

XV. THE ROMAN FORT AT EBCHESTER, COUNTY DURHAM.

BY MICHAEL G. JARRETT.

Abbreviations used in this paper :

- AA1-4—Archæologia Aeliana, first to fourth series.
AE—L'Année Épigraphique.
AJ—Archæological Journal.
Arch. Camb.—Archæologia Cambrensis.
EE—Ephemeris Epigraphica.
Gillam—J. P. Gillam, *Types of Roman Coarse Pottery Vessels in Northern Britain*, in AA4, xxxv (1957), pp. 180-251.
ILS—H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (1892-1916).
It. Rom.—Itineraria Romana, edited O. Cuntz, Leipzig, 1929.
JRS—Journal of Roman Studies.
ND—*Notitia Dignitatum*, edited O. Seeck, Berlin, 1876.
PSAN—Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne.
PSAS—Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.
Roman numerals indicate volumes of *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*.

1. INTRODUCTION.

In October and November 1959 the author supervised excavations at Ebchester on behalf of the Ministry of Works. The report on these excavations forms the subject of part seven of this paper. Publication of that report seemed an ideal opportunity to undertake a comprehensive survey of what is known of the site. Nothing of significance about Ebchester has been published since a summary by R. C.

Bosanquet in 1927,¹ despite the fact that a considerable amount of excavation has taken place since that date. In 1936 an exploratory excavation was carried out by Dr. K. A. Steer, in the course of work for a doctoral thesis on "The Archæology of Roman Durham".² Publication of his thesis was prevented by the outbreak of war in 1939, and no detailed report of the excavations has been printed. He has kindly given permission for the use of his thesis as a basis for part five of this paper; it has also proved of considerable assistance in compiling part four. In addition Dr. Steer has allowed the use of his drawings for figures 1-4; these were made in 1936 to illustrate his thesis, and have not been altered. Further excavations took place in 1958-9, and the excavators, Messrs. M. M. Allison, E. Downs and A. H. Reed of Consett, have been kind enough to provide notes and drawings which form the basis of part six of this paper.

The author's thanks are due to these gentlemen, and to Professor Eric Birley, who has given substantial assistance in the preparation of this report; to Mr. J. P. Gillam, who has assisted with the preparation of the reports on coarse pottery; and to Mrs. K. F. Hartley, who has contributed a note on the *mortarium* stamp found in 1958.

The fort at Ebchester stands on a narrow terrace on the steep southern side of the Derwent valley, between the 250- and 300-foot contours. The modern road from Lanchester, following the line of Dere Street closely, comes down a long incline which is in places as steep as 1 in 8. The fort lies some 200 yards east of Dere Street. It is protected on the south and west by the ravine of the Ebchester Burn; to the north the ground falls away steeply to the Derwent. Most of the site has been obliterated by the church, houses and gardens of the modern village, though the line of the defences can be traced in several places.

It is a small fort, some 400 feet square, with a total acreage of about 3.67. We shall see that even this small

¹ PSAN4, iii, pp. 100-101.

² His thesis may be consulted in the University Library, Durham.

area was restricted by an extremely wide clay rampart which reduced the area available for use to about 2.3 acres. By contrast Gelligaer (Glamorgan) was almost exactly the same size as Ebchester, but had 2.9 acres of available space.³ It must have proved extremely difficult to fit even a *cohors quingenaria peditata* (an infantry battalion five hundred strong, the smallest normal unit in the Roman army) into the fort.

2. THE ROMAN NAME.

None of the inscriptions from Ebchester gives any indication of the Roman name of the site, nor is it recorded in the Ravenna Cosmography.⁴ It is clearly to be equated with the *Vindomora* of the Antonine Itinerary, nine miles beyond Corbridge on the road south and nineteen miles from Binchester.⁵

Since *Vindomora* is not recorded in the *Notitia Dignitatum* one might think that there was no problem over its name. But J. Hodgson Hinde suggested that while *Vindomora* was the river crossing (probably with a *mansio*; Hodgson Hinde mentions the discovery of an altar there), the fort quarter of a mile downstream from the bridge over the Derwent might have been the *Derventio* of *ND Occ. xl, 31*.⁶ *Derventio*, garrisoned by the *numerus supervenientium Petueriensium*, is the last place recorded in the command of the *dux Britanniarum* before the sub-section *per lineam valli*; this might be thought to suggest that it was close to Hadrian's Wall. But it need mean nothing of the sort, for *Occ. xl* is clearly in no very logical order. Giving the accepted modern equivalents the places immediately preceding *Derventio* in the list are South Shields, UNKNOWN (*Dicti*), Chester-le-Street,

³ V. E. Nash-Williams, *The Roman Frontier in Wales* (1954), p. 74.

⁴ Cf. I. A. Richmond and O. G. S. Crawford, *The British Section of the Ravenna Cosmography*, in *Archæologia*, xciii (1949), pp. 1ff.

⁵ *It. Rom.*, I, p. 71; cf. J. Horsley, *Britannia Romana* (1732), p. 398.

⁶ AA1, iv, p. 266.

Bowes, Brough, Brougham, Greta Bridge ?, Piercebridge ?, and Lanchester.

There were at least three places in Roman Britain known as *Derventio*, Littlechester,⁷ Malton⁸ and Papcastle;⁹ whether the name also applied to Ebchester we cannot now say, though a strong case can be made out for supposing the *Derventio* of the *Notitia* to be Malton rather than Ebchester. To accept this does not mean that Ebchester was not occupied when the *Notitia* was compiled; this document does not give a list of all forts in northern Britain occupied at any one date, and it certainly bears little resemblance to a list of the forts known to have been occupied after the reconstruction of Count Theodosius in A.D. 369-370.

3. THE GARRISON.

Little is known of the garrison of Ebchester, though there is the usual evidence of legionary building. To the legions we should probably ascribe most of the centurial stones found at the site. These, with the stamped tile of *legio VI Victrix*, indicate no more than building operations by legionary craftsmen.¹⁰ In addition we have an altar which refers to COH III BR ANTONINIA[NA]¹¹ and a tile with the stamp [CO]H I BR.¹² The former, as R. C. Bosanquet showed,¹³ must indicate that *cohors IV Breucorum* was the garrison of Ebchester under Caracalla or Elagabalus; it presumably remained there throughout the third century and until Ebchester received a new-style unit in the fourth century. For whether or not we accept the identification of Ebchester with the *Derventio* of *ND Occ. xl*, a study of that section of the *Notitia* reveals that new-style units were favoured for the forts of Yorkshire

⁷ *Archæologia*, xciii, pp. 9, 31.

⁸ *It. Rom.*, I, p. 71.

⁹ *Archæologia*, xciii, pp. 10, 31.

¹⁰ *EE*, vii, 1122 a.

¹¹ *VII*, 458.

¹² *VII*, 1229.

¹³ *PSAN4*, iii, p. 101.

and County Durham while on Hadrian's Wall the old cohorts and *alae* remained in garrison.¹⁴

The identification of *coh I Br.* is rather more difficult. It might be *cohors I Britannica* or a first cohort of Breuci, Brittones, Britanni or Bracaraugustani. Of these, *cohors I Britannica* was in Pannonia in 80-85, in Upper Moesia in 105, in Dacia in 110 and probably in Dacia Porolissensis in 159.¹⁵ Nothing is known of a *cohors I Britanorum*, though its existence is proved by the records of second and third cohorts; both were on the Danube,¹⁶ and it is likely that the whole series was raised for service on that frontier. At least four series of *cohortes Brittonum* are known, but all the first cohorts can be shown to have served on the Danube.¹⁷ There was only one *cohors I Breucorum*. Its movements have been analysed by E. Stein,¹⁸ who suggests that in the Julio-Claudian period it was in the east, under Vespasian in Lower Germany, and from c. A.D. 90 at Pfünz in Raetia. It is recorded in Raetian *diplomata* for the period 107-166.¹⁹ This leaves no time for service in Britain, since a transfer from Raetia after 166 is most unlikely, in view of the military situation in that province.

It seems probable therefore that the unit stationed at Ebchester was a first cohort of Bracaraugustani. Apart from the Ebchester tile, only one such unit is known, and that was stationed in Dalmatia, moving to Lower Moesia at some time during the Flavian period.²⁰

However it is clear from *diplomata* that there were at least

¹⁴ Assuming that we regard the whole of *Occ. xl* as being homogeneous and datable to the late fourth or early fifth century; there is much to be said for the view, stated in detail by Mr. J. P. Gillam (CW2, xlix (1949), pp. 38ff.), that the sub-section dealing with the Wall and with its hinterland in the west is of a much earlier date than the rest of *Occ. xl*.

¹⁵ XVI, 26; 31; 49; 57; 110.

¹⁶ III, 8074, 11a; XVI, 55, 117, 121, 125.

¹⁷ XVI, 31, 54, 110; ILS, 2524; AE, 1901, 46; AE, 1894, 112.

¹⁸ *Die Kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper im römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat* (Vienna 1932), pp. 173-176.

¹⁹ XVI, 55, 117, 121.

²⁰ Cf. C. Patsch, *Zur Geschichte und Topographie von Narona*; *Schriften der Balkancommission*, vol. V (Vienna, 1907), pp. 74-77.

two and probably three series of cohorts of Bracaraugustani. A third cohort is recorded on a *diploma* for Syria Palaestina for 139;²¹ another occurs on Raetian *diplomata* for the period 107-166.²² While it could have been removed from Raetia in about 132 for Hadrian's Jewish War, and have returned there c. 140, this is not likely; far more probably these units are entirely separate. The same applied to the other third cohort, which is recorded on British *diplomata* for 103-146;²³ it could have been in Palestine in 139, but this is most improbable.

