

XI.—ROMAN COINS AND POTTERS' STAMPS FROM HALTON CHESTERS.

BY MICHAEL G. JARRETT.

It is most unlikely that there will ever be a comprehensive publication of all the pottery found at Halton Chesters in 1955-1958. A brief account of the sherds significant for the dating of the defences has already been given.¹ The report on potters' stamps and coins (which have become subjects of study in themselves) may be of interest to those members of the Society who are not familiar with excavations in showing what a small proportion of archaeological material is of value in dating the later levels on a site which was occupied over a long period.

My thanks are due to Mrs. K. F. Hartley for the note on the two mortarium stamps and to Professor Eric Birley and Dr. J. P. C. Kent for some assistance with the Samian stamps and coins respectively. The report on finds will be completed by a paper on the figured Samian which Professor Birley hopes to contribute to a future volume of *Archæologia Aeliana*.

Before passing to the main body of this report, I may perhaps be permitted to mention the discovery of a dress fastener similar to Mr. J. P. Gillam's type A, which "lasted to the last quarter of the first century";² its presence at Halton Chesters, a fort which was not occupied before A.D. 124, indicates that the type survived in use until at least the reign of Hadrian, though this does not invalidate Mr. Gillam's main point that this is basically a pre-Roman type which did not continue long into the Roman period.

¹ AA⁴, xxxvii, 188-189.

² Roman and Native in North Britain (ed. I. A. Richmond), pp. 79-80.

COINS.

Mr. J. H. Corbitt compiled a list of the coins found in 1956-1957 which was incorporated in the report in the last volume of *Archæologia Aeliana*.³ I have continued his numbering in this list of coins found in 1958, and have referred to the three coins in his list which were found in stratified deposits. It will be noticed at once that most of the coins were found in deposits of far later date than their minting, and consequently were of little or no value for dating purposes.

A. *In the material used to fill in the Hadrianic ditch in the early years of the third century.*

16. HADRIAN. Denarius. 138-139 ?

Obv.: HADRIANVS [AVGV]STVS PP

Rev.: TRANQVILLITAS AVG COS III

RIC 367, obverse type f.

To this coin must be added number 1 (Domitian) from a similar level.

B. *In the make-up below a clay floor dated by pottery to the reconstruction of A.D. 296.*

17. ANTONINUS PIUS. Sestertius. 140-144.

Obv.: ANTONINVS AVG PIVS PP TR P COS III

Rev.: SALVS AVG S C

RIC 635, obverse type b.

18. FAUSTINA I. Dupondius. After 141.

Obv.: [D]IVA [FAVSTINA]

Rev.: *Illegible*, apart from the s of s c.

19. GETA Plated denarius. 209-212.

Obv.: [SEP] T GETA []

Rev.: [] COS II []

Only a fragment of the coin survives and it is impossible to identify the reverse type.

To these three coins should be added numbers 8 (Faustina I) and 9 (Faustina II) from a similar level.

³ AA⁴, xxxvii, 189-190.

C. Above the clay floor of 296 and below a later re-laying of it, assignable to some date before 367.

20. DOMITIAN. As. 81-96.
Illegible, but identifiable from the bust.
21. ANTONINUS PIUS. Denarius. After 161.
Obv.: DIVVS ANTONINVS
Rev.: DIVO PIO
RIC Marcus 442.
22. CARACALLA. Plated denarius. After 211.
Obv.: ANTONINVS PIVS AVG B[RIT]
Rev.: VOTA SVSCEPTA []
No *vota suscepta* type is recorded for this obverse in RIC.
23. SEVERUS ALEXANDER. Dupondius. 222-235.
Obv.: M[]EV[]
Rev.: []AVG []
24. ALLECTUS. Antoninianus. 293-296.
Obv.: [IMP C A]LLECTVS P.F AV[G]
Rev.: ORIE[N]S AV[G] Mint-mark: $\frac{S}{P}$
RIC 26. ML

