

SPRINGHEAD—THE WELL, F.19

By S. R. HARKER

INTRODUCTION

THIS report is based on excavation notes made by the late William S. Penn who examined the well as an individual construction. Brief mention has already been made in 'Springhead—Map of Discoveries'¹ where it is identified as feature F.19 and located in relation to other features both ancient and modern. At the time of its discovery it was remote from the area then being excavated and was made apparent by a very localized deep subsidence after a period of torrential rain which caused some local flooding. The nature of the subsidence left little doubt concerning the cause. This accounts for the limited area examined at the time. Although the site is now buried under the verges of the new A2 roadway constructions, the adjacent areas have been extensively reported in *Arch. Cant.*²⁻⁶ and the area to the south-west adjacent to the boundary fence of the road is currently being excavated, so that the relationship of the well to other structures may be completely established. The map reference is: TQ 61777252.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavations were carried out by permission of the farmers—then Messrs. J. Bartholomew and Sons. Although the ownership has now changed, thanks are due to the members of this family for their willing co-operation over a period of many years.

Permission to excavate this scheduled site was given by the Ministry of Public Building and Works and the work was carried out by the Excavations Group of the Gravesend Historical Society, whose help and encouragement are also acknowledged. Thanks are due to Mr. A. P. Detsicas, M.A., F.S.A., who kindly examined and reported in detail on the samian ware; Mr. M. R. Hull, M.A., F.S.A., who examined the brooches; Mr. E. W. Tilley, who dealt with the coins; Mr. D. B. Kelly, B.A., A.M.A., who provided several references. The excavators included Messrs. P. Connolly, who was also responsible for the photography, E. W. Tilley, W. Gee and G. M. Burles.

EXCAVATION

For the reasons mentioned in the introduction, only a limited area

¹ *Arch. Cant.*, lxxx (1965), 107.

²⁻⁶ *Ibid.*, lxxiii (1959), 1; lxxiv (1960), 113; lxxvii (1962), 110; lxxxii (1967), 263; lxxxiii (1968), 163.

was available for excavation. This was confined to the removal of the filling of the well itself, and the cutting of a short section in an east-west direction, adjacent to the well. It seems clear that the well served a succession of buildings fronting the Road R.1.⁷ from which it was approached by several paths of chalk topped with gravel. The immediate area surrounding the well-head was cobbled with a single layer of large flints and roughly levelled with small flints and stones (see Plate IA).

The well itself was lined with flints to a depth of 11 ft. 6 in. from the lip, and the opening was circular and 43 in. in diameter. This dimension was maintained for a depth of 5 ft. after which the diameter increased with depth to a maximum of 54 in. at 9 ft. 6 in. The shape then changed gradually to square with sides of approximately 38-39 in. (see Plate IB). The depth to the bottom was 14 ft. measured from the lip and 15 ft. 5 in. below the modern ground surface. In this location the subsoil consisted of yellow loam with layers of orange brick-earth to a depth of 12 ft. 6 in., which overlaid a thick layer of gravel into which the well had been dug.

The bottom of the well was timber-lined for a depth of approximately 2 ft. 6 in. (Plate IB). Judged from the traces of wood which survived, it did not have corner posts in its construction and the wood appeared to have been sawn rather than split. This would suggest a mode of construction similar to that of Well II described in the *Camulodunum* report.⁸

Built into the top of the well structure was a very small pot which was found intact and had obviously been placed deliberately and carefully among the flints forming the lip of the well. It was quite empty; it may originally have contained water as a votive deposit. It appears as no. 9 on Fig. 2 and its position is indicated in the section drawing (Fig. 1).

STRATIGRAPHY AND CHRONOLOGY

The earliest period of this part of the site is represented by a dark soil (Layer c) blackened with soot and ash, which may be the result of burning off the undergrowth when the area was first occupied. In nearby areas the corresponding layer is datable to the first century A.D.⁹ A gravel surface (Layer d) is overlaid by a fairly thick layer of darkish soil (Layer e) which yielded sherds of South Gaulish samian. A chalk floor (Layer f), topped with a mixed layer of gravel and small flints, was covered with a layer of oyster shells. A coin of Trajan was found at the level of the floor but some disturbance had occurred in the immediate vicinity and the coin could possibly be associated with

⁷ *Ibid.*, lxxx (1965), 109.

⁸ C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum*, Oxford, 1947.

