IX.—THE TEMPLE OF MITHRAS AT RUDCHESTER.

By J. P. Gillam and I. MacIvor.

With a Contribution by Eric Birley.

The Roman fort at Rudchester is the fourth from the east on the line of Hadrian's Wall. It lies about a mile and a quarter west of Heddon-on-the-Wall, immediately west of the junction of the road from Newcastle to Carlisle with a minor road from Wylam to Stamfordham, and north of the extensive buildings of the present farm and former village of Rudchester. In 1924 this Society's Excavation Committee undertook the investigation of the fort for the County History Committee; the work was directed by the late Mr. Parker Brewis and Lt.-Colonel G. R. B. Spain. Reports on the excavation were published severally by the Society[1] and in the *Northumberland County History*.[2]

It is certain that the fort had an extra-mural settlement, or *vicus*, but the precise area covered by this has been and remains difficult to determine. Horsley, who could apparently see nothing on the ground, suggests that the settlement lay to the south of the fort, its ruins being covered by the village.[3] Bruce adds that the site of the "suburbs" had recently been destroyed by a quarry opened to supply stone for the construction of the Newcastle and Carlisle railway.[4] As this quarry is situated in the plantation to the east of the road to Wylam, the disturbance recorded by Bruce implies

[1] *Arch. Ael.*, fourth series, vol. i, p. 93f. Hereafter referred to as *AA*[4], &c.
[2] *NCH*, vol. xii, p. 29f.
[3] John Horsley, *Britannia Romana*, 1732, p. 140.
[4] Bruce, *The Roman Wall*, 1st ed., 1851, p. 151.

VIEW OF MITHRAEUM, LOOKING WEST.

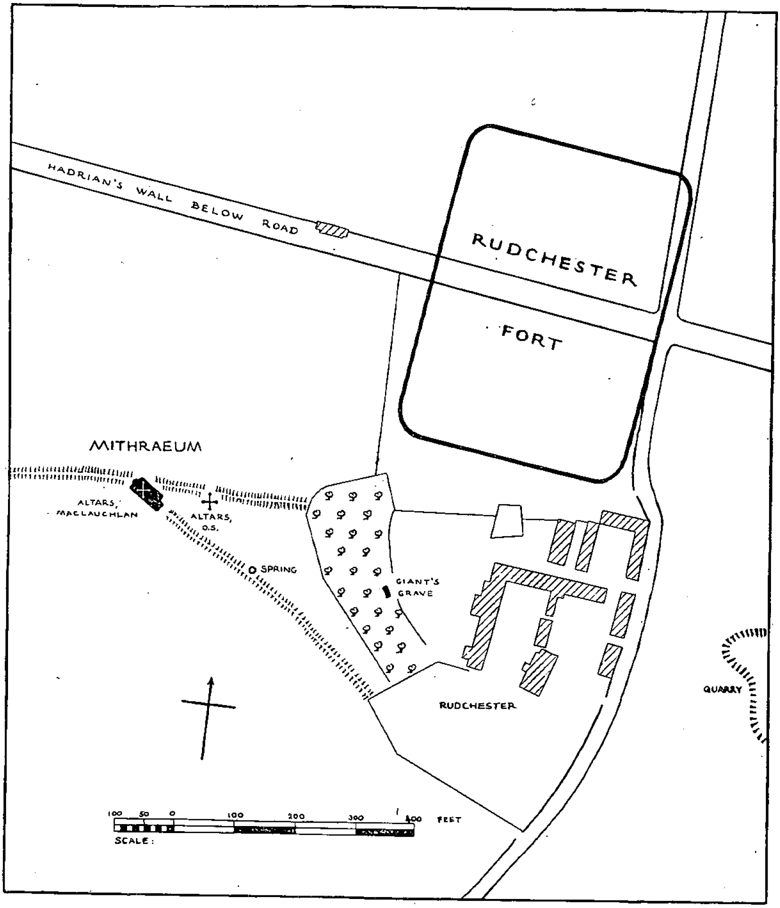


FIG. 1. THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

an extension of the *vicus* well to the south-east of the fort. Bruce gives no details, and his statement naturally cannot be checked. Horsley's suggestion was corroborated a few years ago, when the tops of walls were uncovered in the garden of the dwelling-house, south of the farm buildings. There are several indications that the *vicus* was also developed to some distance south-west of the fort. The level area west of the farm cannot be ploughed because of a consistent stratum of stone debris about a foot below the surface (a rubbish pit recently dug into this revealed a wall standing to two courses); and in the field beyond the plantation which bounds this level area to the west, may be seen the surface indications of buildings. It is probable that so extensive a settlement, closely built, was, as elsewhere on the Wall, responsible for the complete obliteration of the Vallum south and south-west of the fort.

Some ninety yards south of the south-west angle of the fort, now encompassed by the undergrowth of the western plantation, is a cistern or tank carved out of the rock. This was first discovered in 1766: it is 12 feet long from north to south, 5 feet wide and 2 feet deep, and is marked on the plan, fig. 1, as "giant's grave". It is generally, and doubtless justly, regarded as Roman, though its function has been diversely explained. Some seventy yards west of the giant's grave is a masonry-encased spring, also marked on the plan. Several writers have assumed that this is also of Roman date; but, while the source may well have been used in Roman times, and while the stones were probably dressed by Roman hands, in its present form the structure appears to be more recent.

Some eighty yards north-west of the spring a striking discovery was made in August 1844.[5] While searching for walling stones in the vicinity of the fort, workmen employed by the tenant farmer, John Stephenson, dug out five Roman altars from "a mound of earth about 200 yards west of his house": the house referred to was the tenant's in the main complex of farm buildings. A letter from Joseph Fairless of Hexham, read in October 1844 to the newly formed British Archæological Association,[6] adds the details that the altars were "turned up, lying near the surface of the soil"

[5] John Bell and Thomas Hodgson, *Observations on Five Roman Altars, Found in the Summer of 1844 at Rudchester . . .*, *AA*^{1}, vol. iv, p. 5f.

[6] *Arch. Journ.*, vol. i, p. 385. The accounts of Bell, Hodgson and Fairless, together with Thomas Hodgson's MS. and MacLauchlan's *Survey* (*note 7*), form the substantive record of the discovery.

and that "a statue likewise found was broken up, for the purpose of covering a drain, by the labourers employed; timely intervention saved the altars". Four of the altars thus happily preserved bore inscriptions which in one case named Mithras, and in the others clearly shewed that they were dedications to that god. It was doubtless Thomas James, the owner of the land, whose intervention saved them. He had three of them, *a*, *b* and *d* below, removed to Otterburn Tower before the end of the year, and presented the others, *c* and *e* below, to the Society, in whose care they have remained. They were presented at the instance of John Bell, the contributor of the illustrated account published, together with observations by Thomas Hodgson, in *Archæologia Aeliana.* In 1931 Mrs. Howard Pease of Otterburn Tower presented the three altars that had been taken there to the Society, and all five are now in its care.

Eight years after the discovery of the altars, MacLauchlan began the survey of the Wall on which his maps[7] are based. He marks the site of the discovery on his larger inset plan of Rudchester (1 inch to 528 feet). He probably ascertained the precise site from James, whom he mentions in his *Memoir*[8] as having received him kindly.

In the third edition of *The Roman Wall*, John Collingwood Bruce reproduced MacLauchlan's plan, and published new engravings of the four inscribed altars. But his discussion,[9] enlarged from that in previous editions, shows that Bruce had neither studied the plan with care nor made any attentive examination of the ground. He minimizes the distances between the giant's grave, the spring, and the site of discovery, and, improving a hint from Thomas Hodgson, suggests that they were all linked in one mithraic complex. At a casual reading a misleading impression is gained that the altars had been found much nearer to the giant's grave than was in fact the case.

[7] Henry MacLauchlan, *The Roman Wall and Illustrations of the Principal Vestiges of Roman Occupation in the North of England*, 1857.

[8] *Memoir written during a Survey of the Roman Wall*, 1852-1854, p. 17.

[9] *The Roman Wall*, 3rd ed., 1867, pp. 127-8.

Cumont[10] was effectively misled by this, and obscures the evidence further by a misquotation of Bruce which gives a "Mithréum decouvert en août 1844 . . . *on the brow of the hill outside the south-west angle of the station* (Bruce)". Cumont accepts the association of the temple with the spring, and brings a specious parallel from Heddernheim to help establish its proximity to the giant's grave. This progress away from the known and published facts created a false picture of the probable position of the *mithraeum* at Rudchester that has survived to the present day, although the evidences were clearly set out by R. C. Bosanquet in the County History in 1926.

This is the most useful and reliable single account that has been written. In it the three best altars, then still at Otterburn, are illustrated by photographs and line drawings, and all five are minutely described and discussed. The value of MacLauchlan's evidence is stressed, and the reasonable conclusion reached that the spring and the giant's grave can have no connection with the *mithraeum*, for "such sanctuaries were on a modest scale".[11]

When J. P. Gillam visited the site of the giant's grave on May 9th, 1953, Mr. V. L. Benson, of Rudchester, drew his attention to apparent surface indications of buildings in the field to west of the westerly plantation, at about the point where the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map[12] marks the find of the altars; and suggested that excavation might reveal the temple. The Ordnance map marks the position some sixty yards north-north-west of the spring, while MacLauchlan marks it some eighty yards (in the *Memoir*[13] he says ninety yards) distant north-west. As MacLauchlan was in a position to be accurately informed, and was doubtless the source of the later information, his evidence was clearly to be preferred.

[10] Franz Cumont, *Textes et Monuments Figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, 1896 and 1899, vol. ii, p. 392. Hereafter referred to as *Cumont*.

[11] *NCH*, vol. xii, p. 36f.

[12] *Northumberland, New Series, Sheet N. XCIII 2*, 1919.

[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 16, footnote 9.

Some features of the ground have changed since his day; the plantation, its boundary wall and the fence linking it to the Newcastle-Carlisle road are not marked on his map, while a field boundary, now defunct, ran from the farmyard to a point on the March Burn some hundred and eighty yards south of the road. The place is marked close up against the south side of this hedge at a point where it is joined by a mound, the remains of an earlier hedge, running past the spring from the south end of the present western plantation. These features were an aid to the identification of the site on the ground, for in the eastern part of the field the line of the hedge marked on MacLauchlan's plan still appears as a bank, accentuating the natural slope of the ground from the north-east, and in the western part of the field the continuation of the line could be readily picked up, for to south of it the plough riggs run from north to south, while to north of it they run from east to west.

