

1.—EXCAVATIONS AT CORSTOPITUM, 1906-1958.

BY ERIC BIRLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

(a) *Introduction and retrospect.*

“Excavation began at Corbridge in 1906, by way of experiment; it was recommenced on a larger scale in 1907.” So Haverfield began his report to the Society of Antiquaries of London on the work of 1910, adding (with prophetic inklings of ever-extending vistas of research): “How many further seasons may be needed to exhaust the site we cannot yet foretell.” My own guess, in 1958, would be fifty or sixty. . . . But the outbreak of war in 1914 brought that first series of excavations to a sudden close, and before work on the site became possible again, Haverfield himself and many of the men who had taken part in the nine seasons’ diggings were dead; and those who survived had left our district and were largely committed to other tasks. It was not until 1934 that active investigations began again, in the year after the central portion of the site, containing most of the really impressive and important buildings discovered at Corstopitum, had been placed in the custody of the Ancient Monuments Department by Mr. David Cuthbert of Beaufront Castle; by then, the late J. P. Bushe-Fox had become chief inspector, and it was natural that he should take a special interest in the monument on which he had begun his archæological career in Britain: it was at his invitation that the Durham University Excavation Committee (hereinafter referred to as DUEC) undertook the archæological attention to the site which has been its special concern ever since. In presenting a report on an excavation begun in 1957 and continued into January 1958, and dealing with some of the problems of a building first examined in 1908, it seems not

inappropriate to begin with a survey of some aspects of the long series of work whose experimental beginning fell (as it happens) in the year of your President's birth.

Details of the published accounts are given in the next section of this paper (pp. 8ff.); my retrospect will be devoted mainly to a consideration of some aspects of Romano-British archæology, as it was developed during the first series of excavations at Corstopitum or by men who had taken part in those excavations, and as it has been furthered in the north of England, largely by our Society and several of its past members—for it remains a necessity to refer constantly to the work of the pioneers, whatever the advances which their successors may have been able to make.

First, I take the study of Roman coarse pottery, on which Mr. Gillam's important paper, published in 1957 (AA4 XXXV 180-251), gives us not only a basis for the assessment of new finds, but also a challenge for further study in that field. John Ward was the first English archæologist, I believe, to study Roman coarse pottery and to publish it with drawings in the conventions now generally employed; James Curle's magnificent work at Newstead provided, amongst much more, the first demonstration of the essential differences between the material from Flavian and Antonine levels; and Thomas May's long labours, mainly on the previously unpublished accumulations in many English museums, threw increasing light on the range and variety of types and provided a sure foundation for their typological classification. But it is fair to claim that it was the work of J. P. Bushe-Fox and of F. G. Simpson which inaugurated the methodical exploitation of pottery as an aid to the historian of Roman Britain. Bushe-Fox learnt to recognize and handle the material during the first series of excavations at Corstopitum, publishing his first and basic study in the report for 1911 (AA3 VIII, especially 168-185); F. G. Simpson, who was in charge at Corstopitum for one week in 1906 and thereafter, gaining experience at first under the

tutelage of J. P. Gibson, produced the reports on the Haltwhistle Burn fortlet (AA3 V 213-285) and on the excavations just across the Cumberland border (CW2 XI 390-461 and XIII 297-397) which first brought coarse pottery into demonstrable relationship with the successive occupation-levels on Hadrian's Wall.

Bushe-Fox's work led him away from our district—first to Wroxeter and later to Richborough, enabling him to spread the leaven throughout the Midlands and the south of England; Simpson remained in his native north country, and took steps to make sure that his work was continued and developed. His motives were as altruistic as his vision was clear: witness his entrusting to Philip Newbold the analysis and publication of the pottery from the High House sector (CW2 XIII 339-359, making full use of experience gained at Corstopitum), so that there should be no suspicion of prepossession in the assessment of its significance—or his generalship in organizing the excavations at Birdoswald in 1928 and 1929, which were aimed primarily at adding substantially to the volume of stratified pottery from Wall forts, and by good fortune succeeded also in producing a definitive dating of the four Wall periods (CW2 XXX 169-205, cf. AA4 VII 164-174). It was my experience at Birdoswald, and Simpson's encouragement to specialize in the study of Roman pottery, which enabled me to approach the problems of Corstopitum with a fresh eye when Bushe-Fox invited me, in 1933, to write the official guide to the site; I had already been asked by the trustees of the Corbridge Excavation Fund to sort the finds from the 1906-1914 excavations, with a view to their display to the public, and had recognized that their classification and interpretation would be greatly simplified in the light of the work on the Wall which Simpson had been directing and inspiring. It seemed axiomatic that the four main Wall periods should be reflected in the structural history of Corstopitum too: hence my cautious hint in the first edition of the guide, published in 1935, that the principal buildings uncovered in 1906-1914 should be

assigned to the time of Severus—and the more confident interpretation sketched in August 1935 (AA4 XIII 274-278), soon after the discovery of a second inscription of Lollius Urbicus had reopened the question, which of the buildings on the site had in fact been constructed by him.

It was in 1935, too, that the DUEC, at Bushe-Fox's invitation, transferred its annual training courses to Corstopitum, where they have been held every year since then (except for an enforced break during the war of 1939-1945); and from 1935 onwards it has been a basic part of the committee's policy, not merely to learn more about the successive structures on the site (to which Professor Richmond, in recent years assisted most notably by Mr. Gillam, has devoted such illuminating attention), but also to plan its operations in such a way as to increase the volume of stratified pottery from the unmatched series of superimposed levels which the site affords, and to use its study as a basis for advancing knowledge both of Roman pottery generally and also of the history of Roman Britain.

It seems right that, in taking stock of half a century's work at Corstopitum, I should say so much, at least, about its importance in the development of Roman archaeology in this country, and that I should stress the essential connection of the work done there in the past twenty-five years, not merely with the further elucidation of that particular site and its problems (in continuation of the labours of the original Corstopitum Excavation Committee), but also with a long-term plan of operations first conceived by Simpson and now known by a variety of fruits. To take only the study of pottery, witness (in addition to Mr. Gillam's paper, already referred to) Dr. M. H. Callender's study of Roman amphorae and amphora-stamps (AA4 XXVII 60-121: publication of his fuller study of the whole subject is assured), or the book on *Central Gaulish Potters* (1958), first planned by the late J. A. Stanfield after his visit to Corstopitum and the Wall in 1933 and now published, through the good offices of the University of Durham and with Simpson's daughter, Grace,

as the chosen instrument through whose labours it has been brought to completion. We may be proud to remember that this Society's palmary interest in Corstopitum has proved so rewarding in the advancement of Roman provincial archæology.

Bushe-Fox's 1911 report demonstrated that Corstopitum, like Newstead, contained wholly distinct series of pottery assignable to the periods inaugurated by Agricola and by Lollius Urbicus respectively. Simpson's work on the Wall demonstrated that its first structural period, beginning under Hadrian and closing with a great disaster at the end of the second century, had been subdivided in the milecastles and turrets: in them he distinguished the two sub-periods as IA and IB (now convincingly interpreted as separate phases of an occupation interrupted by a period when the structure stood empty), the beginning of IB marking the reoccupation of buildings which had not been damaged by enemy action but which nevertheless needed reconditioning. The historical occasion remained to be identified, and it has been at Corstopitum that an approach to a really confident answer has gradually been worked out. There, inscriptions of Calpurnius Agricola already indicated fresh structural work in the early years of Marcus Aurelius; and the DUEC's digging in 1936 and 1937 made it possible to identify levels assignable to that period, and to show that the pottery which they yielded matched that from IB levels on the Wall (AA4 XV 243-294). During the post-war years an increasing volume of evidence, structural and ceramic, has combined to confirm and amplify the picture which we were first able to outline in 1938; witness the reports which Professor Richmond has written, in collaboration with Mr. Gillam, for recent volumes of our transactions (listed below, p. 11).

