



PL. VII A GATCOMBE, 1967:
Trench A I, north face of defence wall.



PL. VII B GATCOMBE, 1967:
Trench A I, disturbed bedrock.



PL. VIII A GATCOMBE, 1967:
Trench A IV, east face of defence wall.



PL. VIII B GATCOMBE, 1967:
Trench A II, wall A (inside face of defence wall in the background).

THE NORTH-EAST DEFENCES OF ROMAN GATCOMBE

(Excavations at Gatcombe, 1967)

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The excavations at Gatcombe sponsored by the University of Bristol, Department of Classics, were continued in June 1967 under the direction of the writer. A small group of students worked for two weeks on the site, by kind permission of the owner, Mr. J. H. Butler.

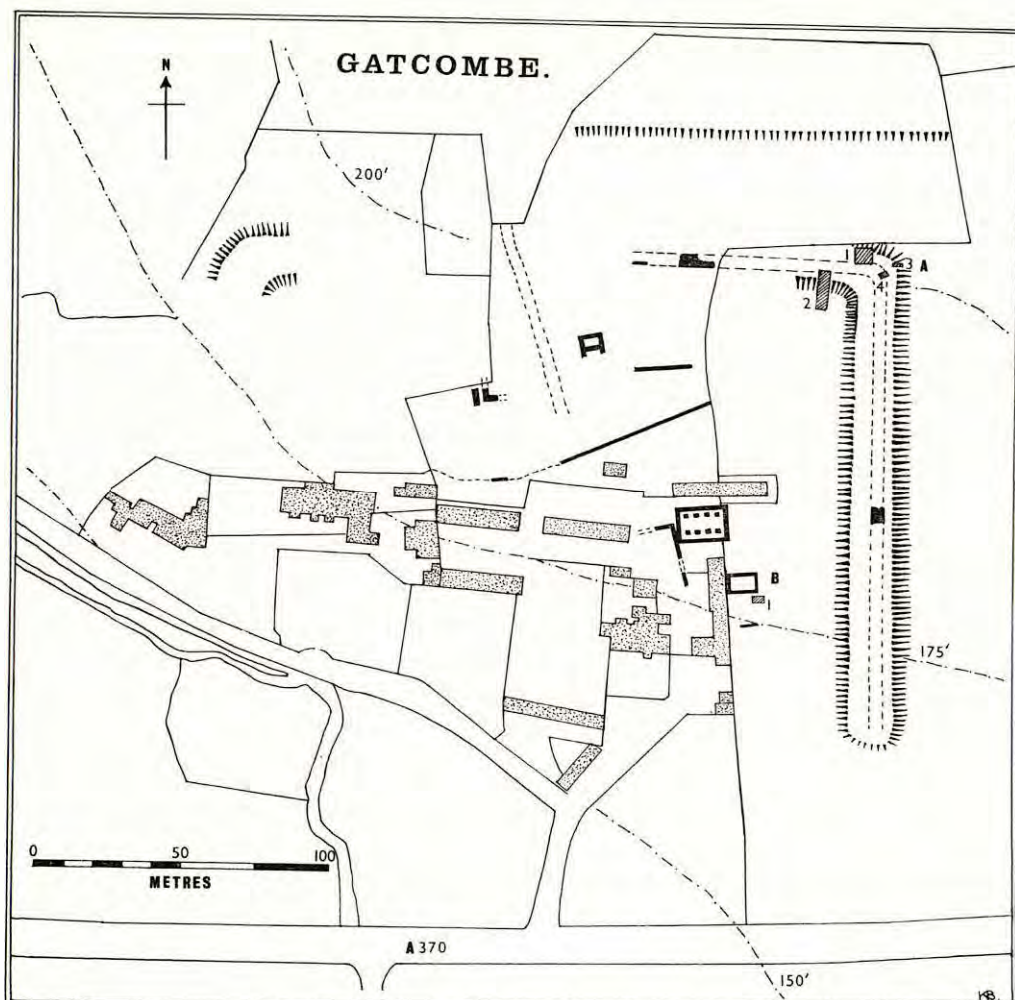


FIG. 1 Location of 1967 Excavations (Areas A and B).

Previous excavations and discoveries at Gatcombe have been discussed and summarized in three recent papers¹ and therefore we need not concern ourselves with

¹ E. K. Tratman (1962) "Ideas on the Roman Roads in Bristol and North Somerset" *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelae. Soc.* 9, 173-175; B. W. Cunliffe (1967) "Excavations at Gatcombe, Somerset, in 1965 and 1966" *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelae. Soc.* 11, 125-160; T. W. J. Solley (1967) 'Excavations at Gatcombe, Somerset, 1954' *Soms. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc. Proc.* 111, 24-37.

previous work on the site except where it is relevant to excavations conducted during 1967. The site at Gatcombe (ST52669) is situated on the southern slope of the Failand Ridge. The town is surrounded by a wall almost fifteen feet thick² but no evidence has previously been found for the existence of either a ditch or projecting bastions. In order to obtain additional information about the defences the excavations of 1967 were concentrated on the north-east corner of the town. The specific objectives of the campaign were three in number — to examine a mound at the north-east corner which might conceal a bastion, to obtain much-needed dating evidence for the construction of the wall, and to examine a small, level area of ground just inside the north-east corner of the defences where one might expect to find traces of the latest Romano-British occupation of the site. In addition to the excavations in this area (designated area A) a small area left unexcavated in one of Professor Cunliffe's trenches was excavated (area B). The trenches in area A are to be filled in by Mr. Butler in whose custody the small finds are lodged. Sherd material is stored in the Bristol City Museum.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

No bastion was found at the north-east corner and it is now almost certain that no bastion was situated on or near the corner. There was no sign of a ditch in front of the wall though there was some evidence that stone had been quarried here in small quantities during the Roman period. No traces of building were found on the small area of flat ground inside the north-east corner but a wall running parallel to the defence wall and probably associated with it was discovered. The north-east corner itself was rounded, at least on the outside of the wall. Evidence was recovered to suggest that the wall was erected in the late third century A.D.

THE NORTH-EAST DEFENCES. AREA A, TRENCHES I - IV.

Only one phase of occupation could be detected in area A, that which followed the erection of the defence wall. The only area where this phase was clearly represented was in trench IV, levels 2 and 3. Level 4 in trench I apparently represents a gradual build up of material following the construction of the wall and was overlain by the first spread of tumbled building stone and rubble (level 3). In trench II a succession of tumble and rubble spreads overlay the original ground surface (level 5) whilst in trench III there was a uniform build up of soil from bed-rock to the present day ground surface.

