



INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title A45 Between Higham Towers + Stanwick	Details Archaeological Investigations
Road Number A45	Date 1994-95
Contractor	
County Northamptonshire	
OS Reference SP97	
Single sided ✓ Double sided A3 1 Colour 0	

✓

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ALONG THE LINE OF THE A45 BETWEEN
HIGHAM FERRERS AND STANWICK, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 1994-5

SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological excavation, related geophysical survey and subsequent development-observation was undertaken in connection with modern carriageway-widening of the A45 road as it passes between the parishes of Higham Ferrers and Raunds, Northants. The work was carried out on behalf of the Northamptonshire County Council Planning and Transportation Department between October 1994 and August 1995. Isolated features were identified along the route but a Roman settlement centred upon NGR SP 9685 7100 forms the only significant archaeological remains. Three stone buildings set within walled yards and other boundaries, together with another four structures found by previous work outside the road corridor, denote occupation from the second to fourth centuries AD. In the absence of wider investigation it is uncertain if the remains are those of a substantial farm or another type of settlement. These discoveries further demonstrate the considerable density of Roman settlement in the Nene Valley, which has been identified previously from intensive work undertaken by the Raunds Area Project where substantial excavation has taken place on the neighbouring sites of Stanwick and Redlands Farm (Neal 1989; Keevill 1991).

INTRODUCTION

This report describes archaeological investigations carried out for the Northamptonshire County Council on land to the north of the A45 road, between the existing roundabouts at Skew Bridge, Higham Ferrers and just beyond West Street, Stanwick. The work was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between October 1994 and August 1995 in connection with the widening of the road by the County Planning and Transportation Department. It included pre-emptive archaeological excavation in advance of road construction, as well as watching brief observation and recording during contractor's earthmoving.

The work was conducted to meet the requirements of an Archaeological Recording Action Brief issued by the county heritage branch on 20 April 1994. An

assessment of the effectiveness of the archaeological mitigation strategy is the subject of a separate report.

METHODOLOGY

Previous archaeological work in the area had identified four areas of potential Iron Age and Roman occupation which might be affected by widening the existing highway (OAU 1989; Parry forthcoming). Each was subsequently excavated ahead of new carriageway construction along the line of the proposed roadside drainage ditch (Fig 1). All of the associated trenches were excavated by a JCB 3X mechanical excavator using a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket.

Geophysical surveys were undertaken in Middle Sands field (OS land parcel 8400) towards the northern end of the highway improvement. Magnetometer survey was carried out using a Geoscan FM36 Fluxgate Gradiometer with an ST1 Sample trigger in the 0.1 nT range and resistivity survey by RM15 Resistance Meter with a twin electrode configuration in a mobile probe spacing of 0.5m. A single grid was used for both types of prospection. Within the grid a series of parallel transects was walked in a south-north direction, each 1m apart with individual readings logged at 1m intervals. The sensor alignment or balance of the Fluxgate Gradiometer was checked upon the completion of survey within each grid square. All data were downloaded in the field into a Toshiba lap-top computer and stored on 3.5" diskettes. The data were analysed using the computer program Geoplot v. 2.01. Low readings are represented as white areas in the resultant plots, which show the high readings as black (Fig 3).

The road corridor was scanned by metal detecting in advance of construction works. Small numbers of Roman coins were found mostly in the areas of settlement previously identified. No new areas of ancient activity were located.

A daily watching brief was maintained during the critical phases of road construction when the topsoil was removed along the road corridor. Significant archaeological features were identified in two locations with the

individual features planned and sampled to provide evidence for date and previous function.

The following list of observations is arranged in order running northward along the road line from Higham Ferrers. It combines details of the features identified by the pre-emptive excavation with those recorded during the subsequent watching brief.

SITES WITHIN THE ROAD CORRIDOR

- 1 The road corridor between Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers and the Chowns Mill (A6) roundabout was examined using metal detectors by members of the Nene Valley Historical Detecting Group. No ancient finds were recovered. Subsequent archaeological watching brief during earthmoving for road construction identified two undated gullies at NGR SP 9574 6982. Otherwise there were no features to the south of the roundabout.
- 2 Trench 1 (80m x 1.5m) centred at NGR SP 9622 7032 Natural sand and gravels were located c 1m below the present ground surface and dipped from 36.64m OD at the south-west to 36.17m OD at the north-east. A narrow gully, together with the possible site of a former tree-bole and other disturbances caused by vegetation, were the only intrusive features. Eight sherds of Roman pottery were present in topsoil; the diagnostic pieces date from the first to second centuries AD.
- 3 Trench 2 (40m x 1.5m) centred at NGR SP 9629 7039 The natural subsoil of sand and gravel ranged in height between 36.38m OD and 36.58m OD beneath overburden c 1m thick. No archaeological features were present. Forty unstratified sherds of Roman pottery, from at least 16 separate vessels, range in date from the late first to fourth centuries AD.
- 4 An undated area of limestone metalling (4), measuring 5m x 2m, was observed during watching brief at NGR SP 9631 7041.

- 5 Two ditches were identified at NGR SP 9635 7042. The larger ditch (2), between 1.5m and 1.8m wide, was exposed for a length of 28m along a north-east to south-west alignment. It appears to respect the other ditch (1) which ran perpendicular to its south-west end and was traced for 5m across the width of the road corridor; it was 1.05m wide. Apart from a small gully (5) on the northern edge of the large ditch no other features were found.

The larger ditch produced a substantial quantity of Roman pottery spanning the period from the first to late third or fourth centuries AD. Metal detecting at this location produced a bronze sestertius of Marcus Aurelius dateable to AD 171.

- 6 A pitched limestone surface, measuring 2.2m x 0.8m, was found during watching brief at NGR SP 9640 7048. Five sherds of early Roman pottery were present on its surface.

- 7 Trench 3 (175m x 1.5m) centred at NGR SP 9666 7078 The natural subsoil of clay and gravel sloped south-west from 34.78m OD to 34.02m OD and lay beneath between 0.85 - 1.10m of overburden. The south-western half of the trench contained no archaeological remains other than two modern field drains and an undated posthole.

The rest of the trench contained a substantial limestone trackway which the subsequent earthmoving for road construction exposed to its full width of 2.5m over a length of 50m. The track was aligned ENE-WSW and had been resurfaced on two occasions. At the southern extent of exposure it overlay a stone culvert containing modern pottery.

To the south-west a series of stone and pebble patches may be all the sole vestiges of other surfaces degraded by modern ploughing. A separate series of three parallel ditches denotes the remains of former field boundaries as shown in Ordnance Survey 6 inch maps 33 SW (1885) and 40 NW (1888).

Sixteen sherds of pottery were found during surface cleaning and from the spoil heaps. The few diagnostic pieces are dated to the first to early second century AD.

- 8 Three isolated patches of former limestone surfaces were recorded between NGR SP 9678 7092 and SP 9682 7096. They ranged in size from 4.5m x 2m to 5.5m x 4.2m. All are undated.

- 9 MIDDLE SANDS ROMAN SITE, NGR SP 9685 7100

Previous work

A concentration of Roman pottery, together with limestone scatters, was identified in 1988 by fieldwalking reconnaissance undertaken as part of the Raunds Area Survey (Parry forthcoming). The distribution of finds suggests the presence of a Roman small settlement of c 1ha beside the modern A45 road (Fig 2).

An archaeological evaluation of the site, comprising geophysical prospection and trial excavation, was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in 1989 in connection with the proposed extension of the nearby gravel quarry (OAU 1989). The magnetometer survey appeared to reveal enclosures defined by ditches, together with walls, pits and possible hearths or furnaces. Three excavation trenches dug within the pottery concentration revealed the possible foundations of four stone buildings, including two which might be roundhouses. A series of ditches was also present together with a human burial (OAU 1989, 2-3).

Roman pottery from fieldwalking mostly comprised middle and late pieces, perhaps implying a second century AD foundation. A similar date-range of the second to fourth centuries can be suggested for the material from the evaluation (OAU 1989, Appendix 3, note 9).

