

XI

NOTES

1. A CROP-MARK SITE AT HASTING HILL, TYNE AND WEAR, NZ 355 541

AMONG THE aerial photographs taken by Professor Norman McCord, and now housed in the Museum of Antiquities at Newcastle upon Tyne, are five showing an oval enclosure at Hasting Hill, half a mile north of Middle Herrington, Sunderland. The enclosure measures approximately 100 m × 60 m, and is marked by a single interrupted ditch (pl. IX). It seems indistinguishable from sites recorded in southern England, and which are regarded as causewayed camps of Neolithic construction.¹

This interpretation of the site is given added weight by the proximity of the Hasting Hill barrow, only a quarter of a mile to the north-west, for in the mound material of this barrow several sherds of Neolithic pottery were found.² The Neolithic pottery may be presumed to pre-date the barrow and to have been accidentally incorporated, for the barrow contained a degenerate Beaker³ in what appears to have been the primary cist, as well as Urn burials.⁴

The site appears isolated from other causewayed camps: the nearest known are in Staffordshire and Lincolnshire,⁵ and these have not been tested for excavation. However, this isolation could prove to be apparent rather than real, for Wilson refers⁶ to a possible site on the Tweed, and there is a second possible site at Lookout Farm, Seaton Sluice, Northumberland NZ 323 775. At Lookout Farm the single ditch enclosing approximately the same area as that at Hasting Hill, appears to have a number of gaps, but some photographs suggest that there may be a circular ditched structure in the interior. It does not show very clearly, but is about 20 m in diameter: it is just possible that it may represent a structure such as that at Playden, in Sussex,⁷ which could be contemporary with the construction and use of a causewayed camp; it is far more likely, however, to represent the ditch-surrounded site of a wooden hut, and this necessitates caution in regarding the Lookout Farm site as a causewayed camp, though it does not preclude the possibility.

A fourth site which may prove to be a causewayed camp is at "King Edwin's Palace", Old Yeavering NT 926 305. The two parallel ditches which show on most aerial photographs of the site clearly have nothing to do with the Saxon palace,

¹ D. R. Wilson, "Causewayed Camps and Interrupted ditch systems". *Antiquity* 49 (1975), 178-186.

² T. G. Manby, "Neolithic Pottery from Hasting Hill, Co. Durham". *A.A.* 5 1 (1973), 219-22.

³ D. L. Clark, *Beaker Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge 1970), Corpus No. 221.

⁴ C. T. Trechmann, "Prehistoric Burials in the County of Durham." *AA* 3 11 (1914), 135-56.

⁵ D. R. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 183.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁷ H. J. Cheney, S. Piggott, and E. C. Curwen, "A Aeneolithic Occupation Site at Playdon, near Rye", *Ant. J.* 15. (1935), 152-164.



Hasting Hill: crop-mark sites

Photo: N. McCord

and have the appearance of being dug in short segments with many gaps. Neolithic pottery was found in pits during excavation,⁸ and the forthcoming report will presumably clarify the issue.

Photographs of the Hasting Hill enclosure also show one end of a rectangular structure, marked by ditches and showing more strongly than the oval enclosure. It is approximately 30 m wide, and at least 200 m in length—at which point it reaches the field boundary, and none of the photographs show it continuing into the next field; this may be because while both fields appear under barley, the crop in that next field is considerably the riper.

It is tempting to regard this rectangular feature as a cursus, and again, the proven existence of Neolithic pottery in the vicinity could lend weight to this interpretation. However, these two crop-mark sites, in close proximity at Hasting Hill, cannot be regarded as mutually supporting a Neolithic date of construction, for there is no pattern of association of Causewayed Camps with Cursus monuments: their occurrence together would be purely fortuitous.