Permission to excavate was readily given by Mr. W. James of Stamfordham, the owner of Rudchester, and by Mr. T. W. Stobo of Rudchester, the farmer. The site for the first trench was chosen on the tail of the bank surviving from the old hedge, at the point where it is joined by the other mound, and where a saucer-shaped depression suggested that there had been earlier disturbance. Work was begun on May 25th. No structural remains were encountered in position, and a waterlogged subsoil was soon reached. It was later learnt that this first trench actually ran across the temple's south-west angle, which had earlier been demolished without trace, only some four yards from the place in the temple where the altars probably stood. A second trench was begun farther up into the bank of the old hedge, and a few yards to the east, almost exactly in the middle of the nave, as it later appeared, and was continued eastwards until, on the fourth day of the excavation, the stone-revetted face of the north bench of the temple was encountered, at an acute angle to the line of the trench.

As contact was so rapidly made with structural remains, it was possible to proceed with their complete excavation in a single season. Excavation continued until August 28th, a total of fourteen weeks.

There can be no doubt that the excavation revealed the *mithraeum* from which the altars had been taken. The excavated building is substantially similar in plan to numerous *mithraea* elsewhere. When the position given by MacLauchlan for the discovery of the altars is plotted, by tie lines from fixed features marked on his plan and visible on the ground, it falls within the walls of the building at the point marked on fig. 1 by a white cross.

Looking from the entrance towards the sanctuary, the axis of the *mithraeum* lies on the magnetic bearing 307° 5′ (August 1953), that is, slightly west of north-west. While it would be rash to assume that there is any religious or astronomical significance in the orientation, it is nevertheless notable that the orientation of the *mithraea* at Carrawburgh[14] and Housesteads,[15] 321° and 260° respectively, is not greatly dissimilar. For the sake of simplicity the Rudchester *mithraeum* is described as if it lay due east and west.

The *mithraeum* (Pl. XIV) has an overall length of 60 feet. Its main body, or nave, is oblong, approximately rectangular, 42½ feet from east to west along the north wall, and 26 feet from north to south. The entrance is by a door 2 feet 9 inches wide, placed precisely in the middle of the east wall. This leads to a central alley 10 feet wide, flanked on either side by benches 6 feet wide and 1 foot high, which are revetted along the inner face by four courses of masonry at most. The return to the north wall of the revetted east end of the north bench survives, 3 feet clear of the east wall. At its west end the *mithraeum* has a segmental apse, 4 feet deep internally and the same width as the alley.

The walls of the nave are 2 feet thick and built in normal

[14] I. A. Richmond and J. P. Gillam, *The Temple of Mithras at Carrawburgh*, *AA*⁴, vol. xxix, p. 1f.

[15] John Hodgson, *Observations on the Roman Station of Housesteads, and on some Mithraic Antiquities discovered there* . . ., *AA*¹, vol. i, p. 263f., and R. C. Bosanquet, *The Roman Camp at Housesteads*, *AA*², vol. xxv, p. 193f.

fashion. North of the entrance the east wall is well preserved, standing 2 feet 3 inches high with five courses of masonry. South of the doorway it shews evident signs of rebuilding, described in detail below, and rapidly loses height, in conformity with the present slope of the ground towards the south-east angle. A short stretch only of the south wall survives to the height of one to two courses, while the rest, which was tested by trenching but not completely uncovered, has disappeared, leaving a shallow foundation trench as its only trace. At the south-west angle and the southern end of the west wall, the ground has been much disturbed and no trace of structures was detected. North of this point, the apse, the northern portion of the west wall, and the north wall, protected by the bank of the old hedge, are preserved to a height of six feet and retain nine courses of masonry.

Outside the east wall of the nave is an external entrance hall, or narthex, planned asymmetrically from the beginning, in much inferior state of preservation to the nave, and standing nowhere to a height of more than two courses. This was entered by a doorway, whose threshold remains, in its east wall, on the axis neither of the narthex nor of the nave.

Except that soft white clayey soil was encountered behind the revetment of the north bench, shewing that it had originally been filled with beaten clay, later washed and softened by exposure, no stratification or change in character could be detected, from turf line to floor level, in the brown humus covering the remains. The floor level was distinguished only by the presence above the natural clay of a layer of soil flecked with black, white and red.

Thus it was not possible to use the evidence of successive floor levels to elucidate the history of the building. On the other hand the clear traces of rebuilding in at least one of the existing walls, the difference in degree of preservation of the narthex and the nave, and other structural points, made it certain that the life of the building had not been uneventful, as indeed the word *restit(uit)* on one of the altars had already shewn.

Earlier remains.—Three works occupied parts of the site before the *mithraeum* was first built.

A stone structure lay on a site immediately to the south of the one on which the temple was later erected, and the lowest course of the north wall was used as a foundation for the south wall of the temple nave. The only part of this early building to be explored was its north-east angle, the further course of its north wall and the temple wall superimposed on it having been completely removed by stone-robbers. Thus there is no evidence whether it turned before or beyond the south-west angle of the temple. Its other walls were not followed, as they lay clear to the south of the site under excavation.

Evidence for the existence of a building earlier than the temple in its earliest form was first observed in the stonework of the T-junction formed by the south walls of nave and narthex of the temple and the east wall of the nave: this corner provides the key to the sequence of building and rebuilding on the site (see fig. 2). The earliest masonry of the feature is a section of wall, 25 inches wide, beginning with the westernmost preserved stonework on the line of the south wall of the nave, and disappearing under later work to the east before the T-junction is reached. One course only of small carefully dressed stones survives. This wall does not turn towards the nave doorway or continue into the narthex; it remained something of a puzzle until a foundation running south was discovered just west of the T-junction. This foundation is made up of a number of flat stones, and has approximately the same width as the east-west wall. The outer face of the north-east angle of the early building appeared to be curved, though later work made this impossible to define with certainty. The earliest wall and foundation are overlaid by masonry of *mithraeum* I which is cruder, less regular, and quite distinct from the earlier work. Masonry of one build, belonging to this period, extends over all three arms of the T; the temple as first built, then, had narthex as well as nave. This is in turn overlaid by work of *mithraeum* II; only three stones of this period survive at the actual junction, but these are so placed to shew that the second temple ended at the south-east corner of the nave, the narthex belonging only to *mithraeum* I. It will be seen

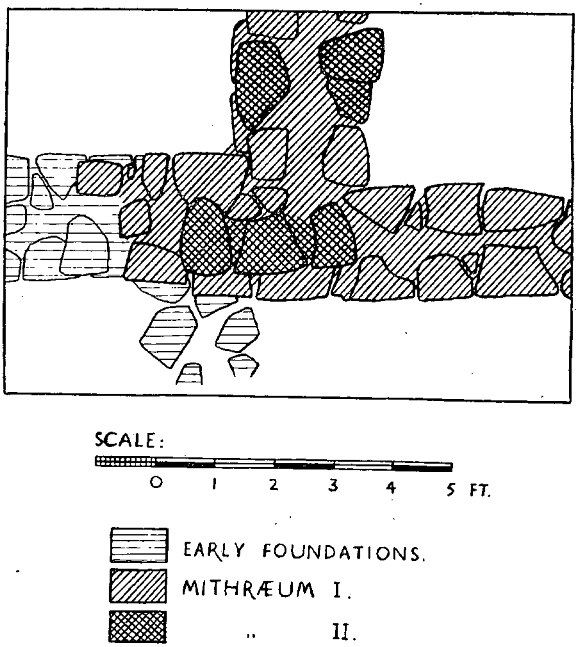


FIG. 2. JUNCTION OF SOUTH WALLS OF NAVE AND NARTHEX.

from this description and the illustrations of the T-junction on fig. 2, that it not only gives evidence of three building periods, but shews also that the earliest building had been reduced to its lowest course when *mithraeum* I was built, and that, at this angle of the building, *mithraeum* I stood no higher when the temple was reconstructed.

Four feet from the north-east angle of the earliest building is the lip of an oval pit, its long axis north-west to south-east, 33 feet in circumference. This was cleared to a depth of 5 feet and shewn by probing to be at least a further 2 feet deep, complete excavation being prevented by a rapid inflow of water.

East of the pit a gully had been cut, aligned north-west to south-east, below the position later occupied by the entrance to the narthex. It was 26 inches wide at the bottom, and did not communicate with the pit, but terminated in a round butt end 25 inches short of its lip.

The original purpose of the pit is unknown. Had the gully entered it, it could be said with some probability that it was part of a system of drainage. There was no sign of revetment in wood or stone; as excavated the sides had a variable slope, though they may have collapsed from a steeper angle. They had some reason to do so, as the later history of this part of the site shewed. So far as the temple is concerned, however, the importance of the pit is its existence rather than its function.

The three features, pit, gully and stone building, are not necessarily connected or contemporary with each other, but each was in existence before the temple was first built. No evidence was recovered for the absolute date of pit or gully, but a piece of Antonine samian was found in association with the foundation of the stone structure.

Mithraeum I.—When the builders of the temple came to the site, the stone structure had fallen into ruin, though its walls were still visible, and the pit had been filled with earth. As the stone structure seems not to be earlier than the Antonine period, the destruction of Hadrian's Wall in A.D. 197 provides both an occasion and a date for its becoming ruinous. The builders of the temple will thus have come to the site after (perhaps some considerable time after) this date. They laid out the nave with its asymmetrical narthex on a plot of ground whose slope was much less marked than it is at the present day. From north to south its decline was only 1 in 15, whereas now it is 1 in $4\frac{1}{2}$. The

