Excavations on a Roman Site at Overstone near Northampton

By JOHN WILLIAMS

With contributions by HELEN BAMFORD, A. BURNETT, DOROTHY CHARLESWORTH, MARY HARMAN, KAY HARTLEY, D. MACKRETH, GWYNNE OAKLEY and H. PENGELLY

INTRODUCTION

In July 1972 a Roman farm of first to fourth century date was excavated at Overstone, Northamptonshire (SP 805646). A series of gullies and timber buildings was succeeded by stone buildings or, at least, buildings with stone foundations. An integral part of the complex in all (?) phases was a circular building twice reconstructed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work was undertaken by Northampton Development Corporation supported by the Department of the Environment, under the direction of the author. M. McCarthy was assistant director and E. Goodward, C. Harding, J. Hedges, R. Hunter and F. Williams acted as supervisors. I am grateful to J. P. Wild and G. Dannell for examining the colour coated pottery and to C. Young for advice on the Oxford wares. The sections on this material are based on their comments. P. Woods made many most helpful suggestions about the coarse wares. Drawings for the report were prepared by M. Card, K. Connor and F. Williams. F. Williams assisted in many other ways in the preparation of the report.

THE SITE

LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site lay towards the top of a north facing slope on a slight rise (110m. O.D.), 3½ kilometres north of the River Nene. Upper Estuarine deposits here survive as a peak above the Lower Estuarine series in the immediate vicinity, with the Northampton Sands outcropping within *c.* 200m on all sides.

The area seems to have been richly settled from prehistoric times. Besides the few flints and Iron Age pottery from the present site there is the Blackthorn Iron Age enclosure, some 450m. to the south (Williams and McCarthy, 1974) and finds of prehistoric and Roman artifacts have been made on most of the fields in the immediate area.

DISCOVERY OF THE SITE

Roman finds dating from the first to fourth centuries A.D. have been made at Overstone in the area centred on SP 805644 since 1963 by R. Hollowell, who had also photographed vague crop marks suggestive of boundary or field ditches (1971, 3). Further quantities of pottery were found by A. Boddington, J. Small and

Overstone: Site Location

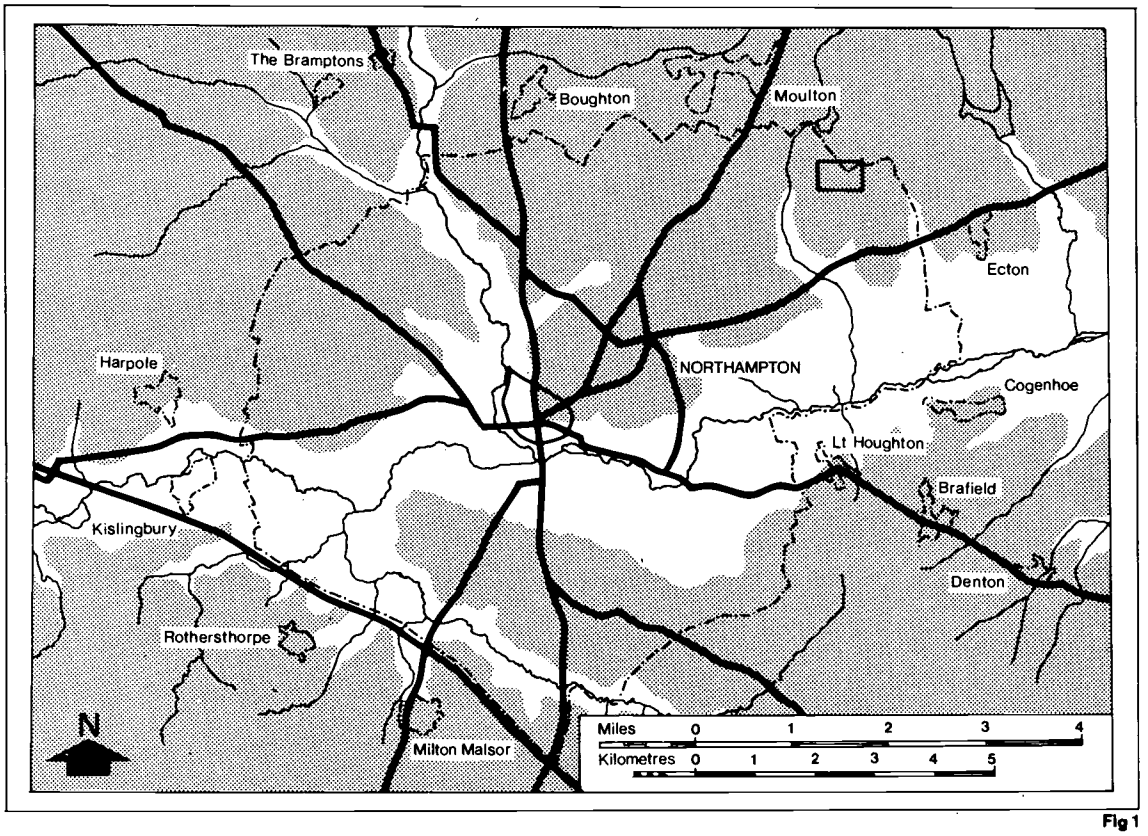
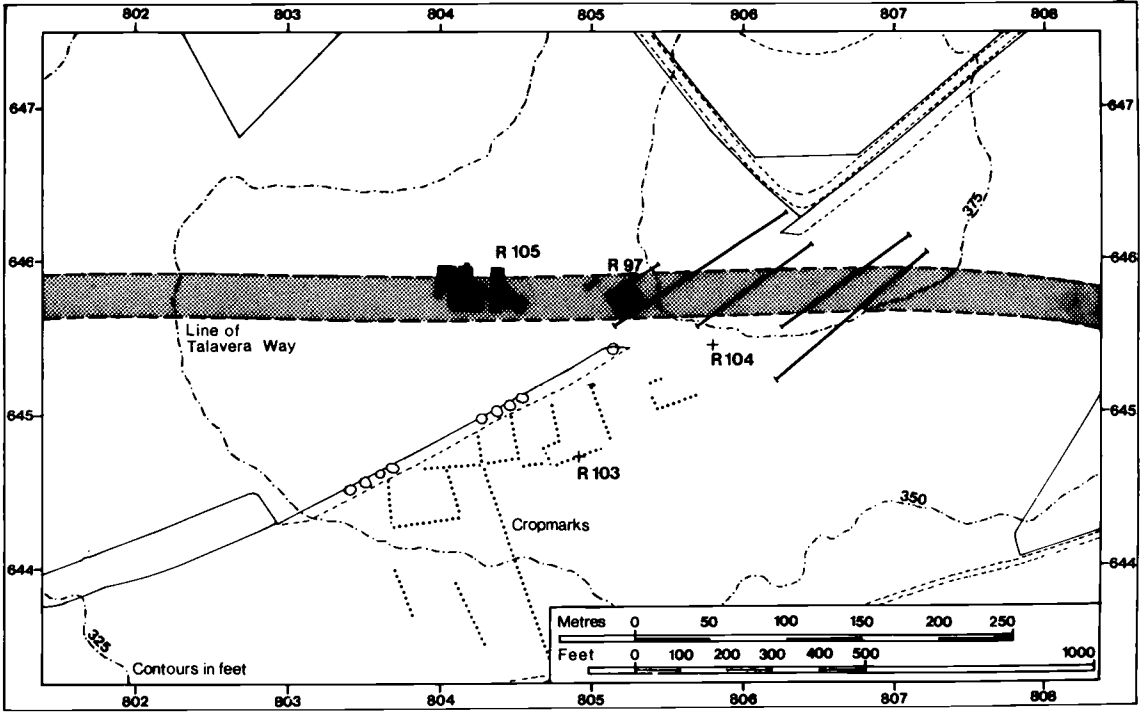


Fig 1

Fig 2



the author in 1971, mainly to the south of the hedge. In summer 1972 trial trenches were cut in the area SP 8057 6456 in advance of construction works for Talavera Way. A small quantity of pottery was recovered but archaeological features were only noted in the area R97 where there was a cobbled surface. A limited excavation confirmed the presence of a yard but major work was not justified. During the topsoil stripping for the new road, stonework was discovered in the area R105. A 3-week rescue excavation was immediately mounted (July 1972) with the site left as a virtual island amid the roar of the giant earth moving machines. The excavations were restricted in scope but uncovered evidence of a Romano-British farm occupied during the first to fourth centuries A.D.; a very small amount of prehistoric material was also found. During housing development in 1975 the area to the south of the road was watched by G. Oakley. Ditches containing Romano-British pottery were found (p.185).

THE EXCAVATIONS

R105

The topsoil had been stripped from the site in the initial road construction works and in many areas the underlying archaeological deposits were badly disturbed both by this initial scrape and also previous agricultural practices. The site was divided into areas designated A, B, C etc., west to east and 1, 2, 3, etc. north to south. A large part of the site was cleared down to reveal the later deposits (phase 2) but earlier levels were examined only in a limited area. The archaeological levels were divided into two broad phases, phase 1 including all levels preceding phase 2 which comprised stone foundations and a metalled yard. Probable pre-phase 1 activity is indicated by worked flints and a few residual Iron Age sherds.

LAYER LIST

Layer numbers used in the site recording are retained in the report. No deposits subsequent to the actual construction of the stone building can be regarded as reliably stratified because of subsequent disturbance. Such deposits, therefore, have all been classed as unstratified and are not included in the following layer list. Bracketed numbers refer to layers separately described in the site notes but now conflated with unbracketed layers.

A1

4. Post hole. Dark earth and stones. Depth 0.10 m. Period 1?
5. Shallow trough. 0.28 m. deep. Filled with stone and dark brown earth. Function? Phase 1?
6. (7; A2, 2) Flat limestone slabs. Flooring for phase 2 building.
8. (B1, 12) Pitched limestone foundations for phase 2 building.

9. Post hole. Limestone slabs set on end. Phase 1?
11. Wall of irregular sandstone and limestone blocks. Phase 2.
14 (22). Gully of dark earth sealed by a deposit of blue clay. Depth 0.35 m. Phase 1.
15. Stone slabbing. Surface associated with stone building or destruction debris from it. Phase 1.
16. Green-brown soil and stones below 15.
17. Curved gully filled with dark earth. Phase 1.
18. Curved gully filled with dark earth. Phase 1.
23. Post hole. Dark earth. Phase 1?
25. Post hole. Dark earth and limestone. Phase 1?

A2

2. See A1, 6.
5 (6, 7). Stone scatter. Part of phase 2 yard.
8. Post hole within 11. Vertical stone packing.
11. Gully filled with dark earth and limestone pieces.

B1

2. Gully. Brown-black clay. A continuation of A1, 14? Phase 1.
3. Large stones in brown clayey soil. Wall or wall robber of circular building.
4. Packed stones. Phase 2 yard surface.
12. See A1, 8.
18. Post hole. Light green soil. Limestone packing. Depth 0.07 m. Phase 1?
19. Post hole. Light green soil. Limestone packing. Depth 0.16 m. Phase 1?
20. Post hole. Light green soil. Limestone packing. Depth 0.04 m. Phase 1?
21. Post hole. Light green soil. Limestone packing. Depth 0.06 m. Phase 1?
23. Post hole. Light green soil. Limestone packing. Depth 0.04 m. Phase 1?

B2

3. Limestone slabs in brown earth. Flooring within circular building. Phase 2.
4 (B3, 14, 17). Pitched limestone footings. Phase 2.
5 (22). Dark brown clayey soil with pebbles. Possible robber of Phase 2 circular building foundations. Note, however, the possible stake holes in bottom of feature. Phase 2.
7 (8). Hard packed concentrated stones 0.08-0.25 m. thick. Phase 2 yard.
9. Gully. Black soil. Phase 1.
10 (24; C2, 10). Gully. Black soil and stones. Phase 1.
11. Pitched limestone footings. Phase 2.
12. Green-brown soil and pebbles. Post hole? Phase 2.
13. Black soil and stones. Defines outer edge of robbed wall of circular building. Phase 2.
14. Stone blocks. Phase 2 circular building wall?
19. Gully. Brown soil and stones with possible stake holes in bottom. Phase 1.
30. Green-brown earth. Post hole? Phase 2.

B3

2 (8, 10, 12). Stone scatter probably spread from phase 2 yard.
3 (13, 16, 18; C3, 4). Gully. Loose brown earth with flat stones and several largely complete pots. Phase 1.
5. Gully. Dark earth, sandstone and limestone rubble. Probably cuts 6. Phase 1.
6 (11). Gully. Dark earth, sandstone and limestone rubble. Phase 1.
9. Soil mark *c.* 0.01 m. deep. No relationship established with layer 5. Phase 1.
14 (17). See B2, 4.