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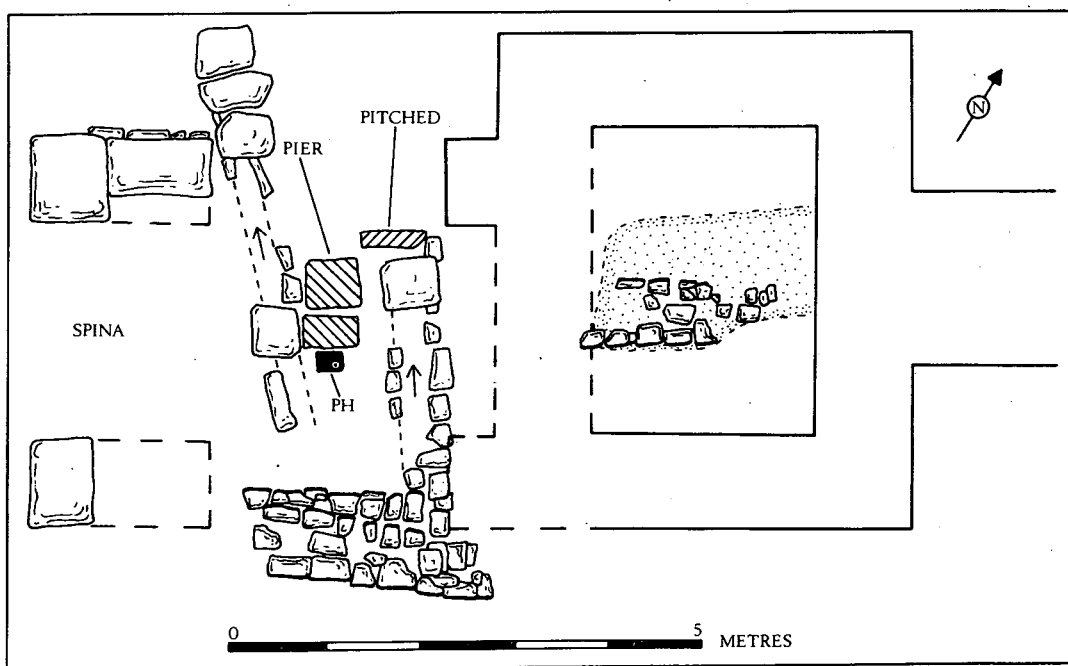


Fig. 1. South Shields: Northgate, east guardchamber and portal.

⁸ Information from the excavator, B. Hope-Taylor, quoted by J. Tait, "Neolithic Pottery from Northumberland", *AA* 46 (1968), 280.

2. EXCAVATIONS AT SOUTH SHIELDS, 1975 (fig. 1)

IN DECEMBER, 1975 small scale excavations were undertaken in the area of the north gate of the Roman fort at South Shields, in advance of consolidation, to remove material unexcavated in 1967.

In the middle of the east guardchamber, isolated by post-Roman robbing, a small island of material, approximately 2 m × 1 m, was removed. It was composed of two successive clay floors, each covered by a layer, *c.* 0.1 m thick, of black earth, charcoal, unburnt coal and clinker. Both floors had been exposed to heat and the concentration of the effects of burning indicated that each had supported a small hearth. Above the upper black layer was a layer of brown sandy soil, *c.* 0.25 m thick, on which rested the remains of a crude stone wall. The first floor rested directly on the mason's chippings associated with the building of the guardchamber around A.D. 120. Trampled into the second floor was found a fragment of a Trajanic-Hadrianic Dr. 37 in the style of Donnaucus-Sacer.

At the south end of the east portal a short length of crude stone walling of two periods, again isolated by robbing, was excavated. The first wall was 0.65 m thick and survived two courses high and on top of this, at a slightly different alignment, had been built the second wall of the same width and surviving two courses high. These walls rested directly on a layer of brown sandy soil, *c.* 0.8 m thick, containing fragments of animal bone and much roofing tile, which overlay the early third-century road and a stone-lined drain built over the road at the east side of the portal. At the bottom of this soil were found six fragments of a shallow Crambeck flanged bowl with painted decoration.⁹

The drain needs further mention as it is another jigsaw piece in the chronology of the north gate. In the 1967 excavations¹⁰ it was found that the west portal of the north gate had been blocked in the early years of the third century and, at the same time, a new road was laid down in the east portal with a new drain running diagonally across the portal. For some reason the arch over the portal needed additional support and a timber post was put in the middle of the portal for this purpose. This proved inadequate, however, and it was sawn off just above the road surface and replaced by a sandstone pier. The placing of the pier necessitated the filling of the drain and thus the drain in question was constructed over the road, between the pier and the guardchamber. It discharged through a hole in a square slab of sandstone pitched between the pier and the guardchamber wall and this meant that passage through the gate was now restricted to the narrow gap between the pier and the spina.