Work associated with the recent road widening

The widening of the A45 road provided a further opportunity to investigate the site. However, since the new carriageway was to be raised on a low embankment, the only requirement for pre-emptive archaeological work was the excavation of the associated roadside ditch for a length of 200m (Trench 4). The limited information gathered from this narrow trench was supplemented by further geophysical survey. Subsequently, observation during the removal of topsoil along the road corridor led to the identification of the plan of stone buildings and metalled surfaces which can be related to the features excavated in Trench 4.

Geophysical survey by P Masters

A rectangular area 200m x 40m was surveyed by magnetometer up to the edge of Trench 4. A series of curvilinear and isolated anomalies can be seen in the resultant dot-density plot (Fig 3). Two substantial, isolated, high thermo-remnant magnetic anomalies (A and B) may denote hearths, kilns or ovens while weaker small anomalies could indicate pits. A series of linear anomalies may represent ditches or gullies but any pattern is confused by land drains which criss-cross the area (for example, C), and by east-west furrows associated with the pre-enclosure field system. Some earth-cut features have been identified adjacent to the buildings exposed in Trench 4 (D and E) and could represent the continuation of robbed-out foundations, though the presence of underlying boundary ditches (cf Fig 7B) prevents a firm attribution without further excavation.

A smaller area of 100m x 40m was surveyed within the same grid using a resistivity meter. The results (Fig 4) show high resistance anomalies possibly denoting the remains of wall foundations and rubble spreads, that have been partly masked by the effects of the corrugated plough surface as represented by closely set linear bands. A linear anomaly (F), 11m long, may denote the continuation the north wall of Building 2. A more substantial structure (G) may underlie the main rubble

spread and another wall to the south (H) could denote the returning wall of an enclosure noted in the watching brief.

Excavation and watching brief

A combination of pre-emptive excavation along the proposed roadside drainage ditch (Trench 4) and subsequent watching brief identified three rectangular stone buildings (Figs 5 and 6). They share a common north-west to south-east alignment, together with other walled boundaries. A metalled surface between two of the buildings could represent a road or shared yard. Ditches, pits and postholes show that Roman activity was spread over a distance of 260m.

The ancient features have been truncated by recent ploughing and mostly survived only where they were cut into the natural gravel. They had been further damaged by medieval and later furrows from open field agriculture, as well as a modern quarry pit within the northern part of the trench. The absence of significant stratification, with only localised intercutting of features, precludes detailed phasing; the more so because many features were aceramic or lacked diagnostic pottery. There is nevertheless a slight emphasis of late first to early second century features at the southern end of the site, while the features closer to the stone buildings contained pottery of the third and fourth centuries AD.

Building 1 which forms the southernmost structure was 5.5m wide and at least 4m long. Its foundations (11 and 13) were 700mm wide and built of pitched limestone, with individual pieces measuring up to 250mm x 200mm x 50mm. The building was also partially exposed within an evaluation trench dug previously by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU 1989, fig 4: trench 5). This work suggests the presence of a doorway in the northern wall but otherwise adds little to the extent of the building. A corner of two walls in the centre of the trench could form an extension or might be part of a separate structure.

The watching brief within the road-corridor identified the foundations of other walls to the north and east, and possibly also at the south.

If contemporary, they would have defined an enclosure 29m long, which on the basis of the resistivity results was perhaps 16m wide (Fig 4, H). The eastern side was formed by foundations 1.50m wide but the other walls were less than half as wide (20). The foundation along the northern side replaced an earlier boundary ditch which was 1m wide and 700mm deep. The steining of a well was exposed in the side of the road drainage ditch within the possible enclosure.

Date: There were no associated finds.

Building 2 lay 38m to the north of Building 1. It was of similar construction but slightly wider at 6.50m. The eastern wall was 1m wide in contrast to the other sides which were only 700mm. Two gullies in Trench 4 (107 and 111), 680mm and 1m wide respectively, are in line with the foundations and could denote robber trenches. The continuation has possibly been traced by magnetometer survey for a distance of at least 13m (Fig 3, D). If so, the building had a total length of 21m. Remains of the north-east side may have also been identified by resistivity survey (Fig 4, F)

Date: Two sherds of pottery from gully (111) are first century AD, but are probably residual.

Building 3 was located 19m north of Building 2. It comprised a simple rectangle, some 5m wide, with a further wall extending at a right-angle from the eastern side. A separate parallel foundation 3.5m to the south could, if contemporary, suggest a more complex ground plan, or may merely denote an adjacent boundary. A continuation of the robbed out remains of the structure may have been traced by magnetometer survey, perhaps indicating that the room had a total length of 14m (Fig 3, E). The foundations of the main structure were 700mm wide, with the wall to the south 1.1m broad. The individual foundations consisted of roughly dressed limestone blocks around a rubble core. Within Trench 4 only the southern foundation of the rectangular structure was present (30), but the continuation of other walls may be marked by possible robber trenches (32 and 88). Another wall foundation 5m to the north of Building 3 in Trench 4 could form a related boundary (35) but its

continuation was not traced during the watching brief.

Date: A single sherd of pottery from one robber trench (32) and thirty-two other pieces from the other (88) suggest a late third to fourth century AD date for their backfilling. Cleaning over wall (35) produced seven sherds of late third to fourth century AD pottery.

Within Trench 4, a broad area of fragmentary limestone and pebble metalling, up to 19.40m wide, may be the vestiges of a trackway or yard surface between Buildings 1 and 2. The insertion of a pitched limestone track (24) divided the remains into two unequal parts. To the north the metalling mostly comprised laid limestone with occasional pebbles (58) but there was a greater proportion of pebbles to the south (56). While it is uncertain if both sides were contemporary, their outer edges, albeit irregular, share a common alignment with the buildings. The smooth surfaces of individual limestone pieces suggest vehicular traffic wear.

The later track was composed of tightly pitched limestones bordered by vertically set edging stones to form kerbs, 4.60m apart. Small patches of gravel and pebbles between the stones may originally have been more extensive, thereby forming a smooth surface which was largely removed by later ploughing. The alignment of the track diverges by 25° from the earlier surface so that it is oriented east-west. The track was traced for a distance of 10m within the subsequent road-corridor.

Date: Six sherds recovered from the metalled surface south of the track have a broad first to fourth century AD date-range. The track itself contained six sherds from the first to third centuries AD but it is possible that they are all residual, with the track being a post-medieval creation perhaps linking Stanwick Mill to a precursor of the present A45 road.

Unassigned features

The significance of a range of other features in Trench 4, including ditches, gullies, postholes and pits, cannot be easily interpreted.

because of the limited area of the excavation (Figs 6 and 7). The fills of the individual features were unexceptional, mostly comprising dark yellowish brown or dark brown loams with variable sand and clay content. These features were not exposed within the main road corridor and their pattern cannot be easily reconciled with the geophysical survey results. Some contained Roman pottery but most were aceramic and therefore remain undated.

In the following list details of the individual features modern land drains, furrows and limestone rubble disturbed by ploughing are excluded but descriptions are retained in archive. For ease of location each section of the trench is labelled A-G running northwards as in Figure 6.