In any case we have certainly two series of cohorts of Bracaraugustani, and only one first cohort which can be assigned to a province. The Ebchester tile must almost certainly indicate that another first cohort was in Britain, and that it was stationed at Ebchester at some time within the period 80-197.

4. EBCHESTER BEFORE 1936.

There seems to be no record of the site at Ebchester earlier than that of Dr. Christopher Hunter;²⁴ for long after Hunter's time the study of the site was bedevilled by the persistent legend that here St. Ebba had founded a monastery in the seventh century. This legend was only refuted finally by Hooppell's contribution to Neasham's *North-west Durham*.²⁵ Gibson duly followed up Hunter's note in his 1722 edition of Camden: "Here not many years since was observed a Roman station about 200 yards square with large suburbs."²⁶ It is worth noting that there have been few later references to the *vicus* which we may reasonably suppose to have existed at Ebchester, and modern building has covered

²¹ XVI, 87.

²² XVI, 55, 117, 121.

²³ XVI, 48, 69, 70, 93.

²⁴ Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, vol. xxiii (1702), No. 278.

²⁵ W. Neasham, *History and Biography of North-West Durham*, V, pp. 113ff.; while the work as a whole is dated 1881, part V did not appear until 1883.

²⁶ col. 940.

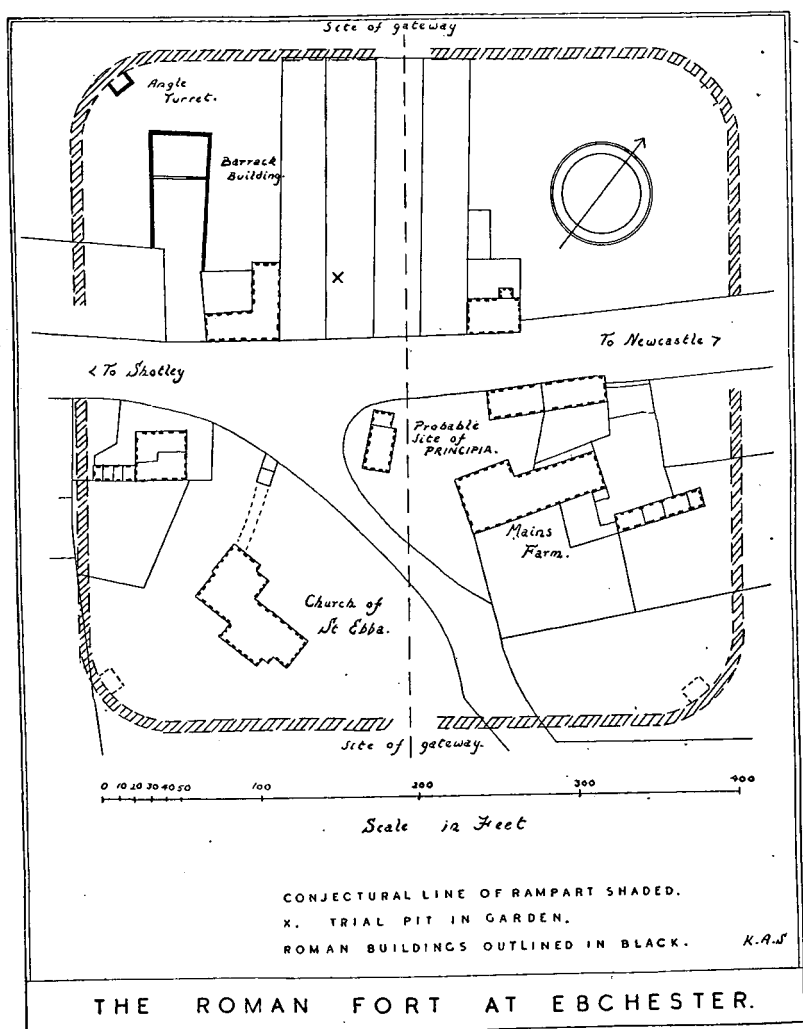


FIG. 1. THE ROMAN FORT AT EBCHESTER; GENERAL PLAN.

most of the likely area; but in a southward extension of the churchyard in recent years Roman pottery and walls, which one may presume to be Roman, have been found.²⁷

Hunter had recorded one inscription (VII 470) and some sculptured fragments; Horsley discovered another inscription (VII 460) and several pieces.²⁸ Successive antiquaries record the discovery of further inscribed and sculptured stones, without adding much to our knowledge of the site. An exception to this is Hutchinson, who does record some important information culled from Christopher Hunter's MSS.²⁹ A mile and a half south of the fort a square signal tower had been observed "about six or eight yards on the west of the military way". While there is no proof that this structure is Roman (it has not been seen since Hunter's day), we may perhaps connect it with the fortlet at Apperley Dene between Ebchester and Corbridge,³⁰ and suggest that these represent the sole known traces of a patrol system on Dere Street when the forts of County Durham (or at least Binchester and Ebchester) were occupied by at most a caretaker garrison; while the main occupation at Apperley Dene was clearly in the fourth century there is some pottery of second-century date which may indicate an Antonine occupation.

Hutchinson also found in Hunter's MSS. information about a stone water channel at the south angle of the fort, which he thought "part of the aqueduct that supplied the baths". It is more likely to be the principal water supply of the fort, drawn from the Ebchester Burn. Nothing at all is known about the site of the bath-house, but in view of the small size of the fort it must have been external. If the supply from the Ebchester Burn was sufficient for both fort and bath-house we should expect to find the latter on the south or west side of the fort.

²⁷ Verbal information from Mr. L. Morgan, sexton.

²⁸ His principal references to Ebchester are in *op. cit.*, pp. 111, 287ff. and 395ff.

²⁹ W. Hutchinson, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, II (1789), pp. 429-434.

³⁰ E. J. W. Hildyard, *A Roman site on Dere Street*, in AA4, xxx (1952), pp. 223-238. Cf. E. Birley in AJ, cxi (1954), p. 195.

Quite the most important published work on Roman Ebchester is that of R. E. Hooppell, contributed to Neasham's *North-West Durham*.³¹ In it he reviewed the whole of the evidence then available. The most important new discoveries he published were those made by the Reverend H. Linthwaite, then Vicar of Ebchester, in 1876. Linthwaite had found a line of channelled stones running at right angles to the south rampart and extending at least fourteen yards into the fort. These, as Hooppell suggested, must have been the drain on the west side of the road from the south gate. The position of the south gate was thus fixed in the centre of the south wall of the fort. As we should expect, Linthwaite had no difficulty in finding (in 1886) the north gate in the centre of the north wall; one of its guard-chambers was excavated.³²

In 1876 Linthwaite also discovered two cubical stone bases and a line of drainage tiles in Shaw Lane, opposite the entrance to the churchyard. These Hooppell considered to be the entrance to some important building; Dr. Steer has suggested that the stones were "pillar bases supporting the west portico of the forecourt of the *principia* from which the gutter may well have taken away the eavesdrip".

Dr. Steer points out that the central position of the north and south gates makes it likely that the east-west road was the *via principalis*, since this road was never centrally placed in square forts due to the need for greater space in the *retentura* for the range of important buildings—*principia*, commandant's house and granaries—which would front on to the *via principalis*. MacLauchlan had already suggested that this east-west road was probably below the modern road from Newcastle to Shotley Bridge.³³ If this view is correct, the fort will have faced north (or rather north-west), and the north gate will have been the *porta praetoria*.

After Linthwaite's imperfectly recorded excavation of 1886 no further excavation was undertaken until 1936. But

³¹ Neasham, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 113ff.

³² J. W. Fawcett, *Historic Places in the Derwent Valley* (1901), pp. 142-145.

³³ H. MacLauchlan, *Survey of Watling Street, 1850-51* (1852), p. 16.

in the later years of the nineteenth century casual discoveries continued to be made;³⁴ they included a *mortarium* with the stamp EXON and a circular brooch, apparently of Collingwood's type 104, which he dated to c. 250-400 or later.³⁵

The latest published work on Ebchester is a summary by R. C. Bosanquet of an address given to this Society at an outdoor meeting in September 1927. While it contributes little new material it is a most valuable summary of the known evidence from the site.³⁶ Since then Dr. K. A. Steer has written his Ph.D. thesis on "The Archaeology of Roman Durham"; this involved further excavation, the subject of the next part of the paper.

5. THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1936.

For the most part, Dr. Steer's excavations took place in the north-west corner of the fort, where several sections were cut across the defences, and a barrack block, angle-tower and latrines were examined. For the first time it was possible to show that the fort went back to the time of Agricola—a point proved by the discovery in the clay rampart of the carination of a Samian bowl of Dragendorff's form 29. Its original building was in clay, presumably with timber internal buildings and gateways, although no post-holes or other traces of timber work were found. It was later rebuilt in stone, although it did not prove possible to date this rebuilding. A second stone phase could be detected in the internal buildings, perhaps dating to c. 296-300. The occupation of the fort continued after the troubles of 367-368, since a considerable amount of Crambeck pottery of this period was found. Figure 2 gives a general plan of this portion of the fort.

³⁴ e.g. PSAN2, iii, p. 387; iv, p. 186; viii, p. 269.

³⁵ R. G. Collingwood, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1930), p. 259.

³⁶ PSAN4, iii, pp. 100-101.

