

THE ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT AT STADEN NEAR BUXTON: THE 1984 AND 1985/86 EXCAVATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The settlement (Fig. 1) was partly excavated in 1981 and 1983 (Makepeace, 1983; 1987). In 1984 a series of small excavations was conducted adjacent to the 1981 excavation. The aim was to examine two small terraces south of the house enclosure. (A third small terrace was recorded (Makepeace, 1983: 77) in the first report.) During the summers of 1985 and 1986, excavations were conducted in the central area known as 'Limepiece'. It was in here that the first direct evidence of R. Woolecroft's 1926 excavations came to light, confirming and amplifying the archival record of his activities (Makepeace, 1987: 31-34). The excavations were confined to two major physical features at the western section of the central area: i) a terraced, banked enclosure; and ii) a level, banked area. These features formed part of a complex of other domestic enclosures, banks and features as yet unidentified.

THE EXCAVATIONS

1. The 1984 excavations

The two terraces examined in 1984 were 3.00 and 3.50 metres long respectively, and *c.* 1.50 metres wide. They were constructed of weathered surface stones; gentle slopes had formed behind each of their revetments. No specific indication of their use was found; they may have been constructed as platforms for agricultural or storage purposes, and are perhaps comparable to the hayrick stands at Wormhill, Derbyshire (Hart, 1976).

Platform 1 (Fig. 2)

This is the highest and most southerly of the three that have been found. The platform is rectangular in shape. Its surface is formed of large, weathered limestone blocks. To the west, a number of the larger stones were set on edge, creating a revetment, at right angles to the platform-surface. Behind the revetment, smaller packing stones had been placed as infill. From amongst these, bones (see Appendix) and pottery were recovered, which is perhaps an indication that the platform had been constructed during occupation. Placed on top of the revetment wall, near the top centre of the platform, was a fragment of a very large, flat, used gritstone quern (Fig. 9: 6).

Platform 2 (Fig. 2)

The second platform is slightly larger than the preceding, but is composed of smaller weathered stones, and has a less substantial revetment wall, constructed of somewhat larger limestone blocks than the rest of the platform. Like the first platform, it is rectangular in shape. It appeared that it had been initially created from material scraped up into a low ridge: stones were then

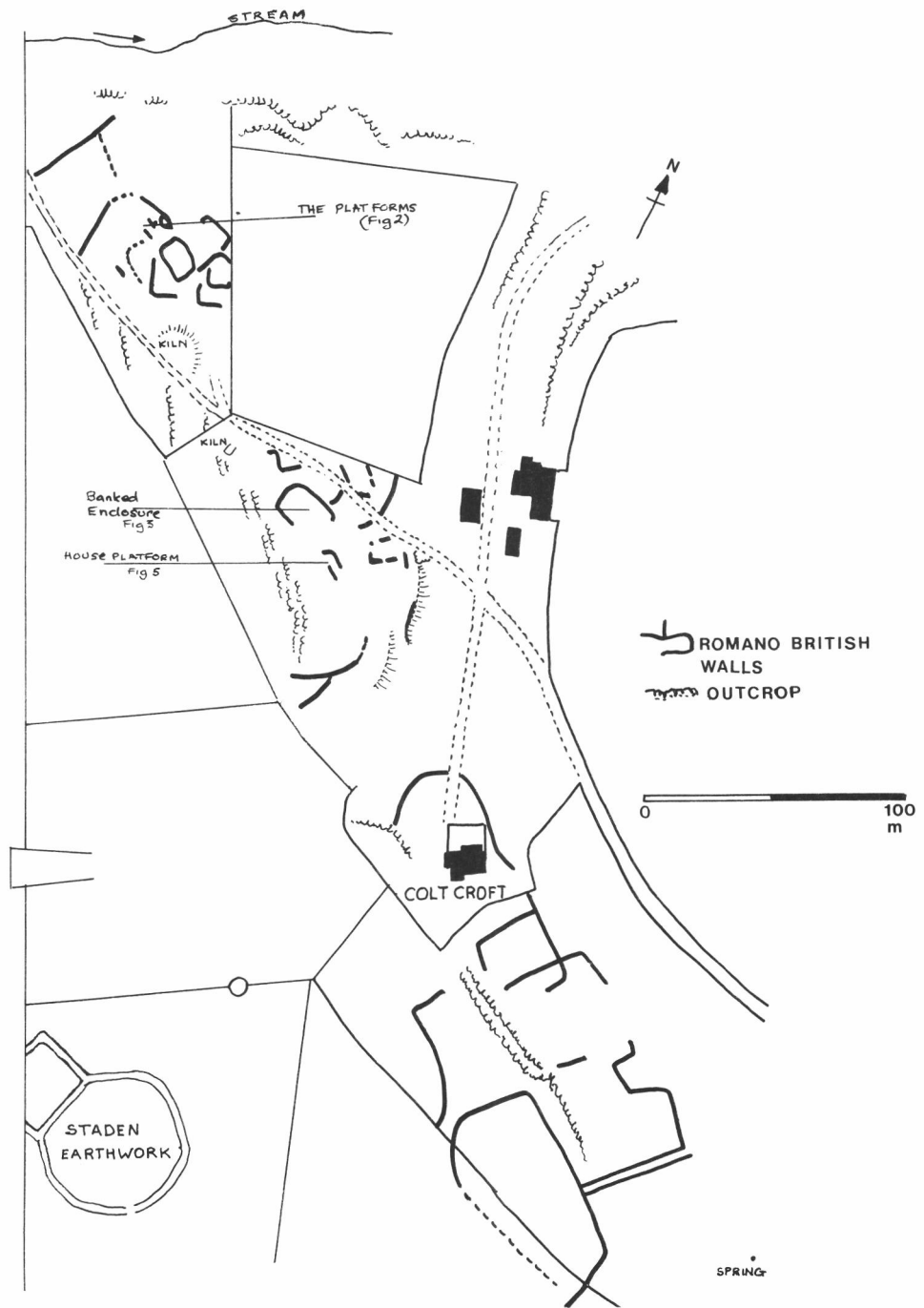


Fig. 1 Staden Romano-British settlement: site plan.