Table 1: Trench 4, individual feature descriptions

Context	Location	Type of feature	Pottery date
6	A	Pit, not excavated, 1m wide	
7	A	Ditch, 1.3m wide, 460mm deep	RB
8	AB	Ditch, 800mm wide, 300mm deep	LIA-C2/3
9	B	Pit, 500mm dia, 200mm deep	?LIA
11	B	Wall, Building 1 - 700mm wide	?C1-C2/3
13	B	Wall, Building 1 - 700mm wide	
20	C	Wall, ?boundary - 700mm wide, 250mm deep: Fig 7B	
23	C	Track, kerbstones	
24	C	Track, 4.60m wide	C1-C3+
27	D	Ditch, 1.8m wide, 750mm deep	
30	E	Wall, Building 2 - 700mm wide	
32	E	?Robber trench, Building 3 - 1.5m wide, 300mm deep	C3-4
34	E	Posthole, 360mm dia, 330mm deep	
35	E	Wall, ?boundary - 700mm wide	?C3-4
48	F	Ditch, late recut, 850mm wide, 230mm deep: Fig 7C	
51	G	Ditch, 3m wide, 400mm deep	
53	G	Ditch, 2.5m wide, 750mm deep: Fig 7F	RB
54	G	Ditch, 700mm wide, 300mm deep: Fig 7F	
55	G	?Ditch terminal containing posthole 74 - 900mm wide, 400mm deep: Fig 7F	
56	C	Pebble and limestone surface, 3.6m wide, 100mm deep	C1-C2/4
58	CD	Limestone and pebble surface, 10m wide, 100mm deep	?C1
59	C	?Ditch below wall 20, 800mm wide, 400mm deep: Fig 7B	
65	E	Ditch, 2m wide, 1.1m deep: Fig 7D	RB
67	F	Ditch (cf 48), 360mm wide, 200mm deep: Fig 7C	
68	F	Ditch (cf 48), 750mm+ wide, 330mm deep: Fig 7C	
69	F	Ditch (cf 48), 800mm+ wide, 250mm deep: Fig 7C	
70	F	Ditch (cf 48), 300mm+ wide, 180mm deep: Fig 7C	
72	G	Posthole, 300mm dia, 450mm deep: Fig 7F	
73	G	Posthole, 700mm dia, 240mm deep: Fig 7F	
74	G	Posthole within ?ditch 55, 450mm dia, 220mm deep: Fig 7F	
78	D	Pit, c. 2.7m dia, 1.5m deep: Fig 7E	C3-4
80	A	Pit, c. 2m dia, 740mm deep	?C1-e2
81	B	Ditch, 2m wide, 400mm deep	C1-2
82	B	Posthole, 350mm wide, 260mm deep	

Context	Location	Type of feature	Pottery date
86	D	Ditch, 1.22m wide, 480mm deep: Fig 7A	
87	D	Ditch terminal, 820mm wide, 460mm deep: Fig 7A	
88	D	?Robber trench, Building 3 - 1.8m wide 1m deep: Fig 7A	C2-C3/4
90	E	Ditch below wall 30, 800mm wide, 500mm deep	RB
91	E	Posthole, 440mm wide, 470mm deep	
93	C	Gully, 490mm wide, 190mm deep	?C1-e2
96	C	Ditch, cut by 104, 500mm wide, 250mm deep	C1
98	C	Pit, 600mm wide, 150mm deep	
100	C	Pit, 430mm wide, 130mm deep	LIA
104	C	Ditch, cuts 96, 480mm wide, 270mm deep	LIA/eRB
107	D	Gully, 680mm wide, 140mm deep	
108	C	Posthole, 570mm wide, 90mm deep	
109	C	Posthole, 330mm dia, 200mm deep	
111	D	?Robber trench, Building 2 - 800mm wide, 350mm deep	C1
112	E	Ditch, 1m wide, 250mm deep	
113	E	Pit, 300mm deep	
114	D	Gully, 600mm wide, 140mm deep: Fig 7A	
115	C	Pit, 2.2m wide, 170mm deep	
117	C	Posthole below track 24, 350mm long, 230mm wide, 230mm deep	
122	C	Pit, 600mm wide, 150mm deep	

ROMAN POTTERY by E MacRobert

All of the Roman pottery was analysed using the Northamptonshire Archaeology form and fabric type series. The main purpose of the analysis was to provide dating evidence for the site.

The only quantification carried out was sherd count by fabric type and form count by fabric type. The size of the collection did not warrant detailed categorisation of grey wares and form types. If a larger assemblage had been present, such analysis, including a comparison with the pottery from Stanwick Roman villa, might have been worthwhile.

Pottery from excavation

Most of the pottery found during excavation relates to the Middle Sands site which spans the Roman period, and also includes some Iron Age and a few medieval sherds.

The diagnostically earlier Roman material includes grogged ware, with the presence of a shoulder from a carinated jar, and shelly wares and hard grogged wares, both including storage jars and channelled rim jars. There is a small amount of samian, but few diagnostically early grey or oxidised wares. A single sherd of a lead-glazed bowl with painted circles below the glaze may be a product from Staines (Fig 8,1. Cf Arthur 1978) and there is one oxidised ware handle possibly from a flagon.

The later material includes lower Nene Valley colour-coated wares. There are a few beaker sherds which could be second to third century, including folded beakers, but many of the forms such as flanged bowls, necked beakers, a pie dish, one beaker and one flange both with painted decoration, and a necked jar, are typical of third to fourth-century production. There is a small amount of Black Burnished Ware (BB1), which is mainly dishes and bowls, including again flanged bowls and simple rimmed dishes. There is also a jar sherd with obtuse lattice decoration. Other grey wares include pie dishes, flanged bowls and simple rimmed dishes. Most of the grey wares are unsourced but there is a small quantity of lower Nene Valley grey ware and some Ecton-type material (cf Johnston 1969). Later shelly ware vessels include square-rimmed storage jars and a Harrold-type flanged bowl. Some of the shelly ware necked jars may also derive from the later Roman period. There is one Oxford colour-coated ware flange and a few mortaria sherds which are probably from the lower Nene Valley.

A few contexts in Trench 4 do not contain any diagnostically later material (9, 93, 96, 100, 104 and 111). They appear to be largely confined to the southern part of the site and might therefore denote a slight settlement shift. The dates must be treated as termini post quos, however, because of the very small number of sherds from each context.

In summary, the collection includes a typical range of material from the early Roman period to the fourth century AD, potentially with some late Iron Age (grogged) material in addition. The quantity of pottery imported from any distance (eg samian, BB1 and Oxford Ware) is very limited.

The small amounts of pottery found in the other trenches contain nothing diagnostically later than the second century AD.

Pottery from the watching brief

A small quantity of Roman pottery was recovered from the limestone surface (4) at NGR SP 9625 7033 and ditches (1 and 2) at SP 9635 7042.

Ditch (2) contained the largest assemblage and spans the period from the first to late third or fourth centuries AD. The earlier material includes grogged and hard grogged wares, with a channelled rim jar in the latter fabric (Fig 8, 2), several sherds of samian and an everted rim in a shelly fabric (Fig 8, 4). There is also a platter in an Ecton-type grey ware. There are grey ware pie dishes (Fig 8, 6-8), one of which is very substantially represented, and simple rimmed dishes (Fig 8, 5), an oxidised necked jar (Fig 8, 3) and a lower Nene Valley colour-coated folded beaker and castor box, all of which are likely to date from the second to third centuries. In addition there is a sherd of BB1 and three sherds of a Hadham Ware vessel, both of which probably date from the third or fourth centuries.

The remaining material collected during the watching brief does not include any pottery which needs to be dated later than the second century AD, although some of the grey ware could have continued to be made into the third century. Early material includes a large shelly ware channelled rim jar, two sherds of samian, and a dish in a fine grey ware with a pie-dish rim but curved rather than straight-sided body.

To summarise, the collection contains material typical of the first to late third or fourth centuries in the area, although the Hadham ware is unusual.

OTHER FINDS by T Hylton

The excavation and watching brief produced small groups of Prehistoric, Roman, medieval and Post-medieval finds. Most of the assemblage comprises Roman structural debris and Prehistoric worked flints but there is a small group of copper alloy dress accessories and eight coins. Some of the metalwork is of indeterminate form and in addition to being undated has little intrinsic value.

Coins by Ian Meadows and Mark Curteis

All of the coins were recovered from topsoil using a metal detector. Six coins were found within the area of the Middle Sands site and closely dateable types span the period AD 268-326; another two are of early fourth century date. At least four of the coins are forgeries, one with a 'casting gate', and the rest display irregularities of shape. A sestertius of Marcus Aurelius, dated to AD 171, and a George III penny minted in 1799 were found at site 5 (NGR SP 9635 7042).

