

## IX.—SAMIAN POTTERY AND A ROMAN ROAD AT CORBRIDGE

*Grace Simpson*

### I. SAMIAN POTTERY FOUND DURING EXCAVATIONS AT CORBRIDGE IN 1952

This paper and three pages of drawings were prepared during the summer of 1954 for publication in the next volume of this journal. Unfortunately they disappeared after they had left my hands. The sherds have now been re-drawn, and the text is revised and brought up to date. The purpose of the original paper was to show the contents of successive strata at Corbridge, so far as the samian pottery was concerned, and how much first-century samian was stratified in levels at least eighty years after their period of production: the same sort of "rubbish-survival" applies to finds of second-century sherds in later levels. A similar situation is found on any Roman site which has a long occupation, with several periods of alteration and re-building.

It has not been possible to locate all the sherds again, which has slightly affected both objectives. However, the sherds are interesting in themselves, especially the very fine Dr. 15/17, no. 8. The original paper was read by Professor Richmond and Professor Birley, and I also wish to thank the artists who drew the sherds.

*The Excavations in 1952*

The excavations by Durham University Excavation

Committee were in two areas that year, Site XI, the Great Storehouse, and Temples I-III. The work on Site XI was described by I. A. Richmond and J. P. Gillam in *Archaeologia Aeliana* Fourth Series, Volume XXXIII, 1955, pp. 218-224, and fig. I and pl. XXII. The lowest levels were examined there. The same two writers discussed the contents of the three pre-Antonine levels on other sites in Volume XXXI, 1953, pp. 205-253. Temples I-III are outside the north-east angles of the East Severan Compound Wall, and the trenches were made in levels underlying Temple III and between the walls of Temples I and II.

### SITE XI

*From the level of Period I, from c. A.D. 79*

#### *South Gaulish Pottery:*

1. Dr. 29. A tiny fragment showing the central moulding. It is an early style for such a northerly site, and it is one of the earliest decorated sherds to have been found at Corbridge. Period of manufacture c. A.D. 55-70.
2. Dr. 18 probably. A broken name-stamp reading PRIM[ probably PRIMVS who worked at La Graufesenque, see Oswald's *Index of Potters' Stamps*, 1931, pp. 248, 414. c. A.D. 60-75.

*From the levels of Periods II-III, Flavian—pre-Antonine*

#### *South Gaulish:*

3. Dr. 37. The design was arranged in narrow horizontal zones. The dolphins within heavy fringed festoons are O.2390A and O.2397A. c. A.D. 85-100.

