

EARLIER FIRST MILLENNIUM POTTERY FROM THE EXCAVATIONS AT HOLLINGBURY CAMP, SUSSEX, 1967–9

by Sue Hamilton

INTRODUCTION

A total of 488 sherds were recovered during the 1967–9 excavations at Hollingbury. Of these 80 sherds had diagnostic features of form or decoration. Eighty-six sherds came from recently disturbed contexts. Pottery from stratigraphically secure contexts was distributed between five hut floors, two pits, the old ground surface below the rampart, the tail of the rampart and the tumble in front of the rampart. The pottery appears to be part of the same assemblage as the sherds recovered from the 1914 (Toms) and 1932 (Curwen) excavations and discussed by Cunliffe (1966). The pottery would seem to represent one general phase of 'Early Iron Age' occupation.* These conclusions are further considered below. In addition to the study of form and decoration the pottery received detailed fabric analysis.

POTTERY FABRICS

Fabric Analysis

Detailed studies of fabric and composition involved disaggregating sherds and separating inclusions which were then studied at $\times 30$ magnification. The sherds were primarily disaggregated with the aid of a vice and thereafter a mortar and pestle. These and subsequent procedures of preparation and analysis have been described for similar Iron Age wares from Sussex (Hamilton 1982, 82). Segments on pie charts

(Figs. 1, 2) visually summarize the relative percentage of inclusions for illustrated sampled sherds. The number of inclusions in a 1-g. sample is noted in the centre of each pie chart (see Hamilton 1977, 85 for discussion of the interpretation of such pie charts). Size categories of inclusions are noted according to the Wentworth Scale (Krumbein & Pettijohn 1938, 30).

Fabric Categories

The 'Early Iron Age' pottery comprised three main fabric types, namely sandy coarser wares, flinty coarse wares and a fine burnished ware with fine flint, sand and iron oxide inclusions. The coarser wares represented the main part of the pottery assemblage and are associated with shouldered jars together with straight-sided and convex-sided vessels. The sandy coarser wares are more often associated with the former vessel type and the flinty ware with the latter two forms. The burnished fine ware is exclusively associated with bipartite bowls. The sherds in other fabric have no diagnostic features of style. Fabric and context alone served as dating evidence. A small number of possible middle Bronze Age, late Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon wares was indicated on this basis.

The Coarse Wares

The major fabric division was between wares predominated by quartz sand inclusions and those predominated by flint inclusions.

The quartz inclusions are of low angularity and are dominated by medium and coarse sand size grades. The size, colouring and morphology

*The use of this period term is discussed under the section on affinities and date.