⁹ *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxii (1967), 109.



Photo: P. Connolly

A. The Well—oblique View.



Photo: P. Connolly

B. The Well—vertical View.

WELL F.19
Section.

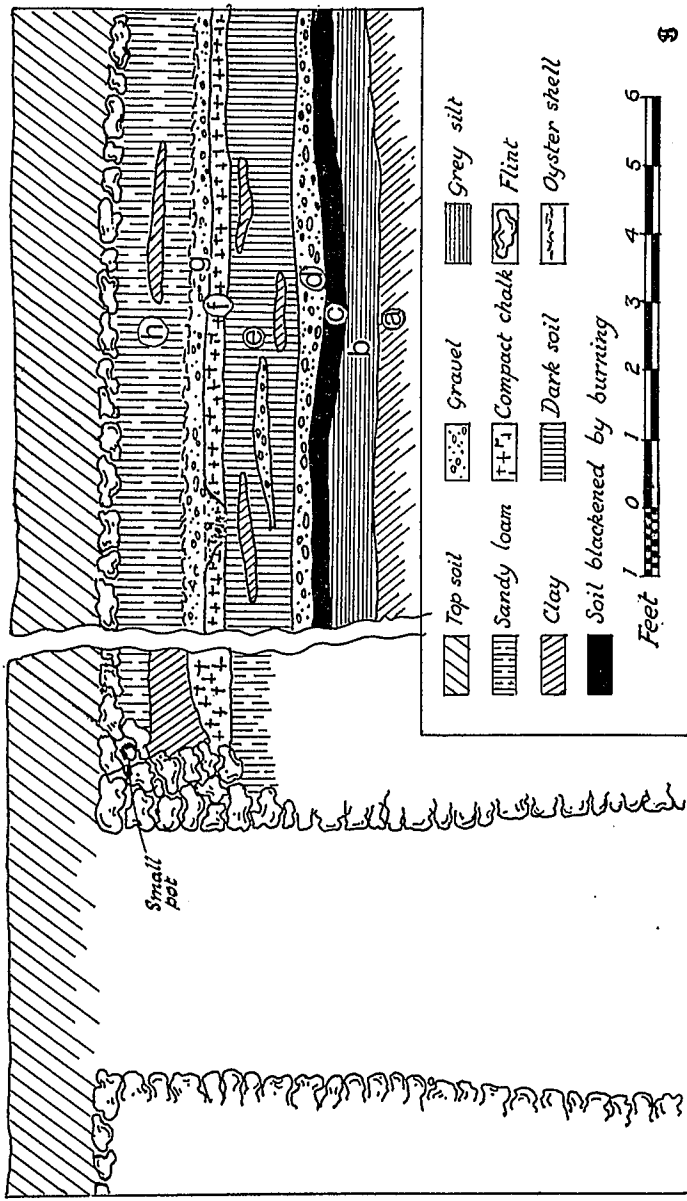


FIG. 1.

this disturbance, rather than the chalk itself. The overlying layers seem to be associated with the period of construction of the well, which can be fairly securely dated to the early decades of the second century A.D. The evidence obtained from the filling suggests that the well remained open during that century and perhaps a little after.

THE FINDS

These are indexed as follows:

Coins	—	Table 1.
Brooches	—	Table 2 (Fig. 2).
Mortaria	—	Table 3 (Fig. 2).
Coarse ware pottery	—	Table 4 (Fig. 3).
Plain and decorated samian	—	Appendix A (Fig. 4).

GENERAL COMMENTS

No attempt has been made to present the coarse ware pottery in detail, as the types represented have been recorded in earlier reports, the majority datable to the Antonine period. One sherd is identified as part of a lamp chimney and it is interesting to note that both types of chimney described in 'Verulamium'¹⁰ are now represented at Springhead.

The number of small finds was relatively low, including several bone pins and a few tiny fragments of glass. One of the brooches is of an unusual type and attention is particularly drawn to this item ('b' in Table 2, illustrated in Fig. 2).

TABLE 1

COINS

Reported on by Mr. E. W. Tilley.