*From the level of Period III, pre-Antonine*

#### *South Gaulish:*

4. Dr. 37. Two sherds are illustrated. Victory D.481 = O.814 was used by MERCATO, BIRAGILLVS and OFPVDENT. Very

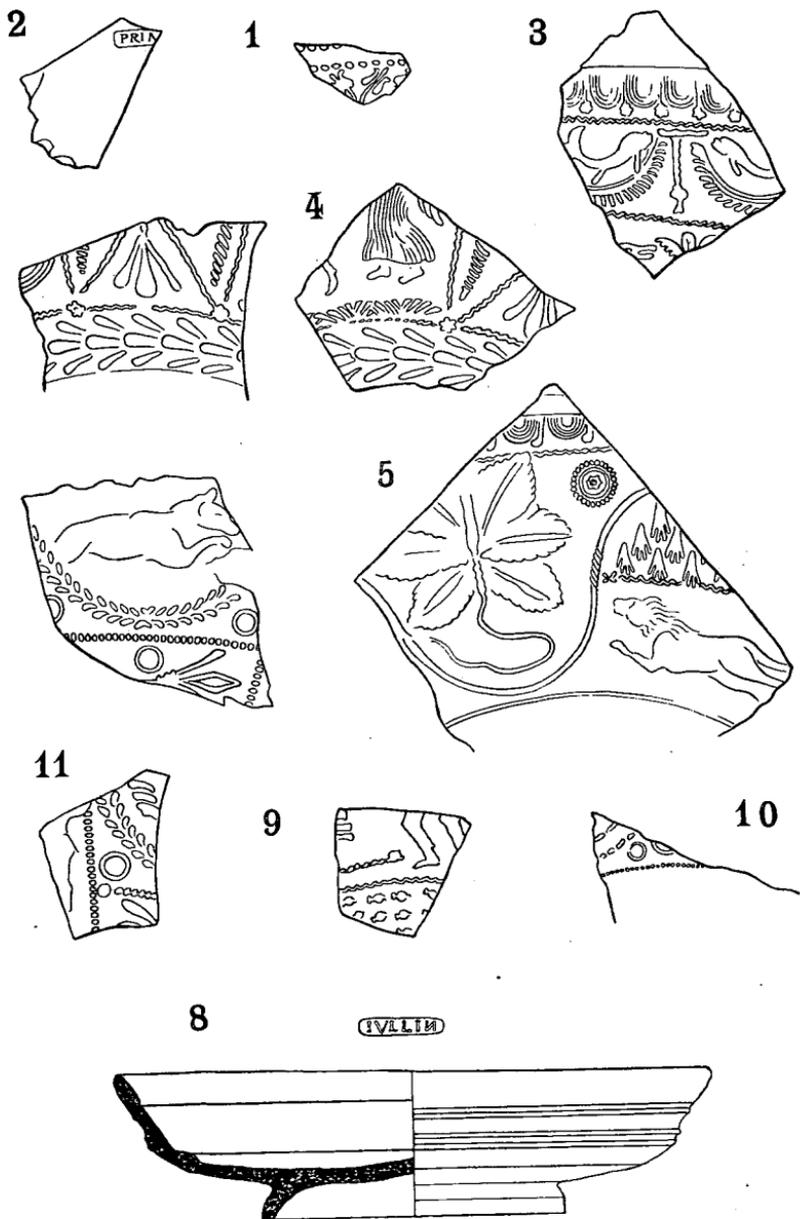


FIG. 1. SAMIAN POTTERY FOUND IN 1952

large coarse basal wreath. Late 1st to early 2nd century.

*Central Gaulish:*

5. Dr. 37. The ovolo 3 and very large leaf used by Potter X-6, see S & S, pl. 75, 22.<sup>1</sup> The tiny cross, large leaf-tips in the arcade, and the star in a beaded circle, are details used by the D ... Potter, now distinguished as Potter X-9 by Mr. G. B. Rogers in a forthcoming publication. For the details see S & S. p. 31. fig. 9, nos. 6, 12 and 19. The charging lion is D-769 = O-1457. For a revised dating for the D ... Potter, see G. Simpson, *AA*<sup>4</sup> XLIX, 1971, pp. 114-115. c. A.D. 115/120-140.

### TEMPLES I-III

*From the levels of Periods I-II, Flavian—Trajanic*

*South Gaulish:*

6. Not illustrated. Dr. 18 base with rouletted ring and the name-stamp PASSEN[ for PASSIENVVS of La Graufesenque, see Oswald's *Index*, pp. 227, 411. With it was the contemporary rim from a thinner Dr. 18 with a glossy slip. c. A.D. 60-80.
7. Not illustrated. An early Dr. 33 with a bright red glossy slip. Large, with very thin wall, broken off just below the interior curve at the base. There is a narrow external groove just above the break, as on O & P, pl. LI, 3, 4 and 7. Such early examples of Dr. 33 are very rare in northern England. Another has been found at Maryport, now at Netherhall, Cumberland.
8. Dr. 15/17. Complete except for a small part of the rim, with a glossy red slip. The name-stamp IVLLIN, has the N reversed. This was IVLLINVS (i) of La Graufesenque, see Oswald's *Index*, p. 394 for the same stamp on a Dr. 15/17 from Aldborough. Flavian.
9. Dr. 37. The figure-type is uncertain. A basal wreath of poppy-heads. c. A.D. 85-100.

*Central Gaulish:*

10. Dr. 37. Only a fragment of the lower edge of the decoration survives, showing a very fine beaded border. Probably made at Les Martres de Veyre.<sup>2</sup> Trajanic.

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Stanfield and Grace Simpson, *Central Gaulish Potters*, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> J.-R. Terrisse, *Les céramiques sigillées Gallo-romaines des Martres-de-Veyre (Puy-de-Dôme)*, XIX<sup>e</sup> Supplement à *Gallia*, 1968.

*From the level of Period IV, Antonine I**Central Gaulish:*

11. Dr. 37. Two sherds from the same bowl in the style of the "DONNAVCVS-SACER Group", see S & S, pl. 84, 2. A sea-horse 0.49, within a leafy festoon. *c. A.D.* 125-145.
12. Dr. 37. A small fragment showing the leafy festoon used by CINNAMVS and PAVLLVS, who both also used the figure-type D-220 = O-348. For the revised dating of the CINNAMVS group, see no. 5 above with reference which associates his early style with the final period of production of the D ... Potter. *c. A.D.* 140-170.

*From the levels of Period V, Antonine II*

No. 13 is from the construction of Period V. *c. A.D.* 163. Nos. 14 and 15 are from the occupation material, and nos. 16-21 are from the destruction level and several of them had been smashed into very small pieces and lay in black burnt earth.

