to r. a reduced version of D.799.

(ix) Nos. 97 and 98. Portions of separate bowls, both Dr.30, in the first case bearing part of the stamp of COBNERTVS of Rheinzabern, and in the second certainly attributable to him. He is in many respects the most interesting of the Rheinzabern potters, and a monograph on his work would be most welcome; he is well represented in the Corbridge collection, his products falling into three well defined typological groups: the earliest of these suggests some affinity with Hadrianic or earlier Lezoux potters, and the latest (represented on the Outer *Limes* in Germany, and thus later than the middle of the second century) has freed itself altogether from Central Gaulish influence; the present instances belong to the intermediate period, which is still influenced in lay-out by Lezoux styles.

(x) No. 106. Mere fragment, showing an *ovolo* assignable to REGINVS of Rheinzabern; note the *notched line*, similar to that used by IANVS, his contemporary.

No attempt has been made to pick out the many pieces assignable to the chief mass-producer of Lezoux, CINNAMVS, but it may be noted that nos. 66-70, all in his style, are all Dr.30, and no. 85 shows an *ovolo* only known on his

work, associated with a decorative style quite unusual for him.

(e) *Details of stratification.*

Discussion of the dating value of individual pieces or groups, in relation to the deposits in which they were found, must be left until the appearance of the final report on the causeway site; but it may be convenient if I add a note on the associations of the pieces here illustrated.

(i) Nos. 1-43 and 91 come from the filling of the Vallum ditch; the soil conditions suggested that that filling occurred at one time, by human agency, rather than by gradual accumulation, and the pottery will thus represent the dumping in the ditch of material cleared up from elsewhere on the site. That interpretation is confirmed by the large bowl, no. 9, one portion of which was actually found inside the fort, while two fragments came from above the filling, in deposits underlying the stone buildings A and B respectively.

(ii) Nos. 65 and 100 are stray finds from third-century or later levels, and nos. 62, 83, 84 and 107 were unstratified.

(iii) The remaining pieces all came from occupation levels overlying the Vallum ditch filling, and below the stone buildings—as it happens, more than half of them from underneath A, and most of the rest from underneath C, as if in those cases the second-century timber predecessors of the stone buildings had been occupied by the richest tenants. But it should be noted that not all the pieces can be assigned to the period when the timber buildings were in occupation; the example of no. 9, just referred to, will show that some of the rubbish which escaped tipping into the ditch of the Vallum must have been used to level up the floors of the buildings erected over it; and that will serve to explain the occurrence of pieces by the early Hadrianic potter G. IVLIVS VIBIVS, nos. 45 and 46, and other Hadrianic material, in layers which (in view of the underlying material sealed in the Vallum ditch) cannot well have been laid much before A.D. 160.

It must be added that the arrangement of the drawings has been made, as far as possible, according to the source and period of the pieces concerned, with the exception that figures 1 and 2 show all but one of the pieces from the filling of the Vallum ditch, and none from elsewhere; while all but one of the pieces illustrated in figures 3-5 come from deposits overlying that filling. But considerations of space have necessarily involved a certain amount of interference with a logical arrangement of pieces; for example, it proved impracticable to place the three Trier pieces in a group together at the end of figure 5.