1. Marcus Aurelius - AD 170-1 (AE Sestertius), RIC 1016
Obv: IMP M ANTONINVS AVG TRP XXV
Rev: VOTA SOLVTA DECENALIVM COS III
Metal Detector find, NGR SP 9635 7042
2. Victorinus - AD 268-270 (forgery with casting gate), Cun 2561
Obv: IMP C. VICTORINVS (P.F.) AVG
Rev: [AEQVITAS AVG]
Metal Detector find, NGR SP 9692 7107
3. Claudius II - post AD 270, Cun 2313
Obv: DIVO CLAVDIO
Rev: CO[NS]ECRATIO (altar 1b)
Barbarous copy
Metal Detector find, NGR SP 9694 7112
4. Constantine I - AD 312-13, RIC 6 Ln 280
Obv: IMP. CONSTAN [TINVS P.F. AVG]
Rev: SOLI INV-[ICTO COMITI]
Minted in London
Metal Detector find, NGR 9686 7109
5. Broken quarter: Crispus - AD 323-24, RIC 7 Tr 440
Obv: IVL.CRISPVS NOB.C
Rev: [CAESARVM NOSTRO]RVM VOT/X (only X legible)
Minted in Trier
Metal Detector find, NGR SP 9692 7108

6. ? Constantine II - AD 337-40, as RIC 8 Ly 13
Obv: Illegible
Rev: GLORI - [A EXERCITVS] with 1 standard
Minted in Lyons
Metal Detector find, NGR SP 9688 7104
7. Valens - AD 364-78, as CK 483
Obv: Illegible
Rev: SECV[RITAS REIPVBLICAE]
Minted in Arles
Metal Detector find, NGR SP 9688 7103
8. George III penny 1799
Very worn, illegible
Metal Detector find, NGR SP 9635 7042

Copper Alloys

A small fragment of a gilded buckle-plate, probably of medieval date is the only piece that can be identified with certainty.

- 1 Strip. Tapered with square cross-section and rounded terminal.
Length: 88mm Width: 5mm
Trench 4, 26, SF No 3
- 2 Rod. Circular-sectioned rod fragment. Slightly curved, indicating that it may be part of a large annular ring.
Length: 45mm
Trench 4, 88, SF No 12
- 3 Buckle-plate, fragment only (Fig 8, 9). Folded sheet plate secured by a rivet with domed head. Patches of gilding are visible.
Width: 20mm
Metal detector find, NGR SP 9680 7093
- 4 Ring. Rectangular-section, very worn.
Diameter: 19mm
Metal detector find, NGR 9686 7101
- 5 Object. Fragment of a cast object of indeterminate form.
Metal detector find, NGR SP 9695 7110

Iron

There are 34 iron objects, among which identifiable pieces include a horseshoe, a possible reamer and a small buckle. The remainder comprise binding/sheet fragments (4) and nails (28); the latter range from 40-95mm in length.

- 1 Buckle, complete (Fig 8, 10). D-shaped loop with iron pin.
Length:20mm Width:30mm
Trench 4, 57, SF No 4
- 2 Double-ended tool, ?reamer (Fig 8, 11). The square-sectioned shank forms an expanded terminal which tapers to a point. The other end is slightly spatulate.
Length: 120mm
Watching brief, 2, SF No 2
- 3 Horseshoe, with trapezoidal head.
Watching brief, 3, SF No 4

Lead

A single triangular-shaped piece of sheet lead with scalloped edge and measuring 25 x 20mm was found. Its purpose is uncertain.

Tile

Forty-eight individual fragments of Roman tile, weighing 4.06kg, were found in Trench 4. The assemblage includes roof tiles of both tegula- (14 pieces) and imbrex-forms (9 pieces), together with a single box flue tile (voussoir) which was furnished with combed keying lines.

Two fabric types are represented. One is distinguished by the presence of large quantities of crushed fossil shell tempering and buff-coloured surfaces. The other fabric is sand-tempered and was fired to a bright orange colour.

Table 2: Roman tile from Trench 4

Context	Tile types:number/weight								Total Weight (g)
	Tegula		Imbrex		Voussoir		Indeter.		
	Qty	Wgt (g)	Qty	Wgt (g)	Qty	Wgt (g)	Qty	Wgt (g)	
01			2	140			1	50	190
17	1	70					1	63	133
21	1	122							122
22	1	271							271
26	2	202					2	95	297
29	3	305					2	97	402
56			1	110					110
57	4	210	2	179			8	488	877
61							2	100	100
78			2	150	1	99	2	192	441
81			1	41					41
88	1	289					5	308	597
Misc.	1	155	1	187			1	135	477
TOTAL	14	1624	9	807	1	99	24	1528	4058

Stone

A small fragment of the upper stone of a rotary quern made of quartz-rich millstone grit and a carborundum whetstone were the only stone artefacts to have been found.

Flint by A Chapman

Twenty-four worked flints were recovered from Trench 4 and a separate piece from Trench 1. Of particular interest is a discoidal scraper which seems to have been manufactured in such a way that it could have been be utilised as both a scraper and a knife (Fig 8, 12). The remaining assemblage comprises 4 blades (two have been retouched), 1 fabricator (Fig 8, 13), 4 cores (cf Fig

8, 14), 1 core rejuvenation flake and 17 flakes, including 2 burnt and 2 utilised pieces.

CONCLUSION

The current investigation, together with the earlier archaeological evaluation, has shown that a substantial settlement existed at Middle Sands containing at least seven stone buildings closely grouped together and set within fields bounded by ditches. The common alignment of some of the buildings could denote the presence of a contemporary road along the base of the valley side but identification of its course requires further fieldwork. The possibly complex plans of Buildings 1 and 3, together with structure E defined by the resistivity survey, could indicate the remains of a sophisticated settlement but confirmation requires more extensive and coherent investigation.

The Roman landscape along the Nene valley appears to have been densely populated with farms and more elaborate villas, such as that known from Redlands Farm, nestling between the larger nucleated settlements of Higham Ferrers and Stanwick. It is impossible to place Middle Sands within this hierarchy without further work. Most of these settlements grew, in some cases from the Iron Age, to exploit the rich agricultural potential of the Nene valley throughout the Roman period. Survey work suggests that Middle Sands may have formed the base from which about 223ha of arable land was cultivated, perhaps with pasture beyond on the upper flanks of the valley side (Parry forthcoming).

ABBREVIATIONS

CK Carson and Kent 1960
Cun Besly and Bland (1983)
LIA Late Iron Age
RB Roman
C Century
e/l early/late
RIC Roman Imperial Coinage: Mattingly et al 1923 ff

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arthur, P, 1978 The lead glazed wares of Roman Britain, in P Arthur and G Marsh (eds), Early Fine Wares in Roman Britain, BAR British Series, 57, 293-355
- Besly, E and Bland, R, 1983 The Cunetio treasure Roman coinage of the third century AD
- Carson, R and Kent, J, 1960 Late Roman bronze coinage AD 324-498; part 2: Bronze Roman Imperial coinage of the later empire AD 346-498
- Johnston, D, 1969 Romano-British pottery kilns near Northampton, Antiq J, 49, 75-97
- Keevill, G, 1991 Evaluations and excavations in Northamptonshire by the Oxford Archaeological Unit 1989-90, Northamptonshire Archaeol, 23, 99-104
- Mattingly, H, Sydenham, E, Sutherland, C and Carson, R, 1923 ff Roman Imperial Coinage
- Neal, D S, 1989 The Stanwick villa, Northants: an interim report on the excavations of 1984-88, Britannia, 20, 149-68
- OAU, 1989 Stanwick, Northants: Archaeological Assessment March 1989, Oxford Archaeological Unit Report
- Parry, S, forthcoming Raunds Area Survey. An archaeological study of the landscape of Raunds, Northamptonshire 1985-92, English Heritage Archaeological Report

FIGURES

- Fig 1 Location plan of archaeological sites
- Fig 2 Plan of Roman pottery and limestone scatters
- Fig 3 Magnetometer plot and interpretation
- Fig 4 Resistivity plot and interpretation
- Fig 5 Roman buildings
- Fig 6 Archaeological features in Trench 4
- Fig 7 Selected sections
- Fig 8 Finds