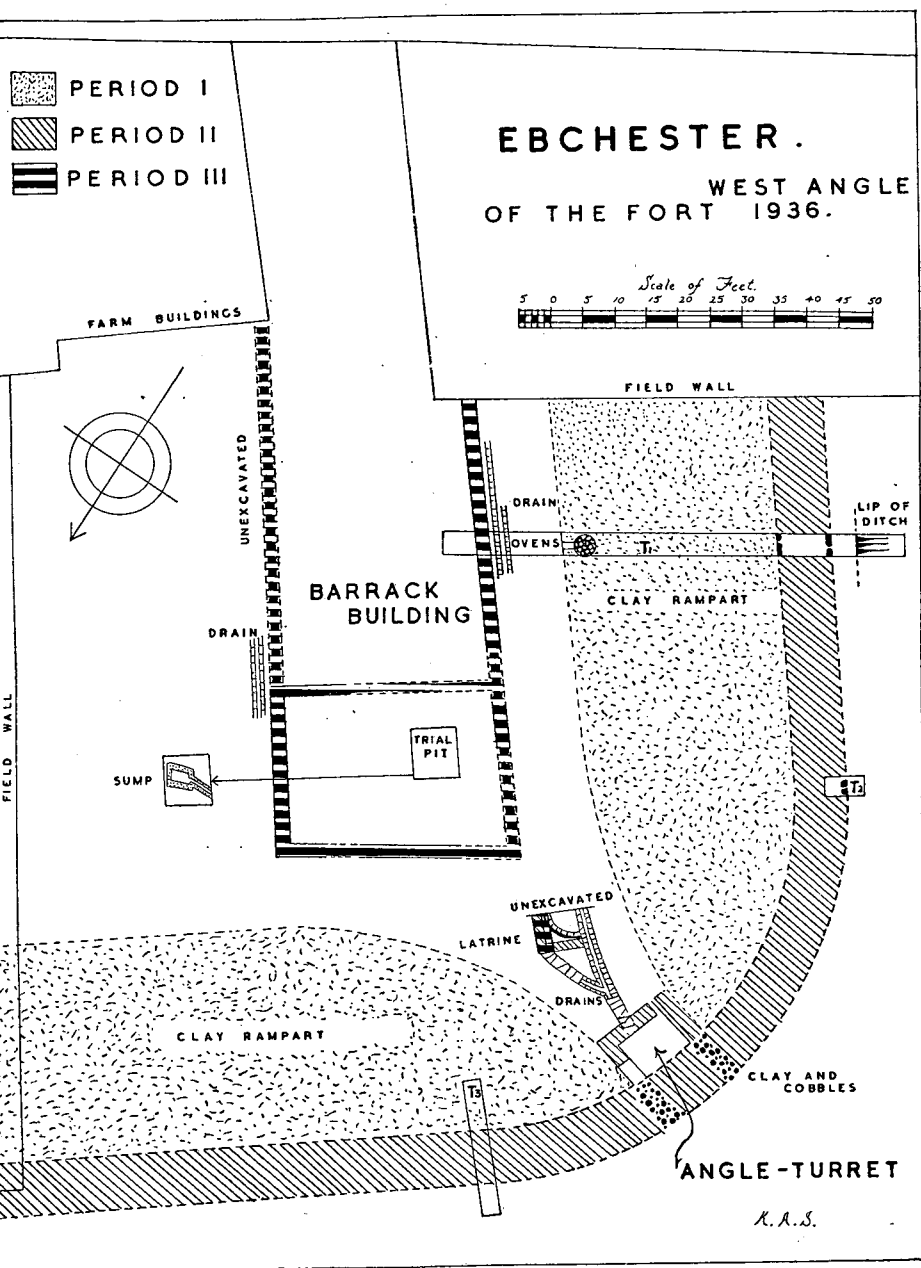


FIG. 2.

The western defences.

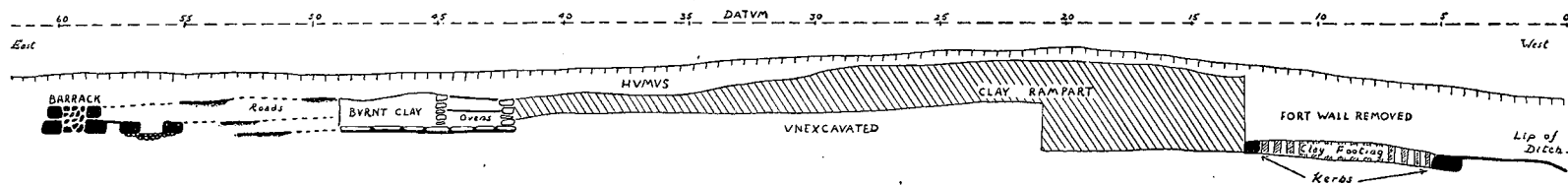
Two sections were cut across the western fortifications. The first, 85 feet from the north-west angle of the fort, located the lip of the ditch at a depth of 2' 6" (cf. fig. 3). The fort wall had been completely robbed, but the clay foundations remained, bounded by two lines of boulders 8' 6" apart. The wall was evidently a secondary feature since it had been slotted into the front of an earlier clay rampart whose vertical outer face, still standing to a height of 3' 0", abutted the inner kerb of the wall foundations. Originally this rampart was not less than 40' 0" in width, and occupation of the site in the first century was established by the discovery of a fragment of Drag. 29,³⁷ of mid-Flavian date, in the body of the rampart.

Set into the rampart, four feet from the inner edge, was a circular oven, 4 feet in diameter, with a floor constructed of stones 3-4 inches thick. The walls were still standing to a height of 1' 4". The paved floor was continued to the heel of the rampart, and extensive burning indicated the approximate site of the fire. The oven was twice rebuilt, with floors 7" and 12" above the earliest; the filling between the floors was stiff brown clay. There is no evidence for dating the original oven, though we shall see that it appears to be contemporary with an *intervallum* road which is itself earlier than a barrack block which is probably to be dated to a reconstruction in 296-300. Below the second floor were fragments of Samian dishes (Drag. 18/31), and a piece of a Samian bowl³⁸ which may be ascribed to the Antonine period.

Behind the rampart traces of road metalling were found at three different levels, but later activity on the site had destroyed all stratification. The earliest road appeared to have been contemporary with the first floor of the oven. The foundation trench for a stone barrack block 9' 8" from the

³⁷ See below, p. 210, number 4.

³⁸ p. 212, number 8.



EBCHESTER. SECTION THROUGH THE WEST DEFENCES 1936.

FIG. 3.

heel of the clay rampart had cut through this road surface; with an associated stone culvert 10" wide bedded in clay and cobbles it reduced the width of the intervallum road to less than 7 feet. It appears that the barrack block was probably erected, in its surviving form, not earlier than 296,³⁹ so that it is probable that earlier road levels had disappeared.

The second section across the western defences, 34' 6" further north, confirmed the line of the fort wall; here again the wall had been robbed to its footings, and the section was not continued across the whole defensive system.

The north wall.

A trench cut into the north wall revealed that even the footing had been robbed. The vertical face of the clay rampart could still be detected, as in the sections across the western defences.

The north-west angle-tower.

A section across the north-west angle revealed a stone angle-tower measuring 7' x 10' internally. The south-west wall had a doorway 1' 10" wide at the east end, through which at footing level a stone drain entered, to empty outside the fort. The rear wall was 2' 5" thick and the side walls 2'; the facing wall was of small well-dressed ashlar blocks. Later activity had destroyed all stratification above the original floor, which was represented by a single paving stone, 7" deep, set in chocolate-brown clay.

At the angle the wall footings consisted of cobbles set in blue clay; this contrasts with the construction further south, where stones were only used for the edges of the footings. The heavier footings are no doubt explained by the need for more solid foundations to take the weight of the angle-tower, and by the steep slope of the ground to the north of the turret.

The considerable amount of pottery found in the angle-tower was all unstratified: most of it was of third-century

³⁹ p. 207.

date, and only one sherd could be ascribed to the second century.⁴⁰

Barrack building.

The barrack building whose west wall was located in the first rampart section was examined in some detail. Its width varied slightly, averaging 36 feet; it ran parallel with the west wall of the fort and its length from the supposed line of the *via principalis* would be about 125'. A stone partition wall across the north end gave a separate room measuring 18' x 33'. This barrack appears to be considerably shorter than those at other forts. At Caerhun for instance a typical barrack block measures 170' in length.⁴¹ Presumably the small size is due to the exceptional width of the rampart backing.

The construction of the building was extremely poor and must have been undertaken by unskilled labour at a time when it was not possible to requisition the services of skilled masons. The walls rested on one or two foundation courses and the offset above the footings varied from an almost imperceptible margin to as much as 8". The materials used for the walls consisted of large roughly dressed blocks and some re-used stone; the masonry was irregularly laid and badly coursed, and rarely showed a straight facing. Dr. Steer suggested that the evidence of construction alone would indicate a date in the fourth century.⁴² The pottery evidence suggests that this building is in fact to be dated to the Constantian reconstruction of c. 296.⁴³

At no point did the barrack walls overlie those of an earlier period, but evidence for the existence of an earlier building on the same lines was furnished by the discovery of a stone drain on the east side of the barrack, parallel with its east wall. It was larger (14" wide) and better built than

⁴⁰ See below, p. 212, numbers 9-19.

⁴¹ Arch. Camb., lxxxii (1927), pp. 292-293.

