



1. Turret 29a, re-built end of west wing wall



2. Turret 29a, east wing wall



1. Turret 29a, east wing wall with narrow wall built on



2. Turret 34a, a general view



1. Turret 34a. Detail of core in junction of E turret wall (foreground) and wing wall



2. Turret 34a west wing wall on broad foundation



1. Turret 34a east side, blocking wall removed for insertion of hearth



2. Turret 34a west side and later walling

VI

A RE-EXAMINATION OF TWO TURRETS ON HADRIAN'S WALL

Dorothy Charlesworth

TURRET 29A (BLACK CARTS)

JOHN CLAYTON, on whose land the turret stood, published briefly an account of his excavation in *A.A.*², vii (1876) 256-260. He found coins of Vespasian, Trajan, Hadrian and Constantine the Great, but no intervening emperors, fragments of millstone, coarse pottery, some samian, broken glass, animal bones and horn, in fact the normal range of finds from a turret, but with more coins than usual. One centurial stone (*RIB* 1512) was found in the turret. Another centurial stone (*RIB* 1513) was found on the north side of the Wall during excavation. This attracted no comment. It has always been assumed that it was built into the south face originally, but the recent discovery of a stone *in situ* 31 m west of the end of the west wing wall in the first course over the offset in the north face and a fallen stone 82 m west of the turret on the north side of the Wall (*Britannia* iii (1972) No. 12) make it plain that centurial stones were built into both faces of the Wall. The centurial stone on the north face at Hare Hill (*RIB* 1958) is not in its original position.

It was thought that the turret should be re-examined before consolidation by the Department of the Environment in 1971. Unfortunately Clayton's work was thorough and only a part of the original floor level remained. No finds were made. Burnt stones were noted in the 5th and 6th course of the east wall as though there had been a floor and hearth at that level.

The turret measures internally 3.45 by 3.40 m and its south wall is 1.04 m, east wall 1.20 m and west wall 1.10 m wide. The doorway with a thick threshold stone, with slots for the stone jambs and a pivot-hole to hang the door at its outer edge, is at the east side. It is the type thought to have been built by the 20th legion (fig. 1).

The treatment of the wing walls has received attention (*A.A.*³, ix p. 56 and *A.A.*⁴, i p. 152). The west wing wall (pl. IX, 1) is squared off in the usual manner (although the irregularity of the work suggests some 19th century rebuilding) and the broad foundation beyond it has been removed. The east wing wall (pl. IX, 2) terminates in a ragged end and there is no sign of the broad foundation beyond it. The south face of the narrow wall can be seen coming up level with the end of the wing wall. At the critical point the facing stones are missing, but they survive again perched up on the core of the wing wall (pl. X, 1).