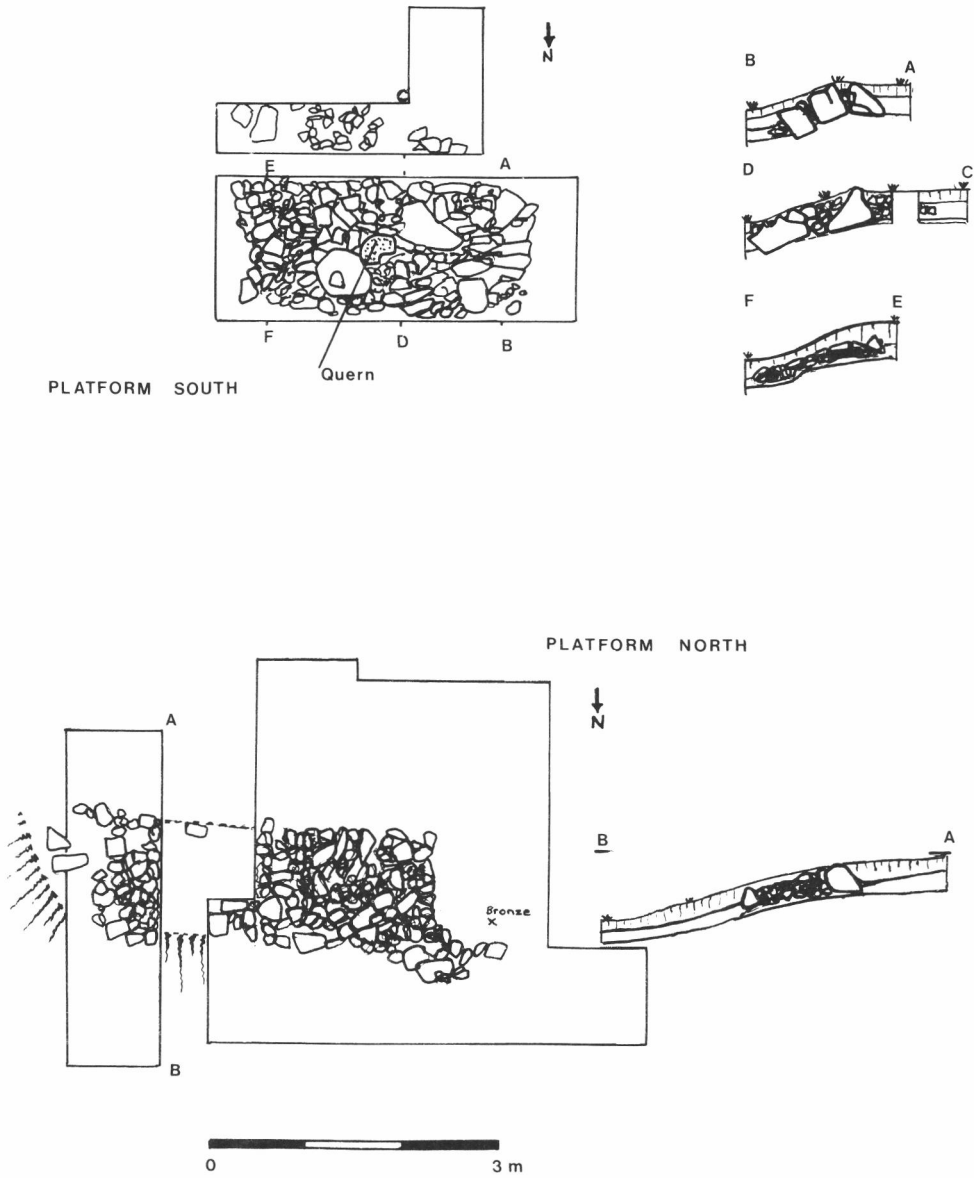


Fig. 2 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1984 platforms.

placed on top to form the revetment. Pottery and bones (see Appendix) were found throughout the construction, again a suggestion that it had been built of occupation debris. At the western side of the platform a bronze wire loop, from a trumpet- or headstud-style brooch, was recovered.

