

SURREY COLLECTIONS

EXCAVATIONS AT ASHTEAD, SURREY.

Second Report (1927 and 1928)

BY

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THE work of the past two seasons (1927 and 1928) has completed the excavation of the actual buildings so far discovered on Ashtead Common, and affords one likely explanation for their existence in such an isolated situation. Excavation has made it apparent that the manufacture of tiles and bricks was carried on here from early in the first century A.D. on a very large scale before the corridor house or isolated bath house was built. The debris and "wasters" from these works cover a large area stretching from the small earthwork in the west to Newton Wood at the east end of the ridge that forms the highest part of the Common. The site of a brick-kiln mentioned in the former report as having been found is now known to have been only one of several, all of them represented by a layer of burnt and distorted tiles, generally about 1 foot thick, and mixed with a considerable depth of charcoal. Everywhere are abundant fragments of early first-century pottery, chiefly coarse ware with little undecorated Terra sigillata ware among it. This pottery is generally found in a dark layer of varying thickness together with bones, oyster shells and other refuse, and a hearth, formed of four large tiles, the upper side blacked and cracked with heat, is often near by.

The separate bath building resembles many of the ordinary camp bath houses in plan (viz., the circular Calidarium) and was probably used by the men employed at the tile works.

The villa has its own bath quarters built as an appendage to the house, and probably at the same date as the bath house, as certain points in their construction are identical.

WORK ON THE SITE

At the end of 1926, approximately half the main building had been cleared and its extent limited towards the south by the finding of the tile-built rain-water gutter (Plate II*b*) corresponding to the one at the north end. Continuing to clear the rooms in order, the first to be excavated was that numbered 10 on plan. It has a roughly laid tessellated pavement of 1 inch plain red tesseræ and is in a very disturbed condition. Like all the pavements of the final period of rebuilding, it is only set on clay without the 4 inches of brick concrete that underlies the earlier work. On its surface were lying several roof tiles and a box-voussoir arching tile.

Room No. 11 (Plate I*a* and *b*) is the most interesting of the rooms of the final building. In the centre is a 4-tile hearth (beside which were found two blue glazed beads of melon type and an enamelled bronze fibula), and close to it is an oven set into the floor and open at the south end. The sides of the oven are lined with tiles set sloping inwards towards the bottom, which is formed with red brick cement. It was found to have an 8-inch deposit of charcoal in it, among which was a 5-inch bone needle. The whole floor of the room was covered with a layer of charcoal, pottery and refuse 1 to 2 inches in depth, and in one corner at the back of the hearth was a shallow pit, full of bones, pottery, shells, etc. A similar internal refuse pit was found in a room of the villa at Folkestone.

Room No. 12 has the remains of a pavement similar to that in Room 10, and below the north corner of it was a deposit consisting of a small lattice decorated beaker of grey ware with slip-coating round the upper part and lattice decoration on the sides (Plate VII*c*). With it was a pot lid and inside the bottom was a much corroded 2nd *Æ* of Domitian. It was badly crushed by the overlying pavement, but has been restored.

The remaining rooms and corridor at this end of the building were destroyed to below floor-level, making it impossible to fill in this part of the plan with absolute certainty.

The whole of this half of the villa was found to be covered

with a layer of the stiff subsoil clay varying from 1 foot to 18 inches in thickness. Nothing has turned up to settle the date when the clay was dug and deposited here or for what purpose; possibly it was done to level the site after much of the tile work was removed in mediæval times. In this connection an important piece of evidence turned up this season. In order to find an explanation for the marked difference in quality and setting between the pavement to Room 2 and Room 4, it was decided to clear out the central area where the tesserae had been displaced. It was then found that there was originally a series of parallel flues running below the pavement (Plate IIc). These flues probably drew their heat from the hypocaust to Room 6, but the side on which the connections must have existed is destroyed to too low a level to show exactly how this was done. They were originally covered with large tiles above which was a 4-inch layer of brick concrete on which the pavement was set, but only a few of these tiles are still in position, and it is clear that the rest have been ripped out, leaving the overturned pavement lying in heaps, amongst which was found one fragment of typical brown glazed mediæval pottery. One complete flue tile with the "dog and stag" design was still *in situ* forming a cross-connection between two of the flues, and it seems likely that the fragments found together with other tiles built into the Parish Church came largely from this very room. We thus have clear evidence of later destruction to obtain building material and the first clue to the date when this took place.

The gutter, by continuing on beyond the west corner of the building, showed that there had probably been some rooms projecting beyond the line of the final back wall, and when we came to dig here the foundations of a Bath Annexe consisting of four or five small rooms and a furnace were uncovered. This part had clearly been demolished before the rest of the building was abandoned.

A and *B* (on plan) is one hypocaust divided by a partition formed of unusually deep flue tiles set in a row between solid abutments (Plate Ic). These flues would regulate the amount of heat passing between *A* and *B*, as six of them were partly blocked with pieces of tile cemented into the ends farthest from the furnace. Apparently a similar partition originally sub-



(a) HEARTH IN ROOM II. SHALLOW REFUSE PIT AT BACK.



(b) ROOM II, SHOWING HEARTH AND OVEN.



(c) REMAINS OF FLUE PARTITION BETWEEN A AND B.



