

XII. *Observations on the Roman Remains found in various parts of London, in the years 1834, 1835, 1836. By Mr. CHARLES ROACH SMITH, communicated in a letter to A. J. KEMPE, Esq., F.S.A.*

Read 17th March, 1836.

Lothbury, February 25, 1836.

SIR,

AT the close of the year 1834, my attention was drawn to the excavations then in progress for sewers, and foundations of houses, in the extensive City improvements, from conviction, founded on former observations, but which opportunity did not then admit my taking advantage of, that the projected line of work at depths varying from twenty to fifty feet, could not fail to afford the means for obtaining some additional and corroborating information illustrative of the ancient occupation of the soil; and, finding that investigation was likely to be attended with some little success, I persevered in examining with all possible diligence the several excavations, and now submit to your notice, though necessarily in an abridged shape, an account of the result of my labours. I shall venture no further on your patience than will be consistent with recording the principal features in the City discoveries, without theorising or wandering from a statement of facts.

The vicinity of St. Michael's Church afforded in 1832 the materials for your interesting paper, printed in the twenty-third volume of the *Archaeologia*.

I commence my narrative in the same neighbourhood.

On either side of King William Street, at a depth ranging from fourteen to twenty feet, the evidences of Roman habitations became numerous.

Walls built with rough unhewn pieces of chalk (cemented by the firm mortar peculiar to Roman edifices), and containing in many instances an admixture of flints, were from time to time made visible. These walls apparently ran

underneath the above-named street, or at all events partially intersected it; but whether a connexion existed between the discernible intersections no means were afforded for ascertaining, as the excavations were so irregularly carried on, and the superintendants of the works unhappily disposed to raise every impediment in their power against investigation. I may however affirm that no highway was at any period during my attendance rendered perceptible in the line of King William Street: on the contrary, everything seemed to demonstrate that this district was closely occupied by dwelling-houses.

Wells of chalk filled with earth, mixed with broken tiles, pottery, and animal remains, were frequently laid open; and in every direction, on both sides of the lately-formed street, an abundance of handles and mouths of amphoræ, fragments of the commoner kinds of earthen vases and urns, together with the Samian pottery, were met with incessantly.

Adjoining St. Clement's Church, at about twelve feet beneath the present level, ran a tessellated pavement, composed of pieces of red brick of about an inch or an inch and quarter long, and three quarters of an inch wide, corresponding with fragments lately discovered in East Cheap at about an equal depth, connected probably with some public building or dwelling-house of the better class, on or near the site of St. Clement's Church.

A precisely similar pavement occurred in Lothbury, which may with like reason be supposed to branch off from a building (by some considered the Prætorium of the Roman Station) that occupied the position of the Bank of England.

Near St. Clement's Church were found many vessels of the common brown and black earth, but mostly in a fractured state. They are such as were in general use among the Romans for domestic purposes, and probably were of colonial manufacture; for it seems unlikely that, when materials might have been had merely for the pains of digging, and no particular trouble or ingenuity was required to mould or fashion them, the unnecessary expense of importation should have been incurred. They are usually met with wherever Roman remains are discovered, and possess great variety of form and quality, though the material seldom equals the design and workmanship of acknowledged specimens from Italy or Greece.

The vicinity of St. Clement's Church produced six small earthen lamps, much Samian ware, both figured and plain, rings of base metal, and coins. One of

the rings had been gilded, and was set with an engraved turquoise, on which was represented what appeared to be an augural priest feeding a cock.

The soil in this neighbourhood is very unfavourable to the preservation of coins. Many have been found, but they are generally half eaten by rust, and the inscriptions seldom to be rendered legible. They chiefly consist of the second-brass of Claudius, Vespasian, and Domitian, with base denarii of Severus, Caracalla, Alexander Severus, and Julia Mamaea.

These denarii are of the very worst description of the various forged and adulterated species of that age, and are composed of brass or a mixture of common metals, with merely a thin coating of silver, and generally bear the commonest reverses. They are found throughout London. A second-brass coin of Julia Mamaea was in the mouth of one of the smaller earthen bottles found adjacent to St. Clement's Church.

