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EXCAVATIONS AND DISCOVERIES ADJOINING THE SOUTH-WEST WALL OF THE ROMAN LEGIONARY FORTRESS IN FEASEGATE, YORK, 1955-1957.

By PETER WENHAM.

INTRODUCTION.

In 1955 the site of the *Old Black Swan* Coaching Inn in Coney Street, York, and an adjacent site in Feasegate were cleared and pile driving began in preparation for the new premises of the British Home Stores (figs. 1 and 2). This report deals with the excavations and discoveries made in 1955-1957. Part I covers the excavations conducted there in 1955 by the writer on behalf of the Inspectorate Branch of the Ministry of Works and Part II gives an account of the incidental discoveries which were made there after the formal excavation was completed.

I wish to thank the British Home Stores Ltd. for permission to conduct this excavation and in particular Mr. G. W. Clarke, their Chief Architect; the contractors (Messrs. W. Birch and Sons); Mr. R. A. Hill of the Huntley Museum, Edinburgh, who took all the photographs (except Plate III, taken by Mr. T. G. Manby and Plate IX by the Yorkshire Philosophical Society); Mr. H. Richardson for assistance in drawing plans and sections; Mr. A. Sanderson and Mr. W. R. Cowl, site supervisor and trainee surveyor respectively to the contractors, who gave me information about day-to-day discoveries; Mr. T. C. M. Brewster for his report on the mediaeval pottery and to Mr. H. G. Ramm, of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, who gave me valuable assistance in assessing many incidental finds; other acknowledgments occur in the text.

PART I—THE EXCAVATION.

The south-west wall of the Roman legionary fortress was known to run across this site and one of the first tasks undertaken by the contractors was to establish its precise alignment and its existing height. Shallow trenches were therefore dug alongside it in various places. Two of these (trenches 1A and 2 of fig. 3)

LEGIONARY FORTRESS, YORK

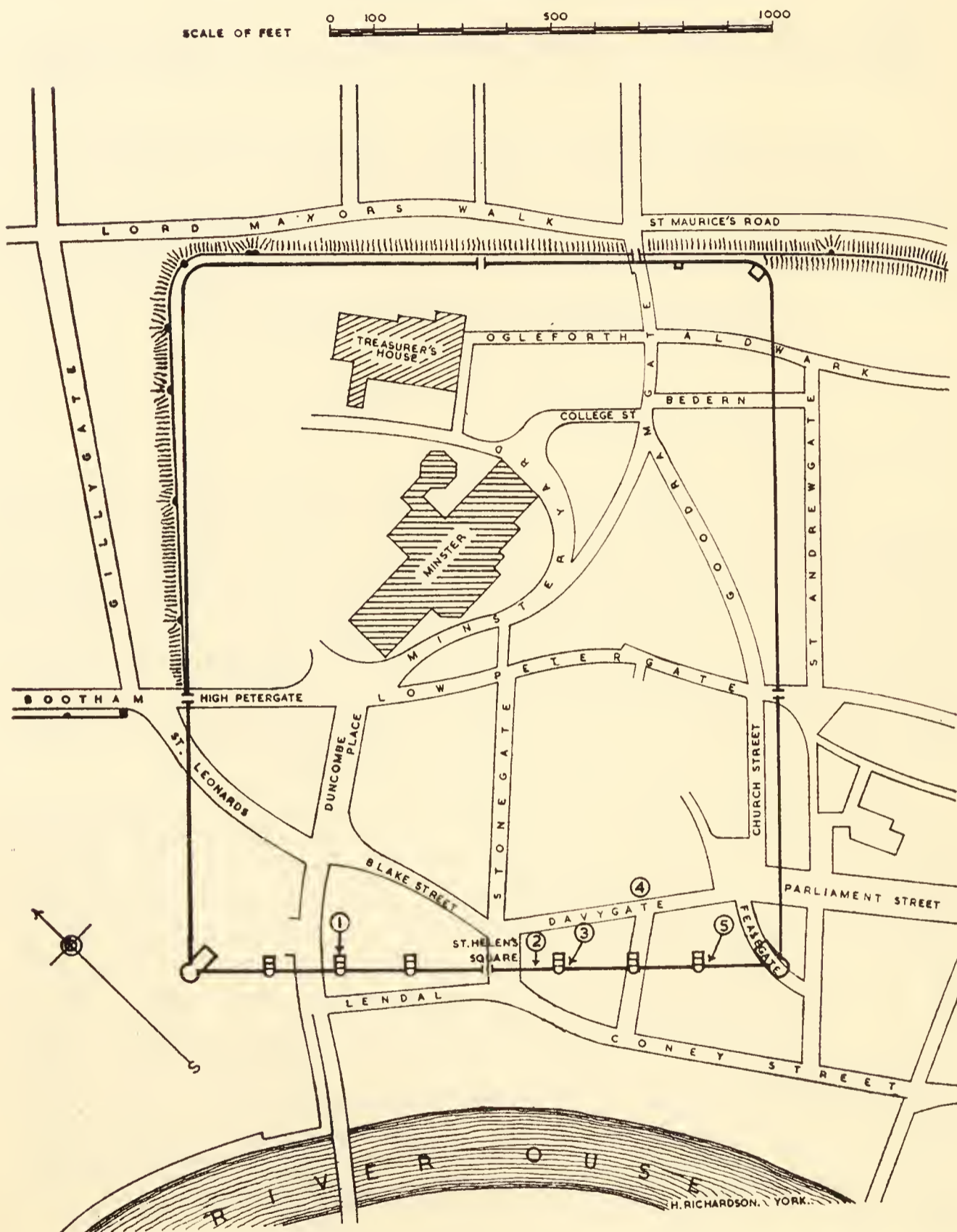
SITE OF 1955-1960 EXCAVATIONS
ON S.W. FRONT

FIG. 1.

- (1) 4th century interval tower (SW 5) excavated 1960.
- (2) Site of H. Ramm's excavation in Coney Street, 1955.
- (3) Site of L. P. Wenham's excavation in Davygate, 1955-58.
- (4) Site of G. F. Willmot's excavation, 1958.
- (5) Site of Feasegate excavations described in this report.

were dug to a depth of 8 ft. below the 1955 surface.¹ Trench 1A was 5 ft. wide and extended 4 ft. away from the outer face of the wall; trench 2 was of similar dimensions but was on the inner side of the wall.

At D on fig. 3 an area 4 ft. deep and 18 ft. long was cleared which exposed some of the concrete core of the wall. It was of particular importance as it just included the beginning of the return which the 4th century wall makes where it joins the south angle tower. (Further important evidence of the line of the wall in this vicinity was obtained when piles Nos. F.1 and F.2² were sunk; both of these just grazed the inner side of the wall.)

FEASEGATE-CONEY STREET AREA, YORK.



FIG. 2.

Feasegate excavation in relation to the buildings &c. in the immediate vicinity.

Permission was kindly given by the British Home Stores, to the Ministry of Works to undertake an excavation by deepening and extending trench 1A. It was extended another 6 ft. (trench

¹ The present floor level of the store where it now overlies the fortress wall is about 5 ft. lower than the 1955 level.

² Throughout this paper pile Nos. and pile cap Nos. relate to fig. 3.