(a) WEST CORNER OF ROOM 3, SHOWING WALLS OF 1ST PERIOD (TO LEFT) AND 2ND PERIOD WORKMANSHIP.



(b) GUTTER AT WEST END OF VILLA SHOWING BOTTOM FORMED OF INVERTED ROOF-TILES.



(c) HORIZONTAL FLUES BELOW FLOOR OF ROOM 4.

divided the hypocaust *A* at the Bath House and was subsequently stripped out. This explains the ragged holes in its two side walls and the gap in the cement across its floor, also the difference in arrangement of the pilæ in its two halves. Pieces of similar deep box-tiles also occurred just outside this room. *A* and *B* thus probably formed the Sudatorium and Calidarium of the series.

C is a small hypocaust communicating between *B* and *D* and probably used as the "Tepidarium."

The remaining rooms are completely destroyed, but can only have been two in number.

The entire Bath Annexe had been stripped level with the floor of the hypocausts and covered over with building debris that was of no further use. On top was a layer of large slabs of the original wall plaster, those which chanced to be face downwards still retaining the painted decoration, which consists of bands of colour on a *white ground* such as was found in Room *A* in the Bath House, but nowhere else on the site. Among the filling was found the well-modelled head of a swan in bronze, probably part of a brooch. A small heap of several hundred small tesserae of various colours, but mainly white, were found in the south-west corner of *B*, and showed that a good-quality tessellated pavement formed the floor to one or all of these rooms.

The gutter was traced along the back of the annexe, though considerably disturbed in places when the main wall was demolished.

In front of the north half of the Corridor was a large accumulation of broken pottery and refuse which yielded most of the smaller objects found last season.

The rectangle of small bricks in Room 2, which was described as a hearth in the former report, was more probably a threshold and marks the position of a door. The entire paving to this room is now known to date from the later period of alteration and to overlie a filled-in hypocaust. Similarly the walls between Rooms 1 and 2 and Rooms 2 and 3 are later and inferior work, as can be seen in the photograph (Plate II*a*).

An examination of the charcoal from the various furnaces was very kindly carried out by Mr. Maby of the Forests Products Research Laboratory, who reports as follows:—

"The charcoal is all derived from oak wood, almost certainly common oak (*i.e.* either *Q. robur* or *Q. sessileflora*) and mostly appears to be from large sized pieces."

Future work will mainly consist of clearing the surrounding ground, and in particular the area between the villa and the Bath House, which has still to be explored and which, it is hoped, will reveal the source of the water supply to the latter.

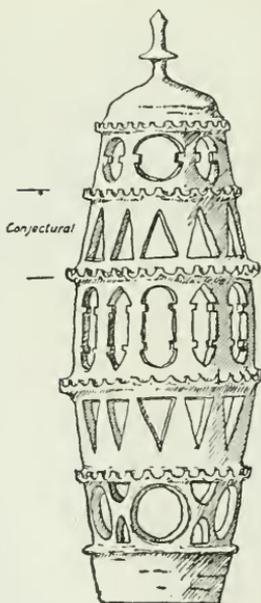
THE FINDS

STONE. (Plate III.)

(a) Several pieces of sandstone, 2 inches thick and with remains of carved "cornucopiæ" decoration were found built into the sides of the gutter. Probably part of a memorial tablet or altar. The most complete piece only is figured.

(b) Piece of millstone of typical form and showing grooves on face. Volcanic Andernach stone.

(c) Part of a slab of Purbeck marble 1 inch thick, of which several fragments were found beside the projecting entrance to the corridor.



Reconstruction Drawing.

FIG. 2. CHIMNEY POT.

TILE.

1. Pieces of chimney-pot from beside the circular hypocaust to Bath House and suggested restoration of same. Height, 2 feet 3 inches, internal diameter, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches to 6 inches at centre (Fig. 2).

2. Semicircular and quarter-circle tiles with projections for bonding into walls. These were found scattered over

the floor of the central part of the corridor. They indicate that engaged half-columns were employed in this part of the building, but probably merely as a decorative feature at the entrance. Their outer surface would originally have been plastered.



OBJECTS OF STONE.

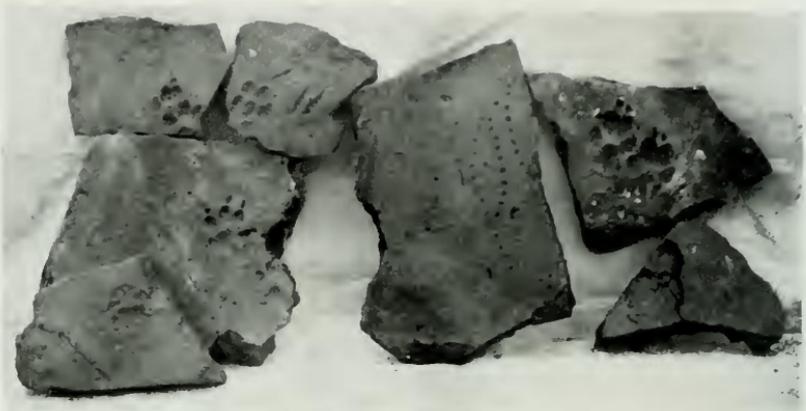
- (a) PIECE OF SANDSTONE.
- (b) PIECE OF MILLSTONE.
- (c) PART OF SLAB OF PURBECK MARBLE.