As the excavations approached Prince's Street (which bounds the Bank of England on the west) the soil denominated, by those familiar with the London strata, *Roman*, descended to a much greater depth than either at East Cheap, at Newgate Street, or at the London Wall near Finsbury. From the level of the present street I should say that thirty feet would scarcely limit its depth, and the extent may be pronounced equal to the length of the west side of the Bank. Here it assumed also a different appearance, being much more moist, highly impregnated with animal and vegetable matter, and almost of an inky blackness in colour. It is worthy of note, that the same character is applicable to the soil throughout the line of excavation from Prince's Street to the London Wall at Finsbury, though no where did I observe it extend to such a depth as at the former place. Throughout the same line, also, were at intervals noticed a vast and almost continuous number of wooden piles, which in Prince's Street were particularly frequent, and where also they descended much deeper. The nature of the ground, and the quantity of these piles, tend to strengthen the probability of a channel having existed in this direction, draining off the water from the adjoining marshes, and that too (from the numerous Roman remains accompanying these indications) at a very remote period. The course of the ancient Wallbrook is described by Stowe as passing through the City by this route: "From the north to the south, this City was of old time divided, not by a large highway or street, (as from east to west) but by a fair brook of sweet water, which came from out the north fields through the wall, and midst of the city,

into the river of Thames, and which division is, till this day, constantly and without change maintained.

“This water was called Wallbrook, not Gallus-brook, (as some have fabled, from a Roman Captain slain by Asclepiodatus, and thrown therein,) but from running through and from the wall of this City.

“The course whereof, to prosecute it particularly, was and is from the said wall to St. Margaret’s Church in Lothbury, from thence beneath the lower part of the Grocers’ Hall, about the east part of their kitchen, under St. Mildred’s Church,” &c.

The Roman remains found by the labourers near the course of the above stream in Prince’s Street, and in the vicinity of the Bank of England, are of a more interesting nature, and of a more varied description, than hitherto have been met with.

I may particularize a pair of small brass scales, keys, one of which is a key-ring, spatulæ, fibulæ, styli, needles in brass and bone, coins, and an instrument eight inches in length, resembling the modern steels for sharpening knives; a bronze horse’s head and a wreath of the lotus leaf form the handle, to which is affixed a brass ring for the purpose of suspending the instrument from the girdle. The blade, five inches in length and one-third of an inch thick, is of steel. This relic is in fine preservation, which I ascribe to a galvanic action of the several metals repelling the formation of rust.^a

Knives were also dug up in this street, one of which has a bone handle. Both ivory and bone were used by the Romans for making the handles of their knives, as well as for other purposes; the former, being by far the more valuable, was confined to the wealthier class, while the latter entered into the manufacture of articles in general request.

Juvenal says,^b

“ —adeo nulla uncia nobis

Est eboris.”

“ —quin ipsa manubria cultellorum

Ossea.”

^a In Montfaucon will be found an engraving of a similar handle (wanting the ring), which is termed a *knife-handle*; but this perfect and curious specimen of the Roman steels, leaves no doubt of the original character of the incomplete relic from which the engraving referred to, was made.

^b Sat. xi. l. 131.

I heard a report of a helmet having been discovered in Prince's Street, and also some silver vessels, but making it a rule to be sceptical in all matters of antiquity that depend merely on the word of the workmen, I pass them over with many other alleged discoveries.

Of the Samian ware a great quantity was procured from Prince's Street and from Lothbury.

The general nature of this pottery has been so often described, and the uses to which it was applied are so well understood, that many remarks thereon may be spared.

While the commoner kinds of fictile vessels may have been made by the colonists, the Samian was in all probability imported; though, it is very likely, that after a time it might have been manufactured, as well as other varieties of earthenware, in Britain. The names of some of the potters stamped on cups and dishes of Samian pottery, are of a very barbarous sound, and remind us of those occurring in Cæsar's Commentaries, as the names of Gauls and Britons, for instance *Dagodubnus*, *Bonoxus*, *Divicatus*, and others.

Saguntum, in Spain, is mentioned by Pliny as being famed for its potteries, and might have exported its wares directly to Britain, for which country it would have been a nearer and more convenient depôt. This historian states, if I correctly understand him, that both Samos and Eretum (in Italy) supplied in his time the dishes or plates for meats, but for *drinking-cups* he names several places, and among them Saguntum. Now the potters' names that I have observed on the broad red dishes (such as most nearly correspond with our dinner plates) bear certainly more classical names than are usually found on the majority of smaller vessels, as *OF. MODESTI. OF. CELSI.*^b &c.

