

ANTIQUITY

It will be seen that, so far from claiming any sort of chronological priority for Maiden Castle in the matter of multiple ramparts in Britain, I have placed it at the bottom of my short list. Thus in his footnote in *Arch. Camb.* as cited, p. 17, Mr O'Neil commends me for showing (in *Antiquaries Journal*, XXII, 1942, 266-7) 'a welcome appreciation' of the difficulties of a view which I have in fact never held.

Finally, let me make it clear that, whilst the infallibility of the factual evidence from Maiden Castle is an article of my creed, I should be the last to maintain the impeccability of the provisional deductions, whether mine or anybody else's. After much thought, they seem to me, as stated in my Report, to form a logical explanation of the evidence as it stands, but I have no doubt that, when I return to England in five years' time, archaeologists will have garnered a mass of new corrective (or even confirmatory) evidence. I may perhaps be permitted to wish their labours every success, and only ask now that their efforts be directed to real rather than to supposititious difficulties.

R. E. M. WHEELER.

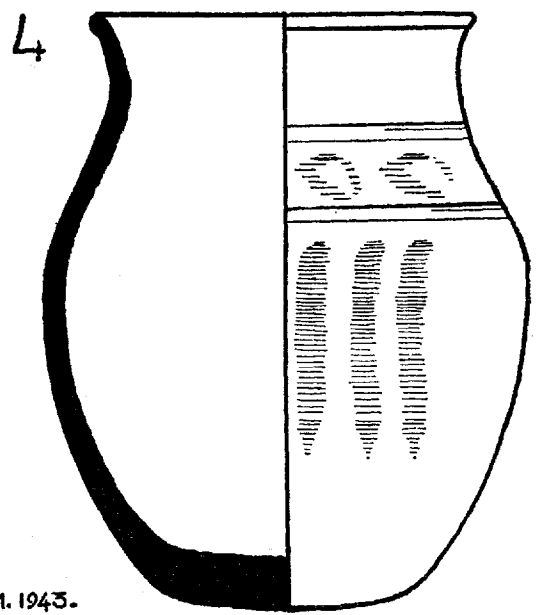
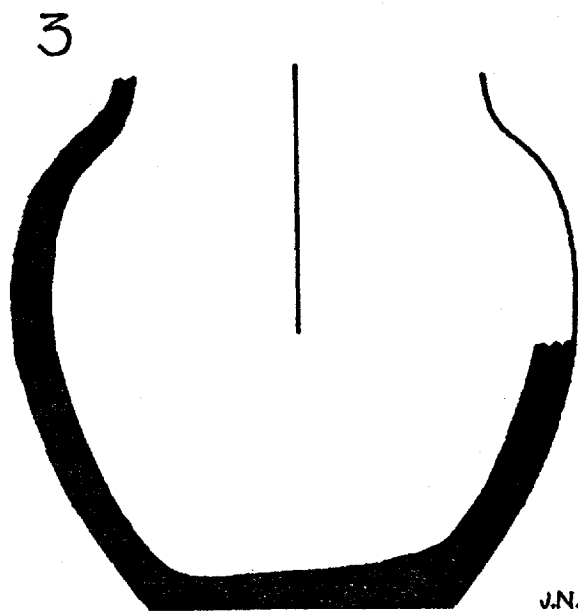
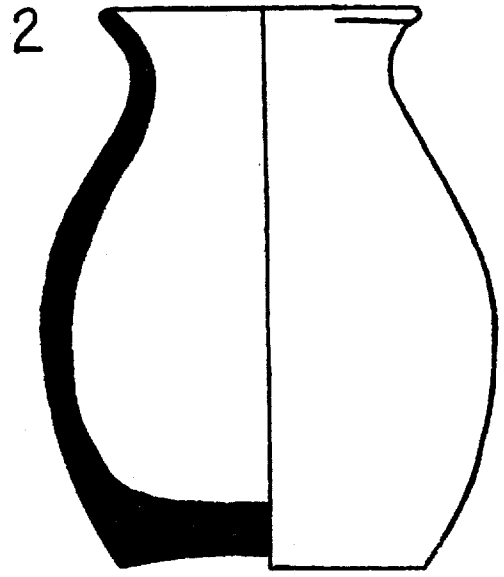
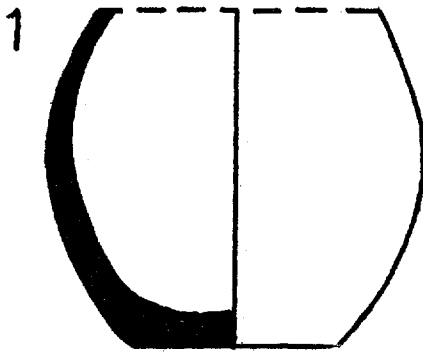
WINGHAM VILLA AND ROMANO-SAXON POTTERY IN KENT