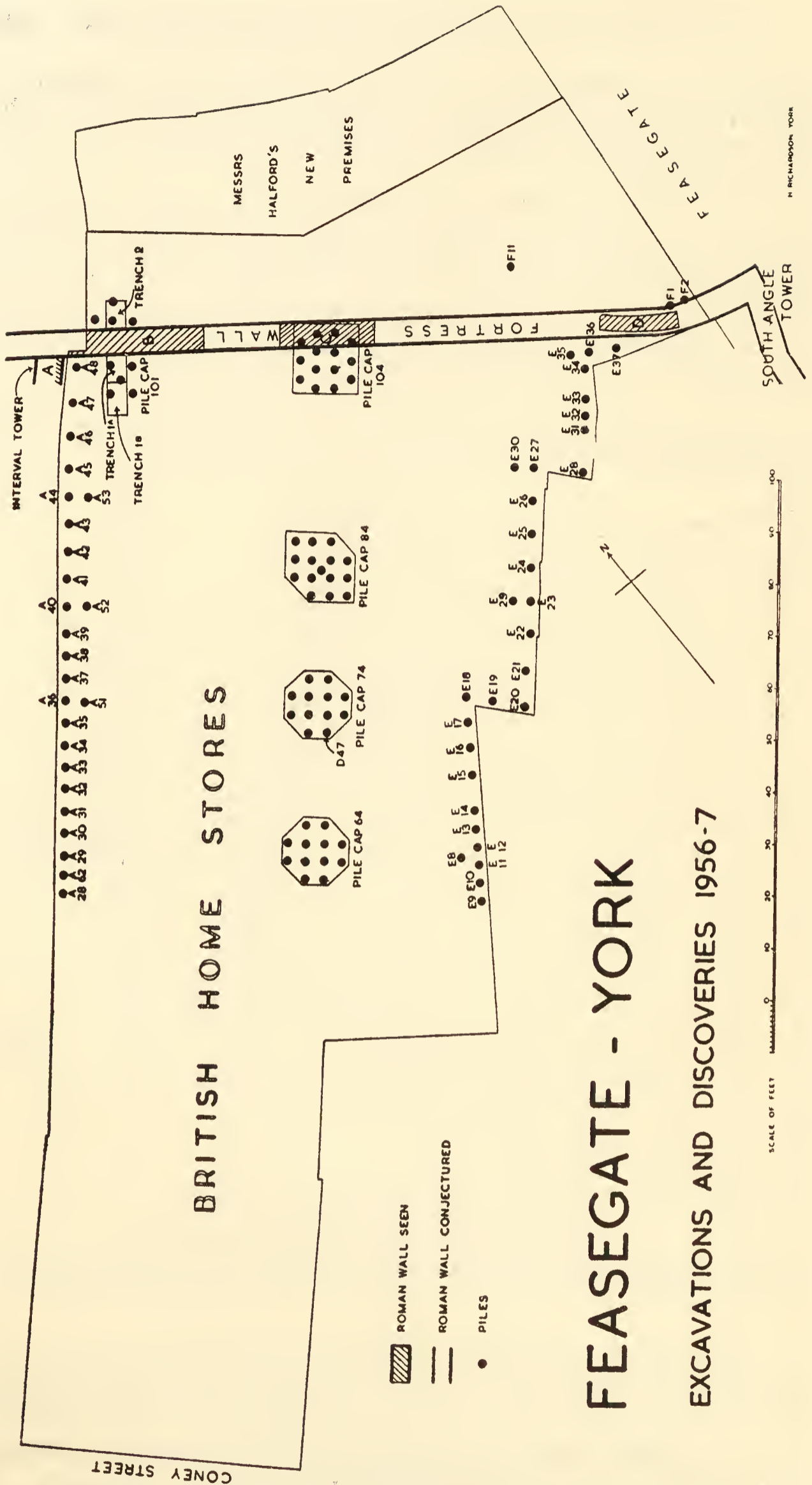


FIG. 3. Plan of the site showing trenches dug, piles sunk and other findspots.

1B, fig. 3) and, in its deepest part—nearest the fortress wall—dug another 7 ft. deep; for reasons which will be evident later it was not dug to this depth throughout. The excavation was supervised by the writer. Three men were employed, one of whom was Mr. T. G. Manby who gave enthusiastic assistance with many of the technical aspects of the work and with the day-to-day recording of the finds; I wish to pay particular tribute to the help he gave me. He has drawn the pottery. The excavation lasted for three weeks—8th-26th November.

This excavation was intended to complement that undertaken by Mr. H. Ramm in 1954 on behalf of the Ministry of Works on a site in Coney Street some 150 yards to the west (fig. 1).¹ Mr. Ramm dug a trench adjoining, and at right angles to, the inner face of the south-west fortress wall and considered that there the existing stone wall in the lowest courses which he exposed (he did not uncover the whole of the foundation) was 2nd century (Severan) in date with a 4th century rebuild above. Besides the Severan and 4th century ramparts he had been able to identify three pre-Severan clay ramparts. He had, however, found no trace whatever of the first stone wall—the Trajanic—and only hints of what might have been the rampart belonging to it. The possibility that the Trajanic wall had been built on a line in front of the Severan could not—on the analogy of what Miller found in his excavation on the south-east wall in the Bedern—Aldwark sector² be ruled out.

The main purpose of this 1955 excavation was to investigate this problem. Although the formal excavation itself did not give an unequivocal answer, other evidence from the building work on this site—particularly the pile driving—makes it certain that the Trajanic wall was on the same line as that of the later Severan and 4th century walls.³

The unexpected discovery of a flight of steps belonging to a mediaeval building (discussed below) unfortunately side-tracked the main issue and, because of the cost and technical difficulties involved in removing the weighty masonry of which it was composed, the whole trench was not dug to a uniform depth of 15 ft. down to the Roman wall foundation as it was in the 2 ft. nearest to the wall itself.

The excavation is best understood by referring to fig. 4, the sectional drawing of the trench and explaining the structures and stratification encountered there.

Layer 1 consisted of a concrete floor 2 ins. thick resting on a rubble foundation 4 ins. thick. According to the contractors it dated *c.* 1920.

Layer 2, 4 ft. 6 ins. deep, consisted of dark, loamy soil such as one would associate with a garden. It contained a few cinders,

¹ Reported in *JRS* xlvi (1956), pp. 75-90.

² *JRS* xv (1925), p. 187 and f.

³ An excavation in 1960 conducted by the writer on a site at the junction of Lendal and Museum Street (see fig. 5) has also confirmed this.

a little building rubble and a few sherds of 19th-20th century pottery (none illustrated).

Layers 3a and 3b. Layer 3b consisted of 2 ins.-3 ins. of black, burnt material, mostly charcoal, running across the whole length of the trench. For a distance of 5 ft. next to the wall above this was a layer (3a) about 1 ft. thick of rubble, mortar and tiles showing signs of burning and which seemed to be associated with the layer (3b) below. In layer 3a were found four sherds of 18th century pottery (none illustrated) and a William III penny.

FEASEGATE - YORK

1955 EXCAVATIONS

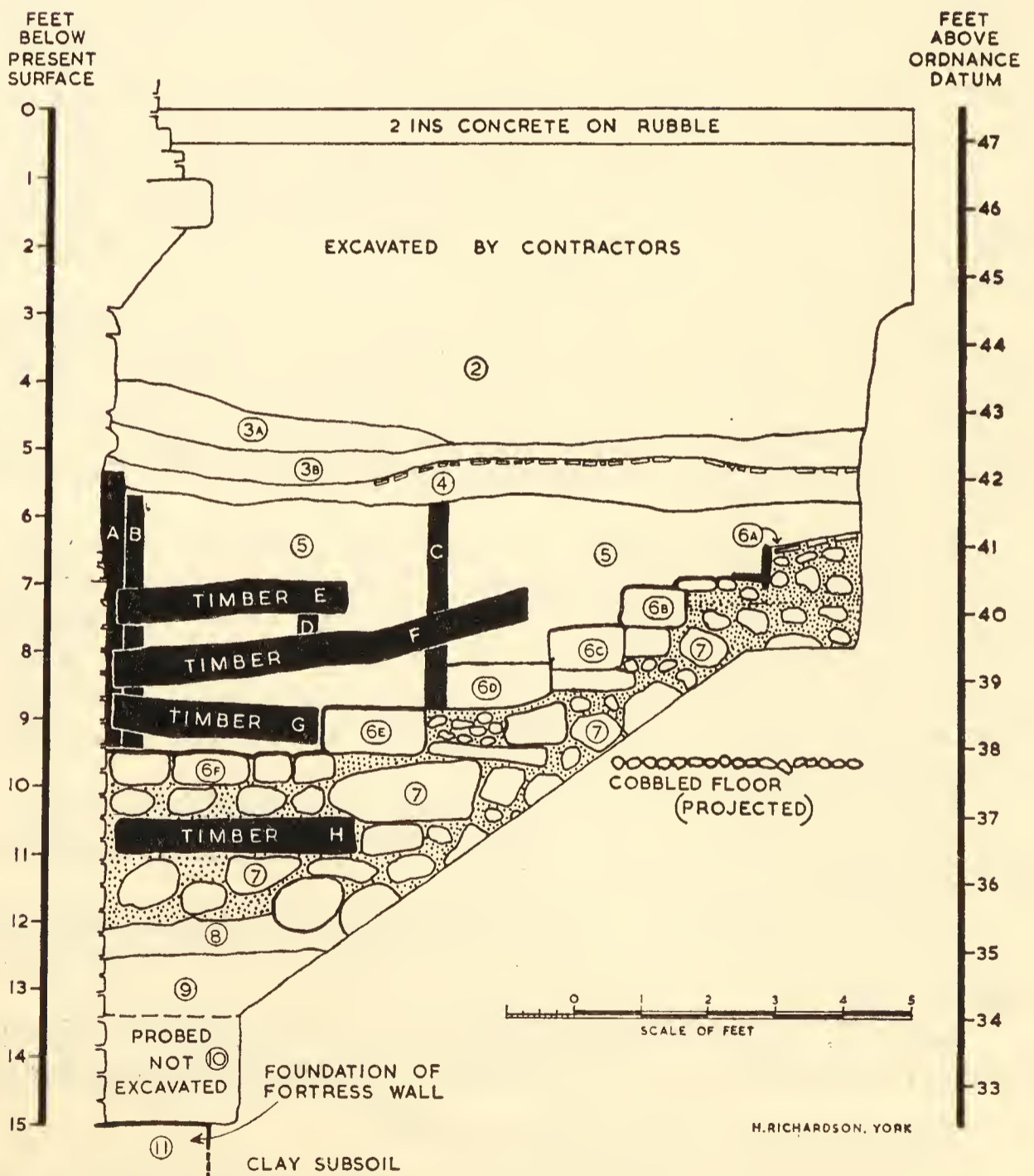
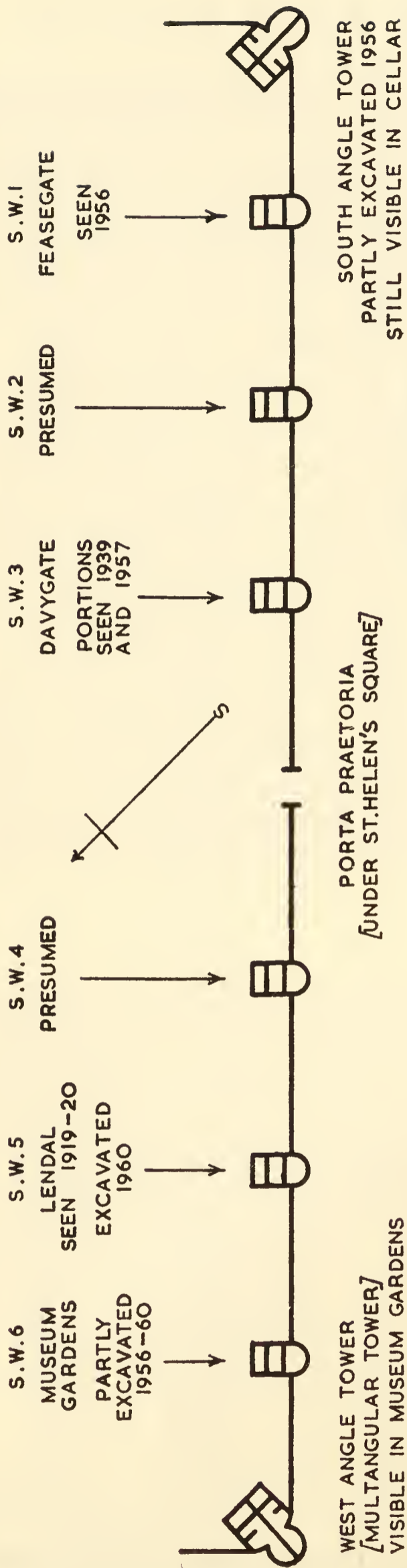