During the same period, the analysis of the first- and second-century levels has shown that the volume of rubbish accumulated or tipped on the site varied very considerably in different periods, the largest quantity (within the area of

the pre-Severan fort) representing the violent destruction which overtook the place in A.D. 197 or the subsequent clearing up of the site under Severus, preparatory to construction of an entirely new lay-out: compare Mr. Gillam's observations on the rich yield from the excavations north of the granaries in 1947 (AA4 XXVIII 177ff.) which he supervised under my direction. In later seasons, fresh cuts into pre-Severan levels elsewhere on the site have yielded smaller groups assignable with confidence to the same period, the most manifest connecting-link being provided by the figured samian. It was this regular sampling of the destruction-levels, designed to help in the archæological training of students during the DUEC's summer training-courses, which enabled us gradually to identify the "tracer-elements" now widely recognized as characteristic of the end of the second century—conveniently demonstrated as far as figured samian is concerned by the diagram given on the last plate of *Central Gaulish Potters*, and for coarse pottery by many of the types in Mr. Gillam's paper.

In 1911, Haverfield referred with pardonable pride, when reporting to the Society of Antiquaries of London, to the value of Corstopitum as a site where beginners in archæology could learn "how to conduct excavations, how to handle workmen, and how to deal with and to record finds" (PSAL2 XXIII 478f.). "This practical training of future archæologists," he continued, "is a new effort, never yet attempted in any English excavations." Bushe-Fox carried the lesson with him to Wroxeter and Richborough, and between the wars Sir Mortimer Wheeler, in particular, developed it with outstanding success on many sites in Wales and England and Brittany; but it was the DUEC, inspired by its first director, F. G. Simpson, which established the principle that its training courses in the summer vacation should be directly linked with a long-term programme of research *per lineam Valli*, and also with the teaching of undergraduates during the university session; and it was a natural and predictable consequence that some of them, after taking their degrees, should

take up more advanced work within the framework of the programme: witness the studies by G. S. Keeney, J. P. Gillam, M. H. Callender and Grace Simpson, listed in the next section of this paper.

Our retrospect, I hope, will have helped to place the series of recent reports on the study of Corstopitum in perspective, as parts in a long-continuing programme in which research is the *motif* but the training of beginners in archaeology is a recurring element which dictates the planning of each season's digging at that site; for it is necessary to ensure that, in the three or four weeks of the training-course, the students shall have a variety of archaeological techniques to sample; and because there is no time-limit to the DUEC's access to the site, and the university's permanent interest in it ensures continuity of attention, there is no need for any specific piece of work to be completed in any one season. The corollary, of course, is that an annual report is no longer justifiable, except in the brief form suitable for the DUEC to render to the senate of the university, or as a paragraph in the *Journal of Roman Studies*; hence the practice, attested by the bibliography which comes presently, of offering reports for printing in *Archæologia Aeliana* only when specific pieces of work are judged to have been brought to a stage that warrants their publication.

One last point must be added. Haverfield referred, in his paper to the London society in June 1911 (PSAL2 XXIII 478ff.), to the high cost of the exploration of a site with so many superimposed levels, and of providing adequate illustrations for the reports printed in *Archæologia Aeliana*. My bibliography shows what a substantial contribution our Society has made by publication of reports: over 700 pages in the third series, already more than 500 in the fourth. But it is right to recognize and to make proper acknowledgment of the Durham University Excavation Committee's generosity in bearing, from 1943 onwards, the cost of all the blocks needed to illustrate not only the reports on Corstopitum but also all other reports on work done under

its aegis and qualifying for publication in this Society's transactions.

(b) *Bibliography of Corstopitum, 1906-1958.*

Haverfield himself summed up the results of the first seven or eight seasons' work in the *Northumberland County History X* (1914), 474-522, which gives a convenient conspectus of the site as a whole, and useful critical studies of the more important categories of finds, notably of course inscriptions and sculptures (his first love). But a definitive study of the first series of excavations was never made, and further digging (not yet practicable over most of the area which they covered) will be needed before one can be offered. Note, for example, that virtually all the work done on the site since 1934 has been within the six acres entrusted to the Ancient Monuments Department, an area which the original excavators reckoned to have examined with sufficient completeness—yet in the past twenty-five years it has yielded an exceptionally full and varied quota of fresh evidence for the structural history of the six or seven phases in the occupation of Corstopitum which preceded the Severan lay-out planned in 1906-1914.

For the work of that period, the fullest reports were those issued year by year in *Archaeologia Aeliana* (overprints issued to subscribers were re-paginated 1- and are usually cited by year as *Report*); but it is often desirable to refer, on points of detail, to the papers read (in most cases by Haverfield, but in one especially important instance by R. H. Forster and J. G. N. Clift) to the London Antiquaries and summarized or printed in full in their *Proceedings*. A check-list has not previously been provided, but experience shows that one is needed, and I therefore offer it here:

1906. AA3 III 161-186=*Rep.* 1-26: by C. L. (now Sir Leonard) Woolley, with contributions by R. H. Forster and W. H. Knowles, who were jointly responsible for the subsequent reports in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, in which Haverfield usually described the inscriptions and sculptures and several other

categories of finds, the coins found up to 1912 were reported on in exemplary detail by Dr. H. H. E. (later Sir Edmund) Craster, and specialist contributions by other writers were included as occasion offered.

1907. AA3 IV 205-303=*Rep.* 1-99; PSAL2 XXII 273f. (brief summary), 300ff. (précis of Haverfield's paper and Forster's comments) and XXIII 112-121 (Haverfield's discussion of the "pottery shop" and its problems, with comments by Forster and others).

1908. AA3 V 304-424=*Rep.* 1-120; PSAL2 XXII 521ff. (précis of Haverfield's paper and of comments by several Fellows).

1909. AA3 VI 204-272=*Rep.* 1-70; PSAL2 XXIII 213-216 (Haverfield's paper in full, and some detailed points made by Forster).

1910. AA3 VII 143-268=*Rep.* 1-125; PSAL2 XXIII 291-296 (Forster and Clift reporting on site XI and giving more fully than elsewhere their reasons for regarding it as left unfinished by its builders: some criticisms by Haverfield and C. J. Peers, partly answered by Forster), 478-490 (Haverfield's paper in full, including his own interpretation of site XI—not nearly so useful—and a most valuable discussion of possible analogies to the structural type).

1911. AA3 VIII 137-264=*Rep.* 1-127; PSAL2 XXIV 261-273 (Haverfield's paper in full, and some useful comments by Forster, Bushe-Fox and Gowland).

1912. AA3 IX 230-280=*Rep.* 1-52; PSAL2 XXV 146-158 (Haverfield's paper, with plans by Clift—differing in some details from those by Knowles in AA3 IX—, and useful comments by Bushe-Fox).

1913. AA3 XI 278-310=*Rep.* 1-34; PSAL2 XXVI 185-189 (Haverfield's paper, with important comments by Forster and Bushe-Fox).

1914. AA3 XII 226-286=*Rep.* 1-62 (including at 49-62 Haverfield's conspectus of potters' stamps on plain samian ware found 1906-1914).

Interpretation of the "pottery shop" found in 1907, of site XI and of the buildings in the west compound, has been greatly helped by reference to the reports in the London Antiquaries' *Proceedings*; and there are several points, recorded under the names of speakers at Burlington House, which still deserve careful consideration.

The following papers have been printed in the current (fourth) series of *Archæologia Aeliana*, dealing with excavation or with research into the site or upon the archæological material which it has yielded since 1906, from 1931 onwards—when Mr. Keeney began the special study that ultimately produced the first paper in the series:

1934. XI 158-175: G. S. Keeney, "Corstopitum as a civil centre" (reviewing and offering a new interpretation of the non-military buildings examined up to 1914, most of them outside the area now in the custody of the Ancient Monuments Department).