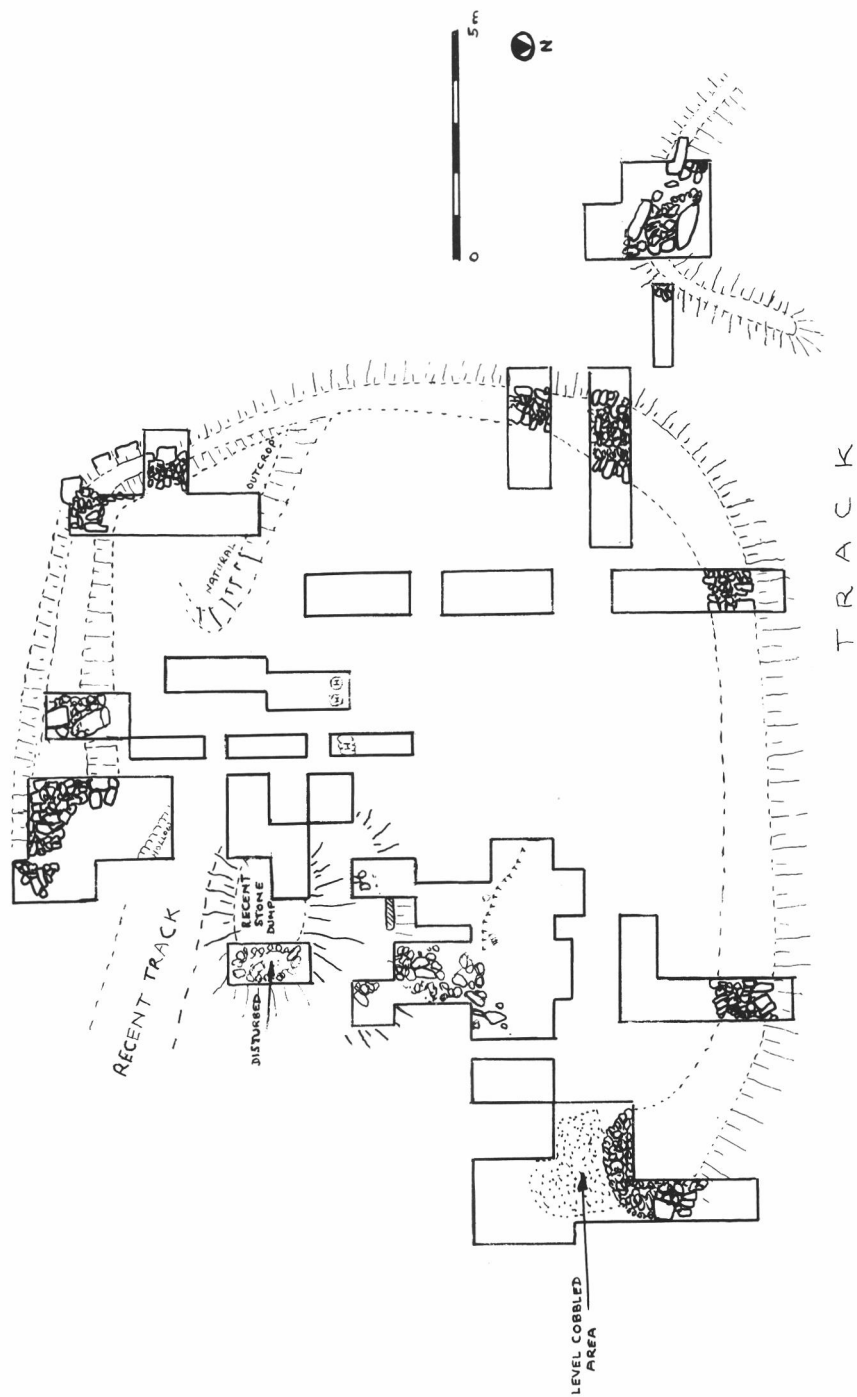


Fig. 3 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 enclosure — structure.

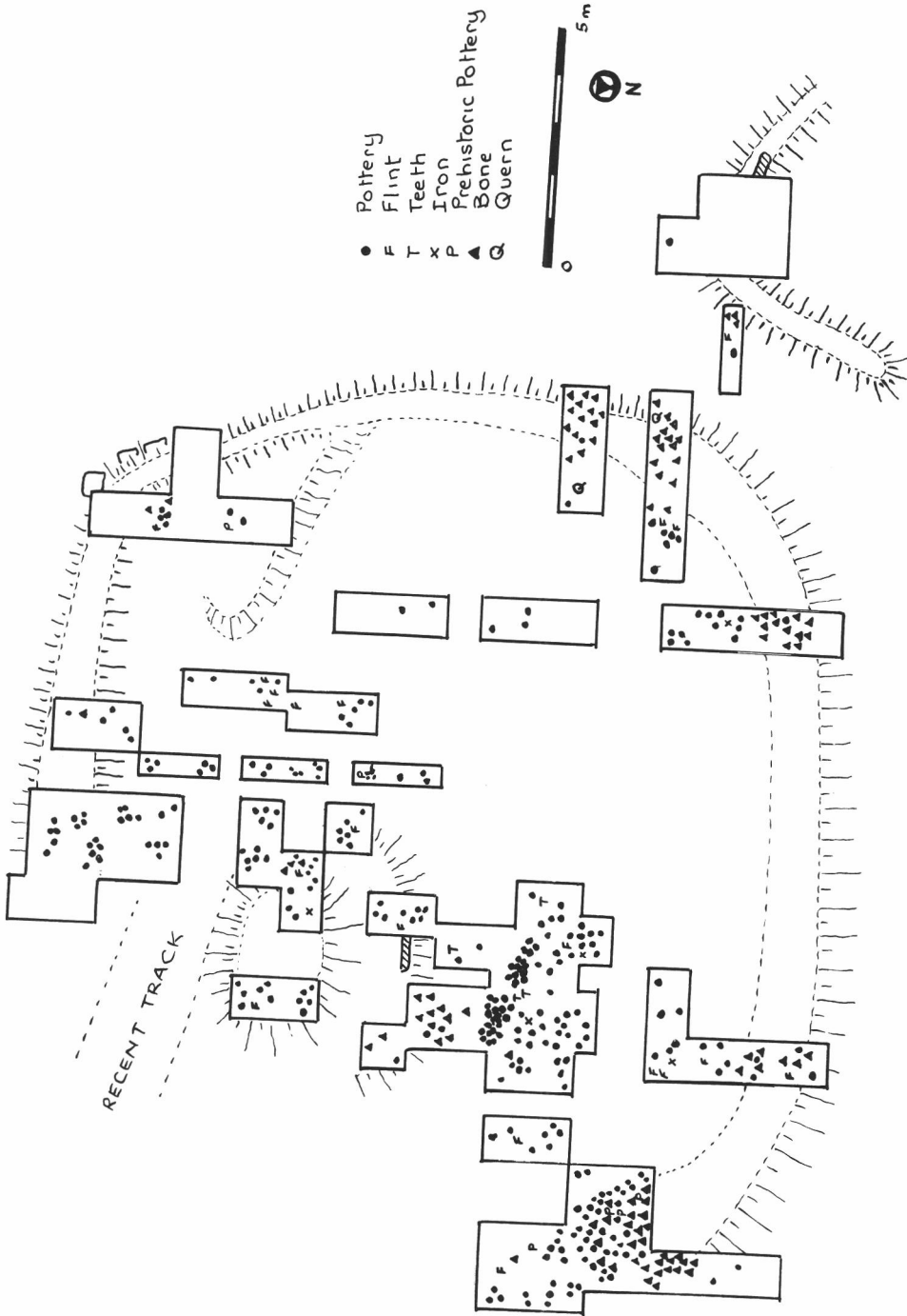


Fig. 4 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 enclosure — distribution of finds.

No post-holes were found behind or near these structures to help indicate their use; it is obvious, however, that they were constructed for a specific purpose.

2. The 1985/86 excavations

The terraced, banked enclosure (Figs 3, 4)

This can be described as roughly 'C'-shaped, and was constructed of weathered limestone with larger stones forming a revetted wall. The space within the enclosure was uneven, except for a small level area in the western half. The north-eastern area had been greatly disturbed by land clearance and a possible trackway, cut through to the lime-kilns nearby. This track seems to have destroyed part of a wall, but too little was left to be definite about it. The northern terraced wall had been constructed on a natural outcrop of limestone, thus enhancing the terraced nature of the enclosure. Two querns were found: i) a saddle quern, in the make-up of the enclosure wall; and ii) a fluted, flat quern, a few feet away in the deep loam behind the terrace wall. Several flints were found scattered throughout the area, a discovery which supports the hypothesis that the area had been occupied from a very early date, and at least during the neolithic period (Makepeace, 1983: 85). Bone remains were mainly confined to the walls and immediately adjacent areas, where they had been preserved by the alkaline nature of the soils. Other prehistoric sherds were found scattered within the enclosure. These sherds appear to be very different from neolithic pottery in that they are much coarser, harder and better fired. Some fragments appear to be of burnt clay, and it is possible that certain of these sherds are late-Iron Age and perhaps contemporary with the beehive- or Hunsbury-type querns found on the platform (see below). Fragments of broken tile, corroded iron objects including nails, and some lead may also be interpreted as the remains of agricultural activity on the site.