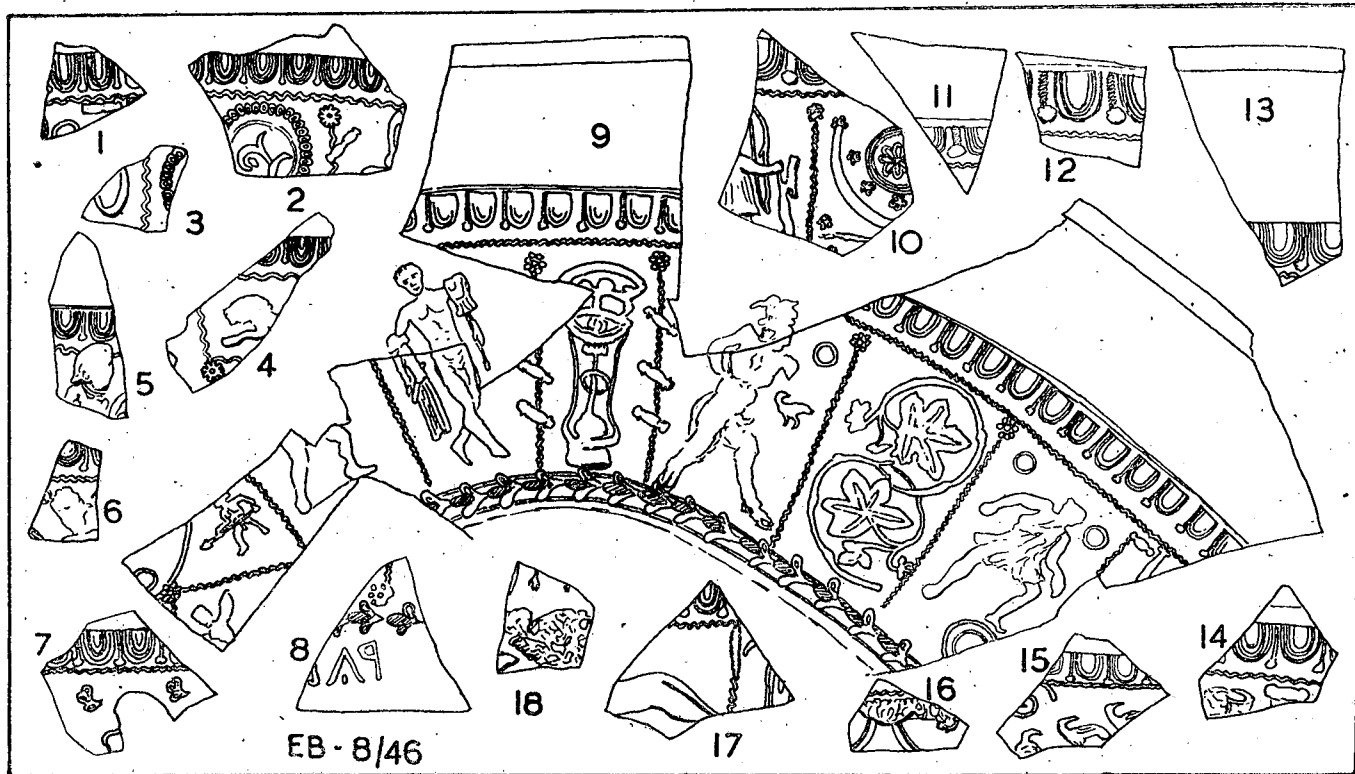


FIG. I. SCALE $\frac{1}{2}$ LINEAR.