1936. XIII 274-278: Eric Birley, "Another record of Lollius Urbicus from Corstopitum" (the inscription of A.D. 139); 310-319: J. D. Cowen, "An inscribed openwork gold ring from Corstopitum" (of value not merely for its treatment of a new discovery made during further clearance on site XI).

1937. XIV 95-102: W. P. Hedley, "The last days of Corstopitum and the Roman Wall—the coin evidence" (basic for its demonstration that the place was occupied into the fifth century).

1938. XV 243-294: E. B. and I. A. Richmond, "Excavations at Corbridge, 1936-1938",¹ with a contribution by S. Gutenbrunner (primarily devoted to the study of pre-Severan levels, mainly below site XXXIX, and to a first analysis of the third-century compounds and their later history).

1940. XVII 85-115: I. A. R. (E. B. is given as joint author, though he was absent on military service and could take no part in producing the report), "Excavations at Corbridge, 1938-1939" (further study of the west compound).

1941. XIX 188-193: R. P. Wright, "The Severan dedication-slab of a granary at Corbridge"; 194-209: R. P. W., "The Stanegate at Corbridge."

1943. XXI 127-224: I. A. R., "Roman legionaries at Corbridge, their supply-base, temples and religious cults" (an elaborate study of the east compound, of the relationship between the two compounds and the series of temples, then first recognized, and of the inscriptions and sculptures associated with them, and further attention to the Antonine and Flavian levels in the southern part of the Ancient Monument Department's enclosure); 239-247: William Bulmer, "A fragmentary inscription of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus from Corbridge."

¹ 1936-1937 in fact: the report was read on 27 April 1938 (and not on 23 February, as printed in AA4 XV 243).

1948. XXVI 172-204: E. B. and J. P. Gillam, "Mortarium stamps from Corbridge."

1949. XXVII 60-121: M. H. Callender, "Corbridge amphora stamps."

1950. XXVIII 152-201: I. A. R. and J. P. G., "Excavations on the Roman site at Corbridge, 1946-1949" (further study of the granaries, aqueduct and fountain, Antonine structures below the east compound, the west rampart of the Flavian fort, and the pottery from the destruction-level of A.D. 197 and from Severan tipping in the area north of the granaries).

1952. XXX 239-266: I. A. R. and J. P. G., "Further exploration of the Antonine fort at Corbridge" (the central administrative buildings underlying the Severan granaries, the aqueduct and part of site XI; and a fresh study of some rubbish-pits and a ditch found in 1907, to west of the Department's enclosure, and of the objects found in them).

1953. XXXI 205-253: I. A. R. and J. P. G., "Buildings of the first and second centuries north of the granaries at Corbridge", with a description of the figured samian by Grace Simpson (242-253).

1955. XXXIII 116-133: Wm. B., "Roman glass vessels in the Corstopitum Museum, Corbridge"; 218-252: I. A. R. and J. P. G., "Some excavations at Corbridge, 1952-1954" (a pre-Roman farmstead and Flavian and later timber buildings underlying site XI; and the sequence of levels, from Flavian to late fourth-century, on site XX).

Meanwhile, the annual reports on Roman Britain in the *Journal of Roman Studies* had given (from Professor Richmond's pen) details or a summary of our work which it will be useful to consult, and I therefore list the references, adding details of three important papers in the same journal which deal with Corbridge finds:

JRS XXVII 226 (1936, mainly site XXXIX). XXVIII 173 (1937, I. A. R.'s first season). XXIX 202f. (1938, W. compound and site XL N.). XXX 165 (1939, N. half of W. compound). XXXII 107f. (1941, E. compound and temples). XXXVII 167f. 1946; XXXIX 100 (1948); XLII 89f. (1950-51); XLIII 111 (1952); XLIV 88f. (1953); XLV 127f. (1954); XLVI 124 (1955); XLVII 205f. (1956, I. A. R.'s last season).

JRS II 1-20. George Macdonald, "The Corbridge gold find of 1911."

JRS V 173-190. H. H. E. Craster, "Roman silver coins found

at Corstopitum" (a full list of those yielded by the excavations of 1906-1912).

JRS XXXI 100-127. O. Brendel, "The Corbridge *lanx*."

Lastly, it will be convenient to cite a few items printed elsewhere which are relevant for the study of Corstopitum in the past quarter of a century:

E. B., *Corbridge Roman Station (Corstopitum), Official Guide*: 1st ed., 1935; 2nd ed. (revised), 1936; 3rd ed. (considerably revised), 1954.

E. B., "Eine neue Inschrift von Corstopitum" (*Germania* 20, 1936, 21-25).

I. A. R., "Roman Corbridge" (*Durham University Journal*, June 1942, 144-153).

I. A. R., "Two Celtic heads in stone from Corbridge, Northumberland" (*Dark Age Britain: Studies presented to E. T. Leeds*, ed. D. B. Harden, 1956, 11-15).

J. P. G., *Corbridge, 1951-1953* (Durham, n.d. [1954]: surveying progress in the study of the site in successive training-excavations, and offering the best brief conspectus of its history in Roman times, as elucidated in particular by the DUEC's work there in recent years).²

(c) *Site XI and its problems.*

Site XI is the large building, 222 ft. by 216 ft. over-all, with a central courtyard 165 ft. by 160 ft., surrounded by four ranges of rooms (fig. 1). Its main entrance is centrally placed in the south range, with five rooms on each side of it, all opening on to the main E.-W. street; eight rooms in the west range, the east range without any subdivisions at all, and the north range (as laid out by the Ancient Monuments Department in 1936) apparently giving nine rooms.³ The western half of the building was found and partly uncovered in 1908, the eastern half in 1910, a little further work being devoted to it in 1911 and later. R. H. Forster and his colleagues called it "the forum" for convenience, but Haver-

² Add now, to the list of papers in our own transactions, Mr. Peter Salway's "Civilians in the Roman frontier region", AA4 XXXVI 227-244, which pays particular attention to Corstopitum *passim*.

³ It seems probable that further examination will show a somewhat different lay-out in the N. range.

CORBRIDGE ROMAN STATION

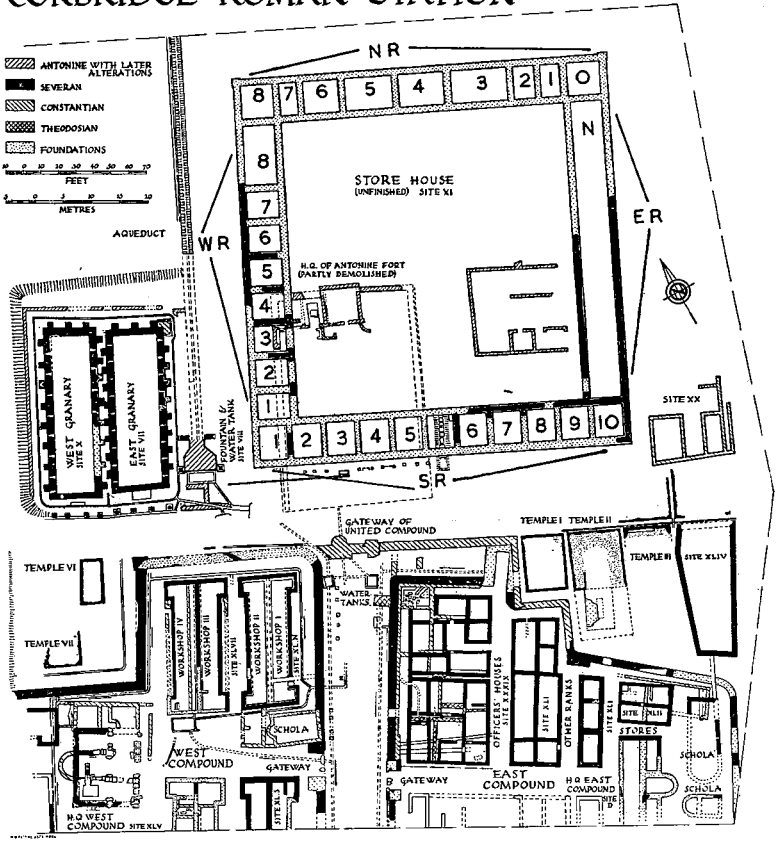


FIG. 1. GENERAL PLAN OF THE AREA IN THE CUSTODY OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS; THE FOUR "RANGES" OF SITE XI HAVE BEEN MARKED, AND THEIR ROOMS NUMBERED. (Reduced, by permission of H.M. Stationery Office, from the plan in the *Official Guide*, 3rd ed., 1954: Crown copyright reserved.)