The main concentrations of Romano-British pottery were found in the north-western area, near the incurving arm of the enclosure. Some pottery was discovered where a fairly level area had been strewn with smaller stones or cobbles to make a distinctive 'floor'; also, nearby this feature, pottery had been packed behind a shallow curving area cut into the slope. To the west, the area consisted of thick, relatively undisturbed loam. Some lead smelting was indicated by lead ore and small amounts of charcoal, but not enough to suggest a bole.

The platform (house) (Figs 5, 6, 7)

This is located east of the 'C' enclosure, and formed an elongated semi-rectangular area constructed on a natural outcrop of limestone with small weathered stones forming a raised platform. Slightly larger stones formed the outer edge of the platform, especially on the northern section where it joined a smaller revetted wall. Some disturbance near the centre of the platform was found, as well as the trenches of the 1926 excavation; possibly both are contemporary. A possible stone-lined shallow post-hole was found near the southern edge of the platform.

Artefacts, bone and pottery were found scattered over the surface and within the floor of the platform where, as in the case of the terraced enclosure, there was also prehistoric (late-Iron Age) pottery. Two fragments of gritstone Hunsbury-type beehive-querns were found, one incorporated into the platform edge, the other slightly further away. Comparison of their grinding angles and shape suggests that these two fragments belong as a pair. The upper stone has a deep hopper and worn grinding surface. The lower stone has a sharp pointed drill-hole and angled grinding surface, with a ring groove around the base. Both are made from gritstone and show pick-pecked marks.

The platform was attached to a revetted bank and small terrace to the east. The last was made level with small packing stones; the occasional pottery sherd is present on the surface.



Fig. 5 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 platform — structure.

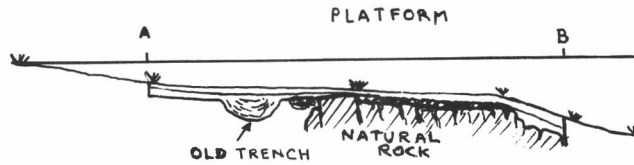


Fig.6 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 platform — section.

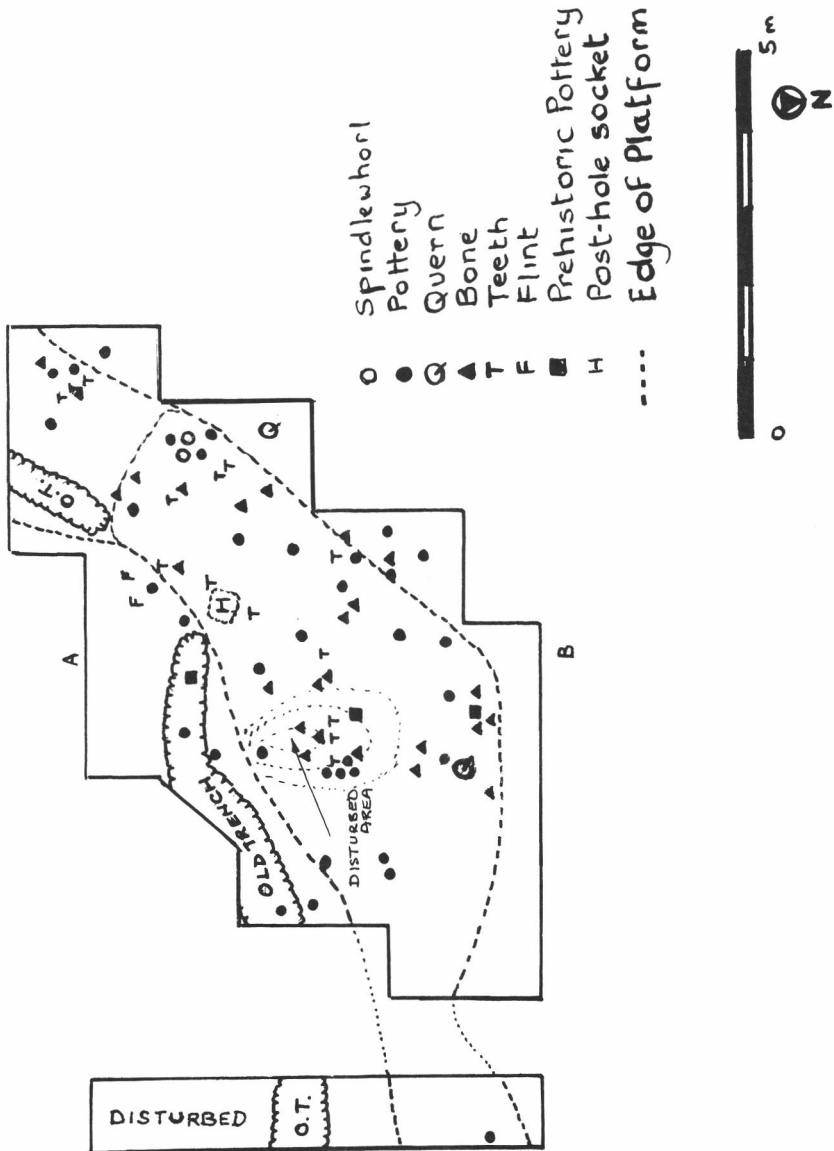


Fig. 7 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 platform — distribution of finds.

THE FINDS

1. The 1984 excavations*Pottery* (Figs 8, 9)

- 1 Derbyshire ware. Base. Fig. 8: 1. Blue-grey exterior, blue-grey interior; well fired hard fabric, cord marks on base.
- 2 Derbyshire ware. Base sherd. Fig. 8: 2. Red-brown exterior, red interior with red core; cord marks on base.
- 3 Derbyshire ware. Base. Fig. 8: 3. Similar to no. 2, could be from the same pot; cord marks on base.
- 4 Derbyshire ware. Rim. Fig. 8: 4. Red-brown exterior, red-blue/grey interior; grey, core-everted simple form.
- 5 Derbyshire ware. Rims. Fig. 8: 5. Everted forms; simple early forms: a) grey fabric — grey core; b) buff fabric — buff core; c) buff fabric — buff core; d) grey-red fabric — red core; e) buff fabric — grey core; f) buff-grey fabric — buff core; g) brown-red fabric — red core.
- 6 Black burnished ware. Flanged bowl. Fig. 9: 1. Lattice pattern, sandy texture; cf. Gillam type 219 (in Webster, 1971) — AD 120-150.