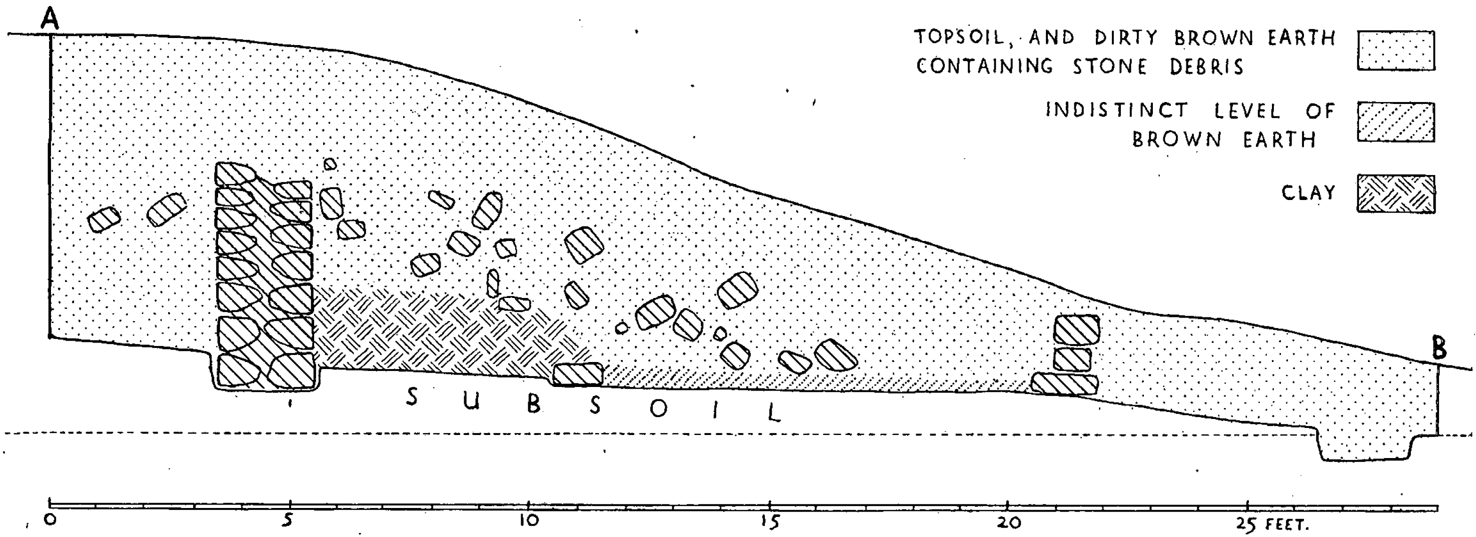
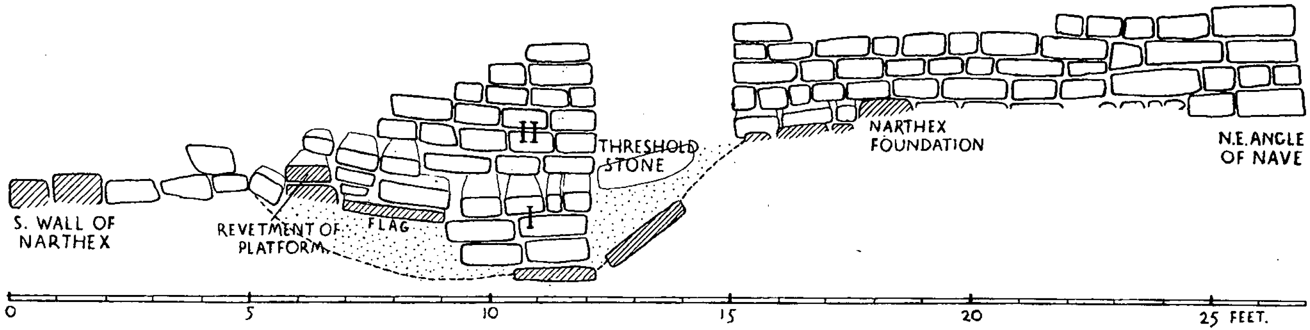


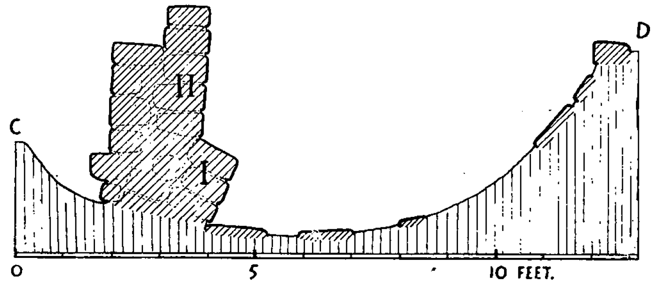
FIG. 3. SECTION THROUGH NAVE.

floor of the nave had to be levelled, and the foundations of the north wall excavated a little way into the rising ground; but this preparation was dictated by the then natural slope of the site, and would have been necessary in the case of any building erected on it. A trench dug down to subsoil outside the north wall, on the line of the section A-B (fig. 3), shewed that, unlike the sanctuary and the south wall of the nave at Housesteads, it is faced with coursed masonry; the bank against it, down to the level of the foundations, is composed of homogeneous soft brown soil. This is hardly to be distinguished from the plough soil, and is clearly a later accumulation. No attempt had been made here, any more than at Carrawburgh, to simulate a natural cave by building the *mithraeum* in part underground. Even at Housesteads, though the *mithraeum* there is often described as a cave, only the sanctuary was recessed into the hillside, and that to the depth of a mere five feet.

As has been noted, the south wall of the nave followed the north wall of the earlier building. With remarkable negligence, the east wall of the nave was built right over the pit, which thus lay under the south jamb of the nave door and 6 feet of the adjacent wall. The oversight, which was later to cause this part of the temple to subside into the pit, is not out of keeping with the general standard of the remains of the whole structure. The south and east walls of the narthex do not make a right-angle with each other, neither are these walls severally either straight or of uniform width. The crudity of the masonry of the narthex may be excused as a foundation course (though as such it stands no comparison with the lowest course of the earliest building); and the builders are not responsible for the present alignment of the threshold stone of the narthex, which was moved later. The stonework of *mithraeum* I at the T-junction is no less rough; here no pains seem to have been taken to see that the outer faces of the stones were either parallel to the lie of the wall or in line with each other. While the narthex clearly belongs to



ELEVATION OF OUTER FACE OF E. WALL OF NAVE.



SECTION C–D THROUGH PIT.

FIG. 4.

mithraeum I, the walls of the nave, as they stand now, probably did duty from the time of the foundation of *mithraeum* I to the time that *mithraeum* II was abandoned. Except at one point, in and over the pit, it is impossible to decide to what extent they were reconstructed, and consequently very little of the surviving masonry can be assigned with confidence to one or other period. The walling that has collapsed into the pit and is there preserved may be definitely assigned to *mithraeum* I. As the corresponding wall of *mithraeum* II was set in turn on top of this subsided wall, provoking a secondary subsidence involving both, there are two superimposed walls in the pit (see fig. 4, section C-D, and pl. XV). The subsidences are described in detail below. The wall of *mithraeum* I is of better quality than one might expect from the remains so far surveyed; a section of masonry must be reasonably sound to sink some 3 feet in one piece, as this has done. The line of the other nave walls is that of *mithraeum* I, however much they may have been reconstructed, and are as poorly set out as the rest. The north wall has an obvious kink, and the north-west angle is obtuse. That the west wall continued its line south of the apse to make an acute angle with the south wall, as appears on the reconstructed period-plan, is of course uncertain, for it has gone; the builders were quite capable of continuing within 10° of this line. The line of the south wall shewn on the plans was recovered by section A-B, which revealed the trench from which stone robbers had removed its foundation.

Any attempt to determine the interior arrangements of *mithraeum* I is hindered by the fact that these were disturbed and overlaid in the nave, and levelled in the narthex, by the builders of *mithraeum* II.

Entrance to the narthex is made through a doorway 3 feet 2 inches wide, over a stopped threshold stone. The outer wall north of this stone has disappeared. There is, however, no doubt that the narthex was built asymmetrically, for there is no sign of the north wall joining the north-east angle of the nave, and no masonry is found beyond the outer face of the east nave wall as far as 8 feet south of the north-east angle, where three large stones stand out at right-angles to it. These are continued to the south by the less prominent flags and cobbling of the narthex, and it seems most reasonable that these large stones represent the surviving foundation of the north wall of the narthex. The general plan shews a number of stones which might be some part of the foundation of the north-east angle. To the south-west of these, and north-west of the narthex threshold, is a group of placed stones forming a rough quadrant of a circle, overlying the narthex floor and standing higher than the threshold. This quadrant seems quite irrelevant to the building in either of the periods, and is difficult to explain as a structure in any context.

The flags and cobbles stop in the nave doorway at the subsided and tilted threshold stone of the earlier temple, and continue about 5 feet beyond its south jamb, many of them having sunk into the pit. Pl. XV shews clearly how the stones originally laid horizontally as the flooring of the narthex have gradually slipped downwards as the soft filling of the pit consolidated. They come to an end against a rough low wall, broken by subsidence and demolition, the revetment of a platform extending to the south wall of the narthex 4½ feet behind. This platform seems to have been made up with clay, though much of the filling has been cut away. In an area between the outer door and the door into the nave, extending to the presumed line of the north wall, the flags of the narthex floor are covered with a black burnt deposit. No trace of a hearth survives in the narthex, and the flags themselves are not reddened by burning. Perhaps the worshippers used a brazier or other such utensil since removed.

Most of the surviving objects and furnishings in the nave either belonged certainly to *mithraeum* II or may be indefinitely attributed to either I or II. There were no distinct floor levels of *mithraea* I or II in the nave. The few flags near the door belong to the second period; the nave alley of *mithraeum* I may have been floored with boards, or with other organic material. The use of boards and heather is illustrated in different periods at Carrawburgh, and of logs in one period at Housesteads. But at Carrawburgh and Housesteads the site was permanently waterlogged, and thus clear traces of these substances were preserved; at Rudchester the site was well drained, and any organic material which may have been present would perish.

Although the internal plan of *mithraeum* I is greatly obscured by the work of the second temple, some of the features may be distinguished. Fragments of a stone revetting wall for the benches of *mithraeum* I may be traced among the later work, the benches being, as the later ones, 6 to 7 feet wide; what may be the lowest course of the face of the south bench in this period projects beyond the later face, and stops 12 feet from the line of the west wall. There are two groups of stones which could represent the actual return of the north bench: one turns opposite the laver; the other is 4 feet west of this and 12 feet east of the west wall, and consists of a few worked stones lying in a foundation trench running to the north wall of the nave. There is no definite evidence for the east termination of the benches in this period, but it seems highly probable that they ended at the same point as those of *mithraeum* II, and they have been indicated accordingly on the period-plan.

Some of the unhewn stones of various sizes found in the north bench may belong to *mithraeum* I; these are part of the bench filling. It is possible that some groups of small stones close to the inner face of the north bench revetment might be base-stones or packers for wooden roof supports of *mithraeum* I. Groups of stones which could be interpreted as such were found approximately 5½ feet from the inner face of the north wall, at distances of 7, 12, 18 and 23 feet from the east nave wall. The continuation of this series was uncertain; there was no evidence of stones corresponding to these in the south bench, but these would be dispersed in the course of the later disturbance of the bench.

The dais in the apse belongs to *mithraeum* II; the lowest course of the stone facing is separated by a layer of soil from the floor of *mithraeum* I, and is well above the lowest course of the apse itself.

The planning of the early temple shews some uncommon features. Of these, the eccentric narthex is to be noted merely for its oddity. Some attention was usually given to symmetry in laying out a *mithraeum* on a clear site, but the temples of the cult have no tradition of monumental regularity. The interior of the narthex calls for little comment. One may only guess at the purpose of the raised platform extending from the south wall: perhaps it was provided for an altar or altars to some local deity associated with the cult.[16] In the nave, the benches terminate much farther from the west wall than is usual, for in almost all other *mithraea* the benches are carried right up to the corresponding wall, or very close to it. The nearest parallel is found at III Heddernheim;[17] but there only one bench is abbreviated, the other being of the common length. Some abnormality in the manner of conducting the rite, and in the number of initiates directly participating in it, may be shadowed in this; but the remains of the benches of this period are so much devoured by subsequent modifications that the point may only be put out tentatively. A more certain unorthodoxy appears in the form of the apse. A representation of Mithras in the act of killing the bull was one of the most important furnishings in a temple of the god, and this was set prominently in the centre of the wall behind the altars. It might either be painted on the wall or carried on a stone slab fixed to the wall (in a few examples this stone reredos is set forward a little way from the wall, parallel to it); in any case the part of the wall which it occupied had

[16] References to examples of this are given by Professor I. A. Richmond, *op. cit.*, p. 30, footnote 32.