TRENCH I (Figs. 1 and 2) was a six metre square laid out with its southern edge running along the defence wall, some 30 cms. back from its outer face. It was intended to examine the mound at the north-east corner of the defences which was thought to perhaps cover the remains of a bastion, and to look for any signs of a ditch situated beyond the wall.

The only structure found in the trench was the outer face of the defence wall itself (Pl. VII A). This was built of ashlar and in the main survived to six courses in addition to the footings; in the south-west corner seven courses survived. The footings were constructed of large rectangular blocks of worked stone, varying in length between 15 and 50 cms., but all about 35 cms. wide and 15-20 cms. deep. No traces of mortar were found between the courses of the wall, each of which was 10 cms. deep. The facing stones varied in length. The core of the wall was not examined but it is presumably no different at this

² Cunliffe (1967), 130; Solley (1967), 24, 26.

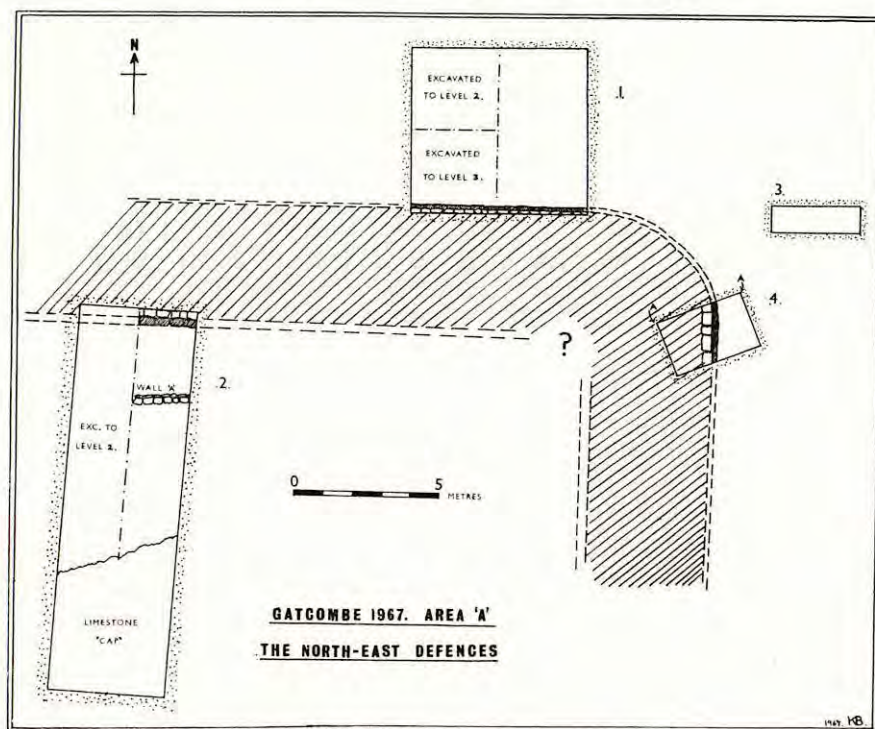


FIG. 2 The Excavations in Area A.

point from the core of the wall at the two points examined in previous excavations.³ Beyond the wall four levels were recognised and excavated before bedrock was reached. Owing to the inclement weather and the difficult nature of the levels, the north-west corner of the trench was not excavated beyond level 2 and the south-west quarter was not excavated beyond level 3. As far as could be seen, however, all four levels excavated in the eastern half of the trench spread across the whole area of the trench. The levels were as follows:

1. Turf and top soil. Depth averaging 5 cms.
2. A thick spread of small pieces of stone, both the red and white varieties found in the neighbourhood, with the occasional block of building stone. Depth averaging 20 cms.
3. A thick layer of red-brown soil containing many complete and broken building stones and large slabs of unworked red stone. Depth 55-60 cms.
4. A thin spread of red-brown soil with a few small stones and a quantity of pottery sherds, many weather-worn.

No features of any kind were found during the excavation of these levels. In the eastern half of the trench, however, the bedrock at the northern end showed clear signs of having been quarried — in small quantities only (Pl. VII B). Levels 1 and 2 produced

³ Cunliffe (1967), 130, Fig. 29; Solley (1967), 26, Fig. 2.

Romano-British, early modern, and recent sherds of pottery. In level 3 only a few scraps of Romano-British pottery were found, whilst in level 4 a larger quantity of Romano-British sherds was found but no small finds or coins. The pottery from level 4 is predominantly late 3rd - late 4th century A.D. of which a small group of seven hand-made sherds is particularly interesting; the earliest sherd, probably the only one earlier than late 3rd century, is part of the base of an Antonine 18/31 dish (for details of the pottery see below pp. 50-1 and Fig. 5, Nos. 4 - 14).

It seems clear that no bastion existed beneath the mound which was examined. The survival of the main defence wall to six and seven courses illustrates that the extent of destruction and/or stone robbing at this point in the circuit has not been great enough to have eradicated all signs of any bastion which might have existed here. We cannot perhaps be quite so dogmatic about the question of a ditch beyond the wall. Trench I extended almost 6 metres beyond the outside face of the wall (2 metres further than Professor Cunliffe's trench in 1965) and in this area no trace of a ditch could be seen. The quarrying had been on a small scale and within the area of the trench represented the removal of only 10 - 15 cms. of bedrock. The material overlying the bedrock — level 4 — ran up to the footings of the wall and presumably represents a deposit laid down after the wall was erected. The dating of the material in level 4 confirms this, for it is in accord with the date of the material from level 2 of trench IV, which is quite certainly a post-wall construction deposit (see below p. 45). It seems likely that the quarrying was carried out in order to produce stone for the pitched core of the defence wall; certainly the quarrying would seem to be no later than the construction of the wall. If the quarrying is indeed to be associated with the construction of the wall, then it would not be surprising to find that the operation had been conducted in such a way as to provide not only stone but a ditch of some sort from which it had been extracted. It must therefore remain possible that a ditch exists a little further out than the edge of trench I, although this is farther away from the wall than one would expect.

TRENCH II (Figs. 1 and 2) was rectangular, 14 metres long and 4 metres wide. Its northern edge ran along the defence wall, 60 cms. back from its inner face. The trench was intended to examine the area immediately inside the north-east defences where a small level area of ground and the steep slope beyond it to the south suggested that one might find some of the latest occupation on the site.