Quern (Fig. 9: 6)

Large flat gritstone quern, 12.00 cms thick and *c.* 64.00 cms in diameter; ring groove on outer rim on upper surface.

Other objects (Fig. 9)

Flint flakes (Fig. 9: 2).

Iron nail head (Fig. 9: 3).

Iron object (Fig. 9: 4): ring?

Brooch (Fig. 9: 5). Bronze wire loop (possibly trumpet type); early-second century AD (Collingwood Rii, in Hattat, 1982: 108); decoration on cross piece and ends.

2. The 1985/86 excavations*Pottery* (Fig. 10)

- 1 Derbyshire ware. Rim and body sherds. Fig. 10: 1. Red exterior, grey interior; everted rim.
- 2 Derbyshire ware. Rim sherds. Fig. 10: 2. Grey exterior, brown interior; everted rim.
- 3 Derbyshire ware. Rim sherds. Fig. 10: 3. Red exterior, red interior; everted rim.
- 4 Derbyshire ware. Body-base sherds. Fig. 10: 4. Grey exterior, brown interior.
- 5 Rims. Fig. 10: 5. a) Derbyshire ware: grey exterior, grey interior, red core, everted rim; b) Derbyshire ware: grey exterior, grey interior, grey core, everted rim; c) Derbyshire ware: grey exterior, grey interior, grey core, everted rim; d) Derbyshire ware: blue-red exterior and interior, grey core, everted rim; e) Derbyshire ware: brown-grey exterior, light buff interior, everted rim; f) Derbyshire ware: red-orange exterior and interior, green core, everted rim; g) Orange ware; h) Buff ware: poorly fired, smooth finish; i) Buff ware: poorly fired; j) Derbyshire ware: hard, blue-grey, warped rolled-flange rim; k) Derbyshire ware: everted rim; l) Derbyshire ware: orange/brown exterior, grey core, poorly fired; m) Derbyshire ware: similar to j).
- 6 Rusticated ware. Body sherd. Fig. 10: 6. Grey fabric, random rustication.
- 7 Rims. Fig. 10: 7. a) Light grey-black ware: sandy texture, micaceous, grey core; b) Black burnished ware: brown core, sandy texture, possibly Gillam type 25 (in Webster, 1971) — AD 120-160; c) Light grey ware: thin-fine fabric, everted rim; d) Grey ware: coarser than c), warped everted rim; e) Grey ware: fine fabric.
- 8 Black burnished ware. Fig. 10: 8. Lattice pattern, sandy texture.

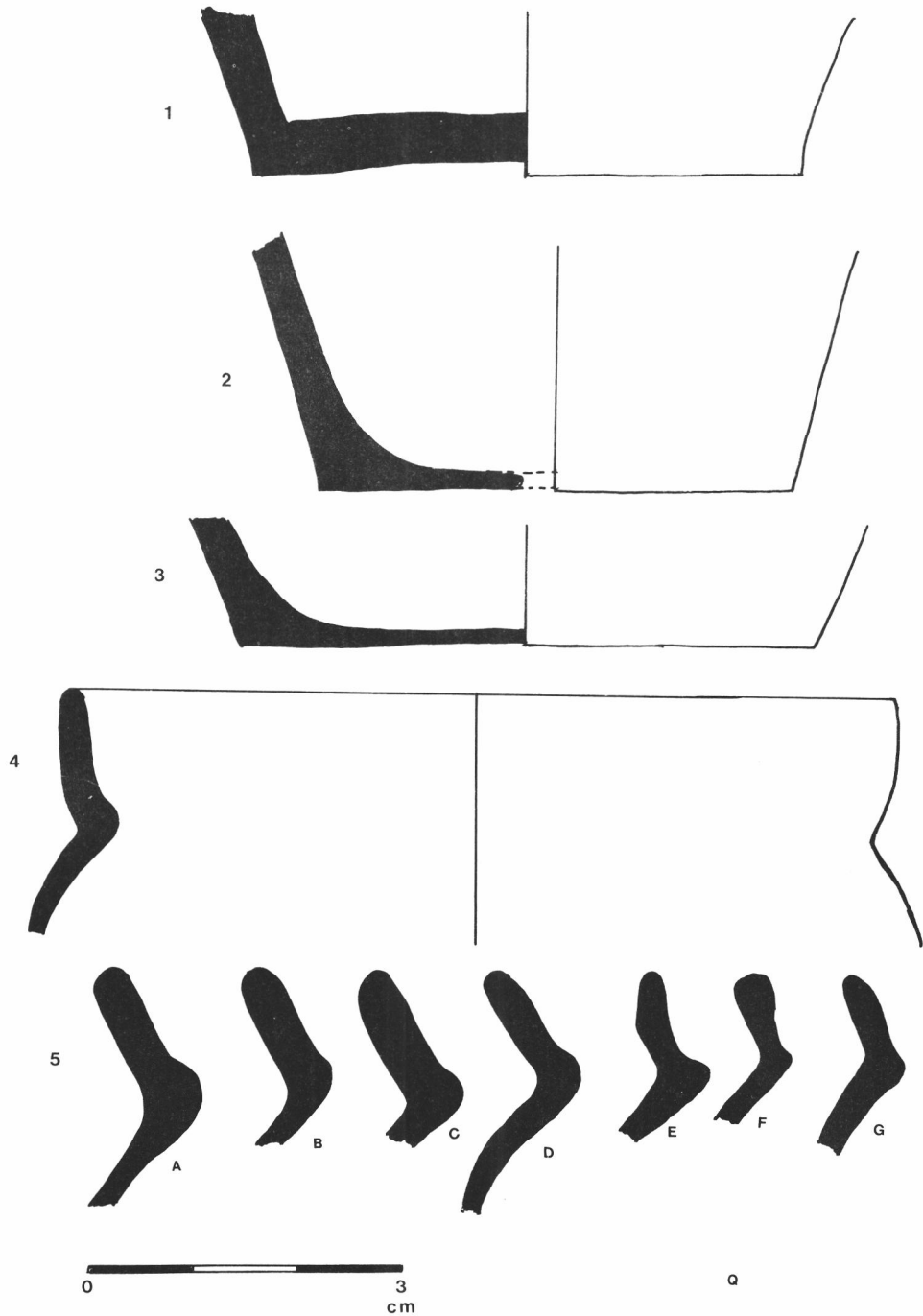


Fig. 8 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1984 excavations — pottery.