Coin No.	Position	Description
1	Well filling 4 ft.	Gallienus 3AE. Obv.: GALLIENVS AVG. Bust radiate r. Rev.: SECVRIT PERPET, Securitas standing l., legs crossed, leaning on column, holding sceptre r. hand. Mint mark in field H (Rome). R.I.C. 280.
2	Well filling 8 ft.	Allectus 3AE. Obv.: IMP C ALLECTVS PF AVG. Bust radiate and cuirassed r. Rev.: LAETITIA AVG, Laetitia standing l., holding wreath and anchor. S/P R.I.C. 79F. C
3	Well filling 12 ft.	Antoninus Pius (<i>Sestertius</i>). Obv.: ANTONINVS AVG PIVS PP, Head laureate r. Rev.: VOTA SOL DECII COS III S C, Antoninus standing l., sacrificing with <i>patera</i> . BMC 1723, R.I.C. 792.

¹⁰ R. E. M. Wheeler and T. V. Wheeler, *Verulamium—A Belgic and two Roman Cities*, Oxford, 1936.

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Section	Trajan 2AE (<i>As</i>). Obv.: (IMP CAES) NERVAE
Layer f	TRAIANO AVG (. . .). Bust laureate r. Rev.: (SPQR OPTI) MO PRINCIPI S C, Spes moving l., holding flower and catching up skirt. BMC 935, R.L.C. 519.

TABLE 2

BROOCHES (Fig. 2)

Reported on by Mr. M. R. Hull, M.A., F.S.A.

Description

- (a) From among the flints at the top of the well. A fine, well-preserved bronze brooch with a trumpet-shaped head covering the spring, a central acanthus moulding on the bow and a well-developed moulded foot. The wire of the spring is looped through the collar, forming a ring on the top by which the brooch could be fastened to a chain. (Brooches of this group seem to have been worn in pairs.) The type is fairly common in England, more so in the North than in the South, but is hardly ever found in France or Germany. Many parallels can be cited, all of which give a late-first or early-second-century A.D. dating.
- R. E. M. Wheeler, *London in Roman Times*, fig. 28.
A. J. Curle, *Newstead 1911*, pl. lxxxvi, figs. 15-16 and pp. 321-3.
J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Wroxeter, 1912*, figs. 9-10, nos. 6-8.
Corbridge 1908, no. 96, and *Corbridge 1911*, no. 39.
Camelon (occupied A.D. 80-180), *P.S.A.S.*, xxv (1890-91), 401.
This brooch can be classified under Collingwood's group R(ii)/R(iv).
- (b) From the well filling at 8 ft. 4 in. Orichalc brooch of Collingwood's 'P' type, length 2.5 in., height 1.8 in. This brooch has a double spring and the bow is ornamented with an open-work trumpet scroll decoration. This is a rare type and the only other British example is in Colchester Museum. The double spring is found in Northern and Central Europe, but like the brooch is very uncommon in this country. It dates from the first half of the third century A.D.

TABLE 3

MORTARIA (Fig. 2)

Sherd	Position	Description
1	Well filling 4 ft. 10 in.	Hard, coarse cream fabric with pink tinge, multi-coloured grit. Herring-bone stamp. Cf. <i>Greenhithe 213</i> . ¹¹
2	Well filling 6 ft. 3 in.	Smooth pinkish fabric without grit. Vertical rim type with slight concavity and shallow double grooves top and bottom.

¹¹ A. P. Detsicas, 'An Iron Age and Romano-British Site at Stone Castle Quarry, Greenhithe', *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxi (1966), 136.