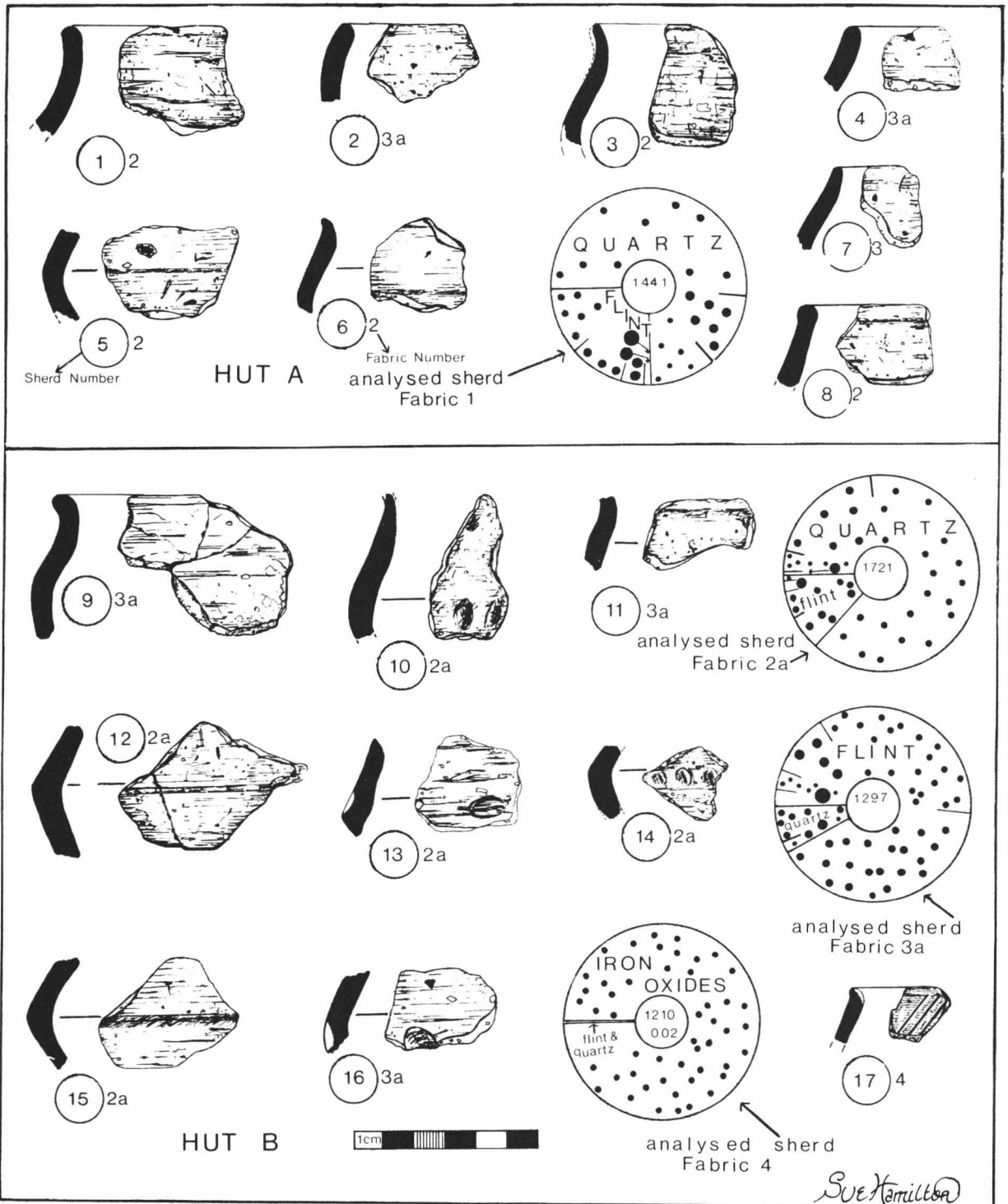


Fig. 1. Earlier first millennium pottery from Hollingbury, 1967-9.

of the quartz suggests the same source of quartz sand for each of the coarseware fabrics (see discussion of source). The quantity of quartz present is indicative of deliberately added temper.

The flint inclusions are calcined and angular resulting from the manufacture of temper by percussion of fire-cracked flint. Medium and then coarse sand size grades of flint predominate, with the exception of Fabric 1 which is coarser.

Some sherds were too eroded to ascribe to specific fabric categories but were clearly coarse wares rather than fine wares.

Fabric 1: sand and coarse flint (2.7%)

The sherds are thick with sections averaging 11 mm. The exterior and interior surfaces are variably red or black in colour and the cores are reduced. The fabric is distinctive in incorporating very coarse sand grades together with fragments of granule and pebble size of calcined flint tempering. These large flint inclusions visually dominate the surface of the fabric. Fine flint inclusions were lacking. The analysed sherd also incorporated substantial quantities of quartz sand.

The size and quantity of the flint inclusions resembles that found in local middle to later Bronze Age coarse wares. The ware can be compared with the analysis of Bronze Age Fabric 1a at Bishopstone (Bell 1977, 46; Hamilton 1977, 88). One sherd was found on the ground surface below the rampart. Others were found in clearly 'Iron Age' (six) or disturbed (five) contexts. The percentage of sherds in this fabric is similar to that for residual Bronze Age sherds on other Sussex sites (Hamilton 1977, 88). Alternatively the fabric may represent the extreme upper size limit of flint inclusions in the Iron Age flint-tempered wares. The sherds were not unduly eroded.