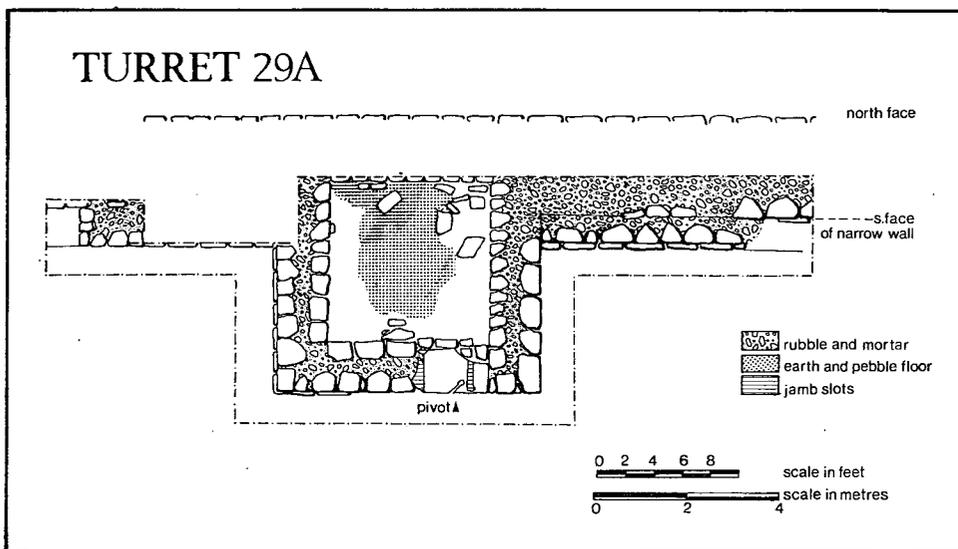


Fig. 1

Evidently no attempt had been made to carry the whole wing wall up to the full height of the rampart walk. As might be expected as a matter of normal building practice, it must have been stepped down gradually from the turret wall ready for bonding with the curtain. This is not always the case, for some wing walls can still be seen standing to a considerable height, without the narrow face riding over them. There one must assume they were carried up to the height of the rampart walk, which would give a more finished appearance to the work. The Willowford turrets 49a and b are examples of this. Neither turret was subsequently obliterated. At 29a there is no reason to assume this narrow face on the wing wall is a later feature. The turret was never obliterated and it never collapsed. Even now it is one of the best preserved in Northumberland, with only its south end heavily robbed. Turret 26b (Brunton) has a similar feature on its east wing wall and in the sector between Gilsland vicarage and Willowford the builders of the narrow wall have not always bothered to demolish those courses of the broad wall already standing, but have merely put in the new line of facing stones behind them. It is surprising in these cases that water has not got in between the two faces and broken up the foundation. In consolidation the Department must make the core watertight, the evidence is, therefore, to some extent destroyed and the photographic record of the detail is important.

TURRET 34A

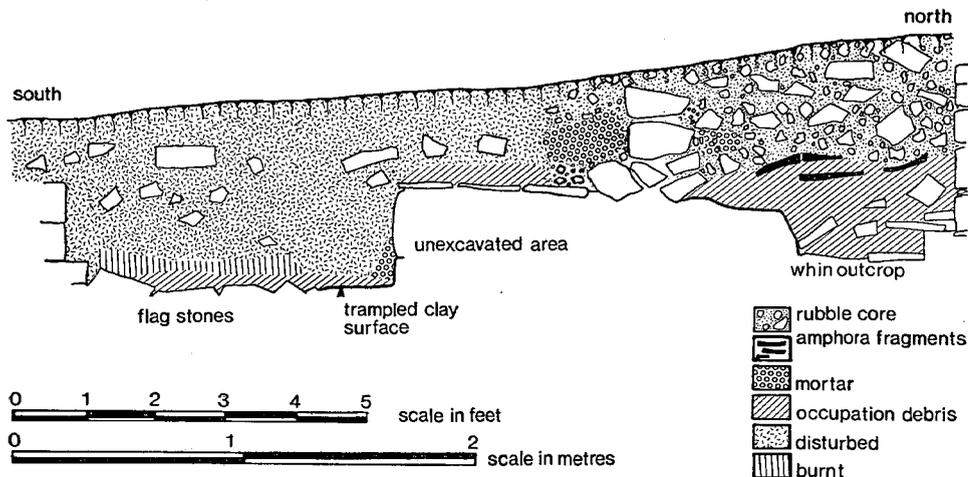


Fig. 2

TURRET 34A (WEST GRINDON)

The turret was excavated by a team of volunteers on behalf of the Department of Environment in 1971 and has been consolidated (fig. 3).

The *Handbook to the Roman Wall*¹ mentions excavation in 1913 and further work to determine the type of the turret² is recorded in 1948, but there is no detailed report on either excavation.

It is the type thought to be built by the 20th legion, door at the east end and narrow walls with a single offset. It measures internally 3.55 m north to south and 3.90 m east to west (pl. X, 2). The east wall is slightly narrower than the south and west walls, averaging 0.90 m to their 0.95 m. Internally this turret is slightly smaller than 33b and its walls thicker. Its walls are of squared facing stones, the core of small stone and mortar which contrasts with the almost dry build of the core of the wing wall, which, like that of the curtain wall, is of large whin blocks (pl. XI, 1). The wing walls are unusually short 0.90 m (pl. XI, 2). In consolidation the core must be made weatherproof and some of the distinction between the core of turret and of curtain wall is lost because both are cement filled. It is just west of this, on Sewingshields, that Hodgson noted the construction of the core of the wall in stages of about 4 courses with mortar binding each stage but the intervening rubble being left almost dry.³

¹ ed. I. A. Richmond (1965), p. 107.

² *J.R.S.*, 38 (1948), p. 84.

³ J. Hodgson, *History of Northumberland*, pt. II, vol. III (1840), p. 287.

The threshold stone was worn and had cracked right across, but had never been replaced. It showed the usual seatings for stone jambs and the pivot-hole for hanging the door at its outer edge as though it were vital to leave as much space in the turret as possible. Even with the rise in the floor level during the occupation the same threshold could be used, those entering stepping down in the early and stepping up in the later years. A path of small stone and amphora fragments had been laid outside.

The interior of the turret was much disturbed. A trench had been dug part of the way round the inner face of the wall to ground level, in places the whin outcrop. Where it remained, the original floor, below the level of the threshold and offset, was a mixture of clay and mortar with patches of clean clay. The entrance had been improved with flagstones to level it up with the whin and clay and mortar spread over them. The floor must at all times have been extremely uneven. Three hearths, two on the west side and one on the east belonged to the earliest occupation and a great spread of burning (see section fig. 2) overlay part of the trampled clay and flag floor near the entrance. It appeared to be an accidental fire not a hearth but it had been partly removed in earlier excavations and its limits could not be traced. Some fragments of pottery, mainly cooking pot were found on the original floor. One piece joins with another fragment found on the flagging at the west side of the turret (Gillam 118 see p. 103). Some nails and a hob-nail from a shoe-sole were also found. Two pieces of military equipment, a spear-head and knife, came from the floor in a somewhat disturbed area just west of the centre of the turret. It may be noted here that most of the finds were made outside the turret.

