

TWO PIT GROUPS IN THE CITY OF LONDON

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As part of the programme of publishing pre-1974 archaeological excavations in the City of London, two small pit groups excavated by Ivor Noël Hume and myself on different building sites in 1956, are published here (Fig. 2). As both pits were discovered during building operations no detailed record could be made of the construction, form and stratigraphical associations of the pits.

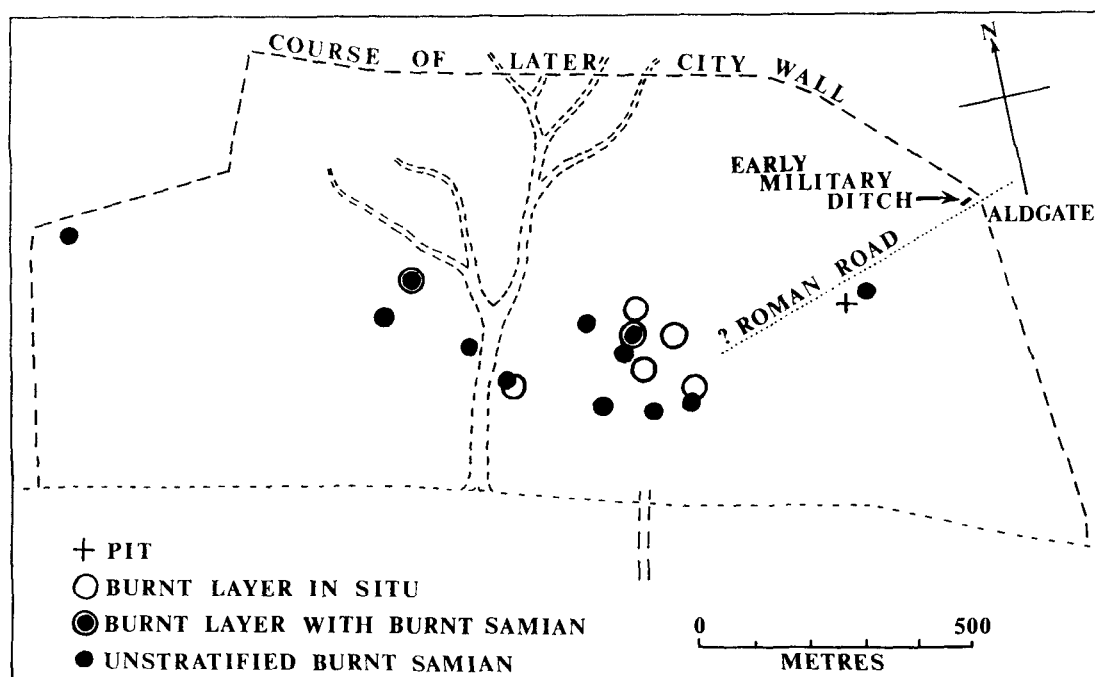


Fig. 1.—Distribution of mid-first century pottery and burnt deposits in London

SITE 1: 28-35 MINORIES

A brick-lined rubbish pit or cess-pit was investigated by I. Noël Hume on this site, and unfortunately, its location on the site was not recorded. The pit produced sherds dateable to the period 1725-50, and the Museum reference to the group is ER.371.

1. Green glass wine bottle neck, with a blown glass top which has not been cut off.
2. Two white pipe clay wig curlers, each stamped WB at the ends. A total of seven wig curlers was found in the pit all similarly stamped. For similar curlers with WB stamps see Hume (1969), pp. 321-23.
3. White saltglazed plate rim, undecorated and therefore unlikely to be later than the mid-eighteenth century (Hume (1969), p. 117).
4. Rim of lead-glazed slipware dish. Hard pale pink ware, with a buff slip on which are applied lines of iron oxide.
5. Cup of Chinese porcelain, white ware and glaze and a blue decoration.