The inner face of the defence wall was in much worse condition than the outer face. In the north-east corner of the trench the wall survived to two courses above its double row of footings, but one metre in from the eastern edge of the trench there was clear evidence of much stone-robbing and only the bottom row of footings survived. A gully some three metres wide runs south-west to north-east right across the line of the wall from this point westwards and presumably indicates that virtually the whole of the wall, core as well, has been robbed at this spot. As with the outer face of the defence wall, the inner face is constructed of ashlar masonry in courses 10 cms. deep. The footings project only 15 cms. beyond the wall face and are formed of two courses, the upper 10 cms. deep and the lower 20 cms. deep. Two metres down the slope to the south a small wall was found, running almost parallel to the main defence wall (Pl. VIII B). It was built against a small rock face some 35 cms. high, apparently cut for the purpose of providing a level rock foundation for this wall (wall A). This rock face almost certainly accounts for the

preservation of the wall, on the eastern edge of the trench to three courses, and elsewhere to two courses. Wall A is poorly constructed of apparently re-used ashlar masonry blocks, mostly 10 cms. deep and of varying lengths. The wall is only one course wide and is separated from the rock face by a narrow gap of 15 - 20 cms. Into this gap thin pieces of stone had been rammed, on edge, and packed around with red marl.

Five levels were recognised and excavated in the eastern half of trench II and all five appeared to continue into the western half of the trench, which was excavated only to the top of level 3 due to the bad weather of the second week of excavations. The levels in the eastern half of the trench were as follows:

1. Turf. Depth averaging 5 cms.
2. Top soil. Depth averaging 5 cms.
3. Red-brown soil with spread of broken up building stone and small field stones with the occasional complete piece of building stone. Depth averaging 10 cms. This level thinned out and stopped altogether about 6 metres from the south end of the trench.
- 3a. A similar level to level 3 but with noticeably more large pieces of building stone. Depth averaging 10 cms. This level ran out at about the same point as level 3.
4. A dense spread of large pieces of building stone and red-brown soil. Depth averaging 15 cms. Level 4 thinned and ran out approximately 6.3 metres from the south end of the trench.
5. A thin stratum of red-brown soil sealed between level 4 and bedrock. Depth averaging 3 cms.

The southern third of the trench was found to have a natural "cap" of limestone overlying bedrock and it was this that produced the small area of flat land which had initially drawn our attention to this spot. No structures or features were found on the "plateau", however, and, although the limestone cap would itself have made an excellent road surface, no traces of wheelmarks or other signs of wear from human activity were found. Levels 1 - 3 contained Romano-British, early modern and recent sherds in small quantities. In addition, level 1 also produced three sherds of late medieval date and a halfpenny or halfpenny token probably of George III (see below p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/6). Level 4 produced half a dozen small sherds, only one of which could be dated, being a rim of a mid-second-century, one-handled cup. Only three small scraps of Romano-British pottery were found in level 5.

Neither the purpose nor the date of wall A is apparent. Its alignment suggests that it might be a retaining wall for a bank behind the defence wall. No trace of such a bank was discovered, however, and the structural weakness of wall A argues against its use as a retaining wall. The stones with which it is built are of the same size as those used to face the defence wall but are clearly re-used rather than newly cut blocks. Wall A, therefore, may have been built when the defence wall was already falling into decay. The wall may belong to the last phase of Romano-British occupation, at present represented by surface finds of coins of the period from Valentinian to Arcadius.⁴ Unfortunately there was not enough material in levels 3a and 4, overlying the wall, to obtain a *terminus ante quem* for its construction.

⁴ Cunliffe (1967), 154-155.

TRENCH III (Figs. 1 and 2) was 3 metres long and $1\frac{1}{2}$ metres wide. It was excavated in order to check whether or not a bastion existed on the corner of the defences. No structures or features were found and the uniform deposit of soil from bedrock to present day turf level produced only two recent and two small Romano-British sherds.

TRENCH IV (Figs. 1 and 2) was situated on the north-east corner of the defences and measured 3 metres by 2 metres. It was excavated in order to establish the nature of the corner.

The outer face of the defence wall was found to run south to north from the southern edge of the trench for one metre and then to begin to curve away to the north-west (Pl. VIII A). The diameter of the curve was approximately 9.5 metres. Two courses of ashlar masonry survived; in every way they were similar to the masonry found in trench I. Below these courses were three courses of footings. These were 5 cms., 6 cms. and 15 cms. deep from top to bottom respectively, and the bottom row rested on bedrock, in places slightly levelled with marl. The footings projected 18 cms. beyond the outer face of the wall, except on the curve where they widened to 25 cms. No other structures or features were found in the trench. Three levels were excavated (Fig. 3).

1. Turf and top soil. Depth averaging 40 cms.
2. Dark brown soil with some medium-sized stones and small quantities of charcoal. In the south-east corner of the trench there was an area of rich black soil containing traces of fire and a small bar of copper or bronze (p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/17). Pottery was relatively abundant (p. 49 and Fig. 5, Nos. 1 - 3) and several small finds were made (pp. 52-3, Small Finds Gat/67/9, 10, 13, 15, 17 and 18). In addition two copper coins and a possible third, very badly worn, were found in level 2. Level 2 ran across the trench from the east side, over the footings and up against the ashlar masonry courses.
3. Brownish soil with small stones and a number of small weather-worn sherds of Romano-British manufacture. This level ran beneath level 2 from the east side of the trench westwards until it came up against the footings of the defence wall.

Level 1 produced a few sherds of both Romano-British and recent pottery in addition to an Antoninianus of Tetricus (or early imitation, p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/12). In level 2 an Antoninianus struck as a commemorative issue to Claudius Gothicus, sometime between A.D. 270 and 296, was found (p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/14). A second coin from this level was too worn to be identified (p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/11) and in addition a small copper disc which might be a much worn coin was also found (p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/16). A total of 88 sherds were found in level 2, of which 3 rims are illustrated (p. 49 and Fig. 5, Nos. 1 - 3). None of the 11 rims found (representing 5 different vessels) were particularly distinctive but they would seem to fall into the late 3rd - late 4th century group of black slipped and burnished wares. Fifty-nine of the sherds from this deposit were of this fabric, the remainder being, apart from two of an orange ware, grey fabrics. No evidence was found to date level 3.

