CHAPTER 2

THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1966 AND 1967 AND THEIR POST-EXCAVATION HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Before describing in detail what was found during the excavations, it is necessary to consider their nature and the subsequent vicissitudes that the archive has been through, as this has considerable bearing on the weight of interpretation that the excavation evidence can bear.

Two things must always be kept in mind when considering the Brougham cemetery. The first is that the excavation was carried out a third of a century prior to the publication of this report. Even in the leisured research-driven excavations of that time, the intellectual and technical climate in which they were carried out was very different from that which is now normal. In the past decades we have built on experience, so that excavation techniques have been refined and improved. Even if the excavators of 1967 had had the time and resources, there would still have been categories of evidence they would not have recovered. Plant remains are an obvious example. It is clear that many items were put on the pyres that burnt the dead at Brougham. It is reasonable to suspect that these may have included fruits and nuts such as those found in a *bustum* at Dover Street, London (Giorgi 2000). Such evidence, however, is only recovered when flotation is routinely practised, but that has only become common in the past two decades or so. A standard textbook on environmental archaeology published in 1978, for example, describes it as a new technique that has 'become increasingly popular in recent years' (Evans 1978, 23).

Equally the way we think about sites has changed immeasurably. This is increasingly the case with the archaeology of Roman cemeteries which is experiencing something of a revolution at present. Influenced by the currents of post-processual thought and aided by improved excavation techniques, there is a different appreciation of the information they can provide than there was at the time of the excavation. Something of the difference can be seen by comparing the papers on a conference on burial in 1974 (Reece 1977) with those of one held in 1997 (Pearce *et al.* 2000). In the former there is a concentration on information about those aspects of ethnicity and religion which graves can provide, in the latter much more concentration on the funeral rites themselves with the burial being only one part of the process. This has important consequences for excavation technique as it is likely that it will lead to the more ready recognition of ephemeral traces of such rites which, as will be seen, were probably not looked for in the 1960s.

The second important fact about these excavations is that they were the outcome of a type of rescue archaeology that few under the age of 40 now have any experience of. They can be put in perspective by comparing them with the excavations of a cemetery found outside the fort and *vicus* at Low Borrowbridge, Cumbria. There, in 1991, the removal of topsoil prior to the construction of a pipeline revealed cremation burials. Construction then stopped for seven weeks while an area 20m by 30m was dug (Lambert 1996, 87). The authors of the report on this reasonably describe it as rescue archaeology because it was unplanned for. At Brougham,

by contrast, it was suspected in advance that the new road would destroy Roman burials but there was no question of delaying the road building while they were excavated. The archaeologists, as will be described below, were faced with the prospect of dealing with an area approximately 70m by 200m at the same time as the engineering work was going on. Even when they negotiated access to part of the site where a more systematic approach could be taken, they were dealing with an area approximately 17m by 80m that had to be excavated in three weeks. In such circumstances it is not surprising that the records for some burials and features are limited, what is astonishing and praiseworthy is the wealth of information that was saved.

This report is also the product of another type of rescue archaeology, this time in the post-excavation process. It has been produced from the paper record and the artefacts and ecofacts that survive. The majority of the authors had no direct contact with or memories of the excavations, and so no way of checking that what survives is an accurate reflection of the original archive. Only in the case of the samian report has there been any continuity of personnel from the first attempt at post-excavation work. In this case it is known that some items have disappeared over the years (see p. 333). Some of the specialists first started to work on the material in the 1980s, others started only in 2000. Paradoxically in some areas, the delay of a third of a century has had great benefits, most notably in the study of the cremated human and animal bone. Here recent advances in techniques of identification have enabled much information to be gained from the Brougham archive which would not have been the case had the site been published shortly after it was excavated. Equally, the refinements in the dating of third-century pottery have meant that it is possible to advance a much more precise phasing scheme than would have been possible earlier.

THE EXCAVATIONS

In 1966 it was recognised that the proposed straightening of the A66 to the east of Brougham would be likely to cut through one of the Roman cemeteries (centred on National Grid Reference NY 545290). The new course of the road would follow the line of the Roman road more closely, cutting across and levelling the low hill that lay to the east of the River Eamont beyond the *vicus*. There were antiquarian records of Roman tombstones being seen in the area (see p. 4), and in 1958 part of a monumental foundation, a tombstone fragment and an urned cremation burial had been recovered during the erection of an electricity pylon (see p. 28, and deposit **349**).