PIECES OF A CHIMNEY-
POT.



SEMI- AND QUARTER-CIRCLE TILES
FROM ENGAGED HALF-COLUMNS
IN CORRIDOR.



TILE FRAGMENTS BEARING FOOTMARKS.



KEYED FLUE TILE, AND KEY FROM ANOTHER, FROM ROOM 6.



FLUE TILE FROM PARTITION BETWEEN ROOMS A AND B.

3. Fragments of a brick object of unknown purpose. Traces of decoration of zigzag lines and small impressed circles visible on two of the pieces. It was made by building up separate

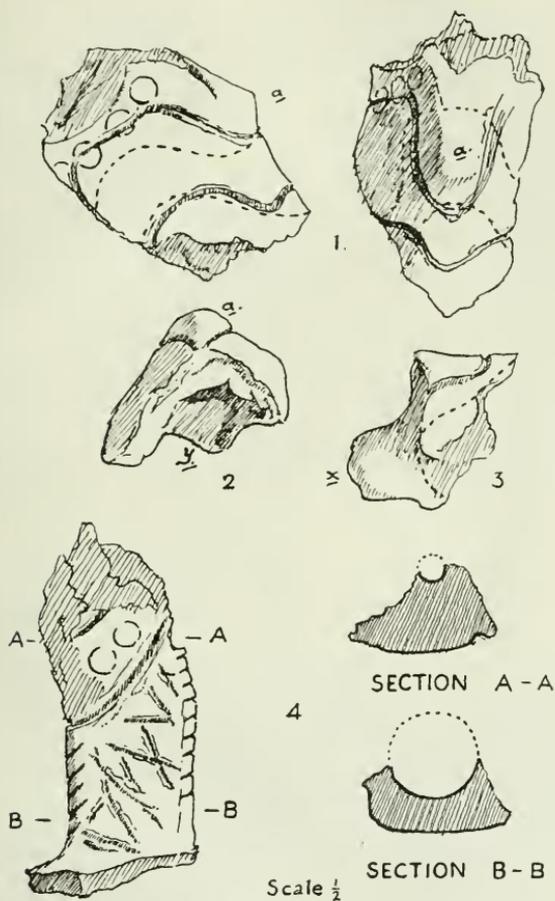


FIG. 3.—PIECES OF DECORATED BRICK (SHRINE ?).

pieces of clay, socketed one into the other, the outside being finally smeared over and the ornamentation applied. Possibly part of a small shrine for a Venus statuette such as the one previously found (Fig. 3).

4 (not illustrated). Part of the "spigot" end of a terra-

cotta water-pipe. Roughly scored to form a key for cement holding it to the socket of the adjacent pipe.

SMALL OBJECTS OF BRONZE, BONE, ETC. (FIG. 4.)

1. Rectangular bronze enamelled brooch with hinged pin and bearing in relief the representation of a dolphin.

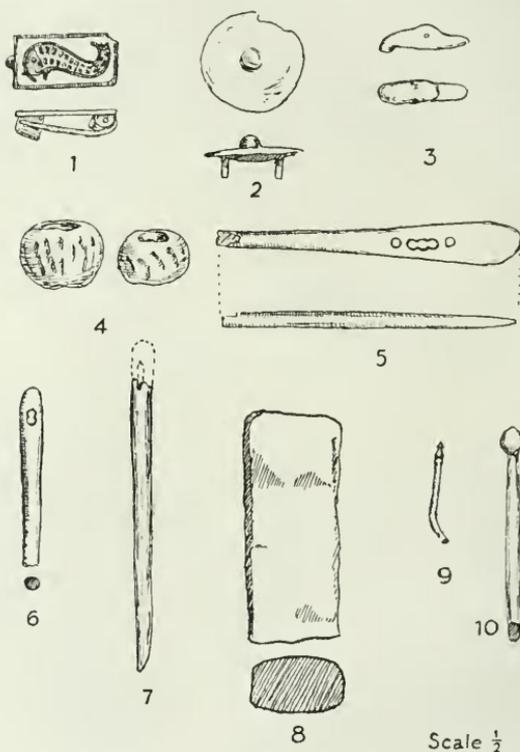


FIG. 4.—SMALL OBJECTS OF BRONZE, BONE, ETC.

2. Small bronze boss with lugs at back for attachment to wood or leather.

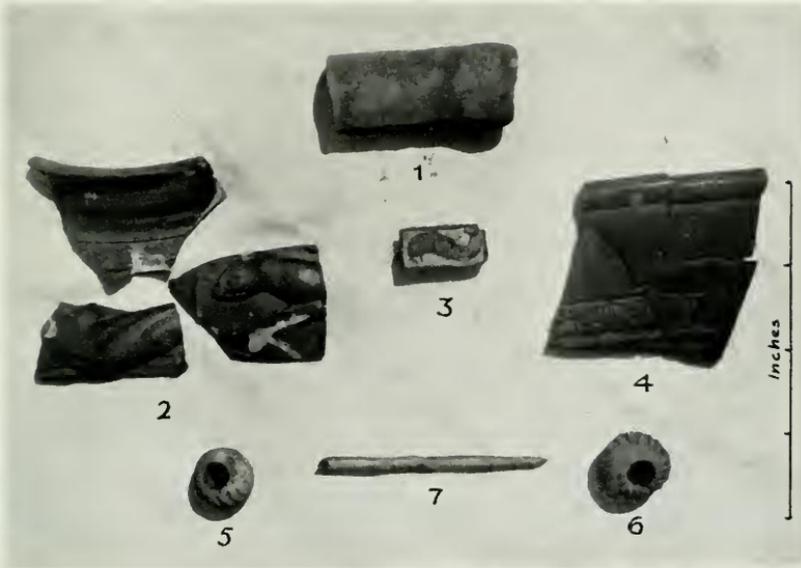
3. Bronze head of swan.