*South Gaulish:*

13. Dr. 27 with a bright smooth glossy slip. A survival from the Flavian period. It was *in* the clay wall of a Period V building.

*Central Gaulish:*

14. Dr. 37 in the large vine-scroll style of the CINNAMVS group, with his ovolo 3. *c. A.D.* 140-170.
15. Dr. 37 with an unusual style which cannot be attributed to any individual potter. The squared ovolo has a straight tongue which thickens towards the tip. The beaded borders are rather irregularly impressed, and so are the birds O-2239B. The two-handled cup, D-1074, was used by DOECCVS, IVLLINVS and CINNAMVS.
16. Dr. 37, almost complete, but in many pieces, and in the style of CETTVS or the Small S Potter. The lion to left is a reduced copy of D-769 = O-1457, and the lion to right is a reduced copy of O-1404. This potter worked at Les Martres de Veyre in the early Antonine period, and his products are common on the Antonine Wall.
17. Dr. 37. Two sherds in the style of TETTVRO, after a cursive signature below the decoration of a Dr. 37 found at Corbridge,

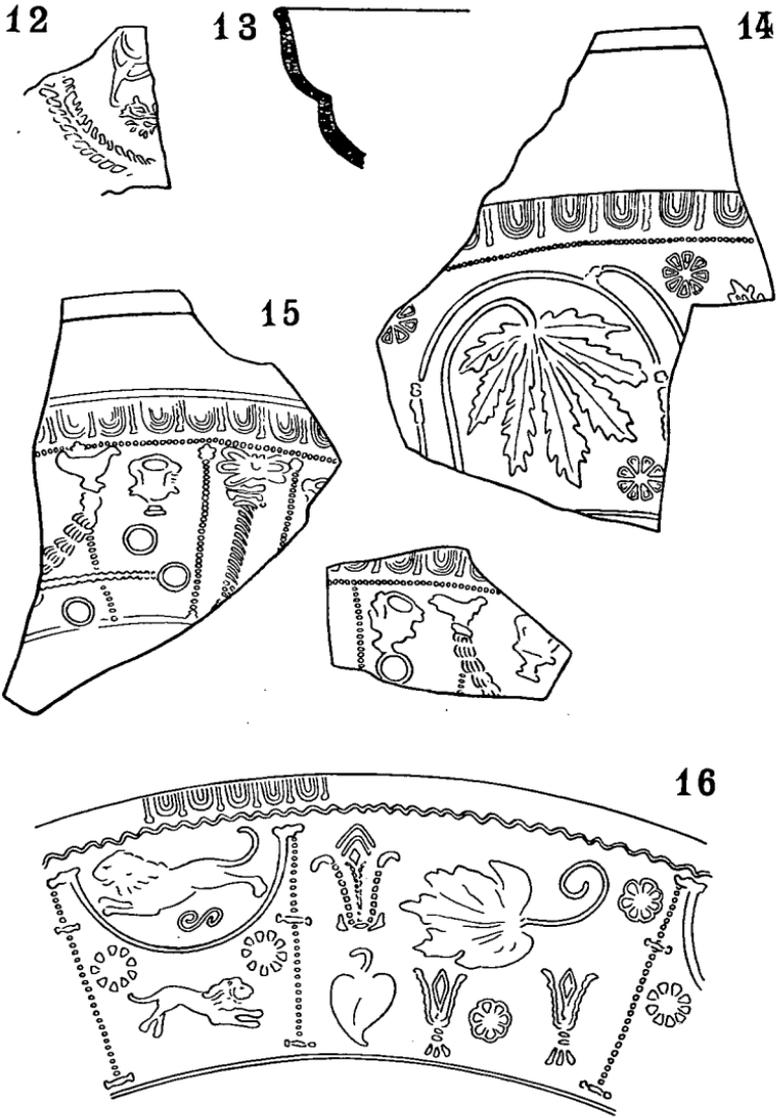


FIG. 2. SAMIAN POTTERY FOUND IN 1952

see S & S, pl. 131, 3, which has the same seated figure of Jupiter which is a variant of D·4 = O·3. Part of this bowl was found in 1951. A similar bowl was found at Holt, W. F. Grimes, *Y Cymmrodor*, XLI, 1930, fig. 45, 119.

18. Dr. 37 in the free-style of CINNAMVS with his ovolo 3B, or beaded tongue. The panther is D·971 = O·1533.  
 19 and 20. Dr. 37 fragments in the style of CINNAMVS with winding scroll designs. c. A.D. 140-170.