The course of the new road lay on land owned by Mr J. Slack of Brougham Castle Farm. He gave permission for excavations to be undertaken in advance of the development. These were directed by Dorothy Charlesworth on behalf of the then Ministry of Public Buildings and Works during August and September that year. Twelve trenches of varying sizes were excavated in the eastern part of the eventual site, one of which examined the area of the monument discovered in 1958. Forty-four deposits were given burial numbers. A burial which does not appear to have been given a number is known from the photographic and written archive (**350**) which suggests 45 deposits may have been investigated.

In May 1967 it was proposed to carry out a watching brief under the direction of Tony Pacitto following topsoil stripping and in advance of the road building. Unfortunately, the road building started earlier than had been anticipated and the archaeologists found themselves rescuing burial groups from under the wheels and tracks of earth-moving equipment. An insight into what they had to deal with can be gathered from the description of how the remains of what appears to have been a lead casket were recovered. This entered the Tullie House Museum in 1992 and the donor, Mr G. Nelson of Penrith, explained how he had rescued it after seeing it being broken by a mechanical digger when the spoil was dumped (Richardson 1998, 23). In these circumstances the aim had to be to salvage and keep together as many groups as possible, and it was not possible to excavate them carefully. Work was

concentrated along the central part of the new carriageway. Approximately 100 deposits were recorded as burials and 30 as features.

At the end of May it was agreed with the contractors that a more formal season of excavation with a larger team could start in July. In the intervening month Anthony Priestman was authorised to keep a watching brief on the continuing engineering works. As part of this he observed the cutting of a drainage ditch which was being excavated along the southern side of the new carriageway. This appears to have been started well to the east of the excavated area. From the Lightwater culvert (NGR NY 549290) to the brow of the hill, Mr Priestman encountered only one burial at a point approximately 225m to the east of the old wall line that crossed the eastern part of the site. In a letter to Mr Pacitto dated 27 June, he describes this burial as having been fragmentary and accompanied by scattered pots and two large nails. In the area cut by the drain trench nearer the river, he observed deposits he interpreted as hut floors but no traces of burials.

Away from the line of the drainage trench, he describes excavating seven burials in the main area of the cemetery. From one of these the gold earring (**G1**) was recovered. The letter refers to a site plan on which the location of the burials was marked but this does not survive in the archive. In the records of the second 1967 season, there are references to three burials which are described as 'Priestmans' (**60**, **327** and **328**), but only one is located on the site plan (**60**), to the north of the central strip that the May watching brief had concentrated on.

A three-week season of excavation, again directed by Mr Pacitto, commenced on 3 July. This concentrated on the northern margin of the site. There was more opportunity for controlled excavation but again the priority was given to the recovery of burial groups. During this season 168 deposits were recorded as burials and 14 as features. After the conclusion of the formal excavations Mr J.D. Dagg maintained a watching brief and recorded five more burials.

THE POST-EXCAVATION WORK

The post-excavation work on the site has had a chequered history. Miss Charlesworth started to prepare a report on the site in 1968 drawing on her records and those of Mr Pacitto and his team. Some progress was made including the production of a draft report on the samian pottery by Brian Hartley, Brenda Dickinson and Hedley Pengelly, but the site report remained unfinished at the time of Miss Charlesworth's death in 1981.

In 1984 the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission commissioned work on the archive under the auspices of the backlog programme. In contemporary parlance the aim was to assemble the archive, and then assess and update it with a view to eventual publication. This work was carried out under the supervision of Gill Andrews and Quita Mould, and latterly Andrew Fitzpatrick. The work continued intermittently until 1991. During this time work was commissioned on most of the small finds and on the pottery while the samian report was updated. Some work was done on the larger groups of cremated bone, but at the time it was felt that the smaller groups would not yield any useful information and these were frequently left unprocessed. Attempts were made to analyse the structural record but not all of the primary sources that are now known to exist were then available, and little progress could consequently be made.