Although we cannot be certain, it seems likely that both the crude wall in the middle of the guardchamber and one, if not both, at the end of the portal formed part of the same structure, namely a small building or shed which was built over the portal and the dilapidated south-west corner of the guardchamber. Both walls

⁹ Crambeck I, no. 76—P. Corder, "Roman Malton and District Report No. 1, 1928".

¹⁰ *JRS* LVIII 1968, p. 179 and Report forthcoming.

were at approximately the same height, the material underneath them probably being levelling and not simply a natural accumulation of debris. If this is so the fragment of Crambeck ware dates the levelling and the structure to the period c. A.D. 367–400 when it is thought that the fort was occupied by the *Numerus Barcariorum Tigrisien-sium*.¹¹ Pottery evidence, or rather lack of it, from the site as a whole points to the fort being abandoned during the period mid-third to mid-fourth centuries.

Working back from this puts the floors and hearths not later than the mid-third century. From its position over the mason's chippings the earlier floor must be associated with the earliest, Hadrianic, fort. The single sherd of Samian is hardly conclusive evidence but its good condition argues for a mid-second century date for the second floor rather than anything later. That this leaves a gap in the occupation of the guardchamber for the early third century, a period of intense activity in the fort, can be accounted for by remembering that at that time the north gate was of relatively minor importance. The west portal had been blocked, the east restricted to pedestrian traffic, and the east guardchamber may not have been in use at all.

In 1967 three crucibles were recovered from inside the east guardchamber, admittedly from a disturbed context, but it is tempting to associate them with the hearths and say that the two together represent a period, or periods of small scale industrial activity inside the chamber.

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3. NORTH-AFRICAN POTTERY FROM SOUTH SHIELDS

AN UNUSUAL rim sherd has come to light during the detailed processing of pottery from the excavations carried out in the northern half of the fort at South Shields in 1967.¹² It can be shown to be an example of African red-slipped ware, whose great rarity outside the Mediterranean area makes its detailed publication desirable in advance of the final report on the excavations.

It was found in a deposit of brown sandy soil overlying a flagged area to the south of the original west guardchamber of the north gate. The flags made up the floor of an extension to the guardchamber built, according to pottery evidence from under the floor, in the early years of the third century. That the deposit post-dates the extension is clear, but by how much is not certain. On present evidence it seems likely that the fort was deserted from about the mid-third to the mid-fourth centuries, and the deposit may represent natural accumulation over that period. However, fragmentary remains of structures from the last occupation of the fort, c. A.D. 370–400,

¹¹ Not. Dig. Occ. XL, 22. See also D. C. A. Shotter, "Numeri Barcariorum, A Note on RIB 601", *Britannia* IV, 1973.

¹² Excavation by J. P. Gillam and J. Tait: "Roman Britain in 1967". *J. Roman Stud.*, 58 (1968), 179.

were found in 1967 and it appears that a general process of levelling up was carried out over the dilapidated remains of the early third-century gate before these structures were erected, in which case the deposit is datable to *c.* A.D. 370. In either case, the sherd is clearly in a residual position.

The sherd comes from a bowl of 16 cm diameter (fig. 2, 1). Below its neatly-rounded rim are two horizontal grooves, and the flat area between these is embellished by two rows of "rouletting". The slightly lower row is more deeply marked, and interrupts the line of the lower groove. Its deeply notched appearance clearly indicates that it was produced by "juddering" a blade against the vessel in a green-hard state, and not by holding a toothed wheel against it while still soft. The fabric of the bowl is medium-fine (coarser than samian ware) and pale orange-brown in colour. Its sur-

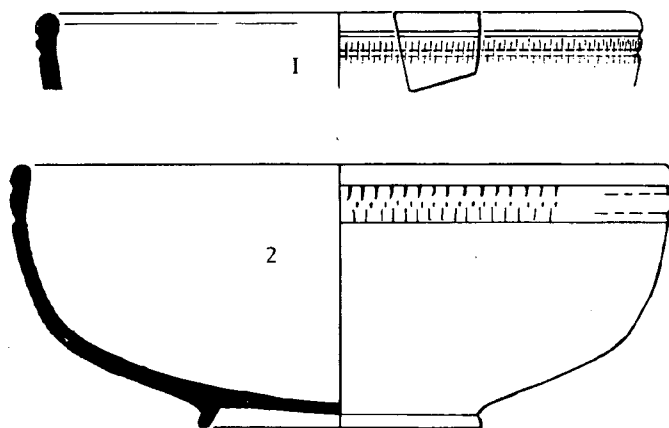


Fig. 2. 1 South Shields; 2 Sparta (1:2).