At the south-west corner of the turret the whin outcrop stood above the general level of the floor and it may have formed part of the platform often found in this position in stone wall turrets. Earlier excavators had already dug down to the rock, but what remained of the floor did not allow much space for a platform. A very regular edge of flagging gave the impression that there might have been some structure against the centre of the west wall, perhaps a bench.

There must have been a steady build up of repairs on top of this floor, probably finishing with a flagged floor, a piece of which remained under and in front of the later blocking wall. A large hearth covered most of it.

The turret had been obliterated, like most of those in this sector. Its walls reduced and the south face of the narrow wall continued across the site to make a continuous rampart walk. The continuation across the reduced wing walls had been robbed and what was left of the internal wall was an unsound structure with a very meagre packing, more earth than stone behind it. Almost an entire amphora was smashed in the core.

On the east side this blocking wall had been broken through and a hearth with a fire-back (not a Roman feature) created in the north-east corner. The pit (pl. XII, 1) which contained a quern-stone also belonged to this period. A

TURRET 34A

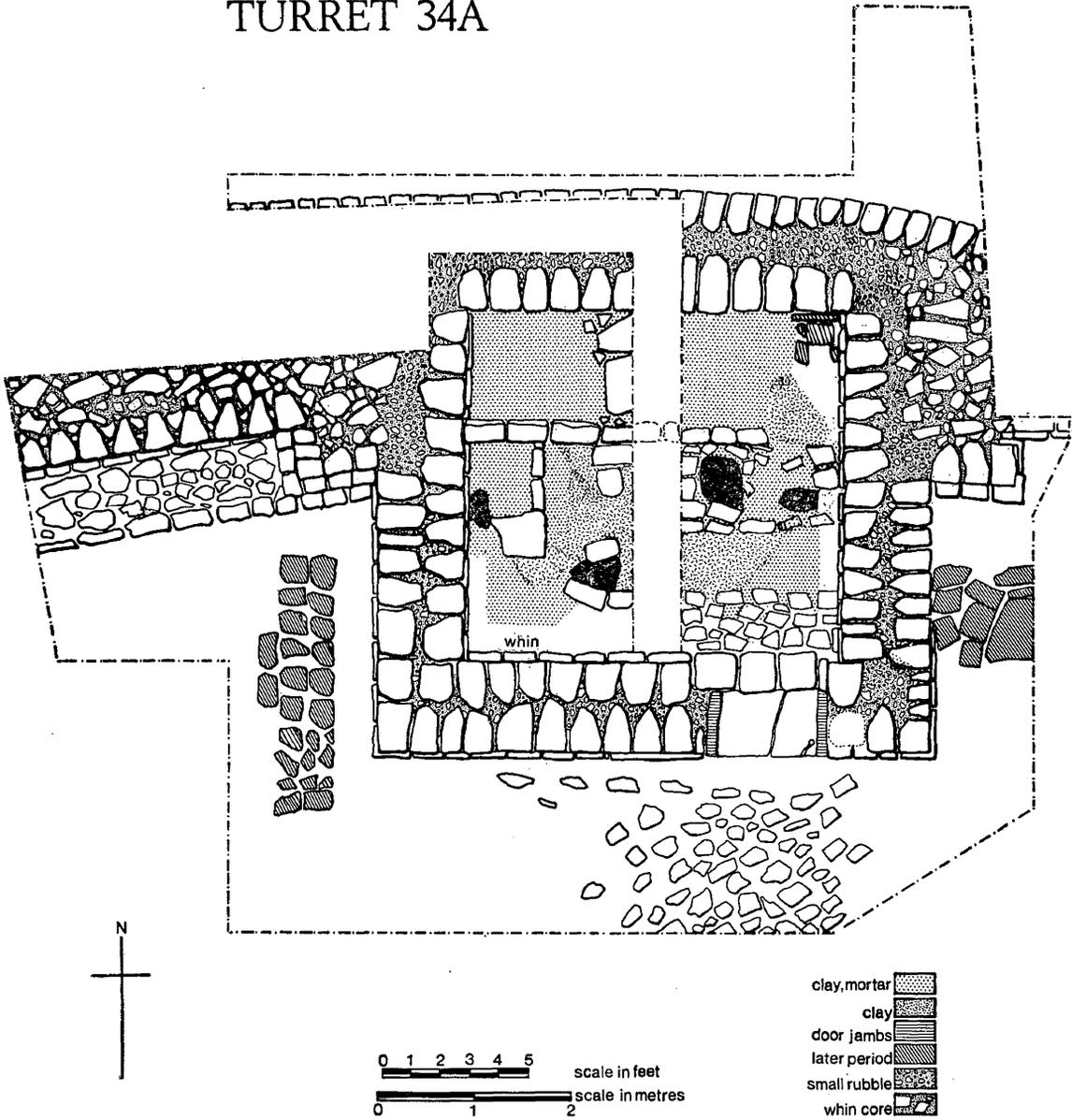


Fig. 3

scatter of small fragments of green glazed-ware indicate that the turret was in part at least re-used at the time when Sewingshields castle,⁴ which lies at the foot of the crag was inhabited, not of course by King Arthur as legend has it, but by members of the Halton (1266), Ogle (1415) and the Heron families. Further evidence of medieval use was the remains of rough walling to the west of the turret (pl. XII, 2) and some flagging to the east. A slight rectangular depression apparently bounded by Hadrian's Wall on the north and a narrow field wall on the south appears to be a garth or stock-yard. It is a bleak, windswept place but those comfortably sheltered below the crag may well have found it advisable to have a watchman living on the top.

The excavation unfortunately contributes nothing new to our knowledge of the turrets. It was impossible to determine whether or not there had been a break in the occupation, as in the occupation of the milecastles. The pottery is all, as might be expected in an obliterated turret, of 2nd century date and few pieces are late in the century. The piece of Derbyshire ware is notable but need not be later than early Antonine (p. 103).⁵