In January 2000, English Heritage commissioned an assessment of the previous work (Cool 2000), and consequently commissioned Barbican Research Associates to complete the analysis and prepare a final report. New reports on the pottery, the cremated bone and the structural narrative were commissioned and all pre-existing reports were revised with the exception of that of Dr Jenkins for the pipeclay figurine as sadly he had died in the interim. This work began in March 2000 and was completed in February 2002.

All of the finds from Brougham were generously donated to the Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, by the landowner Mr J. Slack in 1970. The finds and the excavation archive are stored at the museum under the accession number 15-1971.

THE NATURE OF THE RECORDS

As the report of the excavations that follows is based entirely on the surviving archive, it is appropriate to review the strengths and weaknesses of the records, as these govern the questions it is appropriate to ask of the data.

The written records for the 1966 season are very poor. A small notebook survives with very brief descriptions of the deposits, planning calculations etc. This appears most likely to have been Miss Charlesworth's *aide memoire* rather than the formal site records. If such records did exist it has not been possible to locate them. Nor has it been possible to locate any drawn plans or sections of the burials, though the original site plan is extant. Twelve areas appear to have been opened and these are marked as Trenches 1 to 12 on the site plan (FIG. 3.1). There are photographs of 19 of the deposits in various stages of excavation.

For the May 1967 watching brief there are two notebooks with context descriptions. These tend on the whole to be brief reflecting the time pressure the excavators were under. A few detailed plans and sections exist as does an overall site plan. Given the circumstances of excavation it is felt unlikely that fuller records were ever made. The brief notes made on site are augmented by the information about the contents of the groups recorded in notebooks labelled 'cremation books' which appear to have been made in the site office. The finds were given alphabetic codes (BC/AA, BC/AB etc) and information about the location of the different elements is often given, most notably which vessels contained the cremated bones. Some but not all of the small finds were given numeric small finds numbers but no formal small finds register exists. Additional information about the location of the finds in the grave was also occasionally given on the bags they were stored in. Eighteen of the burials were photographed.

The record for the July 1967 excavation is the fullest. Two large notebooks were used on site to record the burials. One of these survives and there is a typescript transcript of the second which is now missing. In addition to the overall site plan, plans of the individual deposits, often accompanied by one or more sections were made on graph paper and pasted into the appropriate place in the notebooks. Fortunately all of these appear to have been removed from the notebooks prior to the loss of one of them, and so all of these original drawings are in the archive. These plans and sections are of variable quality but exist for approximately three-quarters of the recorded burials and features. The annotations made on them frequently augment the written descriptions in the site notebooks. There are also photographs of approximately one-third of the deposits. The cremation books and bags containing the finds continued to be used to record the groups in the same way as during the May watching brief. The extant notebook was clearly maintained by a single individual. The terminology and the drawing style in the notebook known from the transcript suggest it was maintained by a second, probably more archaeologically experienced, individual. There are occasional drawings in a third style that suggest a third individual also did a little recording.

The site plans for the 1967 excavations occasionally mark outlines to specific areas (see FIG. 3.1) but clearly much excavation took place outside of these. That for the second season presumably reflects the area initially agreed with the engineers. The significance of those marked for the first season is unknown.

There is a short report about the 1967 excavations by Mr Pacitto. This is hand-written and was probably prepared to help Miss Charlesworth when she started to work on preparing the final report. It contains some general observations about the excavations and includes some details which are not noted elsewhere in the records. This source will be referred to as (Pacitto unpublished) elsewhere in this work.

The only record of Mr Priestman's work is given in the letter he wrote to Mr Pacitto, but Mr Dagg produced a manuscript describing each of the five burials he excavated, and accompanied three of the descriptions with sketch plans and sections.

As will be apparent from the foregoing summary, the information available varies with the season when the deposit was excavated. On the whole, the later the season the better the record. It should be noted, however, that this is not invariable. The records for the deposits

dug towards the end of both 1967 seasons are understandably cursory as the excavators were put in the invidious position of saving as much as possible. Where the records are limited, this will be stated in the description of the deposit.