Project Manager: Mike Shaw, BA MIFA
Fieldwork: Iain Soden, BA AIFA and Ian Meadows, BA
Text: Stephen Parry, MA MIFA
Pottery research: Elizabeth MacRobert, BA LLB
Other finds research: Tora Hylton, Ian Meadows and Andy Chapman, BSc
Illustrations: Alex Thorne, BSc MAAI&S AIFA and Tony Baker

Northamptonshire Archaeology
a Service of Northamptonshire County Council Planning and Transportation Dept
Revised 4 March 1996

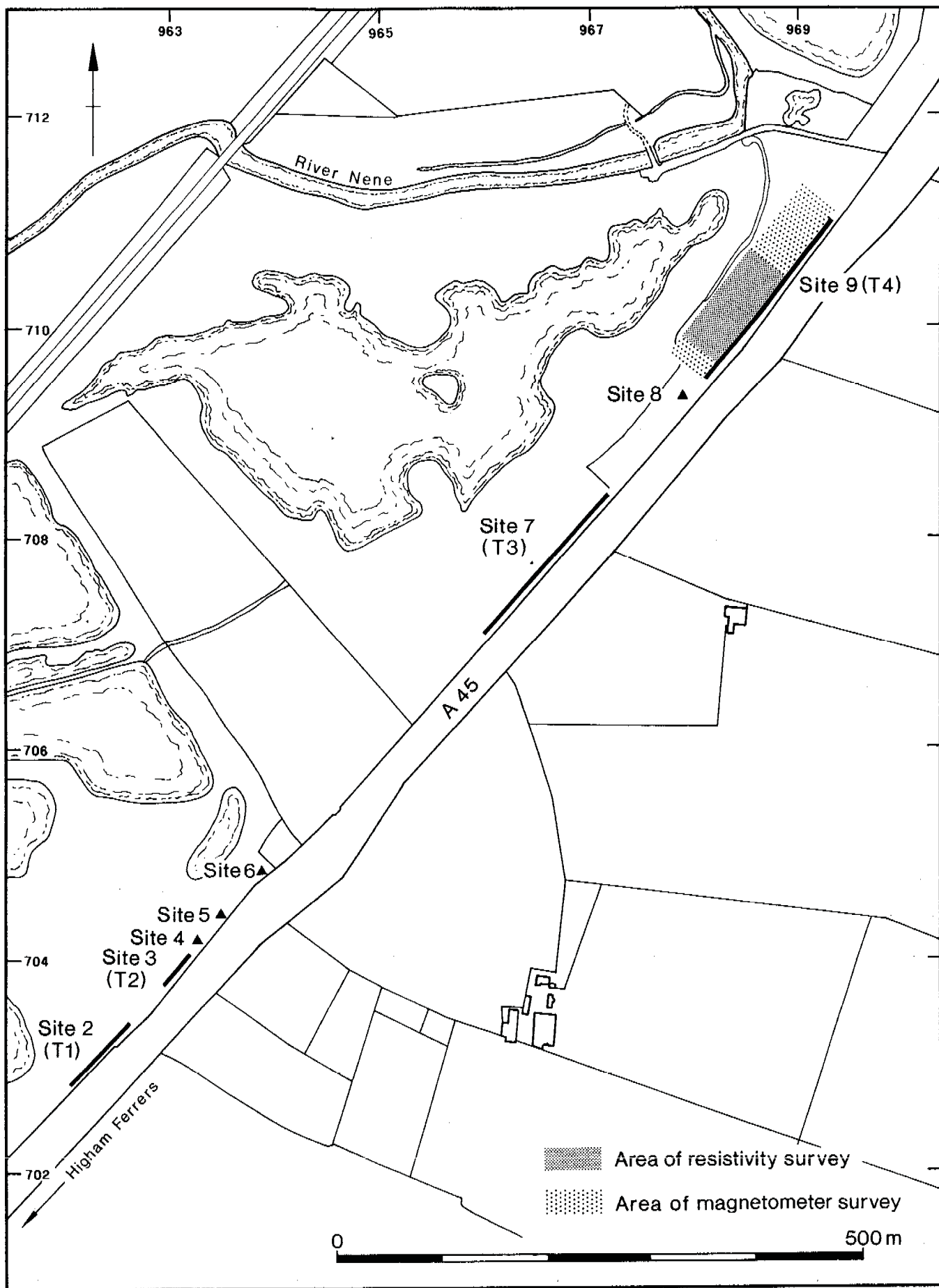
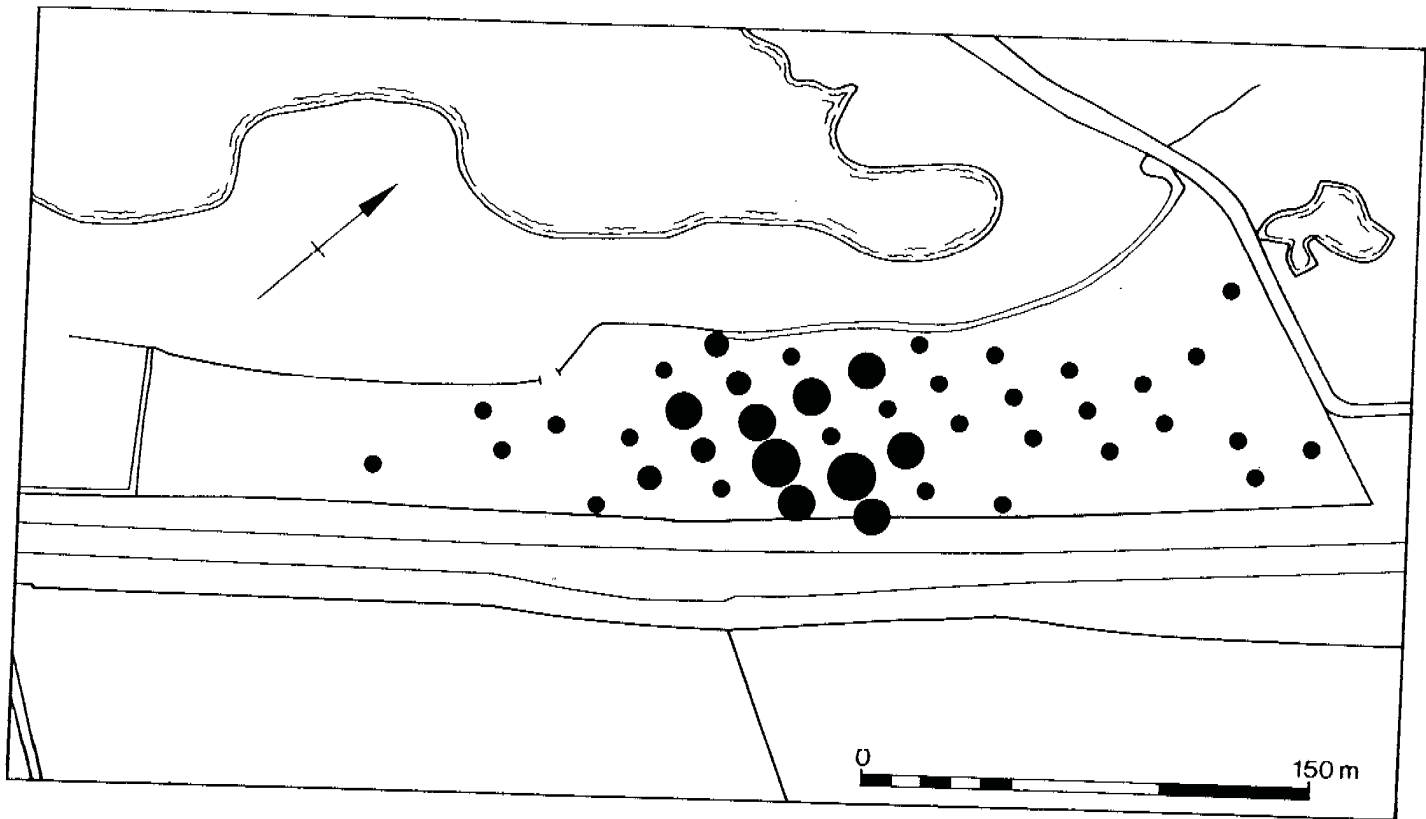
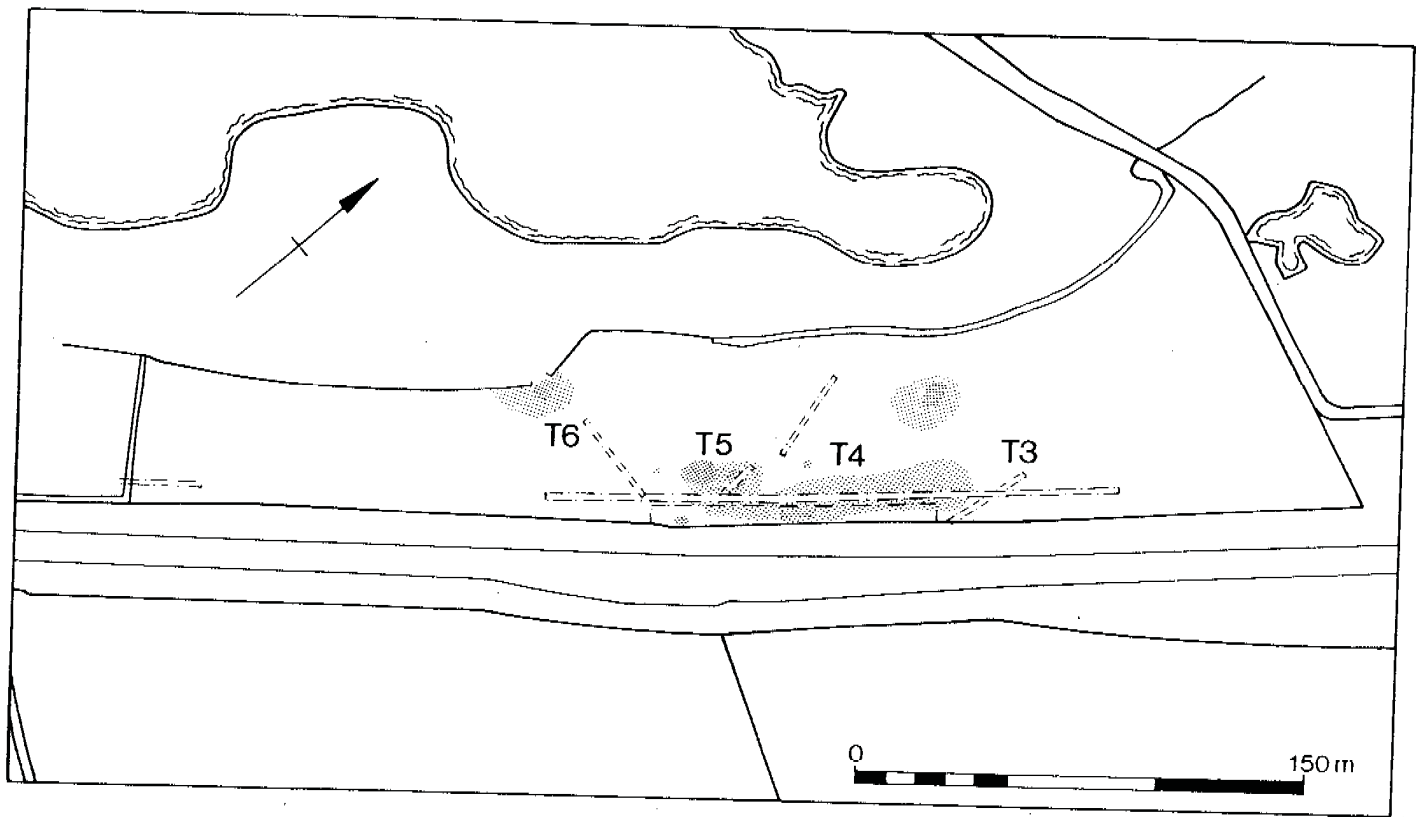