Analysed sherd: Flint (26%); P 0.5%, G 4%, VC 13.1%, C 36%, M 46.4%
Quartz sand (74%); M 70.2%, C 15.4%, F 14.4%*

Fabric 2: sandy ware (19.3%)

Sherds have reduced to buff-coloured exterior and interior surfaces and their cores are reduced. Their sections average 7 mm. thick. Large quantities of quartz sand are present while flint inclusions are negligible.

Analysed sherd: Quartz sand (99.8%); VC 1.6%, C 28%, M 66.7%, F 3.7%
Flint (0.2%); VC 3 inclusions, C 1 inclusion, M 1 inclusion

Fabric 2a: sand with flint (22.1%)

Sherds have reduced to buff-coloured exterior and interior surfaces and their cores are reduced. Their sections average 7 mm. thick. Substantial quantities of quartz are present and also a small amount of flint.

Analysed sherd: Quartz sand (87%); VC 0.9%, C 22.5%, M 72.9%, F 3.7%
Flint (13%); G 2.8%, VC 11.5%, C 43.8%, M 38.2%, F 3.7%

Fabric 3: flint (13.5%) and *Fabric 3a:* flint and sand (12.5%)

Sherds have a variable exterior and interior surface colour: black/red/buff. The cores are reduced. Sherd sections average 8 mm. thick. The sherds are dominated by flint inclusions. Fabric 3a has a minor amount of quartz sand.
Analysed sherd (Fabric 3a): Flint (92%); VC 7.4%, C 31.7%, M 57.9%, F 3%
Quartz sand (8%); C 18.2%, M 81.8%

Eroded sherds (Er) (9.6%)

These coarseware sherds have a proportion of their inclusions eroded out. The sherds are evenly distributed throughout most of the site's contexts.

The Fine Wares

Fabric 4: burnished with fine sand, flint and iron oxides (18%)

Sherds have black or grey exterior and interior surfaces and cores. The sherd sections are thin and average 6 mm. The better preserved sherds have burnished exteriors.

Analysed sherd: Iron oxides; M 98.9%
Quartz sand; M 0.5%
Flint; M 0.4%

Post Early Iron Age sherds (2.3%)

Grog ware (G)

Two grog tempered sherds were of the fabric type designated 'Cooking Jar Fabric' (Green 1976, 258) and renamed 'East Sussex Ware' (Green 1977, 154). The ware was commonly used locally during the later Iron Age and early Roman periods.

Multigritted ware (MG)

One sherd tempered with multicoloured grits was comparable to Fabric 2 of the Anglo-Saxon pottery from Bishopstone (Bell 1977, 228)

Romano-British grey ware (RB)

Six body sherds and one base sherd.

POTTERY SOURCES

The Coarse Wares

Deposits of clay-with-flints cap the Chalk both on and near the site. They occur to a thickness of greater than one metre and could have provided a source of local potting clay. Flint for tempering could similarly have been obtained locally either from the clay-with-flints or from the Chalk.

A riverine or littoral source for the sand tempering is suggested by its degree of particle size sorting and by the low angularity of the grains and their surface morphology. There is an absence of present-day river systems in the immediate vicinity of the site and the palaeo-drainage systems are filled with Combe deposits

*Measurements along the longest axis; P=pebble 64-4 mm., G=granule 4-2 mm., VC=very coarse 2-1 mm., C=coarse 1-0.5 mm., M=medium 0.5-0.25 mm., F=fine 0.25-0.125 mm.: Wentworth's size classification (Krumbein & Pettijohn 1938, 80).