The archive contains no information about the excavation methodology used in 1966, and for the May 1967 season the excavators were involved in salvage recording and did not have the luxury of adopting one. More, however, is known about how the deposits were excavated during the July season. The surface being worked on had already been stripped of topsoil in advance of the road building. The surface was cleaned and features showed as either brownish or black patches in the red stony natural. When a feature was identified, it was often dug as a square box with the deposit being taken down in a number of artificial levels. The drawn sections must often, therefore, have been reconstructed from the changing plan outline. This method of excavation means that even when a good photographic record was kept, it is often not possible to be sure of the relationship between various elements because any traces of the cuts, etc, have been removed. This is especially a problem for some vessels which have been recorded separately, but which seem highly probable to have formed part of the same burial complex (e.g. **135–8**).

There are problems with establishing the depths of the deposits since if there was a standard datum level this is nowhere stated in the archive. One of the people doing the recording in the second 1967 season regularly indicates a schematic ground surface. Where present this has been retained in the published drawings.

Differences in the fill of the features were often commented on in the descriptions, but it was very rare for these different layers to be formally differentiated into separately numbered layers and for the finds from them to be kept separate. The term 'cremation debris' frequently occurs. In some cases the annotations on the plans make it clear that this refers to calcined bone and/or charcoal and/or ash. Charcoal is not always explicitly stated to be present. In the case of **198** for example the fill was stated to be jet black but none of the records note the presence of charcoal. This burial was half-sectioned and the southern half lifted entire and encased in wax. When it was excavated under controlled conditions (see p. 305) it was found that approximately half the weight consisted of charcoal. It seems very likely, therefore, that any fill described as black will have been charcoal-rich. The status of fills described as dark brown is equivocal. One of the notebooks regularly refers to fills being of 'light brown disturbed subsoil'. The other does not use this term but regularly refers to dark-brown fills. It seems likely therefore that the differentiation between light and dark-brown fills depends primarily on the visual perception of the individual recorder, rather than indicating the absence or presence of charcoal in the fill.

The records occasionally refer to a sample of bone being taken, and it seems very likely that the focus of collection was on recognisable finds of pottery, glass, copper alloy, iron, worked bone etc. Many small fragments of pyre goods emerged during the recent processing of the cremated bone, but it is noticeable that small fragments had been separately collected during excavation. It seems probable, therefore, that the extant archive provides a good reflection of the artefactual material that was in the deposits, but a more selective one of the ecofactual material such as cremated bone, charcoal etc. As is to be expected given the date of the excavations and the time pressure the archaeologists were under, there is no mention of any sieving programme having been carried out. It is interesting to note, however, that Mr Priestman describes how he and his wife put the contents of the grave in which the gold earring was found through a riddle to see if there were any other finds. This may hint that some dry sieving was carried out and explain the recovery of some of the smaller finds.

Features other than burials were recognised and recorded, but generally the excavation of these was abandoned once it was realised that it was not a burial. The implication of this is that if there had been large features associated with the cremation process, it could be expected that they would have been recorded but not excavated due to the ever pressing shortage of time. The decision whether to call a deposit a burial or a feature does not always seem to have

been consistent and a feature number was not infrequently assigned to interesting stones or unstratified finds.

Towards the end of the July season the area excavated was stripped by machine again to check if any burials had been missed. The extent of this stripping is not known but the apparent discovery of **113**, **142**, **157**, **181**, **196** and **298** by this process suggests it was concentrated along the northern part of the site and to the east. It is clear, however, that it did not reveal all of the burials in the checked area as in the case of **187**, dug by Mr Dagg after the excavation had finished, he explicitly notes that the vessels had been damaged by the machine used by the Ministry of Works.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE RECORDS

As part of the 2000 to 2002 programme of post-excavation work, all of the extant records for the cemetery and the new information that became available as work progressed were stored in a series of linked databases. The opportunity was taken to provide all the elements with unique identifying numbers. In the original records both the 1966 and 1967 seasons of work numbered the burials from 1, and in the case of the 1966 records initially made a distinction between those burials in cists and those in pits (Cist 1, Cremation 1 etc). All the burials and features were therefore given a new number, which reflects their spatial position with the numbering running broadly from west to east across the site. In the initial re-numbering the original burial numbers which had been issued, but for which there were either no records or which had obviously been discarded by the excavator, were ignored. As analysis progressed it became apparent that some other features and burials were also spurious. These have not been discussed here, but the original re-numbering has been retained. There will, therefore, be the occasional gap in the numeric sequence. In the discussion that follows, the original numbering has been retained for such features as cobble spreads, ditches etc. These are prefixed with F (**F24**, **F40** etc). The new deposit numbers are indicated in bold. The original number is shown where appropriate in the form 1966/18 and 1967/199.