It will not, perhaps, be erroneous to consider some of the larger and better executed dishes, *pateræ*, &c. to have been imported from Rome, some from Saguntum, while others may have been made in potteries established at a more recent period in Gaul and Britain.

Martial,^c in one of his epigrams, mentions a *Batavian* potter named Rufus :

“*Sum figuli lusus Rufi persona Batavi ;*”

perhaps the same whose name we meet with on the red *pateræ*.^d

^b *Ex officinâ Modesti. Officinâ Celsi.*

^c Born in Spain. Martial, xiv. 176.

^d Bagshot, 1783. London, 1835.

In addition to Pliny's testimony of the esteem in which the Samian pottery was held among the Romans, may be adduced the fact of its being frequently found *riveted with lead and brass*, demonstrating that when broken it had been considered too valuable to be thrown away.

It is rendered precious to us of the present day, not merely from its rich colour, compact texture, and variety of form, but as embodying a series of mythological and historical representations alike valuable to the antiquary and the classical scholar.

Deities, their emblematical accompaniments, their priests and sacrificial processions, are frequent subjects on the Samian bowls and vases, the archetypes of which will often be recognised in statues and other works of Grecian or Roman art, so familiar to the connoisseur.

Apollo and Daphne are depicted on a fine fragment in my possession, obtained from Gutter Lane; while on another is a priest (probably of Esculapius) invoking a serpent on an altar. Some, probably drinking-cups, have Bacchantes dancing, and Bacchanalian processions.

The story of the Pygmies and the Cranes often occurs, and cannot be misunderstood:

“Pygmæus parvis currit bellator in armis.”^e

The vine, on one fragment, with pendant clusters of grapes, forms the sole and graceful ornament, and on others the leaf of this tree is blended with that of the ivy, recalling to mind the applicable lines in Virgil:

“Lenta quibus torno facili superaddita vitis,
Diffusos edera vestit pallente corymbos.”^f

Musicians are often introduced playing on the several kinds of flutes and on the harp; of the latter, the plectrum is often discernible in the hand of the performer:

“—— crispo numerantur pectine chordæ.”^g

Gladiatorial combats constitute a favourite subject on the Samian vases. The dresses and actions of the combatants illustrate and corroborate the copious historical accounts that have descended to us respecting this degraded class. Some present us with masks and grotesque objects, nor are there wanting delineations of an indelicate character.

^e Juv. Sat. xiii.

^f Virg. Bucol.

^g Juv. Sat. vi. l. 381.

Combats between men and beasts, and field sports, add to the variety of the figured Samian ware.

Some of the dogs represented as hunting the stag, the wild boar, and hare, bear a striking resemblance to the hounds and greyhounds now employed throughout England, and particularly to the cross-breed we occasionally meet with, between the greyhound and the sheep-dog, a species better adapted in close countries for destructive coursing, being stronger, and if not so fleet, yet capable of enduring more work than the purer breed. The Romans were accustomed to import hunting dogs from Gaul and Britain,^h and our superiority in the breed of certain species to this day will not be disputed.

To the naturalist a field for elucidation is open in the numerous and often very spirited representations of animals, leaves, plants, flowers, and trees, which may be pronounced to be executed faithfully, and with great attention to character.

Running across the centre of the Samian cups, and more rarely on the exterior sides, are found the names of the potters, usually stamped with great regularity, and with the letters and monograms extremely well formed, and in styles peculiar to different æras of the Roman Empire. So fresh indeed, and untouched by time, do these inscriptions come down to us, that we cannot refrain, while beholding them, from regretting that the Romans did not avail themselves of this imperishable composition for transmitting to posterity those valuable records which stone and marble have failed in preserving. The same names are often found at great distances apart, which alone would establish the general demand for this kind of pottery. Thus the name of LVPPA from Prince's Street, corresponds with one from near Shefford in Bedfordshire, found in 1826.