FIG. 4. Section of the trench excavated.

LEGIONARY FORTRESS - S.W. FRONT



H. RICHARDSON, YORK, 1960.

Fig. 5.

FEASEGATE - YORK

1957 EXCAVATION

SECTION THROUGH THE FORTRESS WALL

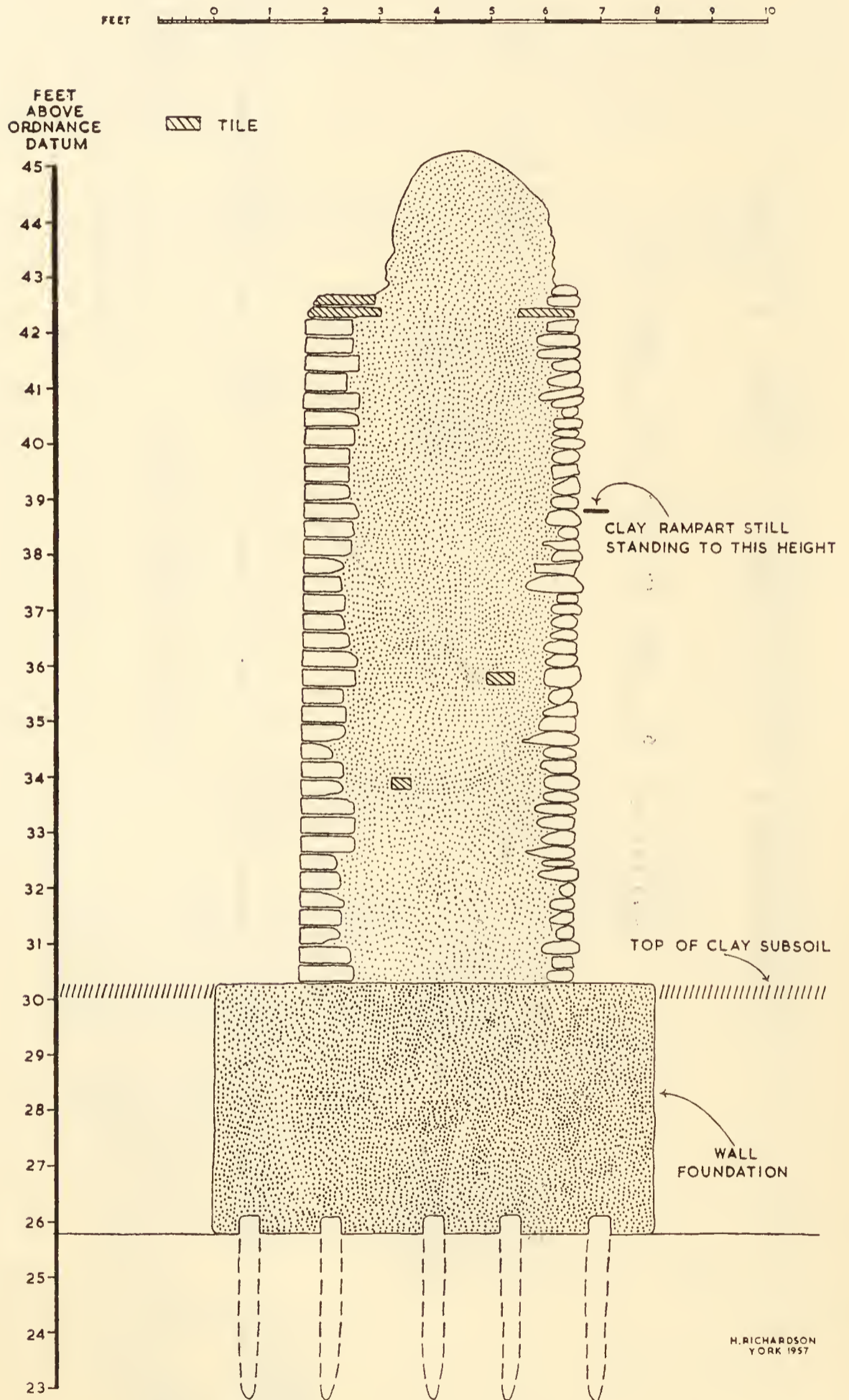


FIG. 6. Section through the fortress wall.



PLATE I. The excavation—showing flight of steps.



PLATE II. Top step and threshold of door.

Layer 4, 6 ins.-9 ins. thick consisted of what appeared to be a floor of sticky brown clay, containing pieces of tile and limestone chippings. Imbedded in the clay were five very small sherds of pottery possibly of 15th/16th century date (none illustrated).

Layer 5 consisted of clay similar to that of layer 4 but it included a larger number of stones—rough, limestone blocks, and cobbles. In depth it varied from 4 ft. nearest the wall to only a few inches at the other end of the trench. This layer clearly represented packing which had been placed over the flight of steps below (layers 6 A-F) in order to prepare a level surface on which the floor above it (layer 4) rested.

Twenty sherds of pottery were found in this packing, nine of which are illustrated and described (Appendix, pp. 339-342 and fig. 7, Nos. 1-9); they are all of 13th-14th century date.

Layers 6 A-F. This consisted of a flight of six steps, five of stone (6 B-F and plate I) and one of cobble packing (6A and plate II). Between the lowest step and the fortress wall was a paved area 3 ft. wide (6F). The topmost step was 9 ft. 9 ins. away from the wall. The steps varied in height 6-8 ins. and in width from 1-2 ft. The four lower stone steps consisted of either a single limestone block or of two such blocks; in the latter instances they were carefully mortared together.

The topmost step consisted of clay, cobble and tile packing behind a 1 in. wide board set on edge; its surface was of cobbles laid in the clay. Beneath the cobbles, lying across the length of this step were two large planks or beams. Their purpose was not absolutely clear though they may have consisted of part of a framework to hold this top step in position.

It was clear that two other wooden structures found in this excavation were to be linked with these steps—one on the east side and one on the west. The first consisted of three oak posts—two close to each other and alongside the wall (A and B of fig. 4) and the other (C) 5 ft. away from the wall. (There was a hint of another at D between them, though the steel shuttering used to revet the trench made it impossible to establish this with certainty.) Lying horizontally across these uprights were three planks (E, F and G), each 6 ins. wide and 1 in. thick. Though no nails were found tying them to the uprights it was clear that they were all associated.