In the original records none of the 1966 deposits had any form of grid reference and the occurrence of such references in the 1967 records was intermittent. During the final campaign of post-excavation work, therefore, each deposit was given a grid reference. The grid was derived from the original plans but was a construct of the post-excavation work. This grid has been used to generate the schematic distribution plans used to illustrate various points throughout this work (see for example FIG. 3.4). In these the symbols are all of a uniform shape and size, and no attempt has been made to reproduce the actual sizes and shapes of the deposits. It is felt that this can be justified on both the practical grounds that in some cases the precise size and shape of the feature is unknown, and on the pragmatic grounds that it has allowed the plans to be easily generated electronically.

A recurring feature in the descriptions of the burials from all the phases of work at Brougham was that the excavators believed that many of them had been robbed. In her preliminary report on the 1966 excavations, Miss Charlesworth noted that 'many' must have been robbed. In his notes describing the May 1967 salvage recording Mr Pacitto stated that:

> 'a high percentage had been robbed in antiquity. In every case where robbing had taken place and the roadworks had not destroyed the evidence, it was obvious that the robbers had made a very neat little hole into the burial pit itself.'

Mr Priestman thought that the seven graves he had excavated as part of the watching brief had probably been robbed, and robbing was regularly recorded during the July 1967 season as well.

In all, approximately 40% of the records recorded robbing. Though caution must always be exercised when questioning the conclusions of competent excavators, this did appear to be a remarkably high proportion of the burials. It was also difficult to see what would have been

of sufficient value in the burials to warrant this intrusion. The principal grave goods were pottery vessels and the most valuable items appear not to have been placed entire in the grave, but burnt on the pyre with the body. It is of course possible that they could have been robbed at some later date when pottery vessels were no longer easily available and the cemetery could have been viewed as a good source of vessels. Going (1993, 49) has suggested the 'mining' of cremation cemeteries in this way to explain the centuries-old vessels being placed in fourth-century inhumations at Colchester. A similar phenomenon has been observed in the East London cemetery (Barber and Bowsher 2000, 122). This seemed less likely at Brougham where the fuller records often describe pottery as being carelessly thrown back into the fill. It is also noticeable that in two cases (**106** and **326**) gold trinkets had been left behind in the 'robbed' burial which seemed curious if the motives of the robbers were economic. It is possible of course that the motive had nothing to do with greed, but that the observed phenomenon was part of the funerary ritual and material was being removed for a secondary rite (see for example Parker-Pearson 1999, 50). This, though, would seem to be most unusual within the context of Roman Britain.

Clearly the phenomenon of the robbing needed to be explored at an early stage in the analysis of the cemetery. Given the paucity of the records in many cases it was often difficult to assess the validity of the judgement. In the cases of **112**, **115** and **116**, there was clear evidence in the plans and sections that a secondary pit had been dug into the grave, and the evidence was consistent with the interpretation of removing something from the grave. These are presumably the 'neat little hole(s)' mentioned by Mr Pacitto. A similar phenomenon also seemed indicated for **53**. In the other graves where robbing was suggested and where the drawn record was sufficient to explore the interpretation further, there were no obvious secondary pits, and the fills showed no obvious secondary disturbance. Instead, the identification as a robbed grave often appeared to have been made when no complete or approximately complete vessels had been identified, and the fill consisted of fragmentary artefacts and confused deposits of charcoal, bone etc.

One possibility that presented itself as an explanation was that some of these robbed burials had never been burials in the formal sense of the deliberate deposition of the remains of the deceased in an urn with accompanying grave goods. There has come to be an increasing realisation that this is not the only type of funerary related deposit that can be recognised within cremation cemeteries. There has always been a tradition of looking for the *ustrina* or pyre site itself, but within Britain the features where the redeposited pyre debris was placed has until recently received less attention (see for example McKinley 2000a, 41–2).