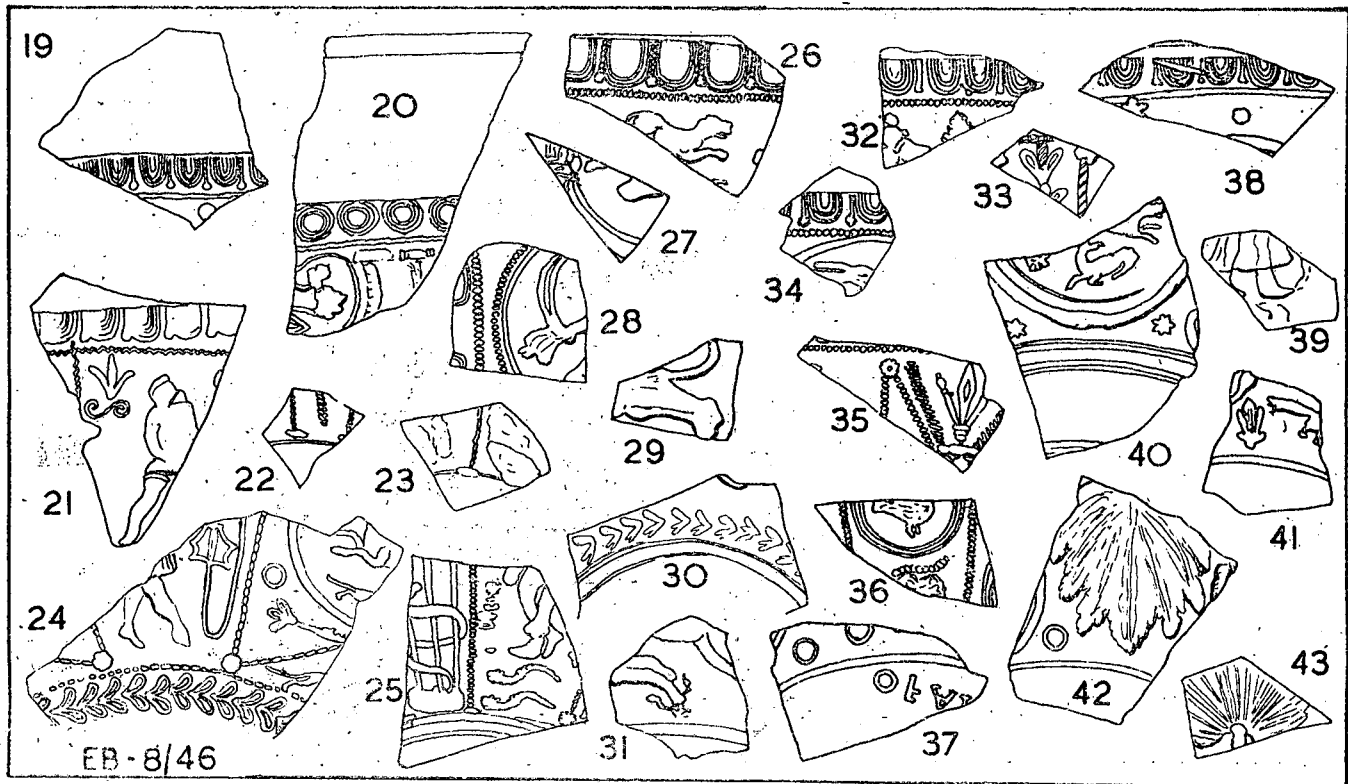


FIG. 2. SCALE $\frac{1}{2}$ LINEAR.