4. Blue paste beads of "melon" type.

5. Spatulate bone object with drilled perforations.

6 and 7. Bone needles.

8. Whetstone of soft sandstone.

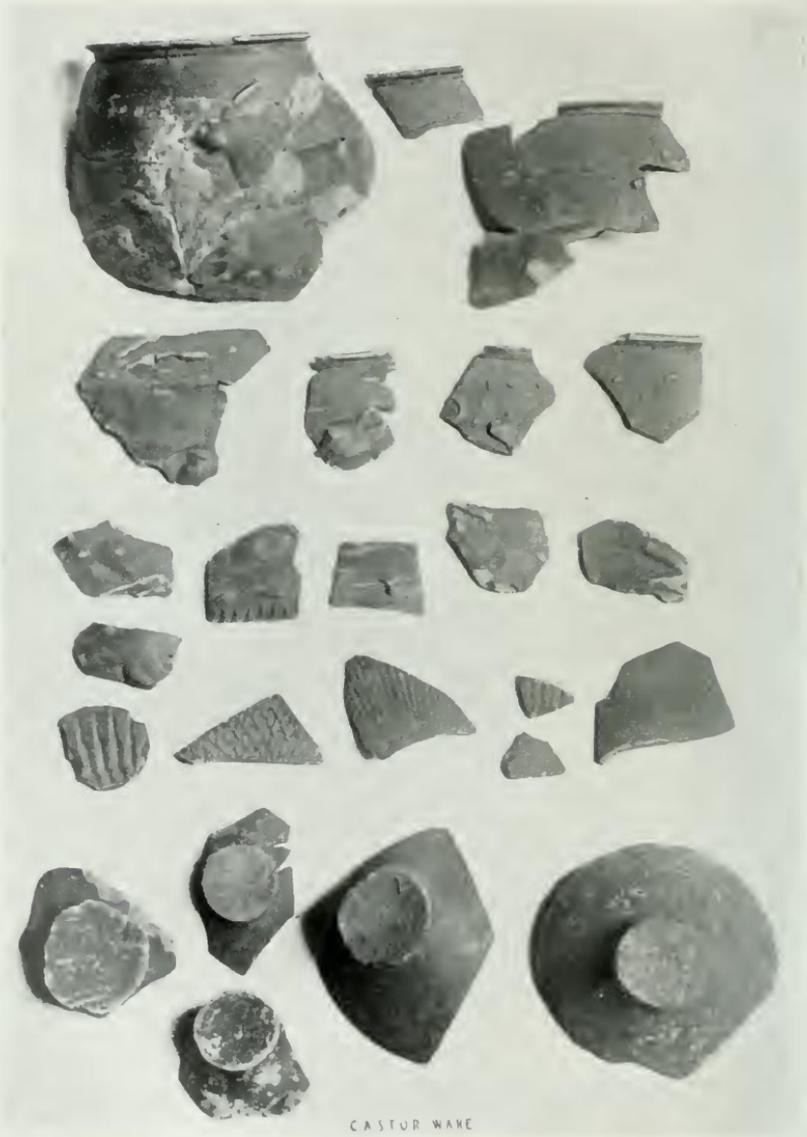


(a) OBJECTS FOUND IN ROOM II.

1. WHETSTONE OF SOFT SANDSTONE. 2. PIECES OF CASTOR WARE. 3. ENAMELLED BROOCHE WITH DOLPHIN. 4. PIECE OF DECORATED T.S. WARE (DR. FORM 37). 5 AND 6. BLUE GLAZED BEADS OF "MELON" TYPE. 7. BONE NEEDLE FOUND IN THE OVEN.



(b) INKPOT AND "TAZZA-FORM" INCENSE CUP (BASE MISSING).



CASTOR WARE

SLIP-COATED AND BARBOTINED CASTOR WARE.

9. Bronze pin with finely turned head.
10. Bone pin head.
11. Stone object, broken. A set-square (?). (Not illustrated.)

COINS.

Only three more coins have been found ; they are :—

Domitian (A.D. 81—A.D. 96)

1. 2nd Æ.

Obv. laureate bust to right.

Ins. . . . Dom. . . . (obliterated)

Rev. all detail obliterated.

Found in olla below floor of Room 12.

Hadrian (A.D. 117—A.D. 138)

2. DENARIUS.

Obv. Laureate bust to right.

Ins. IMP. CÆSAR. TRAIAN. HADRIANUS. AVG.

Rev. Winged female figure to right holding trident.

Ins. . . . (illegible) and COS III.

3. 1 Æ SESTERTIUS.

Cut in half and only the front of bust (laureate to right) is visible.