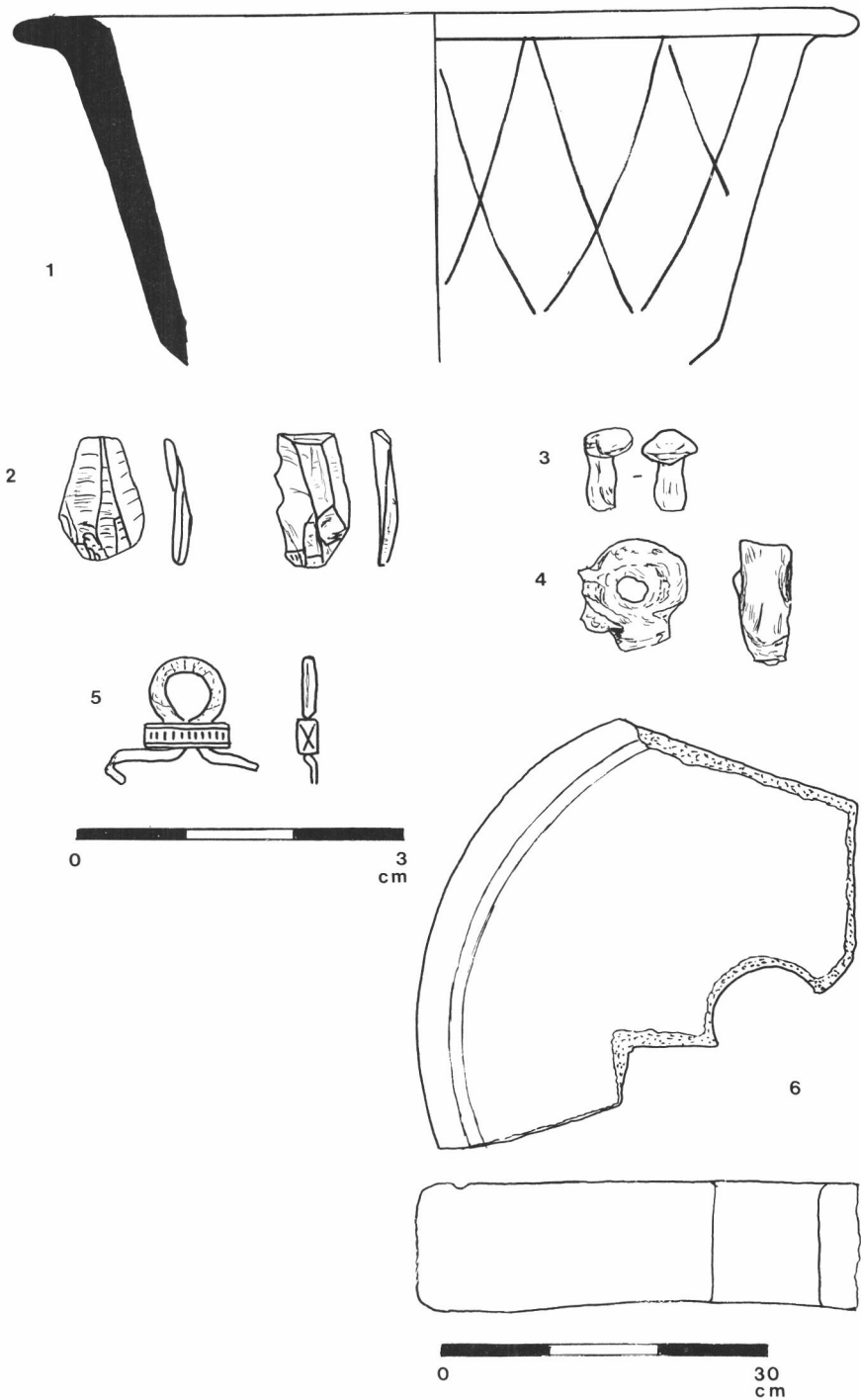


Fig. 9 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1984 excavations — pottery and other finds.