field preferred the term "storehouse", which has been retained in the official guide. His reasons were given most fully to the London Antiquaries (PSAL2 XXIII 482ff.): city *fora* show features of importance which are lacking here—a basilica, a colonnade round the courtyard, a uniform series of shops—the masonry is of a type "much too costly for anything but governmental work", and "a forum implies a highly developed town-life, such as the remains of Corstopitum do not indicate". It must therefore, he reasoned, have been built for some military purpose: either as the headquarters-building for a projected legionary fortress—but in that case, it was evidently an unfinished example of the type—or preferably as a storehouse comparable to the two which excavation had recently revealed in the fortress at Carnuntum (Deutsch-Altenburg, in Lower Austria).

Haverfield might, as it happens, have cited a structure which in some respects offers support for Forster's term, namely the building just outside the S.W. angle of the legionary fortress at Vindonissa (Brugg, in Switzerland), excavated in 1902.⁴ It is far larger than site XI, measuring 453 ft. by 400 ft. over-all, and it is not certain that it had ranges of rooms on either side as well as at front and back; but it was undoubtedly designed as a forum—not to serve a highly developed town-life (which there never was at Vindonissa) and not for a strictly military purpose (otherwise it would have been built inside the fortress, like the two storehouses at Carnuntum) but, as Friedrich Drexel first suggested, as a market-place in which traders could do their business as it were under the guns of the fortress. He went further, asking whether it was not one of the places at which people in the frontier region, and from across the frontier, were allowed to come, under strict military supervision, to trade with Roman merchants; and Professor Laur, accepting that interpretation, has made out an attractive case for identifying

⁴ Cf. R. Laur-Belart, *Vindonissa: Lager und Vicus* (1935), 74ff. and plate 26; my description is based on Professor Laur's text, in which acknowledgements are made to Drexel's paper in the *Anzeiger f. schweiz. Altertumskunde*, 1921, 31.

it as the *Forum Tiberii* which the geographer Ptolemy (unquestionably using a source of the Julio-Claudian period) places in that general area. If he is right, the persistence of the original Celtic place-name, Vindonissa, can best be explained by the fact that the frontier soon moved northwards into the *agri decumates*, no doubt taking the market with it, so that the forum fell into disuse while the fortress, and the village which grew up around it and continued in occupation after the departure of the legion *circa* A.D. 101, remained.

Yet, attractive though the Vindonissa analogy may seem, it will be easier to revert to the explanation which Haverfield thought of but felt unable to accept, that site XI is an unfinished legionary headquarters. The case depends on the evidence for it having been left unfinished, and for its construction having been begun in the time of Severus; I will take the two points in that order.

(1) That it was never finished is now a commonplace, but the evidence has never been set forth in full, and the most complete discussion of the question was not communicated to this Society. The case seemed so clear to R. H. Forster by the end of the 1910 season that he felt justified in reading a paper on it to the November meeting of the London Antiquaries (PSAL2 XXIII 291ff.), his main points being as follows:

(i) In the foundation-course (in the northern part of the E. range), the plinth-course and the first, second and third courses of "rustic" masonry above it, there are manifest examples of blocks whose upper beds have never been dressed to allow a higher course to be placed upon them.

(ii) The plinth-course, where it survives, is unfinished work, left at various stages of dressing at different points.

(iii) The main drain, below the entrance-passage in the south front, has never been linked at either end with the connections which would enable it to function.

(iv) Irregular piles of banker chippings, and a considerable number of stone-dressing tools found close to various parts of the building, gave him the impression that work on the project had been abandoned suddenly.

(v) The doorways in the W. and E. ranges show no signs that they were ever provided with either doors or partitions.

The case was a strong one, and we shall see presently that it can be reinforced decisively. But Haverfield's criticisms were so strongly pressed that Forster (we must suppose) decided to await further evidence before returning to the charge, and his report on the 1910 excavations, in *Archæologia Aeliana*, leaves most of his points unsaid; and, in any case, the whole question was soon obscured by assumptions as to the date of the building and its subsequent vicissitudes, which later discoveries have shown to be unjustified.

The additional points which fall to be placed on record have in fact only become clear as a result of the general clearing and levelling of the site by the Ancient Monuments Department, mainly in 1935 and 1936, and of the digging which was done by the DUEC in 1957 in preparation for, during and (finally) after that year's training-excavation; digging continued on a small scale as late as January 1958, but a full report must await further work on the site, several of the results obtained in 1957 having raised problems rather than solved them: the basic case, however, is clear enough to justify a statement of the evidence now:⁵

(vi) The courtyard itself was never levelled in Roman times. In its S.W. quarter, the surface was mainly below the level to which the S. and W. ranges were built, while the S.E. quarter was left at a higher level, on an upward slope eastwards: existing contours had been ignored in the planning of the building, its E. range being taken through a considerable cutting, its S.W. corner (at least) being raised several feet above existing ground-level. The northern half of the courtyard only achieved its present smoothness in 1936; before that the latest Roman ground-level was markedly higher (at least in the centre of the N. range), and excavation in 1957 showed that, towards the N.E. corner, the levelling of 1936 had removed even the construction-trenches of the earlier Roman buildings.

⁵ Further work was done in July and August, 1958, and it is hoped to continue the investigation in 1959.

(vii) In the N. range, most of the blocks of the foundation-course had only been placed roughly in position and never properly levelled (let alone dressed to take the plinth-course), and it is not certain that that range was ever completed even at foundation-level: examination of the partition-walls in its eastern half, as marked out in 1936, indicates that some of them had only been begun—thus, the wall between NR-0 and NR-1⁶ was no more than two stumps, each of a couple of blocks, jutting out from the main N. and S. walls of the range. Moreover, there were several blocks lying higgledy-piggledy at a lower level, as though they had been dumped there in readiness for the building up to a higher level which was intended at that point (for the existing ground-level had been lower there than to S. or W., for a reason which remains to be found).

The fact that the courtyard was never levelled will explain, of course, why the main drain was never completed, to take off surface water; it will also explain the absence of a colonnade, such as the normal legionary *principia* and civilian forum alike show, for its construction would come at a later stage than was ever reached by the builders of site XI. But *principia* and forum alike regularly have a great hall opening off the opposite side of the courtyard to the main entrance, and though Haverfield felt able in June 1911 (PSAL2 XXIII 482) to claim that site XI has no basilica “nor even room for one”, there seems a clear suggestion of provision for such a structure:

(viii) The N.E. and N.W. angles of the foundation-course are formed of slightly larger blocks, projecting a little beyond the fronts of the N. and side ranges, as though to indicate that they were intended to carry piers of masonry: it would be simple to complete the plan of a great hall, with its main entrances immediately north of the N. range, in an area where the first series of excavations was far from exhaustive. Only to north of the extreme W. end of the N. range are any structures shown (on Knowles's plan) within a hundred feet of site XI, and those are the buildings of site XVI, examined in 1909 but never available for further investigation since then; in 1909 there was no thought of seeking the clay-and-cobble foundations which such a hall would have needed.