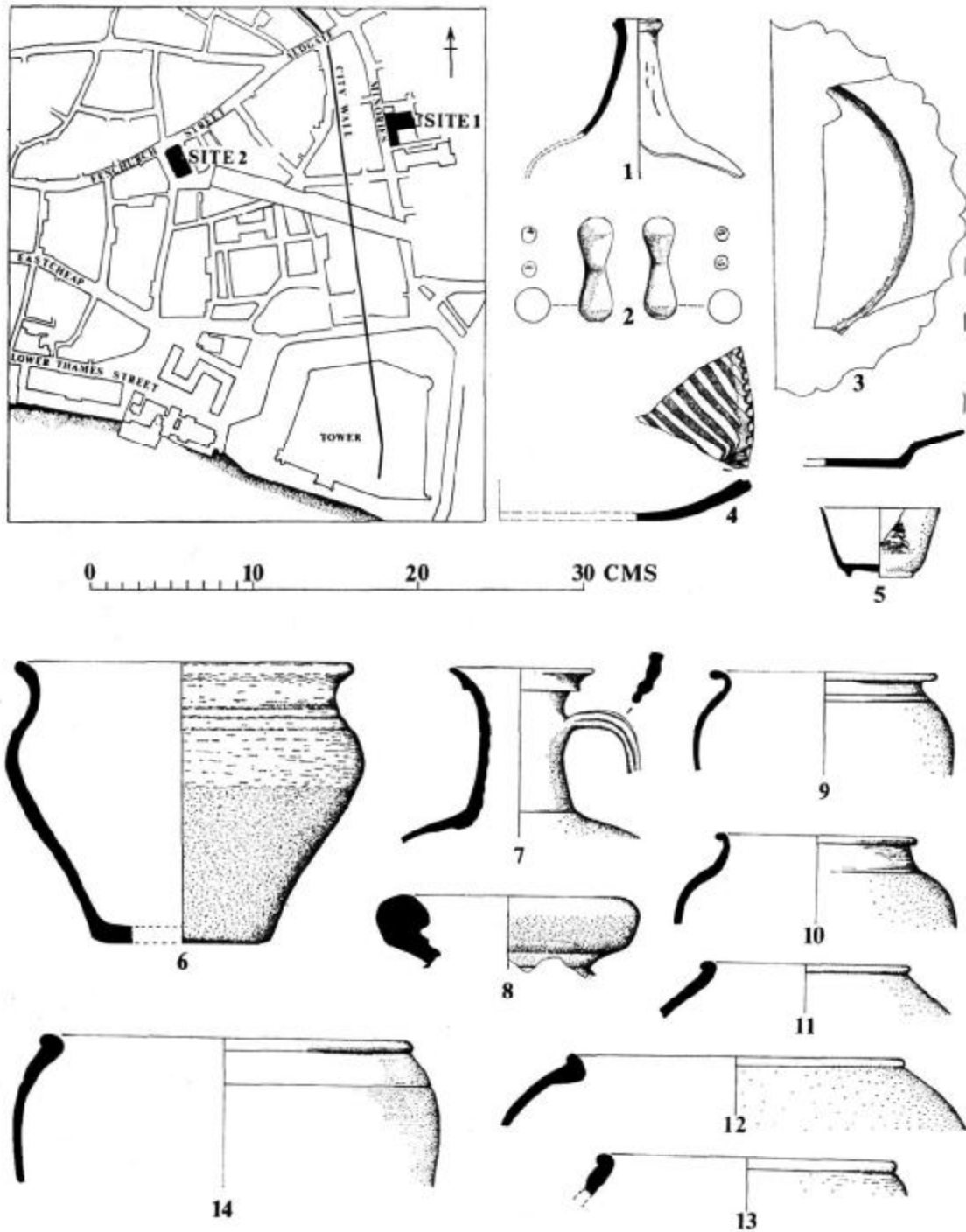


Fig. 2.—Finds from 28–35 Minories (Site 1), and from 56–59 Fenchurch Street (Site 2)

SITE 2: 56-59 FENCHURCH STREET

A rubbish pit of Claudian-Neronian date was found dug into the natural subsoil on the east side of the site (marked with a + on the plan in Fig. 1), and included the following objects which are recorded under the Museum excavation reference ER.372.

6. Belgic ware jar with an outcurved rim, and a corrugated shoulder, the upper part of the body only being smoothed. This is of a soft pale grey coarseware, soapy to touch (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull (1947), Pl. LXXVIII, type 229c, which is dated to the first half of the first century).
7. Flagon neck, of a hard pale pink coarse ware, with a strap handle. This is a well-known type of the first century which is frequently found in Claudian and Neronian deposits (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull (1947), Pl. LX, LXI, type 140, dated to before *c.* A.D. 65; *Richborough IV*, Pl. LXXXV, No. 368, dated to the Claudian period; Chapman (1973), Fig. 8, No. 25, dated Neronian).
8. Amphora neck with an internally undercut lip; of a sandy buff ware (*cf.* Cunliffe (1971), Fig. 99, No. 145, which is common at Fishbourne during the earliest Roman phase).
9. Necked jar with a cordon at the junction of the neck and the shoulder. A fine grey sandy coarse ware. This is a characteristic first-century type which is difficult to parallel exactly (see Cunliffe (1971), Fig. 103, type 180).
10. Jar with an outcurved rim, of a hard grey sandy coarse ware. The type is typical of the first century A.D. (see Cunliffe (1971), Fig. 101, type 161).
11. Rim of jar, of a hard pale grey coarse ware. Smooth outer surface, and a slightly sandy inner surface.
12. Bead rim jar, of soft grey Belgic coarse ware (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull (1947), Fig. 56, No. 3, for a bead rim jar of similar form, dated before A.D. 43; Chapman (1973), Fig. 8, No. 19, dated Neronian; the type is also very common at Fishbourne during the pre-Flavian period, Cunliffe (1971), Fig. 102, type 166).
13. Rim of jar of soft flakey black coarse ware with a grey core. The outer surface has been burnished (*cf.* Hawkes and Hull (1947), Pl. LXXXIII, type 225B, dated to pre-A.D. 65 in the first century A.D.; *Richborough III*, Pl. XXXV, No. 246, dated Nero-Vespasian).
14. Bead rim jar of hard grey-buff coloured coarse ware (*cf.* Chapman (1973), Fig. 8, No. 8, dated Nero-Vespasian).

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PIT IN FENCHURCH STREET

By adding the position of this pit to a distribution map of find spots of mid-first century burnt layers and burnt Samian ware in London (Fig. 1), it is clear that the pit was situated to the east of the main settlement area of the embryo city, and close to a site where burnt Samian of the same period has been recovered (see G. C. Dunning, "Two Fires of Roman London", *Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. XXV (1945), 48-52; also R. Merrifield, *The Roman City of London*, Benn (1965), 90). This suggests that there may have been some ribbon development along the early Roman road which presumably linked *Londinium* and *Camulodunum*, the latter initially being the political centre of the new province. The Roman road itself has not been discovered within the course of the city defences, but its existence at an early date is also possibly indicated by an early Roman ditch of military type found at Aldgate, though Chapman suggests that it lay further south (H. Chapman, "Excavations at Aldgate, 1972", *Trans. London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, Vol. 24 (1973), 5-7, 13).

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