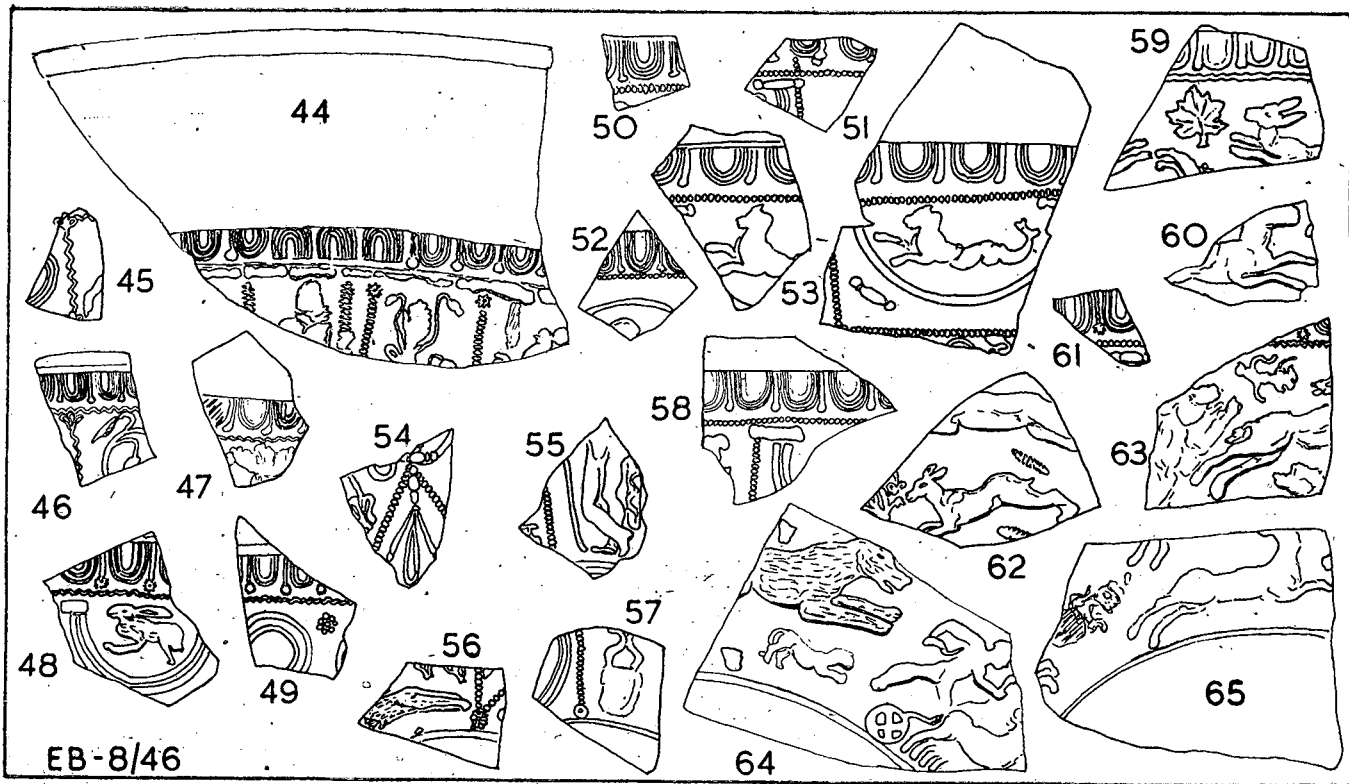


FIG. 3. SCALE $\frac{1}{2}$ LINEAR.

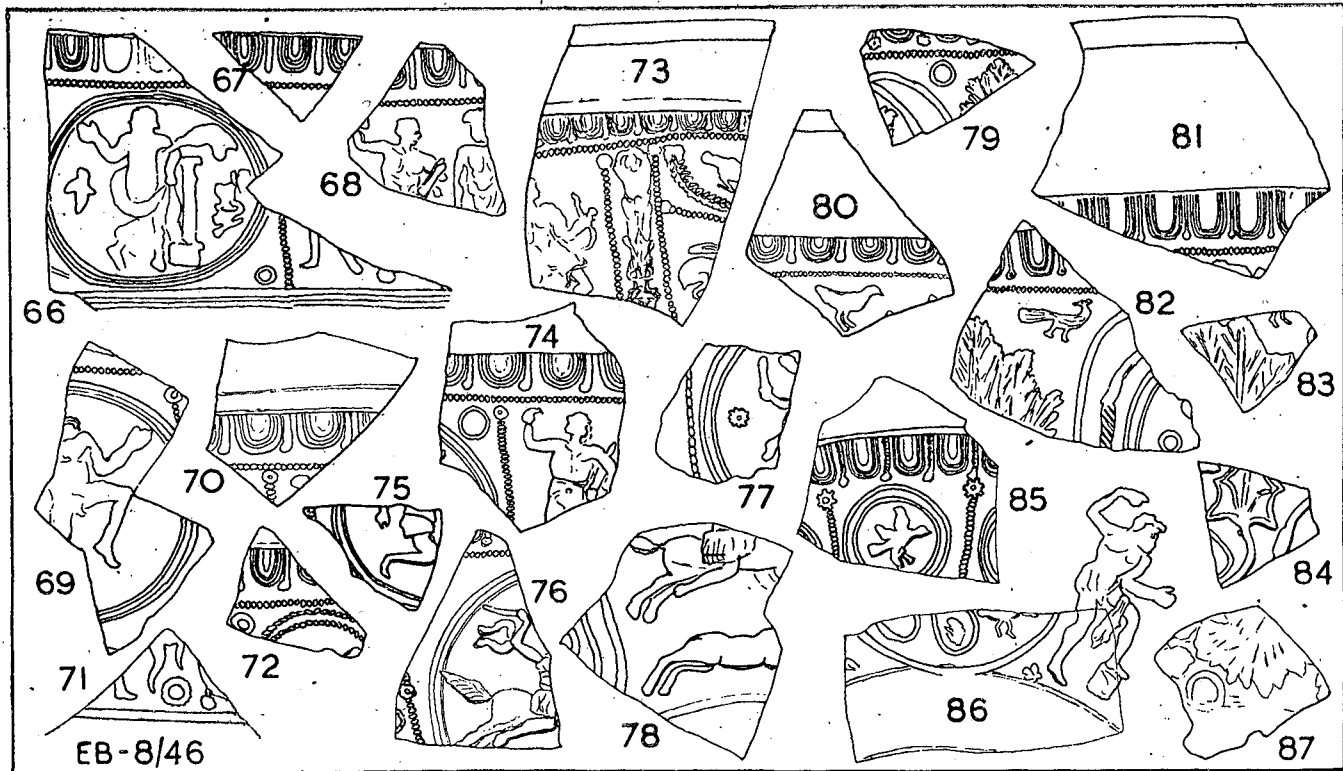


FIG. 4. SCALE $\frac{1}{2}$ LINEAR.