C2

3 (4, 5). Tightly packed stone surface. Phase 2 yard.
8. Gully. Brown earth. Phase 1.
9. Thin soil level below 3 and above natural.
10. See B2, 10.

C3

2. Pitched stones up to 0.25 m. deep. Possibly foundations but probably part of 3. Phase 2.
3 (7, 8). Packed stone surface. Phase 2 yard.
4. See B3, 3.
4a. North-south branch of 4. No relationship established between 4 and 4a.
6. Shallow gully. Brown earth.

D1

2. Gully. Brown soil. Phase 1? Unexcavated.
3 (4). Stone scatter. Phase 2 yard.
8. Gully. Brown soil. Phase 1? Unexcavated.

D2

2 (4). Packed stone. Phase 2 yard.

D3

2. Large stones tightly packed. Possibly wall foundations, probably yard. Phase 2.
7. Tightly packed stones. Yard surface or rubble spread. Phase 2.
9. Gully. Dark soil. Phase 1.
10. Gully. Dark soil and stones. Phase 1.

E2

4 (5, 6). Rubble spread. Phase 2 yard?

E3

4 (5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). Various rubble spreads including worked limestone blocks. Phase 2 yard.
6. Gully. Brown soil. Phase 1.
7. Gully. Brown-black earth, some stone. Phase 1.
9. Gully. Green-grey clay, some stone, including a lump of tufa. (Section in FIG. 5 at mid-point). Phase 1.

F3

3 (7, 8, 12, 13). Stone scatter. Yard surface. Phase 2.
5 (5, 16). Pitched limestone and large limestone blocks. Part of a wall? or reused in yard. Phase 2.
15. Two large limestone blocks. Remains of wall? Compare 5. Phase 2.

F4, 5

2 (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Various scatters of rubble, presumably extensions of phase 2 yard.

PHASE 1 (FIGS. 3-5)

It is diffcult to sub-divide phase 1 meaningfully in view of the limited area examined. The features, however, fall naturally into two groups.

1. The circular timber structures
2. The other gullies.

THE CIRCULAR TIMBER STRUCTURES

A number of post holes, all very shallow, were located (A1, 4, 9, 23, 25; B1, 18,

Overstone: Phase 1

Northamptonshire Archaeology 1976, 11

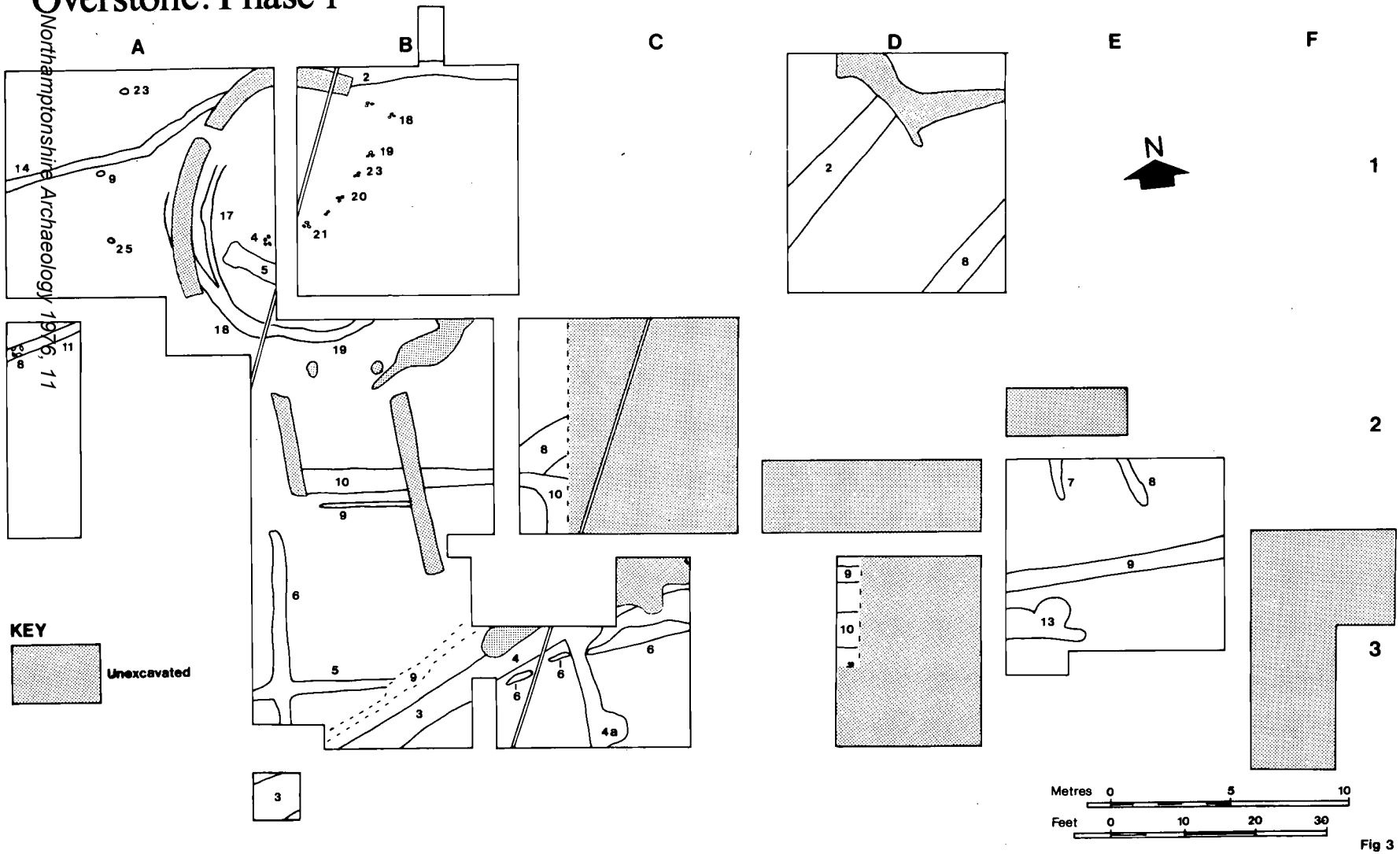


Fig 3

Overstone: Phase 1

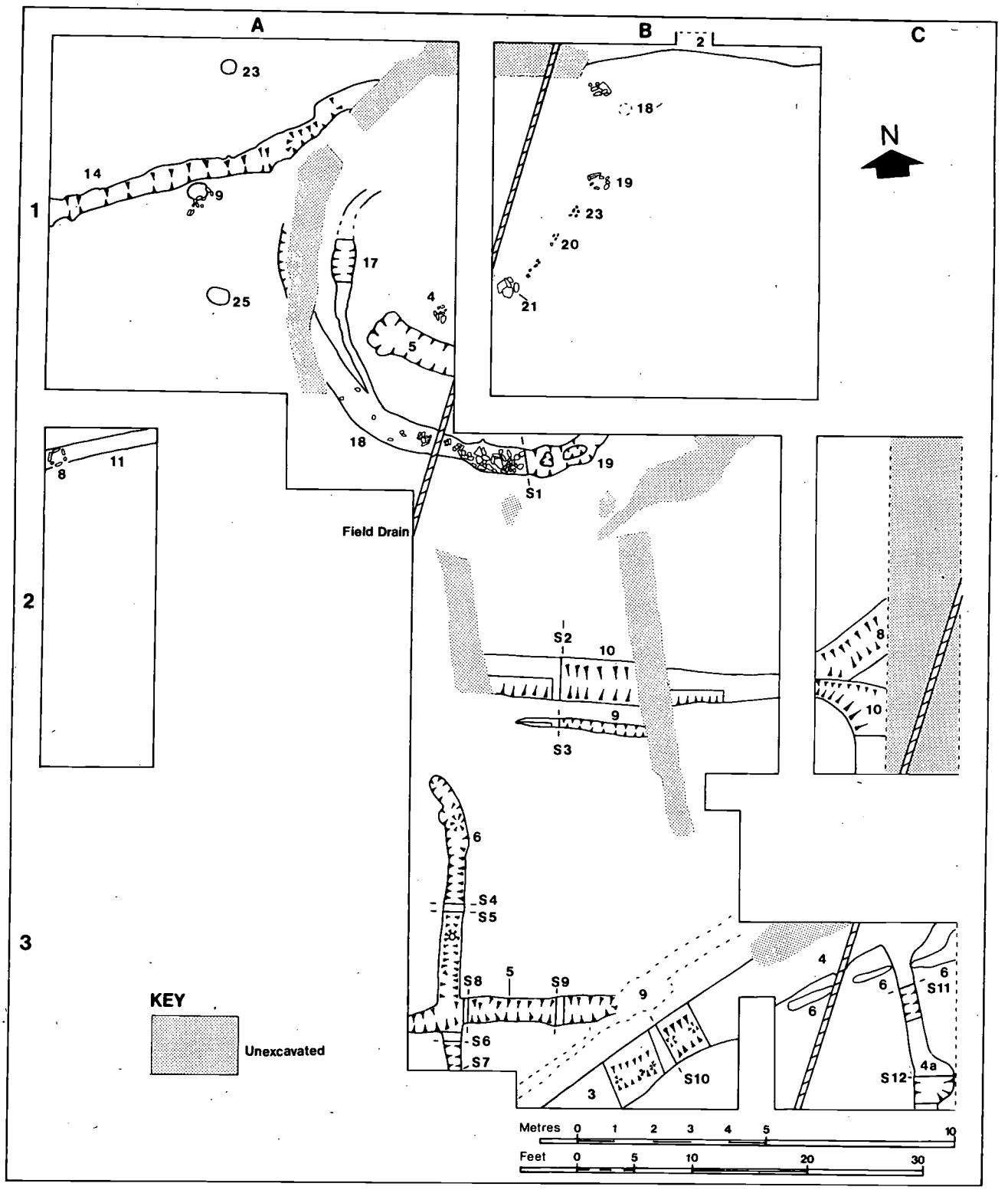


Fig. 4

Overstone: Phase 1 Sections

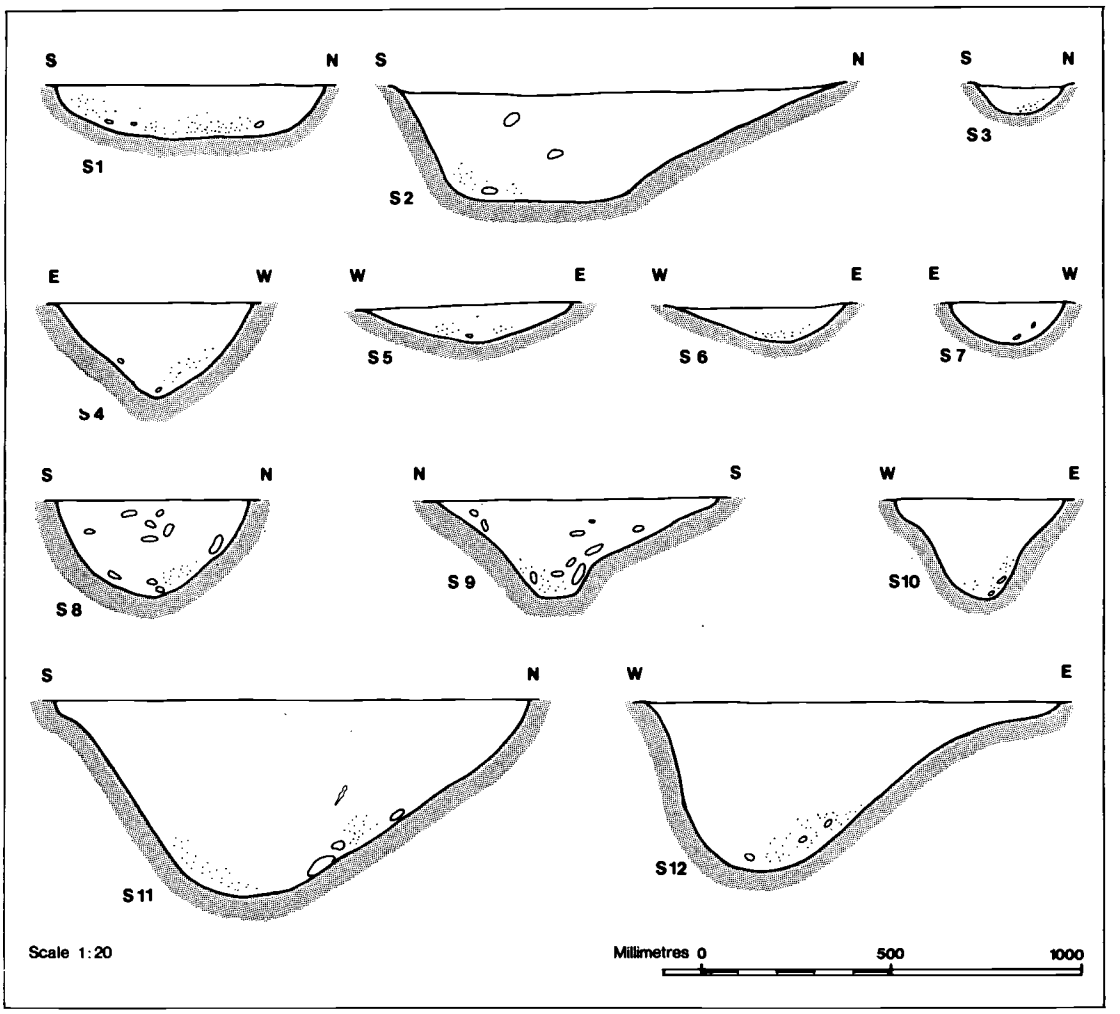


Fig. 5

19, 20, 21, 23). None was sealed by phase 2 levels or, in fact, cut them but all are tentatively assigned to phase 1. Two semi-circular or one roughly elliptical arrangement could be distinguished which is/are assumed to be the wall line(s) of (a) timber structure(s). No evidence by way of floor levels etc. was found to substantiate this. Gullies A1, 17, 18 and gully B2, 19 evidence a further structure or structures with posts set in a continuous trench. Shallow holes at the bottom of the excavated portion of B2, 19 probably indicate post settings. No trace of a continuation of the gully was found in B1 but its shallow depth, where emptied, suggests it may have been completely ploughed away to the north. Similarly it faded away in the northern half of A1, again possibly because of erosion. The