Ins. obliterated.

Glass. (Fig. 5.)

1. Rim of cup. Clear, thin glass.
2. Do. Clear, yellowish.
3. Base of cup. Semi-opaque, white.
4. Rim of cup. Clear glass.
5. Do. Clear, yellowish.
6. Neck of flagon. Thin, clear glass.
7. Neck of flagon with long projecting spout and part of handle. Semi-opaque, white.
8. Rim of cup (resembling the common sigillata Dr. form 33).
Opaque, crystalline, brownish glass of gritty texture.

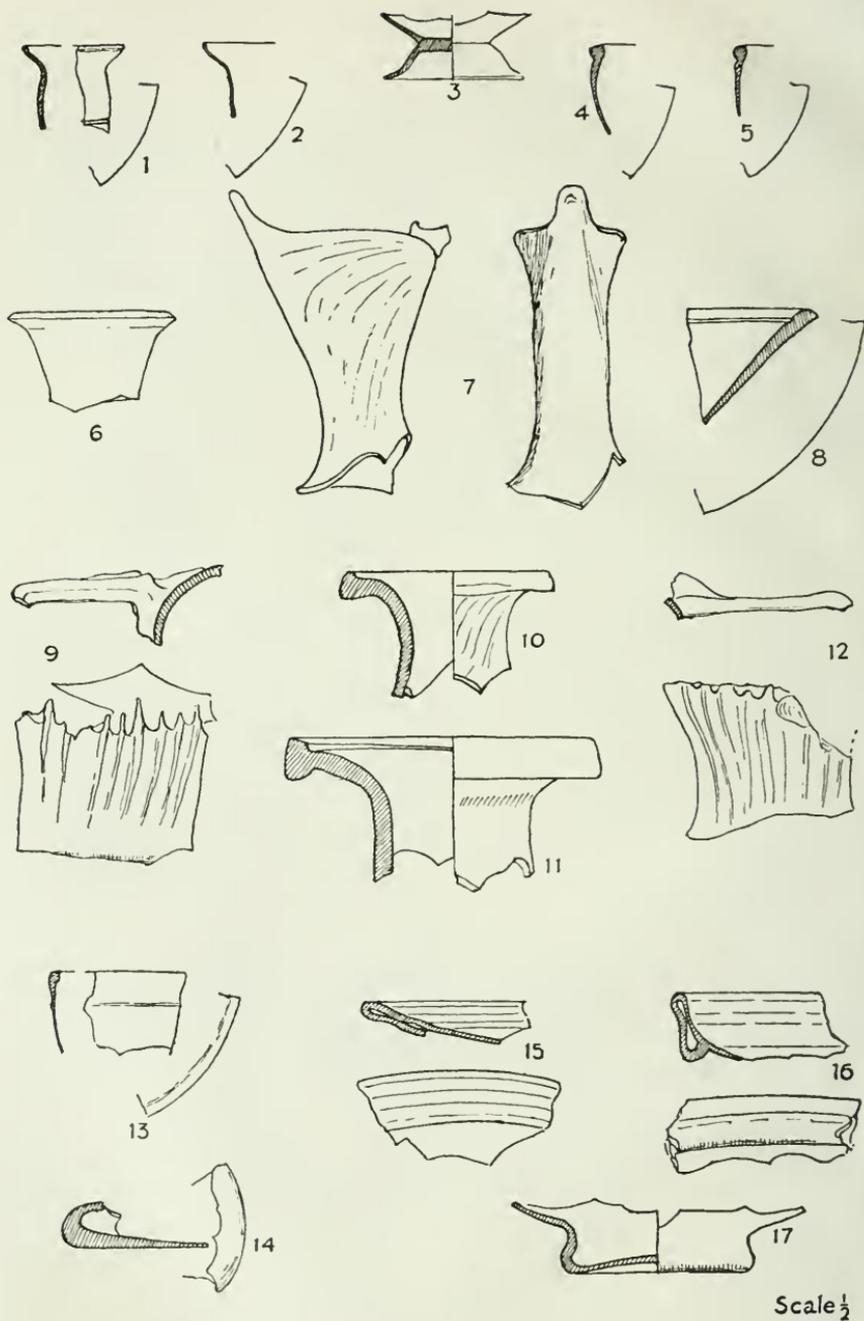


FIG. 5. FRAGMENTS OF GLASS VESSELS.

9-12. Fragments of necks and handles of large bottles.

13. Rim of cup of very clear, thin glass.

14. Part of a base (?) of clear, yellowish glass.

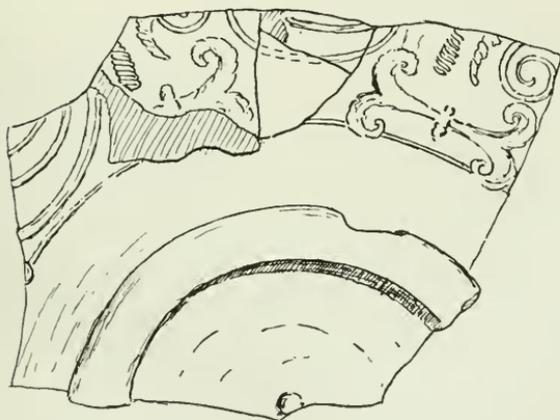
15-17. Fragments of dishes with folded rims and the base of a similar vessel.