A fragment from East Cheap, in addition to being ornamented with dogs and leaves, has inscribed on the outside CRVCVRO, which may either stand for the maker's name in the nominative case, or abbreviated at the final R, and the o for officinâ. Another, closely resembling the foregoing in execution, found near Lothbury, bears M CREST.O, (Marci Cresti officinâ) in double impress, having been first blundered and then corrected. In one instance the

^h See Strabo. Nemesian also (in *Eclogis*, p. 220.),

— catulos divisa Britannia mittit

Veloces, nostrique orbis venatibus aptos.

name, SABINVS FE.ⁱ, runs in a circle; and I possess examples of stamps *incuse*, and have seen one in your possession.

Adjectives, although uncommon, do occasionally appear, as AVGVSTALIS, either as referring to the quality of the ware, or to its appertaining to the Prætorium. I may also allude to the word FORTIS on a terra-cotta lamp in your collection.^j

On the handles of amphoræ found in these excavations, merely initials often appear as C. IV. R., while on the rims of the broad shallow earthen pans the names are given more or quite at length, for instance, ALBINVS. . . MORICAM: FECIT, SOLLVS F. &c.

The excavations having advanced to Lothbury, the first object that struck my attention was the remnant of a tessellated pavement opposite Founder's Court. Nearer the church of St. Margaret, at about ten or twelve feet deep, the workmen met with a vast number of iron instruments, such as chisels, crow-bars, hammers, &c. all in a very corroded state. Descending still deeper beyond the church, and at the east corner of the Bank, the usual vestiges denoting Roman occupancy were found in abundance, and include a leathern sandal, well preserved and thickly studded with nails on the sole, specimens of red and black pottery, numerous middle-brass coins of Domitian, and one of Antoninus Pius, reverse "Britannia." Wooden piles similar to those before-mentioned in Prince's Street, were again encountered, and combined to indicate the existence of embankments of a water-course at a very remote period.

As the works proceeded from Lothbury to London Wall, various objects of interest were from time to time procured, such as brass coins of Agrippa, Antonia, Claudius, and Vespasian, in the second size, and Trajan in large brass (which last have at intervals been found from East Cheap to London Wall), spatulæ of various kinds, styli, needles, a gold ring, an engraved cornelian, pottery, a pair of brass tweezers, with ear-pick connected by a ring, and an instrument five inches long, somewhat resembling a packing-needle, with an eye about an inch from the pointed extremity, while the other end is flat and circular, about the size of a shilling, and bearing on the obverse a strong mixed resemblance to the coins of the Lower Empire and the Saxon period. It carries the

ⁱ Sabinus fecit.

^j I observe also in my list Comitialis and Cerealis, both of which may designate the peculiar purposes for which the vessels thus inscribed were used, though the latter is also a proper name.

impression of a helmeted head to the right, looking upwards to what seems a sceptre surmounted by a cross and two minute stars ; on the breast is also a cross, and projecting behind the head are two rows of pearls, such as are appended to or constitute the diadems on coins of the later Roman Emperors. It was most probably used in arranging or fastening the hair.

But the most important discovery in the line of excavation from Lothbury to the Wall, was made on the Coleman Street side, near the public house called the Swan's Nest, where was laid open a pit or well containing a store of earthen vessels of various patterns and capacities. This well had been carefully planked over with thick boards, and at first exhibited no signs of containing any thing besides the native gravelly soil, but at a considerable depth other contents were revealed. The vases were placed on their sides longitudinally, and presented the appearance of being regularly packed or embedded in the mud and sand which had settled so closely round them, that a great number were broken or damaged in being extricated. But those preserved entire, or nearly so, are of the same kind as the handles, necks, and pieces of the light-brown-coloured vessels met with in such profusion throughout the Roman level in London. Some are of a darker clay, approaching to a bluish black, with borders of reticulated work running round the upper part ; and one of a singularly elegant form is of a pale bluish colour with a broad black border at the bottom. Some are without handles ; others have either one or two. Their capacity for liquids may be stated as varying from one quart to two gallons, though some that were broken were of much larger dimensions.

A small Samian patera, with the ivy-leaf border, and a few figured pieces of the same were found near the bottom of this well, and also a small brass coin of Allectus, with the reverse of the galley "Virtus Aug." and moreover, two iron implements resembling a boat-hook and a bucket handle. The latter of these carries such a homely and modern look, that, had I no further evidence of its history, than the mere assurance of the excavators, I should have instantly rejected it, from suspicion of its having been brought to the spot to be palmed off on the unwary ; but the fact of these articles being disinterred in the presence of a trustworthy person in my employ, disarms all doubt of their authenticity.