significance of the bifurcation of B2, 19 into A1, 17 and 18 is unclear. Perhaps the building was partially or totally reconstructed. The relative dates of the circular structures could not be established. Dating evidence was only recovered from B2, 19 and consisted of a single rim, probably Hadrianic, but possibly later in date (No. 38). Its value is purely as a general indicator of a *terminus post quem* for one of the circular buildings. It is likely that one of the circular timber structures was still in use in the second half of the third century on the grounds of continuity of the circular ground plan in a specific part of the building complex. The initial contruction of such a building in this area could not be firmly dated, but it would seem reasonable to suppose it was some time in the period A.D. 80-150. If gully A1, 14 predates the circular buildings, and it would certainly be difficult for it to be contemporary with them, a second century date is most probable.

THE OTHER GULLIES

The function of these gullies is unclear. Post holes were possibly distinguished in the bottom of gullies B3, 3 and B3, 6. Soil level B3, 9 may well represent the upcast of B3, 3. The gullies formed no obvious pattern nor could a sequence be determined on purely stratigraphical grounds.

Gully B2, 10 is dated on ceramic evidence to the Conquest period. B3, 6 would appear to be immediately post-Conquest but its apparent contemporaneity with B3, 5 does not support this and it may well be that the pottery, of limited quantity, is residual. Perhaps even the pottery in B3, 10 is residual.

Gully B3, 3 contained a large quantity of fairly complete grey ware vessels belonging to the period A.D. 70-120. B3, 5 and B2, 9 and possibly B3, 6 (see above) appear to date to the mid second century. B3, 5 certainly stopped short of B3, 3 as though respecting its alignment and no relationship could be established between B3, 5 and B3, 9. C3, 6 could possibly have been a continuation of B3, 5. Gully A1, 14 also dates to the middle of the second century.

Only extremely limited sections of pre-stone period gullies were revealed in D3 and E3 and they are not discussed further here.

PHASE 2 (FIGS. 6-7)

At some time towards the end of the third century on the basis of pottery from C2, 9 the site underwent a radical change with the reconstruction of the previously timber buildings either completely in stone or at least with stone foundations. A well-metalled yard surface was also laid down.

Pitched stone foundations of a roughly circular building measuring *c.* 13m. diameter externally were found in A1 and B1. The wall had apparently been robbed in B2 and partially in B1. The foundations were between 0.35m. and 0.40m. wide and formed of short straight lengths rather than being a continuous curve. The direction of the pitching was not constant. In A1 the pitched foundations were overlaid by a single course, total length *c.* 2m., of flat stones. It is unclear whether the building was further carried up in the stone or half-timbered. The inside of the building was floored with stone slabs. Two post holes B2, 12 and 30 may well be door posts connecting the circular building with the attached rectilinear structure. Pitched stone foundations B2, 4 and 11, also *c.* 0.35m. wide, presumably abutted the circular building and were contemporary with it. The

Overstone: Phase 2

Northamptonshire Archaeology 1976, 11

Fig. 6

Overstone: Phase 2

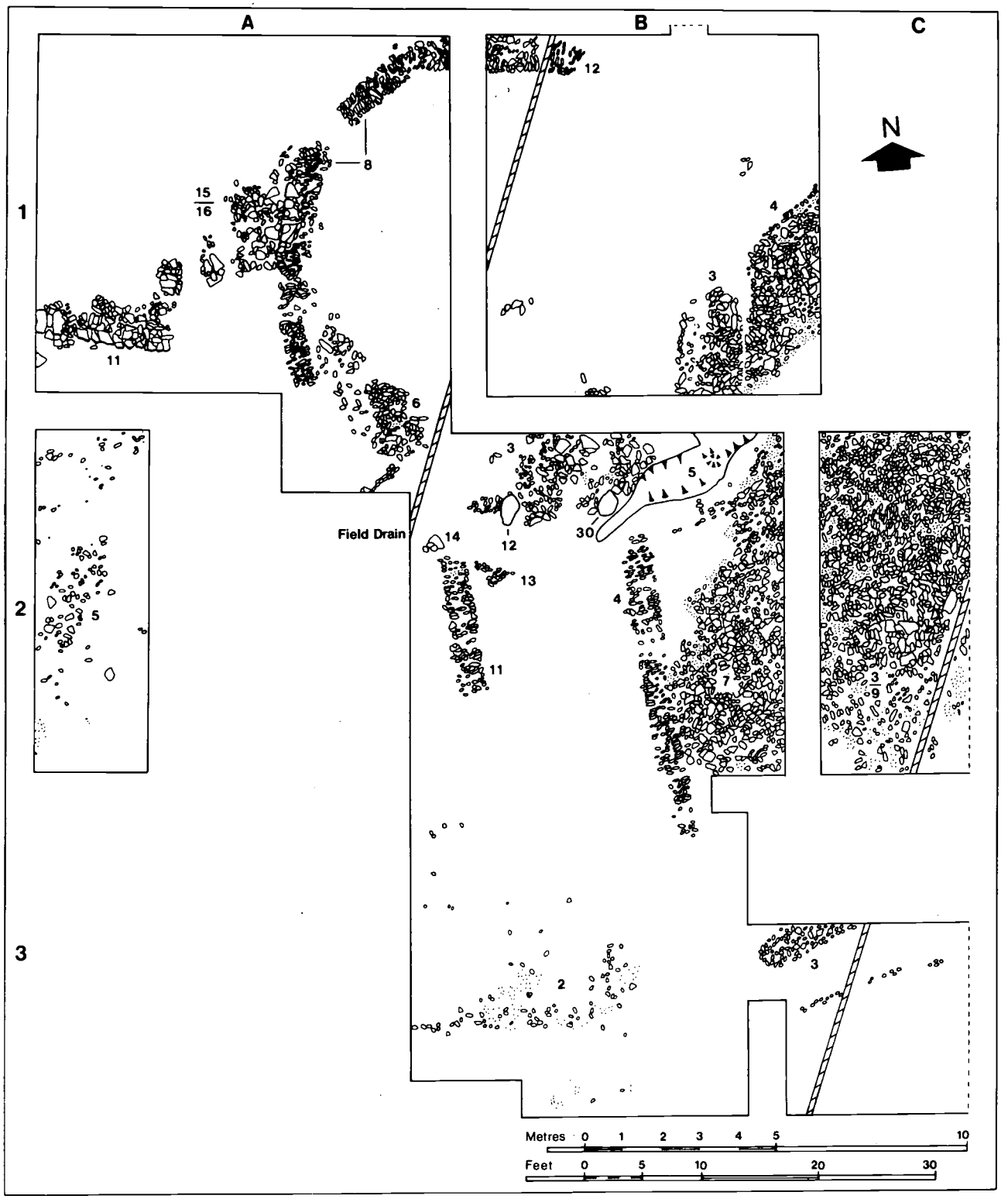


Fig. 7

southern extent of the building could not be determined because of late disturbance, nor did any floor levels survive.

To the west of the circular building, a short length of wall A1, 11 was probably all that survived of a further rectangular building.

To the west of all these structures stretched a yard of closely packed limestone, clearly contemporary with these later buildings. The yard extended some 15m. south of the excavated area in file F. It is quite possible that there were other buildings associated with phase 2. Odd lengths of stone pitching, eg C3, 2, perhaps suggests walls but are more likely to be part of the stone yard. Some quantity of worked limestone blocks was recovered and further structures may well have not survived.

The phase 2 structures continued in use at least up to the middle of the fourth century, after which the quantity of pottery and coins declines noticeably.

There is little evidence for roofing materials in either phase 1 or 2. Few *tegulae* fragments were found and cannot be assigned to a particular phase.

R97

Four 8m. squares were laid out separated by 1m. baulks (A to south, B to east, C to west and D to north). Area A was completely cleaned down. A cobbled yard formed mostly of small stones was overlaid by green/brown and black soil containing pottery and coins mainly of the late third and early fourth centuries, but also with some early third and second century material. A 3m. wide strip across the north-west side of the trench was excavated below the metalling. Three parallel slots *c.* 0.20m. wide x 0.03m. deep were cut into the natural clay about 1m. apart. These were thought to be plough marks. The half of area B nearest to area A was roughly cleaned and patches of yard were noted. A 2m. wide strip along the north-west side of area C was also roughly cleaned and further patches of yard were recorded. Area D was not excavated. No structures were recorded but the metalled surface was assumed to be part of the same complex as R105.

R103 AND R104

The area to the south of the hedge where large quantities of pottery had been found through field walking was watched by Miss G. Oakley during construction work. Miss Oakley also plotted onto FIG. 2 vague crop marks from air photographs by R. Hollowell and the author (PLATE 1). 30m. wide enclosures or fields surrounded by ditches are possibly indicated.

R103. Two intersecting ditches (one of which possibly appears on the air photographs) were seen in section in a contractor's trench in September 1974. Ditch A, 1.8m. wide x 0.6m. deep at least (probably 0.9m.) was filled with clayey soil. Ditch C, 2.1m. wide and filled with layers of clayey loam cut Ditch A. Ditch C contained no finds but pottery probably of late first or early second century date was recovered from Ditch A.

R104. A ditch 1.4m. wide x 0.6m. deep was seen in section in a contractor's trench, again in September 1974. The ditch was filled with dark brown clay and

contained five sherds of coarse limestone gritted storage jars probably dating from the second half of the 1st century.

DISCUSSION

CIRCULAR BUILDINGS

Romano-British circular stone buildings in the lowland zone have generated considerable discussion as to their function. Examples at Brigstock (Greenfield, 1963), Collyweston (Knocker, 1965) and Frilford (Bradford and Goodchild, 1939, 36) relied on a religious explanation for their ground plan (see also Lewis, 1966, 78) although discoveries in villa complexes such as Great Weldon (*J. Roman Stud.* 45 (1955), 135) and Great Casterton (Corder, 1954, 19) widened the range of interpretations to include threshing floors and drying ovens. However, in spite of Stead's cautionary note to accept less specific uses (1966, 81) there is still a tendency to seek in a circular ground plan a significance perhaps not justified by other archaeological evidence.

The number of Roman round stone buildings known has increased considerably in the last few years. Nevertheless a full-scale survey is precluded by the fact that most of the evidence is only available in summary form. The following discussion is therefore by no means comprehensive, although it seeks to draw some tentative general conclusions.

The wide range of date and constructional quality and the apparent diversity of functions is most striking.

Stone circular buildings seem to vary in diameter between 7 m. (23 ft.) at Barnsley Park (Webster, 1967, 77) and 15 m. (50 ft.) at Bozeat (Hall and Nickerson, 1970) or 15½ m. (52 ft.) at Winterton (Stead 1966, 81) and Piercebridge (*E.A.R.* 1970, 58). A large number lie within the range 9 m. (30 ft.) to 13½ m. (45 ft.), e.g. Castor — 9 m. (35 ft.) (Dannell and Wild 1974, 87), Thistleton — 9 m. (35 ft.) (*E.A.R.* 1963, 11; *J. Roman Stud.* 55, (1965), 267) and Gayhurst 12.2 m (40 ft.) (Fleming, 1972). The roofs generally appeared to lack any internal support but Bozeat and Winterton had four pier bases centrally placed in a square while Piercebridge, Manfield (*Britannia* 1 (1970), 279; 2(1971), 251) and Shakenoak (*Britannia* 5 (1974), 436) had four large post holes similarly arranged. It is interesting that this is the same layout found in house 1 at Little Woodbury (Bersu, 1940, 78) and generally regarded as being untypical of Iron Age structures (Harding, 1974, 39).

