

APPENDIX II

MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS CONCERNING UPCHURCH WARE

John Battley (1745), *Antiquitates Rutupiae*.

"Ceruntis nigricantes illas urnas atque vasa: ea in villa Newtonae proxima eruta sunt, in agro, ut puto, figulina, non sepulchrali; quoniam urnae et vacuae, et inversae et nullo ordine positae, reperlae sunt; idque in solo palustri non arenoso imo una vel altero, si recte memini in ipso vicini fluvii alveo demersa."

John Murrays' "A Handbook for Travellers in Kent and Sussex", 2nd Edition (1867) pp 69-70.

The Upchurch Marshes, which in fact, consist of hard ground lying on a bed of very fine clay, are the site of extensive Roman potteries, 'which must, from appearances, have been worked during the whole period of the Roman occupation of the island. In many parts along the sides of the creeks, where the sea has broken away the ground and left a perpendicular bank, we can see, running along at a depth of from 2 to 3 ft, a regular layer, in many places a foot thick, of Roman pottery, most of it in fragments, but here and there a perfect or nearly perfect vessel, and mixed with lumps of half burnt clay. The bed of the creek is formed of the clay in a liquid state, forming a fine and very tenacious mud; this is completely filled with the Roman pottery, which is more easily procured than on the bank, and with less danger of breaking the perfect specimens. The latter may be felt by pushing a stick about in the mud.' - Wright ("Wanderings of an Antiquary").

The search for this pottery is no light task, since the treasure-seekers must trust themselves, at low water, to the mud, which has no definite bottom, and are consequentially obliged to keep themselves in constant motion, lest they should sink too far, and become themselves embedded for the gratification of future archaeologists. Large water-boots, southwesters, and light spades should be provided by the adventurous. The Medway pottery was inferior to that made in Caistor, in Northamptonshire (Durobrivae). Its texture is, however, fine and hard; and its colour usually a blue-black, 'which was produced by baking it in the smoke of vegetable substances in smother kilns. Some specimens of a red ware are also found here. The ornaments of both kinds are simple, consisting of lines and raised points, though the arrangements are very graceful and diversified. The forms are always good. The extent of the works are remarkable. Layers of pottery have been found at almost every point between Gillingham and the Isle of Sheppey, - nearly 7 miles. Inland the site extends at least 3 miles. The fragments are, no doubt, 'the refuse of the kilns of the potters, who it seems, gradually moved along in the course of years, or rather of ages, using up the clay, and throwing their refuse - the broken and damaged pottery - on the land which they had exhausted, until this extensive tract of country became covered with it. ' The field of broken pottery thus left by the Romans was gradually covered by the alluvial

soil, which the tide has again scooped into creeks, thus bringing the fragments to light."

The above article was cribbed in part in a pair of notes found in the Upchurch parochial records; neither contained any further additional information. (Kent County Archives Office, Unpublished MSS).

British Museum Catalogue to the Charles Roach-Smith Collection, (unpub.) page 20.

"A considerable number of earthen vessels of a great variety of form and pattern, but presenting a uniformity in material and in the mode of manufacture. Many of the fictile vessels in this collection have been coloured with metallic oxides, but the class now referred to is distinguished by a peculiar black colour which appears to have been imparted to the clay by the smoke of vegetable substances thrown down upon the vessels in the kilns. Investigations made on the banks of the Medway opposite Upchurch and towards Sheerness, have clearly shown that the beds of clay which there abound were extensively worked by the Romans, and that, although the potters did not confine themselves to the manufacture of this particular class, it nevertheless constituted an extensive branch of their trade; and we are justified from the immense quantities of fragments and entire vessels there found, in concluding that this district of Cantium was the chief depot for this particular ware. Accordingly we find examples of it much more numerous in South-Eastern and Midland parts, and it is by no means of common occurrence in the North.

"As many of the examples found in London are fragmentary, the collection contains, for the sake of comparison and illustration, perfect specimens procured from the Upchurch Marshes..."

The Roach-Smith collection was purchased in 1856 for £2,000.