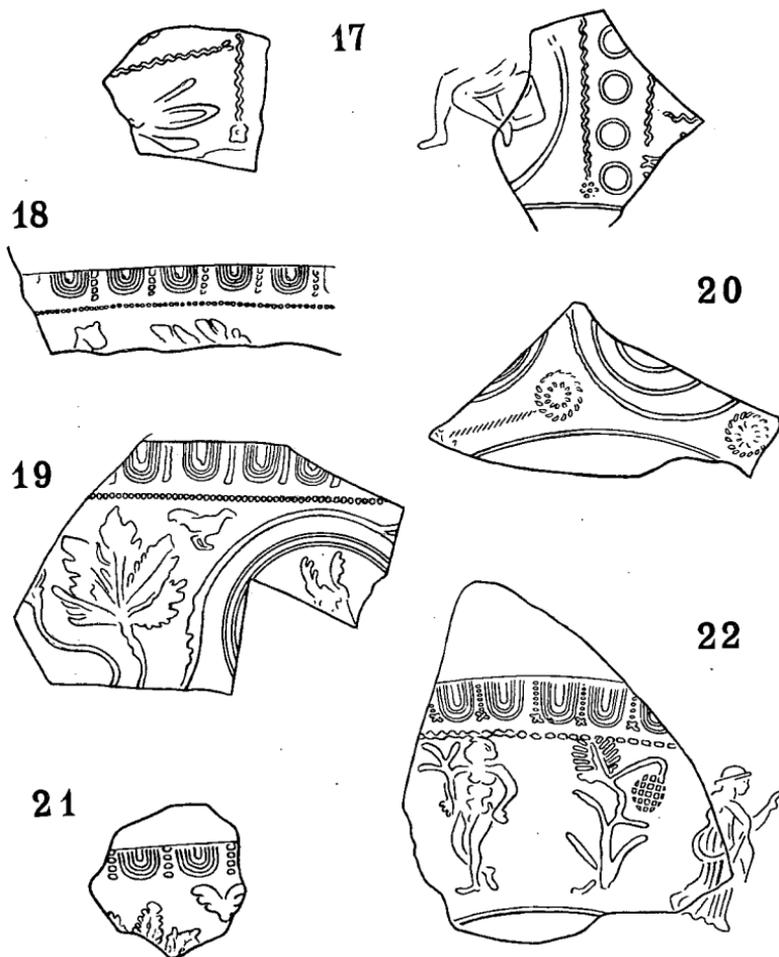


FIG. 3. SAMIAN POTTERY FOUND IN 1952

*East Gaulish:*

21. Dr. 37, probably in the style of B. F. ATTONI, see Ricken, *Die Bilderschüsseln der Römischen Töpfer von Rheinzabern*, 1942, Taf. 40, 2, and for the ovolo, Taf. 261, 3.

*From the level above Period V (not sealed)**Blickweiler Ware:*

22. Dr. 37. A larger part of this bowl was found in 1954 bearing the name-stamp of AVITVS. The woman is O-326. Apollo is smaller than O-92, and the tree is Knorr and Sprater,<sup>3</sup> Taf. 55, 11, and 58, 1 and 2, used by AVITVS.

## II. THE ROMAN ROAD EASTWARDS FROM CORSTOPITUM—CORBRIDGE

*Summary:* The excavation commenced on 20th October, 1949, with the help of the late Mr. Thomas Batey, and it continued for five weeks until 28th November, when severe frost and then snow, ended the investigation. The objective was to find the line of this road from its known and visible position as the main west-east road crossing the excavated area at Corbridge, from its junction with the Roman road northwards which is sometimes known as Dere Street.<sup>4</sup> This north road is just outside the eastern edge of the excavated area, see pl. XIX, and fig. 1. Two road levels, and—in two trenches—three road levels, were located crossing the field. Three road levels were present in Trench 12, close to the modern Hexham to Corbridge road, but deep trenching in Trinity Field, the next one eastwards beyond the modern road, revealed no trace of a road. Presumably it changed direction, or ended, below the modern road corner.

The work was suggested to the writer by the late Pro-

<sup>3</sup> R. Knorr and F. Sprater, *Die westpfälzischen Sigillata-Töpfereien von Blickweiler und Eschweilerhof*, Speier, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> *AA*<sup>3</sup> XI, 1914, 284-291 and pl. VIII (reprint pp. 8-15).



Air Photograph, 1948, showing the two fields trenched and the line of Dere Street. Copyright reserved.



Fig. 1. The Gutter in Trench 4, looking eastwards.



Fig. 2. The flag-stone Gutter in Trench 7, looking eastwards.

fessor Sir Ian Richmond who inspected the trenches and, together with other kind help, took the two photographs which are reproduced here as plates XX, 1 & 2.