The quality of the various buildings is difficult to determine from the published information. A large number in Northamptonshire had rough dry-stone walling over pitched stone foundations as at Overstone. Whether the walls were carried up to roof level in stone or were purely dwarf walls is, however, unclear. Floor materials are not specified in many cases and some were presumably only beaten earth. Stone flagged floors were found at Barnsley Park, Thorplands (Mynard, 1971), Brigstock and Overstone, "floor plaster or concrete" was recorded at Winterton and tessellated floors are known at Castor, Ringstead (*Britannia* 3 (1972), 322) and Thistleton.

In considering constructional quality, comparison must be made with circular timber structures. These can now be seen to continue throughout the

Plate 1 Overstone from the air; beyond the hedge is the site, within the road boundaries, at commencement of excavation; to nearside of hedge are some of the crop marks plotted on Fig. 2.

Plate 2 Overstone: Area B, during excavation. The various phases of circular building can be seen.

Plate 3 Overstone: area B2. Gullies 9 and 10 are to the left; yard in foreground, pitched limestone footings of rectangular building in centre; stone slabbing overlying earlier circular gully, top right.

Roman period in the lowland zone, e.g. at Staunton (Todd, 1973, 100), Brockworth (*Britannia* 5 (1974), 448), Churchover (Cameron and Lucas, 1971-3, 102), Fisherwick (*E.A.R.* 1968, 19), Goltho (*Britannia* 6 (1975), 244), Welton (*Britannia* 5 (1974), 414), Quinton (*Northants. Archaeol.* 9 (1974), 95), Wollaston (*Britannia* 3 (1972), 326-7) and Towcester (*Northants. Archaeol.* 10 (1975), 163). A native building tradition was preserved. Surely the stone buildings should be seen as an application of Roman building techniques to an established plan where suitable stone was readily available; circular stone buildings in the lowland zone of Roman Britain appear to be concentrated within the Jurassic area with a particular intensity in Northamptonshire. In considering this interplay between traditional building plans and available materials the continued usage of stone circular houses in many areas of the highland zone through the Iron Age and Roman periods is relevant.

The thesis of the development of stone circular buildings directly out of timber ones is well supported at Overstone, Thorplands (Hunter and Mynard, forthcoming), Thistleton, Brigstock[1] and Ringstead where excavations have revealed earlier circular timber structures below the later stone buildings.[2] Clearly the timber structures were being 'modernised'. It is also interesting to note at Brigstock the combination of the circular stone wall with the penannular drip gully so typical of Iron Age timber houses.

The earliest circular stone buildings were at Gayhurst — late first to early second century, Manfield — first half of the second century, Piercebridge — second century and Winterton — early second century. Late examples occur at Brigstock — third to fourth century, and Barnsley Park — fourth century. Circular timber buildings, as noted above, were present throughout the Roman occupation.

The known distribution of circular buildings, both stone and timber, is probably somewhat distorted. Stone buildings are more likely to be discovered than timber thus drawing attention to the stone buildings in the Jurassic area. Additionally, the lack of attention which has been paid to lowland native sites may account for the comparative absence of similar structures, presumably timber or turf, in areas lacking good building stone.

Thus, circular buildings, both of timber and stone construction occur in a wide variety of contexts throughout the Roman period. Although it is quite possible that circular buildings such as Thistleton may well be temples, considerable caution must be exercised in interpretation for the evidence for the circular and polygonal structures at Collyweston being religious is far from conclusive. Some round structures were clearly workshops or outbuildings attached to villas and some may well have been domestic.

[1] This is based on a reconsideration of the published evidence. Greenfield (1963, 230) suggested that post hole F24 may have been contemporary with the stone structure but states that post holes F20, 23 and 24 were all similar and that F20 and 23 were not contemporary with the stone building. Post holes F20, 23 and 24 form an arc of a circle which may well represent the wall line of a circular timber structure. The next post hole to the south would have lain beneath the stone wall and the next to the north-west, to judge from the information given on depths etc., would have been completely removed by ploughing. Additionally, there seems to be no reason why the penannular gully beneath the polygonal structure should be Iron Age rather than Roman.

[2] Although Northumberland is, strictly speaking, ouside the area of this survey, it is worth recording that Jobey has demonstrated an apparent transition from timber to stone round huts in Northumberland during the Roman occupation (1966, 1973). The later stone houses occupied the same sites as the earlier timber structures.

Thus the buildings should surely be seen as a continuation of a native design and fulfilling several different functions varying from domestic to religious.

GENERAL

Little general comment can be made concerning the Overstone site. It was apparently part of a modest Roman farm in use from the first to fourth centuries and possibly overlay a pre-Roman site. Buildings, or at least those excavated, were simple. Tiles may have been used for roofing but few survived. Finds of pottery, metalwork etc., while not demonstrating great affluence indicated a reasonable level of prosperity. Animal husbandry was probably practised and the presence of oysters (found on many Romano-British sites) confirms that there was movement of at least some foodstuffs over considerable distances during this period.

The precise chronology of the site is extremely difficult. It is impossible to say

i) at which stage the Romano-British occupation commenced or in fact whether it was continuous from pre-Roman times; the evidence of the brooches and Belgic-type pottery certainly suggests some activity at around the Conquest period.

ii) whether the Romano-British occupation was unbroken.

iii) at what date the site was abandoned. The coin of Arcadius supports the idea of occupation possibly continuing into the fifth century. The site's ceramic assemblage, however, contains little material recognisable as late fourth century although it must be emphasised that there is little securely dated pottery of this period in the region.

THE FINDS

THE COINS

by A. BURNETT

Augustus. Mint of Lugdunum (Lyon). Denomination: As. *C.* 10-3 BC (R.I.C., 360). R105 A2/B2, SF 97.

Postumus. Mint of Cologne. Antoninianus. *C.* AD 265 (R.I.C., 315). R105 A1, SF 1.

Tetricus I. Mint of Cologne. Antoninianus. AD 269-71 (R.I.C., 90). R105 B2, SF 23.

Claudius II (posthumous). Mint of Rome. Antoninianus. *C.* AD 270 (R.I.C., 261). R105 A1, SF 16.

Claudius II (posthumous). Mint of Rome. Antoninianus. *C.* AD 270 (R.I.C., 261). R105 A1.16, SF 70.

Claudius II (posthumous). Mint of Rome. Antoninianus. *C.* AD 270 (R.I.C., 266). R105 D3, SF 81.

Constantinopolis. Mint of Trier. AD 330-5 (L.R.B.C. Pt. I, 66). R97 Area B, SF 10.

Constantine II (Caesar). Gloria Exercitus (2 standards). Mint of Trier. AD 330-5 (L.R.B.C. Pt. I, 51). R97 Area A, SF 1.

Emperor and mint illegible. Gloria Exercitus (1 standard). *C.* AD 335-47. Contemporary imitation. R97 surface find, SF 5.

Constantine I (posthumous). Quadriga. Mint illegible. AD 337-41 (Cf. L.R.B.C. Pt. I, 106). R97 Area B, SF 8.

Constans. Two Victories. Mint of Trier. AD 347-8 (L.R.B.C. Pt. I, 140). R105 C2, 3 (in soil on top of yard), SF 17.

Constantius II. Two Victories. Mint of Trier. AD 347-8 (L.R.B.C. Pt. I, 151). R97 Area A, SF 2.

Magnentius. Gloria Romanorum (type 2). Mint illegible. AD 350-1 (Cf. L.R.B.C. Pt. II, 4). R97 Area B, SF 9.

Arcadius. Victoria Augg. Mint illegible. AD 395-402 (Cf. L.R.B.C. Pt. II, 173). R105 C2, 2 (in soil on top of yard), SF 32.

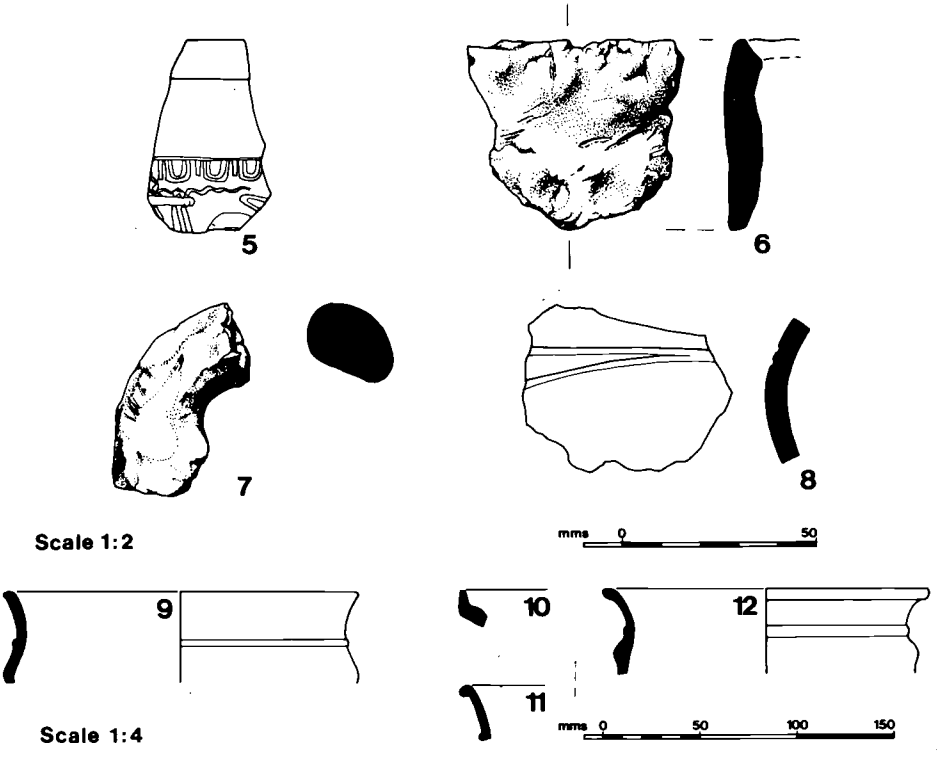


Fig. 8 Overstone: pottery.

THE POTTERY (FIGS. 8-11)

INTRODUCTION

The pottery report is basically selective in approach because of the large amount of material which was not securely stratified, lying on top of the latest ground surface immediately below the ploughsoil. A detailed analysis of the coarse wares, which locally still require much study, would not have been productive. There are a few useful groups and these are published but general indications of date range etc. have been arrived at from the study of the Samian and regional imports together with the non-ceramic material. The pottery from R97 and R105 is combined and treated as one.

The report is broken down into the following sections:

1) a general discussion of the various pottery types
2) a brief analysis of the Samian ware (by H. Pengelly)
3) a description of selected pottery particularly groups
4) an analysis of the mortaria (by Mrs. K. Hartley)