⁶ The rooms are cited by range and number, as in fig. 1.

But it will be necessary to await the day when it is possible to dig further N. than the Ministry's boundary-fence, before we can hope to settle the question satisfactorily.

Meanwhile, however, there are important pointers towards the presence of a complete legion (and not merely small detachments of legionary craftsmen) at Corstopitum in the early years of the third century. Firstly, there is the fine altar-shaped pedestal with its inscription to the emperors' Discipline, set up by *leg. II Aug.*—not by a mere detachment, but by the legion itself;⁷ it was found, indeed, fallen to the foot of the flight of steps into the sunken strong-room of the headquarters of the W. compound (site XLV), but it is completely out of scale for that small building, even if its dedication did not require us to assume the presence of the legion in force. That presence is confirmed by the fragmentary altar, found in Hexham and doubtless brought there from Corstopitum in Anglian times, dedicated to the emperors' Victory by a man who seems identifiable as a Severan legate of *II Augusta*.⁸ Granted a Severan dating for the lay-out, the case for supposing that the legion was being given a new fortress, at Corstopitum, is an attractive one. Something must be said, however, about the question of date, on which Forster and Haverfield alike came ultimately to conclusions which we can no longer accept.

(2) The bibliography given above (pp. 8-12) will permit readers who are interested to follow the development of the excavators' ideas from 1908 onwards; here it will be sufficient, I hope, to set forth the chain of reasoning which led me to postulate a Severan date, even before the DUEC's excavations enabled us to establish it.

When Bushe-Fox entrusted me with writing a guide to Corstopitum, there was little to be seen even of the buildings now exposed, except for the granaries and some parts of site XI, and I was obliged to base my study mainly on the

⁷AA3 IX 263, EE IX 1380.

⁸CIL VII 480, cf. NCH X 505, no. 39, and my *Roman Britain and the Roman Army* (1953), 51.

printed accounts. I soon became aware of the differences of opinion between Forster and Haverfield, and noted how the tendency to date every important building to the governorship of Lollius Urbicus had developed gradually, without solid reasoning ever asserting itself. But Forster's reports, even where one could not accept his conclusions, were exemplary in setting forth evidence which might be used for a fresh assessment—which could be made in the light of the evidence for the dating of the four main periods of Hadrian's Wall, as it was firmly established by F. G. Simpson's excavations at Birdoswald in 1929.⁹ It seemed axiomatic that the three destructions of A.D. 197, 296 and 367, should be represented at Corstopitum too, and the restorations by Severus, Constantius Chlorus and count Theodosius respectively; and on site after site, Forster's reports showed decisive evidence for the Theodosian restoration, and brought the stone buildings of the main visible lay-out back, beyond an earlier restoration readily assignable to Constantius Chlorus, to the time of Severus—while here and there, notably towards the S. end of the W. range of site XI, they recorded fragments of earlier stone buildings. In the last resort, it was only the fine inscription of Lollius Urbicus, found re-used in a reconstruction of the E. granary,¹⁰ which gradually led Haverfield and his colleagues to assign the principal buildings—intuitively rather than on solid evidence—to the early years of Antoninus Pius; and retention of that dating would have compelled us to assume that Corstopitum escaped one or other of the destructions which overwhelmed the Wall at the end of the second century and at the end of the third. Reference to the series of reports on the DUEC's excavations (listed above, pp. 10f.) will show that the Severan dating has been confirmed time and again; but that necessarily re-opens the question, not merely of what site XI was intended to be, but also why work on it was

⁹ Cf. CW2 XXX 169-205 (report on the excavations and the finds, by I.A.R. and E.B., with Simpson's conclusions, pp. 202ff.).

¹⁰ AA3 IV 262 and VI 269, EE IX 1146, and cf. my revision of its reading, AA4 XIII 274ff.

suddenly abandoned; there is also the problem presented by what the excavators, in 1910, took to be evidence of purposeful demolition of part of the E. range—though Forster and Haverfield differed in their interpretation of what had happened, and when.

(d) *The excavations of 1957 and 1958.*

The main reason for excavating on site XI in 1957 was to obtain further evidence for the pre-Severan timber buildings, the construction-trenches for which, cut into the subsoil, have gradually been yielding a more and more complete plan of the barracks and other buildings in the *retentura* of the second-century fort and its predecessor; but the structural and historical problems, which have just been discussed, were much in our minds, and it soon became clear that the time had come to devote continuous attention to them. In April 1957, work began in NR-3 and continued eastwards in the N. range, aiming at uncovering the construction-trenches isolated within the rooms of that range, in readiness for an examination of the adjacent area in the N.E. corner of the courtyard; but in NR-2 we found that the construction-trenches were almost completely lost, as a result of later Roman rubbish pits having been dug there, and in NR-1 and NR-0 we found a great depression, dipping several feet below the level prevailing further W., over which the clay and cobble foundations of the N. range had been raised up as it were on an embankment: two or three blocks, identical to all appearances with those used in the foundation course (where it had been laid), lay on or close to the floor of the depression, which was filled by a mass of rubbish, including a very considerable deposit of pottery—in relation to the total area involved, the largest amount of pottery that I remember having to deal with since Birdoswald in 1929.

A detailed account of the structural evidence, and its interpretation, must wait until the re-examination of site XI has been completed (as it is to be hoped that the DUEC may be able to do within the next year or two); but in the

meantime it may be noted that the bulk of the deposit of pottery is clearly of late second-century date, and its general character and condition left us in no doubt that it represents the destruction of A.D. 197 and the Severan clearing up of the site, closely matching deposits into which our excavations in earlier years had brought us. It was a delightful coincidence that it should be found while two important by-products of the DUEC's work at Corstopitum were passing through the press—namely, the book on *Central Gaulish Potters*, conceived by the late J. A. Stanfield and completed under my direction by Miss Grace Simpson and Mr. Wilfred Dodds (both of whom began their special study of figured samian in the DUEC hut on the site), and Mr. Gillam's important paper on Roman coarse pottery in the north of Britain (AA4 XXXV 180-251). The total quantity of material was so great that there was never any prospect of a complete report on it being ready for this volume of *Archæologia Aeliana*, but by intensive work, in which Mr. Dodds has played an invaluable part, it has been possible to produce a first instalment, here offered as *hors d'oeuvres* to the main meal, reserved for a later report. It so happens that Mr. Gillam's other commitments have prevented him from sharing in the study of the finds, which has been done mainly in the department of Archæology in Durham, where most of them will have to remain until sorting and drawing can be completed.

In selecting pieces for illustration and discussion in this first instalment, it has seemed best to concentrate on two particular categories: (a) pieces which help to demonstrate the character of the main deposit, particularly such of them as come from the destruction level above which the Severan builders began to erect site XI, and (b) the group of jugs or flagons (the first category in Mr. Gillam's type-series). It will be convenient, however, to insert first of all a report on some of the figured samian, using it to show how the publication of *Central Gaulish Potters* allows economy of description in dealing with Lezoux ware; then I deal with the jugs,

on which the deposit has yielded a very useful supplement to the late second-century harvest from Corstopitum; finally, various other vessels, of interest either typologically or from their stratification.

Mr. Dodds has made all the drawings, has drafted most of the descriptions of individual pieces, and has undertaken much of the searching for parallels; but I take responsibility for the report in its final form.