The relation of the strata in trench IV to the outside face of the defence wall is quite clear. After the wall was built on bedrock there seems to have been a slow build-up of soil against its footings. Little was found in this level (3) apart from a few weathered sherds. In contrast, level 2 was relatively prolific in finds of both pottery and small finds. The material from level 2 and the texture and richer nature of the soil suggest that this

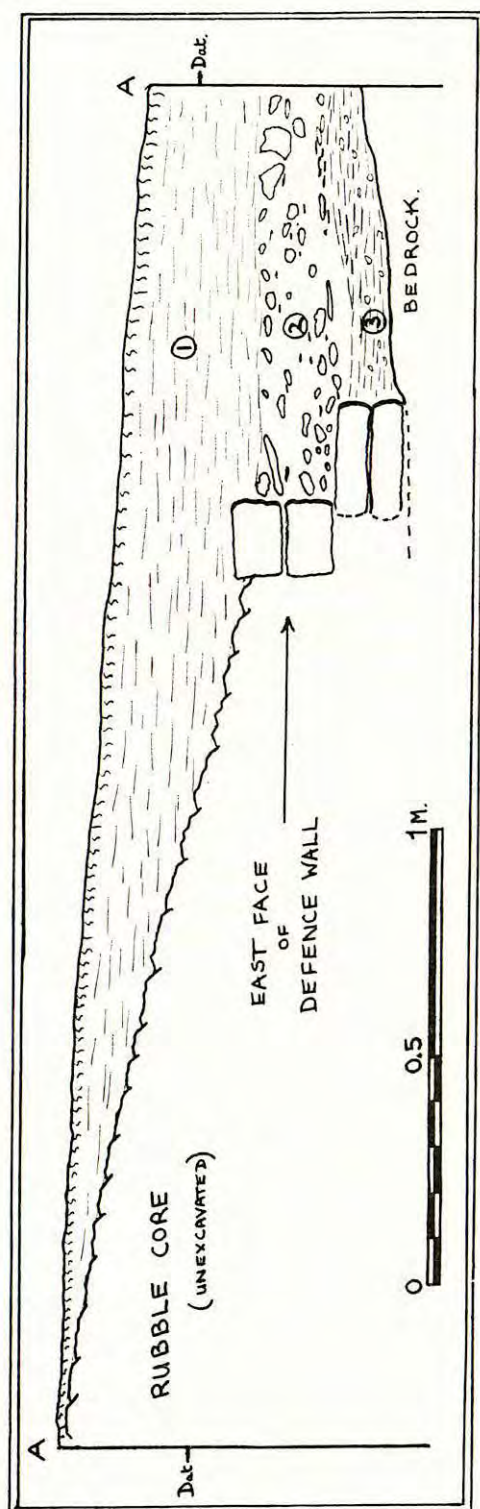


FIG. 3 GATCOMBE: The North Section of Trench A IV

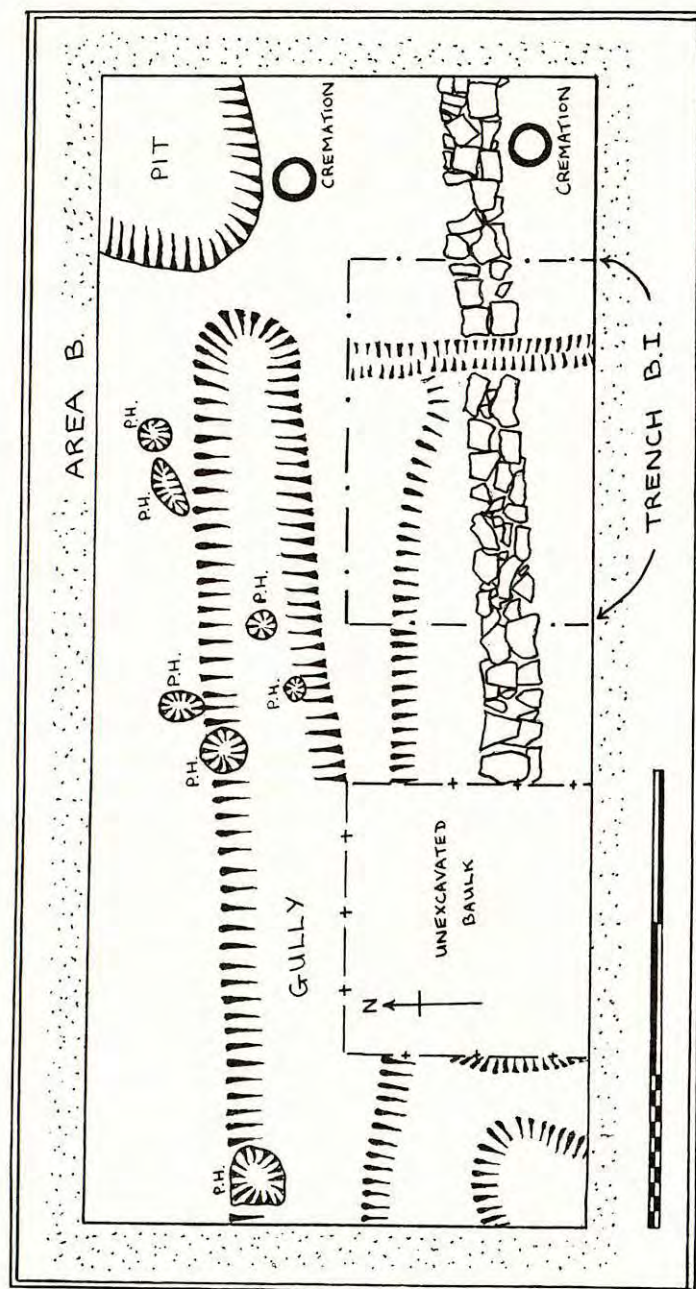


FIG. 4 GATCOMBE: The Excavations in Area B.

represented rubbish tipped on to the existing ground surface and, as the section shows (Fig. 3), against the ashlar masonry of the defence wall. The dateable material in level 2 therefore, provides us with a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the defence wall. Unfortunately the dating of the material in level 2 is not as clear and decisive as we might wish. The pottery would seem to indicate a date not earlier than the late 3rd century whilst the commemorative issue to Claudius Gothicus would presumably not have remained in circulation very far into the 4th century. A tentative date for the deposit is late 3rd - early 4th century. This, however, is not the date that should be assigned to the construction of the wall, for between the erection of the wall and the tipping of the rubbish in level 2 there is a build-up of 25 centimetres of soil. How long this soil build-up took we cannot say, but with this factor in mind it seems probable that the dating of the construction of the defence wall may be placed in the second half of the 3rd century A.D. It must be emphasized that this dating leans heavily on a small amount of material, the dating of which is tentative.