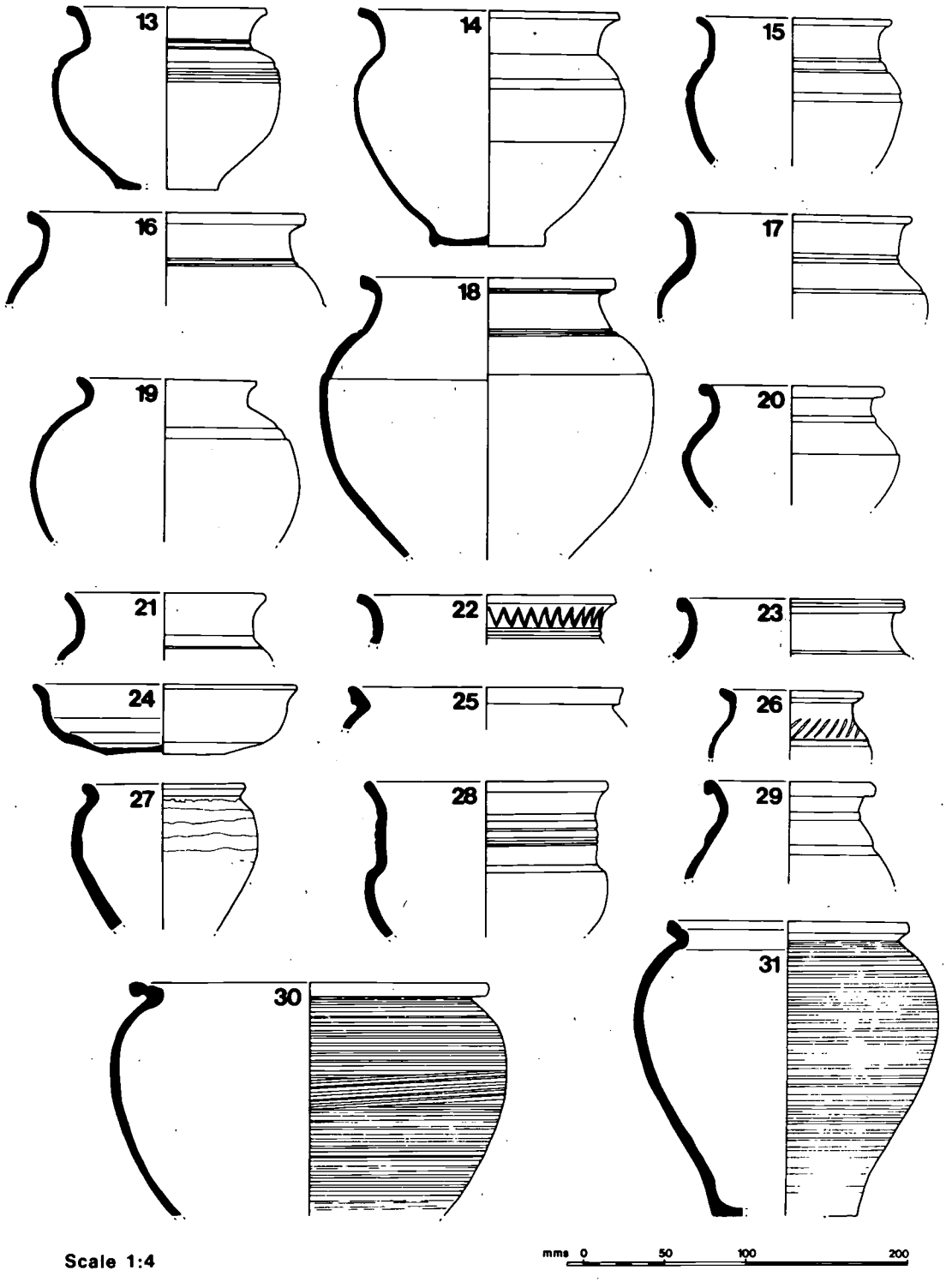


Fig. 9 Overstone: pottery.

1) THE POTTERY TYPES

Approximately 8000 sherds were examined. These can be divided into the following general categories based primarily on fabric.

A	Probably pre-Roman wares	1%
B	Non local wares	
	i Samian	1%
	ii Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria	>1%
	iii Oxford wares	2%
	iv Nene Valley colour coated wares	4%
C	Probably local wares	
	i Grey wares	59%
	ii Limestone gritted wares	18%
	iii Non limestone gritted wares	1%
	iv Other	13%

These figures must be treated with caution being the total quantities for the whole of the site's occupation; since most of the pottery was unstratified, no meaningful chronological breakdown based on the stratigraphy of the site was possible.

A Pre-Roman wares: three pieces of pre-"Belgic" pottery were found, namely a coarse body sherd (6), a probable handle (7) and a body sherd, probably from a bowl decorated in the Hunsbury curvilinear style (8). Several other pieces, including two carinated bowls, in a soft soapy fabric similar to fabric 1 at Moulton Park (Williams, 1974, 24) probably date to around the Conquest period. This early pottery was not "stratified" apart from that in R105, B3, 6.

B i The Samian: see section 2 below.

B ii Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria: see section 4 below.

B iii Oxford wares: in addition to the mortaria (see section 4 below) the identifiable vessels represented were bowls (copies of Drag. 31 and Drag. 38); these could not be dated more precisely than AD 250-400.

B iv Nene Valley colour coated wares: the mortaria are treated separately (see section 4 below). Beakers, bowls, jars and imitation Samian forms from the Lower Nene Valley were all present but jugs were missing. There was apparently little material earlier than AD 250 or later than AD 350.

C i Grey ware comprised the vast bulk of the pottery on the site and fabrics varied considerably. Early pottery tended to be sandy and fairly finely made — forms included various bowls and jars (cf. the group from R105, B3, 3). A large quantity of grey wares from later levels (third and fourth centuries) was heavily abraded but could be seen to be thicker and more metallic. In the absence of any local late fourth century group it is impossible to place a terminal date on the grey wares from the site especially as all the presumed late levels were badly disturbed.

It is interesting to note among the grey ware fabrics a few sherds, dark grey and rather gritty. The fabric, which is present on other sites in the Northampton area from the second century is very similar to material from Early or Middle Saxon levels in the centre of Northampton. The finish of the Roman sherds is rather finer but the close similarities of this Roman and Saxon pottery poses interesting questions on the continuity of the pottery industry during these periods.

C ii Limestone gritted wares occurred throughout the Roman period mainly as cooking pots and storage jars. Some examples of the Harrold kilns were probably present.

C iii A few coarse sherds, without limestone gritting, were probably from storage jars.

C iv Other fabrics included fine buff to pale orange sandy wares from bowls and possibly jugs and other light buff wares from channel rim cooking pots (cf. nos. 27, 30, 31, 34, 35) white sandy wares and a few fragments of fine orange beaker with rouletted decoration.

2) THE SAMIAN *by* HEDLEY PENGELLY

Four sherds only, all Central Gaulish, came from useful stratified contexts.

1. (unill.) Form 27 with part of potter's stamp, not identifiable, Hadrianic or early Antonine. Layer A1,22.

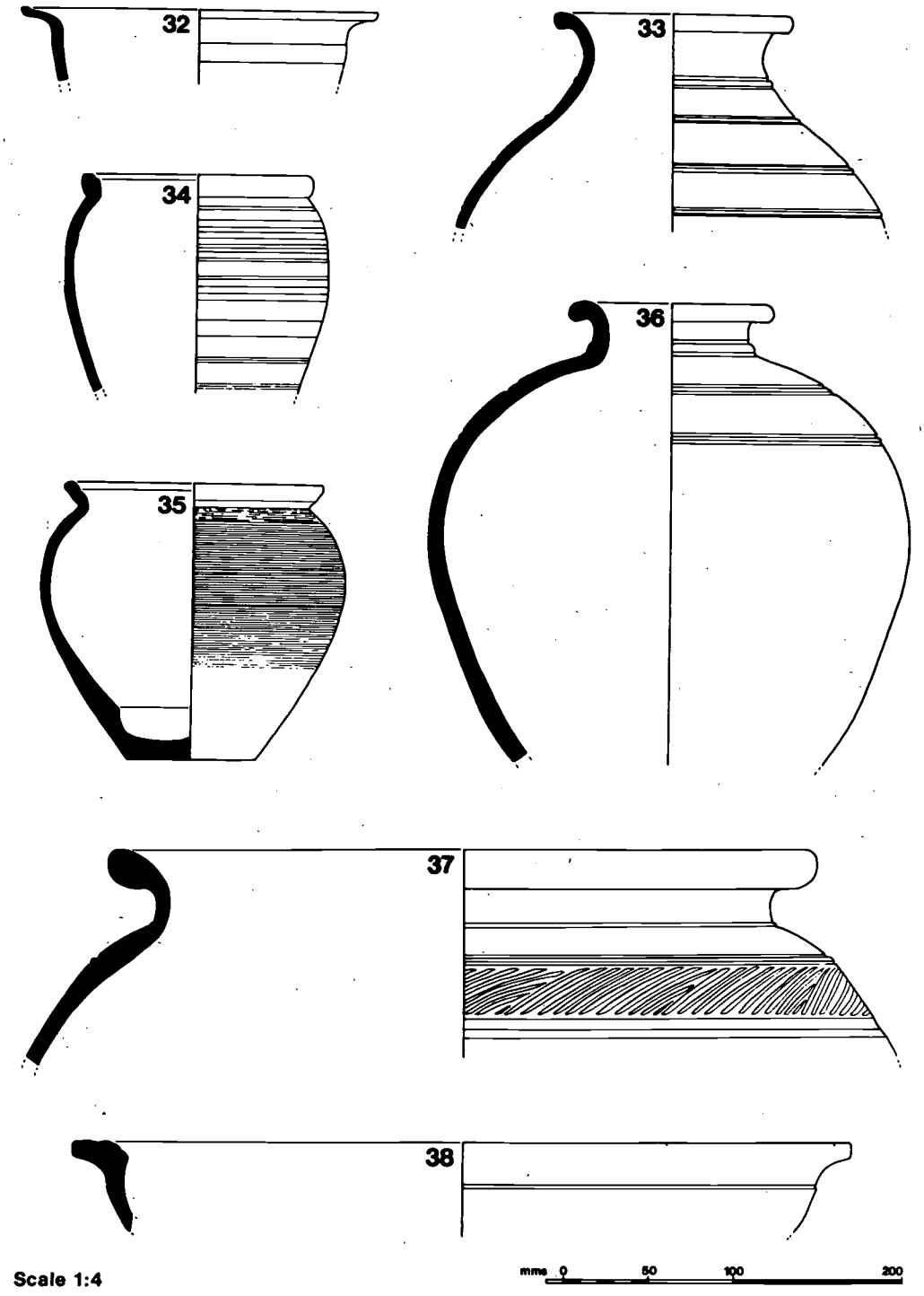


Fig. 10 Overstone: pottery.

2. (unill.) Two small scraps, probably Antonine. Layer B1,12.
3. (unill.) Scrap, Hadrianic or Antonine. Layer B3,5.
4. (unill.) Form 45, *c.* AD 170-200. Layer C2,9.

The other sherds, which should be regarded as unstratified, are summarised below:

South Gaulish: small scrap from La Graufesenque, probably Flavian.

Central Gaulish: Form 15/17R or 18R — in one of the hard, overfired fabrics of Les Martres-de-Veyre, Trajanic or early Hadrianic. Form 18/31 — Antonine. Form 18-31 or 31 — late-Hadrianic or Antonine. Form 18/31R — two scraps, Hadrianic/Antonine. Form 18/31R or 31R — three pieces: probably Hadrianic/Antonine, Hadrianic/Antonine or Antonine, probably Antonine. Form 30 or 37 — rim, Hadrianic/Antonine or Antonine. Form 31 — four pieces, all Antonine. Form 31R — three pieces, all Antonine. Form 33 — thirteen pieces: Hadrianic or early-Antonine, 1; late-Hadrianic or Antonine, 2; Antonine, 9; probably late-Antonine, 1. Form 36 or 38 — Antonine. Form 37 (a) small fragment depicting part of a double medallion with bird (Oswald, 1936-7, 2324 or 2325), not assignable to a particular potter, Antonine; (b) five fragments of a thick walled bowl with a beaded medallion or festoon by Do(u)eccus I of Lezoux (Stanfield and Simpson, 1958, pl. 148), *c.* AD 160-200; (c) (FIG. 8, 5) in the style of Servus II of Lezoux (Stanfield and Simpson, 1958, pl. 131) with one of the lesser known ovolos (Rogers, 1974, B147) and a double-festoon with hare (Oswald, 1936-7, 2057), *c.* AD 160-95. Form 38 — six pieces, Antonine. Form 79R — mid or late-Antonine. Probably Form 79R — Antonine. Form Curle 15 or 23 — Antonine. Fragment of enclosed jar (form 72 etc.; Oswald and Pryce, 1920, pl. LXXVII) — late-Antonine. Seventeen unidentifiable scraps — Hadrianic or early-Antonine, 1; Hadrianic or Antonine, 2; Hadrianic/Antonine or Antonine, 1; Antonine, 8; probably Antonine, 4; late-Antonine, 1.

East Gaulish: Form 31 — six pieces, late-Antonine or early third century. Form 31R — probably Rheinzabern ware, late-Antonine. Form 38 or Curle 21, flange, — two pieces probably late-Antonine.

3) SELECTED POTTERY

The pottery described below includes most of that which was reliably stratified plus a few earlier pieces which are of interest in that they indicate a possible pre-Roman occupation on the site.

Colours of individual sherds are described in the following sequence — exterior, core, interior.

6. Grey, grey, grey. Coarse, gritty, hand made sherd. Possibly pre-Belgic Iron Age. R97, area A.
7. Orange-brown on surface, grey core. Hard fabric, some grits. Probably a handle — pre-Belgic Iron Age — but could be part of a circular weight. R97, area A.
8. Brown, grey, brown. Medium hardness, soapy surface. Probably part of a curvilinear bowl of Hunsbury type. Cf. Fell, 1937, 75. R105, E3, 9.
9. Purple brown, grey, purple brown. Soapy. Belgic style carinated bowl. Cf. Williams, 1974, 31. R105, B3, 6.
10. Grey, grey, grey. Smooth fabric, medium hard. Copy of Belgic platter. R105, B2, 10.
11. Orange brown, grey, orange brown. Smooth surface, medium hard. Probably from a carinated bowl — cf. 9. above. R105, B2, 10.
12. Orange, grey, orange. Soapy surface, C2, 10.