Fig. 1



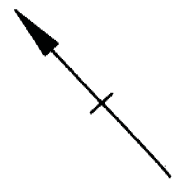
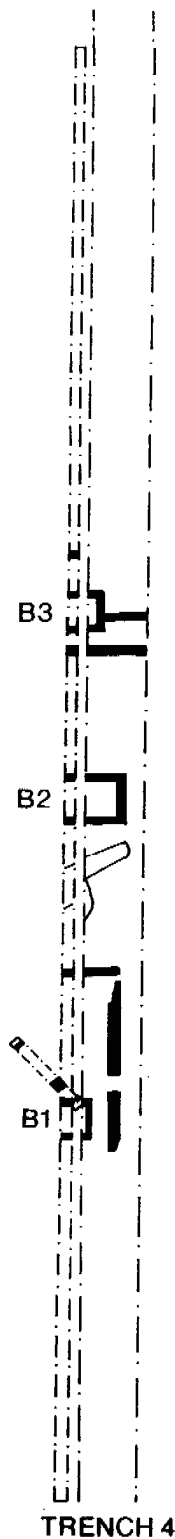
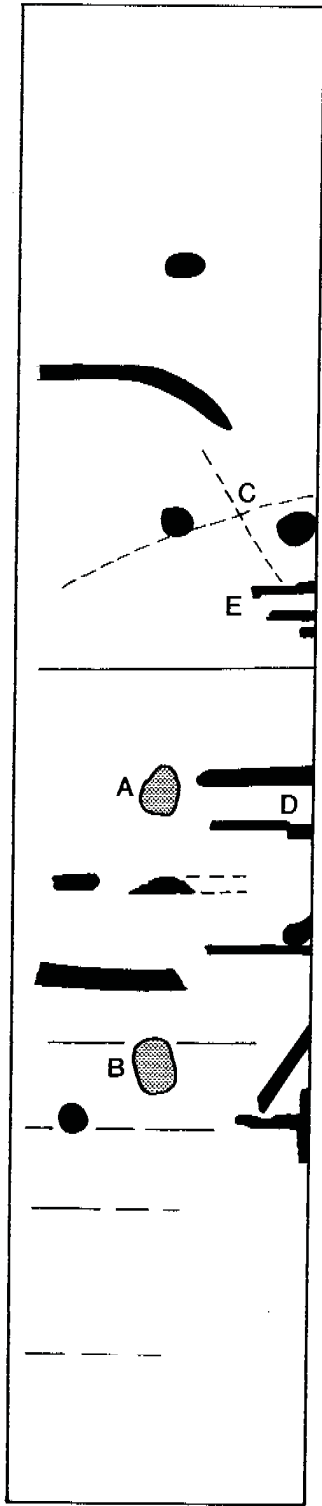
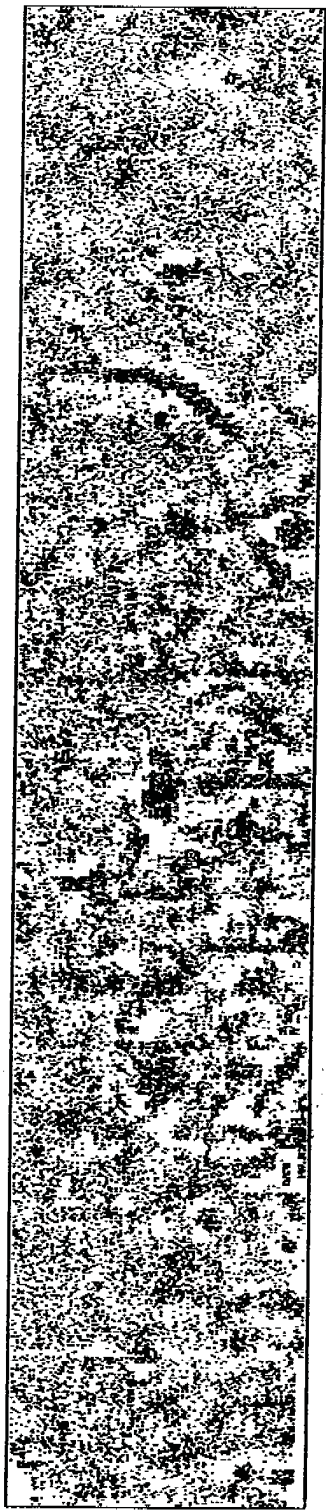
Roman pottery ● 1-6 sherds ● 7-10 ● 11-19 ● 20 and over