AREA B, TRENCH I (Figs. 1 and 4).

Area B, Trench I consisted of the south-east baulk left within Professor Cunliffe's trench 12 in 1966. A narrow drystone foundation found in 1966 appeared to run through this baulk⁵, and its excavation was, therefore, conducted in 1967 in order to confirm this. The excavations showed that this drystone foundation did continue through the baulk.

The foundation varied in width from 35 cms. to 40 cms. and was made of flat pieces of limestone laid on undisturbed red marl. There was only one "course" and the top of the foundation was uneven. At a point 0.5 metres from the eastern edge of the baulk, the foundations were terminated by two roughly squared stones. These stones appeared to have been deliberately placed in such a way as to form a proper end to this section of the foundations. The foundations were resumed, on the same alignment, a little over 20 cms. further west and then continued without break until entering Professor Cunliffe's south-western baulk. Through the gap in the foundations a small gully ran, some 20 cms. wide and about 8 cms. deep at its deepest point. No other structures or features were found in the area excavated. Within the baulk five levels were excavated:

1. Red-brown clay with limestone lumps. Depth averaging 7 cms. (equates with Cunliffe, Section FF Level 4).
2. Red-brown clay with limestone lumps and large fragments of building stone. Depth averaging 9 cms. (equates with Cunliffe, Section FF Level 4, which appears to thicken towards the southern edge of the trench).
3. Red-brown clay with small pieces of occupation debris and small pieces of limestone. Depth averaging 2.5 cms. (equates with Cunliffe, Section FF Level 6).
4. Red marl. Depth averaging 1.5 cms. (equates with Cunliffe, Section FF Level 9).
5. Reddish-brown silt in small gully through foundations.

Level 1 produced an abundant amount of pottery, predominantly 3rd and 4th century wares but including some 2nd century sherds. A barbarous Antoninianus of Tetricus I (p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/2) and an Æ 3 of A.D. 364-378 (p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/4) cover the period to which most of this deposit belongs. Level 2 produced a very similar collection of material and an Æ 3 of Valentinian I (p. 53, Small Find Gat/67/8). There

⁵ Cunliffe (1967), 133, Pl. 21.

were very few sherds in level 3, which may perhaps be contemporary with the drystone foundation, but those that were found agree with Professor Cunliffe's dating for his level 6 in trench 12, namely mid-1st to late-2nd century.⁶ No dateable sherds were found in level 5 and level 4 was undisturbed marl.

Levels 1 and 2 would seem to represent debris accumulating from building 3 after its abandonment (in the 380's?)⁷ and over the course of centuries slipping slowly down the slope.⁸ The relationship of level 3 (Cunliffe Level 6) to the drystone foundation is not, in my view, established. It seemed to run over these foundations and this would also appear to be the case in Professor Cunliffe's section.⁹ Once the timber sill and superstructure were removed from the foundations it is true that a deposit which had rested against the north wall would soon slip down the slope and over the foundations. If level 3 (Cunliffe Level 6) is contemporary with the use of the foundations, however, it is difficult to explain how the same deposit appears on both sides of the foundation, resting on undisturbed marl. As Cunliffe pointed out,¹⁰ the foundations clearly represent the north, outside, wall of a building. For this reason alone it is very unlikely that the sequence of levels to the north of the wall would be the same as the sequence to the south of the wall. I am therefore inclined to the opinion that level 3 (and Cunliffe's Level 6) are what they appear to be — namely of post-drystone-foundation date. The building represented by the drystone foundation still cannot be closely dated, but the re-interpretation of the stratification suggests that it may have gone out of use considerably earlier than the latest material in Cunliffe's level 6, which is dateable to the late 2nd century. This material, in my view, can no longer be regarded as contemporary with the building. The gully running through the wall alignment presumably represents a small drain which was apparently inserted when the building was erected. It runs into the large gully which Cunliffe found running parallel with the wall. The arrangement was repeated at a later date in the south wall of building 3.

DISCUSSION

The production of further evidence for the dating of the defence wall is undoubtedly the most important contribution made by the excavations of 1967. Useful as the evidence from trench IV may be, it is still inconclusive, for the area dug was small and the material recovered not as closely dateable as one would wish. It does, however, gain some measure of confirmation from the material found in Professor Cunliffe's section through the east defences.¹¹ In disturbed marl contemporary with the construction of the wall were found four rims of late-2nd century date.¹² Of more relevance are the two rims and colour-coated beaker sherd found with a worn coin of Commodus on the old ground surface.¹³ These cannot be later than the construction of the wall. Rim No. 72 in black ware is almost certainly of 3rd century date and the northern dating evidence is relevant to black burnished fabrics of this type. In Gillam's type series for the north, rim No. 72

⁶ Cunliffe (1967), 139.

⁷ Cunliffe (1967), 159.

⁸ See also Cunliffe (1967), 135.

⁹ Cunliffe (1967), Pl. 23, section FF.

¹⁰ Cunliffe (1967), 133.

¹¹ Cunliffe (1967), 130, Fig. 30.

¹² Cunliffe (1967), 141, Fig. 35, 67-70.

¹³ Cunliffe (1967), 141, Fig. 35, 71-72.

finds its best parallel in Gillam form 227, dateable to A.D. 260-320.¹⁴ The absence of any distinctive 4th century sherds in the material from the marl deposit and the old ground surface is perhaps significant. On the evidence of these finds the construction of the defence wall may most reasonably be referred to the late 3rd century. It may, therefore, have been erected at the same time as the main stone buildings which have so far been excavated.¹⁵ The absence of a ditch close to the outer face of the wall and of an internal bank behind it, might be indicative of a 4th century date, however. The defences at Gatcombe might be compared with those of Catterick, Thorpe by Newark and Great Chesterford, all of which have no internal bank and no external towers as part of their original construction.¹⁶ All three towns appear to have been walled in the early 4th century. On the other hand there is no reason to think that the absence of a ditch close to the outer face of the wall is indicative of a wide, flat-bottomed ditch further out. Surface indications suggestive of such a ditch on the east side of the town were subjected to a resistivity survey (11/5/68) which revealed no evidence for a ditch. Furthermore, the discovery that no bastion stood at the vulnerable north-east corner of the defences suggests that the town was probably never given *ballistae* defences and the wide ditches that went with them. This in turn might explain the relatively early abandonment of many of the buildings within the town.¹⁷

THE FINDS

POTTERY

Most of the pottery recovered in 1967 came from levels which had suffered modern disturbance, or represented deposits accumulated over many centuries and subjected to both human and natural disturbance. The total volume of pottery was not great, about 800 sherds, but a series of type fabrics was assembled and 52 fabrics provisionally identified. At this stage, with only a few examples of many fabrics and very little dating evidence or associated rim forms, the type series will not be presented. It is hoped that the first publication of a series for Gatcombe will be possible after the excavations of 1968. Only two significant groups of pottery were found in 1967 and these are illustrated in Fig. 5 and described below.