13-31 (R105, B3, 3). This group was probably deposited over a short period with little if any residual material. No. 25 is perhaps slightly later than the rest of the group and being a single sherd may well be intrusive but the large portions of individual pots surviving suggest that the pots reached the gully soon after being broken. The following fabric groups were distinguished — i: 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 28; ii: 21, 22; iii: 13, 19, 29; iv: 14, 26; v: 25; vi: 30, 31; vii: 27. There is so much overlap between groups i — iv (all grey wares) that it is probable that these four fabrics are, in fact, the same but that individual pots have been subject to differing wear patterns. The vessels are hard and finely made but the forms show considerable 'Belgic' influence. The characteristic features of the wide-mouthed jars — the cordoned neck and grooved or cordoned body — are fairly pronounced, perhaps suggesting a date before such features became less dominant. Bowl 28 is completely Belgic in form and the well made platter 24 retains the internal shaping of its Belgic prototypes. Cooking pots 27, 30, 31 (fabrics vi and vii) continue a tradition particularly apparent in Northamptonshire and the surrounding areas.

The jars, particularly 13-20, constitute a fairly widespread form both geographically and chronologically and many parallels could be quoted (cf. however Frere, 1972, nos. 150-170; Brodribb *et al.*, 1971, no. 207 and Woods, 1970, nos. 93, 130). The form is particularly common in the late

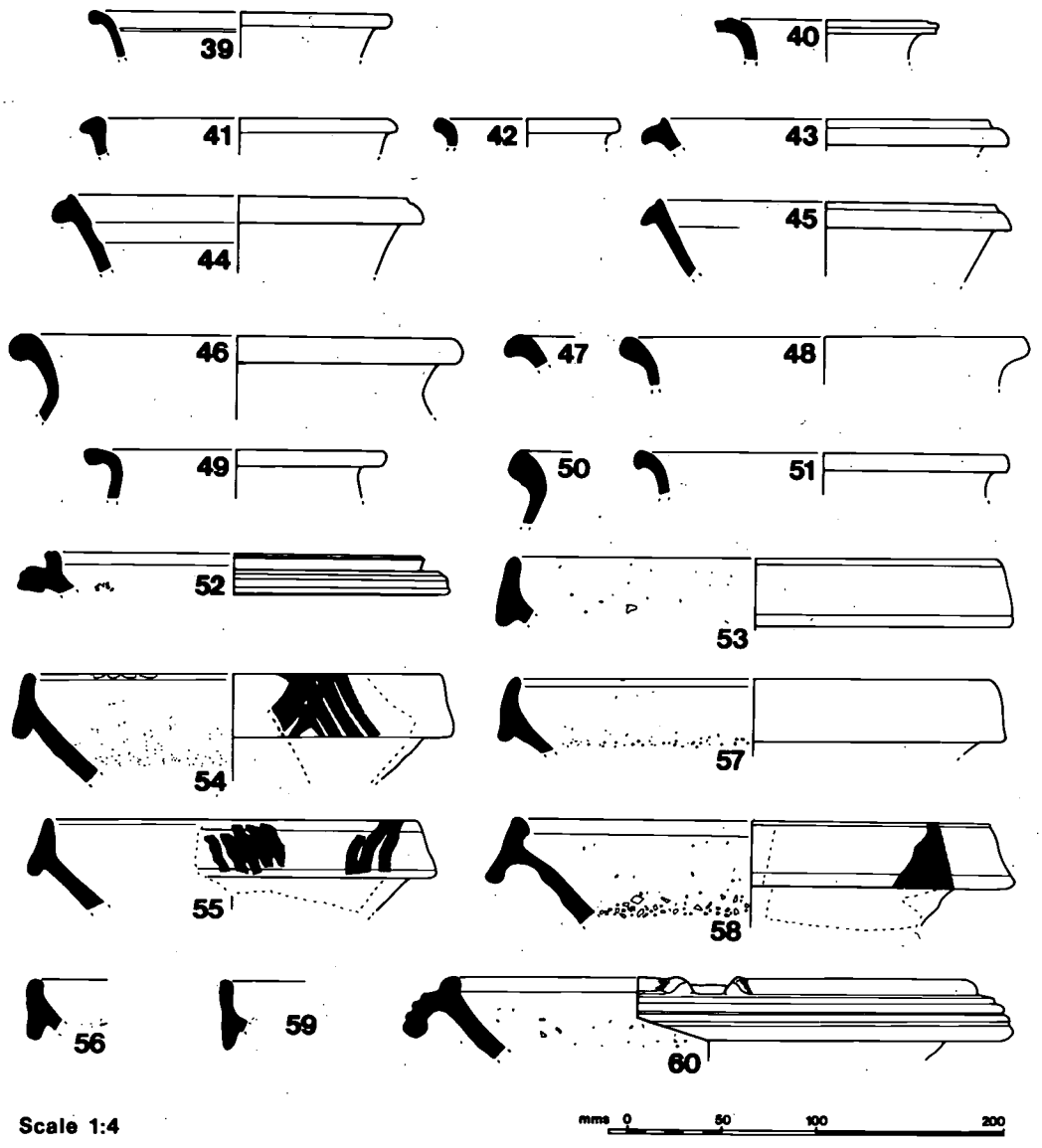


Fig. 11 Overstone: pottery.

first and early second century. For the cooking pots 27, 30 and 31 cf. Woods, 1970, nos. 195-223; Kenyon, 1948, 117 nos. 10-22; also their Belgic antecedents at Moulton Park (Williams, 1974, 35). The group as a whole probably falls somewhere in the bracket AD 70-120. On the basis of 1) the fabric of 27, 30 and 31, 2) the prominent Belgic features on many pots, and 3) 25 possibly being intrusive, a first century date is probably the more likely.

13. Light grey, light grey, light grey. Sandy.
14. Light grey, red/grey/red laminated, brown grey. Hard sandy. Some blobs on the lower body.
15. Grey, light grey, grey. Hard sandy. Burnished.
16. Dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Hard slightly sandy. Burnished.
17. Light grey, light grey, light grey. Hard sandy.

18. Dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Hard slightly sandy. Burnished.
19. Light grey, light grey, light grey. Hard sandy.
20. Dark grey, grey, grey. Hard slightly sandy. Burnished on body and inside of rim down to shoulder.
21. Dark grey/light grey, light grey, dark grey. Hard, slightly sandy.
22. Light grey/dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Smooth, slightly sandy. The wavy line on neck does not occur much earlier than AD 100.
23. Dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Smooth sandy. Burnished.
24. Dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Hard slightly sandy. Burnished.
25. Light grey, grey, grey. Sandy.
26. Grey, grey, buff/grey. Hard, smooth but slightly sandy.
27. Fawn grey-dark grey (sooted), fawn, fawn. Smooth slightly soapy. Some grits. Hand finished. A late Belgic early Roman fabric not occurring much after *c.* AD 75.
28. Dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Hard, slightly sandy. Burnished.
29. Light grey, light grey, light grey. Hard sandy.
30. Grey, fawn, grey/fawn. Very rough surface, limestone and other grits. Rilling on outside of body. This fabric at Brixworth sealed below floor of earliest building, i.e. pre AD 85.
31. Dark grey, grey, red. Limestone grits, fabric as 30. Rilling on outside of body. Cf. notes on 30.

32 -37. (R105, A1, 22). This group is probably less consistent internally than B3, 3. From the same layer there was also one piece of Hadrianic or early Antonine Samian (no. 1 above). The group as a whole is probably mid to late second century.

32. Grey, grey, grey. Hard sandy. Cf. Woods 1970, no. 62.
33. Grey, light grey, grey. Hard sandy. This is a typical Belgic form but the neck is beginning to lose its Belgic shape — the cordon is virtually gone and the grooves are almost non-existent. Earlier rims are much deeper. Probably second century.
34. Grey/fawn, grey, white. Hard smooth.
35. Grey/pink, grey, pink. Hard smooth, slightly sandy. Fine combing on exterior. Upstanding rim and hard fabric probably indicate a second century date. Cf. Woods, 1970, no. 213.
36. Fawn, grey, fawn. Hard sandy. Some limestone gritting and grog. Cf. Woods, 1970, nos. 143-7.
37. Pink/grey, grey, pink/grey. Very hard, much limestone gritting. Combing in opposition. Form very close to some Belgic ones but fabric suggests a late first or early second century date.
38. (R105, B2, 19). Red on white, grey, red on white. Hard slightly gritty. Cf. Woods, 1970, no. 77.

39 - 52. (R105, C2, 9). This group may well span some considerable time, the sherds being small and well abraded. It is published as a group, however, as it is well sealed by stone yard C2, 3 and is therefore the key deposit not only for the laying down of the yard but also for the construction of Phase 2 as a whole. The crucial sherds are dishes 43, 44, 45 (Cf. Woods, 1970, nos. 42-45, also Frere, 1972, nos. 1101-3, 1110, 1162-1174) which should be seen as late third century, a date consistent with the mortarium rim, no. 52, and also a fragment of Oxford ware, form Drag. 36 (unill.) from the same layer. Bowl 41 seems typical of the second century but the thick, rather metallic grey wares 46 and 48 are probably later. No. 40 is typical of the narrow necked jars with double rims from Ecton (Johnston, 1969, nos. 67-75). A date probably post AD 270 should be assigned to the group.

39. Light grey, light grey, light grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.
40. Grey, white, grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.
41. Dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Hard, sandy, burnished.
42. Grey, fawn, grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.
43. Light grey, white, light grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.
44. Grey, white-grey-white, grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.
45. Grey, fawn, grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.
46. Light grey, white, light grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.
47. Dark grey, light grey, dark grey. Hard, smooth, slightly sandy, burnished.
48. Light grey, light grey, light grey. Smooth, hard, sandy.

49. Grey/fawn, fawn, grey/fawn. Sandy, with some grits. Lightly pitted surface.
50. Fawn, grey, fawn. Fairly hard, limestone gritted.
51. Pale orange, grey, pale orange. Smooth sandy.

4) THE MORTARIA *by* K. HARTLEY

In that only no. 54 is stratified, the report is arranged by product source. Drawn sherds are from forms for which close parallels have not been published.

Oxfordshire Products

52. Slightly sandy, greyish white fabric with a few brown and white crystalline grits surviving. Closest parallels from kilns at Headington, (*Oxoniensia* 17/18 (1952-3), fig. 45 nos. 20, 26) AD 250-400. R105, C2, 9.

    Seven other fragments: i. Flange and spout in off-white fabric, flattened bead and large thin, hooked flange. This form made at Cowley if not elsewhere (Atkinson, 1941, fig. 5 nos. 48, 52-6) 2nd century. ii. Cream fabric. For form cf. Churchill Hospital kilns (Young, 1972, fig. 5 nos. 3, 8, 9). Late 2nd — early 3rd century. iii & iv. Flanged mortaria AD 250-400. v. Brownish pink fabric. For form cf. Churchill Hospital kilns (Young, 1972, fig. 6 no. 21). 4th century. vi & vii. Cream slightly sandy fabric. For form cf. Cowley and Churchill Hospital kilns (Atkinson, 1941, fig. 5; Young, 1972, fig. 5 no. 15).

    Approximately 20 other fragments in cream and orange-brown fabrics of the Oxford kilns. Although some possibly earlier material, most sherds date to AD 250-400.

Mancetter-Hartshill Products

53. Fine creamy white fabric with slight traces of decoration in red-brown paint on collar; red-brown and blackish trituration grit. Unusual rim-form; probably 3rd century.
54. Hard, fine-textured white fabric with dark brown trituration grit; diagonal stripes, partly overlapping to form a partial lattice, in red-brown paint on collar. Late 3rd century or more probably 4th century.
55. Fine, white fabric with grey or black trituration grit; flange decorated with groups of diagonal wavy lines painted in red-brown slip. Almost certainly 4th century.
56. Fine, cream fabric with red-brown and dark grey grit. Probably within period AD 260-370.
57. Fine, white fabric with red-brown trituration grit; fabric notably smooth despite addition of very fine tempering material. Perhaps 4th century.
58. Fine, hard white fabric with greyish tinge in the core and abundant red-brown and grey trituration grit; flange decorated with broad diagonal stripes of red-brown slip. The hard, thin flange and body and somewhat unusual rim-form are almost certainly indicative of a 4th century date.
59. Very thin-walled mortarium in fine, hard, white fabric. This unusual rim-profile does not occur on military sites in the north of England and it almost certainly belongs to the second half of the 4th century, perhaps to a date later than AD 370 when the Mancetter/Hartshill potteries finally lost their northern markets.

    Four other rim fragments of late 3rd-4th century — one wall-sided and three hammer-headed (two approximate to Gillam, 1968, form 284); also several body fragments.