■ Dense stone scatter
 ■ Stone scatter

--- NCC trench
 - - - OAU trench

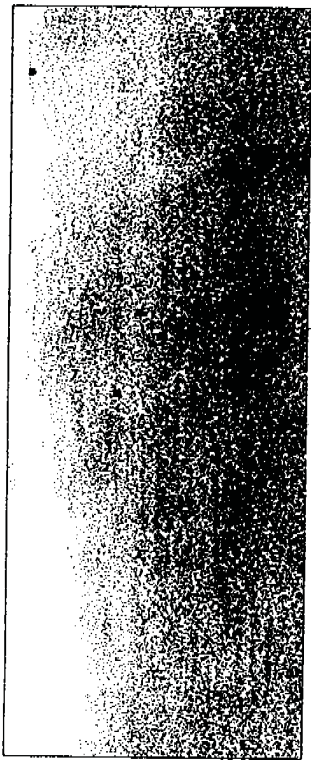
Fig. 2



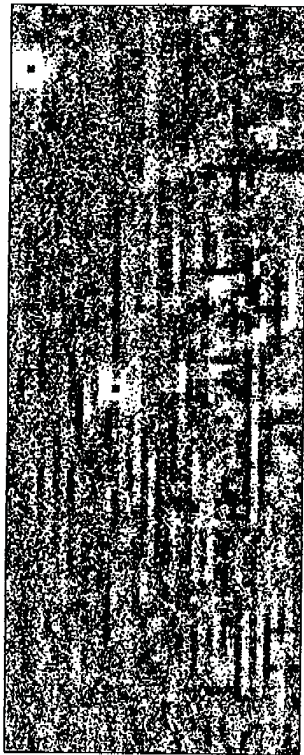
0 40m

- Ditch or robber trench
- Pit
- Hearth
- Furrow
- C Drain

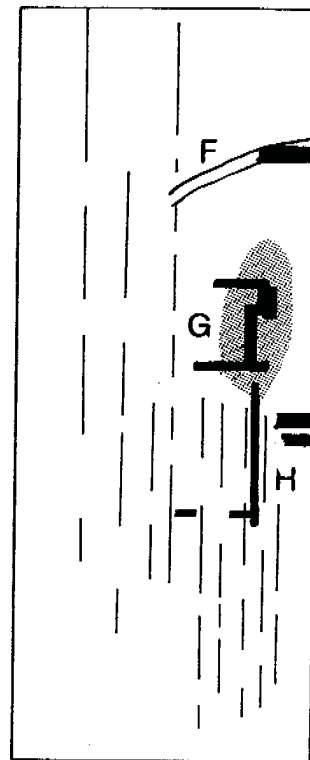
Fig. 3



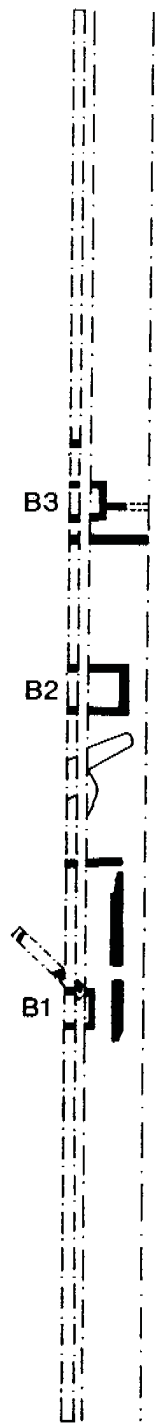
Min. -0.5
 Max. +2 Std. Dev.
 Cont. 2



Min. -2
 Max. +2 Std. Dev.
 Cont. 2



Interpretation



Trench 4




 Wall
  Rubble spread
  Plough lines



Fig. 4

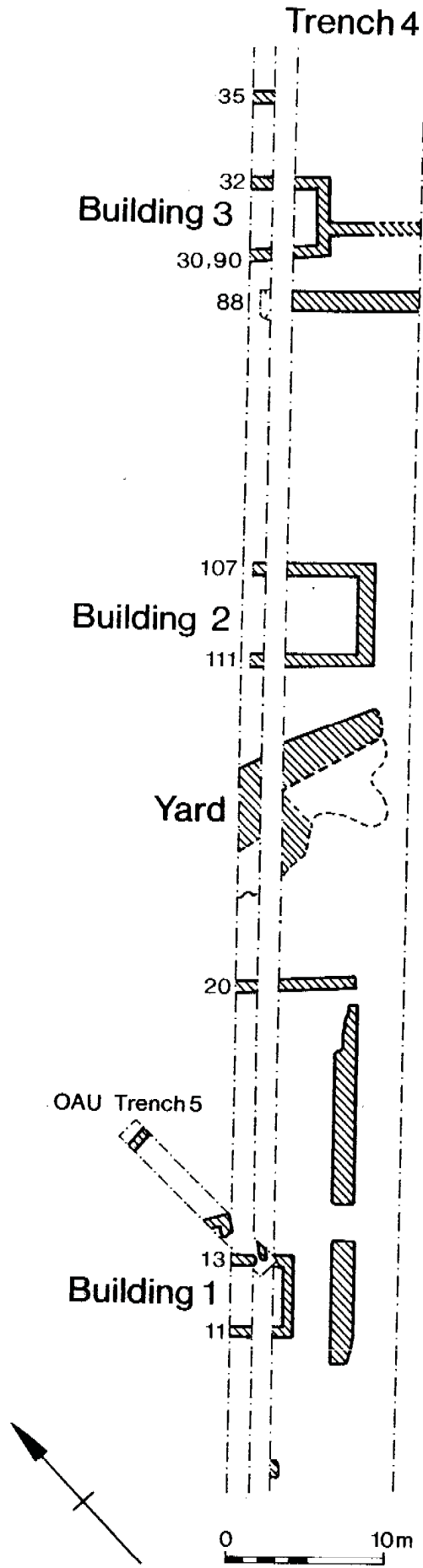


Fig. 5