The dimensions of this pit or well were about two feet nine inches, or three

feet square, and it was boarded on each side with narrow planks about two feet long, and one inch and a half to two inches thick, placed upright, but which framework was discontinued towards the bottom of the pit which merged from a square into an oval form.

To describe or enumerate every object that has occurred in this locality, and elsewhere, during the progress of the works for the sewers and streets, would prolong my communication to a more tedious length than, I fear, it has already reached ; I will therefore go on with the general narrative.

At Honey Lane, in digging for the foundations of the new City School, the tiles, pavement, vaults, &c. of an Anglo-Norman church first attracted my notice ; then were found many coins of Æthelred, a tripod, some bronze utensils, and two sacrificial knives, one of the blades of which has three narrow sprigs of brass inlaid, and is one of the finest specimens of the kind I have ever seen. At the depth of about sixteen or eighteen feet some pottery, glass bottles, and some few coins, two of which were, a badly preserved medallion of Trajanus Decius and a small brass of Allectus.

The acquisitions from Bread Street consisted of richly figured Samian vases, many of the earthen pans, to which the term *mortaria* has been, I think questionably, applied, and specimens of paintings from the walls of Roman dwellings which time or the hand of the spoiler had played sad havoc with.

With regard to the circular vessels, *mortaria*, they seem to me to be in every respect unsuited to the purposes of trituration, both from the softness of the material and also from the shape ; but appear to be well adapted for a variety of culinary uses, and from being usually found on the sites of dwelling-houses may have been intended for general service in the kitchen department. They are met with in various sizes, and sometimes in pale red clay.

The specimens of paintings from the walls of the domestic habitations of the Romans, who were stationed or settled in London, are very interesting, as exhibiting additional proofs of the extent and comfort, not to add luxury, perceptible in the vestiges of the private residences of the colonists.

The observations of Sir William Gell on the paintings at Pompeii, will apply to these now under consideration. They exhibit great freshness of colours when first brought to the air and washed free from dirt, but soon vary and fade, so as in a short time to afford but a faint idea of their original beauty.

The prevalent colours on the specimens I obtained were yellow, white, red, and green; some have a border of white circles, and some alternate borders of white and green on a red ground, while others exhibited traces of flowers or fanciful designs.

At the entrance to Bread Street, twelve feet from the surface, a chalk wall crossed Cheapside diagonally towards Wood Street, and apparently entered that street; but what direction it then took, the partial openings made for sinking shafts to sewer works did not give sufficient scope for determining.

A shaft was sunk between Bread Street and Friday Street, and pottery obtained both from that and from another sunk opposite Gutter Lane. There was discovered a black wide-mouthed earthen pot embedded in the loam eighteen feet deep from the present surface. It is of the cinerary kind, and is deposited in the museum of Mr. W. D. Saull, of Aldersgate Street.

Gutter Lane proved a fertile source for the Samian pottery. Among other pieces from this street, is one bearing a human head in high relief and of very superior workmanship, and which appears to have been separately moulded and then fastened on; also a well-preserved glass bottle, capable of holding about two ounces, and a brass coin of Carausius, reverse "CONCOR. MILIT."^k (two hands joined); also many of the broad curved-edged tiles used for covering the roofs of houses.

Not less interesting discoveries were made in a shaft sunk opposite Paternoster Row, where, at about eighteen feet deep, the operations were checked by a stone wall, of intense hardness, running in a direction towards the centre of St. Paul's, and which cost the labourers three or four days to cut through.¹ Close to this wall were found several of the second brass coins of Vespasian and Domitian, and above the fine Samian dish, bearing across its centre the inscription "OF. MODESTI." with several potters' names, iron tools, and instruments, one of which is the head of a hammer nearly a foot long.

In the direction of St. Martin's-le-Grand, a few yards distant from this wall, and at the depth of twenty feet, were a vast quantity of wooden piles covered with planks, and among them was found a human skeleton. An immense

^k Concordia Militum.