⁴² Cf. I. A. Richmond on Constantian masonry at Birdoswald, in CW2, xxx (1930), p. 171.

⁴³ p. 213, numbers 20-26.

the drain on the west side of the barrack,⁴⁴ and its filling contained a large quantity of coarse pottery assignable to the third century.⁴⁵ Thus, it antedates the existing barrack, and had in fact been deliberately filled with clay and broken flags when the latter building was constructed.

Excavation of the interior of the barrack was limited to a trial pit at the north end (fig. 2). Here the earliest occupation was represented by a sump which was found at a depth of 3' 3". It consisted of a single flag, measuring 3' x 2', surrounded by dwarf walls and drained by a stone channel which presumably emptied outside the north-west angle of the fort. The pottery from the floor of the sump and the mouth of the drain forms a homogeneous group assignable to the late first and early second centuries.⁴⁶ Above this sump was a patch of stone paving which might represent another occupation earlier than that of the barrack as excavated. Above the paving was a rough floor, presumably belonging to the walls already described, which sealed an unusual flanged bowl of third century affinities.⁴⁷ Above this flooring was a group of unstratified pottery which may be assigned to the fourth century.⁴⁸

The latrines.

The corner of a latrine, showing two structural periods, was discovered between the barrack and the north-west angle-tower. The earlier walling was of the same neat ashlar as the angle-tower, and clearly represented contemporary work. The west wall survived to a height of 2 feet, but the east wall was lower and showed traces of reconstruction. The floor was of clay with a stone facing and a tiled gulley ran round the edge of the platform. This gulley was presumably emptied outside the north-west corner of the fort by the drain which was found in the angle-tower. The gulley was

⁴⁴ p. 206.

⁴⁵ p. 213, numbers 27-39.

⁴⁶ See below, p. 210, numbers 5-6; p. 214, numbers 40-43.

⁴⁷ p. 213, number 20.

⁴⁸ p. 213, numbers 21-26.

subsequently filled with clay to provide a foundation for the thickening of the east wall of the latrine. The building was crossed by a drain which was apparently a continuation of that on the west side of the barrack block.

Other internal features.

Slight excavation in two of the gardens to the north of the main Newcastle-Shotley Bridge road revealed the metalling of an internal street running south from the north gate; this was presumably the *via praetoria*.⁴⁹ In the next garden to the west was found a heavy flooring resting on a clay spread 21" thick; the flooring contained much re-used stone, including fragments of querns. Below this were traces of cobbling resting on the natural subsoil and overlain by occupation material. Dr. Steer conjectured that these two levels were part of a barrack block fronting on to the supposed line of the *via praetoria*.

THE FIGURED SAMIAN (Figure 4).

1. Drag. 37, South Gaulish. Dr. T. Davies Pryce supplied the following note to Dr. Steer.

"For the ovolo with the large rosette, well-prolonged below the egg-elements, compare Atkinson, *Pompeii*, JRS, iv, figs. 39-53, 'The potter of the large rosette'.

"*Upper zone*: The seated figure seems to be in a garland-festoon rather than in a medallion. If so, this decoration is in imitation of a pre-Flavian *motif* which was used by many early potters (cf. Knorr, 1919, 6A, AMANDVS: 30B, DARIBITVS) and in the early work of Nero-Flavian potters (cf. *op. cit.*, 17B, CALVVS: 37, GERMANVS: 43, IVCVNDVS). It is rare in the Domitianic period. The bird perched on the top of the wavy diagonal line of the cruciform ornament is also a copy of an early decorative arrangement (cf. *op. cit.*, 41 G.H.). Birds in a similar position occur on a bowl by MEMOR, at Pompeii (Atkinson, *op. cit.*, XIV, 74) (See also Richborough, Rep. III, XXIV, 8).

⁴⁹ See above, p. 201.

"*Lower zone*: The two-leaf scroll has the low curvature not uncommon in the early work. The decoration is well spread—evidently the designer did not suffer from the *horror vacui*. The many-lobed leaf is an imitation of an early type, frequently occurring in the work of pre-Flavian potters, such as SENECIO, when the terminal lobe is more pointed than in later examples such as the *Ebchester Bowl*. For somewhat close 'approximates' see Knorr, 1918, 56, MELVS, and Ritterling, *Hofheim*, I, XXVII, 14; but there are differences, particularly in the number of lobes. This leaf is rarely found on Domitianic Sigillata. The serrated leaf is also an early type and has many 'approximates' in the pre-Flavian period (cf. Knorr, *op. cit.*, 66E, OF PRIMI, from Holheim). Late variants typical of pre-Flavian period are heavier and coarser (cf. Knorr, *op. cit.*, 23A, OF COELI). The decoration of this bowl displays many features of pre-Flavian work. Typologically it must be assigned to the principate of *Vespasian* and, as far as my recollection goes, it is certainly earlier than anything as yet found in Scotland. Dr. Felix Oswald, F.S.A., informs me that, as far as he is aware, the only instance of the seated figure occurs, together with the same ovolo, on a F. 37 from Margidunum (too incomplete to be included in the *Index of Figure Types*). He will confidently ascribe the *Ebchester Bowl* to FRONTINUS." From the heavy flooring west of the *via praetoria*.

2. Drag. 37, South Gaulish. Ovolo with trifold tongue-terminal bent left. Fair glaze and execution. Period: Mid-Flavian. Same find-spot as number 1. [KAS]

3. Drag. 29 or 30. Lezoux. Bird within a plain medallion, bead row to the right. The fabric recalls the South Gaulish rather than the Lezoux kilns, but the bead row points unmistakably to the latter. [KAS]

4. Drag. 29. South Gaulish. Fragment of the central zone showing straight wreath as used by L COSI⁵⁰ between bead rows. Tendril and leaf below. Worn. Period: Mid-Flavian. Found in the body of the clay rampart.

5. Drag. 37. South Gaulish. RINCEAU decoration. The stalks of the scroll terminate in large pointed leaves with serrated edges as used by BIRACILLVS,⁵¹ COELIVS⁵² and M.CRESTIO.⁵³ In the lower concavities of the scrolls are (i) animals: a boar (D. 837) used by the Flavian potters COSIVS RVFVS, PRIMVS, GERMANVS, SASMONOS, PASSENVS and CRVCVRO (Brecon, S 46), and a panther. (ii) triple row of arrow-heads demarcated by wavy lines. Basal wreath of

⁵⁰ R. Knorr, *Topfer und Fabriken Verzierter Terra-sigillata des Ersten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1919), Taf. 25, 2.

⁵¹ Knorr, *op. cit.*, Taf. 16.

⁵² *ib.*, Taf. 23.

⁵³ *ib.*, text, fig. 30.

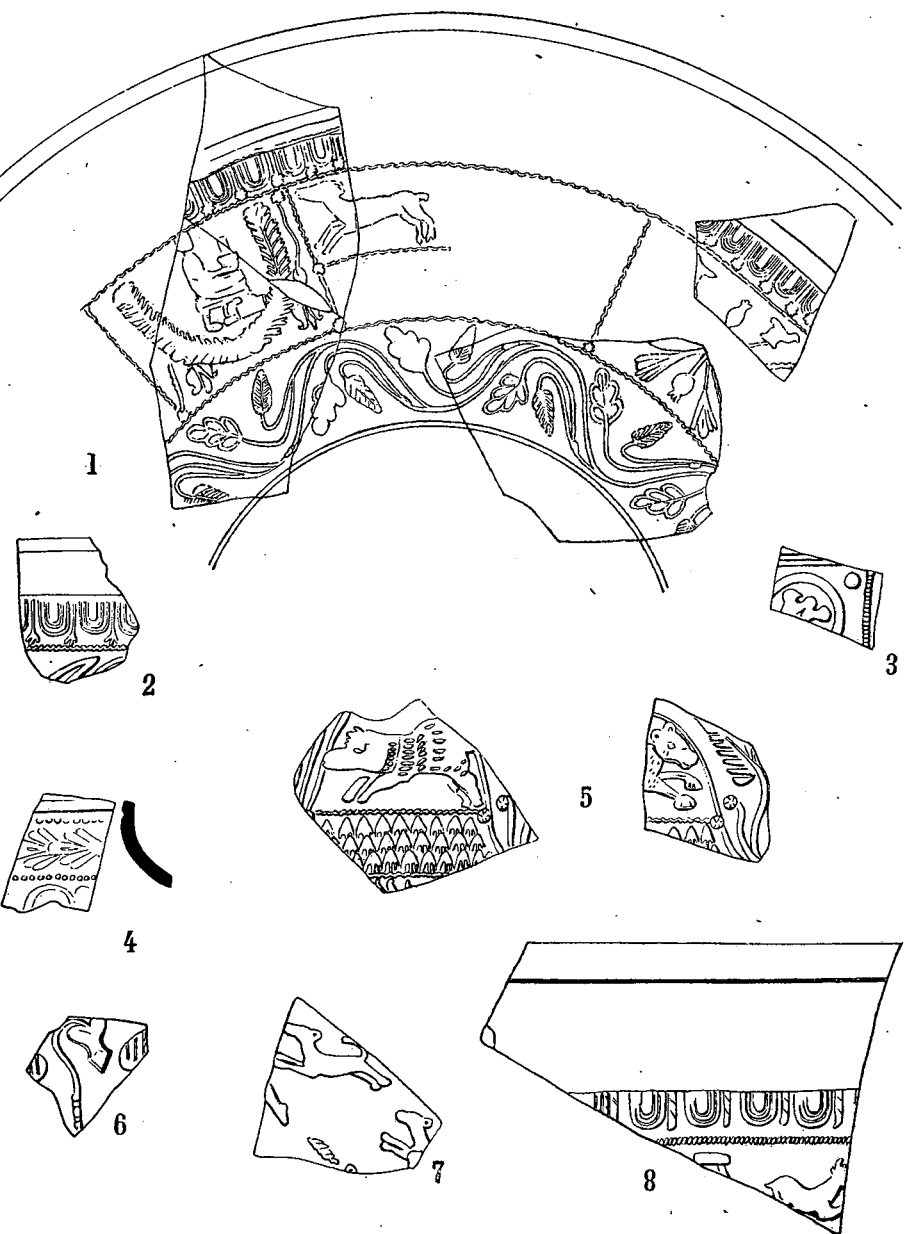


FIG. 4. FIGURED SAMIAN WARE FROM EBCESTER. SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}$.