which suggests an absence of active rivers at any time during the Flandrian. It is possible that the sand could have been derived from small outliers of the Tertiary Woolwich and Reading Beds which occur on the South Downs near Brighton, Newhaven and Seaford (Edmunds 1935, 43). These deposits are sandier near their base where they rest on the Chalk. It is, however, the shelly clay beds of these deposits which are more accessible and which are known to have been exploited during the Iron Age and later as raw material for pottery and other ceramic products (Hamilton 1977, 92; Norris & Burstow 1950, 56). Field sampling, however, suggested the beach as a likely source for the sand tempering. The present beach is 4 km. away from Hollingbury. The Hollingbury sand tempering comprises transparent to translucent quartz sand together with quartz, rose quartz and flint granule and pebble inclusions. The medium sand and larger size grades have a frosted morphology typical of the abrasion associated with marine and littoral erosion processes. The larger granule and pebble inclusions are more clearly polygenetic than the lower size grades and in this respect, as well as in the surface morphology, the Hollingbury sand tempering is comparable with present-day samples taken from Brighton beach.

The Fine Wares

The iron oxide wares belong to a distinct group of fabrics which have been recognized at a number of Sussex sites (Hamilton 1980, 203). The substantial presence of iron oxide grains suggests a highly ferruginous clay source within the Wealden Series. The richest such ferruginous strata are associated with Wadhurst Clay (Gallois 1965, 26) and a High Wealden source has tentatively been suggested (Hamilton 1977, 93). The iron oxide wares could thus suggest a pattern of resource exploitation or pottery trade extending 20 km. inland from Hollingbury.

Conclusion

A consideration of 'Early Iron Age' pottery

fabrics from Hollingbury suggests exploitation of resources from both north and south of the Downs and the possibility of trade up to 20 km. inland.

THE NUMERICAL PRESENCE OF SHERDS BY CONTEXT

<i>Fabrics</i>										
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2a</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3a</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Er</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>MG</i>	<i>RB</i>	<i>Context</i>
1	10	8	15	4	12	6	1	1	7	Topsoil
7	51	13	12	14	21	10	—	—	—	Hut A
—	—	11	20	21	24	22	—	—	—	Hut B
2	12	7	7	—	4	—	—	—	—	Hut C
—	7	12	6	2	6	1	—	—	—	Hut D
—	5	14	1	—	2	3	—	—	—	Near Hut E
—	2	4	1	5	4	—	—	—	—	Near Pit DXLVI
1	—	3	4	4	4	1	—	—	—	Pit FXLV
—	7	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	Gully near Pit FXLV
—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Trial Hole
—	—	13	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	Tumble in front of rampart
1	—	16	—	2	9	2	1	—	—	Tail of rampart
—	—	2	—	1	—	1	1	—	—	Recent hole in tail of rampart
1	—	1	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	Ground surface below rampart

FORMS AND DECORATION (Figs. 1, 2)

The coarse wares: Fabrics 2, 2a, 3 and 3a

Diagnostic sherds comprised:

Tripartite shouldered jars; 10 flaring rims (e.g. Nos. 18, 22 and 28)

Bipartite jars/bowls; 2 proto-bead rims (e.g. No. 9)

1 upturned rounded rim (No. 7)

2 out-turned rounded rims (e.g. No. 3)

2 plain rounded rims (Nos. 4 and 8)

Convex-sided jars; 1 incurved rounded rim (No. 2)

1 flat-topped rim (No. 23)

Straight-sided, open-mouthed jars; 1 upright rounded rim (No. 25)

3 flat-topped rims (e.g. No. 21)

Bases; 21 sherds from flat bases (e.g. No. 5)

Decorations; 10 undecorated shoulder sherds (e.g. Nos. 6, 12, 15 and 26)

13 shoulder sherds with finger-tip impressions (e.g. Nos. 10, 13, 14, 16 and 24)

1 finger-impressed rim (No. 21)

1 fingernail-impressed shoulder (No. 27)