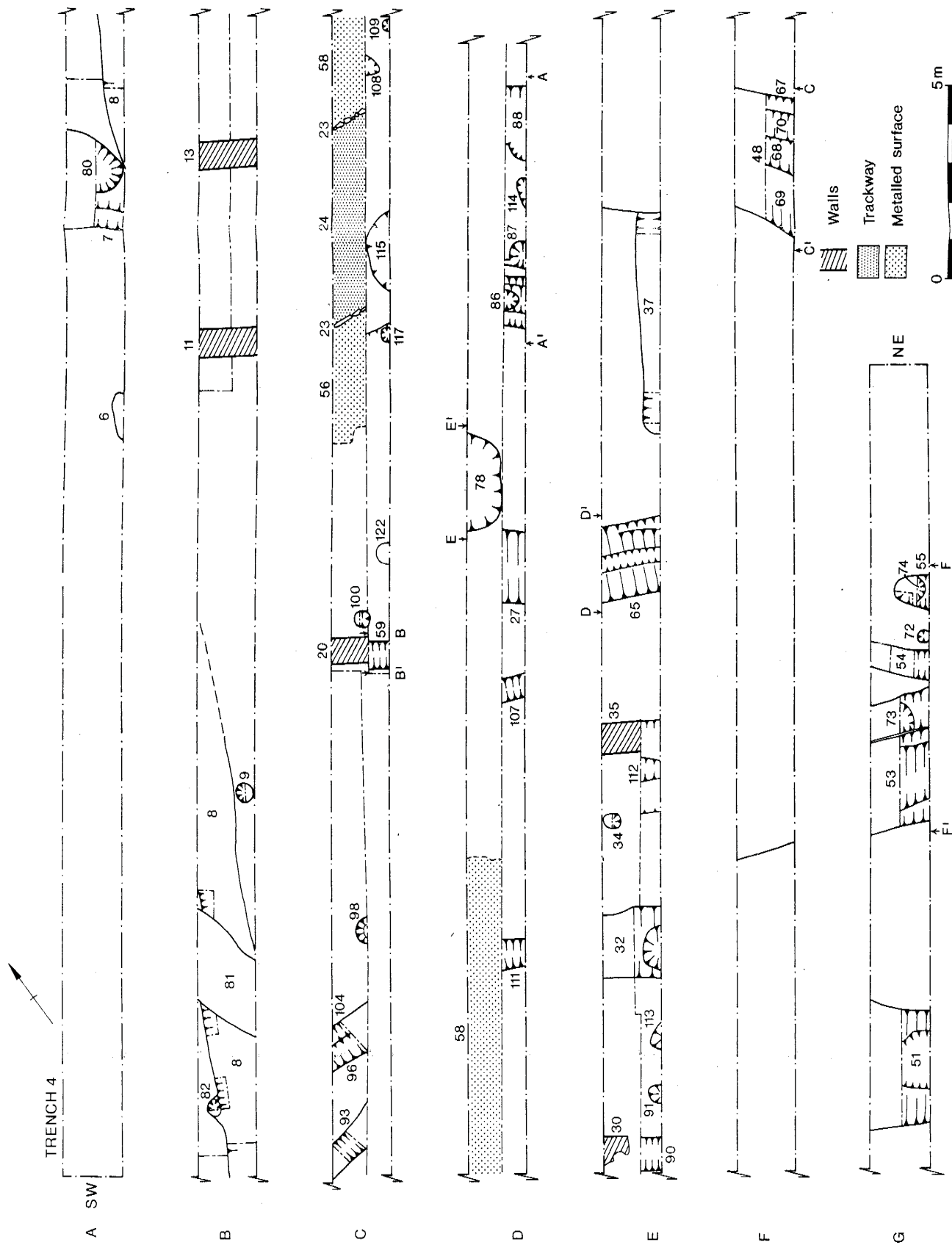


Fig. 6

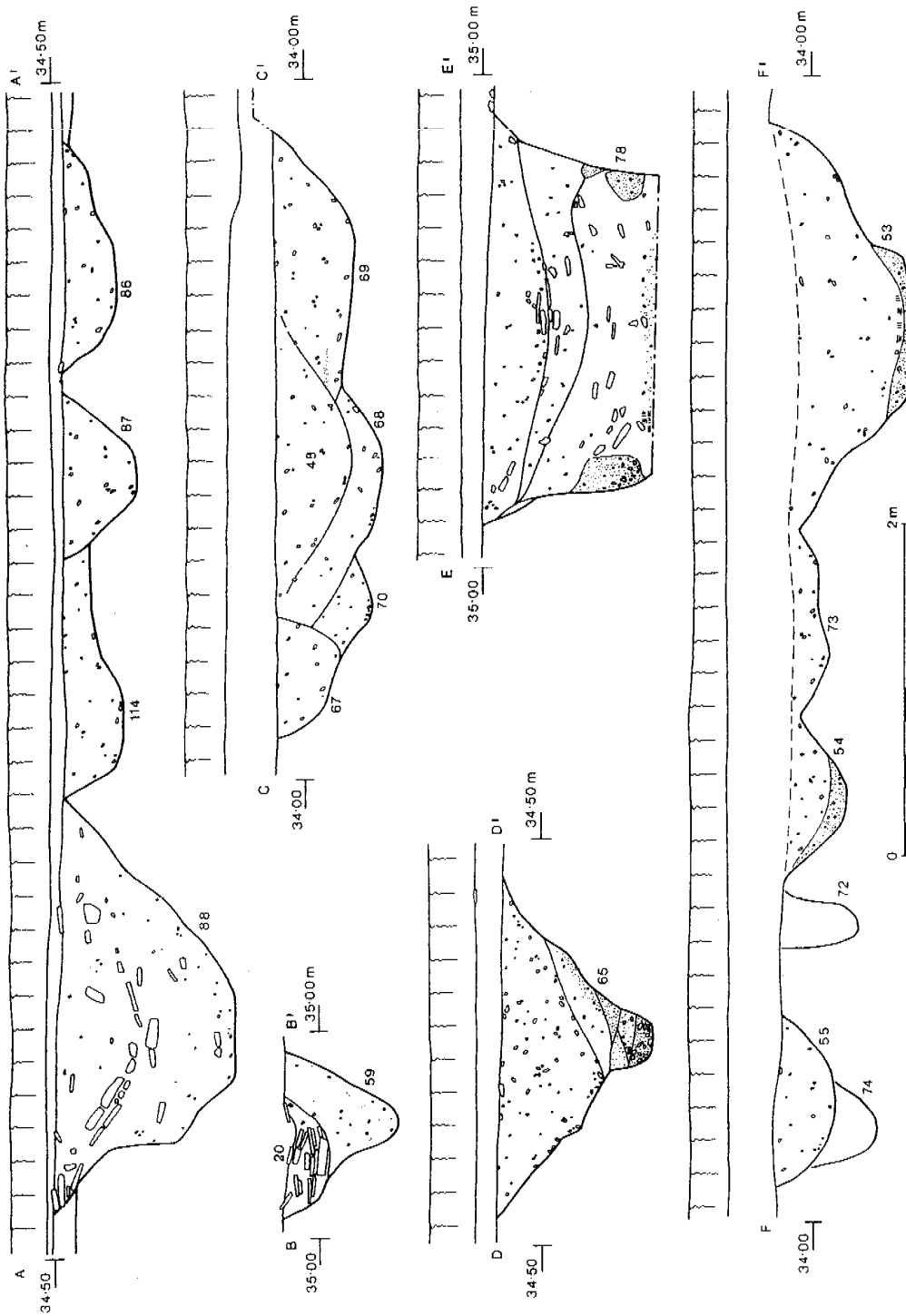
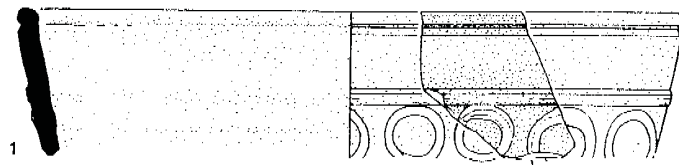
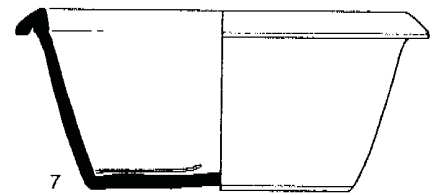
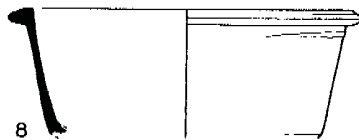
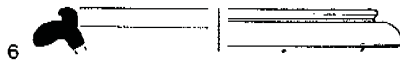
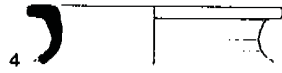


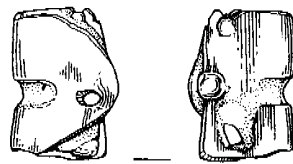
Fig. 7



0 5cm



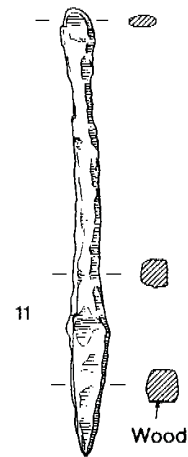
0 10cm



0 3cm



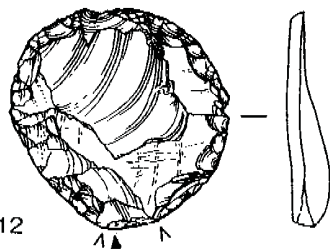
10



11

Wood

0 5cm

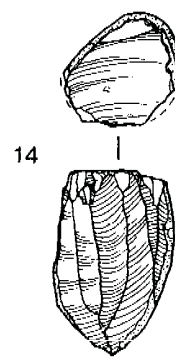


12



13

0 5cm



14

Fig. 8