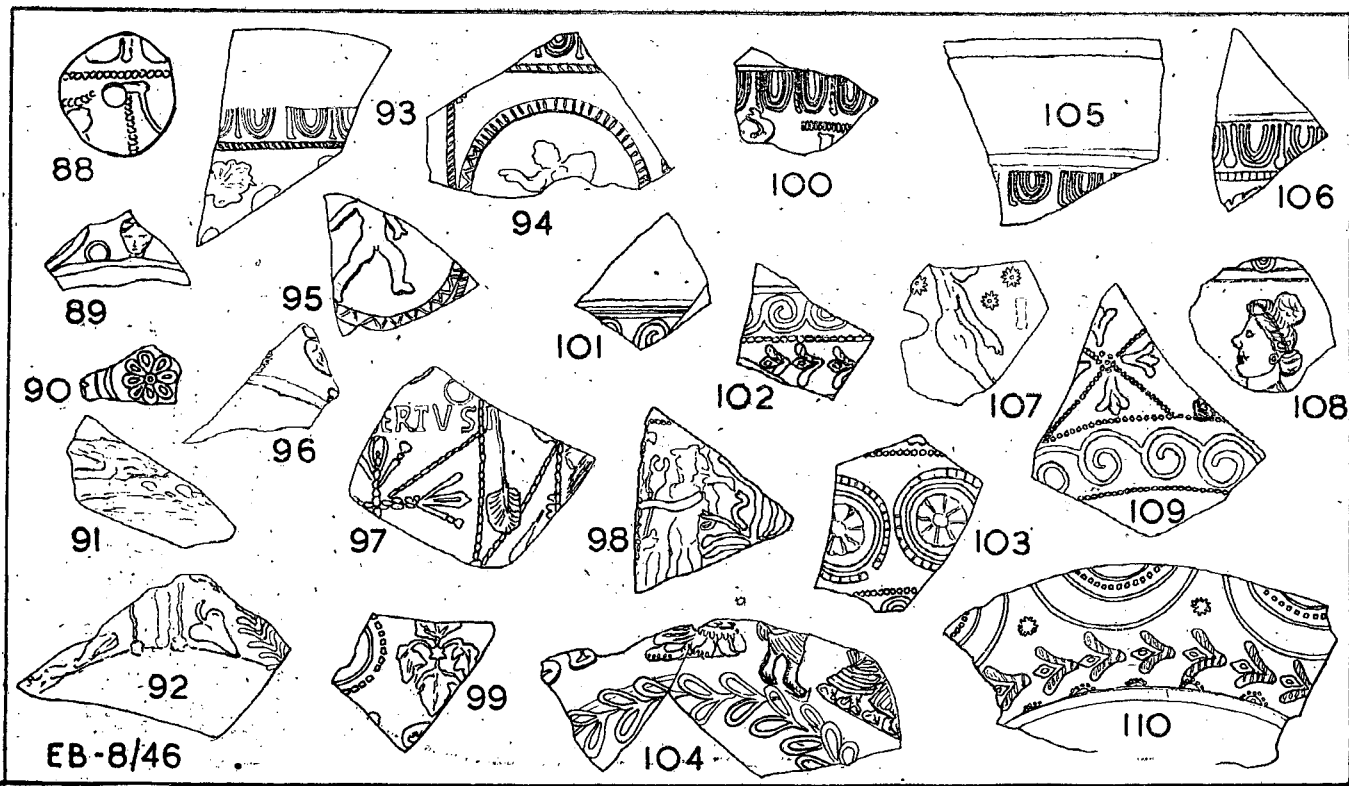


FIG. 5. SCALE $\frac{1}{2}$ LINEAR.