*Trench 1.* The starting point was the south-west corner of Site XXIII, located in 1910,<sup>5</sup> where a small square stylobate exactly marks the road junction. This was re-located, and found to be 21 × 20 inches square, with a central socket sunk into it, five inches square. Starting from the southern edge of the stylobate, there was a stone gutter, twenty inches wide, which was located in many of the other trenches and formed the northern edge of the uppermost road as far as Trench 5, and further east it formed the northern edge of the second road level. The gutter stones varied between 30 and 32 inches in length and were well cut, see pl. XX, 1.

Trench 1, Section A-B, see fig. 3, was cut across the road on either side of the hedge. The uppermost road—including the gutter—measured 36 feet 6 inches wide. At its centre it was only eight inches below ground level. It consisted of large river-rounded cobblestones and broken sandstone, loosely packed, and containing small sherds of Central Gaulish Dr. 37, coarse pottery, a wall sherd from a second-century amphora, and fragments of burnt animal bones, all clearly having been rubbish lying about the site. The gravel surface of the road had disappeared. One foot below the upper road surface there was a second road, its southern edge marked by a packing of clay. This lay on the fine gravel of a third road surface which projected southwards for two and a half feet beyond the uppermost road, and it was limited by a shallow earth-cut trench for drainage purposes.

*Trench 2.* 19 feet 8 inches from the centre of the hedge line to the north edge of the gutter. (All subsequent measurements cited as "hedge to gutter" are from similar measuring points.) 160 feet from the stylobate to the east side of

<sup>5</sup> AA<sup>3</sup> VII, 1911, 168-175 and pl. III (reprint pp. 26-33).

T2. Two courses of squared kerb-stones stood on the southern side of the stone gutter, and three courses of dressed stones, which were not further investigated, stood on its northern edge.

*Trench 3.* 24 feet from hedge to gutter. 46 feet 6 inches from the east side of T2 to the east side of T3. Two courses of large re-used dressed stones stood on the north edge of the gutter.

*Trench 4.* 26 feet 6 inches from hedge to gutter. 61 feet 8 inches from east side of T3 to east side of T4. The gutter sloped down two feet within the ten feet long west to east trench and in it lay a small bronze coin in poor condition, c. A.D. 330. A complete jug and mug lay at the level of the uppermost of two kerb-stones, see fig. 4, nos. 1 and 2, their position was close to the ranging pole on pl. XX, 1, and they were three feet below modern ground level. One cover-stone was in position over the gutter in this trench.

*Trench 5.* 28 feet from hedge to gutter. 17 feet 6 inches from the east side of T4 to the east side of T5. Section C-D shows two road surfaces, see fig. 3. The western half of the west to east trench, which was eleven and a half feet long, was disturbed and the disturbance continued down to the clean sandy subsoil at three and a half feet down. The upper road here was fifteen and a half feet wide including the gutter and southern kerb-stones. The lower road was surfaced by small cobblestones.

*Trench 7.* 30 feet from hedge to gutter. 47 feet from east side of T5 to east side of T7. T7 was 17 feet long from west to east. No gutter-stones were found, though they may have been at a lower level as in T10. Small flagstones, closely set, formed the bottom of a channel with large blocks set on them at either side, see pl. XX, 2. The blocks were one foot high and from one and a half to two and a half feet long. A