FINDS

SAMIAN by Hedley Pengelly

IN SMALL STONE IN W. SIDE

1. = No. 3.

IN OLD TRENCH, E. SIDE

2. Form 37, slightly burnt after fracture. Three joining fragments of base and footring with rivet. The footring is well-worn. Central Gaulish, late Antonine.

OUTSIDE THE TURRET

3. Form 37 (see also No. 1). Two fragments in the style of Sacer of Lezoux having mixed panels with neat rosettes at the corner as on bowls from the Saalburg and Cannstatt (*S & S*⁶; pl. 84, 14 and 15). The Saalburg bowl also has the caryatid (D 657, O 1206) and hare O 2061) and the Cannstatt one the narrow panel with circles. The third figure-type is the bear (D 820, O 1527). Central Gaulish, c. A.D. 130-50, fig. 4, 1.



4. Form 37, slightly burnt. Fragment of rim and a small fragment from the same bowl in the style of Paternus with the tip of his ovolo 3 (*S & S*; fig. 30, 3), and a little panel decoration giving the corner of a festoon between roped borders (cf. *S & S*; pls. 104, 4 and 105, 12). Central Gaulish, c. A.D. 160-90, fig. 4, 2.



Fig. 4.
1 and 2

5. Form 33, slightly burnt; glaze eroded on the inside. Central Gaulish, Antonine.

⁴ *A.A.*², xiv (1891), J. C. Bates, *Border Holds*, p. 313, 15, 47.

⁵ I am indebted to Mr. Webster for this identification.

⁶ *S & S* = J. A. Stanfield and Grace Simpson, *Central Gaulish Potters*, (1958).

POTTERY

A. ON ORIGINAL FLOOR

1. Smooth grey ware, deep bowl, fig. 5, 1.
2. Black burnished ware (Gillam 118) and joining piece from the flagged floor, fig. 5, 2.
3. Black burnished ware (Gillam 116), fig. 5, 3.
4. Light grey ware jar, fig. 5, 4.
5. Top of a pink ware flagon, fig. 5, 5.

B. ON THE FLAGGED FLOOR

6. Calcite gritted ware, pink/grey colour, fig. 5, 6.
7. Black burnished ware cooking pot rim unevenly fired (Gillam 115/116), fig. 5, 7.
8. Black burnished ware, unevenly fired, fig. 6, 8.

C. VARIOUS LOCATIONS

9. 6 fragments of a pink ware bowl as Gillam 197 but without decoration found on the original floor west of the baulk, in disturbed soil east of the baulk and in the course of consolidation, fig. 6, 9.

D. IN THE CORE OF THE BLOCKING WALL

10. Cooking pot rim, black burnished ware, soot covered, fig. 6, 10.
11. Cooking pot rim, black burnished ware, very sketchy cross-hatching, fig. 6, 11.
12. Cooking pot fragment black burnished ware, acute cross-hatching, fig. 6, 12.
13. Light grey ware, fig. 6, 13.
14. Grey ware beaker rim, fig. 6, 14.
15. Cooking pot rim, black burnished ware, fig. 8, 15.
16. Fine grey ware jar, fig. 8, 16.
17. Black burnished ware dish (Gillam 318), fig. 8, 17.

