

Section 13

Dating and material culture sequences

Evelyn Baker

Cross-references to Digital Supplement in red
Cross-references to Printed Synthesis in brown

13.01–13.12

Twelve groups comprising 53 closely-associated buildings and the crucial settlement-defining ditch **CF29** have been selected to illustrate dating and material culture sequences [7.01=13.13]. The choice was made primarily from those structures that were part of a stratigraphic sequence, but also to show the range of types of buildings and activities through their material residue. Each group is headed by a simple chart which shows the time span of each building relative to the others within the group. Uncertainties about dates are indicated. A chart summarises all buildings in numerical order [1.08=13.16].

It was clear that there were likely to be difficulties at both ends of the sequences, either because of too little evidence within the early buildings or because there was too much in the latest in the series. With the latter, the story is complicated by part of the core of the site probably receiving waste material from the supplanting manorial building across the Cocklake stream after the medieval buildings had gone out of use or had been demolished. The dangers of repeating specific finds analyses or publishing large quantities of undigested information were recognised and avoided; in any case, the opportunity of presenting much of the material culture from a fully excavated extensive and long-lived site weighed heavier than that slight risk. Sufficient data have been presented for readers to form conclusions about the quality of the evidence and its interpretation. The data are, nevertheless, selective, since some buildings and open areas are omitted as less informative and with less potential for adding to the picture. Those assemblages selected are presented in a manner complementary to, rather than duplicating, the specialist reports and key finds tables (with the structure descriptions), though some overlap is unavoidable.

There are a number of cases where the structures themselves provided little or no dating evidence, and use has been made of associated deposits deemed contemporary or otherwise because of their stratigraphic relationships. Contemporary external surfaces sometimes contained the only artefactual evidence for some structures. It was considered particularly important in these cases to include finds found in external association with buildings through time; they did not exist in all instances. Where they do they are distinguished by suffixes used in compiling the tables: **A (associated)** or **D (disuse or destruction)**. Where available D contexts have been integrated, some of these surfaces were patently long-lived or difficult to separate, but could indicate date as well as activity in the vicinity of the building over a phase.¹ In many cases the other structures in the sequences provide the continuity. They are an effective and informative means of filling the evidential gaps left by the selective key context lists in the structure descriptions and the deliberate exclusion of context numbers in texts. Where there is no suffix the material is considered to be directly related to contexts belonging to that particular structure and the phasing given. Sequences can include pre-building and post-building assemblages in order that residuality and intrusivity can be gauged. Each finds sequence is given in Period and phase order by amalgamating the products of like contexts in each. They have been divided into two basic classes:

¹ Editor's note: sense unclear

Building materials and fittings

Finds used to construct the building itself, including evidence from windows, doors, floors, roofs.

Activity indicators

All the other finds that accumulated through use of the building, including environmental evidence where appropriate and available.

Building materials and fittings

These sequences include architectural stonework, roofing materials, internal finishes, structural fittings such as window material, and ironwork. This section lacks analysis of plaster and mortar, since the report on the material has not been received. These entries rely upon the notes made by Patricia Walsh as a preliminary catalogue for the specialist, and field notes made by supervisors. The architectural material is ordered by the date order of the deposit from which it came, followed by the architectural date as identified by Harris, and grouped by form. Almost without exception, the stonework has derived from long-lived buildings which have undergone remodelling, or from destruction horizons. As with any portable artefact it is recognised that the pieces may have originated somewhere else entirely, but the assumption is made that concentrations of material are significant, especially where they appear to match building type and finds. Where there is no form listed dating has been determined by tooling types as described in Harris' report [39]. Only a limited number are illustrated, their **AF (architectural fragment)** numbers appearing in the figures and catalogues. Only those stones given an architectural date range have been listed in detail in this section, but significant forms are noted since they provide added information about structure type and details. With roofing material, the fluctuating fortunes of site resources and staff availability has also resulted in patchy adherence to the site collecting policy, and some contexts suffered from unavoidable premature disposal before being fully catalogued. This loss is explained in Slowikowski's technical text [38]. Other evidence such as day book entries, detailed site drawings, and photographs has been included in the principal structure descriptions. Iron roofing nails are listed simply by quantity within a phase. Structural fittings are only given their registered find number when Duncan has been able to ascribe a date range [40]. Substructures have been included with their independent dating if available.

Activity indicators

These include ceramics, registered finds other than structural/fittings items, industrial waste, and selected environmental evidence. Detail of environmental evidence is given where available and relevant. Animal bone, except for individual instances, has been excluded on the advice of Grant and Britten for statistical reasons. For ceramics the total number of vessels of all types for a given stratigraphic time span is given first (see [51] for pottery quantification methods); numbers vary widely. The percentages of wares follow in numerical order, and then in fabric number order starting with the earliest **A** types and ending with the latest **P** wares; the broad categories have been colour coded for easy identification. Residual and intrusive sherds have not been selected out, and there is no account taken of forms, function, or decoration and their effect on dating. Detailed listings and graphs are available in Slowikowski's report and catalogue (Sections 51-58). Registered finds are presented by their simple names as in Duncan's report [40-50]. The find number only appears with items

to which she has been able to give a date range, and these head the specific groups listed. Industrial debris is logged by type present rather than quantity; horseshoe nails by number of types appearing within the structure or associated with it.

The tables include agreed date ranges [51.02] for ceramics in the key finds lists, but readers should note that coarse and fine sandy wares, C59A and C59B, are specific to the locality around La Grava and Chalgrave; their date is accepted as being uncertain since there are no kiln sites. The other dominant pottery type is Hertfordshire-type greyware, C60. It belongs to the same tradition as south Hertfordshire reduced ware (SHER in the London type series) and although there are affinities with the fabric of vessels produced at Elstree, no production sites have been positively identified for this pottery found at La Grava. There is a possibility that these types are earlier than the tentative dates suggested by Slowikowski and closer to the dates suggested by Brine (1988, 43)². Anglo-Saxon A16 has been shown to extend well into the middle Saxon period on more recently excavated sites in the county [52].

Where they exist, fabric type is given for roofing tiles, archaeomagnetic dating is given for hearths, and the catalogue number of registered (small) finds is given with ascribed date. By giving the full phasing range for each group of material rather than relegating all finds to the latest possible date the reader is given the maximum flexibility to judge likely intrusion and residuality possibilities and probabilities. Entries are colour coded to give maximum legibility.

Dating and material culture sequence tables

Sequence	Structure numbers	Section
1	4, 10, 40, 41, Rt L/55	13.01
2	16, 17, 22, 54, 63	13.02
3	8, 88, 21, 96, 28	13.03
4	97, 12, 13, 19, 27	13.04
5	(CF2), 42, 43, 56	13.05
6	5, 91, 6, 87, 24, 25, 35, 68	13.06
7	31, 33 (with principal road sequence Rts A, G), 34, 53, 62	13.07
8	7, 20, 29	13.08
9	14, 18, 86, 23, 60	13.09
10	36, 37, 38, (62 included in full in Sequence 7)	13.10
11	(CF26) (CF28) 90, 1, 101, (CF34) 107, 67, 102	13.11
12	(CF29) Late Saxon boundary ditch	13.12

² Editor's note: Anna Slowikowski discussed issues relating to the dating of these wares both in the fabric descriptions [55] and in the pottery discussion section [57].