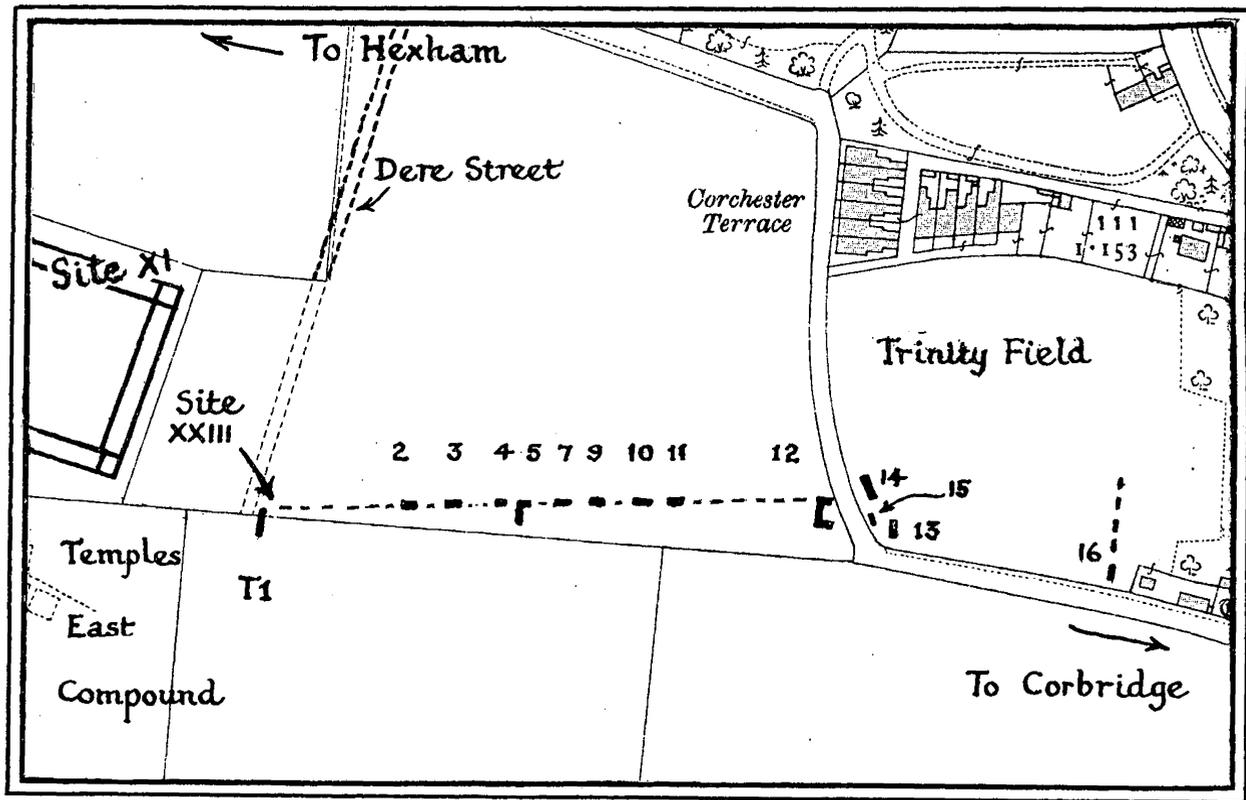


FIG. 1. PLAN SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE TRENCHES

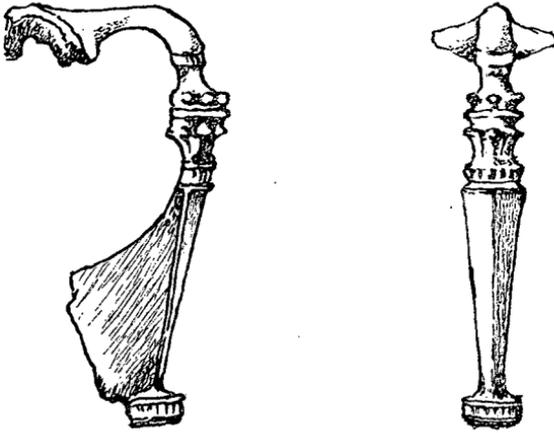
small portion of the lower road was located; one foot below the flagged channel and surfaced by small cobblestones.

*Trench 9.* 30 feet from hedge to gutter. 39 feet from east side of T7 to east side of T9. The gutter was floored by closely set flag-stones, as in T7.

*Trench 10.* 32 feet from hedge to north edge of upper gutter. 44 feet 4 inches from east side of T9 to east side of T10. Section E-F shows the upper channel, floored with flag-stones, which contained a late fourth-century calcite gritted cooking-pot rim, see fig. 4, no. 5. The upper road was loosely packed and mixed with scraps of pottery, as in T1. This road material filled the lower gutter which contained near the bottom a trumpet brooch of the second century, see fig. 2, and a blackish-grey burnished cooking-pot rim, the kind with a straight rim and acute-angled hatching of the late second to early third century, see fig. 4, no. 6. The gutter filling also contained two sherds of reddish-coloured Derbyshire ware, probably of the third century.

*Trench 11.* 33 feet 6 inches from hedge to north edge of lower gutter. The upper gutter had been robbed away. 26 feet from east side of T10 to east side of T11. The lower gutter was three and a half feet below the upper road surface. A fragment of Dr. 37 in the style of the Antonine potter CASVRIVS lay in this gutter.