E. OUTSIDE THE TURRET

18. Large jar, dark grey ware, 2 rows of zig-zag decoration burnished central reserve, fig. 7.
19. Rim of Derbyshire ware (*Derbyshire Arch. J* 89 (1969) G. D. B. Jones and P. V. Webster, *Derbyshire ware, a re-appraisal* illustrates a similar rim in an early Antonine context at Melandra), fig. 8, 19.
20. Fine light grey ware small jar, rim designed to support a lid, fig. 8, 20.
21. Calcite gritted ware, dark grey, fine comb marks on outer surface, fig. 8, 21.
22. Cooking pot, misfired, nearly white, soot on one side (Gillam 116), fig. 9, 22.
23. Cooking pot with wavy line below rim, black burnished ware (Gillam 125), fig. 9, 23.
24. Cooking pot, black burnished ware (Gillam 116), fig. 9, 24.
25. Grey ware neck of jar (Gillam 30), fig. 9, 25.

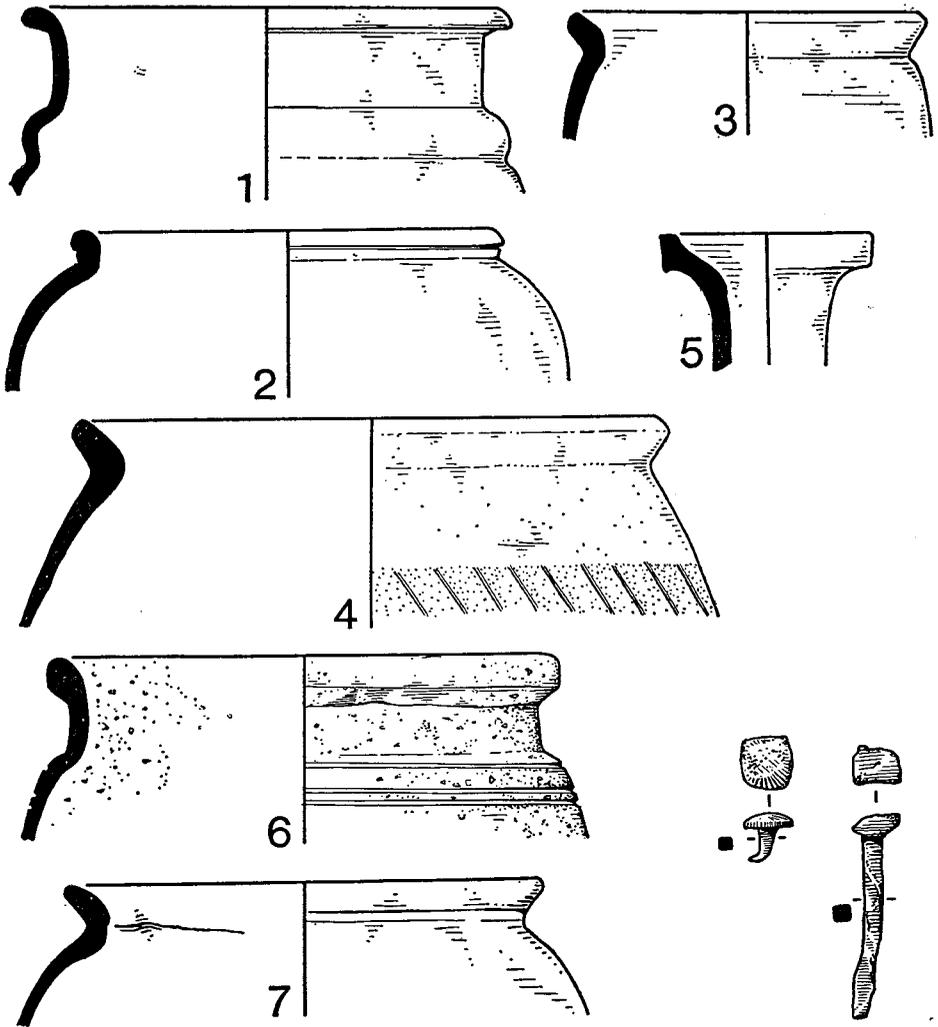


Fig. 5



Decorated stone from turret 34a

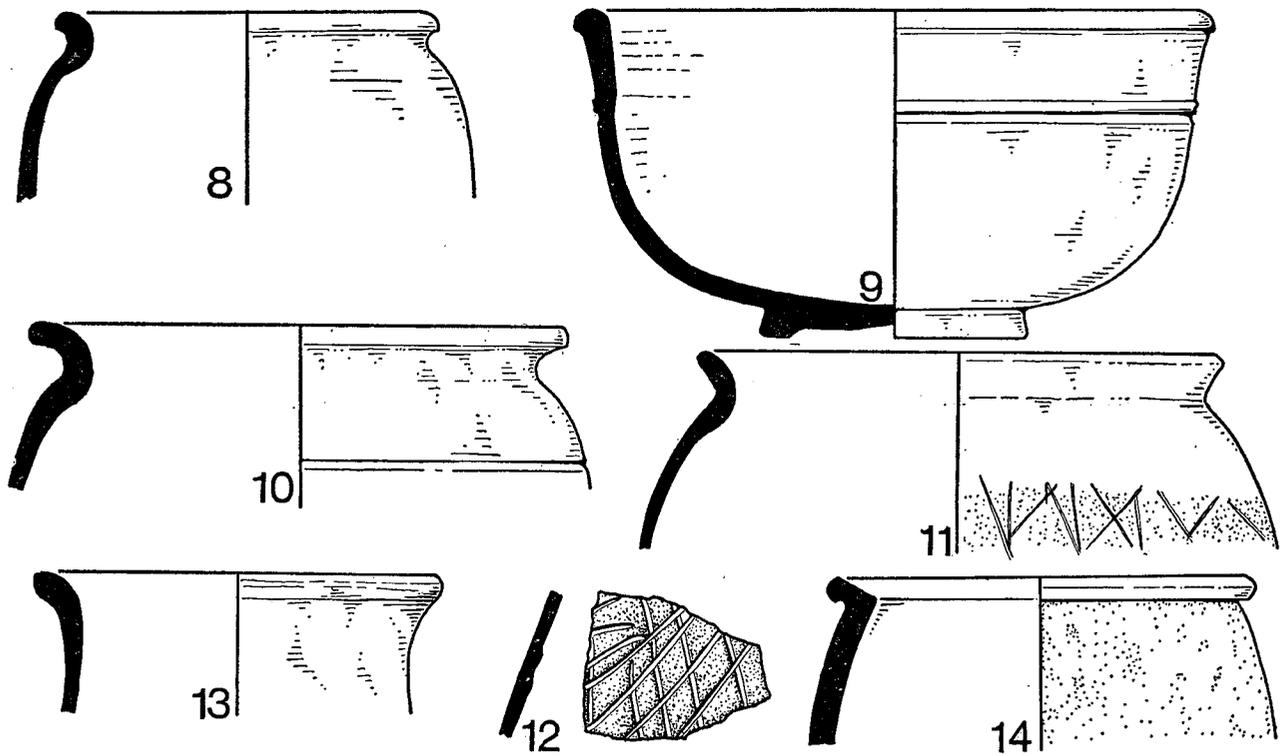
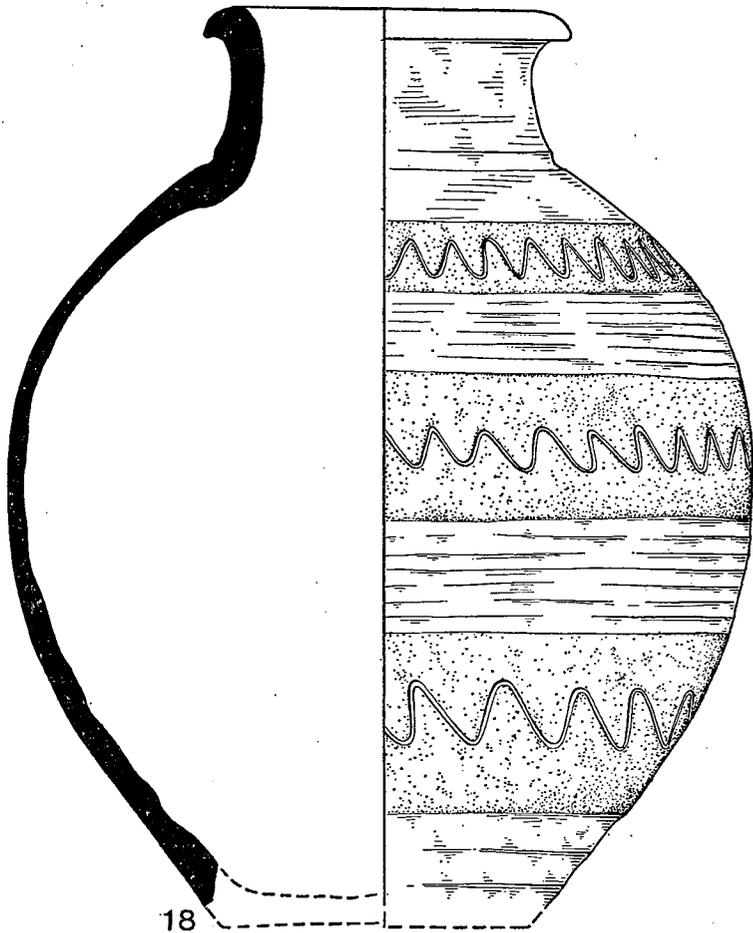