POTTERY. (Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.)

Decorated Terra Sigillata Bowls.

1. (Dr. 37.)

Base of large bowl. Diameter of foot ring $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Lezoux ware; large scroll style. Good, hard, deep, coloured clay.



1

2. (Dr. 37.)

Medallion with figure of Victory (Déch. 481). To left, female figure under branch or tree.

La Granfesenque (?).

3. (Dr. 30.)

Medallion with figure of hare

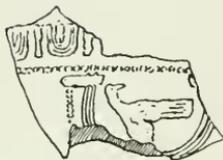


2

Scale $\frac{1}{2}$



3



4

or rabbit (Déch. 950), and an unguent-pot (?) in corner. May, *Silchester Pottery*, p. 55, pl. XXI A. on Dr. 37. ". . . both the animal figures and large medallions are used by Cinnamus and Doeccus."

4. (Dr. 37.)

Lunette with figure of bird (Déch.).

5. (Dr. 37.)

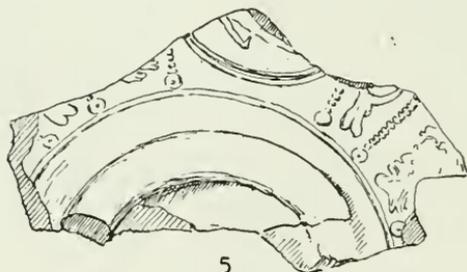
Part of base with medallions and masks (Déch.).

6. (Dr. 37.)

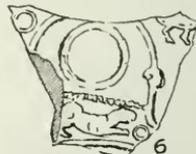
Decorated with tendril, small circles and animals. The Panther cf. Ludowici II, p. 197, T. 25, and May, *Silchester*, p. 83, No. 131.

7. (Dr. 37.)

Fragment of bowl that has been repaired by riveting. Figure of pugilist (Déch.). Very good, fine hard ware.



5

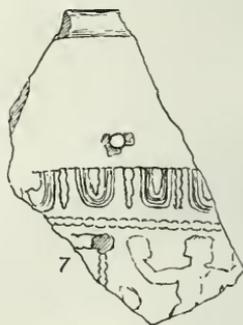


6

Terra Sigillata with Incised Decoration.

8. (Dr. 54).

Rim fragment of thin good quality clay. This ware is apparently not earlier than the second century and survived to the fourth century. 170 A.D. at earliest.



7

Terra Sigillata with Rouletted Decoration.

One fragment (not illustrated) of an upright sided bowl with rouletting.

Ref. Heiligenberg potteries of A.D. 85-160.

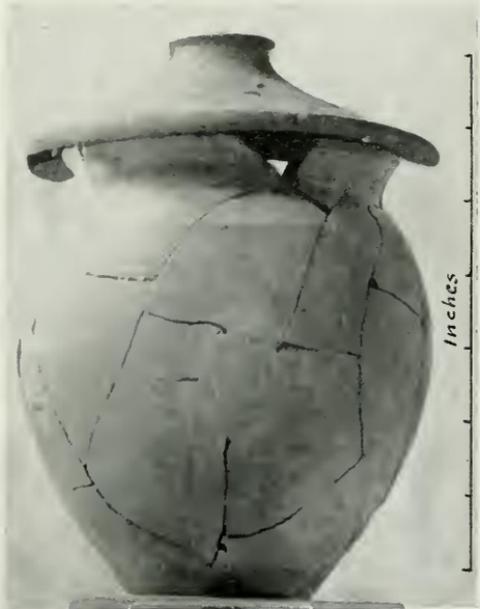
Scale $\frac{1}{2}$



(a) VESSELS OF LIGHT GREY WARE.



(b) BASE OF SOFT BROWN WARE WITH REMAINS OF THICK CREAM SLIP.



(c) OLLA WITH LID, FROM BELOW FLOOR OF ROOM 12.

Potters' Stamps on Terra Sigillata Ware.

Excluding the five previously recorded:—

1. - - - SIANIF. Dr. 33.

Probably CELSIANUS.

Refs. B.M.Cat. M2073 and 2074.

C.I.L., VIII, 10010, 520, at Autun.

CELSIANUM on Dr. 33. May, *Silchester Pottery.*

2. C.B. Dr. 37 or 30.

Small piece from near base of bowl. Probably the La Granfesengue potter Crestus.

3. MERCILLVS F. Dr. 33.

Coned base of cup, hard ware, fine matt glaze. May, *Silchester.*

4. IA[NUARI] (?). Dr. 18/31.

Apparently a piece of Lezoux ware.

5. PAV L IM. Dr. 31.

Base rising sharply in centre. Sides have a series of horizontal grooves running round the outside.

This potter is represented at a large number of different sites.

6. PATER F. Dr. 33.

Base of good ware.

Curle, 238 (A.D. 140-180).

C.I.L., VII, 1336, 787, XIII, 10010, 1500.

Also at Silchester and Holt near Chester.

7. [RE]GALIS.

Base of cup 33.

8. RES - - - TVS. Dr. 33.

Probably RESPECTVS.

Base of cup 33 of very poor, soft, yellowish ware.

9. SE[DAT]IMA. Dr. 18/31.

Large bowl of Lezoux (?) ware.