*Trench 12.* Section G-H. The southern kerb of the uppermost road was 31 feet from the centre of the hedge. From that point on the hedge line to the gate leading to the modern road the measurement was 46 feet along the hedge. The northern kerb of the uppermost road was uncovered up to the fence, and its southern kerb was located at intervals to the fence. This road was 24 feet 6 inches wide and showed no change of direction. The line of the southern kerb of the second road, sixteen feet further south, was



Profile

Front View

FIG. 2. TRUMPET BROOCH FROM TRENCH 10

equally straight in its direction. This road was 25 feet wide, and below its northern kerb lay the gravel surface of a third road. An unscribed altar two feet high and one foot square lay in the loosely packed cobbles and sandstone of the uppermost road. Two asses of Antoninus Pius, Cos III, much corroded, but apparently not much worn, lay on the gravelled surface of the second road. In the drainage ditch of this road lay the Hadrianic-Antonine cooking-pot rim in black burnished fabric, see fig. 4, no. 7.

*Trench 13.* The trench was sited in Trinity Field in order to locate the roads if they had continued in the same straight line. But there was no trace of them. At four feet down there was a flagged floor, and below it lay Hadrianic to Antonine coarse pottery and a very worn Republican denarius identified by the late Mr. W. Percy Hedley as belonging to the second-half of the first century B.C. It had VICTRIX in the exergue. At six feet down there was another

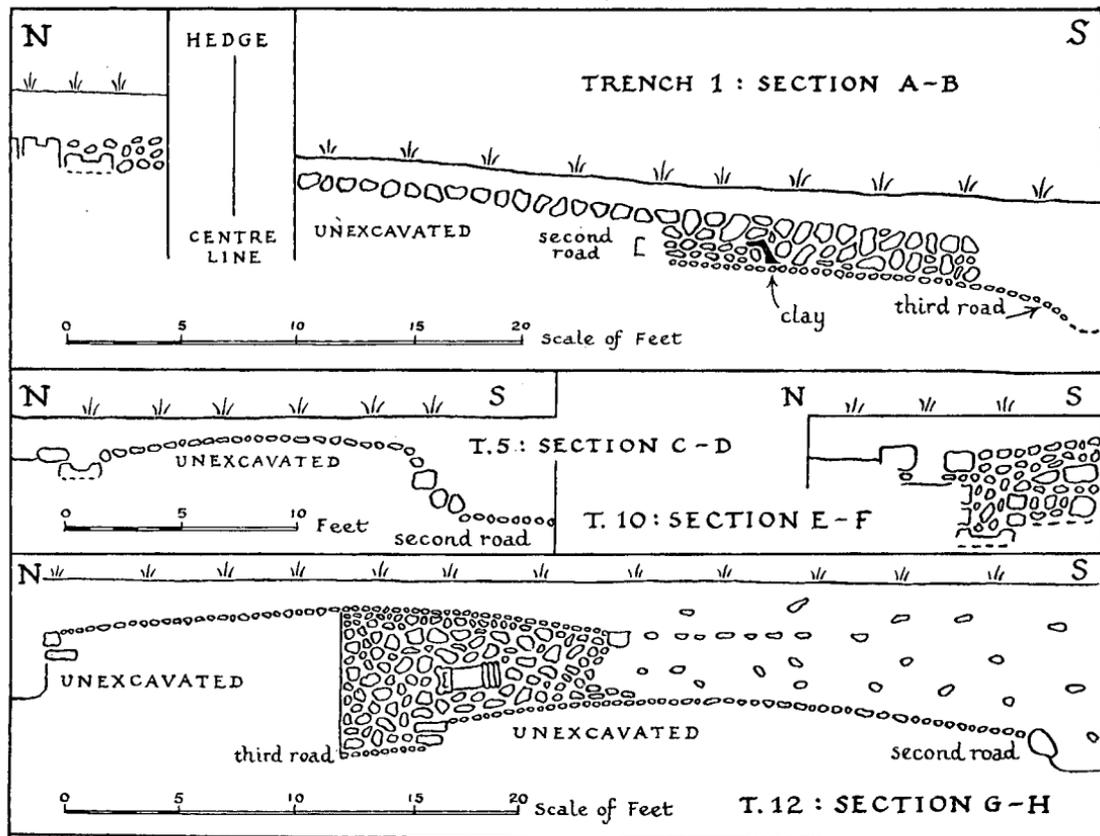


FIG. 3. SECTIONAL DRAWINGS OF TRENCHES 1, 5, 10 AND 12

flagged floor and on it lay Flavian to Trajanic pottery. The natural sandy subsoil was reached at seven feet.

*Trench 14.* It was hoped that the roads had changed direction to the north, but the twenty-four feet long trench showed only occupation debris including some fragments from a human skull-cap, two LEG VI V tiles, a candle-holder in coarse dark grey ware, see fig. 4, no. 8, and a few fragments of Antonine samian and coarse pottery, all at about four feet deep.