face is coated with a very fine thin lustrous slip of the same colour, reminiscent in its quality of that found on certain first-century samian vessels made at Lezoux¹³ or on first-century colour-coated vessels from south Italy and southern Spain.¹⁴

The character of the ware and form of the bowl place it into the general category of the red-slipped pottery produced in the Mediterranean area from the Flavian period into the Late Empire, and fully described by Hayes.¹⁵ More precisely this particular sherd belongs to Hayes' form 9 (its rouletting placing it into subdivision 9A) of the fabric described as African red-slipped ware, probably produced in Tunisia. Hayes proposes an overall date range of *c.* A.D. 100–160+ for form 9A, but certain typological features allow a closer dating of the South Shields bowl. Its rim is rounded, and the angle of the wall indicates a more hemispherical shape than the later everted-rimmed carinated examples of the form. It lacks the very early feature of a rounded rouletted moulding below its rim, having instead a simple flat zone between its pair

¹³ Boon, G. C., "Micaceous Sigillata from Lezoux at Silchester, Caerleon, and other Sites", *Antiq. J.*, 47 (1967), 27–42.

¹⁴ Greene, K. T., *Guide to Pre-Flavian Fine Wares*, *c.* A.D. 40–70, Cardiff, 1972, 7–12.

¹⁵ Hayes, J. W., *Late Roman Pottery*, 1972.

of grooves.¹⁶ A similar vessel of form 9A from Sparta¹⁷ is illustrated here for direct comparison (fig. 2, 2). Without wishing to over-emphasize fine typological distinctions, a central date within Hayes overall range would seem likely. The bowl may well have arrived at South Shields during the Hadrianic occupation of the fort.

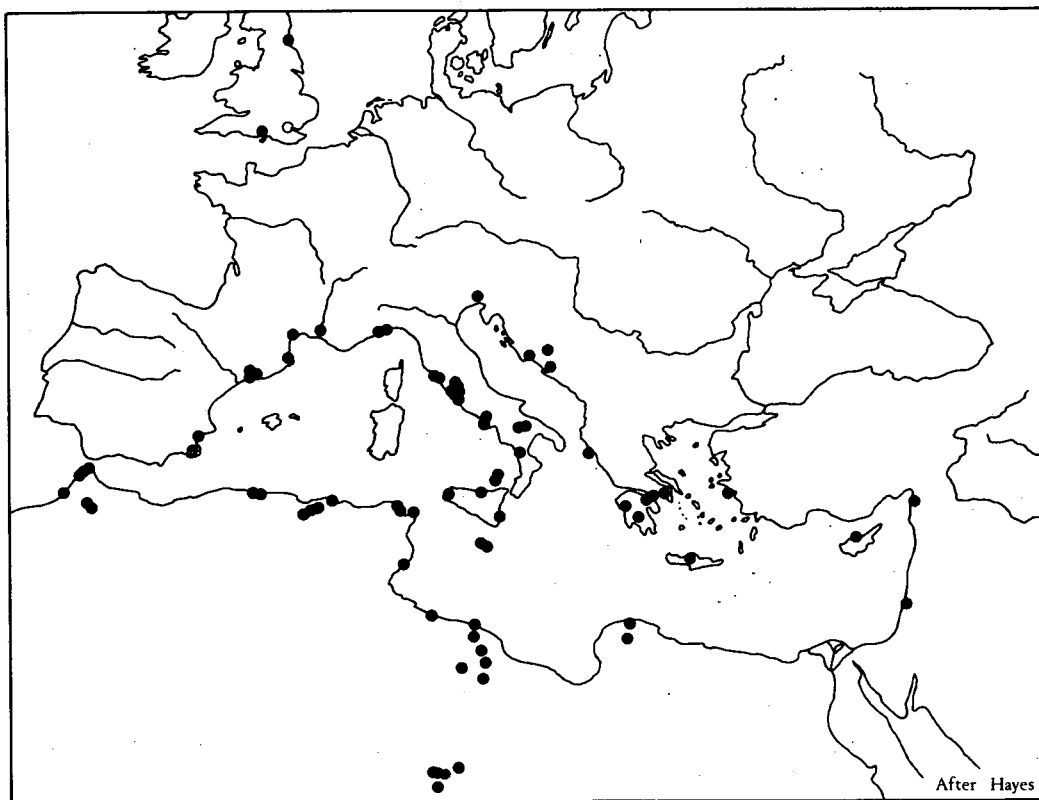


Fig. 3. African red slipware, forms 8A 9a second century.