¹ In this wall were cemented two large sea-shells, evidently for ornament. Sir William Gell notices this as a common practice in Pompeii.

number of human and other animal remains were exhumed opposite St. Martin's-le-Grand; but I saw no signs of pottery, coins, or other Roman vestiges.

The excavations were suspended in Newgate Street, near to Ross Street. About 100 yards from the eastern entrance, the foundations of a wall,^m forty feet in length and eight feet deep, had to be opened; but such was the solidity of the mortar, that much time and labour were expended before their object could be effected. This stone-work appeared to me to run diagonally across the street towards the entrance to Christ's Hospital. About sixteen yards from this entrance I obtained a beautiful gold ring set with a sapphire, a ruby, and two torquoises. I must here correct a newspaper report that the wall or stone-work above named, was situated at the *bottom* of Newgate Street, and that some antiquities besides were obtained from that locality. All operations up to this time have been confined between the *eastern* entrance and Ross Street.

Some of the facts herein related stand very disconnected; but, however isolated their position, they may not be unworthy of record, as at some future period they may serve as materials towards the Roman topography of London, and I trust that the details may be enlivened by the exhibition of the accompanying articles which I have ventured to offer, through your medium, to the inspection of the Society of Antiquaries.

I am, Sir, respectfully yours,

CHARLES ROACH SMITH.

A. J. KEMPE, Esq. F.S.A.

SOME OF THE POTTERS' NAMES FROM RECENT DISCOVERIES IN LONDON.ⁿ

AVLIVS F.	Aulius Fecit.	AMMIVS F.	
ASCILLI M.	Ascilli Manu.	AVGVSTALIS.	St. Michael's.
AGEDILLVS F.		ATTICI M.	
ALBANI M.		ALBINVS.	
AQUIT	} Aquitanus.	BOINICCI M.	
OF AQVIT		BORILLI OF.	
OF AQVITANI		BONOXVS.	

^m Supposed to be the south wall of the church of St. Nicholas Shambles.

ⁿ Nearly all the following stamps (with many more) have been obtained by me at the various sites referred to in the foregoing communication, and are now in my possession. Some of the names have been given by Mr. Kempe in his paper, vol. xxiv. p. 202 of the *Archaeologia*, on the Roman Antiquities found near the site of the church of St. Michael, Crooked Lane.

CARINVS.	OF MURRANI.
CALVINI M.	MERCATOR.
OF CRESTI.	OF MODESTI.
CRESI M.	OF NIGRI.
CATASEXTVS F.	OF NERI.
CARANI F.	PATERCLOS FE. Paterculus Fecit.
CELSVS.	PAVLLVS.
DIVICATVS.	OF PAVLLI.
DIVICI M.	PASSEN. M.
DIVIXTVL. Divixtulus.	OF PATRICI.
DECVMINI M. Decumini Manû.	PRIMANI.
DAGODVBNVS.	PRIMVLI.
FELIX.	OF PRIMVL.
OF FELICIS.	OF PRM.
GERMANVS.	POTITIANI M.
OFF GER. Officinâ Germani.	QVARTVS F.
GEMINI M.	RVFI.
GRACCHVS.	RVFINI M.
HILARI.	SABINVS F.
IABVS FE.	SACREMV. Sacremus.
IOENALIS. Iovenalis.	SACROTI M S. Sacroti manû sua.
LATINVS.	*OF SEVERI.
LVTAEVVS. Incuse, from Gutter Lane.	SĒCVNDVS.
LVPPA.	OF SECVN.
OF LICINI.	SECVNDINI.
LICINILVS.	SEXTUS FE.
LIBERIVS.	SEXTI O.
LVCANVS.	SENICI O. Senici Officinâ.
LOLLIVS F.	SILVIRI M.
OF LVCCEI.	SILDATIANI M.
MATVCENVS.	SVLPICI.
MARTIVS.	SOLLUS FECIT.
MARTIALIS.	L. C. SOL.
MARCELLI M.	TERTIVS.
MAGNVS.	VIDVCVS.
MAINACN. Perhaps Manû Janacini.	VIRTHVS FECIT.
MEDETI M.	VICTORINVS.
MOM. Momi.	VITALIS. M. S.
OF. MO. The same.	

* The F is placed within the o in some.