D. Unstratified.

25. TITUS. Denarius. January-June 80.
Obv.: [IMP TIT]VS CAES VESP[ASIAN AVG PM]
Rev.: *Illegible*; but the type is clearly an elephant.
RIC 22a.
26. ANTONINUS PIUS. As. 138-161.
Identifiable by portrait.
27. ANTONINUS PIUS. Dupondius. 138-161.
Obv.: []AVG[]
Rev.: []NIA[] S C
This is clearly not Britannia; the type is a standing figure 1., with a staff or spear in left hand and right hand extended. The coin has been clipped and is badly worn on rev.
28. FAUSTINA I. Sestertius. After 138.
Illegible, but identifiable by portrait.
29. SEVERUS ALEXANDER Base denarius. 222-235.
The coin is badly corroded and illegible; the portrait can just be recognized.
30. Silver-washed denarius Third century.
Obv.: *Illegible and unidentifiable*.
Rev.: *Illegible*; the type is probably PAX.

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| 31. CLAUDIUS II. | Radiate (illegible). | 268-270. |
| 32. TETRICUS II. | Radiate (illegible). | 270-274. |
| 33. | Illegible radiate, not barbarous. | Late third century. |
| 34-37. | Three barbarous radiates and another radiate which is probably barbarous. | Late third century. |
| 38. CONSTANTINE I. | Illegible bronze. | 308-337. |
| 39-40. | Two small and badly corroded coins of the house of Constantine. | Fourth century. |

STAMPS ON PLAIN SAMIAN.

The dating of Oswald⁴ has been accepted throughout this list. It includes two pieces stamped by Scoplus, a potter whose production appears to have been small; both were made by the same stamp, and were probably part of the same consignment for the British market.

A. *In demolition deposit of c. 197.*

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|-------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. ALBINIOF | Dr. 31 | Albinus of Lezoux | Trajanic-Antonine |
|-------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|

B. *In material used to level rampart backing, c. 296.*

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|-------------|--------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2. CINT[| Dr. 31 | Cintusimus (ii) of Lezoux | Hadrianic-Antonine ⁵ |
| 3. MASV.ETI | Dr. 33 | Mansuetus of Lezoux | Hadrianic-Antonine |
| 4. PRIMNI.M | Dr. 31 | Primanus of Lezoux | Trajanic-Antonine |
| 5. PRIVATIM | Dr. 33 | Privatus of Lezoux | Trajanic-Hadrianic |

C. *In the make-up below a clay floor assignable to the reconstruction of 296.*

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|-----------|--------|------------|
| 6. NO[| Dr. 31 | Norus ? ? |
| 7. PATER[| Dr. 31 | Paternus ? |

D. *Above the clay floor of 296 and below a later re-laying of it assignable to a date before 367.*

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|---------------|--------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 8. MACR.INIM | Dr. 31 | Macrinus of Lezoux | Hadrianic-Antonine |
| 9. SCOP[LL.M] | Dr. 33 | Scoplus of Lezoux | Hadrianic-Antonine |
| 10. []SSAM | Dr. 31 | | |

⁴ In his *Index of Potters' Stamps on Terra Sigillata*.

⁵ This piece has on the underside of the base a graffito reading []EA[].

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|-------------------------|--------|--|--------------------------------|
| 11. []TIVI | Dr. 33 | | |
| 12. Rosette | Dr. 31 | On East Gaulish fabric | Probably Antonine ⁶ |
| E. <i>Unstratified.</i> | | | |
| 13. ANI[| Dr. 31 | | |
| 14. CARVSSA | Dr. 33 | Carussa of Lezoux | Domitianic-Antonine |
| 15. MARTII.OF | Dr. 33 | Martius of Lezoux | Domitianic-Antonine |
| 16. PISTILI | Dr. 33 | Pistilis of Lezoux | |
| 17. SACRILLI | Dr. 33 | Sacrillus of Lezoux | Antonine |
| 18. SCOPLI.M | Dr. 33 | Scopulus of Lezoux (cf. no. 9) | Hadrianic-Antonine |
| 19. []ILLIO | Dr. 31 | | |
| 20. NVCH.V.O | Dr. 33 | This is a stamp not previously recorded. The fabric of the piece suggests a Lezoux potter. | |

While it will be noted that virtually no second-century levels have been excavated at Halton Chesters in the period under review, it is clear that a large amount of second-century pottery (not only Samian ware) got into deposits of much later date. This is a factor which must be reckoned with on any excavation of a site occupied over a long period; most of the pottery in any one group will probably not belong to the date of deposit. This is well illustrated by the largest group of pottery recovered at Halton in recent years.