[17] *Cumont,* vol. ii, p. 372 (monument 253, fig. 281).

to be flat, and if the reredos were recessed in a niche or apse,[18] this ended in a flat wall. There are very few exceptions to this, and there are no other *mithraea* which have a segmental apse. The only example which suggests a pattern for the treatment of the apse in *mithraeum* I at Rudchester is the temple in the Palazzo dei Musei, Rome,[19] which in the latest period is furnished with a detached shrine, free-standing in a deep and irregular recess. The face of the shrine is thought to have borne a statue of the god, though this did not survive. Such a detached shrine, either bearing a figure of Mithras or the relief itself, is the most likely furnishing for the apse of the first temple at Rudchester. It is improbable that the altar or altars belonging to *mithraeum* I themselves occupied the apse; their place would be in the open space just outside it. Such an arrangement at least is the general rule, broken only in the case of the screened sanctuary of the third temple at Dura.[20]

Subsidence of the south jamb of the nave door and the adjacent wall into the filling of the pit brought about at once the collapse of the temple and the end of its first period of occupation. With the wall subsided the threshold stone of the nave, part of the cobbled flooring of the narthex and the retaining wall of the narthex platform nearest the nave wall. As has been noted, the subsided portion of the nave wall, though it tilted, did not break up. To casual observation this fallen wall appeared to be an actual side to the pit, and the flagging of the narthex floor (which had sunk so far into it, though not to the actual bottom), to be a flooring for the pit and a lining for its other sides. In other words, it might have been interpreted as a deliberate structure

18 " Apse " is not a very appropriate term to use for the externally projecting rectangular sanctuaries of *mithraea* in general; it has, however, become attached to this context by long usage, and it is retained here with the reservation that only two *mithraeum* apses (Rudchester and II Heddernheim) are strictly apsidal.

19 C. Pietrangeli, *Il Mitreo del Palazzo dei Musei di Roma, Bollettino della Commissione Archeologica di Roma*, 1940, p. 148f.

20 M. I. Rostovtzeff *et al.*, *Excavations at Dura-Europos, Seventh and Eighth Seasons* (1933-35), p. 76.

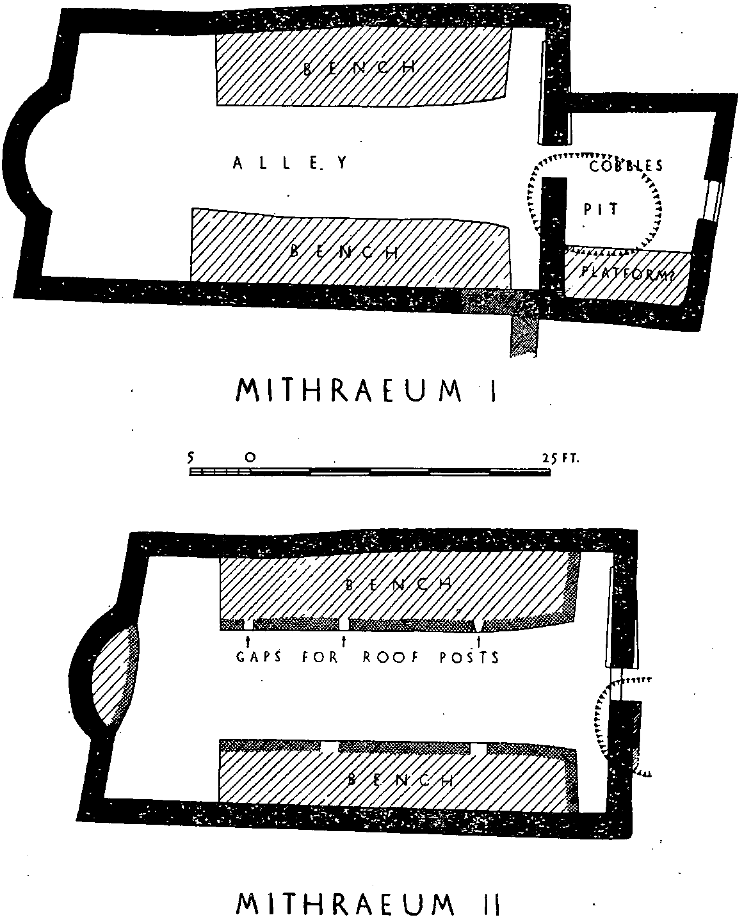


FIG. 5.

and as part of the *mithraeum*—possibly a ritual pit. But the position of the pit and the nature of its accumulated contents, as shewn in section, elevation and photographs (fig. 4 and pl. XV), shew that it is quite impossible to maintain this.

Mithraeum II.—It is not known how long the temple remained in a state of ruin, but there is reason to suppose that it was rebuilt towards the end of the third century. By this time the south jamb of the nave door had sunk 2 feet into the pit, the east wall south of the lip of the pit had been completely broken away from the section of wall in the pit, and very little of the south-eastern part of the temple remained standing.

The narthex was not rebuilt with the temple (fig. 5); it may be deduced from the character of the surviving masonry that it had never been very ornamental or very safe. Now, or a little later, it was deliberately demolished and levelled. The difference in degree of preservation between the narthex and the east end of the nave is striking; while the north-east angle of the nave was being protected from later harm by the bank of the old hedge, the narthex did not survive to enjoy this protection. The threshold stone of the narthex has been broken in an attempt to lever it up in order to remove it; the disturbance has brought it even farther out of line than the erratic wall which it adjoins.

The walls of the nave were reconstructed without change. There is no reason to assume that all the walls of *mithraeum* I were reduced as far as was the south-east angle of its nave, for the greater part would not be involved in the structural collapse into the pit. If in fact some considerable part of the surviving masonry is of *mithraeum* I, a variation in the quality of the work of this period will be apparent; for though the execution of the upstanding walls of the nave is nowhere good, it contrasts very favourably with the crudity of the narthex walls.

Two centurial stones from the vallum are built into the walls of *mithraeum* II. One occurs on the outer face of the south jamb of the nave door over the pit, being the third course of the rebuilt wall; the other is in the top course of eight in the outer face of the north wall, 12 feet from the north-west angle.

Through a strange disinclination to learn from experience, the restoration of the nave walls included the rebuilding of the east wall over the pit on the same lines as before. The ruins of the subsided part of the old wall were used as a foundation for a new one, set back a little from the east face of the old, which had tilted forward in sinking, and precariously attached to the inclined west face of the old wall by narrow strips of stone simply applied to it without bonding.

In general, where modifications were made, they were designed to remove the unorthodox features of *mithraeum* I, with the result that every feature of *mithraeum* II may be illustrated by other examples elsewhere. The demolition of the narthex reflects little more than the loss of what is in a *mithraeum* merely an optional amenity. If the narthex had provided accommodation for local deities, these would be ejected; and apparently the members of the cult were now denied a fire in the temple precincts.

There is more evidence for the arrangement of the later temple than for that of the earlier. The nave was entered through a door of the same width as before, but without a threshold stone. The threshold was now simply made up with a rough packing of stones put into the pit in order to render the surface more firm. The lintel of the door was formed of a large re-used threshold stone brought from another building: this was found thrown down inside the nave. It is probable that the several square and round sockets cut in this stone belong to its history before it was brought to the *mithraeum*. The door itself, which opened inwards, would be hung in a wooden frame.

The door opened on an alley 10 feet wide, with stone revetted benches to north and south. These benches are stopped 3 feet from the east wall, the step leading to the north bench being well preserved. The single surviving stone of the return of the south bench has a square socket 4 inches by 3 inches cut in it. This does not seem to have any structural significance in its present position as, lying less than 3 feet from both south and east walls, it could scarcely be part of a north-south screen. The west end of both benches is confused by later disturbance, but the benches are a good deal longer than the earlier ones, and appear to have continued to within 7 feet of the west wall. The return of both benches, however, has been torn out.

The large stones found in the filling of the north bench are noted above. The rest of the filling of this bench, up to the level of its stone revetment, could be distinguished from the accumulated earth above; the filling of the south bench, by contrast, was of the same character as the soil covering the remains, and there was no certain demarcation between it and the topsoil. This does not mean that the two were differently treated in the beginning. The turf-level is only a few inches above the top of the south bench face, and the south wall has been robbed: these are sufficient reasons for the absence of visible signs of the original clay filling of the south bench. The discovery immediately behind the revetment of the bench of a fragment from a cooking-pot of the Huntcliff type and a musket ball, also points to subsequent disturbance of the filling.

The only part of the nave floor of *mithraeum* II which is now distinct is the irregular flagged area near the door. Other flags may have been removed, but it is reasonable to think that this small area only was paved as a provision against the extra trampling that the floor near the doorway would receive. The rest of the floor has been made up of either beaten earth, boards or other organic material. Of the last two there is now no trace, but as has already been pointed out in considering the floor of *mithraeum* I this does not preclude their having been used. In neither period was there a defined level of an occupation deposit anywhere in the nave, and nowhere in the temple save for the layer of burnt material in part of the narthex. On the whole site only one tiny fragment of bone was found, and that was unstratified in the narthex. This seems to indicate that the nature of the soil promoted the complete disintegration of bone. There is no reason to think that fowls and other small animals were not sacrificed and consumed in ritual meals within the temple, as they were at Carrawburgh.

The position of the supports for the roof of the second temple could be determined with some certainty, the uprights being erected in gaps left in the bench revetment. While only the best preserved of these gaps are marked (P.H.) on the general plan, they could be identified on the north bench at 11, 22 and 30½ feet from the east wall, and on the south bench at 11, 23 and 30 feet: the west wall is 40 feet distant from the east. This gives a main span for the roof timbers of 10 feet over the alley, subordinate spans of 5½ feet over the aisles, two bays of 11 feet and two of approximately 8½ feet.

