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Roman Antiquities,

IN THE
CITY AND COUNTY MUSEUM, LINCOLN.
(PART 4.)

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

Sold at the Museum.

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Photo by] ROMAN ANTIQUITIES FROM WESTGATE, LINCOLN. [Mr. A. Smith

Roman Antiquities.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES IN WESTGATE, LINCOLN.—It will appeal to all Lincolnshire Archæologists that discoveries made in the city and county should be published as early as possible, for the sake of a published record, and more important still the authenticity of the record, which can only be satisfactorily established whilst the matter is in hand. Now the Museum is established as a centre for the reception of antiquities there is less risk of those "finds" becoming scattered, and the one under consideration has been secured for that institution.

In carrying out the great scheme for supplying Lincoln with water the erection of a water-tower was necessary, hence a deep excavation was made to secure a solid foundation for this building. The area of the excavation was not extensive, being a trench dug, practically forming a square, each side being about sixty feet in length. The trench was about ten feet wide and fourteen feet deep, leaving the central portion unexplored.

In digging the trench the whole of the soil was cut through down to the solid limestone. Before the workmen had reached any great depth a quantity of pottery fragments were found, most of it glazed and of the character of pottery made in the fifteenth century. A very fine mortar was found, made from the local stone, having a pedestal base and originally provided with four bosses, one of which is broken away with a portion of the vessel. Stone coffins, of a kind which occur in numbers in this old city, were found, having the rounded cavity for the head to rest on.

The deepening of the trench, however, soon left the Mediæval period behind, and at a depth of about ten feet, abundant evidences of the Roman occupation were met with. The site is in the north-west corner of the Roman fortress and therefore was looked upon as being a productive area, and likely to yield numerous specimens. For the sake of investigation from an archæological point of view it would have been a fine opportunity to have thoroughly worked the surrounding area, but contractors and the exigences of a great undertaking prohibited further research.

In the trench, a portion of a wall was struck and broken out, it was of Roman stonework, laid in herring-bone form, with layers of flat tiles so often used in such constructions. A layer of these tiles were secured for the Museum, and one was interesting from the fact that it had slightly fused and an accidental glaze produced on the brick-red tile. The floor of a room was found, consisting of concrete, smoothed on the surface, only a small portion was uncovered and some heavy rains caused it to soften and only a fragment was recovered intact. It shows what appeared to be the early and ready method of flooring, just the smoothing of the cement, no large stones or tile-fragments worked in, nor any tesserae laid on.

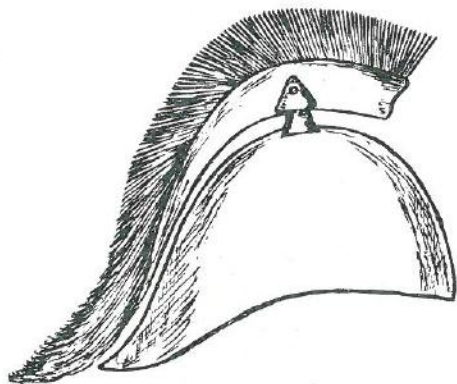
Pottery of the Period was found in great abundance. Fragments of vessels of almost all types, large amphorae and urns of coarse ware, smaller vessels of finer ware and decoration. Portions of Mortaria in plenty, and pieces of fine "Castor Ware" with raised scrolls in beautiful free designs, others with decorations painted in white. So called "Samian" ware was found in fair abundance, many of the pieces are decorated with scrolls, wreaths and festoons, human figures, animals, and floral designs standing out in moulded relief. This ware evidently was the finest domestic pottery of the period, imported from France and Germany to this country. Some of the examples are exceedingly good fabric, many pieces of Graufesenque ware of the first century, also Lezoux ornament of the second century.

Several pieces bear the potter's mark, all being bases or vessels stamped on the inside, thus handing down the name of the potter to those who admire his work many centuries after. These marks are as follows:

TAVRICIO another letter F is lost and means Taurici officina. OSBIMANVS Osbimanus. ALB is part of a name such as Albucius. OFCV is perhaps OF CVR, a known mark. MVX no doubt Muxtullus. A worn stamp seems to be PRI·M, some of the letters are missing so the name cannot be with certainty completed. OF SA no doubt intends Officina Sarini or the like. Two pieces have letters scratched on the outside of the vessels, one with the letter R the other PR, these Professor Haverfield suggests may be someone's initials.