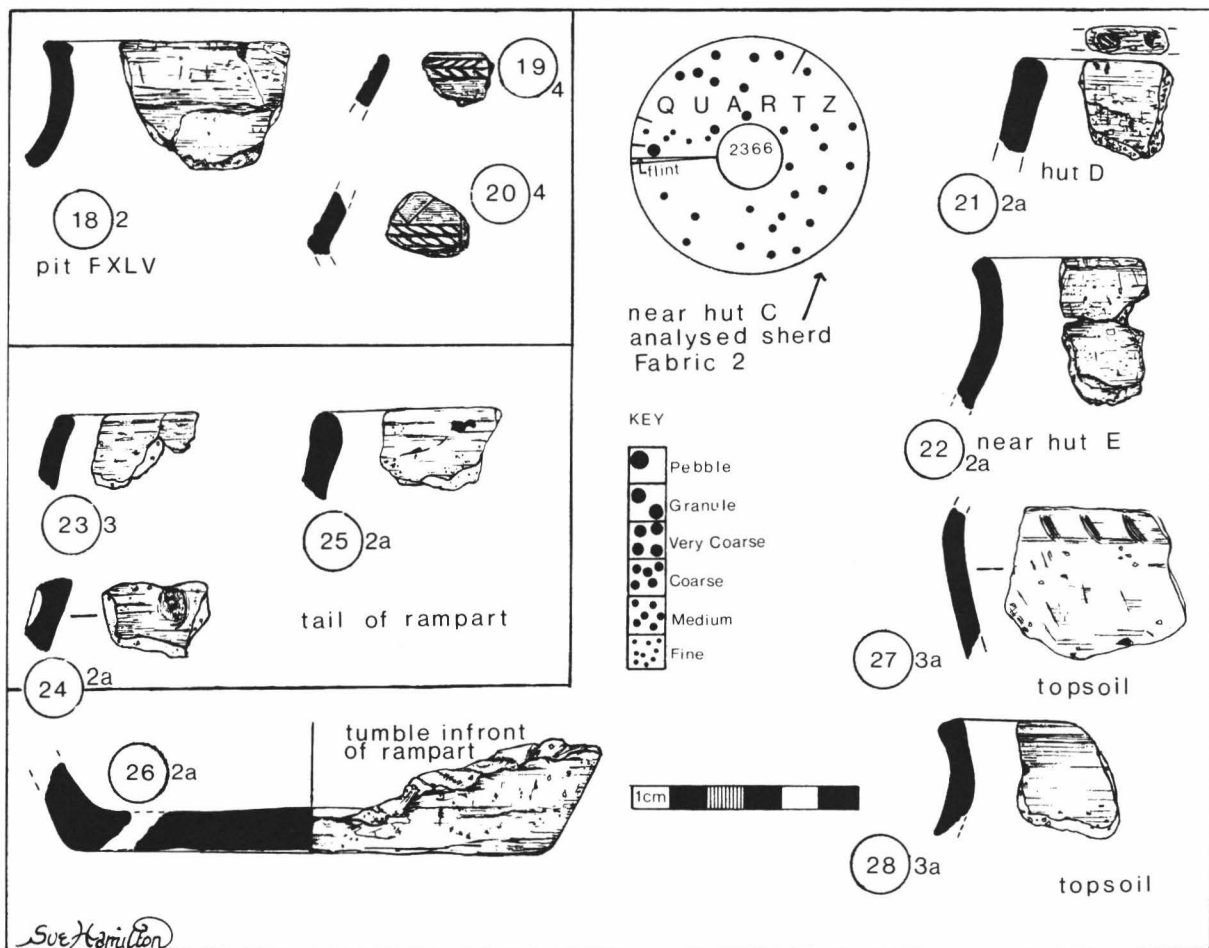


Fig. 2. Earlier first millennium pottery from Hollingbury, 1967-9.