The most considerable objects from the interior of the temple, the four large altars, together with one smaller altar and a statue, were discovered and either removed from the site or, in the case of the statue, destroyed, in 1844. A much disturbed area to the south of the broken wall of the apse marks the approach of the excavation which removed them. The position of the disturbed area seems to indicate that the altars had been situated in front of the dais of the apse, or less probably, distributed between the front of this dais and the south-west angle of the nave. This dais was certainly not built as a platform for the altars: there is no stone packing of any kind behind the revetment, only a filling of earth too unstable for heavy monuments. It may be inferred that in *mithraeum* II the interior of the apse held a large conventional relief shewing Mithras killing the bull. Broken pieces of a large grooved slab suitable for the base stone of such a reredos were found in the disturbed ground south of the apse. The original length of this slab could not be estimated (34 inches of it survive); its other dimensions are 24 inches by 8½ inches, with a groove cut along the whole length of its broader face, 9 inches wide and 1 inch deep. No trace of the reredos itself was found, and its removal would explain the movement of the base from the dais to a position in the nave where it was found and thrown back in 1844. The excavation of that date does not seem to have penetrated as far as the revetment of the dais along the chord of the apse, and certainly not into the north-west corner of the nave, of which the degree of preservation and position beneath the mound of the field boundary suggest that it could not have been disturbed; it is therefore unlikely that any of the large altars were found in this angle. The two large flat stones in the north-west corner are of a size and solidity to have held the altars, but it is more likely that these stones together formed the oblong base for, as it might be, a carved stone lion. If this was so the disappearance of the object cannot be attributed to the stone robbing of 1844.

The small votive altar found in 1844 is the only one of its kind from the southern part of the temple. It would stand either at the stone face of the south bench, or against the south wall beyond the extremity of the bench. Four altars of the same general size as this last, and similar to the lesser altars found at Carrawburgh, were found lying at intervals before the face of the north bench. All were lying clear of the bench, which would seem to indicate that they had originally stood upright on its edge and pitched forward from it; on the other hand the rear face of the majority was but roughly dressed, as if they had stood on floor level, their backs to the bench, as the corresponding altars at Carrawburgh had undoubtedly done. Close to one of them, set right up against the face of the north bench at a distance of 17 feet from the west wall, was a stone laver. This is probably *in situ*, and there may have been another opposite it against the face of the south bench. In the *mithraeum* at Spoleto[21] a laver similarly placed but on top of the bench was matched by another one on the opposite bench; in the *mithraeum* at the Palazzo dei Musei an opposed pair was found at ground level. The heads of two *dadophoroi* were found in the eastern part of the alley; one of these retained its Phrygian cap, while that of the other had been broken

[21] H. C. Coote, *The Mithraeum at Spoleto, Archæologia,* vol. xlvii, p. 205.

off. The character of these and the stone of which they were made differed so much that they cannot have formed a pair. It is possible that one or other of these heads came from the statue broken up in 1844; if so, the head had already been broken off before then, for the stone robbing of that date did not extend so far east as the findspot of either head. A group of three pottery lamps and an unusual vessel (fig. 12) was found just beyond the presumed western extremity of the south bench.

There are some uncertain signs of late modification to the internal plan of *mithraeum* II, by which the north bench was extended with earth mixed with clay to the east wall, and with large rude stones to the west wall. The work is extremely rough and unskilful. Whatever the explanation of this, there came a time, early in the fourth century it would seem, when the building ceased to be used.

Distinct marks scored by ploughshares run from front to back of the top of the tallest unbroken altar (*c*). This shews that it, and presumably also the other large unbroken altars, still stood upright and undisturbed in its final position when ploughing began, long after the building was in ruins. On the other hand the main bull-killing relief, together with whatever stood on the base in the north-west corner, has vanished without trace, and the torchbearers are represented only by two heads, not forming a pair, and possibly by the statue found and destroyed in 1844. The temple was presumably desecrated, but destruction of its furnishings did not extend beyond those objects most intimately related to the cult.

The deserted *mithraeum* was not engulfed in waterborne silt as was that at Carrawburgh and perhaps also that at Housesteads. Some time after it was deserted the south jamb of the door and the adjacent part of the east wall of *mithraeum* II, clumsily rebuilt on the sunken fragment of *mithraeum* I in the still incompletely consolidated filling of the pit, collapsed and brought the heavy and unwieldy lintel from over the door somersaulting into the nave.

Beneath the lintel were found a few dressed stones, doubtless brought down with it, and the severed head of one of the torchbearers, thus shewing that the collapse took place after the desecration of the *mithraeum*. The collapse nevertheless came quickly, for there was no more soil beneath the lintel than can readily be accounted for as having accumulated later between the fallen stones. Not much pottery and other rubbish found its way into the deserted and partly ruinous building, presumably because it lies a long way from the fort, but rubbish continued to be dropped there for many years. Clear of the fallen lintel examples of distinctive post-Pict-War pottery types, absent at Carrawburgh, were found in the soil covering the floor, below the level of the top of the north bench where they could not have been ploughed in, but will have been dropped before the north and west walls fell into ruin.

Much later the process of natural decay was helped by man, for when the building was first uncovered the fallen stone from the north wall had the appearance of having been spread in random fashion, and exactly filled the north-east corner of the building up to the surviving tops of the walls (Pl. XVI, fig. 1); this contrasts with the collapsed east wall at Carrawburgh, which still lay in its courses as it had fallen. Distinct marks of east and west ploughing are to be seen on the north wall, on the east wall of the nave on either side of the doorway, and on the fallen stones inside the building, as well as on the capital of the tallest unbroken altar (*d*). It may be that the equally tall altar (*c*), found broken cleanly in two, had stood towards the south end of the group, where it would have protruded, and was broken at this time. This demolition of the visible ruins to allow the site to be ploughed was almost certainly complete before (possibly long before) Horsley's time, for, while he describes the ruins of the fort, which were levelled at a later date, he merely infers the presence of an external settlement and says nothing of any visible ruins.[22]

[22] John Horsley, *op. et loc. cit.*

A rearrangement of the field boundaries saved the building from further destruction by the plough. It now lay protected within the junction of two hedges, one still in existence when MacLauchlan made his survey, and the other running to the corner of the wood, of which only the bank survived to be marked on his plan. The remains were untouched either by east and west ploughing to north of the northern hedge, or by north and south ploughing to south of the southern hedge. The north wall in particular was protected by up to three feet of stoneless earth from the bank of the northern hedge.

There is, however, evidence of still later interference by man. It is possible that the robbing of the south wall and the disturbance of the filling of the south bench came earlier, but a saucer-shaped hollow in the ground, interrupting the rhythm of plough rigg and hedge bank, visible when excavation began, lay above the completely wrecked south-west angle; dressed stones from the apse have been torn out southwards from the north face of an irregular excavation, leaving a raggedly stepped broken end, and from a large area of the sanctuary the fallen masonry had been quite removed. The date of this final robbing is not in doubt; it was 1844.

Inscribed and sculptured stones.—A total of eighteen inscribed, sculptured, or interestingly worked stones were recovered from the *mithraeum* in 1844 and 1953. All but two of those that still survive appear to have been wrought from the same fairly coarse-grained cream-coloured millstone grit, in which particles of quartz can be seen.

In the descriptions of the altars which follow the dimensions are given in the order: height, maximum width across the face, maximum depth from front to rear. The texts of the inscribed altars are given by Mr. Eric Birley on pp. 211-3.

(*a*) Altar, found in 1844, dedicated to Mithras by P. Aelius Titullus; 43 × 20 × 16 inches (fig. 6). The altar is very little weathered; such weathering as there is shews mainly on the face, where the letters seem to have been cut lightly. Plain angular mouldings above and below the inscribed panel are carried round the sides, which are otherwise undecorated. The back is in one plane and very roughly dressed, as if it were not intended to be seen. On the top, slightly off centre, is a shallow *focus* surrounded by a raised border, with an internal diameter of 6 inches; four much smaller *foci*, equally deep, are symmetrically disposed about it.

(*b*) Altar, found in 1844, dedicated to the unconquered sun by Tib. Claudius Decimus, the restorer of the temple; 43 × 21 × 15 inches (fig. 7). The carving on this altar is still crisp and unweathered. The dedication is inscribed on a sunken panel on the face of the altar, above which the capital is squat and delicately decorated with a palm-leaf motive; the front ends of the bolsters have a geometrical design resembling a six-petalled flower. The plain angular mouldings are carried round the sides, which are otherwise plain and undecorated, and continue as a chamfer round the back, which, while less neatly dressed than the sides, is more neatly dressed than the backs of the other altars. A single shallow *focus* surrounded by a raised border, with an internal diameter of 7 inches, is tied to the middle of the bolster on either side by a moulding resembling a rope.

(*c*) Altar, found in 1844, dedicated to Apollo by Aponius Rogatianus; 50 × 20 × 15 inches (fig. 8). The height of this altar is incorrectly given in the County History; it is in fact as tall as (*d*). At some time it has been broken cleanly in two. The break occurs horizontally along the fourth line of the text, which it obliterates, and rides up a little along the sides to a greater height at the back. Great force will have been required to damage the stone in this way. Above the fracture the altar is but little weathered and the inscription is legible; below it is more weathered, not only on the face of the stone where the inscription is legible in part and with difficulty, but also on the sides and back, thus shewing that the lower part was exposed for a time after the altar was broken. Bell's illustration makes it certain that it was in this state when found. The altar was presumably broken before or at the time that ploughing began, and this has saved the top from suffering damage comparable to that of (*d*). The ends of the bolsters are similarly decorated to those of (*b*). The plain angular mouldings are carried round the sides, which are otherwise undecorated, and continued as a chamfer round the back, which is very roughly dressed. The top has a *focus* similar to that of (*b*) and no unusual features. Bosanquet[23] makes the following comment on the text: "*Aniceto*, the Greek equivalent of *invicto*, seems to occur only in

[23] *NCH*, vol. xii, pp. 38-9.

FIG. 6. ALTAR (*a*): 1/18

FIG. 7. ALTAR (*b*): 1/18

FIG. 8. ALTAR (*c*): 1/18

one other Latin dedication, an altar found in Dacia. The identification with Apollo is also rare. Together they suggest a touch of Greek learning—or pedantry—in the dedicator."