Behind the piles and planks was a clay/rubble filling and the conclusion was that the flight of steps had originally led to a basement, cellar or to some sunken passage way. This was supported by the fact that on the opposite side of the steps were stumps, 3 ft.-4 ft. long, or four posts (shown on plate I). The two nearest the top of the steps had a 3 ft. 6 ins. plank (6 ins. wide and 1 in. thick) between them, acting as a revetment to the steps and the filling below them (plate II). The other posts presumably originally supported similar planks which had rotted away and so disappeared and also, since part of them still re-

mained standing above the level of the steps, a handrail of some sort.

The floor of this cellar or sunken area (6F) consisted of large blocks of limestone (the largest being 12 × 6 × 6 ins.) in its 3 ft. nearest the wall. Beyond these steps and this 'paved' area and on the same level with it was a cobbled surface laid on clay (projected on to fig. 4).¹ Below the 'paved' area and the steps was a considerable number of large limestone blocks (layer 7) among which was what looked like part of an oak beam (H) measuring 4 ft. × 6 ins. × 6 ins. and 19 sherds of pottery of 13th-14th century date: thirteen of the latter have been drawn and described below (Appendix p. 342 and figs. 8 and 9, Nos. 10-22).

Layer 7. Described above.

Layer 8. Consisted of 4 ins.-5 ins. of gravel.

Layers 9 and 10. These both consisted of black, evil-smelling soil, containing a large proportion of decayed organic material: layer 9 represents that part of this stratum above the water line and layer 10 that below it. Despite pumping, the water could not be brought under control and the trench remained permanently waterlogged. The water and silt of layer 10 was, however, probed and a solid level layer (11) of what—in view of discoveries on the site later during clearance by the contractors—was unquestionably the concrete foundation of the fortress wall. This was encountered at a depth of 15 ft. What appeared to be the edge of this foundation was established 18 ins. away from the wall (see fig. 4). In layers 9/10 only Roman pottery, together with the fragment of a roofing tile (*tegula*), was found. There were 22 sherds in all, as follows. None has been considered worth illustrating.

- (i) ² 9 sherds of plain Samian ware representing Forms 17, 27, 33 and 35.
- (ii) 1 sherd of decorated Samian. Form 37, South Gaulish. Good gloss but poor workmanship. The only identifiable figure-type is a dog (Dech. 922). The potter is uncertain, but the date of the piece is c. A.D. 75-90.
- (iii) Rim and wall of mortarium of Corder's Crambeck Type 6, in the usual dirty white, slightly sandy fabric, with orange-brown slip on the exterior. Black grit beginning well below the bead.
The type is not found at the Yorkshire coastal signal stations, so it must have been one of the early Crambeck products, made in the decades before A.D. 370.
- (iv) Jar base in grey fabric with burnished interior. Difficult to date, possibly 2nd/3rd century.
- (v) Body fragment from a thin-walled vessel in hard orange-brown fabric with dark brown to black colour-coat. Five rows of rouletting. Castor ware type. Probably late 3rd or early 4th century.

¹ It is probable that the western limit of this cellar or yard was the wall of the projecting (Roman) interval tower which, as pointed out in Part II of this report (pp. 343-4) was, when it was seen in 1956, still standing to a considerable height, only 13 ft. away. As it would project at least 5 ft. from the fortress wall it would provide a ready-made western limit to the cellar or area discovered in this trench.

² Mr. and Mrs. Brian Hartley kindly helped me in the examination of the pottery.



PLATE III.

Outer face of the S.W. fortress wall as uncovered in the excavation.



PLATE IV.

Detail of the fortress wall. (Note centre ashlar third course from top and lefthand ashlar course four).

- (vi) 9 sherds—no rim—of pinkish buff (legionary) ware: 2nd/3rd century.

The range of this pottery is 1st-4th century, just the kind of deposit which one would expect to find in the fill of the foundation trench alongside the 4th century wall.

THE ROMAN FORTRESS WALL (Plates III and IV and fig. 4).

Twenty-four courses of the wall, standing 8 ft. 6 ins. high above the foundation were counted. Above this, though invisible because of post-Roman walls surmounting and obscuring them, were another ten courses, together with the red tile band, 1 ft. thick, and another 2 ft. of the core of the wall. (These facts came to light later when the post-Roman walls were demolished—see p. 344.) The whole of the wall examined was clearly of 4th century date, the red tile band, the wide mortar joints and the ashlar of irregular lengths (varying from 3 ins.-12 ins.) being indicative of this (together with other information which was to come to light later during the clearance of the site). Two ashlar displayed further interesting treatment which was occasionally applied to large facing stones used in the 4th century fortress at York and which I do not think has been hitherto commented upon. These are shown on plate IV, in the third and fourth courses from the top. They both measured 16 ins. in length and, across the centre, each had a vertical groove which had been cut to simulate the joint between two blocks.¹

APPENDIX—MEDIAEVAL POTTERY.

By T. C. M. BREWSTER.

LAYER 5—ABOVE STEPS.

Fig. 7.

1. Cooking pot rim in fine hard light brown buff fabric. Traces of applied handle just below rim.
2. Small rim fragment with internal bevel and fine light green glaze on all surfaces.
3. Wall fragment of ewer. Chevron decor covered by fine light brown glaze.

¹ Mr. Ramm has drawn my attention to the fact that these same features are to be seen on stones from another sector of this same 4th century wall which was exposed in 1928 in excavating a cellar under Barclay's Bank, Coney Street. There are a number of interesting facts visible on the hitherto unpublished photograph of this (plate IX) which are dealt with here. The walling was originally examined by the Rev. Angelo Raine and the photograph was taken on his instructions. (The letters A—F in the following account refer to Plate IX.) (A) A long stone twice the ordinary length. The mark across it is clearly not a mortar joint but an incised imitation. (B) Not quite so obvious but this too looks like an incised line. Here this may be not so much an imitation joint as it seems to be too near the edge. Perhaps the workman started to shorten the stone but decided he was not making it large enough and so cut it further out. (C) Another long stone. Owing to an imperfection in the stone it is not clear whether there is an incised line here or whether the mark is part of the imperfection. (D) An L-shaped stone. (E) The footing course. Here it is of gritstone as near the N.W. gateway (still visible in a chamber under Bootham Bar). This may be the Severan plinth cut down. (F) The conglomerate foundation. The photograph has been published by permission of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society.

4. Wall fragment of pitcher in light buff bisque with green glaze. Warts with dark toffee coloured glaze. 13th century?
5. Base of jug in fine hard bisque. Light grey to light muddy brown surface.