It is worth considering what the excavators might have been expecting of a cremation cemetery in 1966 and 1967. Deposits of pyre debris had been recognised in the early 1950s when the Trentholme Drive cemetery in York was excavated but this information was not published until 1968 (Wenham 1968, 26–7). Todd (1977, 39), writing a decade later, noted 'British excavators ... are prone to think of cremations as very monotonous in their character and their arrangement of their goods', before going on to point out that German archaeologists recognised much variety depending on how pyre debris had been incorporated. Judged by Philpott's survey which collected material published up to 1989, excavators working in Romano-British cremation cemeteries continued to look in the main for contained cremations and not for the pyre debris, as he noted that pyre sweepings were not usually incorporated in the grave fill (Philpott 1991, 8). This is a curious observation when judged against cremation ritual in the other north-west provinces, and one which might reflect recording and publishing techniques rather than reality (Bridger 1993, 349).

Against this background, it is reasonable to think that the excavators were probably expecting to find cremation burials contained either in urns or some other form of container, and often this is what was found (see for example **36** and **264**, FIGS 2.1, 2.2). Given that there are undoubtedly a few robbed or emptied burials, it is understandable how it would have been tempting to look on deposits of pyre debris and pyre goods as the jumbled remains of robbing.

FIG. 2.1 Urned cremation burial **264**.

To explore whether these 'robbed' graves could indeed have been redeposited pyre debris, it was necessary to devise an analysis that the material in the Brougham archive was capable of answering. This concentrated on the material from the second 1967 season because the fullest records exist for these burials.

The predominant component in redeposited pyre debris is fuel ash including charcoal. As already discussed, however, there is very little consistency over the recording of these elements. It was occasionally thought appropriate to record the presence of ash, but only generally where nothing else was found in the fill of the pit (see for example **8**, **64** and **66**). While accepting that fuel ash and charcoal are the principal components of redeposited pyre debris, it became obvious that within the context of the Brougham cemetery, the records were insufficient for these to be used to characterise such deposits.

The records for the pyre goods, which are another element of redeposited pyre debris, are good. The presence of melted glass, decorated burnt bone etc, was often mentioned in the site record. It was almost invariably recorded where present in the cremation books, and survived physically in the archive to be inspected. Three main types of such pyre goods were selected for analysis. These were melted fragments of glass vessels, burnt bone veneers, and copper-alloy fragments. The last-mentioned often showed signs of melting and fragmentation that were consistent with them having been on the pyre. Complete unburnt copper-alloy items that appeared to have been placed in the grave as deliberate grave goods were excluded from consideration. It seemed reasonable to assume that if the 'robbed' graves had indeed been robbed there would be no significant difference between the presence or absence of the pyre goods in the robbed and in the undisturbed burials. These items are not something that any robber looking for economic gain would feel worth removing.

From an inspection of the written and drawn records, together with a consideration of the pottery and human bone evidence, it was possible to characterise 114 of the burials from the second 1967 season as belonging to one of six broad categories. The category described as redeposited pyre goods includes both those deposits described by the excavators as ash or charcoal pits and as robbed burials. Some burials from this season's work had to be excluded from consideration as either the records were insufficient or the material in the archive did not agree with what was recorded in the written record. The categories and number of cases both with and without pyre goods are shown in TABLE 2.1.

Clearly the pattern of the occurrence of the pyre goods did not support the idea that they are as likely to occur in the undisturbed burials as in the 'robbed' ones. In the four graves where the interpretation of robbing or emptying can be sustained from the drawn evidence, only one has any pyre goods. They occur proportionately less often in the undisturbed burials than they do in what appears to be redeposited pyre debris. This pattern can be demonstrated formally by carrying out a Chi-squared test on the top two rows of the table. The result is

FIG. 2.2 Urned cremation burial **36** under excavation.

significant at less than the 1% level clearly showing a strong association between the deposit type and the presence or absence of the pyre goods. The urned burials where the records do not indicate substantial quantities of pyre debris in the fill, usually indicated by the mention of charcoal, tend not to have pyre goods. The 'robbed' graves by contrast do, frequently in relatively large quantities. As it is very difficult to imagine any circumstances where only burials which contained these scraps of pyre debris were generally robbed, it seems reasonable to reject the interpretation of widespread robbing, and to assume that what we are dealing with, in the main, is indeed redeposited pyre debris. In what follows, therefore, the deposits which are described as robbed in the records but which contain pyre goods will be considered to be redeposited pyre debris.