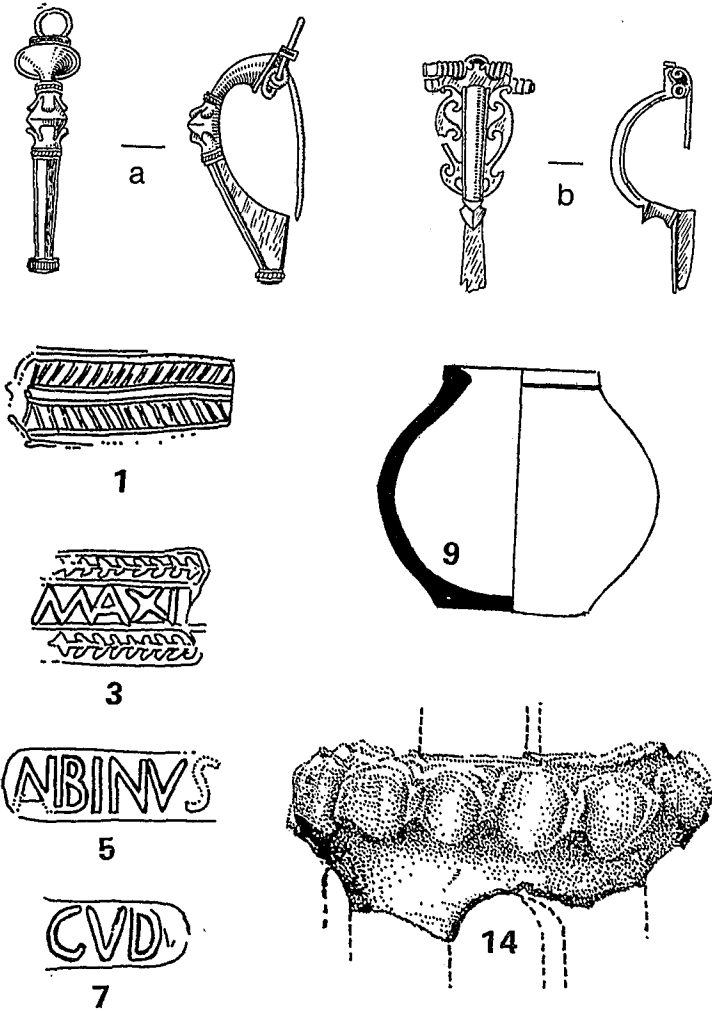


FIG. 2. Brooches, Mortaria Stamps, Coarse Pot and Chimney Fragment ($\frac{1}{2}$).

- 3 Well filling Orange-buff fabric with white trituration grit. Hooked rim with small bead below the top of the curve. Stamped MAXI with herring-bone decoration above and below. This stamp is illustrated by Walters on his M2790 found in Fetter Lane, London.¹² It does not appear to have been reported outside London which has provided several examples.
- 4 Well filling Hard, white slightly micaceous fabric. Curved sloping rim with internal overhang.

¹² H. B. Walters, *Catalogue of the Roman Pottery in the Department of Antiquities, British Museum*, London, 1908.

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| 5 | Well filling
11ft. | Light buff fabric, ungritted. Hooked rim with vestigial bead at the top of the curve, projecting internally. Stamped ALBINV(S). |
| 6 | Well filling
12 ft. 7 in. | Smooth cream fabric with white grit. Pronounced high bead and downbent rim. Cf. Wroxeter 106. |
| 7 | Well filling
13 ft. 8 in. | Almost identical with no. 5 above, but slightly heavier and with less overhang. Possibly from the same potter who appears to have worked at Lyons from the evidence of the mark () GVD. This is discussed in <i>Wroxeter 1912</i> , p. 66. |
| 8 | Well filling
13 ft. 8 in. | Cream fabric with white grit. Heavy overhanging rim with flat top and a flattened internal projection. |