Nene Valley Products

60. Slightly sandy, cream fabric with brownish slip or colour-coat and ironstone trituration grit. The bead has been cut and turned out to form the two sides of the spout. This mortarium is typical in fabric, grit and form of mortaria made on a large scale in the Castor-Stibbington area of the Lower Nene Valley in the 3rd century, *c.* AD 230-300.

    Three other rim fragments: i. Flanged mortarium in hard, buff fabric with greyish core and one very large grey-green grit. Mortaria with large rounded beads of this type can be Antonine. Fabric unusual but not impossibly so at Mancetter; possibility, however, of manufacture at a small workshop in Northamptonshire, where mortaria certainly were made in the second half of the 2nd century although reaching only local markets. ii. A near wall-sided mortarium in slightly sandy, cream fabric with some pink. Both fabric and form closely reminiscent of mortaria made at Ecton kilns (Johnston, 1969). This form with collar divided into three parts was first made in the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries in the second half of 2nd century when it

was occasionally stamped (Greenfield and Webster, 1964-5, 23, fig. 8 no. 26), but more commonly in the first half of the 3rd century, and the thumb depression in the bead to form the spout is more in keeping with a 3rd century date. iii. Late 3rd and 4th century; Stibbington product.

Also two body fragments from Lower Nene Valley *c.* AD 240-400, and two other body fragments within Lower Nene Valley or Northamptonshire.

GENERAL

The pottery can in no way be regarded as an outstanding collection yet two interesting points emerge. Firstly, although there is some first century material, including pre-Roman pottery, the earliest Samian is second century and the quantity of vessels represented is rather small. Secondly, the pottery as a whole throws light on the position as a purchasing centre of a small Romano-British farm in an area probably only of moderate prosperity. Presumably the site's ceramic assemblage reflects what was available in adjacent markets and it is interesting to see the local wares for example from Ecton and Harrold mingling with the regional imports from the Lower Nene Valley, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire, production centres from which Northampton is roughly equidistant. Certainly the non-local pottery was at no time more than a small percentage of the total and yet of sufficient quantity and from sufficiently diverse sources as to support a thesis of fairly healthy trade and economic activity.

THE GLASS

By D. CHARLESWORTH

i Chip from a handle in blue green glass. 1st-2nd century. R105, B2. SF 11.

ii Three fragments of the neck of a small flask, green glass. 1st-2nd century. R105, C2 (on top of yard). SF 27.

iii Small featureless fragments but the thin metal with pinhead bubbles and striations suggests a late Roman date. R105, A2. SF 71; R105, E3. SF 86; R105, D2. SF 120.

iv Small bulbous dark blue bead, 5 mm. diameter. R97, A. SF 3.

THE OTHER FINDS

By G. E. OAKLEY (except where otherwise stated)

IRON (FIG. 12)

61. Double barbed spring from barrel padlock. One leaf from second barb missing. Second arm arches and enters slot in main arm. Details of fixing not clear but X-rays show thin bracer across arch. Each leaf on main barb has slight flange on outer edge, perhaps to guide entry to lock. Three examples from Shakenoak (two in late 3rd century or 4th century contexts) have second barbs mounted with leaves opening sideways but similar keys would open both types of lock (Brodribb *et al.*, 1968, 102, fig. 34, 1 and 2; 1973, 118, fig. 56, 355). R97, B. SF 7.

62. Finger ring? Bent and broken but D-shaped section. Iron signet rings are ascribed to 1st century AD by Henig (1973). One from Quinton, Northants. has carnelian setting (R. M. Friendship-Taylor, unpublished). R105, A1. SF 22.

63. Thin curved band, section slightly convex. R97, B. SF 38b.

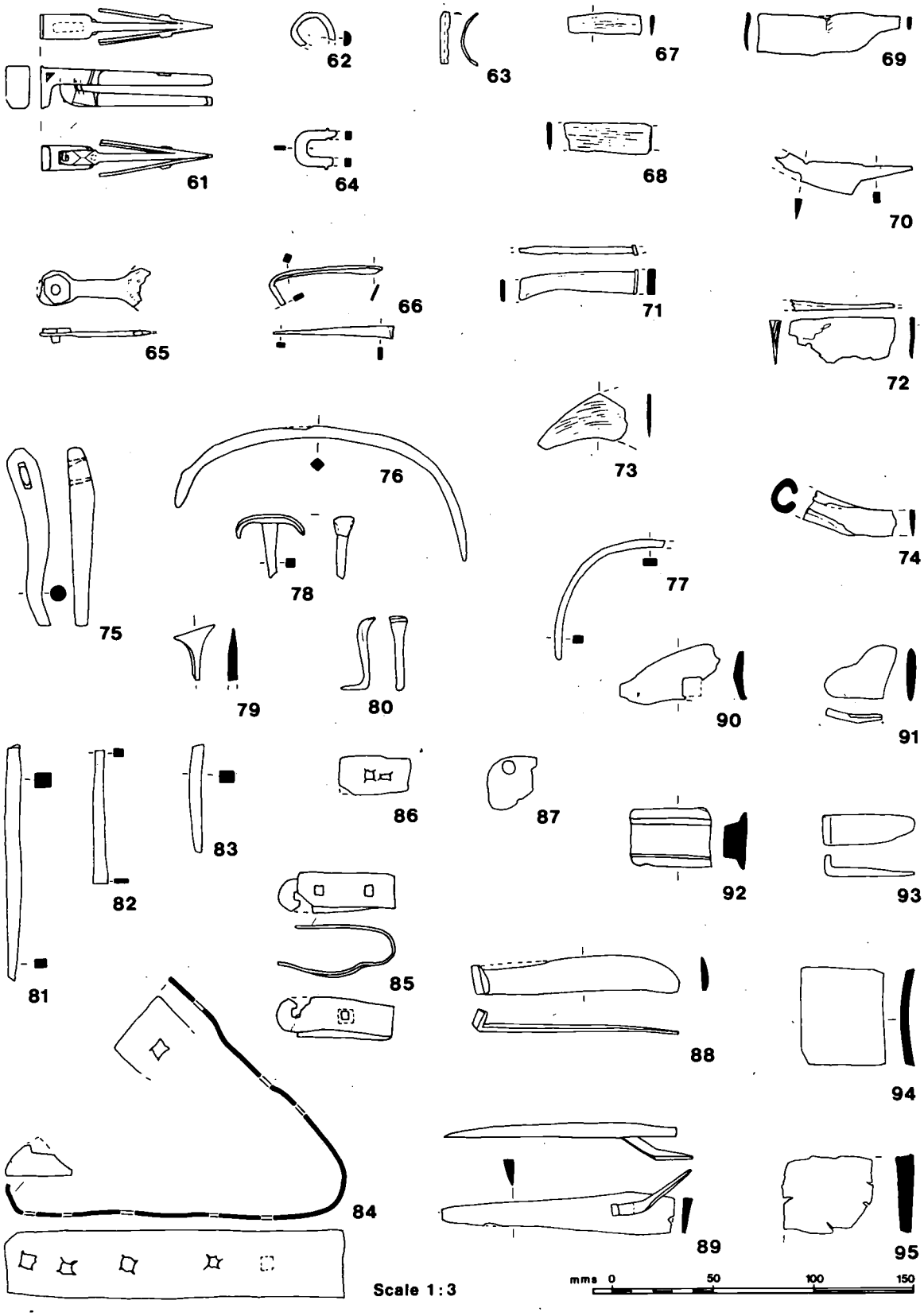
64. Object with two prongs joined by flat loop. Each prong has a projection or stop on the outside and both appear to be broken off. R105, B1. SF 103.

65. Arm with disc-shaped end through which a heavy round-shanked rivet with rough hexagonal head passes. Other end of arm broken where it widens out and becomes thinner. X-rays suggest holes in this thin area. Cf. later 3rd century examples from Shakenoak (Brodribb *et al,* 1971, 122, fig. 51, 110). R105, E3, 9. SF 65.

66. Two thin rods with varying cross-section. Both are broken and do not appear to join. One bent with flat curved end like tweezer. R105, A2. SF 63.

67. Knife blade fragment. X-rays show striations. R105, C2. SF 55.

68. Knife blade fragment. X-rays show striations. R105, B1. SF 45.



Northamptonshire Archaeology 1976, 11 Fig. 12 Overstone: iron objects.

69. Blade with tang? Thin fragmentary and twisted. R97, A. SF 32.
70. Knife blade fragment with tang. R105, unstratified.
71. Heavy strip shaped by hammering both edges, broken both ends. Possibly a solid knife handle. R105, D3. SF 110.
72. Laminated blade fragment. Original shape uncertain. R97, A. SF 15.
73. Tip of curved blade, possibly sickle or pruning hook, but very thin. X-rays show striations. R105, C2, 3. SF 42.
74. Curved blade fragment with broken socket for wooden handle. Small sickle? R105, A1. SF 7.
75. Leg. Heavy, circular section, elegantly curved and tapered to flat foot. Rectangular hole containing nail passes through upper end. Perhaps leg of gridiron for cooking? R97, A. SF 12.
76. Handle, possibly from bucket, ends incomplete. Diamond section. R105, C2. SF 72.
77. Curved bar, possibly handle, tapering towards one end. R105, B1. SF 44.
78. Special purpose nail. Large head with ends curled over. R97, A. SF 4.
79. Tip of tool? Broken rectangular bar flattened asymmetrically at end. Centre of slanting edge is thinner than sides. R105, C2. SF 128.
80. Object with one end flattened and curled over, the other pointed and bent. R105, C2. SF 52.
81. Tapering rectangular bar, end slightly burred as if hammered. R105, D2. SF 58.
82. Chisel? Rectangular section, bar extended at end. R105, C2. SF 76.
83. Heavy bar tapering slightly. R105, C2. SF 91.
84. Bent strip with irregular holes split at the corners, one end rounded or pointed, the other square, perhaps broken. Possibly binding around edge of wood 20-25mm. thick fastened by nails or rivets passing through both sides of strip. R105, A1, 6. SF 99.
85. Bent strip with 4 square holes, one end rounded, the other square. Possibly binding around edge of wood 15-25mm. thick fastened by 2 nails or rivets 25mm. apart. R97, A. SF 33a.
86. Thin plate with 2 ragged rectangular holes. R105, C2, 3. SF 53.
87. Thin sheet fragment with rough round hole. R105, B3. SF 102.
88. Half-rounded heavy tapering bar bent up at thick end. R97, A. SF 37.
89. Heavy tapering bar with asymmetrical triangular section. Rectangular hole at wide end contains tapering rectangular nail bent over on flat side of bar. R105, B2. SF 12.
90. Thick plate fragment broken across square hole. Horseshoe? R105, C2. SF 85.
91. Thick plate fragment with partial chamfer, R105, C2. SF 92.
92. Fragment of thick wide bar with flanges. R97, B. SF 38a.
93. Plate fragment with turned up end. R105, C3. SF 88.
94. Heavy rectangular plate with slight lengthwise curve. R105, A1. SF 10.
95. Wedge-shaped heavy fragment. R97, A. SF 33b.
96. (unill.) Smaller wedge-shaped fragment. R97, A. SF 39.
97. (unill.) Thick plate fragment without holes with curved edge bent up slightly. Length 37 mm. R97, A. SF 16. (cf. 90 above).
98. (unill.) Cleat? Rectangular section bar turning through 90 degrees into nail-like end, other end missing. At bend bar is made thinner and wider. Exactly like late 3rd century and late 4th century cleats from Shakenoak. (Brodribb *et al.*, 1968, 106, fig. 36, 67; 1971, 122, fig. 51, 117; 1973, 126, fig. 62, 452.) Length of bar 54 mm., width across end 34 mm. R97, A. SF 18.
99 103. (unill.) Five boot studs or hobnails as at Shakenoak. (Brodribb *et al.*, 1971, 122, fig. 52, 136.) Domed heads 8-9mm. diameter, 3-4mm. deep. Shanks bent at 5-10mm. indicated outer sole thickness? R105, A1. SF 29. E3, SF 41. R97, A. SF 17, 34. C. SF 35.
104. (unill.) Pin or needle, fragment of shaft only. Cf. 127 below. Length 24mm., diameter 0.8mm. R105, E3. SF 79.

Distribution of 44 iron objects: of 28 objects from R105, 10 are from C2, 5 from A1, both yard areas, the rest scattered.

Nails

Distribution of 94 iron nails: of 61 nails from R105, 29 are from C2.

Shanks: rectangular section, mostly tapering from 7 x 5 mm., a few thinner. Many with sharp points.