(*d*) Altar, found in 1844, dedicated to "the god" by L. Sentius Castus; 50 × 18 × 15 inches (fig. 9). Except at the very top the rich carving of this altar is still crisp; there is only the slightest superficial damage, and no more weathering than eighty-seven years in the open at Otterburn would account for. The top has, however, suffered badly. The rear edge has been ground down for several inches, as if the altar had been repeatedly struck by ploughshares at a time when it stood buried, tilted forward a little, with the upper edge near the surface of the soil. Four deep parallel plough scorings run across the altar from front to rear, at an acute angle to the sides, exactly as if the altar had stood squarely facing the door of the temple at the time of the east and west ploughing. Bosanquet describes the altar as follows: "The word *Deo* in letters four inches high is set within a crown of leaves, from which a tablet bearing the rest of the inscription is hung by cords. On either side is a palm-branch. The face of the capital is cut into a figure recalling the 'sacral horns' of Minoan Crete; behind the horns rises a conical object, and behind its top is a crescent, both so much weathered that it is difficult to determine their meaning. On the base a male figure, no doubt Mithras, is seen guiding a bull by the horns. On the left side of the capital is a small bull's head, facing; on the right what seems to be a Phrygian cap. The left side of the base is not carved; the right bears three short swords pointing downward. The prominence of the wreath and the votive tablet attached to it imply that the dedication of the altar accompanied or replaced the offering of an actual wreath. Cumont has suggested that it commemorates an initiation into the grade of *miles*, 'soldier', the third of seven degrees to which a worshipper was successively admitted. In this ceremony, described by Tertullian, the aspirant was offered a crown resting on a sword, and renounced it, saying 'Mithras is my crown'; thenceforward if ever a crown were offered him—and it was a coveted reward of valour in the army—he must refuse it and say, 'It belongs to my god.' The scene below refers to the capture and sacrifice of the bull from whose blood according to the Persian scriptures all plants and animals had their birth. The cap is the characteristic head-dress of the Eastern god, and the swords recall the weapon with which on the monuments he is represented stabbing the bull, and on which the crown was offered to his worshipper." The mouldings of the face are carried along the sides, though those below the capital on the left side die out after three to four inches. The back is in one plane and very

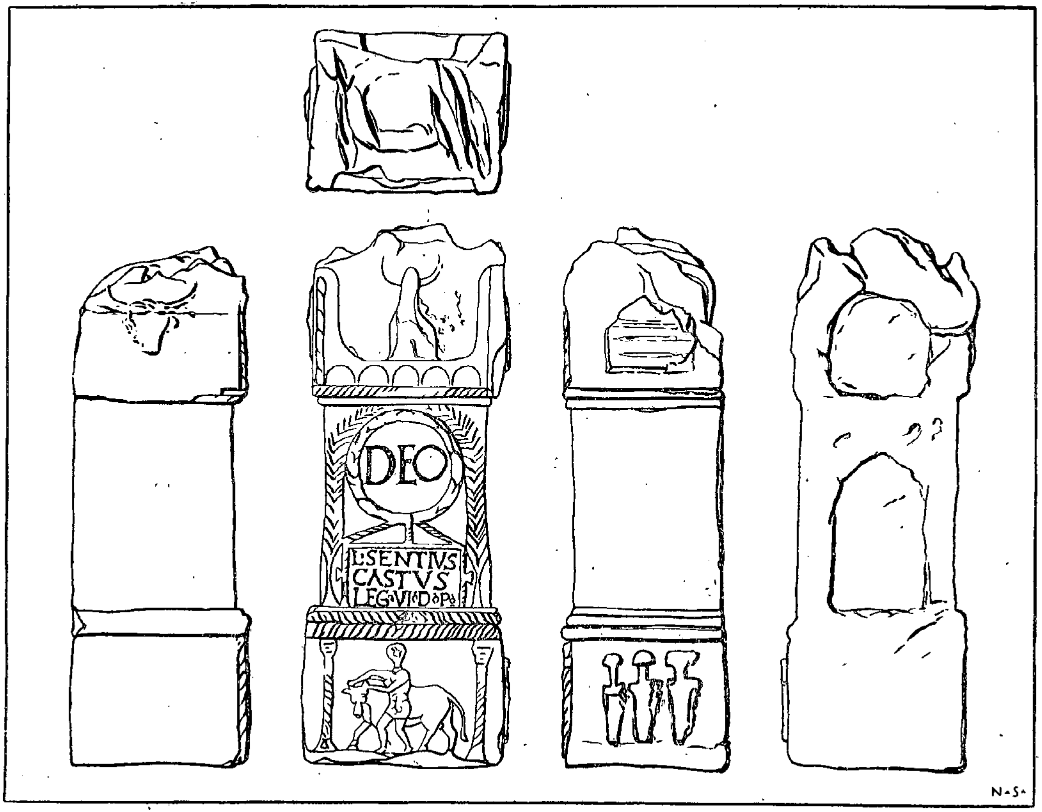


FIG. 9. ALTAR (*d*): $^1/_{18}$

roughly dressed. In it are two recesses, 10 inches wide, centrally placed one above the other. The bottom of the lower recess is 14 inches from the bottom of the altar; it is 15 inches high to its rounded top, and 8 inches deep. There is an interval of 6 inches between the recesses, and the upper one is 9 inches high and 6 inches deep. The closest parallel to these recesses is in one of the altars from Carrawburgh, where the individual rays of the radiate halo of a relief of Mithras on the face of the altar are pierced so that they might be illuminated by a lamp placed in the recess at the back. Doubtless the recesses in the present altar held lamps, but whether in order that they might be produced at an appropriate moment in the ceremonies, or in order to throw their light on an object standing behind the altars, cannot be determined.

(*e*) Uninscribed altar, found in 1844; $25 \times 7\frac{1}{2} \times 6$ inches (fig. 10e). Bolsters and pediment are indicated on the front of the capital; the *focus* is merely pecked out; the back is plane and rough. A tenon 1 inch deep by 4 inches wide runs from front to back of the base of the altar.

(*f*) Uninscribed altar, found in front of the north bench near its west end (I on plan); $23\frac{1}{2} \times 8 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ inches (fig. 10f). This altar has a normal base but tends to taper towards the top; it is otherwise similar to (*e*).

(*g*) Uninscribed altar, found in front of the north bench near its east end (II on plan); $16\frac{1}{2} \times 7 \times 5$ inches (fig. 10g). It is generally similar to (*f*).

(*h*) Uninscribed altar, found in front of the north bench near the laver (III on plan); $14 \times 9 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ inches (fig. 10h). This differs markedly from all the other small altars. The stone is very much grittier, and contains many large quartz pebbles. The capital is carried all the way round the top of the altar, and it appears as though the base has been similarly treated, though flaking of the stone now obscures the feature. In both sides are rectangular recesses $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, their borders broken towards the rear, running to the full height, 6 inches, of the panel. There is a large shallow *focus*, rectangular with rounded corners. A wide groove on the base, running from front to back, gives the altar the appearance of standing on runners.

(*j*) Uninscribed altar, found in front of the north bench west of (*g*) (IV on plan); $15 \times 7\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ inches (fig. 10j). Except that two triangular incisions fill the gap between the bolster ends, this

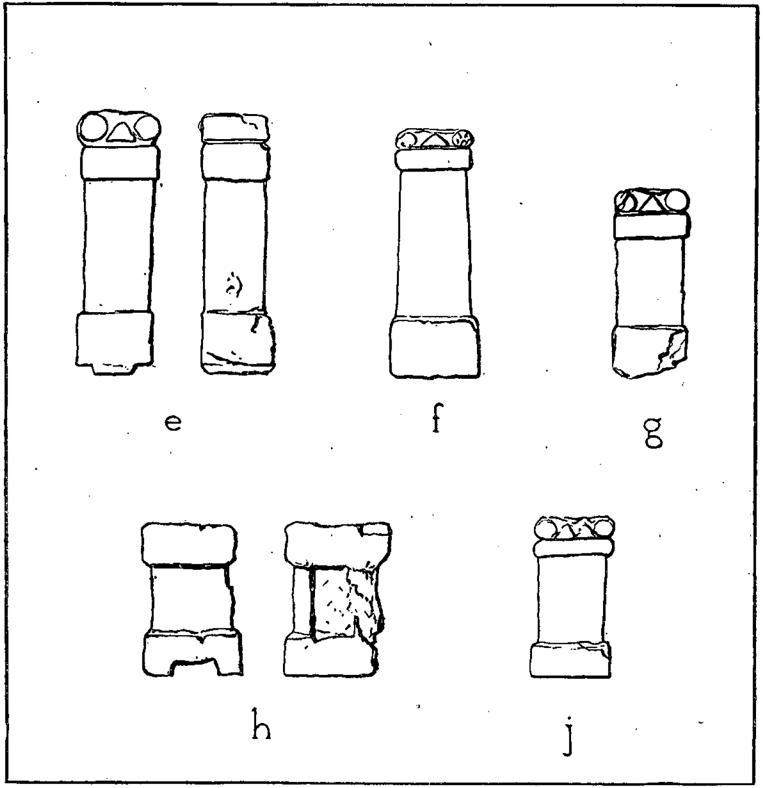


FIG. 10. SMALL ALTARS: $^1/_{18}$

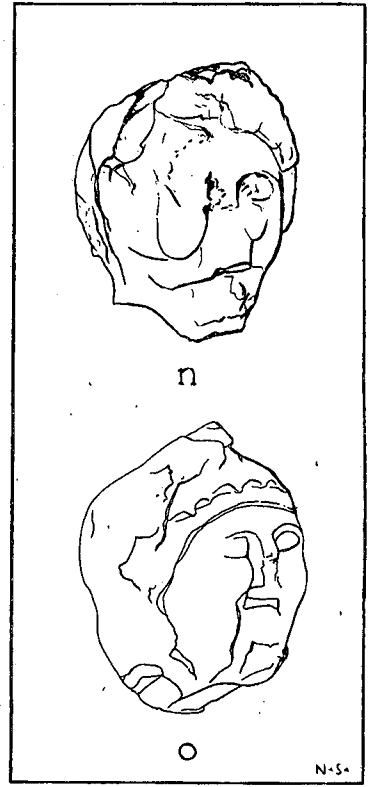


FIG. 11. STONE HEADS: $\frac{1}{6}$

altar is similar to (*g*). The fact that the backs of four of the five small altars are but roughly dressed suggests that they may have stood in front of the benches with their backs to them rather than on top.

(*k*) Centurial stone built upside down into the highest surviving course of the outer face of the north wall (inscribed stone on plan); 16½ inches wide, 5 inches high and about 6 inches deep; not tailed back into the core of the wall. The stone reads: 7 IVV, possibly "century of Iuv(enis)".

(*l*) Centurial stone built upside down into the third course of the outer face of the rebuilt jamb of the nave door; 13 inches wide, 5 inches high and about 6 inches deep. On the stone is a centurial mark followed by a long personal name difficult to decipher. The two centurial stones were undoubtedly re-used in the positions where they were found; as both lack roots to be gripped by the core of a stone wall it is unlikely that they came from the fort or from the Great Wall, but by no means unlikely that they came from the *vallum*.

(*m*) Statue found in 1844 and broken up.

(*n*) Stone head, about 8 inches high, found in the nave alley near the small altar (*j*) (head B on plan). The stone is much grittier than that of the other head, and resembles that of the small altar (*h*). The head has not only been severed from the body but has received rough handling. If, as is likely, it was originally represented wearing a Phrygian cap, this has quite gone. The features are just discernible (fig. 11n).

(*o*) Stone head, about 9 inches high, found in the nave alley below the fallen lintel (head A on plan). The stone is that of most of the objects. This head has suffered less damage than the other; not only are the small and neat features still distinct, but the Phrygian cap, though damaged, survives (fig. 11o).

(*p*) Fragment from the limb of a statue in the round, found in the narthex; 4 inches long and 2½ inches in diameter. It is in the same stone as the head (*o*).