Fig. 6



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Fig. 7

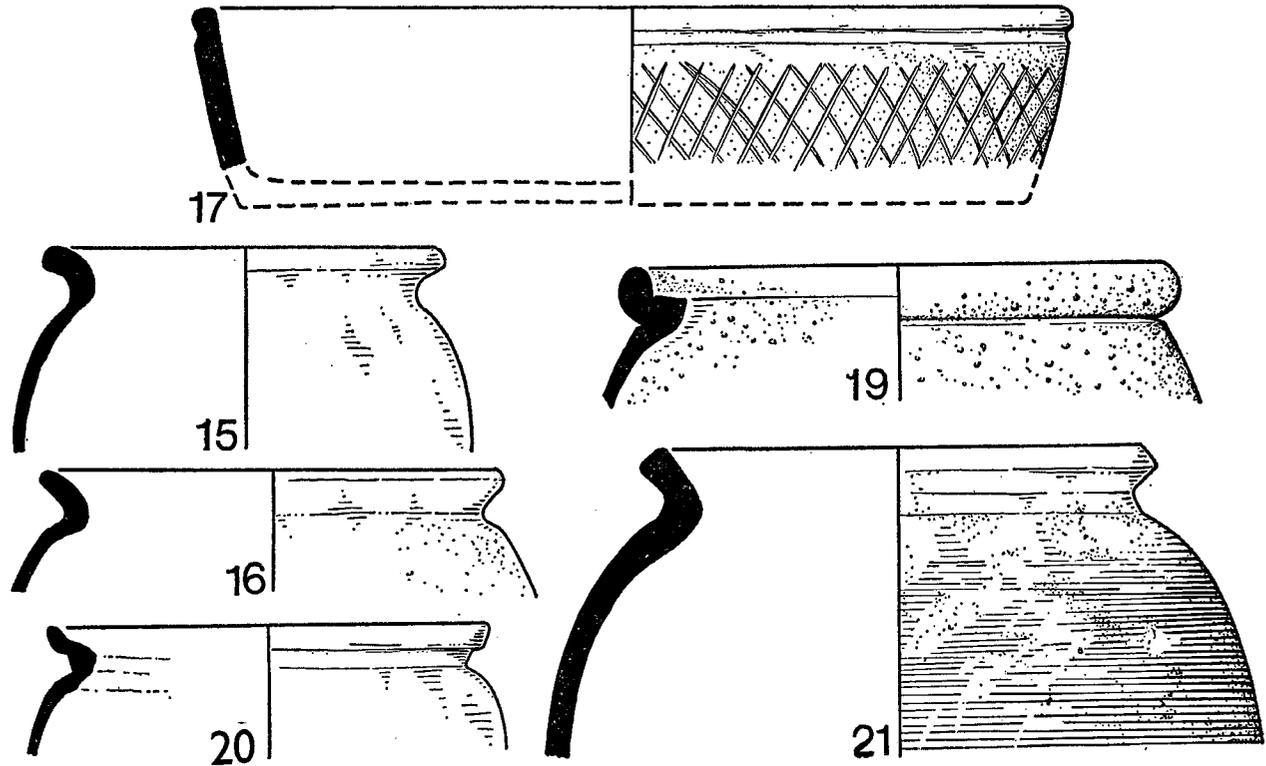


Fig. 8

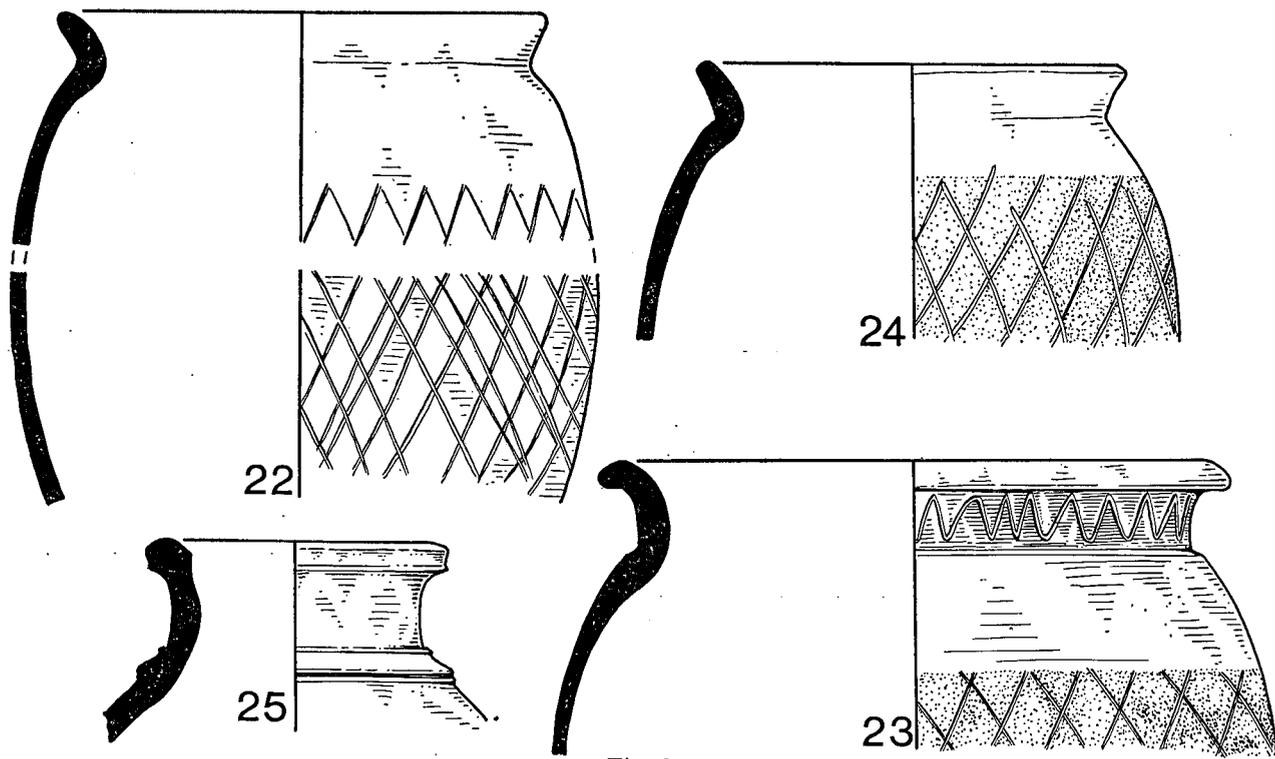


Fig. 9

GRAFFITI

These have kindly been examined by Mr. R. P. Wright. Neither has been seen since transfer of material to the new D.O.E. office.

1. On samian Dr. 33 above the carination VIRILIS, found outside the turret. *Britannia* iii (1972) p. 360 no. 42a.

2. On a black burnished ware jar MASVIITVS (Mansuetus) found outside the turret, *ibid.* no. 426.

STONE (pl. XIII)

Mr. R. P. Wright kindly considered the possibility of the shallow markings forming part of an inscription and rejected