chevrons, glaze good, fair execution. Period: Mid-Flavian. Found on the floor of the sump. [KAS]

6. Drag. 37. South Gaulish. Tendril terminating in a debased cordate-bud, a common Flavian *motif*;⁵⁴ rolls on either side. Period: Domitianic. Same find spot as number 5. [KAS]

7. Drag. 37. Rheinzabern. Free style. The dog is Ludowici type T. 201 used by COBNERTVS, FIRMVS, VICTOR, PRIMITIVS, COMITIALIS and IVLIVS. Period: Antonine. [KAS]

8. Drag. 37. Lezoux. The ovolo and bead row clearly belong to CINNAMVS or a similar potter;⁵⁵ the remaining fragments of decoration are not inconsistent with such an attribution. Period: Antonine, c. 150-190. [MGJ]

*Potters' stamps on Samian ware.*⁵⁶

- (i) QVINTI M. Quintus of Lezoux. Hadrianic-Antonine. Drag. 38.
- (ii) GENITOR. Genitor of Lezoux. Domitianic-Trajanic. Drag. 18/31.
- (iii) VICTORINVS. Victorinus of Rheinzabern. Hadrianic-late Antonine. Drag. 18/31.

THE COARSE POTTERY.

A. *Unstratified, in the north-west angle-tower.*

- 9. Cooking pot in black calcite-gritted fabric, similar to Gillam type 163, but without the internal groove. 360-400.
- 10. Platter, ornamented on rim with red painted chevron decoration, cf. Gillam type 298. 370-400.
- 11. Cooking pot in black calcite-gritted fabric, Gillam type 163. 360-400.
- 12. Bowl in hard light grey fabric, reminiscent of Drag. 44. Late second century?
- 13. Castor type beaker with plain rim in orange-brown fabric. Late second-early third century.
- 14. Dish in hard light grey fabric, Gillam type 225. 190-240.
- 15. Jar in sand-coloured micaceous fabric, Gillam type 225. 190-240.
- 16. Cooking pot in hard grey fabric, Gillam type 140. 180-240.
- 17. As number 16, in slightly gritty fabric. 180-240.

⁵⁴ Cf. Knorr, *op. cit.*, text, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Cf. J. A. Stansfield and M. G. Simpson, *Central Gaulish Potters* (1958), p. 265 (ovolo number 3), illustrated in fig. 47, number 3.

⁵⁶ The dating is that given by F. Oswald, *Index of Potters' Stamps on Terra Sigillata 'Samian Ware'* (1931).

18. Jar in slightly gritty light-coloured fabric, Gillam type 101. 70-110.
19. Jar in hard light grey fabric with fine grit, Gillam type 150. 140-210.

B. Below the latest surviving floor in the barrack block.

20. Flanged bowl in coarse grey fabric (not from the Crambeck kilns). The nearest parallel appears to be an unstratified sherd from Denton Hall turret (7b), probably of third-century date.⁵⁷

C. Within the barrack block, unstratified.

21. Mortarium in pipeclay fabric, Gillam type 278. 270-350.
22. Mortarium in pipeclay fabric, cf. Gillam type 261, dated to 160-210; the fabric of the Ebchester specimen suggests a later date.
23. Mortarium in pipeclay fabric with fine red grit, cf. Gillam type 285, dated to 320-370.
24. Mortarium in same fabric and grit as number 23, cf. Gillam type 283, dated to 290-370.
25. Cooking pot in hard coarse grey fabric with oblique outbent rim. Fourth century.
26. Cooking pot in hard coarse grey fabric with some grit (Dales Ware), Gillam type 157. 280-340.

D. In the drain on the east side of the barrack building.

27. Cooking pot in fabric of "light sandy colour" with micaceous grit, cf. Gillam type 160, dated to 300-370.
28. Cooking pot in hard dark grey fabric, Gillam type 139. 180-250.
29. Cooking pot in hard smooth light grey fabric, Gillam type 144. 200-280.
30. Three rims of cooking pots in same fabric as number 27.
31. Cooking pot in same fabric as number 27, Gillam type 139. 180-250.
32. Bowl in hard light grey burnished fabric, no decoration, cf. Gillam type 222, dated to 170-210.
33. Bowl in black fumed fabric, Gillam type 225. 190-240.
34. Flanged bowl in coarse light grey fabric, Gillam type 226. 220-270.
35. Dish in black fumed fabric, slight carination of basal angle, cf. Gillam type 312, dated to 190-240.
36. Dish in black fumed fabric, Gillam type 225. 190-240.
37. Bowl in dark grey fabric with lighter core, cf. Gillam type 226, dated to 220-270.

⁵⁷ AA4, vii (1930), p. 152, number 21.

- 38. Cooking pot in hard light grey fabric with fine grit, Gillam type 151. 190-260.
 - 39. Cornice rim beaker in white Castor fabric with chocolate slip, Gillam type 86. 170-230.
- E. *In the sump and associated drain below the barrack building.*
- 40. Jar in hard grey fabric with lighter core, cf. Gillam type 108, dated to 80-130.
 - 41. Cooking pot with two girth grooves in hard thin buff fabric, cf. Gillam type 112, dated 110-130.
 - 42. Carinated bowl with reeded rim in coarse grey fabric, Gillam type 214. 80-125.
 - 43. Jar or cooking pot in fumed fabric, no parallel.
- F. *Above the latest floor of the oven cut into the clay rampart.*
- 44. Jar in very hard coarse dark grey fabric, Gillam type 31. 160-230.
- G. *In clay filling below heavy stone flooring in area to west of via praetoria.*
- 45. Carinated bowl with reeded rim in coarse light grey fabric, Gillam type 214. 80-125.
 - 46. Cooking pot in the same fabric as number 45, cf. Gillam type 98, dated to 80-130. There is no evidence of rustic ornament on the Ebchester sherd.
 - 47. Beaker in hard blue-grey fabric with lighter core, cf. Gillam type 170, dated to 130-180. The Ebchester specimen has cross-hatched decoration.
 - 48. Mortarium in buff fabric with grey and white grit extending to the rim, Gillam type 239. 80-110.

6. EXCAVATIONS IN THE PRAETENTURA, 1958-9.

In August 1958 our members Messrs. M. M. Allison and A. H. Reed, with Mr. E. Downs, began excavations in the garden of Fish Cottage, by permission of Mr. L. Morgan. This is the most easterly of the four gardens to the north of the main road, and lies to the east of the road which is presumed to be the *via praetoria*. The excavation was confined to the northerly part of the garden. Figure 5 shows the

main area excavated, and figure 6 gives two north-south sections.

Two main structural phases were revealed by the excavation. The first exhibited nothing except the clay rampart with a flagged area behind it, presumably the Flavian *intervallum* road, since the flags lay on the natural clay. A small quantity of late first-century pottery was sealed by the flags.⁵⁸

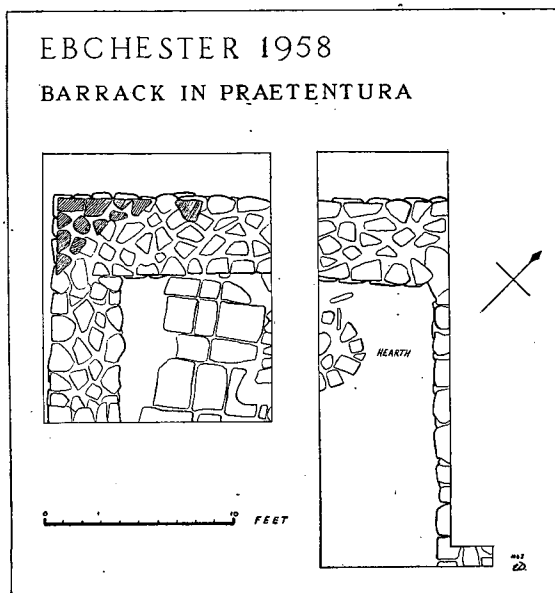


FIG. 5. NORTHERN PART OF BARRACK BLOCK.

In the second phase a stone building, which we may presume to be a barrack block, lay across the flagging and was set into the clay rampart for a distance of some 10 feet. In this period there was no *intervallum* road in this area, the north wall of the barrack lying close to the south face of the cut-away rampart (cf. figs. 6a and 6b, layers 3 and 9). It was

⁵⁸ p. 218, numbers 1-3.

about 16 feet south of the fort wall, though modern buildings prevented an exact measurement of the distance. This would imply that on the north side the clay rampart was some 10 feet narrower than on the west side, though Dr. Steer has no note of any such variation near the north-west angle. Dr. Steer had already noted that in other turf or clay forts the width of the rampart might vary considerably in accordance with the strength or weakness of natural defences;⁵⁹ for instance at Cappuck the fortlet had a rampart 8 feet wide, except on the east side where the width was 24 feet.⁶⁰ The north side of the fort at Ebchester was certainly well defended by the steep drop to the river; but the Ebchester Burn provides a good natural defence on the west side, so that an exceptionally wide rampart does not seem to be necessary there.