TABLE 2.1: PRESENCE AND ABSENCE OF PYRE GOODS (GLASS VESSELS, WORKED BONE AND COPPER ALLOY) IN DEPOSITS FOUND DURING THE SECOND 1967 SEASON

Deposit type	With pyre goods	Without pyre goods	Total
Redeposited pyre debris	20	10	30
Urned burials	20	37	57
Urned burials with redeposited pyre debris in the fill	9	4	13
Deliberately emptied graves	1	3	4
Uncontained burials	2	2	4
Groups of pots with little or no human bone	–	6	6
Total	52	62	114

A NOTE ON THE PHASING

Very few of the burials cut each other and/or any other feature. In the absence of any appreciable vertical stratigraphy the phasing of the site has to depend on the independent dating of the contents of the burials. For the urned burials, both with and without pyre debris in the fill and for some of the unurned burials this is provided by the pottery. Other categories of finds such as the glass vessels can be used in support of the proposed dates but they are not sufficiently closely dated independently to refine the dating further. The reliance on the pottery to provide the phasing has the inevitable consequence of leaving the majority of the deposits in some categories unphased, most notably the small group of definitely emptied or robbed graves and the deposits of redeposited pyre debris. It was hoped that the bone veneers might have aided the phasing of these. A large number of different patterns were recorded, but unfortunately they show few chronological trends, either for the individual patterns or for the combinations found in certain deposits.

The full consideration of the ceramic dating evidence is discussed on p. 334. Here it is sufficient to note that the key tool has been the Black Burnished 1 (BB1) jars (see FIG. 2.3). A minimum of approximately 300 of these could be recognised (see TABLE 8.2), all but one decorated with obtuse lattice. Bidwell (1985, 175) has demonstrated that obtuse lattice decorated vessels emerged before *c*. A.D. 225 and a date *c*. A.D. 200/220 is favoured here. Two further basic criteria may be used to date the vessels more closely. A groove above the obtuse lattice zone appears first in *c*. A.D. 240 (Bidwell 1985, 175), and vessels where the rim is of greater diameter than the maximum girth appear *c*. A.D. 270 (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 95). Some burials in the cemetery also have *termini post quem* of *c.* A.D. 280/285 as they contain Crambeck greywares which first appear at about that time.

Using this evidence three phases can be suggested for the principal period of use for the cemetery. Phase 1 runs from *c*. A.D 200/220 to 240, Phase 2 from *c*. A.D. 240 to 270, and Phase 3 from *c.* A.D. 270 to 300/310. The deposits with Crambeck greywares which allow a slight refinement of the Phase 3 dates to A.D. 280/285 to 300/310 have been designated Phase 3b. The phasing of individual deposits is conservative. They are placed in the earliest appropriate phase but could, of course, be later.

This phasing relates to the cremation cemetery, but the area excavated also contains seven long cists which are likely to have contained inhumation burials, though in only one case (**67**) were any traces of human bone recovered as the soil conditions are not conducive to the preservation of unburnt bone. The only stratigraphic relationships these cists have is with each other, as **24** is cut by **26**. Three of them were made from fragments of Roman tombstones which indicates a Roman or later date. It was far from unknown for tombstones to be reused in the Roman period for a variety of purposes, despite the anxious pleas of those who set them up (Toynbee 1971, 76). At Chester, for example, the lower courses of the north wall of

FIG. 2.3 Black-burnished ware (BB1) jars. Right **264.4** with groove above lattice and rim not exceeding the maximum girth – the form typical of Phase 2. Left **219.4** with groove above lattice and rim exceeding the maximum girth – the form typical of Phase 3. (Crown Copyright).

the fortress contained a considerable number of tombstones pillaged from the neighbouring cemeteries when it was rebuilt at the end of the third century or later (Wright and Richmond 1955, 4). There is, therefore, no fundamental obstacle to the long cists being contemporary with the third-century cremation cemetery. They are unlikely to have been earlier as some have fragments of pottery contemporary with the cremation cemetery associated with them. The contexts of these suggest, however, that they are likely to be residual rather than indicative of primary deposition. The long cists have therefore been assigned to Phase 4 which, while it *may* have been contemporary with the cremation cemetery, *probably* postdates it. The basis for this is discussed further on p. 38.