(1) *Figured samian* (fig. 2). Very little figured samian was found, most of it obviously scattered rubbish and not from vessels broken *in situ*; seven items have been chosen for publication, either because of their findspots or for their intrinsic interest. Reference to *Central Gaulish Potters* (cited as *CGP*) is presupposed in the description of the Lezoux vessels, nos. 3-7. All are of Dragendorff's form 37.

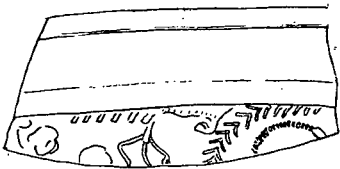
1. Two conjoined pieces of a South Gaulish bowl (ER-N top-soil and NR-1 low level); the ovolo and upper part of the decoration have been removed by the bowl-finisher's carelessness. Style of GERMANVS, c. A.D. 80.

2. Two pieces of a slightly larger South Gaulish bowl (NR-3 rubbish-pit and Courtyard NE); decoration closed below by straight wreath of chevrons in series, above which were the familiar three-legged stags confronted, popular with many Flavian potters: c. A.D. 90.

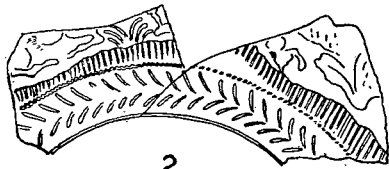
3. Two pieces from a large bowl (NR-1 and ER-N), attributable to CINNAMVS (*CGP* 263ff.—conceivably from the same mould as the Wroxeter bowl, pl. 158, 19, which shows the advertisement-stamp CINNAMI retrograde in one panel, and the stamp of the mould-maker MERCATOR below the decoration).

4. Two large pieces from a medium-sized bowl (NR-2 and ER-N); winding-scroll pattern, with leaves in the upper cavities and a seated shepherd piping (O. 617A) in the lower. The leaf-tips in the field recall the style of SACER (*CGP* 161ff.), but a more likely attribution would be to CINNAMVS; the figure-type has not been noted on a signed piece. Search through the many boxes of the latter potter's work at Corstopitum may well yield further pieces of the same bowl (cf. nos. 6 and 7 below).

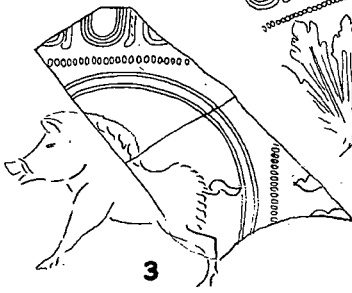
5. Three conjoined fragments (NR-0, ER-N and Courtyard NE), showing the characteristic "hammer-tongued" ovolo with beadrow below of LAXTVCISSA (*CGP* 184ff., and esp. fig. 27, 1).



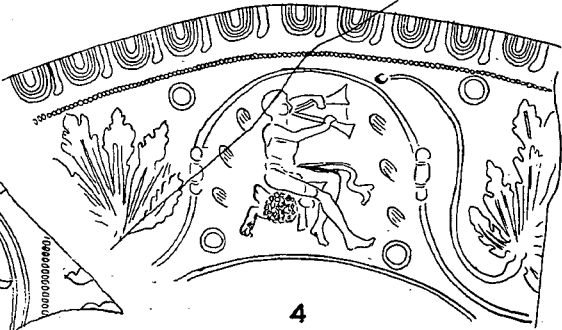
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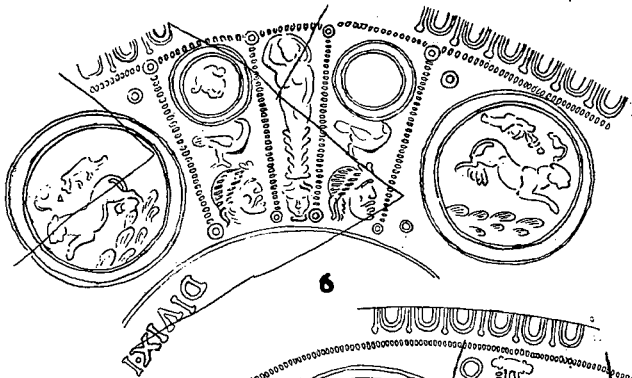
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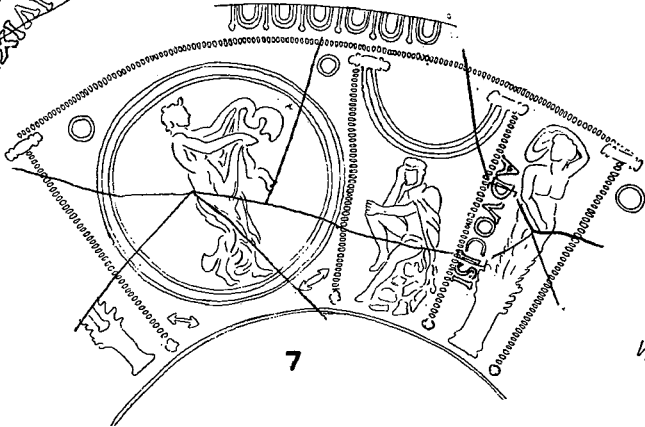
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W.D.

FIG. 2. FIGURED SAMIAN (1/2).

6. Nine pieces from a small bowl (NR-0 six, pre-1940 three); stamp of DIVIXTVS below the decoration (cf. *CGP* 207ff.; additions to his repertoire of figure-types are the *backward-looking bird*, O. 2252=D. 1019, and the *small mask to front*, O. 1262—otherwise style and decorative details all proclaim this potter, even if part of his stamp were not visible).

7. Four pieces from a larger bowl (NR-2 two, pre-1940 two); one piece, found in the north-east portion of site XI in 1936, was drawn by Stanfield and is illustrated in *CGP*, pl. 112, 13: the new discoveries give the beginning of the potter's name-stamp and his normal ovolo for all but very large bowls (*CGP*, fig. 33, 2), but do not quite enable us to complete the scheme of decoration.

The bowl by DIVIXTVS might well come from the final occupation of the site before the destruction of A.D. 197 and the subsequent Severan building, to judge by the large amount of it found—and by the regularity with which this potter's wares turn up in that destruction level at Corstopitum. The ADVOCISVS bowl is typologically rather earlier, but could equally well have been left where broken (rather than brought here for tipping); disturbance by pre-war levelling makes a confident decision impossible.

(2) *Jugs* (fig. 3). A noteworthy feature of the destruction level was the number of jugs that it yielded, including several so nearly complete that there could be no doubt that they had been broken *in situ*. All those illustrated here can be assigned with confidence to the closing years of the second century, for which they furnish a very interesting group of types; note in particular the virtual disappearance of the "ring-neck" type, represented only by no. 4 and, in vestigial form, no. 6. Nos. 1-7 are all in normal fabrics but no. 8 is in a coarse ware, and has therefore been placed in a separate frame.

1. Orange-buff jug, handle broken off (many pieces, some from NR-0, some from ER-N, all assignable to the destruction level); closest to Gillam type 15, but with a rather simpler rim-section.