(*q*) Grooved slab, found south of the apse; 24 inches wide, 8½ inches thick, broken at either end but surviving to a maximum length of 34 inches. Running the length of the stone on the upper surface is a regular groove, centrally placed, 9 inches wide and

1 inch deep. This stone once formed the base for an upright slab, probably the reredos.

(*r*) Stone laver, made of light-coloured sandstone of fairly fine grain, found *in situ* against the face of the north bench. This is oval in plan, its diameter 13-14 inches; the basin is 3 inches deep; the underside of the laver is rounded.

(*s*) An amorphous lump of stone, just over a foot long, found among the debris in the sanctuary, had a slot, 8 inches long by 1½ inches deep by 1½ inches wide, cut along one face. The edges of the slot were reddened by fire. Filled with oil and equipped with floating wicks it could have functioned as a lamp.

The Dedicators and Their Altars.

By Eric Birley.

The dedicators attested by the altars from the Rudchester *Mithraeum* do not provide us with so interesting a series of names as those of their co-religionists at Carrawburgh, but nevertheless they will repay examination. I take the four texts in the order assigned to them by Huebner in *C.I.L.* VII.:

(a) VII 541 with *EE*, IX, p. 585: *deo invicto Mytrae P. Ael. Titullus prae. v. s. l. l. m.*—"To the unconquered god Mithras, Publius Aelius Titullus, prefect, gladly, willingly and deservedly fulfils his vow." The *praenomen* and *nomen* show that the family's citizenship was derived, directly or indirectly, from a grant by Hadrian; in the third century, to which the text should doubtless be assigned, Titullus must have been a Roman citizen of the third or fourth generation. His *cognomen* gives us a suggestive clue to his origin, for reference to Holder's *Altceltischer Sprachschatz* will show that the Titulli came mainly from Narbonensis and Aquitanica, with outliers in Tarraconensis and northern Italy. Of these four areas, Aquitanica was the one in which Roman

citizenship had become least widespread by Hadrian's day, so that we may be justified in suspecting that it was his province of origin. The fort at Rudchester was originally intended, to judge by its plan, size and relationship to the Wall, to be occupied by a cavalry regiment; but Titullus, describing himself as *prae(fectus)*, must be recognized as the prefect of a cohort and not of an *ala* (the commander of which would be styled *praefectus equitum*, in however abbreviated a form): it will be remembered that the Notitia gives *cohors I Frixagorum* as the garrison of *Vindobala* and that this is generally believed to be a corruption of *I Frisiavonum*, a known unit of the army of Britain from A.D. 105 onwards. It remains to be seen whether the cohort had the fort to itself, or shared it with some other unit (as seems to have been the case at Burgh-by Sands, in the third century, where a cohort and the *numerus Maurorum Aurelianorum* shared a fort originally built to house an *ala quingenaria*).

(b) VII 542: *deo Soli invic(to), Tib. Cl. Decimus Cornel. Antonius praef. templ(um) restit(uit).*—"Tiberius Claudius Decimus Cornelius Antonius, prefect, restored the temple." The accumulation of names is not unusual in the dedicator's walk of life (we may compare a prefect of the *ala Tampiana*, on an altar recently discovered at Linz in Austria—Gaius Domitius Montanus Septanius Romanus), but it is unusual to find as many as three *nomina* and only one *cognomen*, and none of his names can help us to discover his place of origin. But we are entitled to suppose that he came of a family whose Roman citizenship was of many generations' standing.

(c) VII 543, with Mr. R. P. Wright's additional reading in *JRS*, XXXIII, 37: *Soli Apollini Aniceto [Mithrae], Apon[i]us Rogat[i]anus [praef. v. s. l. m.]*.—"To the Sun, Apollo, the Unconquered, Mithras, Aponius Rogatianus, prefect, gladly and deservedly fulfils his vow." The restoration of Mithras' name and of the dedicator's rank and closing formula seems tolerably certain. The *cognomen* Rogatianus, like the simpler form Rogatus from which it has been evolved, establishes a strong presumption of African origin;

our prefect might be a kinsman, perhaps a nephew or great-nephew, of C. Aponius Rogatus, a soldier of *III Augusta* whose tombstone has been found at Lambaesis (VIII 3038). It may be noted that a certain L. Apponius (*sic*) Rogatia(nus) is attested on an inscription from Rome (VI 1057 vii 28) as a soldier serving in the junior century of *coh. V vigilum* in A.D. 210; and one cannot absolutely exclude the possibility that this is the dedicator at Rudchester, at the outset of his career: for in the third century it was still possible for other ranks to be transferred to the Guard after service in the *vigiles*, and as the century went on, it looks as if an increasing number of equestrian appointments came to be given to men who had risen from the ranks of the Guard, whether or not they had intervening service in the centurionate. There is sufficient evidence to show that recruits from Africa might enter the *vigiles*, so that there is no need to take the inscription from Rome as an indication of the man's Italian origin. *Anicetus*, the Greek equivalent of *invictus*, will serve to show that Rogatianus, wherever he came from, was a man of some education, even if his service had started in the ranks.

(*d*) *VII* 544: *deo, L. Sentius Castus* (7) *leg. VI d*(*ono*) *p*(*osuit*).—"To the god, Lucius Sentius Castus, centurion of the Sixth Legion, placed his gift." The sculptures on the altar affirm the identification of the god as Mithras, even if it had not been placed in a *mithraeum*; the centurial sign must be understood, though it has been omitted from the text, for it would be inappropriate for the dedicator's connection with the legion to be left unspecified. The centurion was presumably on special duty at Rudchester, perhaps as interim commander of its garrison. L. Sentii occur sporadically in many parts of the Empire, nor is the *cognomen* Castus particularly characteristic of any one province (it may be recalled that L. Artorius Castus, who as prefect of the Sixth led a task-force from the army of Britain to put down a rising in Armorica, the modern Brittany, was of Dalmatian origin); but the greatest concentration of Casti and Castae is to be found in *C.I.L.* VIII, and if I were to express a personal preference, it would be to assign an African origin to the centurion.

Small objects.—Three lamps and one other vessel were found in mutual association immediately west of the presumed end of the south bench. They seemed to have been abandoned as a group when the temple finally went out of use.

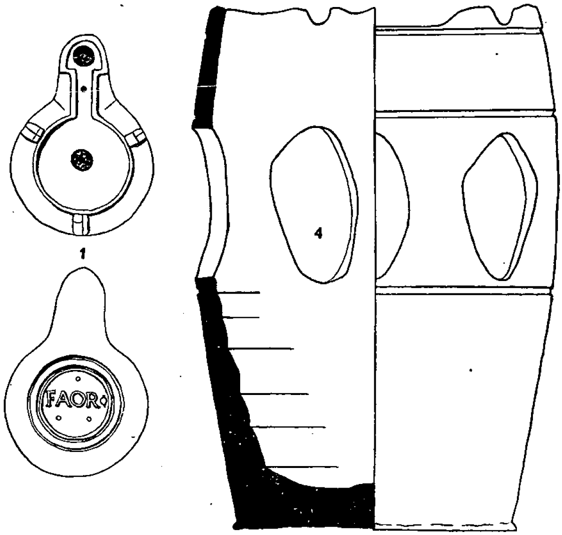


FIG. 12 : $\frac{1}{4}$.

1. (Pl. XVII, fig. 2, and fig. 12, no. 1.) Complete lamp in smooth self-coloured red fabric; the nozzle is smoked. The lamp is of the closed mass-produced variety, skilfully moulded. It is of Wheeler's type III*b*,[24] dated by him to the second century. The circular flange of the *discus* is continued along either side of the nozzle and frames the semi-circular panel containing the hole for the wick. In addition to this hole, and to the filling hole in the centre of the *discus*, there is a small air vent in the nozzle. The lamp has no handle, but there are three vestigial lugs on the outer edge

[24] R. E. M. Wheeler, *London in Roman Times, London Museum Catalogues: No. 3*, 1930, p. 63.

of the *discus*. On the base is the stamp FAOR (presumably Favorinus) in neat raised letters. The same combination of letters has been recorded on lamps from Trion and Orange in France and from Augst in Switzerland; it also appears on a lamp of uncertain provenance in Berlin Museum.[25]

2. (Pl. XVII, fig. 2.) Small lamp of an open type with an open nozzle, in thick whitish fawn fabric, smoked black around the edge as if the wick had floated away from the nozzle. It is complete except for the handle, of which a stump remains directly opposite the nozzle; it was probably lost in antiquity. The lamp is perhaps of local manufacture.

3. (Pl. XVII, fig. 2.) Complete saucer-lamp in thick pinkish fawn fabric, smoked on either side of the simple thumb-depression nozzle and along one edge.

4. (Fig. 12, no. 4.) Several large pieces from a tall flat-bottomed vessel in clean brick-red fabric. It was thrown on a wheel, and then, before it was fired, elliptical holes, three inches high and originally seven in number, were cut in the sides; they are bordered above and below by scored lines. The lowest part of a second tier of holes appears at the top of the surviving portion of the vessel, above another scored line. This shews that the vessel, surviving now to a height of rather more than 10 inches, originally stood much higher; if completed to the same pattern it would stand 18 inches high. The damage it has suffered is consistent with its having been abandoned intact and upright and subsequently struck by ploughs, as has sometimes happened to cinerary urns; the smaller lamps escaped. There are no parallels to the type, but the vessel is clearly of the same order as the lamp chimneys, such as that found in the triangular temple of Verulamium.[26] Had the present vessel held a lamp it would have shewn signs of smoke, which it does not. On the other hand, if it held incense and charcoal, or carbonized pine-cone fuel, this would leave no sooty deposit. For this reason the vessel is marked as "thurible" on the plan.

The other pottery from the site is mainly Roman, though a few pieces of medieval pottery came from the topsoil and the disturbed areas. Very little of the Roman pottery was both stratified and interesting in itself, and it is not therefore illustrated, but it included types securely datable by their

[25] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. xii, 5682.43, and vol. xiii, 10001.129.

[26] R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler, *Verulamium, a Belgic and two Roman Cities, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, No. xi, 1936, p. 190, pl. lviii and fig. 32, no. 43.

occurrence on other Wall sites. Except that one or two late fourth-century types, including a mortarium of Corder's Crambeck type 8,[27] appeared, the range of date was much the same as at Carrawburgh, and there were examples of most of the types represented there. There were a few second-century pieces, though no more than can readily be accounted for as strays or survivals on a third-century site. Pottery of the third and early fourth centuries was abundant; fragmentary Castor ware and Rhenish beakers, cooking pots, both with true cavetto rims and with widely splayed rims, hammer-head mortaria, and bowls with the earliest form of flanged rim were among the types present. From the point of view of dating the most significant pieces are as follows: the base of a samian bowl of form 37, with the stamp [A]VENTINI M below the zone of decoration, datable to the Antonine period and found in association with the foundation of the wall of the building which antedated *mithraeum* I; several large fragments from a grey cooking pot with a true cavetto rim, of early to mid third-century date, found in the packing behind the revetment of the dais in the apse; several fragments from a black cooking pot with a splayed rim, of early fourth-century date, found a little above foundation level outside the north wall of the nave; and a fragment from the rim of a cooking pot of the Huntcliff type, of late fourth-century date, from behind the revetment of the south bench.