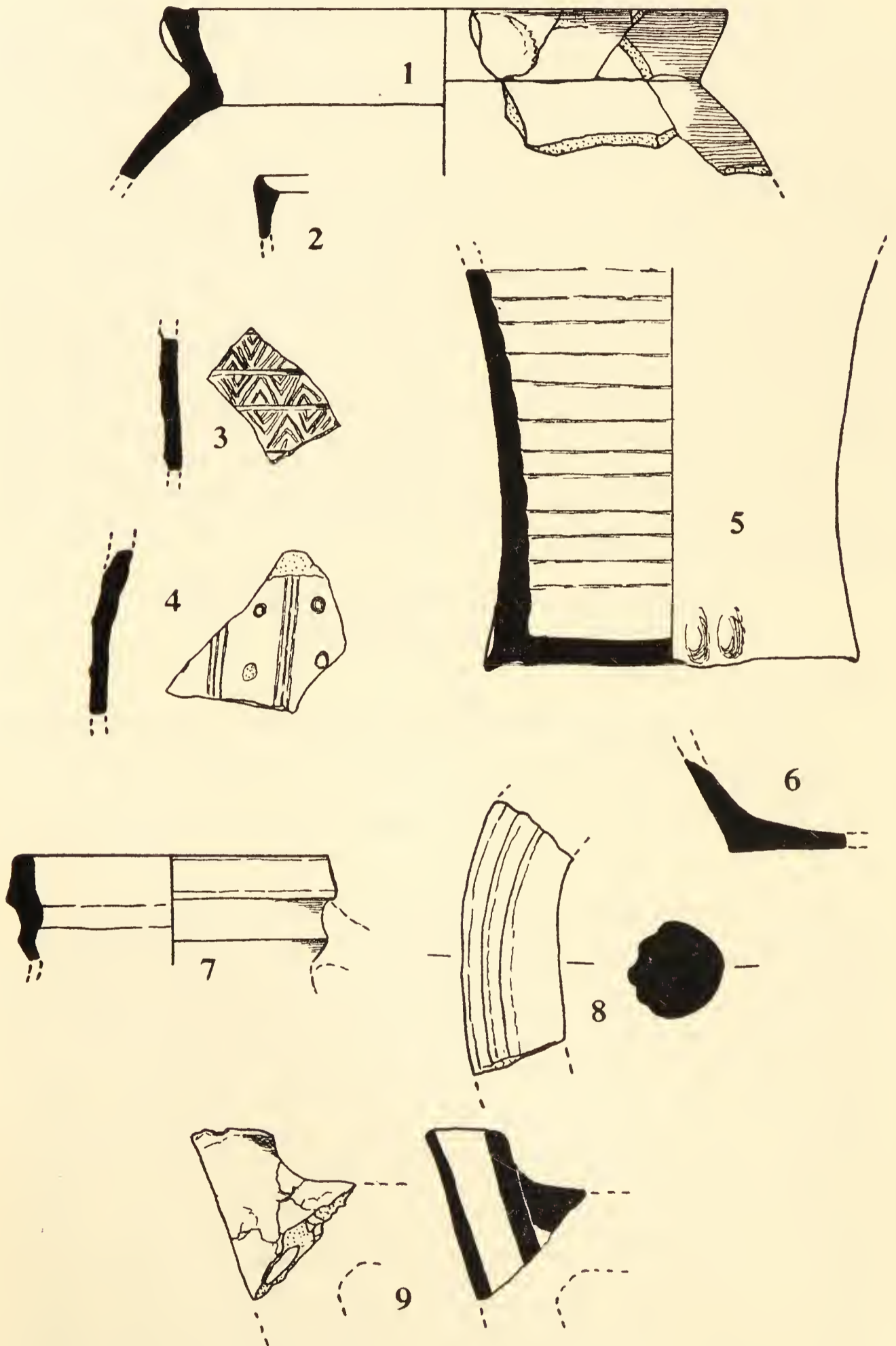


FIG. 7. Mediaeval pottery, nos. 1-9.

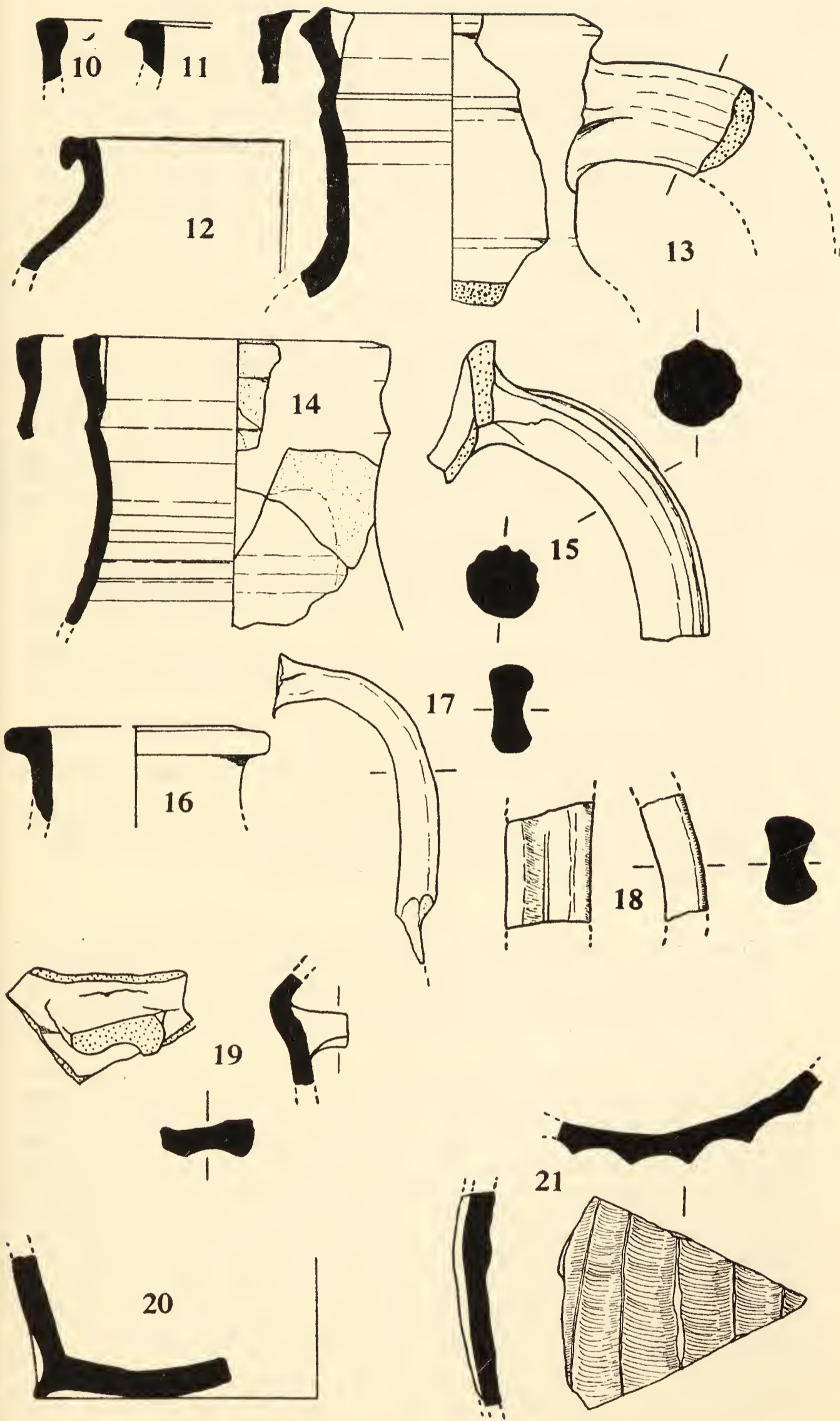


FIG. 8. Mediaeval pottery, nos. 10-21.

6. Base of jug. Fine hard and smooth surface in light brown buff bisque. Interior grey with oblique rilling.
7. Small rim fragment of ewer in same fabric as above. Buff with grey core.
8. Ewer handle with grooves, hard red fabric and grey core. Fine dark glaze with green tones.
9. Tubular ewer spout. Fine white to grey bisque with light green glaze. 13th-14th century.

LAYER 7—BELOW STEPS.

Fig. 8.

10. Small rim in hard light brown fabric.
11. Small cooking pot rim in dull fawn bisque with pink tones. Fabric closely resembles Staxton ware. 13th century.
12. Coarse pustular ware cooking pot rim with coarse grits. Probably contemporary with Kirkstall series. Light buff with patches of black probably due to fuming during firing. Late 12th-early 13th century.
13. Part of rim and neck of jug, with grooved handle and a spout. Hard light grey body with red and brown tones. Dark brown to dark green glaze.
14. Rim and neck fragment in same fabric as above.
15. Grooved handle of ewer. Green glaze badly over fired and fouled, possibly kiln waster. Hard fine bisque with buff surface and grey core.
16. Ewer rim in dull brown fabric with grey core. Medium to dark brown glaze on exterior.
17. Single grooved strap handle from ewer. Light brown to dark toffee coloured glaze on outer surface. Dull buff bisque with red tones and grey core.
18. Grooved strap handle with dark green glaze on outer surface. Hard dull buff bisque with grey core.
19. Wall fragment of jug with portion of handle. Hard light red fabric with same light brown glaze on exterior.
20. Base of ewer, coarse dull buff bisque with grey core and pink tones.
21. Wall fragment of jug decorated with vertical grooves. Hard dull buff inner surface with grey core. Dark brown glaze.

Fig. 9.

22. Coarse ware cooking pot with marked grooving on interior and exterior. Fabric not unlike pustular with protruding grit. Pink to pink with buff tones and areas of black. Light green glaze on part of rim and wall. Similar fabric occurred at Kirkstall and Knaresborough not unlike Staxton ware Type II form.¹ Probably late 13th century.

The glazed and unglazed pottery illustrated in fig. 8 form a very mixed bag. Multiple grooved jug handles first occurring in the 14th century came from above and below the steps (Nos. 8, 13 and 15) and a tubular jug spout dated at present to the early 14th century was located in the upper level (No. 9). A simple cooking pot rim in pustular ware normally associated with late 12th to early 13th century pottery appears to be the only intrusive sherd (No. 12) and is doubtless a stray from an earlier level disturbed when the steps were constructed. With this exception the whole pottery complex may be fairly safely dated to the late 13th and 14th centuries. The ceramic evidence suggests the steps were constructed in the 14th century. The few 13th century sherds both above and below the steps point to a disturbance in the area after the end of the 13th century. Possibly the lower levels were not disturbed and the pottery was *in situ*.

¹ Cf. *YAJ* xxxix (1958), pp. 445-6. Also T. C. M. Brewster, *Two Mediaeval Habitation Sites in the Vale of Pickering* (Pub. Yorkshire Museum 1952).

PART II—INCIDENTAL FINDS MADE DURING THE CLEARING OF THE SITE.

(i) INTERVAL TOWER. In April 1956 when underpinning the wall which separates the property of the British Home Stores from that belonging to Messrs. Waddington (Piano Repair Workshop), the contractors found at A¹ the plinth of a wall joining and "running roughly at right angles" (to use the expression of the foreman—Mr. A. Sanderson) to the outer face of the fortress wall. The junction of this wall with the fortress wall was apparently a little less than 2 ft. beyond the boundary line of the British Home Stores. Unfortunately, this discovery was not made known and the plinth was concreted over. On further questioning Mr.