Many pieces of glass, weathered and iridescent, were found, mostly of small vessels known as "Ungentaria," there is a portion of a glass bangle with ornamental pattern of cable design, and pieces of two glass beads, ribbed all round. Five counters of glass, three white and two black, probably used by the Romans in some game.

Bronze objects were found, several of these being of an interesting character indeed. They were submitted to Mr. A. G. Wright of Colchester, who describes them as follows :



A bronze terminal of a helmet, double-conical in shape, there is a slot to receive the plume that surmounted the helmet, and a hole is provided to secure the plume in the terminal.

A bronze fibula of the "Aucissa" type, the pin is missing but the bow is intact. It is decorated along the ridge, and near the pin-cylinder seem to be traces of the name.

A bronze bell, pyramidal in form, one and three-quarter inches in height, with a boss at each corner and ring for suspension, it may have been attached to harness, or used at festivals.

A bronze seal box to protect the seal of the writing tablets, the thread being passed through the holes in the box and sealed.

A cloak fastener, which has been silvered or tinned, part of the loop is broken away. A bronze strap buckle, with hinged plate for attachment. A bronze mount from a staff or baton. A stylus, part of the broad end broken. A strap-slide. Two rings which appear to be from a casket rather than finger rings. Piece of a bronze pendant. Bronze object which being square in section appear to be an awl.

These are shewn in the accompanying plate with the glass counters, beads, and bangles, together with a bone pin, a bone dress-fastener which is at the same time a Phallic charm, and a bone counter.

Other bronze objects have not been included on the illustration, among them fibula, mountings of a casket, pieces of bronze in course of working and other interesting specimens.

Nearly all these are assigned to first century date.

Several coins were found most of them of Claudius, 41 to 54 A.D. There is one, a scarce and interesting coin of Antonia, the mother of Claudius, other coins found among the soil were of a later date, being of the time of the Constantines, and one of Valens.

Thanks are due to the officials and workmen who interest themselves in the welfare of our antiquities and place them where they are appreciated by the public. It is hoped that all county finds may gravitate to the county collection and thus build up a great reference series of Lincolnshire Antiquities

ARTHUR SMITH, F.L.S., F.E.S.



CIST WITH LID RAISED.



URN.

STONE CIST FOUND AT LINCOLN.—Further excavations made on the South Common, Lincoln, in January, brought to light a Stone Cist and other Roman remains. Several stones were unearthed, mostly rough and unworked, but a larger one attracted the attention of the Commons Warden—Mr. T. Kennington—who at once communicated with the Curator of the County Museum, Mr. Arthur Smith.

The stone was twenty-four inches long, sixteen inches wide, and thirteen inches high. At first there seemed to be no indications of working, the damp soil clinging closely to the stone, but it was determined to draw out the stone from the surrounding earth for further examination, when partly moved, a groove along the edge was seen as the soil was moved.

The stone was being dragged to the surface when it fell into several pieces and disclosed a hollow in the centre of the block. The cavity was basin-shaped and eleven inches across. This hollow held the remains of a cremated interment, consisting of many charred bones and ashes embedded amongst the sandy soil which had made its way into the cist, and among the remains were two small glass unguent bottles.

The upper portion of the cist had a shallow recess in which a stone lid fitted.

The remains were carefully taken out and conveyed to the Museum, as was also the broken cist.

During the same excavation several fragments of Roman pottery were found, many of which were recognised as being of the same vessel. It was of lightish grey ware and the method of decoration was of an unusual form. It is seven inches in height and the major portion has been ornamented by putting pieces of wet clay on the vessel and drawing it together with the fingers. The repetition of the process has produced a crude design which may be likened to foliage.

There were also four pieces of thin bronze which had formed the chief portion of a bronze mirror highly polished on one side and ornamented with concentric circles on the back.

The objects found were near to the stone which was found a year before, inscribed to the memory of Valerius, standard-bearer of the IXth legion and previously noted in this Journal.

The Cist and Urn have now been restored by the Curator and are in the collections at the City and County Museum.

The Photographs give a good impression of the principal objects which are of more than usual interest to local archæologists.