

Two Roman Stamped Tiles from the Peterborough Area

by Adrian Challands

Roman stamped tiles are far from common in the Peterborough sector of the Nene Valley. Of the two here described, one was found recently, while the other, an old find, is the only tile out of a small number in Peterborough Museum with a secure provenance.

During work on the villa and attendant industrial site at Sacrewell near Thornhaugh (*Durobrivae* 2, 1974, 13-19) a fragment of tile was found 100 metres south of the villa (fig. 10). It lay on top of a badly damaged feature containing charcoally loam and iron slag which was in close proximity to three bowl furnaces. Unfortunately, the tile is fractured and bears only the end of the stamp J.L.E. While it is reminiscent of the Fifth Legion stamps at Lincoln (*LHA* 1, 1966, 29-31), the comparison will not stand up to close examination on epigraphic grounds (kind comments of Mr M. Todd of Nottingham University). The tile has been fired to achieve the usual red fabric and can be interpreted as a *tegula*; but certain features about it are unusual. These are the very substantial ironstone inclusions in the fabric and the small dimensions of the flange. It is probable, in view of the findspot, that the tile is the work of a civilian company in the locality rather than of military origin. The resolution of the abbreviation L E is obscure.

Mr E. T. Artis in his *Durobrivae* (Artis (1828), pl.XXV) illustrates tiles used as moulds at ironworking sites in Bedford Purlieus — which raises some interesting possibilities in view of the ironworking at Sacrewell.

The second tile (fig. 9) is a rib voussoir with a stamp of the Ninth Legion on it (LEG IX HISP). It was found in 1867 at Hilly Wood in the parish of Bainton (TF 112044) on the Roman King Street. The circumstances in which it was found are not absolutely clear. It is stated to have been 'ploughed up' in the unpublished papers of Mr J. T. Irving (1886). However, Mr T. Davis Pryce ((1938), 46, fig. 3) states, from information furnished by the then 'Directors of the Peterborough Museum', that it was associated with an inhumation burial and a 'rilled' pot of late first-century date. J. T. Irving in his papers sketched his interpretation of how the voussoir could be placed to form a tile-grave, presumably based on a tile-burial found at York which utilised a LEG IX *tegula* (*Archaeologia* II, 1773, pl. X). No source records other tiles found at the time which would substantiate his interpretation. Again, interesting problems are raised about how the tile came to be at Hilly Wood and what its significance

may be in the military history of the Peterborough area in the first century A.D. The Ninth Legion may have provided troops for the Longthorpe fortress.

Bibliography

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Artis (1828) | E. T. Artis, <i>The Durobrivae of Antoninus Identified and Illustrated</i> , 1828 |
| Davis Pryce (1938)
<i>LHA</i> | T. Davis Pryce in <i>Antiquaries Journal</i> XVIII, 1938
<i>Lincolnshire History and Archaeology</i> |



Fig 10 The stamped tile from Sacrewell