Mr A. G. Wells has done right to call attention (*ANTIQUITY*, 1943, XVII, 210-2) to the evidence provided by George Dowker's account of the 1881 excavations for the post-Roman occupation of the villa at Wingham, Kent. As a supplement to his note it may be worth recording that there is at least one object preserved from these excavations which can be used to illustrate Dowker's reference to the 'coarse black pottery, apparently belonging to culinary vessels' which he regarded as one indication that the 'site was occupied by a semi-barbarous people'. This is a fragmentary vessel in the Maidstone Museum of which a section is shown (p. 53, 3). It bears a label which reads, 'Thick urn from Wingham Villa: Saxon'? It is an undecorated hand-made jar of rough, hard, gritty, ware, brownish grey in colour, and with a smoothed surface which may once have been burnished. The whole of the rim is unfortunately missing. The base is fairly flat but markedly asymmetrical, the section being considerably thicker on one side than the other. It is ornamented on the outside with a roughly wiped cross, a feature which can be paralleled both in Roman and in pagan Saxon pottery.

Whether this vessel can be properly described as Saxon, I am not prepared to say. Neither the form nor the fabric is sufficiently distinctive to make the attribution certain. It is, however, a very queer pot to find in a Roman villa. The suggestion on the label may mean little more than that the excavators correctly recognized it as being quite out of place among their Romano-British potsherds. If they had only recorded the exact position in which it was found in relation to the other supposed indications of post-Roman occupation we should be better able to assess its significance. As it is we must wait until the adoption of Mr Wells' suggestion that the villa should be re-excavated before we can hope for an explanation of the presence of such a vessel in a Romano-British building.

It may also be relevant to note that among the pottery in the Maidstone Museum from the nearby Romano-British cemetery on Dearson Farm, Preston-next-Wingham (1), are two other vessels which seem out of place in a Romano-British context. These are shown (p. 53, 1, 2). The first is a small hand-made vessel in rough grey ware of the same general form as that from the Wingham villa; its base is, however, more rounded, and sags slightly, a common feature in Saxon pottery. Like the Wingham villa pot, it has lost the whole of its rim, but this evidently occurred in ancient times, for the neck

¹ Described by George Dowker in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 1878, XII, 47-8.



J.N.L.M. 1943.

POTTERY FROM ROMAN SITES IN KENT, NOW IN MAIDSTONE MUSEUM
1, 2 : from Roman Cemetery, Dearson Farm, Preston-next-Wingham. 3 : from Roman Villa, Wingham.
4 : from Roman Villa, Hartlip
By permission of the Curator of the Maidstone Museum

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has been carefully filed off flat all round so that the vessel was suitable for continued use. This feature, which can be paralleled in the case of a rather similar little Saxon pot from Banstead, Surrey, now in the Guildford Museum, suggests that, whatever the date of its manufacture, it may well have survived in use into a barbarous age when serviceable pots were not lightly to be discarded even if their rims were broken.

The other pot from the Dearson Farm cemetery (p. 53, 2) is roughly wheel-turned and far more reminiscent of normal Romano-British types. It is, however, very crudely made of rough corky-surfaced grey ware with a sagging profile and a very heavy base. It is just the sort of pot that one might expect to be turned out in sub-Roman Kent by someone with a rudimentary knowledge of the potter's wheel and an acquaintance either with late Roman coarse wares or with Jutish bottle-vases or with both. The presence of these two vessels in a cemetery which may well have been used by the inhabitants of the Wingham villa is certainly of some interest.

Mr Wells' suggestion that the evidence of post-Roman occupation in the Wingham villa might be used as the basis for a distinction between the history of East and West Kent in the period of Jutish settlement has not in my view much to recommend it. Indeed it is not the case, as his theory would require, that the villas of West Kent are entirely barren of post-Roman objects. As I have pointed out elsewhere (2), one of the very few undoubted Anglo-Saxon objects to have been found in a Roman villa in this country is a little pot in the Maidstone Museum from the Hartlip villa near Sittingbourne. There is nothing in C. Roach-Smith's account of the excavations at Hartlip (3) to suggest that he or anyone else suspected post-Roman occupation of this site, nor apparently did they notice the peculiarity of the pot in question occurring in Romano-British surroundings. It may, however, be significant that the villa, unlike most villas, produced coins to Honorius.