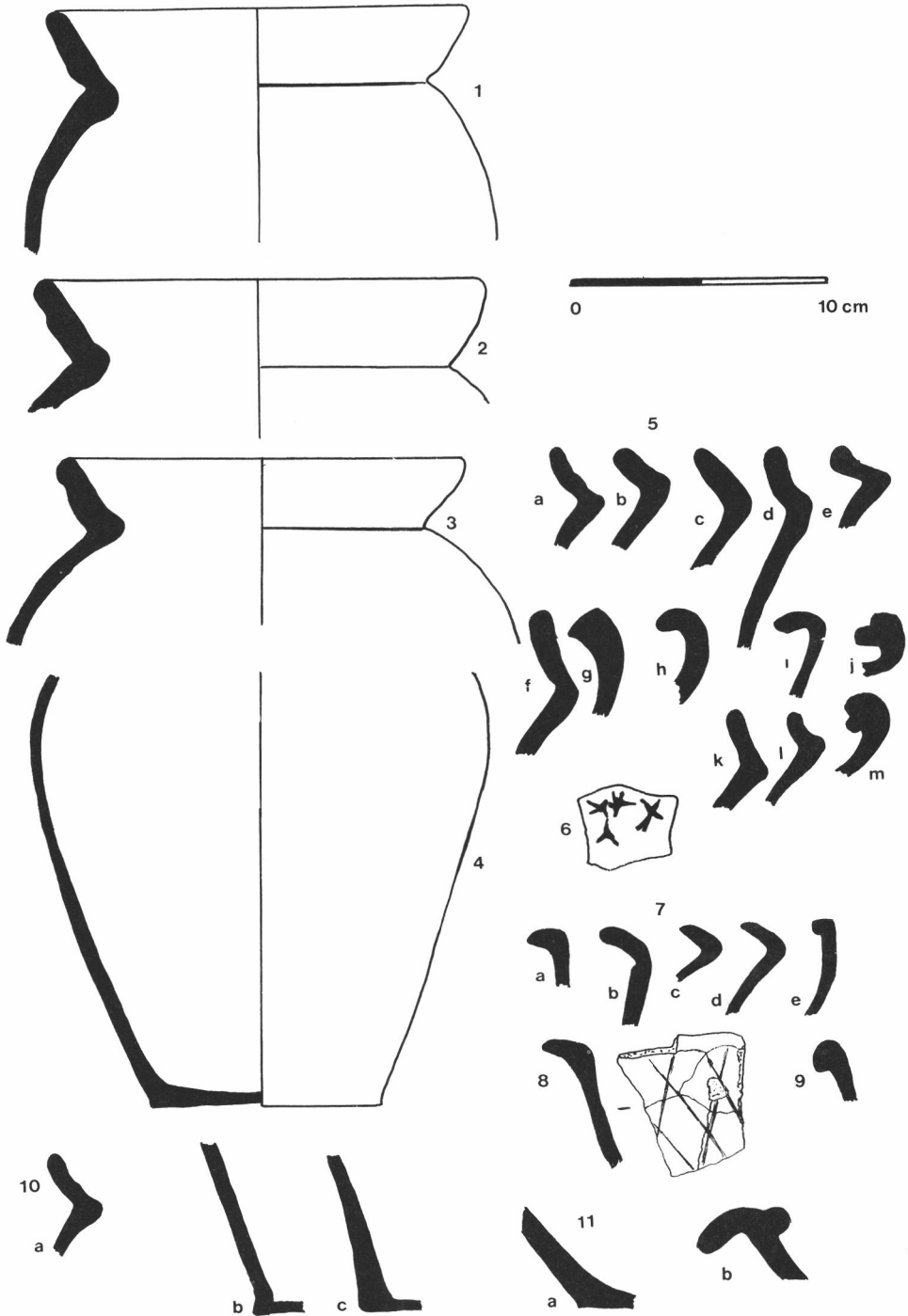


Fig. 10 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 excavations — pottery.

- 9 Grey ware. Rim sherd. Fig. 10: 9. Grey interior and exterior.
- 10 Derbyshire ware. Fig. 10: 10. a) Rim sherd: grey exterior and interior, red core; b) Base: red exterior, grey interior; c) Base: grey exterior, brown interior.
- 11 Mortaria. Fig. 10: 11. a) Body-base sherd: cream white fabric; b) Rim sherd: cream white fabric.

Querns (Fig. 11)

- 1 Flat quern. Upperstone. Fig. 11: 1. Millstone grit; fluting or ribbing on outer edge and upper surface; some wear on grinding surface.
- 2 Saddle quern. Fig. 11: 2. Fine grained sandstone; dished or worn upper surface; slightly burnt on edges.
- 3 Beehive quern. Upperstone. Fig. 11: 3. Hunsbury-type, millstone grit; deep hopper, picked-pecked on outer surface; grinding surface worn.
- 4 Beehive quern. Lowerstone. Fig. 11: 4. Hunsbury-type, millstone grit; medium shape, angled grinding surface (11°); picked-pecked on outer surface; ring pecked groove on base.

Not illustrated:

- i Fragment of possible rubbing stone; gritstone, slight wear on surface.
- ii Fragment of quern; gritstone, wear on worn surface.

Other objects (Fig. 12)

Spindlewhorl. Fig. 12: 1. Grey-green shale; heavily flaked outer surfaces, milled or cut grooved outer edge.

Nail. Fig. 12: 2. Iron; square section, corrosion on surface (other iron fragments found not illustrated).

Flints. Fig. 12: 3. a) Small scraper; b) and c) Small flint flakes; d) Flint fragment, worked on two edges: possible arrowhead.

Tile. Fig. 12: 4. i) Brick tile fragment, red, diagonal groove on one surface, 2.50 cms thick; ii) Brick tile fragment, red, two diagonal crossing grooves on surface, c. 2.50 cms thick.

Not illustrated

- i 17 smaller fragments of tile.
- ii 5 pieces of iron.
- iii 10 small sherds of samian ware, one with some decoration.
- iv 3 pieces of haematite.
- v 2 pieces of smelted lead, 1 piece of galena.

3. The 1981 excavations

Further information on the finger ring (Makepeace, 1983)

Bronze ring. With overlapping ends, thickening at bezel, centre setting; blue enamel with four white spots inserted at the main cardinal points. Similar rings have been found at Traprain Law (Cree, 1922-23) and Newstead (Curle, 1911), where a date in the second century AD is suggested.

DISCUSSION

The dating evidence for the 1984 terraces is congruent with that of the previous two reports (Makepeace, 1983; 1987), i.e. late-first and second centuries AD. Derbyshire ware is again represented by early forms—many poorly fired and varying in hardness of the fabric and colour. These forms appear to be transitional in the development of Derbyshire ware. No early-first century or late-third and fourth century AD material has been found.