At right angles to the north wall was a wall of similar construction which continued for at least 16 feet. Unfortunately it lay below a modern garden wall, so that it was not possible to excavate it completely or to examine in detail its junction with the north wall. It is not therefore clear whether it is the west wall of a barrack parallel with that already described or whether it is an internal partition wall of a barrack running east and west. If Mr. Reed's estimate, that this wall lies 14 feet east of the centre line of the fort, is correct, then the barrack must be parallel with the north wall of the fort. Working from Dr. Steer's plan it appears to me that the distance must be nearer 40 feet, in which case the barrack might be lying alongside the *via praetoria*. The position is complicated by the location of another wall parallel with the north wall and some 33 feet south of it. This could equally well be (i) a partition wall in a block parallel with the *via praetoria*; (ii) the south wall of a block parallel with the north wall of the fort; or (iii) the original north wall of a barrack which was later extended 33 feet further north, across the *intervallum* road and into the

⁵⁹ Cf. Collingwood, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁶⁰ PSAS, xlv (1911-2), p. 453.

rampart backing. Only further excavation can show which of these possibilities is correct.

In each of the trenches opened the earliest level associated with the north wall of the barrack block consists of small cobbles (layer 8 in figures 6a and 6b). The more easterly trench continued far enough for it to be proved that it lay

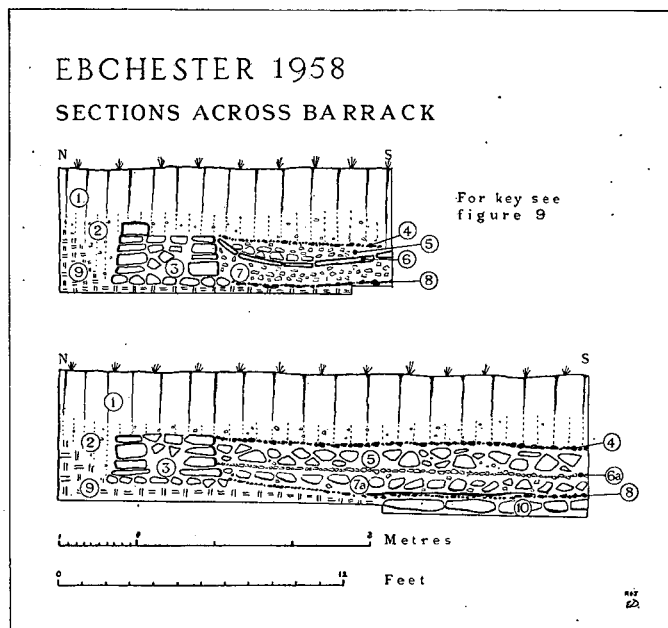


FIG. 6. NORTH-SOUTH SECTIONS ACROSS BARRACK (FIG. 5).

for some distance above the flags of the earlier *intervallum* road. It will be clear from the drawn sections that it is on a level with the cobble foundations for the north wall, and cannot therefore be a floor; it must be interpreted as a building level. There was no pottery sealed by this cobbling apart from the small group of first-century sherds below the *intervallum* road.

The earliest floor level of flags or cobbles (layer 6 in fig. 6a; layer 6A in fig. 6b) sealed, in the earth and rubble make-up of layer 7, a quantity of second-century pottery.⁶¹ Both flags and cobbles seal similar groups of pottery, and since neither is paralleled in the other section it seems likely that they are of the same date; but since the point is not proved the two groups of pottery are recorded separately. The latest type of pottery in either group was first made c. A.D. 180, and we should presumably date the original building of this portion of the barrack block to the reconstruction of Severus. Unfortunately this does not necessarily date the rebuilding of the fort in stone to that period, for we have already noted the possibility that the area excavated was an extension to an earlier barrack block.

A further cobbled floor (level 4) sealed an earth and rubble make-up (level 5) above this first floor. Level 5 contained pottery of which the latest pieces should be assigned to the late third century,⁶² together with *denarii* of Faustina I (died 141) and Antoninus Pius (138-161). A circular hearth stood on this floor. Presumably the floor belongs to the Constantian reconstruction. No structural evidence of Theodosian occupation remained.

It will be noted that the problems of this area are by no means solved, and it is welcome news that the excavators have obtained permission to continue their work in 1960.

THE POTTERY.

A. *Below the flags of the intervallum road.*

1. Fragment of a Samian cup (Drag. 27) in a fabric and glaze which suggest manufacture at one of the South Gaulish potteries in the first century.
2. Wide-mouthed jar in grey fabric, Gillam type 103. 80-120.
3. Fragment of a carrot-shaped *amphora* which might have been current in the first century.⁶

⁶¹ p. 219, numbers 4-17.

⁶² pp. 220-221, numbers 18-31.

B. *Below the first (cobbled) floor, in layer 7 (fig. 6b).*

4. Fragment of a Samian bowl (Drag. 37) with badly smeared ovolo and decoration; the fabric and glaze suggest that it is a late South Gaulish product, assignable to the late Flavian or Trajanic period.
5. Fragment of a carinated bowl with reeded rim (Gillam type 214) in pinkish fabric. 80-125.
6. Dish in black fumed fabric, Gillam type 311. 180-200.

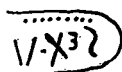
C. *Below the first (flagged) floor, in layer 7 (fig. 6a).*

7. Ovolo of a Samian bowl (Drag. 37) in a fabric which suggests East Gaulish manufacture. There is nothing about the piece to suggest a date later than the Antonine period.
8. Base of a jar or flagon in pink slightly gritty fabric.
9. Cornice rim of a Castor beaker. c. 170-260.
10. Rim fragment of a jar in grey rustic ware, Gillam type 96. 80-130.
11. Two further fragments of rustic ware.
12. Rim of jar in light grey fabric, Gillam type 108. 80-130.
13. Rim of cooking pot in light grey fabric, Gillam type 117. 125-150.
14. Rim of cooking pot in black fumed fabric, Gillam type 118. 125-160.
15. Rim of cooking pot in black fumed fabric, Gillam type 121. 125-160.
16. Mrs. K. F. Hartley has contributed the following note:

"A mortarium in sandy, pale buff fabric with cream and pink core, red-brown, grey and white grits. Diameter $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins. The stamp is not completely impressed, but others from the same die make it possible to expand the reading to SEX. VA. IV (retrograde). SEXTVS VALERIVS is certain, but the *cognomen* must remain uncertain.

"There were several Sexti Valerii, and the large number of their stamps at Colchester, compared with their sparsity elsewhere, suggests that they worked near the *colonia*. In general the fabrics used are consistent with this suggestion. The characteristics of their mortaria imply activities falling within the Flavian-Trajanic period.

"These remarks apply, however, only to some products (from Colchester) of the Sextus Valerius under consideration. Other mortaria stamped with the same die, including the Ebchester one and several from London, are in fabric typical of the large potteries south-east of Verulamium. A change in his kiln-site seems therefore to be indicated. The Ebchester vessel is unusually small, but the rim-profile is consistent with

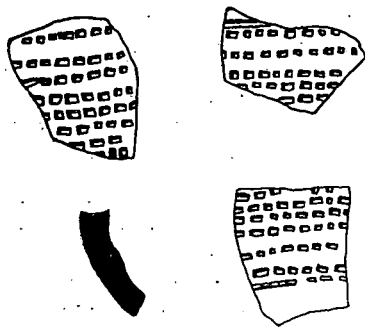
FIG. 7. $\frac{1}{2}$.

a Flavian-Trajanic date. Corbridge is the only other northern site where the work of the Sexti Valerii has been noted."

17. Portions of two lids in grey fabric, Gillam type 340. 100-140.

D. *Below the second cobbled floor, in layer 5.*

18. Four fragments of rouletted pottery from the same vessel in soft light grey micaceous fabric with traces of a darker wash surviving on the outer surface (figure 8). The rouletting consists of sub-rectangular depressions of varying size, and appears to have formed a zone round a hemispherical vessel. It is cut off at the bottom by a narrow rouletted line; below this line the vessel appears to have been undecorated. Presumably it had a foot stand. The form appears to be an imitation of a Samian form—probably Drag. 37, though other vessels in fabrics of this general character are reminiscent of Drag. 44. The associations appear to be with Belgic *terra nigra* and its British imitations. The nearest parallels seem to be at Templebrough (Yorks) in a fabric described as "blue-black, bitumen coated"⁶³ An unpublished (and unstratified) sherd from Caerleon (Mon.) in imitation of Drag. 44 combines rouletting with compass-drawn semi-circles; another sherd from the same site has the compass-drawn semi-circles with incised festoons or straight lines running from the base of the semi-circles. This latter decoration can be paralleled by a vessel from Silchester imitating Drag. 37.⁶⁴ There appears to be another

FIG. 8. $\frac{1}{2}$.

⁶³ T. May, *The Roman Forts of Templebrough* (1922), pp. 108-109, numbers 170 (Drag. 30, ascribed to the first century) and 171 (Drag. 37, dated 'later').