POTTERY FROM THE RUBBISH DEPOSIT AGAINST THE EASTERN FACE OF THE DEFENCE WALL. Trench A.IV, Level 2 (Fig. 5 Nos. 1 - 3):

1. Rim sherd of open-mouthed jar. Medium grey fabric with small brownish grit; fired to hard; slightly rough texture. (Prov. Type Fabric A.IV).
2. Rim sherd of a cooking jar. Dark grey fabric with no visible grits; unevenly fired; black slipped and burnished exterior. (Prov. Type Fabric B.V.)
3. Rim sherd of a flanged pie dish. Fabric as 2.

(Not illustrated) 85 other sherds representing 12 provisional type fabrics. Notably absent were colour-coated and samian wares, whilst black slipped fabrics predominated.

No. 1 is not closely dateable, whilst no close parallels have been found for No. 3 although it clearly belongs to the late-3rd - late-4th century group of black slipped dishes. The closest parallels to No. 2 found previously at Gatcombe by Cunliffe are his Nos. 76 and 125. Cunliffe No. 76 was found in associa-

¹⁴ J. P. Gillam (1957) "Types of Roman Coarse Pottery Vessels in Northern Britain" *Arch. Aeliana* (4th series) 35, 203, Fig. 24.

¹⁵ Cunliffe (1967), 158.

¹⁶ Frere (1967), *Britannia* (Routledge), 254.

¹⁷ Cunliffe (1967), 133, 159; Solley (1967), Building II, Room I seems to have been abandoned about the time of Valens, whilst the coin of Theodosius and very probably most of the other coins in the group found on the floor of building I, probably belong to a squatter re-occupation. The evidence for this was found in excavations conducted by the writer in a second room of this building in June 1968.

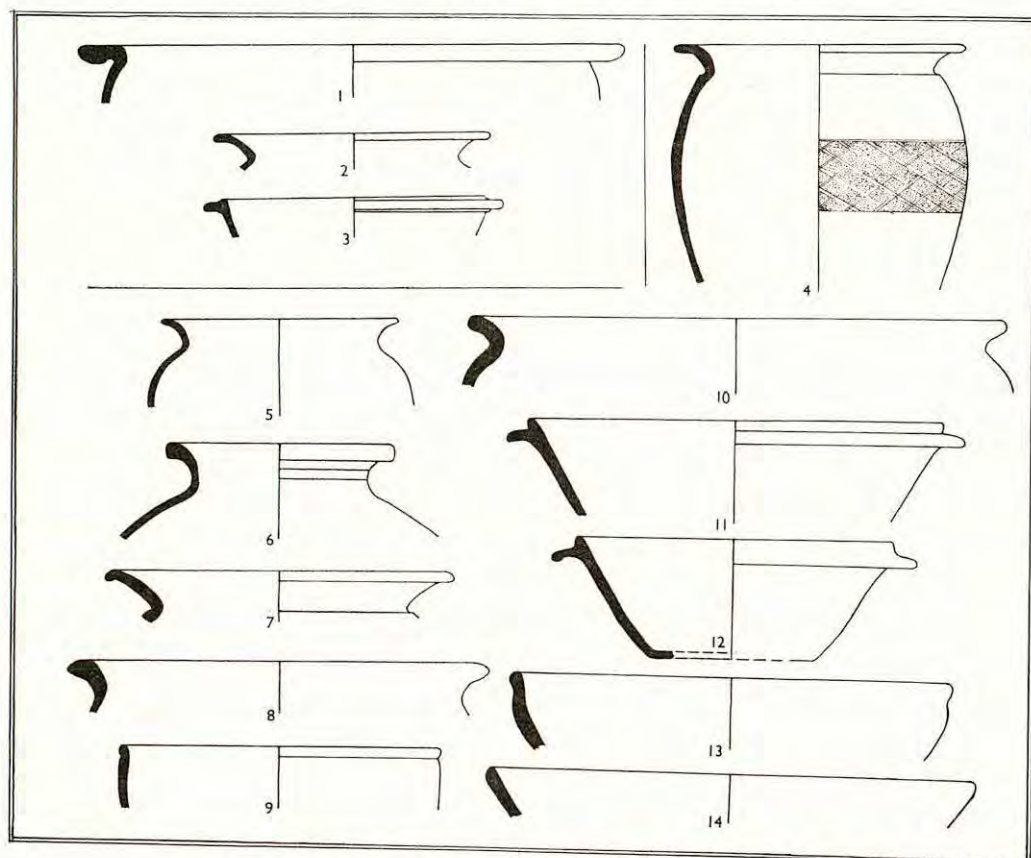


FIG. 5 GATCOMBE: Pottery from A. IV, 2 and A. I, 4. ($\frac{1}{4}$).

tion with a good coin series and a comprehensive group of pottery, all dating to the period late-3rd to late-4th century. The only coin found in association with our small group was a commemorative issue to Claudius Gothicus minted before A.D. 296. (Coins, Small Find Gat/67/14). The dating of both this group and the level from which it came is, therefore, inconclusive but may tentatively be given as late 3rd to early 4th century.

POTTERY FROM THE SOIL BUILD-UP AGAINST THE NORTH FACE OF THE DEFENCE WALL AND OVER THE QUARRIED BED-ROCK. Trench A.I, Level 4 (Fig. 5, Nos. 4-14):

4. The upper portion of a cooking jar. Darkish grey fabric with small white and black grits; evenly fired to hard; roughish texture; black slipped and burnished, the slip quite thick; decorated around the widest area with a cordon of lattice work in reserve (Prov. Type Fabric B.II).
5. Rim sherd of a cooking jar. Medium grey fabric with small, rounded white grits and a few larger white grits; fired to hard; slightly rough texture (Prov. Type Fabric A.VII).
6. Joining rim sherds of a narrow-necked jar. Medium grey fabric with no visible grits; fired to hard; even texture (Prov. Type Fabric A.III).
7. Rim sherd of a cooking jar. Fabric as 4.
8. Rim sherd of an open-mouthed jar. Medium grey fabric with pinkish grits; fired to hard; even texture but surface slightly gritty (Prov. Type Fabric A.XVII).
9. Rim sherd of an open bowl, considerably weathered. Grey core fired to pale red-orange; a few small white grits; unevenly fired; even texture (Prov. Type Fabric C.III).