*Trench 15.* Between T13 and T14, and close to the modern footpath. It contained only a rough stone floor and occupation debris, scraps of second-century pottery and animal bones.

*Trench 16.* This, and four trial-holes, were dug at sixteen feet intervals down to the natural sand or gravel subsoil, which was reached at about four feet. Small fragments of Trajanic to Antonine pottery were the only objects found here. It would seem that the roads had turned southwards below the modern road, unless they ended at this area of civilian occupation.

#### NOTES ON THE POTTERY

##### Fig. 4

1. See T4. Found with no. 2. A complete jug with a pinched spout, in coarse dark grey calcite-gritted fabric. Rough cross-hatching is lightly marked around the girth. The jug was partly, if not wholly, made by hand. The shoulder is roughly decorated by a more deeply-impressed wavy line between two irregularly drawn incised lines. The handle, the upper part of which is missing, is decorated with a rough stab and drag ornament. This most unusual jug would appear, from its position, to belong to the very latest period of Roman occupation at Corbridge.
2. The mug, handmade, and complete except for one handle, is in a finer and more dense calcite-gritted fabric than no. 1. It is

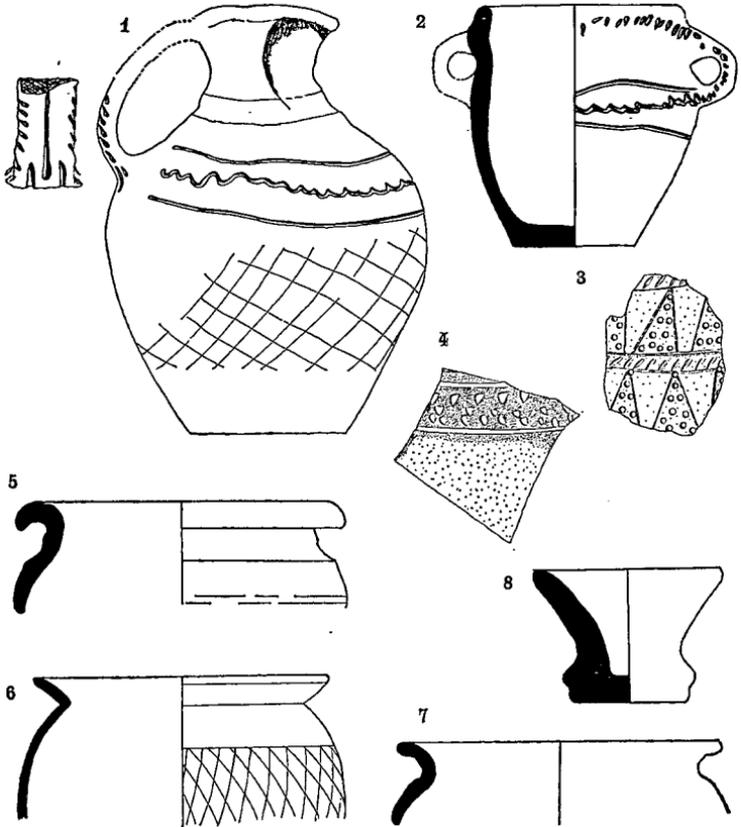


FIG. 4. POTTERY FROM TRENCHES 4, 10, 12 AND 14

black and dark grey in colour, very thick, and decorated with a very irregular wavy line, and with stab and drag impressions.

Parallels to this jug and mug are very hard to find, but the following two sherds are similar in fabric and decoration. Dr. David Smith provided the information about them, and they were drawn by Mr. Wilfred Dodds.

3. It was found during the excavations at Aesica, Greatchesters Fort, by J. P. Gibson in 1894 (*AA*<sup>2</sup> XVII, 1894-95, xxii-xxxi). It has the same dense, very hard, black-brown fabric as no. 2, and it was probably handmade. The decoration consists of incised lines, stab-marks, and small round impressions probably

made by the end of a bird bone. Now in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne.

4. A wheelmade, hard fabric, brown on both surfaces with a grey core. The sherd is broken off just below the rim, and the shoulder has been decorated by roughly-impressed stab ornament between two incised lines. In the Museum at South Shields, Co. Durham.
5. See T10, upper gutter.
6. See T10, lower gutter.
7. See T12, in the earth-cut drainage channel at the southern edge of the second road.
8. See T14, in Trinity Field.

### *Acknowledgments*

Plate XIX is reproduced by permission of Dr. J. K. St. Joseph, Curator in Aerial Photography in the University of Cambridge. The detail on fig. 1 is based on the Ordnance Survey Map by permission of the Ordnance Survey Office. Mr. R. L. Cessford completed the drawing of figs. 1-3.