it. The border shows that only one corner of the pattern remains. The lower line looks like a crude representation of a range of hills, the upper ornament appears to form the centre-line of the whole. Found during consolidation.

IRON

1. Nails and hob nail (fig. 5) on the clay floor.
2. Spear head, on original floor west side of baulk, fig. 10, 1.
3. Knife with decorated handle, for type see R. G. Collingwood and I. A. Richmond, *The archaeology of Roman Britain*, pl. xix m, n, fig. 10, 2.
4. Two choppers, on original floor level, fig. 10, 3 and 4.
5. Stirrup found in consolidation, medieval, fig. 10, 5.

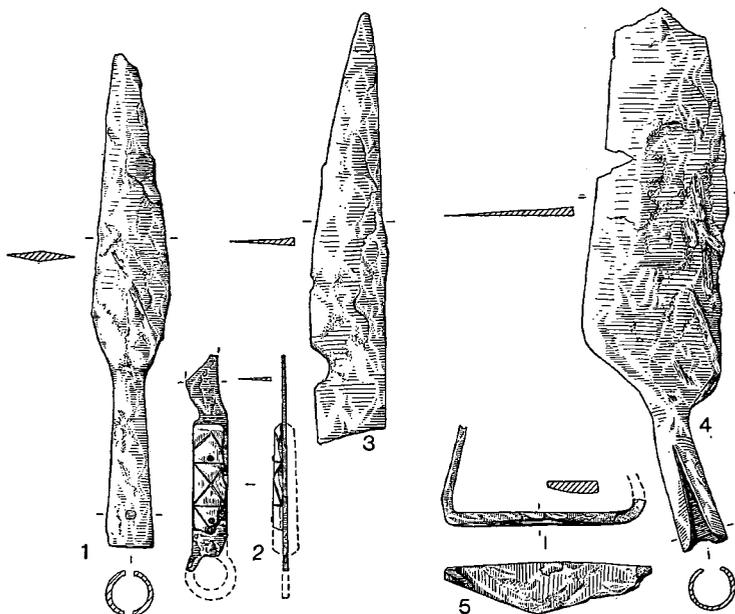


Fig. 10