10. Rim sherd of an open-mouthed jar. Fabric as 9.
11. Rim and joining sherds of a flanged pie-dish. Fabric as 4.
12. Complete profile of a flanged pie-dish, much burnt and encrusted. Fabric as 4.
13. Rim sherd of an open bowl. Black fabric with quite numerous and large white grits; unevenly fired, texture soft and corky; hand-made (Prov. Type Fabric B.XIII).
14. Rim sherd of an open bowl. Fabric as 13.

(Not illustrated) 80 other sherds representing 14 provisional type fabrics. There were no colour-coated sherds and only one of samian. Black wares were again predominant and included five further body sherds of the hand-made fabric (see Nos. 13 and 14).

The samian sherd and rim 9 are probably residual or stray sherds. Rims comparable to 9 were found by Cunliffe in mid-2nd to early-3rd century deposits (Cunliffe's Nos. 71, 134, 139). Rims 5, 6, 8 and 10 could all be as early as the late-2nd century but they are forms which were produced over a long period of time and cannot be confidently ascribed to any short time range. The remaining rims can confidently be identified as late-3rd to late-4th century types. Jar rims flaring broadly like those of Nos. 4 and 7 fall into the compass of Gillam forms 147 and 148¹⁸ which are dated in the north to A.D. 290-370. In Somerset they could perhaps begin a little earlier and end rather later.¹⁹ They are characteristic of late-3rd to late-4th century deposits at Gloucester (Bon Marché),²⁰ Lufton²¹ and Gatcombe²² and are common in the late-4th century deposits at Lydney.²³ The two pie-dishes 11 and 12 point to a late-4th century date for at least the latest material in the deposit. Rim 11 compares well with Gillam form 231²⁴ (A.D. 370-400) and was represented in the post-Roman rampart additions at Lydney.²⁵ At Gatcombe Cunliffe found examples in two 4th century deposits (Nos. 124 and 145).²⁶ Pie-dish 12 with its turned flange is distinctive enough to allow of precise dating. In Gillam's series it is form 229²⁷ dating to the period A.D. 370-400. This form too appeared in the post-Roman rampart additions at Lydney²⁸ and two examples occurred in a late-4th century deposit at Gatcombe (Cunliffe Nos. 159 and 161). The two hand-made rims (13 and 14) and the five similar body sherds cannot be compared to the pre-Roman fabrics found by Cunliffe²⁹ and no hand-made fabrics occurred at all during Cunliffe's excavations. Red hand-made fabrics were found in a deposit dated A.D. 330-350+ at Shipham villa³⁰ and are of some value as an indication that hand-made pottery was being produced locally. The sherds from Gatcombe, however, are in a black fabric and appear to relate to the black slipped and burnished wares which predominate in this deposit. More information is needed about this fabric, but one may tentatively ascribe it to the last period of occupation of the site, i.e. between the abandonment of the houses excavated by Cunliffe and the abandonment of the site in the last decade of the 4th century perhaps.³¹ The group of pottery as a whole may be dated within the confines of the 4th century, although a more precise dating of rims 5, 6, 8 and 10 might lower the opening date for the group quite considerably.

¹⁸ Gillam (1957), 195, Fig. 17.

¹⁹ This suggestion is based on the assumption that the wares are manufactured in Somerset, as Dr. D. Peacock believes.

²⁰ A. G. Hunter (1963) "Excavations at the Bon Marché Site, Gloucester" *Trans. Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.* **82**, 51; Fig. 12, 17.

²¹ L. C. Hayward (1952) "The Roman Villa at Lufton (near Yeovil)" *Soms. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc. Proc.* **97**, Fig. 6, 24.

²² Cunliffe (1967), Fig. 36, 75, 105; Fig. 39, 166.

²³ R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler (1932) *Report on the Excavation of the Prehistoric, Roman, and Post-Roman Site in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire*. (Report of Res. Comm. of the Soc. Ant. London. IX) Fig. 26, 32; Fig. 27, 37.

²⁴ Gillam (1957), 203, Fig. 22.

²⁵ Wheeler (1932), 99, Fig. 27, 43.

²⁶ Cunliffe (1967), 144, Fig. 37, 124; Fig. 38, 145.

²⁷ Gillam (1957), 203, Fig. 24.

²⁸ Wheeler (1932), 91, Fig. 27, 41.

²⁹ Cunliffe (1967), 137, Fig. 33, 1-8.

³⁰ K. J. Barton (1964), "Star Villa, Shipham, Somerset" *Soms. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc. Proc.* **108**, 75, 79.

³¹ See R. Reece in Cunliffe (1967), 156.