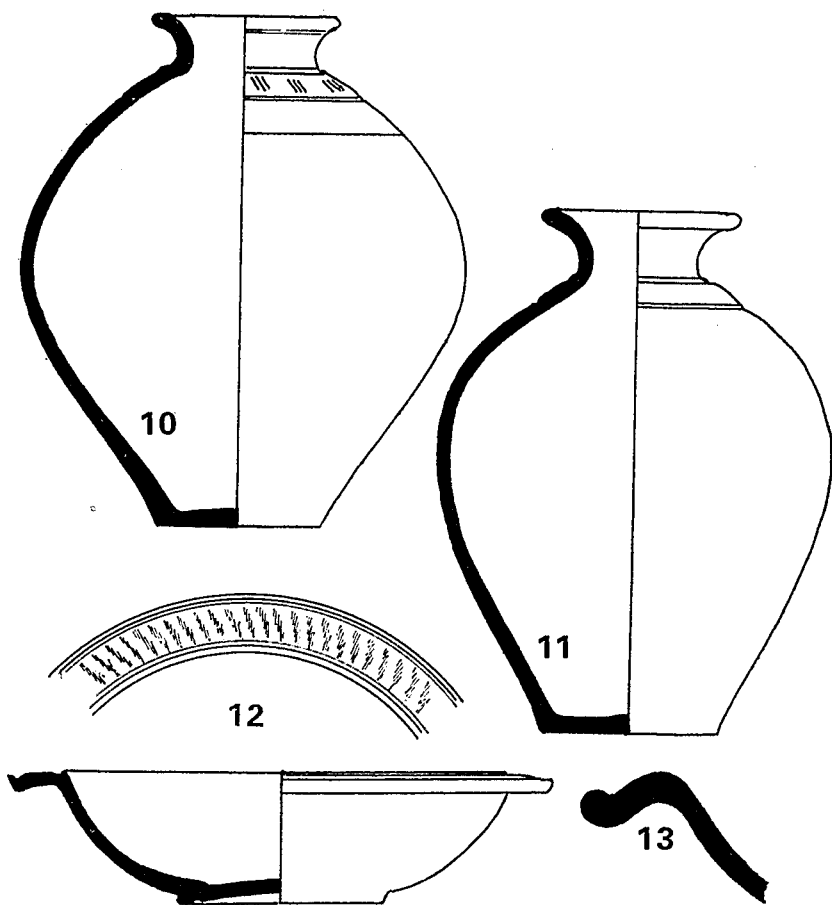


FIG. 3. Coarse Pottery (1).

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TABLE 4

COARSE POTTERY (Figs. 2-3)

Sherd	Position	Description
9	In flints at top of well	Complete small jar in sandy grey fabric. Slightly concave flat rim continuing the curve of the neck vaguely defined by a shallow groove. Poorly finished, with an irregular base.
10	Well filling 6 ft. 8 in.	Complete narrow-mouthed jar or large flask in sandy grey-brown fabric. A slightly raised cordon formed by two shallow grooves at the base of the neck is decorated with vertical grooves at intervals. A burnished band immediately below.
11	Well filling 8 ft. 4 in.	Complete narrow-mouthed jar or large flask in sandy reddish-brown fabric. Weakly cordoned and grooved below the neck with signs of burnishing on the outside of the rim.
12	Well filling 13 ft. 2 in.	Shallow dish in hard smooth light grey fabric with a darker core. Inside surface black and polished. Out-swept flanged rim with small beads decorated on the upper surface with rouletting. Neat turned foot. Cf. <i>Colchester 311</i> . ¹³
13	Well filling at several depths from 8 ft. to 11 ft. 10 in.	Shallow dish or platter in light orange fabric with a grey core.
14	Well filling 10 ft. 3 in.	Fragment of orange pottery with rough 'frilled' decoration and traces of pierced 'windows' identified as a lamp chimney. Cf. <i>Verulamium</i> , pl. lviii.

APPENDIX

THE SAMIAN WARE (Fig. 4)

By A. P. DETSICAS, M.A., F.S.A.

Abbreviations and References

CG	Central Gaulish.
CGP	J. A. Stanfield and Grace Simpson, <i>Central Gaulish Pottery</i> , London, 1958.
D.	J. Déchelette, <i>Les Vases céramiques ornés de la Gaule romaine</i> , ii, Paris, 1904.
EG	East Gaulish.
O.	F. Oswald, <i>Index of Figure-Types on Terra Sigillata</i> , i-iv, Liverpool, 1936-7.
SG	South Gaulish.

¹³ M. R. Hull, *The Roman Potters' Kilns of Colchester*, Oxford, 1963.

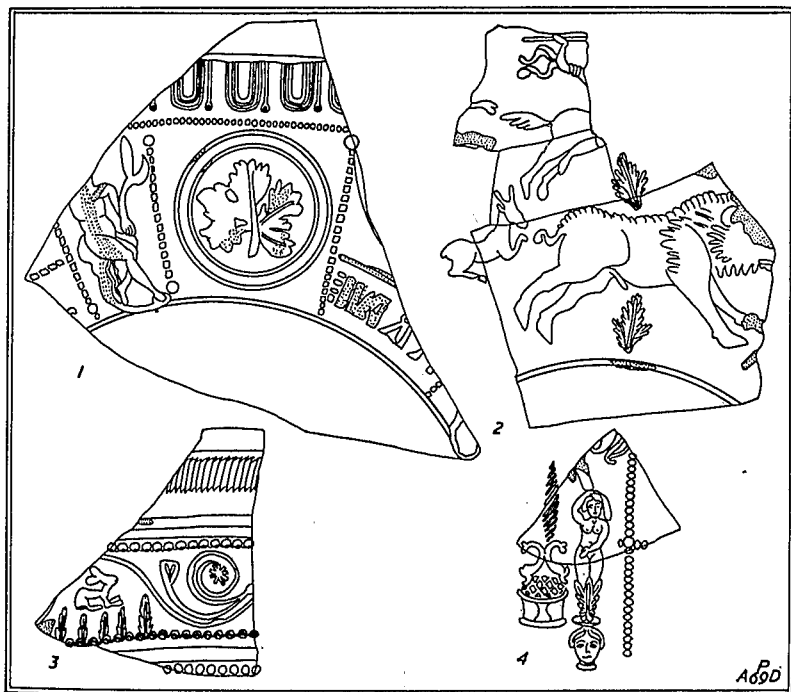


FIG. 4. Samian Ware (½).