10. VICTORI[NVS F]. Dr. 33.

Base of cup of poor ware.



11. Rosette stamp:—Dr. 33.

Rosette formed of nine small raised dots within a circle. Very good ware.

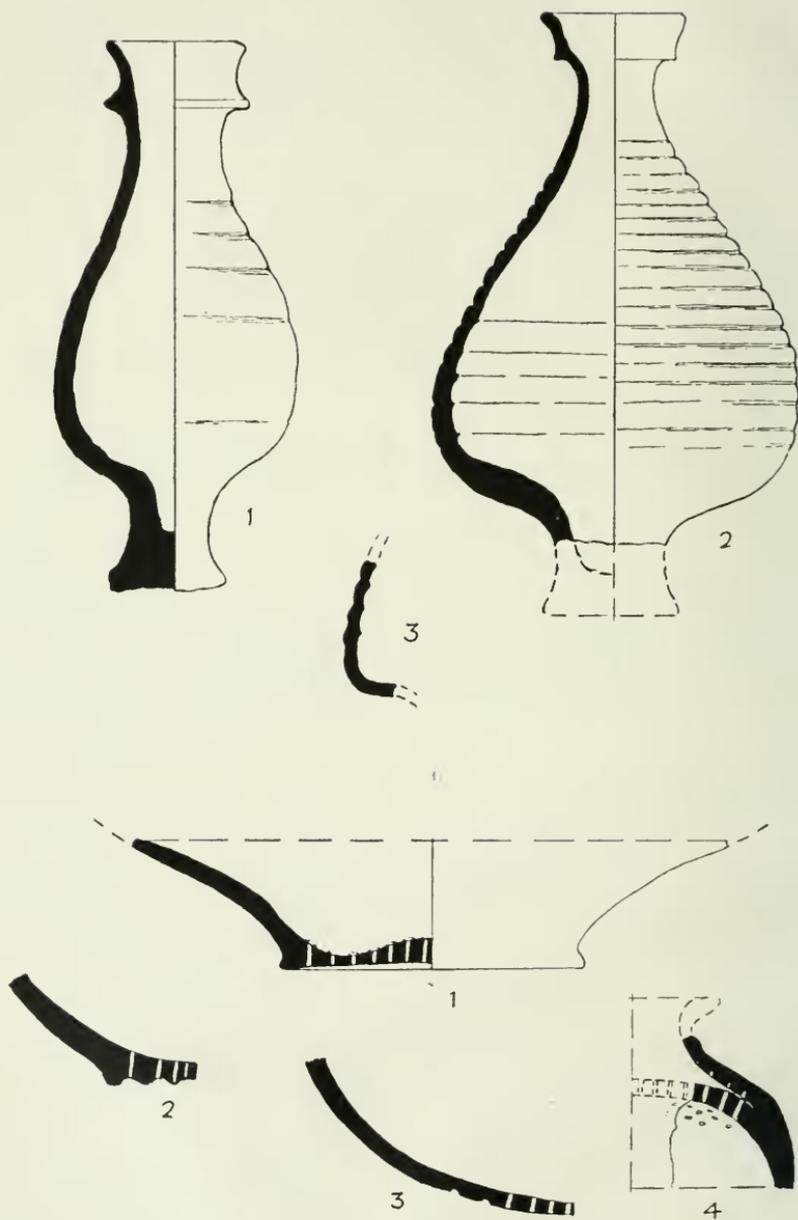


FIG. 6.—UNGUENT POTS AND STRAINERS.

COLOUR COATED CASTOR WARE.

Fragments of various small pots decorated *en barbotine*. Some with rouletting round base.

COARSE WARES.

The following notes refer to some of the more important of the pottery figured:—

Strainers (Fig. 6).

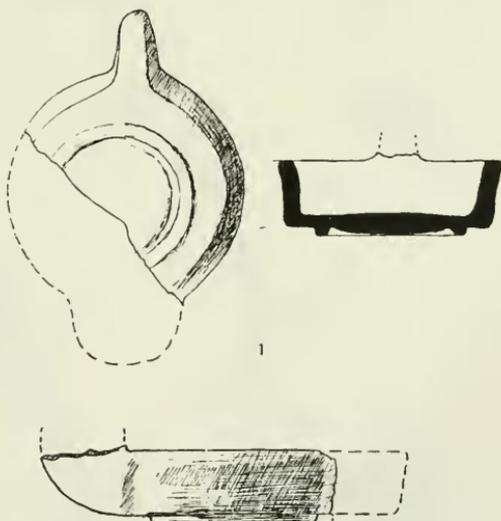
Various fragments of normal types.

One fragment of upper part of "neck" strainer of buff ware with reddish coating on exterior. *Refs.* May, *Silchester Pottery*, p. 119. Type 71, pl. L, No. 71. Behn, *Röm. Keramik*, Nos. 1924-5, form 410. Heidesheim and Friedberg (painted in fine red on yellow body).

Ascribed to the "Domitian to Hadrian" period and thus agreeing in date with other finds at Ashtead.

Lamps.