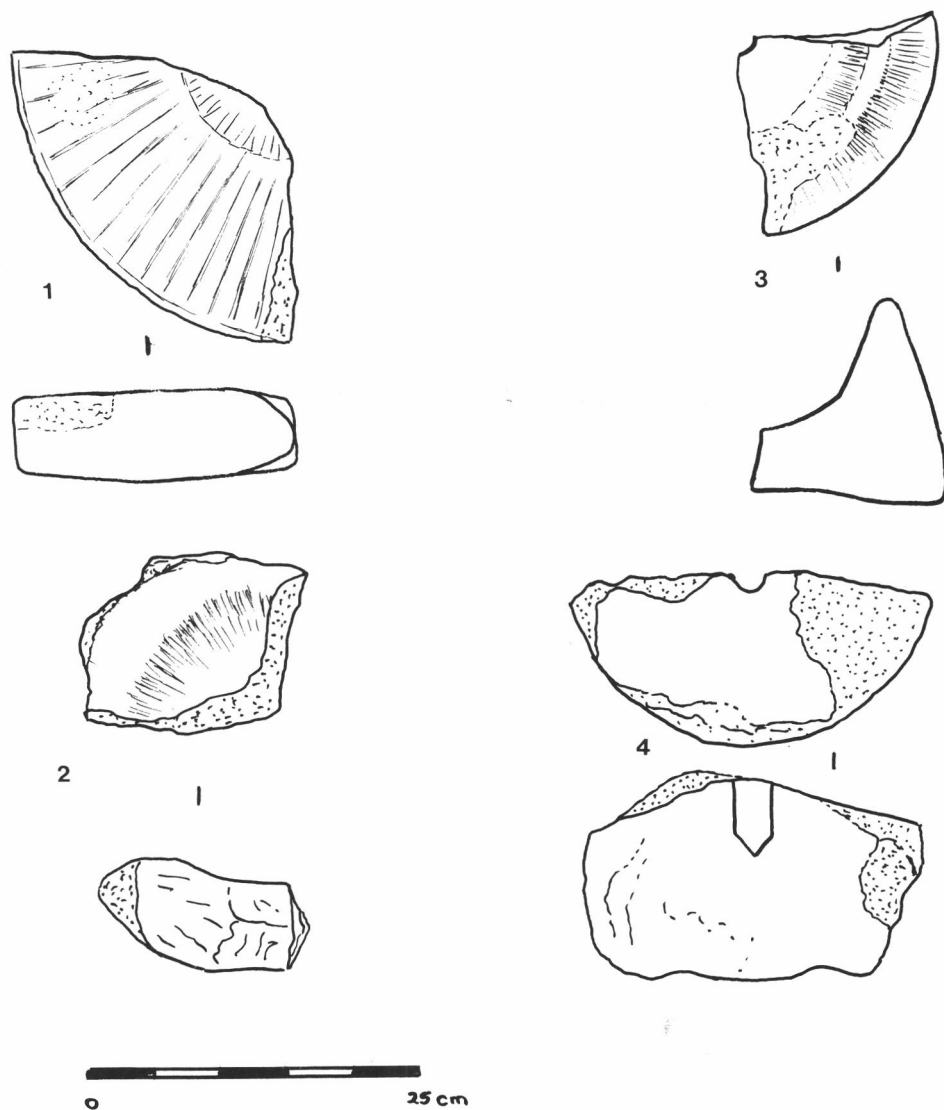


Fig. 11 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 excavations — querns.

In respect of the 1985/86 excavations, while the C-shaped enclosure seems to have accommodated agricultural activities, the level banked area is probably best interpreted as a house platform, with levelled working area to the east. No hearth was found, but the post hole and other features would seem to support such an hypothesis.

APPENDIX: ANALYSIS OF THE THE BONES (MB)

(See table on page 32)

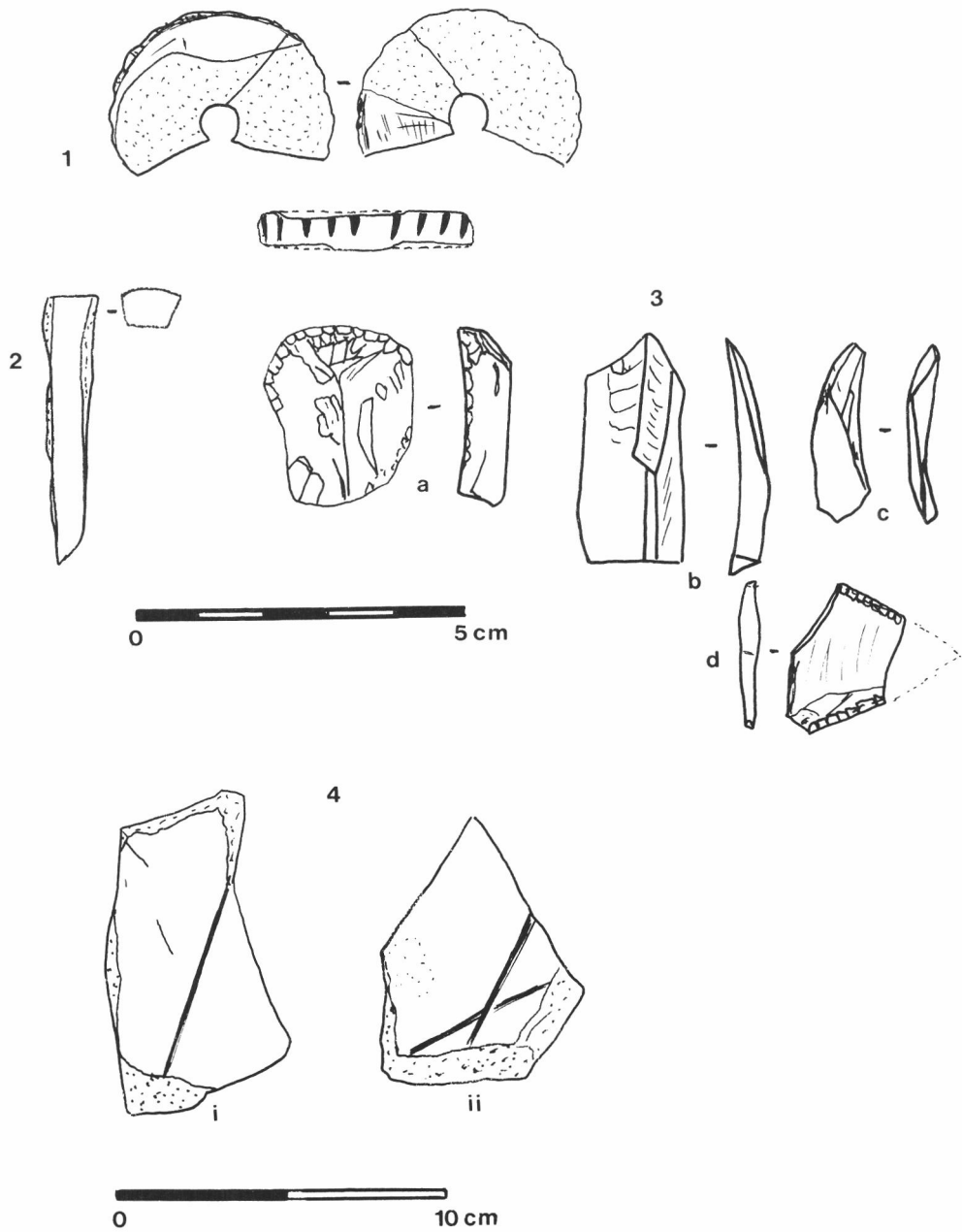


Fig. 12 Staden Romano-British settlement: the 1985/86 excavations — other finds.

	PLATFORMS			HOUSE SITE			TERRACE SITE			ENLOSURE (DAJ 107)					
	Ox	Sheep Goat	Horse Deer	Ox	Sheep Goat	Horse Deer	Ox	Sheep Goat	Horse Deer	Ox	Sheep Goat	Horse Deer	Other		
Teeth	10	2	10				25	3	4		5				
Upper	12	5	6	2			22	8	3		7		1 dog		
Lower			1										man- dible		
Deciduous	7			1	1		2	2							
Mandible				1			1								
Vertebra	5			2											
Rib	2			3	1		3				1				
Scapula	2			1	1		6				1				
Humerus	2		1	1			3				2				
Radius/Ulna	3			1			11				3				
Metacarpal							1								
Pelvis															
Femur															
Tibia							6								
Astragalus	1						2								
Calcaneum							3								
Metatarsal	5		1				3		1						
Phalanx				1			3				1				
Other							2						1 frgt. shed antler		
Fragments															
c. 100 fragments probably of Ox				c. 50 fragments nearly all of Ox				c. 100 fragments probably of Ox				c. 100 fragments of Ox			

Majority of Ox and Sheep/Goat have been slaughtered at young adult or sub-adult stage

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