Several sherds, belonging to both plain and decorated forms, were submitted. They were recovered from the filling of the well. The majority of the vessels in question (12) originated in CG factories; SG and EG manufacture is represented by four and two vessels, respectively.

(i) *Plain Forms.* A single sherd of Form 33, EG and dating to the second half of the second century A.D., is the only cup present. Form 18 has two SG vessels of Flavian date. Form 35 or 36 is represented by one SG sherd of Flavian date and one CG fragment belonging to the middle of the second century A.D. There is one sherd which could be of either Form 31 or 31R; the rouletting of the latter variant of this form is beyond the fracture of this piece, but the internal ridge points to this rather than Form 31—late-Antonine in dating. Two vessels of the late-Antonine Form 79, both CG. One sherd from Form Curle 11, CG and Trajan-Antonine in date. Form 45, dating to the last quarter of the second century A.D., is represented by a large portion of one mortarium, with a very worn interior surface and white grits, but lacking its spout.

(ii) *Decorated Forms.* A total of seven bowls are concerned; of these

four are illustrated in Fig. 4. Like the plain forms, the majority (5) are CG products, with one vessel each from SG and EG factories.

1. Form 37, CG. A shallow bowl with poor and squashed relief, by PATERNVS, whose usual PATERNFĒ retrograde signature appears above the basal line. The decoration consists of small compartments divided by vertical bead-rows and shows, within a double-ringed medallion, PATERNVS's leaf (*CGP*, fig. 30, p. 196, no. 16) and a badly squashed figure-type, Apollo (O.94A); the feet of this figure-type appear immediately to right of the stamp. Date: c. A.D. 160–190.

2. Form 37, CG. Five fragments, three of which conjoin, from a bowl in the style of CINNAMVS. A free-style decorative scheme with Deer to right (D.847 = O.1704), as on a signed sherd from Chesters (*CGP*, pl. 158/21), part of Horseman to right (smaller than D.156 = O.245), as on a signed sherd from Caernarvon (*CGP*, pl. 163/72) (this figure-type is also partly present on another sherd which, though showing the lower part of the horseman's body, does not allow completion of the drawing), and Boar to right (D.826 = O.1641), as on a signed sherd from Moulins (O. p. 108). Also, in the field, CINNAMVS's small leaf (*CGP*, fig. 47, p. 267, no. 5). Date: c. A.D. 140–195.

3. Form 29, SG. Two fragments from the same vessel. Part of the decoration of the upper zone with a winding-scroll containing a badly squashed bud-like detail at the end of a tendril and a small rosette within another. The squashed figure-type in the left concavity is Rabbit to right (O.2048), used by several SG potters. The pointed leaves below the rabbit are partial impressions of a decorative detail and as such do not help in the definite attribution to the style of an individual potter; however, the style of the decoration is clearly Flavian.

4. Form 37, CG. A small fragment from a vessel very likely in the style of CINNAMVS. To left of a dividing bead-row border and faintly impressed, his cordate bud (*CGP*, fig. 47, p. 267, no. 8) and below it a small Caryatid forming the right-hand column of an arcade, as on a signed sherd from Lezoux (*CGP*, pl. 161/47); this figure-type is badly squashed and this may account for its looking rather smaller than D.656 = O.1199. Below the arcade, remnants of CINNAMVS's twist (*CGP*, fig. 47, p. 267, no. 4) and affronted dolphins over a basket (*CGP*, fig. 47, p. 267, no. 18). Date: c. A.D. 140–195.

Also (not illustrated), a sherd of Form 37, EG, with a wide rim-band and a tiny remnant of the ovolo; another Form 37, CG, with part of a Nude Man (D.359 = O.644); a Form 30 sherd, of CG origin, with part of Nude Man (D.398 = O.689).

On the basis of this samian assemblage, it is clear that this well remained open throughout the second century A.D.