The significance of the presence of this north African bowl at South Shields must now be considered. Hayes' form 9A bowls have an entirely Mediterranean distribution: the accompanying map (fig. 3)¹⁸ includes the closely-related form 8A, and is redrawn after Hayes, with the addition of British finds.¹⁹ These outlying findspots in Britain are unlikely to represent trade, but rather the casual movement of vessels with other cargoes or individuals. South Shields, London and the Fishbourne palace clearly

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 35–37.

¹⁷ Redrawn from *op. cit.*, 32, fig. 4, no. 2.

¹⁸ Redrawn from *op. cit.*, 454, Map 3.

¹⁹ Two bowls of form 8A from the Fishbourne Roman palace, Sussex (Cunliffe, B., *Excavations at Fishbourne, 1961–69, II, The Finds*, Rep. Res. Comm. Soc.

Antiq. Lond., 27, Leeds, 1971, 181, fig. 85, nos. 32. 1–2). Sherds have also been found in London and a few other south-eastern English sites, but these are mainly of later types; and will be fully published by Joanna Bird in the near future. An open circle has therefore been placed as a findspot symbol for London.

had every possibility of direct personal links with the Mediterranean area: the inscriptions of Barates and Victor from South Shields provide epigraphic evidence of such far-reaching contacts.²⁰ If the sherd is correctly dated, it would coincide with a period when the diversity of shipping arriving in the Tyne must have been particularly great, in connection with the organisation of the vast Wall-building operation.

The circumstances which led to the rise of African red-slipped ware production also make the possibility of specific pottery trade with Britain extremely unlikely in the second century A.D. The dominance of the whole Roman sigillata market by Arretine ware was already breaking down even in the Augustan period, with the establishment of branch factories in Gaul to serve the market of the troops on the frontiers newly advanced into Germany.²¹ The rise of the South Gaulish factories by the reign of Tiberius and rivals to Arrezzo in the Po Valley led to an astonishingly rapid eclipse of this once dominant industry, which by the Flavian period was reduced to producing coarse parodies of the South Gaulish vessels which had meanwhile spread in large quantities into Italy, Spain and North Africa.²² The South Gaulish factories in their turn lost the Spanish market to indigenous products,²³ and Gaul and Britain to the Central Gaulish centres which expanded rapidly in the Trajanic period. The vacuum in the west Mediterranean market was filled by the earliest African red-slipped ware, which in its first decades imitated current South Gaulish forms.²⁴ It is thus no accident that Hayes' forms 8A and 9A closely resemble the Gaulish samian bowls Drag. 29 and 37 in their initial typological stages. Central Gaulish production was geographically ill-placed for a substantial trade to the south, and Mediterranean red-slipped wares soon diverged progressively and permanently away from the European sigillata tradition. It is thus of special interest that they should reappear in Britain in the later fifth and sixth centuries A.D. (as "Tintagel ware", or Thomas "A" ware), again not as items of a specific trade, but in connection with the links between the western British church and the Mediterranean.²⁵

Individual sherds of pottery are seldom of great significance: it is therefore extremely satisfying that a single rim should betray its exotic origin and date so clearly, and add one more strand to the network of far reaching military, mercantile, and personal contacts already attested at South Shields.

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²⁰ Collingwood, R. G., and Wright, R. P., *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, Oxford, 1965, 355-6, nos. 1064-5.

²¹ Lasfargues, J., "Une Industrie Lyonnaise", *Archéol. Trésors Ages*, 50 (Sept. 1972), 15-19.

²² A typical bowl in the British Museum is illustrated by Johns, C. M., *Arretine and Samian Pottery*, 1971, Pl. 3b. Boon cites three such Tardo-Italic vessels found in Britain, *op. cit.*, 42.

²³ Mezquierez de Catalan, M. A., *Terra Sigillata Hispanica*, Valencia, 1961.

²⁴ Hayes, *op. cit.*, 15.

²⁵ Hayes, *op. cit.*, 458, Map 11; 460, Map 15. The religious connection is emphasized by a map in Thomas, C., *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, Glasgow, 1971, 28, fig. 6.