In view of its interest in the present connexion a drawing of the Hartlip vessel is on page 53. It is hand-made, in very rough leathery ware which was originally smoothed or burnished and has a heavy sagging base. It is decorated with two light horizontal neck-lines demarcating a zone of very faint hollows made probably by slight pressure of the potter's finger. On the body are four groups of three faint vertical grooves or flutings extending from the shoulder to about one inch and a half above the base.

The decoration of this vessel is of course characteristically Saxon, the faint vertical fluting being paralleled on a number of vessels mainly from the southeastern quarter of England (4). But the form, apart from the base, is not typically Saxon and the rim in particular suggests familiarity with Romano-British fashions in pot-making. It may not be too imaginative to suggest that this vessel too, though far more Teutonic in character than those from the two sites at Wingham, may reflect some attempt at cultural assimilation on the part of the Jutish conquerors of Kent with the ceramic fashions appropriate to the environment of the Roman villa in which it strangely found a resting place.

These few examples by no means exhaust the list of pottery found in this country which may have some claim to be called Romano-Saxon. There is more of this hybrid material in our Museums than is generally appreciated, and Kent is not the only part of England from which it comes. Nor is it only to be found in Romano-British cemeteries

² *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, 2nd edition, 1937, 441 n.

³ *Collectanea Antiqua*, 1852, II, 1-24.

⁴ See *Antiquaries Journal*, 1937, XVII, 424-37, especially 432 onwards

NOTES AND NEWS

and villas. Besides those mentioned above I have noted examples from several Saxon cemeteries, from a Romano-British town, a Romano-British village, and a Saxon Shore fort. It is a subject which will repay careful investigation when the contents of our Museums are again fully available for study and when there is once more leisure and opportunity for archaeological work.

J. N. L. MYRES.

NEW DISCOVERY IN CHINA

The following account is reprinted (by permission) from the *American Journal of Archaeology*, XLVII, no. 3 (July-September 1943), p. 265 :—

Chinese workmen who were digging to make an air-raid shelter in Chengtu, Szechwan Province, have been responsible for an important archaeological discovery. Their picks struck a mound of brick and stone work which has been revealed as the grave of Wang Chien, distinguished official and self-appointed Emperor of the 10th century A.D. Chinese and American archaeologists believe that the contents of the coffin, as yet not fully investigated, will prove of great value to archaeologists and historians alike. Facts of this discovery have just reached United China Relief from the Associated Boards for Christian Colleges in China.

Wang Chien's grave was found a quarter of a mile outside the West Gate of the City of Chengtu in an historical mound believed, until now, to owe its fame to association with the Chinese poet, Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, who died in 117 B.C.

Excavations of the tomb are now going on under the supervision of Dr Feng Han-I, Harvard-trained Director of the Museum of West China Union University. After clearing away the bricks and stones, the tomb chamber was found lying in a mud casing 15 feet thick. The tomb itself is 80 feet long, 20 feet wide and 20 feet high. At the back of the tomb-chamber, on the tomb-throne, was a statue—presumably of the dead man—and lying in front of this was a case, the dragon-shaped handles of which gave the first clue to the regal identity of the occupant. Two other cases, lined with silver and inlaid with silver and gold in discoidal design, contained two sets of jade books, composed of 53 leaves, 1 foot 2 inches long by half an inch thick. The inscription shows this to be a long commentary on the 'gracious reign' of Emperor Wang Chien. A detailed report of all the grave-furniture, including photographs and sketches, is being prepared by students and faculty members of the Department of Archaeology of West China Union University. The Emperor's coffin is expected to give a wealth of lacquer, pottery, copper and jade.

Wang Chien, who was born about A.D. 847, rose from the generalship to the governorship of Szechwan Province. When the house of T'ang collapsed in A.D. 906, he declared Szechwan to be a new kingdom, and proclaimed himself its Emperor. Chengtu was his capital. It was a city of wealth and culture, and is considered by some historians to have been, at that time, the most civilized city in the world.

THE LIVING PAST

It is, of course, a truism to say that exponents of the Past should bring it before the eyes of their audience and make it live. The implication—that the audience has no imagination—is only too often true. Whether the blind can be made to see without a miracle is very doubtful, but worth trying for the sake of the few. Visitors to the Museum of Fine Arts at Boston must have been somewhat shaken recently when they saw a life-size bust of an ancient Egyptian (Ankh-haf, of the 4th dynasty) dressed in modern clothes. Even hardened Egyptologists may have been momentarily taken