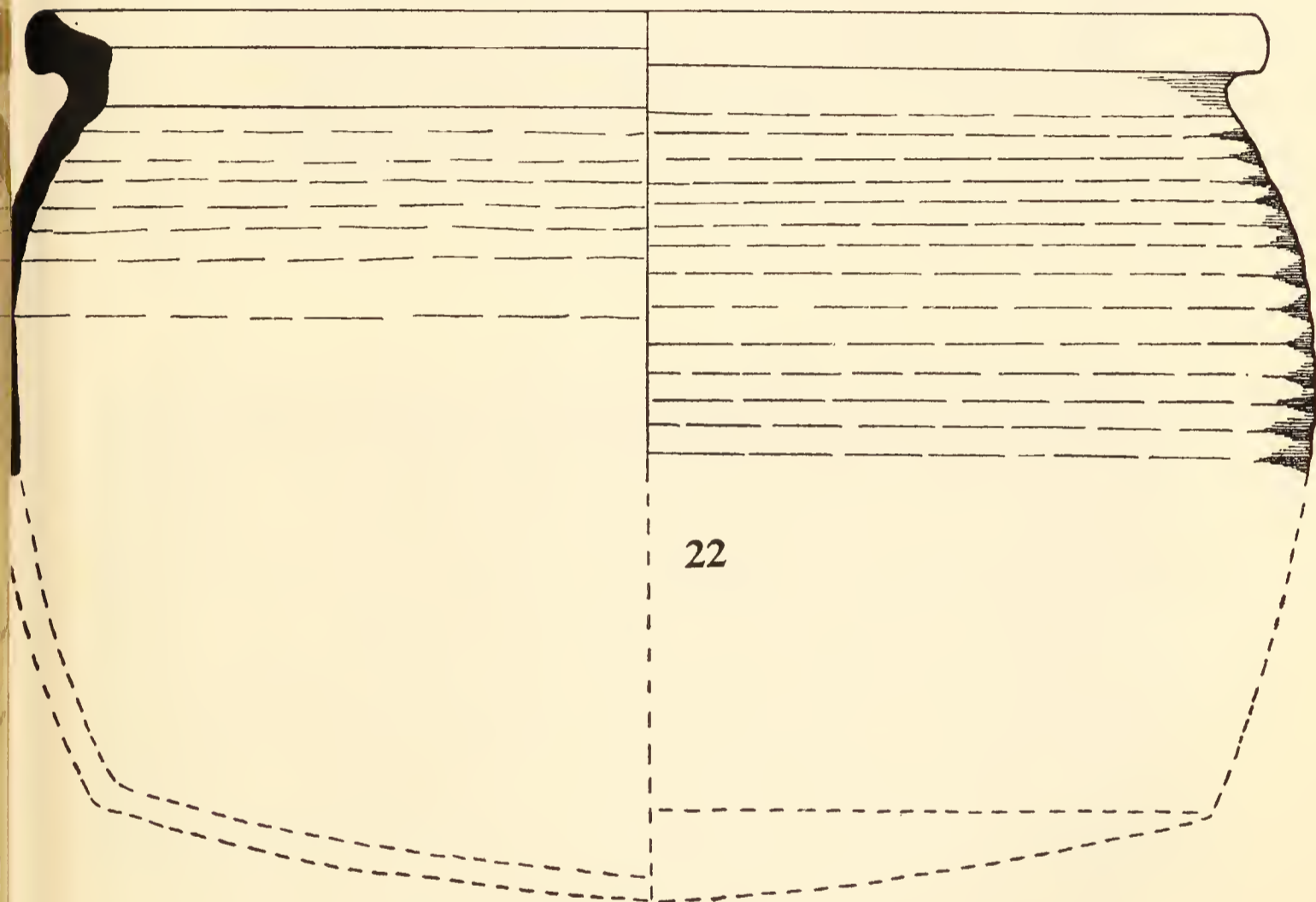


FIG. 9. Mediaeval pottery, no. 22.

Sanderson volunteered the information that the angle between the outer face of this projecting wall and the fortress wall was, in fact, greater than a right angle, and that—in his own words—"the wall was sloping away" from the fortress wall in the entire 5 ft. of its length which was exposed. Mr. Cowl, who also saw the wall, describes it as made of "good, clean-cut facing stones".

This was undoubtedly the wall of one of the projecting towers on the south-west front of the fortress. The distance between this wall and the point where the wall of the south angle

¹ Throughout Part II of this paper letters like this refer to the find spots on fig. 3.

tower would begin to project from the straight line of the fortress wall is 125 ft.¹ As a result of this discovery Mr. G. F. Willmot, Keeper of the Yorkshire Museum, put down some trenches in the Museum Gardens and exposed a hitherto unsuspected interval tower there at the same distance from the nearest projecting face of the west angle tower, the so-called Multangular Tower. In 1917-1919 George Benson² uncovered in Lendal part of another interval tower which we now know must have been approximately another 125 ft. east of the one recently uncovered by Mr. Willmot. These three discoveries—Mr. Willmot's, Benson's and that in Feasegate³—make it clear that originally there must have been six projecting towers on the 4th century south-west front of the fortress in addition to the two angle towers. These were arranged with three on each side of the *porta praetoria* as shown on fig. 5.

(ii) SECTOR OF THE FORTRESS WALL. On 24th August, 1956, a 22-ft. length of the fortress wall was uncovered by the mechanical excavator employed on the site (B on fig. 3). As it was too tough to be broken up by the excavator it was left over the weekend until a compressor was available to use on it. On 26th August, Messrs. Ian Stead and Robin Hill cleaned, measured and photographed⁴ it and I am grateful to them for the following information.

This stretch of wall (part of which is shown on Plate V) formed part of that which was exposed in the course of my excavation in 1955, described earlier in Part I of this report. However, by August, 1956, the post-Roman stone and brickwork which had surmounted the fortress wall here and which had completely obscured both the tile courses and the rubble core above it when I was conducting my excavation, had been removed. Two courses of the limestone facing were visible, above which was a band of red tiles, five courses thick (in all about a foot deep), and above these some 2 ft. of the rubble core from which the facing stones had been robbed. The tile course did not extend right through the wall; its furthest penetration behind the line of the ashlar face being 1 ft. 3½ ins. The width of the wall in this sector was 4 ft. 11 ins. The tile courses had been badly damaged in front.

The rear of the wall was faced with irregularly sized, undressed limestone blocks together with a few tiles. Even though one or two tiles appeared in the same line or course there was nothing to suggest that they had ever been intended to form a continuous layer as they did in the front. This line of tiles in the

¹ Mr. Ian Stead's excavation in the cellars under the premises of Messrs. Chas. Hart in Feasegate of part of the south corner tower (reported *YAJ* xxxix (1958), pp. 515-537) has now fixed the site of this tower exactly.

² *York* ii (1919), p. 161 and fig. 56, and *YAJ* xxv (1920), pp. 357-9. Re-excavated by the writer in 1960, report impending.

³ Part of what is almost certainly another of these towers has now been identified in the cellar of Messrs. Border's warehouse in Davygate (see next part of this Journal).

⁴ Including some in colour.