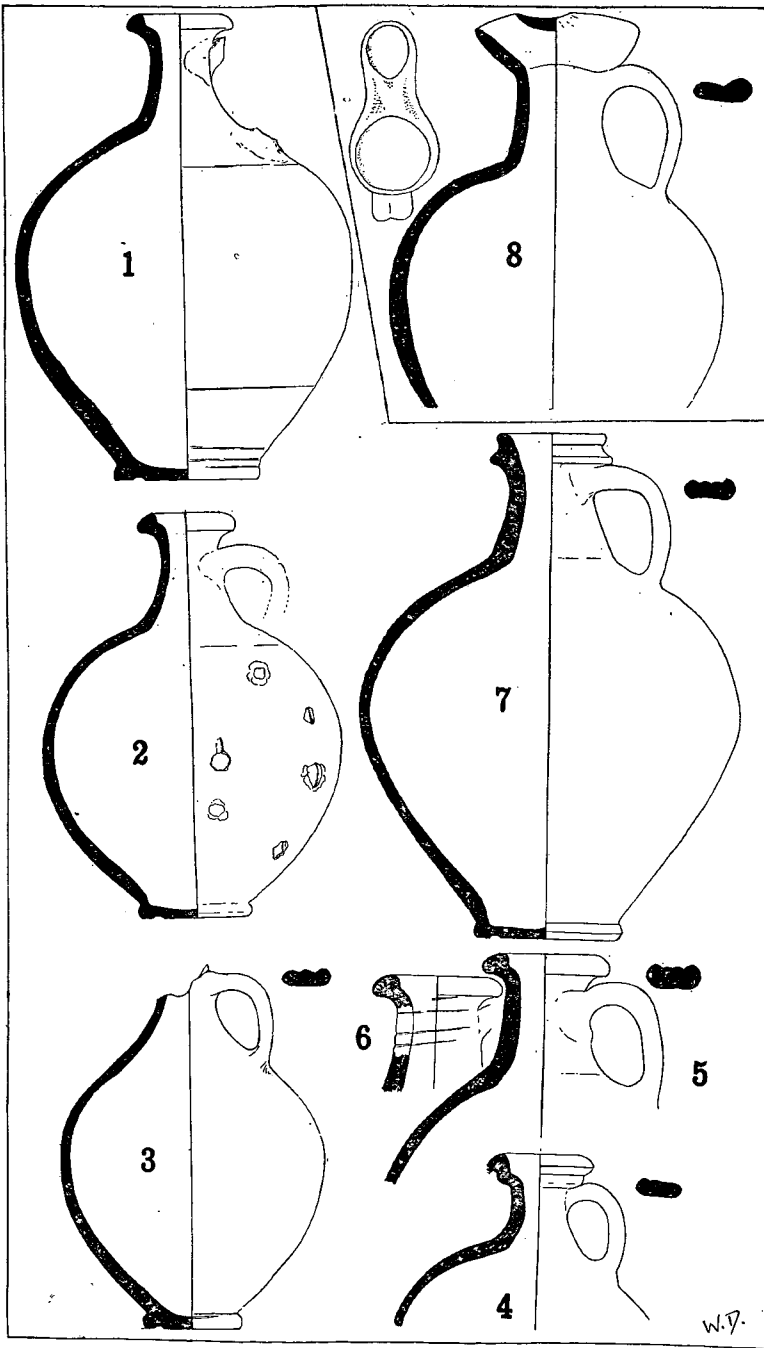


FIG. 3. JUGS OR FLAGONS (4)

2. Smaller jug of the same type and in similar fabric (NR-0, many pieces making up more than half of the jug); several series of evenly-spaced holes have been cut in its body, for what purpose does not appear.

3. All but the rim of an elegant jug in whitish ware with matt surface and traces of a very thin slip (ER-N, some 30 pieces); closest to Gillam type 15, but not represented in his series.

4. Upper half of a jug in smooth whitish ware, not unlike pipeclay (ER-N, probably from the same jug as fragments of similar ware from NR-0 and NR-1); still in the ring-neck tradition, closest to Gillam type 8.

5. Upper part of a jug of the same general type as nos. 1 and 2 but with a less slender neck, dark buff ware (NR-0).

6. Much of an almost identical jug (neck only illustrated—NR-0 and NR-1, many conjoined pieces), showing vestigial rings; originally in similar fabric but covered with cream slip, and partly burnt slate-grey.

7. Large jug in whitish clay with a yellowish surface tinge, polished (NR-0 and NR-1, more than 50 pieces, mainly conjoining); Gillam type 17.

8. Most of a pinch-neck jug in rather coarse blue-grey fabric (NR-1, close to the Severan south wall, the foundation-trench for which has presumably removed its base); the Birrens jug, Gillam type 61, is in the same general style and of the same period, but in an entirely different fabric and tradition.

It will be seen that the 1957 deposit has already yielded, amongst its jugs, some useful additions to Mr. Gillam's type-series; comparison with the material from the similar deposit examined in 1947 (AA4 XXVIII 177ff.) will emphasize that in this case there is a larger proportion of jugs represented, and the complete sections emphasize that the vessels were broken where our excavations found them.

(3) *Miscellaneous types* (fig. 4). One vessel, no. 9, comes from the pre-Hadrianic occupation of the site; the remainder belong to the destruction level of A.D. 197, most of them incidentally illustrating the unity of the deposit into which the foundations of the Severan lay-out were dug.

9. Much of a characteristic Trajanic cooking-pot (NR-3, from a small pit partly cut away by a later rubbish-pit); cf. Chester-

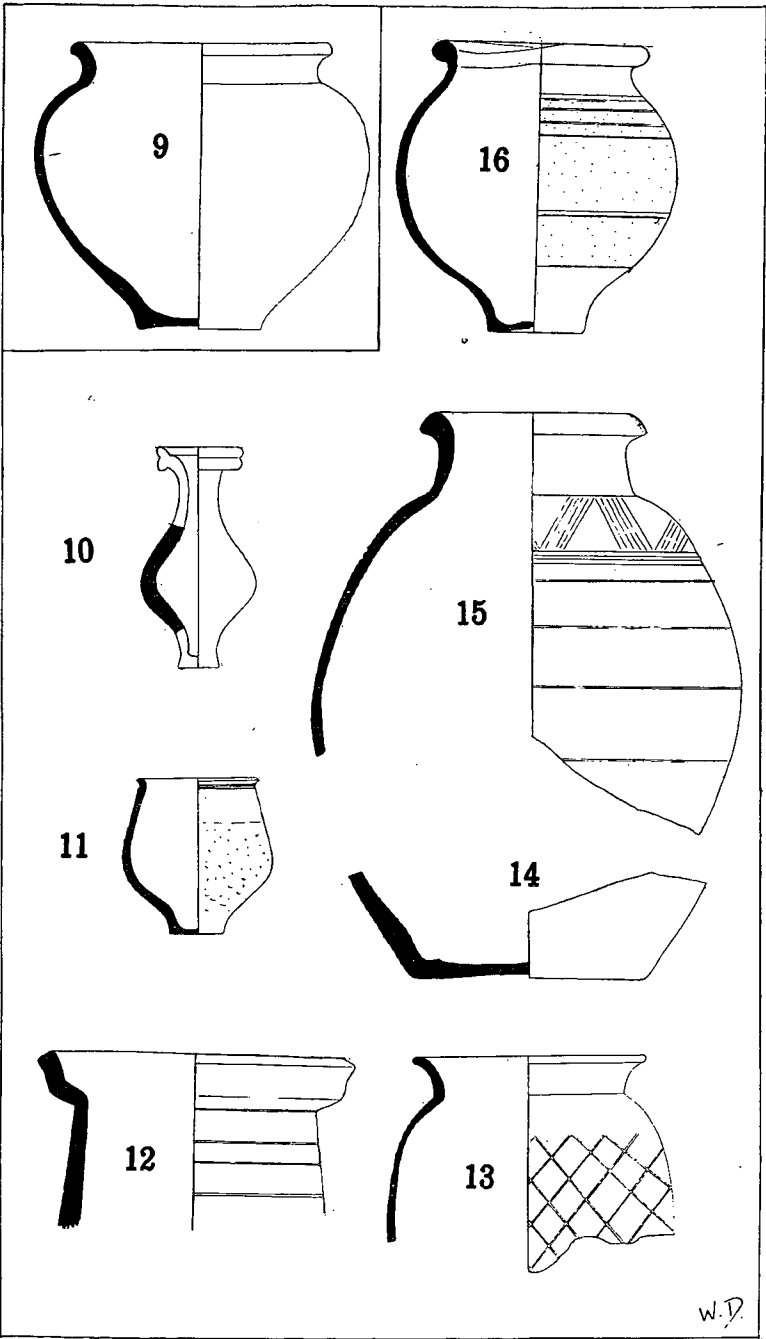


FIG. 4. MISCELLANEOUS VESSELS (4).

holm no. 26 (AA4 XV 230 and fig. 3) in a similar fabric—dark grey surface, paler grey in fracture. Nearest to Gillam type 106 (=Corstopitum 1911, no. 3), which however has an unusual base; that of the present vessel is of the type usually met with in that period.