⁶⁴ T. May, *The Roman Pottery found at Silchester* (1916), p. 171, number 164.

sherd, reminiscent of Drag. 44 in the Carmarthen Museum from the Roman site at Llandovery. I have not been able to examine this sherd, which has a dark grey outer surface and rouletted decoration. It is badly worn. None of these vessels need be later than the first century A.D.; but at Dinas Powys (Glam.) vessels reminiscent of Drag. 44 in a very soft grey fabric with darker wash have been found. These also have sub-rectangular rouletting, though in every case it was badly worn in use.⁶⁵ Dinas Powys seems to have been occupied in the Roman period and in the Dark Ages, and it is not certain to what date the sherds belong. They are generally accepted as a post-Roman type⁶⁶ under the term "D-ware", though it appears possible that a Roman date should be ascribed to it. The Ebchester fragments may be assigned to any date between A.D. 80-296.

19. Rim of Samian bowl (Drag. 31) in a Central Gaulish fabric. Second century.
 20. Two rim fragments of Samian cup (Drag. 33) in a Central Gaulish fabric. Second century.
 21. Two rim fragments of Samian bowl (Drag. 37) in a Central Gaulish fabric. Second century.
 22. Rim fragment of a vessel similar to number 21.
 23. Boss from narrow-mouthed jar, in grey fabric, Gillam type 33. 250-320.
 24. Handle of small beaker in grey fabric, Gillam type 64, 65 or 66. Overall dating 130-300. Latest date of first emergence number 66 (A.D. 180).
 25. Cooking pot in black fumed fabric, Gillam type 122. 125-160.
 26. Cooking pot in same fabric, Gillam type 127. 130-170.
 27. Cooking pot in same fabric, Gillam type 132. 140-220.
 28. Bowl in dark grey fumed fabric, Gillam type 225. 190-240.
 29. Mortarium in pinkish fabric, cf. Gillam type 258, dated to 160-200.
 30. Hammer-head mortarium in pipeclay fabric, cf. Gillam type 283, dated 290-370.
- E. *Below level of flagged floor (layer 6), but not certainly sealed by it.*
31. Small fragment of rim of Samian cup, Drag. 27, probably of Central Gaulish origin.

⁶⁵ Information from Mr. L. Alcock; for a discussion of these sherds see his paper in G. E. Daniel and I. Ll. Foster, *Prehistoric and Roman Wales* (forthcoming).

⁶⁶ Radford's Class D. C. A. Raleigh Radford, *Imported pottery found at Tintagel, Cornwall*, in D. B. Harden, *Dark Age Britain* (1956), pp. 59-70.

32. Rim of cooking pot in light grey fabric with darker surface, short rim pressed over on to shoulder. A close parallel occurs in a Flavian level at Corbridge.⁶⁷
33. Rim of jar in hard orange-pink fabric, assignable to the late first or early second century.

F. *Unstratified.*

34. Small Samian cup, Drag. 27, in South Gaulish fabric. The footstand has an external double groove. The small size indicates an early date.⁶⁸ Flavian.
35. Rim of a Samian cup, Drag. 33, in Central Gaulish fabric.
36. Rim of a Samian bowl, Drag. 37, in a fabric which suggests East Gaulish manufacture.
37. Small fragment of a platter of Central or East Gaulish manufacture; there is a fairly close parallel at Silchester.⁶⁹
38. Cornice rim beaker in white Castor fabric with orange slip and rouletted decoration, Gillam type 87. 190-240.
39. Cooking pot in black fumed fabric, Gillam type 122. 125-160.
40. Cooking pot in dark grey fumed fabric, Gillam type 142. 190-280.
41. Lid-seated cooking pot in greyish-fawn sandy fabric, Gillam type 150. 140-210.
42. Bowl in dark grey fumed fabric, Gillam type 227. 260-320.
43. Rim of mortarium, whitish-buff fabric, cf. Gillam type 243, dated to 100-140.

7. SECTION ACROSS THE EASTERN DEFENCES, 1959.

Excavations were conducted by the author on behalf of the Ministry of Works on a site to the south of the main road. The object of the excavations was to obtain a section across the eastern defences; it was hampered by some water seeping into the trench, and by modern buildings which lay across the inner portion of the clay rampart. Figure 9 shows the section that was cut.

Below the topsoil was a deposit of ash (layer 2) varying

⁶⁷ AA4, xxxi (1953), p. 224, number 3.

⁶⁸ F. Oswald and T. Davies Pryce, *An Introduction to the Study of Terra sigillata* (1920), p. 187.

⁶⁹ T. May, *The Roman pottery found at Silchester*, plate XXXI, number 26 = Oswald and Pryce, *op. cit.*, plate LXVI, number 4.

in thickness from 1' 3" at the eastern end of the section to 6" immediately outside the fort wall, where it finally petered out. The ash sealed pottery which was almost all of Roman date, though some eighteenth-century sherds were found. No pottery of the period 400-1700 was found in the course of the excavation, the earliest post-Roman pottery being Staffordshire combed ware (first half of the eighteenth century). The ash was probably deposited in the early nineteenth century, and may perhaps be connected with the brewery which local tradition places in this general area. Of a similar late date are two pits (layers 11 and 12), containing respectively ash with nineteenth-century beer bottles, and organic refuse.

Below the thick band of ash most of the section contained a level of humus and rubble (layer 3) of varying thickness. Unlike the ash this was cut by a later feature, a thick stone wall (layer 20). Probably layers 4, 6, 7 and 9 (clean yellow sand) and 8 (clean yellow clay) represent heaps of material not used or removed by the builders of this structure. To the east of this wall (which was not excavated) and below these patches of sand and clay was an area of paving stones (layer 18) set in blue clay; in this clay were found sherds of early eighteenth-century pottery. The paving is either contemporary with or earlier than the stone wall, so that neither of them can be dated earlier than the eighteenth century.

These levels were cut into the grey silt of a ditch (layer 19) and the brown clay (layer 17) above it. This ditch could not be excavated to the east of layer 20, because of water draining into the trench, but the characteristic smell of ditch material was noted even in the upper levels of the silt. On that side the section was confused by the construction of layers 18 and 20, but to the west of layer 20 the sequence was clear enough. The ditch in question had been cut through dirty grey clay (layer 14) and yellow clay (layer 15). This yellow clay was indistinguishable from the material used in the clay rampart (layer 10). It overlay the grey silt of another ditch (layer 16). The outer ditch was clearly of a later date

than this one since it cut through the material piled above the inner ditch and also cut off a portion of its eastern side (cf. Plate X, fig. 1).

As it survived this inner ditch was some 9 feet wide; probably its original width was more than 11 feet. It was about $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. In profile it was a typical V-shaped military ditch with a drainage channel at the bottom; this was some 13" deep and tapered from a width of 2' at the top to 8" at the bottom. The filling of this ditch contained a considerable amount of timber which could be divided into three groups. (i) Beams of 3" square section of which the longest surviving portion was 2' 11"; another piece had been sharpened to a point at one end. These may represent some of the timber defences from the top of the clay rampart, removed when the ditch was filled and the stone fort wall built. (ii) Fragments of barbed tent pegs which can be paralleled by finds from a ditch at Corbridge.⁷⁰ The longest (broken) was 21". (iii) Bundles of twigs of diameters up to $\frac{1}{2}$ ". All the timber recovered from the ditch showed traces of blue vivianite staining, as the Corbridge pegs still do.⁷¹ Vivianite is "an hydrous phosphate of iron".⁷² In the ditches at Corbridge and Ebchester this must be due either to iron in the soil or more probably to iron objects deposited in the ditch filling. There was little organic silt in the ditch and its outline remained sharp and clear-cut. It would appear that it was thoroughly cleaned out only a short time before it was filled, and that it was in use for a relatively short period. At the top of the grey silty filling (layer 16) a small amount of pottery was found; none occurred in the lower levels of the ditch filling. It contained nothing which need be later than the reign of Trajan.⁷³

Above this layer 15 probably represents a removal of a portion of the clay rampart prior to the building of the stone

⁷⁰ AA3, vii (1911), p. 167.

⁷¹ AA4, xxx (1952), p. 264.

⁷² C. Fox, *A Find of the Early Iron Age from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey* (1946), p. 4.

⁷³ p. 226, numbers 1-5.



FIG. 1. OUTER DITCH (LEFT) CUT THROUGH FILL OF INNER DITCH.



FIG. 2. STONE FORT WALL (CUT BY MODERN DRAIN) AND LIP OF EARLIER DITCH.

wall.⁷⁴ The reason for an alteration to the ditch system is clear; the inner lip of the earlier ditch was only 4' 3" outside the cobble foundation for the stone wall (layer 13), and there might well be reason to fear subsidence; the cutting away of the clay rampart would then precede the rebuilding in stone. The evidence of the timber beams and stakes in the ditch filling seems to indicate that the ditch was deliberately and systematically filled at a time when the clay rampart was also having its timber superstructure removed; the most likely occasion for this would be the rebuilding of the fort in stone.

Probably this ditch was not the only one of the Flavian fort. It would certainly not have provided enough material for the clay rampart (layer 10). On this eastern side the rampart was at least 26 feet wide; modern buildings prevented the location of its inner edge. One may therefore suggest that at least one more Flavian ditch has been obliterated by the cutting of the ditch (layer 19) for the stone-walled fort.

This outer ditch had a much more gradual slope than the one already described. It was about 16 feet wide. Water seeping into the trench made complete excavation of this ditch impossible, but a conjectural outline is to be found in figure 9. If this restoration is correct, the ditch was considerably deeper than the Flavian ditch already described. The pottery from its filling⁷⁵ was all of second-century date.