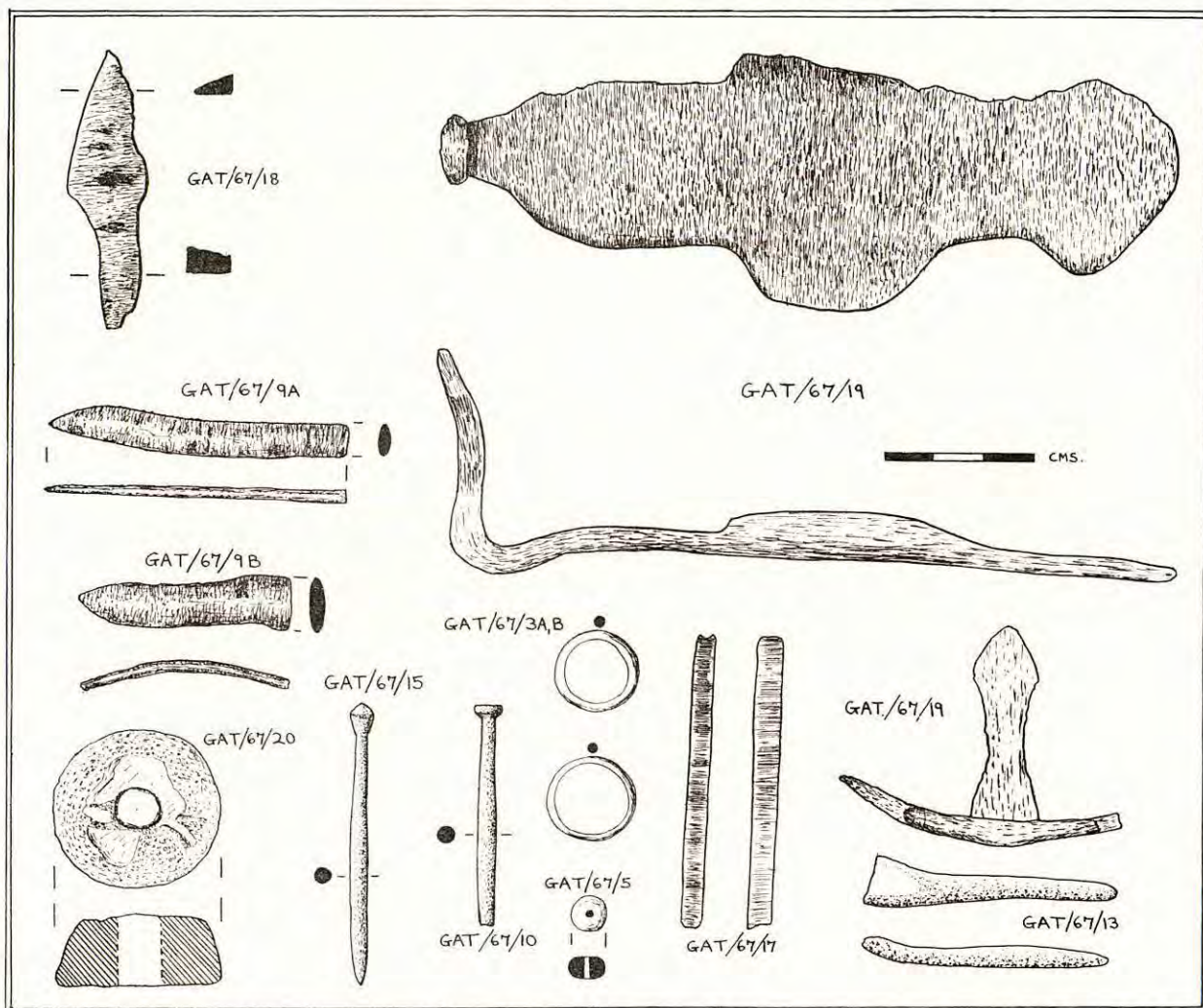


FIG. 6 GATCOMBE: The Small Finds.

SMALL FINDS (Fig. 6)

GLASS

- Gat/67/5 A bead of green glass, in the shape of a flattened sphere and perforated at the centre. Diam. 7 mm. From B/I/2.

IRON

- Gat/67/9 Two small strips of iron, elliptical in section. Purpose unknown, although *a* resembles a broken tip of a small hand fork. Length *a* 5.5 cms.; *b* 4 cms. From A/IV/2.
- Gat/67/18 A piece of iron which in outline resembles a broken arrowhead. The section however does not conform to this identity. Purpose unknown, possibly scrap. Length 5.5 cms. From A/IV/2.
- Gat/67/19 A flat strip of iron with a tang projecting at right-angles from one end, a small rounded projection curving slightly upwards from the middle section of both edges, and a broadening of the strip at the other end. There is some resemblance to a hippo-sandal but it is only

superficial; equally the object is too weak to be an unusual form of plough share. The purpose of the object therefore remains unknown. Length 14.5 cms. Max width (as surviving) 5.3 cms. From A/II/4.

COPPER/BRONZE

Gat/67/17 A small bar of copper or bronze broken off at one end but slightly rounded at the other. Signs of hammering on three sides but completely smooth surface on the fourth. Length 6.1 cms., Thk. 0.5 cms. From A/IV/2.

? BRASS

Gat/67/3 Two small rings which would fit a lady's finger but are probably curtain rings. They appear to be made of a modern alloy by mass production methods. The rings were found on the edge of the baulk excavated in trench B.I and are almost certainly intrusive from domestic rubbish dumped here since the 1966 excavations.

BONE

Gat/67/10 A bone pin with a flat, circular head, and broken at the tip. Length 4.5 cms. From A/IV/2.

Gat/67/13 A small rib bone worked into a spatula. Length 5 cms. From A/IV/2.

Gat/67/15 A bone pin with an egg-shaped head. Length 5.7 cms. From A/IV/2.

Gat/67/20 An animal's knee-cap made into a spindle-whorl. Very badly weathered. Diameter 3.6 cms. From B/I/2.

THE COINS by P. H. Robinson PH.D.

Gat/67/1 Surface find. Æ 4. Commemorative Issue to Theodora, struck A.D. 337-341, either in Trier, Rome or Constantinople. Rev. type PIETAS ROMANA.

Gat/67/2 Trench B/I/1. Antoninianus of Tetricus I (A.D. 270-273). Possibly struck shortly after his death; the coin is not an official issue but a good "barbarous" copy.

Gat/67/4 Trench B/I/1. Æ 3 (clipped) Emperor and mint uncertain. The Rev. type — SECURITAS REIPUBLICAE — dates the coin to the period 364-378.

Gat/67/6 Trench A/II/1. Very badly weathered. A halfpenny or halfpenny token, probably of George III.

Gat/67/7 Trench B/I/1. Æ c. 12 mm. Virtually illegible; odd letters may be made out. A late 3rd century date is possible.

Gat/67/8 Trench B/I/2. Æ 3 of Valentinian I. Struck A.D. 367-375 at Arles. Rev. type SECURITAS REIPUBLICAE. The mint mark is damaged but the coin may date to A.D. 364-67.

Gat/67/11 Trench A/IV/2. Æ c. 13 mm. Worn completely smooth, cannot be identified.

Gat/67/12 Trench A/IV/1. Æ Antoninianus of Tetricus I or an early imitation. Similar to Gat/67/2. Struck in the 270's.

Gat/67/14 Trench A/IV/2. Commemorative Issue to Claudius Gothicus. Struck under Quintillus in A.D. 270 or under other emperors between A.D. 270-296. Rev. type CONSECRATIO, large altar.

Gat/67/16 Trench A/IV/2. A square piece of copper (12 mm. square). Possibly a mid-4th century coin but much too worn to be certain.