This is the group here designated B; it overlay the clay rampart backing of the Severan extension to the fort, and was mixed in with the rubbish which had been used to level off that rampart backing in order to erect a building immediately behind the fort wall. Less than ten per cent of the pottery in this group was demonstrably of third-century date, though one sherd can hardly have been earlier than 280; the rest was from the second century. This well illustrates one of the dangers of archæology; in hardly any circumstances (other than those of a virgin site) will pottery or coins give a precise dating. In the case quoted the *terminus post quem*

⁶ Cf. Oswald and Pryce, *Introduction to the Study of Terra Sigillata*, p. 47.

was c. 280 (the date of first emergence of the latest identifiable vessel in the group); our knowledge of the vicissitudes of Hadrian's Wall suggests most strongly that in fact the building behind the fort wall is to be dated to 296 or soon afterwards, when we know that the Wall was being rebuilt by Constantius Chlorus.

MORTARIUM STAMPS.

BY KATHARINE F. HARTLEY.

1. Mortarium in hard, slightly sandy, greyish buff fabric with orange-buff surface showing signs of burning; a few small black grits survive.

The stamp is incompletely impressed, but may be restored with certainty as CAMVLAC/VS FECIT, from one of the four dies known to have been used by this potter, whose stamps are rarely completely impressed and often difficult to read. The distribution, as known at present, is:

- (a) CAMVLAC/VS FECIT in small letters: *Halton Chesters* and "near Cambridge (dredged from the Cam)".
- (b) CAMVL.../CVS FEC.. in larger letters with the first half of the stamp in the lower line: *Verulamium*.
- (c) CAMVLA... with separate counterstamp FECIT: *London (L.M.)*.
- (d) CAMVLACVS, with reversed L, again with a separate counterstamp: *Wroxeter (3)*.

The similarity of the lettering in these stamps leaves little room for doubt that all are the work of one potter even though the rim forms vary considerably.

Apart from the *Halton* stamp the only dating evidence comes from *Wroxeter*, where the stamps were found in deposits dated c. 80-110 and 80-120 by *Bushe-Fox*. The rim-forms and the fabrics used suggest that the potter's activity

fell predominantly in the second century. A Trajanic-Hadrianic dating may be suggested tentatively, with the Halton piece presumably a late product. His kilns were perhaps in the Hertfordshire/Bedfordshire area, since his fabric and rim-shapes are closely paralleled by those of VEDIACVS, whose products are largely confined to that region.



FIG. 1. MORTARIUM STAMPS FROM HALTON CHESTERS. $\frac{1}{1}$

2. Mortarium in buff fabric; large to medium-sized red and grey trituration grit.

Two very faint stamps, close together, reading SETIBO, are incomplete impressions from the only known die of the potter SETIBOGIVS. Other stamps of his have been found at Adel, near Leeds, Catterick and at a kiln-site at Rossington Bridge near Doncaster (2). The stamp from Catterick and one of those from Rossington Bridge are on mortaria which are also stamped by the well-known potter SARRVS. This combination of stamps indicates a close association, and since there are in all only 5 known stamps of SETIBOGIVS and

74 of SARRVS it is reasonable to suppose that the association was short-lived.

Little can be deduced about SETIBOGIVS from his recorded work, but the known facts about SARRVS are clearly relevant. Fabric and distribution alike show beyond reasonable doubt that SARRVS began work in the Midlands (Hartshill, Warks., is the site usually suggested, *Proc. Soc. Ant. Lond.*, 2nd Ser., XVI, p. 405, though the evidence is not conclusive). Later he appears to have begun production at Rossington Bridge where 14 of his stamps, some on wasters, have been found. Presumably SETIBOGIVS worked there, too, though there is not yet sufficient evidence to determine whether he had worked in the Midlands previously. However, the Halton Chesters mortarium is in a fabric clearly different from the other recorded ones, and could be matched with known Midland products.

The mortaria stamped jointly with SARRVS make an Antonine date for SETIBOGIVS certain, since 7 stamps of SARRVS have been found at sites on the Antonine Wall. Any attempt at a closer dating necessarily involves subjective factors, though c. 155-175 covers the possible range.