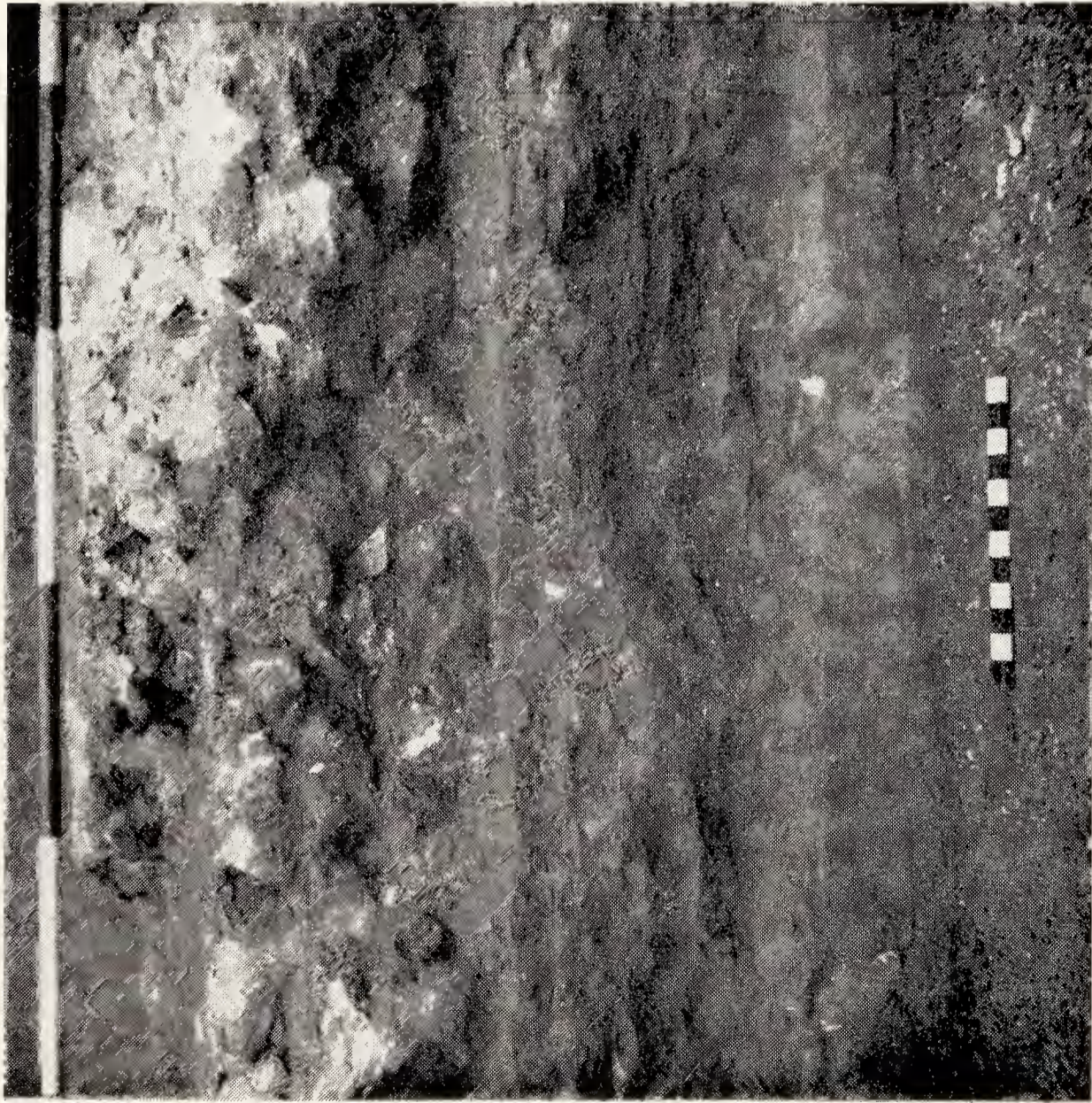


PLATE V.

Detail of fortress wall, showing tile band surmounted by concrete core.



PLATE VI.

Mortar-like pot of c.16th century date.

rear of the wall did, however, coincide with the top of the tile course—five tiles deep—on the front.

(iii) SECTION THROUGH FORTRESS WALL. In November, 1956, the contractors decided to remove part of the fortress wall and its foundation because part of a pile cap (No. 104 on fig. 3) coincided with it. A cutting 18 ft. long and 5 ft. wide (the width of the wall itself)—C on fig. 3—was, therefore, made by two men working with compressors. It took them two months to complete the task, since the wall was standing here to a height of 14 ft. with a foundation 4 ft. 6 ins. deep below it. From an archaeological viewpoint the results obtained were of the utmost importance and gave a remarkable section through the wall (plate VII and fig. 6). In the highest remaining portion of the wall the two lowest of the usual five courses of the red tiles were visible. Below this, on the outer face, were thirty-six courses of blockwork in magnesian limestone, each about 4 ins. in height, the blocks varying from 6 ins. to 12 ins. in length and from 10 ins. to 13 ins. from back to front, most of them being tapered so as to bond into the concrete core. The inner face of the wall consisted of roughly hewn, irregularly sized, undressed blocks of magnesian limestone. The core of the wall consisted of layer upon layer of mortared aggregate, each about 16 ins. thick, the equivalent of four courses of ashlar, containing a few cobbles, many rough fragments of limestone and a few pieces of red tile. The mortar had presumably been poured, in liquid state, over the aggregate and had run into the interstices between the backs of the facing stones and, owing to the tapered ends of most of the latter, had bonded all into a very solid whole.

Below the wall was the foundation, 4 ft. 6 ins. deep, consisting of mortared aggregate looking like that of the core described above but containing a larger proportion of limestone chippings and a few cobbles up to 6 ins. in diameter. The foundation projected 18 ins. in front and 18 ins. behind the wall and had been deposited in a straight-sided trench cut into the clayey subsoil.

A final discovery was made when the foundation itself was removed and the top of the clay subsoil exposed. Visible in the clay were the tops (plate VII) of numerous wooden piles. Thirty were counted, though there may have been more hidden from view because the trench at this depth was constantly much under water. They were arranged alternately in rows about 15 ins. apart. The tops of the piles were 3 ins.-5 ins. in diameter: their length was undetermined as it proved impossible to remove one in its entirety. But on the analogy of those shown by Wellbeloved¹ below the 4th century wall which he saw in St. Leonard's and of piles still preserved at Gray's Court, York, and described as coming from below the Roman gateway beneath Bootham Bar, they are shown on fig. 6 as 3 ft. long. They were in an excellent state of preservation,

¹ *Eburacum* (1842), plate I, fig. 2, opposite p. 48.

black in colour and without signs of decay. Fragments were recovered and identified as oak.

The wall as seen in this section was clearly of one and the same 4th-century build for the whole existing height above the foundation. This conclusion was based upon, firstly the existence of the tile courses only found in the 4th century rebuild; secondly, the occurrence on the outer face of the wide joints which, in York, are associated with the 4th century walls; thirdly the undressed stones of the inner facing; and fourthly the absence of any plinth such as Mr. Ramm found in his Coney Street excavation,¹ associated with an earlier, Severan, phase of the wall.

It was of the utmost importance to establish whether the wall and its foundation were homogeneous or of different builds. A line of demarcation was visible between the top of the foundation and the lowest course of the wall itself but this cannot be interpreted as a structural change and might merely represent a stage in building during construction of a single work. In section the concrete of the foundation appeared to be more gravelly than that of the wall above but the difference was not a very striking one.

The foundation and the piles beneath them were certainly a unitary piece of work as the tops of the piles projected two or three inches *above* the bottom of the concrete of the foundation and were not actually level with it. They cannot in this case have belonged to any earlier foundation on the self-same line.

Owing to the close shuttering which, of necessity, had to be used on both sides of such a deep trench (this is shown on plate VII) it was impossible to make a detailed study of the rampart behind the wall. All that could be noted was that it was standing 8 ft. 6 ins. high above the level of the wall foundation and was of brown clay.

(iv) PART OF (?) WOODEN STRAPPING FROM THE RAMPART. During the drilling of pile cap No. F.11 (fig. 3) at a depth of 16 ft. below the modern surface a fragment of wood about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter and 15 ins. long was recovered from the mass of clay which was then being penetrated. It was presumably a portion of one of the strappings under one of the ramparts—at this depth almost certainly one of the two Flavian ramparts. It was of oak.

(v) METALLED AREA OUTSIDE FORTRESS, BEYOND DITCH AND BERM. In August 1956, during the sinking and concreting of pile caps Nos. 74 and 84, the workmen encountered what were variously described as “cobbled” or “paved” areas. I was not in York at the time, but Messrs. Ramm, Stead and Cowl saw what was to be seen and this account is based on information kindly supplied by them.

¹ *JRS* xlvi (1956), p. 80, fig. 11 (section) and plate IX.



PLATE VII.

Section through the 4th century fortress wall. (Note tops of wooden piles at the bottom).

N.B. The "line" across the middle of the plate is caused by the joining together of two photographs and is therefore "artificial".

*Pile cap No. 74.*¹ (Some 55 ft. away from the fortress wall.) During the sinking of this the workmen encountered "cobbling" over the whole area at what had already been established as roughly the Roman ground level (O.D. 29.9 ft.). Mr. Stead was able to see part of this and describes it as "cobbles set in grey mortar at least 20 ins. deep". It appears to have borne some resemblance to the cobbling outside the fortress wall found in Mr. Ramm's Coney Street excavation.² In the east corner of the pile cap a section of this was cleared and photographed (plate VIII). A sherd of colour-coated (Castor) ware was found embedded in the metalling, suggesting that it was to be dated post-2nd century. At the west end of this pile cap, pile D.47 just hit the edge of a large stone which was still *in situ* embedded in, and its top level with, the cobbling. It was unfortunately broken by the workmen before it could be examined; it must have measured at least 3 ft. long, 2 ft. wide and 9 ins. deep. Two of the sides were clearly worked, the others were not seen.

Pile cap No. 84. (Some 30 ft. away from the fortress wall.) The workmen reported that the whole of the area covered by this pile cap was 'metalled' at an O.D. level of about 29.91 ft. i.e. the Roman ground level. Mr. Stead was able to check a small piece of this nearest to the fortress wall and reports that it "seemed to be rubble concreted in a way very similar to the core of the fortress wall itself; it was about 9 ins. thick".