Fragments of open lamps. These are, by some authorities, described as lamp-holders, but the ones illustrated appear to have been used as lamps, and the ends farthest from the handle show marks of burning as where a wick has been. This carbonised layer stops on an even line half-way up the side of the lamp and indicates the point to which it was filled, probably with animal fat. It is suggested that this form of lamp was for burning solid fats as against the closed type of container in which oil would be used. No pieces of the latter forms have occurred on the site.



FRAGMENTS OF LAMPS.

Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

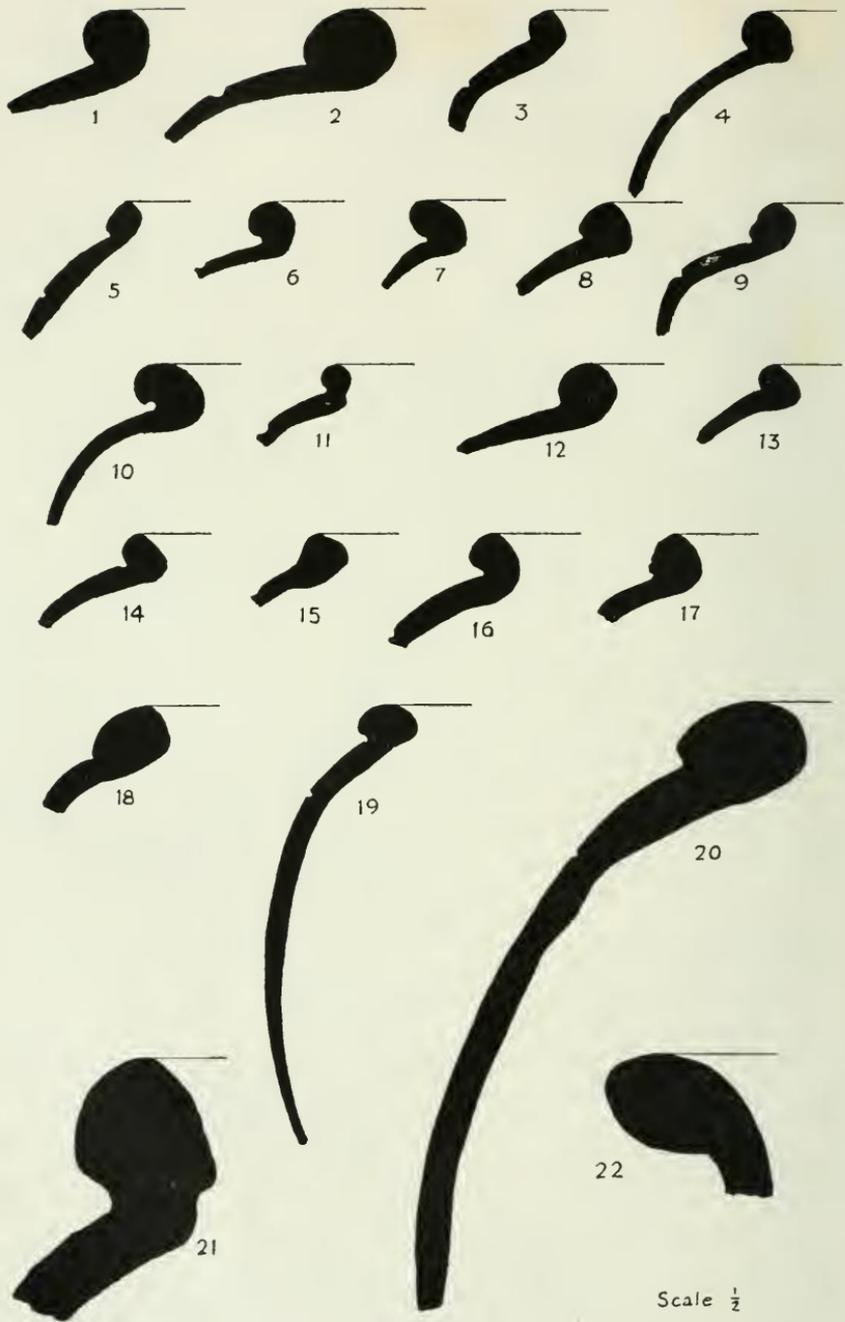


FIG. 7.—CLAUDIANT POTTERY.

May, *Silchester Pottery*, p. III, Nos. 13 and 14, pl. XLVII, A.

Claudian Pottery (Fig. 7).

Rim sections of various bead-rim pots found mainly on a level passing below the floors of the villa and about 2 feet below the floor surface. Found at many sites it is definitely dated to the first part of the first century A.D.



2



3



4

VARIOUS WARES FOUND IN SMALL QUANTITY
(not illustrated).

1. *Mica-dusted Ware*. Pieces of several small ollæ of soft buff ware, the outside coated with mica.

2. *Ridged Grey Ware*. This is only represented by a few small fragments. The outside bears irregular projecting decoration.

3. *Black Slip-coated Ware*. The slip-coating is on a soft red clay. The sides of the pots indented. Pieces of 3 found.

4. *White Ware with Orange-colour Coating*. Many small pieces of one olla of large size.

5. *Fluted Castor Ware Beaker*. White paste with dull yellow-brown coating applied overlapping scales on the projecting ridges. May, *The Roman Pottery at York*, p. 28, No. 2.

6. Thin, reddish, soft ware, with horizontal bands of cord-like indentations round body.

LAMPS.
Scale $\frac{1}{2}$