The fine wares: Fabric 2

Diagnostic sherds comprised:

- 1 bipartite bowls; 2 upright rims with slight bead (Nos. 17 and 19)
- 2 undecorated shoulder sherds
- 3 shoulder sherds variously with grooves and cordons decorated with incised herringbone design, a shallow tooled triangle and oblique tooled lines (Nos. 17, 19 and 20)
- 4 sherds from flat bases

AFFINITIES AND DATE

Both in fabric and form the pottery assemblage is closely comparable with the pottery

from previous excavations at Hollingbury (Toms 1914; Curwen 1932). Cunliffe (1966), in reviewing the pottery from these earlier excavations, placed the Hollingbury material in the same style group as Caburn 1 ware (Hawkes 1939). He also recognized Caburn 1 type pottery from other Sussex sites including Stoke Clump, The Trundle and Highdown Hill (Cunliffe 1966, 117). The Caburn 1 assemblage was taken to include the following ceramic elements:

1. Tripartite shouldered jars with flaring rims. The vessels are of two qualities: fine, hard fabrics, usually with cordoned shoulder and

neck angles, and coarser gritty wares usually with fingernail-impressed decorated rims and shoulders.

2. Coarseware, straight-sided vessels with fingernail impresses or 'pie-crust' rims.
3. Fineware bipartite bowls with sharp shoulders and often beaded lips. The upper part of the body can be decorated with incised motifs and single and paired cordons.

The Hollingbury material fits within such an assemblage description.

Cunliffe later collated the Caburn 1 type material into his Kimmeridge–Caburn 'style zone' with a date range of 650–500 B.C. (Cunliffe 1974, 34). It is possible that this 'style' may represent a greater chronological span (Barrett 1980, 311) than originally allowed either by Hawkes (1939) or Cunliffe (1974). Sussex, however, lacks the necessary absolute dates to better define such a chronology. Reliance on comparisons from outside the region, for example the Thames Valley, indicates that shouldered jars with finger-tip decoration and bipartite bowls were current by the 8th century B.C., and this stylistic repertoire continued to develop in the 6th and 5th centuries (Barrett 1980, 306). The pottery from Caburn may represent the latter end of this tradition. It is distinct in both fabric and form. Sand-tempered finer wares, in both jar and bowl forms, are more prevalent than the coarse flint gritted wares that dominate some of the possibly earlier assemblages such as that from Highdown (Wilson 1940; Wilson 1950). The fine cordons and incised decoration associated with the finer wares at Caburn are similarly distinct. The fineware bowls from Hollingbury and the quantity of the coarser wares with predominantly quartz sand

rather than flint tempering makes the assemblage more akin to the Caburn assemblage. Sherds from fineware bipartite bowls illustrated in the present report (Figs. 1, 2), together with a bowl previously published from Hollingbury (Cunliffe 1966, fig. 2.62), are particularly comparable in fabric and form to examples from Caburn (Hawkes 1939, fig. E.74).

A number of earlier first millennium sites in Sussex are potentially associated with datable later Bronze Age metalwork. Sites thus associated and with elements of Cunliffe's Kimmeridge–Caburn tradition would include Highdown Hill and Harting Beacon which have possibly 7th-century B.C. metal finds. None of the metalwork, however, is in stratigraphic association with the pottery (Champion 1980, 44). A perhaps similar association is the find of a looped socketed axe of Late Bronze Age type only a few kilometres from Hollingbury Hill. This axe type can be dated to the 7th century B.C. and might be considered as contributing to the pattern of such associations (Thomas 1983). While assemblages characteristic of the Kimmeridge–Caburn style group may represent an extended chronology of the 8th to 5th centuries B.C., the material from Caburn itself and from Hollingbury might be seen on both fabric and stylistic grounds to come after the earliest part of the tradition. The material from Hollingbury might be considered to comply with a mid 7th- to mid 6th-century date based upon the above metalwork and ceramic discussion. This date range spans the latest Bronze Age and earliest Iron Age period division. The ceramic discussion would seem to favour an earliest Iron Age description of the material.

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