Pile cap No. 64. (Some 90 ft. away from the fortress wall.) This was one of the earliest pile caps put down before the site supervisor (Mr. Sanderson), the site surveyor (Mr. Cowl) or the workmen were aware of the archaeological potentialities of the site and consequently before they started paying any particular attention to obstacles encountered during the pile driving: nor was any York archaeologist then watching the site. Mr. Sanderson is certain that at what would be the Roman ground level (O.D. 29.6 ft.) obstacles over most of this pile cap were encountered, some of which were certainly cobbles.

Messrs. Sanderson and Cowl added that they could recollect no piles between pile cap No. 64 and Coney Street encountering any "obstacle" such as those met with in Nos. 64, 74 and 84.

The meaning of these finds in the present state of our knowledge is quite inconclusive and they are merely put on record here as further discoveries may give added significance to them.

¹ It will be useful to explain briefly what is meant by a pile cap. It consisted of a dozen reinforced concrete piles each 18 ins. in diameter and 2 ft. apart. Each one was sunk to a depth of at least 40 ft. A square or hexagonal area, 12 ft. in width, was then excavated around these piles to a depth of just over 7 ft. below the old ground level. (4 ft. 6 ins. below the new ground level.) The tops of the piles were then knocked off to this level and the whole area "capped" with concrete 3 ft. 6 ins. deep. On this the steel stanchions were erected.

² Described by him as "a paved area extending for at least 36 ft. [beyond the outer edge of the fortress ditch]". *JRS* xlvii (1956), p. 78.

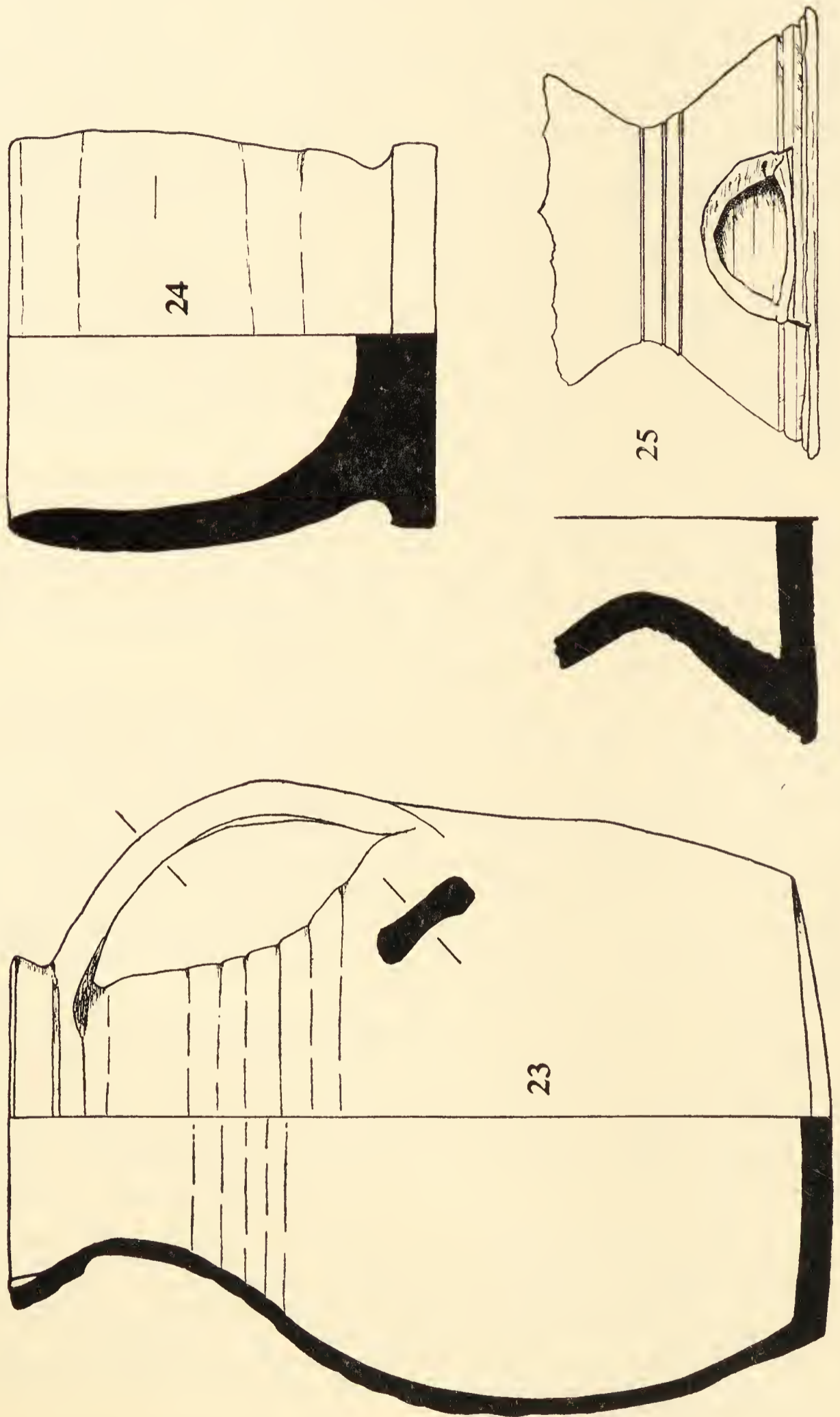


FIG. 10. Mediaeval pottery, nos. 23-25.



PLATE VIII.
Section of cobbling found in area of pile cap no. 74.



Photo.: Yorks. Phil. Soc.

PLATE IX.
4th century fortress wall exposed in 1928 in a cellar under Barclay's Bank,
Coney Street, York.

(vi) **MEDIAEVAL POTTERY.** In the course of clearing the site a considerable quantity of post-Roman pottery came to light and half a tea-chest of fragments was collected. They were all unstratified. Only three of them call for particular comment: these were complete or nearly complete and are illustrated (figs. 9 and 10) and described here by Mr. T. C. M. Brewster.

Fig. 9.

No. 22 (plate XI).

Base of vessel in hard red ware with some green glaze. Probably the base of a chafing dish, dating to the 16th century.

Fig. 10.

No. 23 (plate X).

Complete pitcher in fine buff to dull pink bisque with small protruding grits on the surface. This fabric is not unlike the finer 12th and 13th century unglazed cooking pots found in the York area. Rilling occurs from just below the lip to the junction of the body and the single grooved strap handle. A bright green glaze covers nearly all the surface from the lower part of the handle to the rim. Jugs of this type occur on many sites in Yorkshire and can be fairly safely dated to the 14th and early 15th century.

No. 24 (plate VI).

Mortar-like pot in hard grey fabric with light green glaze over most of the base, rim and interior. The outer surface is fractured, probably by fire, and the exposed areas are burnt red. Probably 16th century.

CONCLUSIONS. The following are the main conclusions to be drawn from the archaeological finds on the British Home Stores site in Feasegate:—

1. A flight of stone steps belonging to some building of 14th century date, the floor of which was 8 ft. above the Roman ground level, and leading to a basement or sunken yard (almost certainly the latter) 3 ft. lower. The south-west wall of the fortress provided a limit to this lower area on the north-east, while on the north-west the wall of a projecting Roman interval-tower may have supplied another.

2. Part of a projecting interval tower, which supplied the clue to the existence of six such towers, in addition to the angle towers along the 4th century south-west front of the fortress.

3. The beginning of the curve of the south-west fortress wall just before it meets the projecting south angle-tower.

4. Three lengths of the south-west fortress wall, together with a section across it. It was not clear whether the foundations—of mortar aggregate—of this were re-used Severan or of 4th century build. (There can be no doubt in view of the 1960 discoveries in Lendal that it was the former.)

5. As pointed out above (p. 333), the primary purpose of this excavation was to ascertain whether the Trajanic stone wall had taken a line in front of the 4th century one. The formal excavation threw no light on this problem. However, the sinking of piles within a few feet of the outer face of the wall (fig. 3, piles nos. 46-8, pile caps Nos. 101 and 104 and E.31-7) supplied

what appeared to be evidence to the contrary. In none of these was any stonework, concrete or wooden piles encountered which could be associated with such a wall or walls.

6. There was evidence of what may have been a "cobbled" area of some sort beyond what was presumably the outer edge of the wall ditch.¹ The latter was not identified anywhere on this site and the only fact relating to it which emerged as a result of the clearing of the site was that its outer lip was somewhere within 37 ft. of the fortress wall.

7. Besides the mediaeval structure represented by (1) above, a quantity of mediaeval pottery was found on the site, the three complete or nearly complete pieces being illustrated and described.

¹ I had hoped that the sections revealed in the deep holes sunk for the piles (40 ft. below the modern surface)—particularly along the north-west edge of the site where they were put down at 3 ft. intervals—would produce a profile of the ditch (or ditches). Mr. Cowl prepared a careful sectional drawing of these covering the whole area between the fortress wall and Coney Street, but the ditch(es) could not be identified.



PLATE X. 15th century pitcher.



PLATE XI. Base of 16th century chafing dish.