10. Eight pieces conjoined of a flask in whitish clay (NR-0 and NR-1), restored from Gillam type 38 and in keeping with the dating assigned to that type (A.D. 150-220).

11. Roughcast beaker, light pinkish buff fabric (NR-0, more than half the vessel survives); Gillam type 74/75, where the lower limits (set at 160 and 180 respectively) seem definitely too early.

12. Three pieces conjoined from an unusual vessel to which no parallel has yet been found (NR-0 and NR-1): dark grey, lighter in fracture and with a rather matt surface, faintly scored horizontal lines round the body.

13. Upper half of a black fumed cooking-pot (NR-0, many pieces conjoined), Gillam type 138 (assigned to 180-250). From its findspot it was evident that the lower half of the pot had been removed at the digging of the foundation-trench for the east wall of the Severan building.

14, 15. Much of one large narrow-mouthed jar—unless the base belongs to an almost identical specimen (NR-0 and NR-1, many pieces conjoining); grey self-coloured fabric, with lightly burnished lines round the belly and in a broad chevron pattern on the shoulder. Closest to Gillam type 31: large jars are seldom found sufficiently complete for drawings of them to be made, except when cemeteries are being excavated; hence the scarcity of parallels.

16. Complete jar, made up from several dozen pieces (NR-1); steel-grey fabric, lightly burnished above and below a central matt band with horizontal lines scored across it; a suggestion of mica in the clay. We have found no close parallel to this interesting vessel, which seems to be a hybrid between Gillam type 70, in its footstand and fabric, and a normal jar; the rim-section, in any case unusual, has been distorted badly by sagging.

(4) *Cooking-pots* (fig. 5). A special note is called for on cooking-pots, in supplementation of Mr. Gillam's discussion of his types 115 onwards which include, of set purpose, vessels undoubtedly used habitually for cooking which do not, however, qualify for inclusion under the term first standardized and defined by F. G. Simpson in his report

on the pottery from the Poltross Burn milecastle (CW2 XI 450):

“The rim appears to have been finished on the wheel, but the vessels do not show the internal grooving common to ordinary wheel-made vessels. The base, which is quite plain, and the lower part of the body, have a uniform thickness, usually less than $\frac{3}{8}$ inch.”

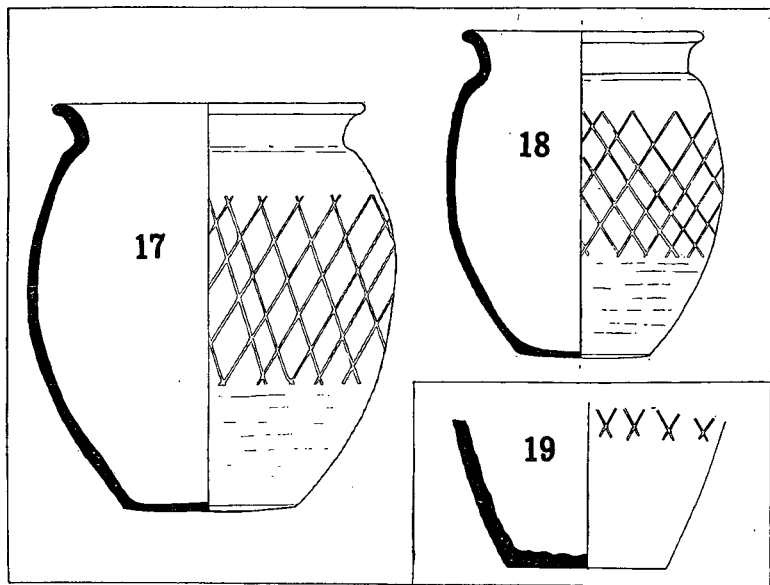


FIG. 5. "SPECIAL COOKING-POTS", AND JAR-BASE ($\frac{1}{2}$).

Two features, that is to say, characterize the "special cooking-pot", as it may be convenient to term it; its uniform thinness (as we may put it) would allow its contents to be cooked more quickly and would perhaps give it a longer life than a vessel of varying thickness; and the lack of internal grooves makes it all the harder to find joins when one is sorting a mass of fragments. This last point will explain why complete sections, from rim to base, are so seldom illustrated for such cooking-pots: few of us have enough

leisure, even if we have the patience, to find sufficient joins to build up a section. But the 1957 deposit has already yielded several examples, two of which are illustrated here as samples of the type as it had developed by the close of the second century:

17. Large size (NR-1 and NR-2); grey fumed ware, with the customary lattice-pattern scored on the body, but without the wavy line on the exterior of the neck which is commonest on vessels of the second and third quarters of the second century, but occurs sporadically in third-century deposits (AA4 XV 270). Compare Gillam type 135, illustrated by an incomplete specimen from the contemporary deposit north of the granaries.

18. Smaller size (NR-0); originally black fumed ware, mainly now light grey as the result of much burning. Note the high rim, characteristic of the early third century (AA4 XV 270) but already appearing before the close of the second, cf. Gillam type 133.

19. By contrast, I illustrate the lower part of a wholly wheel-made jar (on Simpson's classification), with well marked internal wheel-marks giving an undulating or corrugated effect, and a base of uneven thickness.

It has not yet been possible to estimate the total number of "special cooking-pots" in the destruction level, but it was very considerable; and a great deal more patient sorting will be needed before the remainder of the cooking-pots or jars can be reported on in satisfactory detail; for one thing, the deposit is known to continue for some distance southwards, into the northern part of the E. range—and the excavations of July and August 1958, in that area, have added substantially to the material available when this report was communicated to the Society.

(5) *A face-jar* (fig. 6). Perhaps the most interesting vessel in the whole deposit was the face-jar here illustrated as no. 20. Only a small portion of it was found, close to the unfinished Severan partition-wall dividing NR-1 from NR-0, the foundation-trench for which perhaps dug away the rest of the vessel—unless, indeed, it was found in earlier excava-

tions, and awaits re-discovery in the reserve collection of the Corstopitum museum.

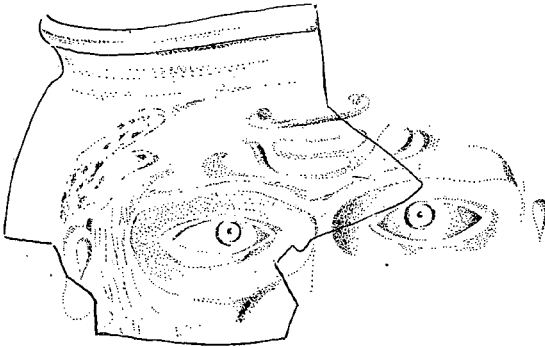


FIG. 6. PORTION OF FACE-JAR (1/2).

20. Grey ware, fumed and polished, with part of a large and unusually lifelike face, close below the rim of the jar; it has been rendered by a more than usually competent artist.

* * *

The work was done as part of the basic DUEC programme, and many people took a share in it; here I will content myself with special acknowledgements to Dr. Gilbert Larwood, who undertook the examination and recording of the structural sequences and problems first presented in NR-1 and NR-0 in 1957, and followed up by the work of July 1958: the full report on the structure of site XI-will, I hope, be mainly contributed by him.