Two links of bronze chain, each $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch long, were found at floor level in the sanctuary, in front of the dais.

A silver-plated coin in perfect condition was found above the floor level in the north-western corner of the nave. Its condition shews that it was dropped while new, but from its place of discovery it seems that it had been subsequently disturbed. The coin is an *antoninianus* of Philip II as Cæsar, A.D. 244-246; obverse: M.IVL.PHILIPPVS CAES., radiate head to right; reverse: PRINCIPI IVVENT., standing figure in mili-

[27] P. Corder and M. Birley, *A Pair of Fourth-century Romano-British Pottery Kilns near Crambeck, Antiquaries Journal*, vol. xvii, p. 403.

tary dress, holding a globe in his right hand and a staff in his left.

The dating of the successive mithraea.—As there are neither explicit dates on the altars nor clearly defined floor levels in the nave, a precise and reliable chronological framework for the various phases through which the building passed is unattainable. Scraps of evidence, however, used against the background of general probability, give some indication of when the temple was founded, rebuilt and abandoned.

It is likely that the rise and decline of the cult will have been approximately simultaneous at each of the forts on Hadrian's Wall. At Carrawburgh the *mithraeum* was founded and reached its maximum size in the third century; at Housesteads one of the altars is dated to A.D. 252; at Rudchester, even if little reliance is placed on the mint coin of A.D. 244-246, the greater part of the period of use of the *mithraeum* seems to have fallen in the third century, for the altars are of third-century style, and the bulk of the pottery belongs to the same period. On the other hand the structural sequence was obviously different at each of the three *mithraea* so far discovered.

Mithraeum I was built on and over earlier works (one apparently of Antonine date), which had fallen so far into decay that the replanning of this part of the *vicus* was possible. It is reasonable to suppose that the second-century *vicus* had been destroyed in the invasions of A.D. 196 or 197, and was developed again after the Severan reorganization. Thus the *mithraeum* probably began its life in the early decades of the third century. There is nothing to show that it was necessarily founded so early as the reign of Severus himself; it may have come somewhat later. The first *mithraeum* at Carrawburgh, built early in the third century, was very small; the first *mithraeum* on the excavated site at Rudchester was much larger even than the restored *mithraeum* at Carrawburgh, and is possibly approximately contemporary with it.

In the nature of the evidence there is no direct indication of periods of temporary disuse of either *mithraeum* I or *mithraeum* II, or of an interval between the collapse of *mithraeum* I and the building of *mithraeum* II. The consolidation of the filling of the pit, which brought about the collapse of the successive *mithraea*, would proceed more rapidly at first than later, and this probably means that the life of *mithraeum* I was shorter than the life of *mithraeum* II. The fact that the dais in the apse, which is probably contemporary with the rebuilding, was inserted while early to mid third-century pottery was still in circulation, tends to confirm this.

While pottery of types that emerged before the end of the third century and long remained current was fairly abundant, no pottery of types exclusive to the fourth century was found sealed by the fallen masonry of the east end of the temple. This suggests that while the temple continued in use into the fourth century, it was for a short time only. The lamp of second-century style, apparently still in use when *mithraeum* II was abandoned, must be accepted as a survival and as irrelevant to the dating of the building.

It is not impossible that the final abandonment and desecration of the *mithraeum* at Rudchester was strictly contemporary with the final abandonment and desecration at Housesteads and Carrawburgh. The parallels between the treatment of the three several known *mithraea* on Hadrian's Wall are close, while there seem to be no close parallels to this precise kind of treatment elsewhere in the Empire. In all three the main relief was destroyed and largely or completely removed, the torchbearers were damaged and in part removed, while the altars were left in position without desecration. Such uniform treatment implies a single wave of feeling along the line of the Wall, or a single general order.

Acknowledgments.—The co-operation and forbearance of Mr. W. James and Mr. T. W. Stobo, owner and tenant respectively, is gratefully acknowledged. The excavation

FIG. 2. PIT, LOOKING SOUTH, SHEWING PLATFORM IN BACKGROUND AND REBUILT WALL OF NAVE ON RIGHT.

FIG. 1. SUBSIDENCE INTO PIT, SHEWING NARTHEX FLOOR AND FRACTURED AND COLLAPSED EAST WALL OF NAVE.

FIG. 2. NORTH-EAST ANGLE OF NAVE, SHEWING RETURN OF NORTH BENCH AND PACKING BEHIND BENCH REVETMENT.

FIG. 1. NORTH-EAST ANGLE OF NAVE, SHEWING LEVELLED DEBRIS, SCORED BY PLOUGHING.

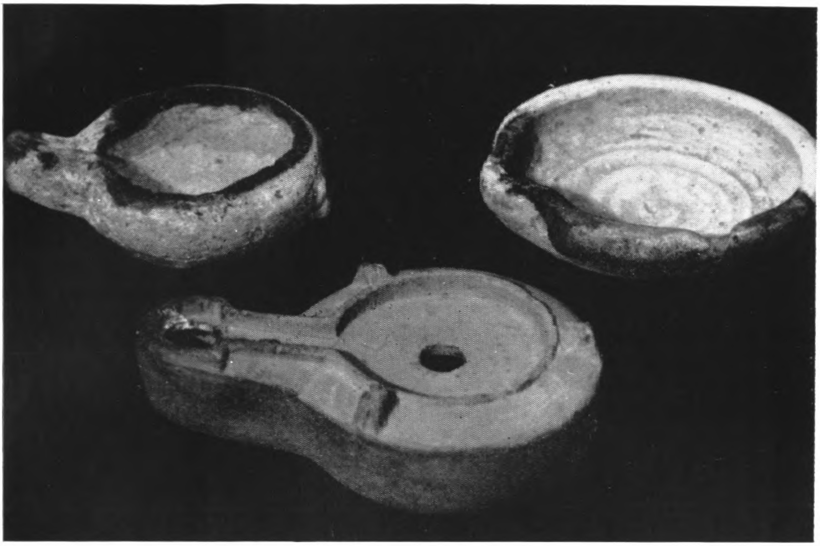
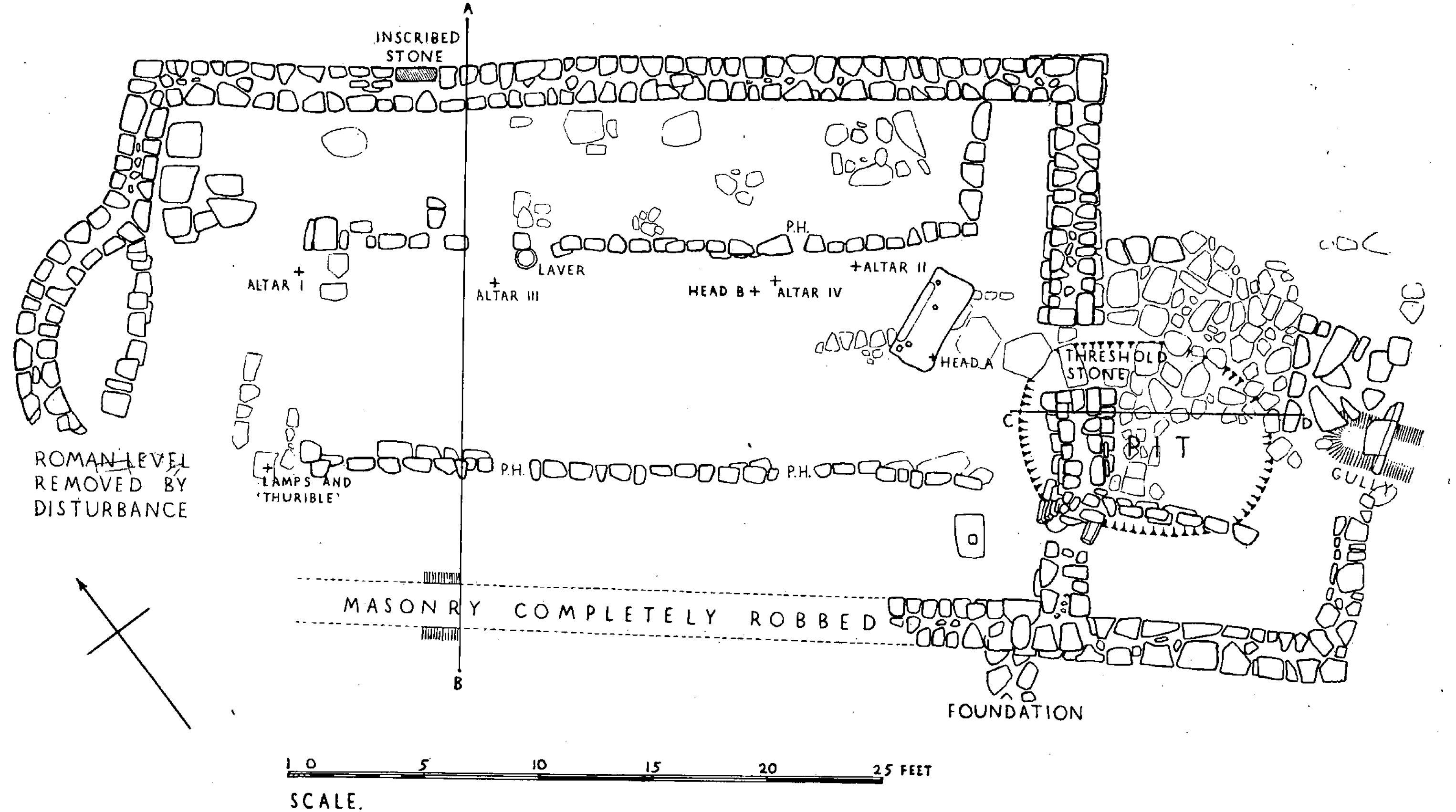


FIG. 2. THE THREE LAMPS FROM THE MITHRAEUM.

FIG. 1. WEST END OF NAVE SHEWING LAVER AND TWO SMALL ALTARS.



GENERAL PLAN OF THE MITHRAEUM.

was initiated by the South Shields Archæological and Historical Society, which provided the first and largest team of voluntary workers. As the excavation increased in scope, Durham University Excavation Committee and this society were successively associated with it, giving financial and other help. Students on the university's annual training course in excavation, members of this society, and other interested individuals helped to swell the voluntary labour force. The very length of the list of those to whom the writers are indebted, unfortunately makes its publication impossible.