The stone wall of the fort was built of well-dressed ashlar blocks with a rubble and mortar core. The stones of the inner face, which was hidden by the clay rampart, were of roughly dressed ashlar (cf. Plate X, fig. 2; the wall has been cut by a modern field drain). The wall was 4' 9" wide at its lowest course of dressed stone, with an offset of 5" at the next course on the outer face. Only two courses survived. They rested directly on the cobbled foundations, which were 5' 3" wide, but the wall was on a slightly different alignment and only covered 3' of this foundation, the other 2' 3" pro-

⁷⁴ Cf. p. 223.

⁷⁵ p. 227, numbers 6-9.

jecting in front of the wall. The lip of the Flavian ditch was only 4' 3" beyond the edge of the cobble foundation, presumably the reason for its replacement by another ditch further out. The weight of a stone wall required a larger berm than did a turf or clay wall if subsidence was to be avoided. The berm for Hadrian's Wall is normally 20 feet wide, but where the Wall was originally built in turf the berm is only 6 feet.⁷⁶ That subsidence did sometimes occur is shown at turret 54a (Garthside) where the north wall of the stone turret collapsed into the ditch of the original Turf Wall.⁷⁷ In the Flavian fort the berm must have been extremely narrow if it existed at all.⁷⁸

No direct dating evidence for the building of the stone wall was recovered. Indirect evidence would suggest that it happened after (and probably immediately after) the filling of the inner ditch and the deposition of layer 15. The most likely date is under Hadrian, since there is no evidence for an abandonment of the site after the filling of the ditch or after the deposition of layer 15; no sign of humus-development could be seen at either of these levels.

THE POTTERY.

A. *From the upper levels of the grey silt filling of the inner ditch, below layer 15.*

1. Base of Samian cup, Drag. 27, in fine South Gaulish glaze and fabric. First century.
2. Three fragments of a Samian bowl, Drag. 18/31, of Central Gaulish manufacture. Trajanic?
3. Rim and ovolo of Samian bowl, Drag. 37, in late South Gaulish fabric and glaze. Trajanic or earlier.
4. Two fragments of one jar or flagon in orange pink fabric.
5. Eight fragments of one jar in hard light grey fabric with darker surface, no decoration.

⁷⁶ J. C. Bruce, *Handbook to the Roman Wall* (11th edition, by I. A. Richmond, 1957), p. 19.

⁷⁷ JRS, xxiv (1934), p. 200.

⁷⁸ At Chester there was at least one point where the stone wall stood without any berm; it would appear likely that the turf rampart can rarely have had a berm of any size, since the stone wall has not been found with a berm wider than 5 feet. Cf. F. H. Thompson, *Deva, Roman Chester*, 1959, p. 17.

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SECTION ACROSS E EASTERN DEFENCES

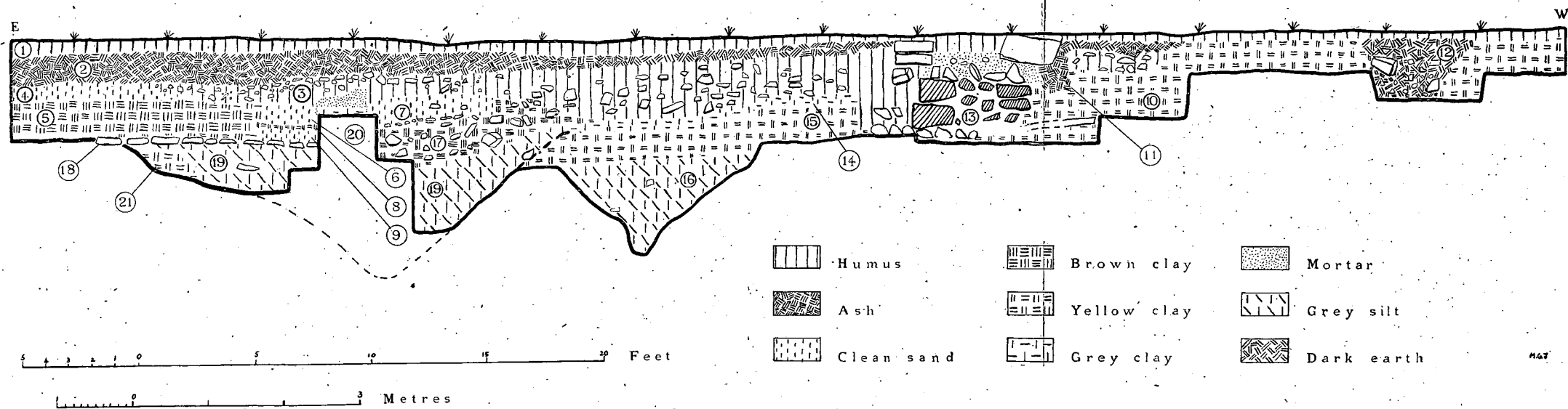


FIG. 9. SECTION ACROSS EASTERN DEFENCES.

B. *From the grey silt filling of the outer ditch, below layer 19.*

6. Rim of Samian bowl, Drag. 37, of Central Gaulish manufacture. Second century.
7. Fragment of Samian bowl, Drag. 31, Central Gaulish. Second century.
8. Fragment of globular flagon in pink sandy fabric with cream slip inside.
9. Body fragment from cooking pot in black fumed ware. Hadrianic or later.

C. *From layer 3, sealed by layer 2.*

10. Fragment of Samian bowl, Drag. 37, in worn condition. Professor Birley has examined the sherd, and says that it may be attributed to Paternus (c. 150-190).
11. Base of Samian dish, Drag. 31, with stamp DATIVS FEC. The only other record in this country of Datius of Rheinzabern is from Maidstone. Oswald assigns him to the Antonine period.
12. Base of Samian cup, Drag. 33, with stamp MARCEL[]. Central Gaulish fabric. There are several potters who might have used this stamp.
13. Side wall of Samian platter, Walters form 79, Central Gaulish. Second century.
14. Large jar in soft light grey gritty fabric, similar to Gillam type 106, dated to 80-120.
15. Fragments of two flanged bowls in smooth lead grey fabric (Crambeck), Gillam types 229 (350-400) and 231 (370-400).
16. Small fragment of thin black pottery, rouletted decoration. Wedgwood, late eighteenth century.

8. CONCLUSIONS.

Since this is the first comprehensive survey of the evidence for the Roman occupation of Ebchester since Hooppell's work of 1883, there is a considerable amount of material in it which has not appeared in print before. A Flavian fort was postulated by R. C. Bosanquet,⁷⁹ and its existence has since been proved by Dr. Steer. The Crambeck and Huntcliff pottery found⁸⁰ makes it clear that occupation must have continued after the Picts' War and the reconstruction of

⁷⁹ PSAN4, iii, pp. 100-101.

⁸⁰ p. 212, numbers 9, 10, 11; p. 227, number 15.

Count Theodosius. Dating of the intervening levels is less clear. Dr. Steer's barrack block may be assigned, in its present form, to the years 296-300, as may the latest phase in the barrack block to the east of the *via praetoria*. An earlier portion of that building seems to belong to the Severan rebuilding. By contrast, the stone wall of the fort seems best assigned to the reign of Hadrian. Unfortunately no traces of timber internal buildings have yet been located, and we have no knowledge of the number of timber periods within the fort. It is by no means impossible that the fort continued to have timber barrack blocks after the wall was rebuilt in stone. Dr. Steer suggested that the fort was either abandoned or occupied by a reduced garrison from the time of Hadrian until that of Severus. This suggestion was based on the small proportion of second-century pottery found in 1936. A reassessment, using also the pottery found since that date, suggests that this cannot now be accepted. The figured Samian includes pieces by two of the best-known Antonine potters, Cinnamus⁸¹ and Paternus.⁸² A stamped sherd of plain Samian was made by another Antonine potter (Datius).⁸³ A considerable amount of coarse pottery again suggests an Antonine occupation.⁸⁴ The post-Trajanic pottery of the second century falls into two groups; on the one hand are a number of Hadrianic types, on the other a number of vessels which might have been deposited immediately before the disaster of 197. On this basis one may postulate occupation from c. 80-140, followed by an abandonment; during this abandonment there may have been a patrol system on Dere Street based on blockhouses and signal towers. It is suggested that the fort was then re-occupied by Calpurnius Agricola, c. 163. Thereafter it was continually occupied until the end of the fourth century.

⁸¹ p. 212, number 8.

⁸² p. 227, number 10.

⁸³ p. 227, number 11.

⁸⁴ Cf. pp. 213-214, numbers 19, 47; pp. 219-222, numbers 13-15, 25-26, 41; and a number of Central Gaulish sherds which are certainly of second-century date.

This hypothesis will only be proved or disproved by further careful excavation on one or other of the limited areas within the fort which are not covered by modern buildings. This is urgently needed. The Roman forts of County Durham have been surprisingly neglected by archaeologists of the twentieth century; but until scientific excavation has determined when they were built, at what dates they were occupied, and what types of garrison they held, our knowledge of the northern frontier will be incomplete. Nor is this all; we know little of the British population of County Durham during the Roman period. Hardly any of their sites are known, less are excavated. Yet the Romans did not build a network of forts over the county unless there was a substantial native population which might well cause trouble. An attempt to locate, survey and excavate these sites would, if not rewarding in itself, be of considerable value to our understanding of Roman Britain in general and of its northern frontier in particular.