Heads: home-made large flat heads 15-22 mm. across, varying from circular through pentagonal, trapezoidal to rectangular, form 60 per cent of the 62 extant heads. 18 per cent have heavy crutch heads, expanded sideways but same width as shaft (average 22 x 7 mm.). Lengths unbroken (max. 96 mm., min. 19 mm.): of 47 complete nails, 58 per cent are 45-65 mm. long, 40 per cent are 50-60 mm. long. Lengths of bent shanks (from head): of 20 nails, 50 per cent bent at 30-40 mm., 35 per cent at 35-40 mm. Lengths broken: of 33 nails, 70 per cent broken at 30-50 mm., 52 per cent broken at 35-45 mm. For comparable data see Brodribb *et al.*, 1973, 134, fig. 66; 1972, 114-5, fig. 55.

THE BROOCHES *by* D. F. MACKRETH (FIG. 13)

105. Nauheim Derivative: Very large brooch. Spring and lower part of bow and catch-plate missing. Very long bow, square section. Sunken moulding with slow swell down front and each side. Catch-plate clearly pierced, probably by two holes.

Other examples rare. Brooch not consistent with Werner's definition (1955, 170-1), but clearly not a standard post-Conquest type. Diagnostic features: size; care taken over decoration; piercings in catch-plate. While large brooches may be post-Conquest, most are earlier. Ornament applied not only to front but also to sides. Catch-plate incomplete but piercings clearly large, probably separated by bars (possibly stepped), giving a fretted appearance. Such decoration characteristic of a series of brooches belonging to the first half of 1st century AD. (Bushe-Fox 1925, 40, pl. XII. 2; *ibid*, 43, pl. XIII. 9; *Antiq. J.* 22 (1942), 61, fig. 1.6). This brooch is quite possibly pre-Conquest. R105, A1; SF 18.

106. Colchester: plain wings and bow; bow has square section with rounded corners. Catch-plate pierced by three rectangular holes set two above one. Spring broken and repaired in antiquity by feeding through coils of spring piece of bronze sheet rolled into tube. Broken end of spring bent under wing to provide necessary resistance when pin depressed.

One of two main types in use in pre-Conquest Britain, but so few dated specimens that in the main impossible to be sure which side of Conquest any specimens may have lain. No. 106, however, could have a *floruit* of *c.* 35-50 AD (cf. dated examples from Skeleton Green, Puckeridge, and King Harry's Lane, Verulamium, both Herts.; publications forthcoming); but because of lack of any detailing, and piercing of catch-plate, is probably pre-Conquest. This range relevant for probable date of manufacture but brooch could have continued in use for some time, especially as it was repaired. R105, A2; SF 15.

107. Plate: plain plate with champlevé enamel decoration on front and traces of sprung pin arrangement on back. Ornament: central circular cell, now empty, with surrounding broad band containing ring of small circular bosses; traces of green enamel left in this zone, probably affected by corrosion products.

A simple design type subject to variations, principally colour of enamel and number of bronze dots in outer circle; pin fixing may be hinged or sprung (*Saalburg Jahrbuch* 1972, 106 no. 998 and 999, taf. 260). Type rare in Britain and apparently not dateable. In general, plate brooches supersede native bow brooches but use of enamel becomes popular in late 1st century, and is commonly used on late 1st century and 2nd century imported brooches. No. 107 may well have been imported and probably has same date range. R105, B2 SF 14.

THE OTHER BRONZE OBJECTS (FIG. 13)

108. Toilet article with suspension ring; tip broken off but probably nail-cleaner. Strip 0.7 mm. thick folded over at edges to stiffen shaft. Cross-hatched lines on surface incised before folding since they pass over edges onto back. Traces of these at lower end which has been cut in typical late Romano-British style. Cf. late Roman example at Cadbury Congresbury, Somerset (Fowler *et al.*, 1970, 24, fig. 10, 2). R105, unstratified. SF 34.

109. Finger ring? Sheet bronze 0.1 mm. thick folded lengthwise and bent into rough circle. R105, B3. SF 132.

110. Small weight. Flat square, domed upper face bearing rough V-section cut in shape of letter V or lambda together with several shallow depressions or dots. Reverse severely pitted by corrosion. Slender raised recto-oval frame encloses half surface. Larger frame may have bordered whole face. A few isolated ridges cannot now be interpreted. Surface tooling in several places may reflect surface of mould used to cast weight. Length and width 9.5 mm., thickness 1 mm. Weight 0.65 gm. R105, F3. SF 35.

This object now weighs 10 grains Troy = ½ scruple Apothecaries' weight, but may be lightened

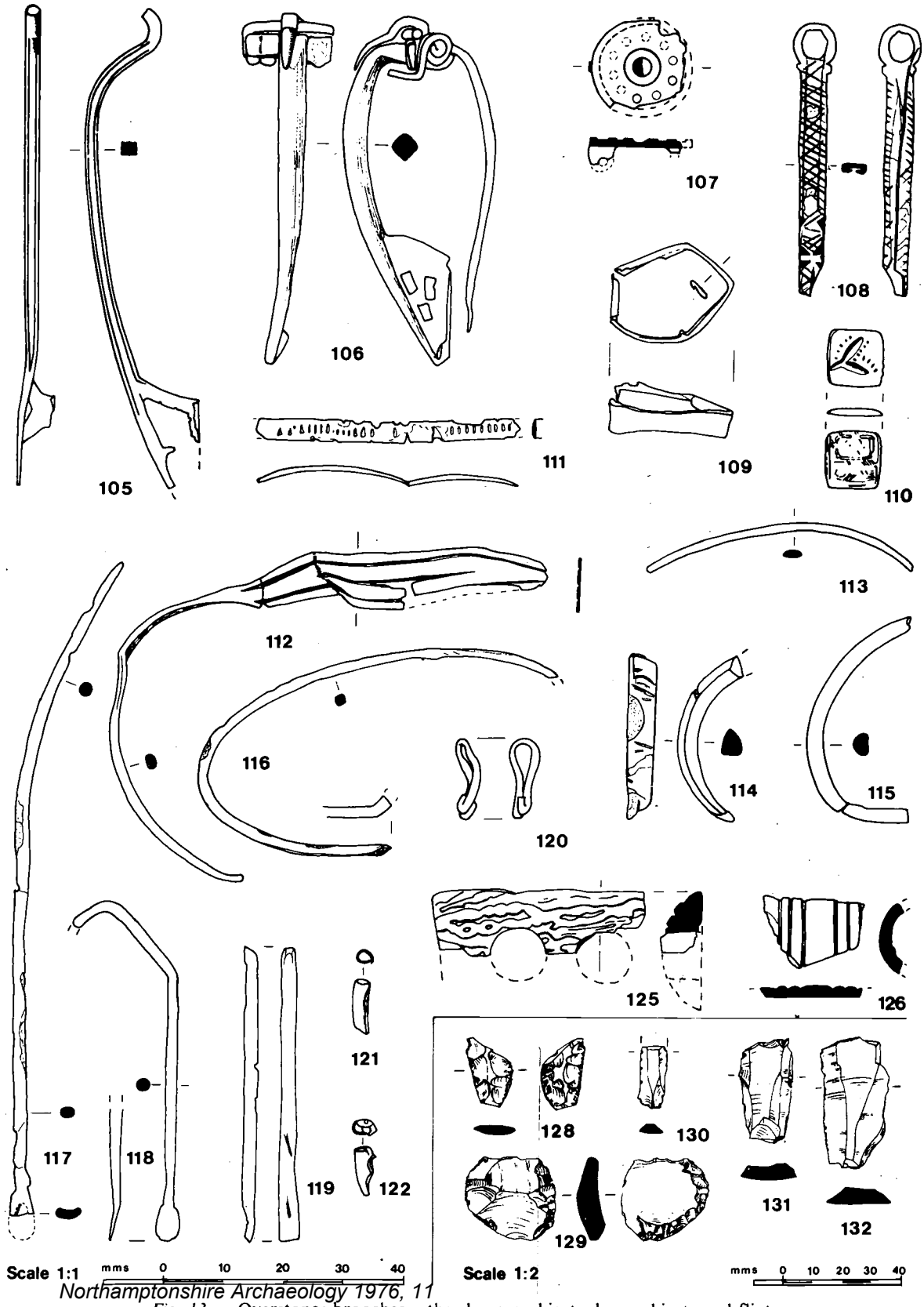


Fig. 13 Overstone: brooches, other bronze objects, bone objects and flints.

by corrosion and wear. These units were not standardised until medieval times but have considerable antiquity. The nearest Roman unit would be an *obolus* of 0.56-0.57gm. (Skinner, 1966, 477, Table II), but Roman standard weights were often inaccurate (Fox and Ravenhill, 1972, 94, fig. 18, 6). The Greek *obolus* was heavier at 0.727gm (Fuchs, 1974, 199). The Roman *scripulum* (or scruple = 2 x *obolus*) was sometimes marked with a reversed F symbol (Kisch, 1965, 220-1) and coin weights often bore dots (Kisch, 1965, 150).

(I am grateful to staff of the Coins and Medals Dept. of the British Museum for their opinion that it is not a coin weight but may be an apothecaries' weight).

111. Bracelet, fragment. Decorated with small depressions. R97, A. SF29.

112. Bracelet? Rod beaten out into wide thin strip decorated with incised lines nearly cutting the metal. Rod curved in arc 50mm. diameter might fit arm if similar rod once joined broken end of strip. R105, D2. SF 33 and 48.

113. Bracelet, fragment. Flat D section. R97, A. SF 31.

114. End of bracelet. Cast bronze. Inside rounded and smooth, outside rough with traces of transverse incised decoration? Reverse D section tapering towards end. R105, A1. SF 3.

115. Bracelet, fragment. Rounded D section. R97, A. SF 14.

116. Bracelet? Curved wire, rounded square section, flattened and turned up at one end. R97, B. SF 6a.

117. Spatula, probe or stylus. One end pointed, the other flattened but slightly curved across broken end. R105, D2. SF 67.

118. Spatula. Flat roughly circular end, bent and broken shaft. 2nd to 4th centuries, cf. example at Camerton (Wedlake, 1958, 254, fig. 61: 1, 4, 7). R105, A1. SF 24.

119. Spoon handle or probe. Complete asymmetrical rounded point, flattened and broken at other end. R97, B. SF 6b.

120. Loop, made of 1.2mm. diameter wire, both ends folded back, showing much wear in centre. R105, A1. SF 106.

121. Rolled piece of sheet 0.3 mm. thick. Lace end? Cf. repair to brooch 106 above. R105, A1. SF 6.

122. Rivet? Rolled piece of sheet bronze tapering to point, turned over at top with small hole one side. Several from Roman well at Exning, Suffolk, used to rivet bronze sheets together (Johnston, 1959, 12, Fig. 1, 7). R105, A1, 16. SF 82.

123. (unill.) Sheet fragment with broken edges. Minimum dimensions 25 x 10 mm. Thickness 2 mm. R105, C2, 3. SF 108.

124. (unill.) Pin, bent. Thin iron or steel shaft with shaft point. Head made from bronze strip 0.5 mm. wide wound round shaft twice. Cf. 104 above. Intrusive medieval or later? Length 25 mm. Shaft diameter 0.5mm. R105, A1. SF 5.

OTHER METALS

Two fragments of lead. R105, F3. SF 115; C2, 3. SF 28. Four small lumps of slag; dull blue-black surface with small-scale wrinkles. Fairly dense. R105, B2. SF 39; C2. SF 74; C2. SF 93; D2, 2. SF 77.

WORKED BONE (FIG. 13)

125. Red deer antler. Split segment with two round holes, broken across holes and at one end. Flat back worn smooth. Hole diameter *c.* 8mm. R105, C2, 3. SF 46.

126. Hollow bone fragment carved or lathe-turned on exterior with transverse ridges and convex curve between. Interior not worked. Diameter *c.* 20mm. R105, C2. SF 30.

127. (unill.) Sheep metatarsal highly polished by wear especially on sides. Wide shallow groove worn on each side where shaft expands. Both ends broken off. Complete example from recent excavations at Duston (R101, A26. SF 283) shows pair of shallow side grooves and single deeper groove at distal end of shaft. Another has pair of shallow grooves at distal end (R101, B51. SF 282). Both also have slighter grooves on front and rear faces next to side ones. Ends of bones show little wear. Both from late 1st or early 2nd century AD contexts. Cf. example from Irchester (Hall and Nickerson, 1967, 90, fig. 16, 14). Some form of handle? Width 11.5mm. R105, E3, 9. SF 137.

FLINT (FIG. 13) *by* HELEN BAMFORD

128. Arrowhead fragment, probably leaf-shaped. Both ends broken off. Fine pressure flaking on both faces. Patinated grey/white. R105, B1. SF 122.

129. Discoidal scraper. Bifacial edge retouch, two thirds of which is on the bulbar face. Dark grey, translucent, unpatinated. R105, D1. SF 96.

130. Very small blade. Distal end snapped off recently. Slight damage on both edges possibly resulting from use. Patinated grey/white except at broken end. R105, F3. SF 100.

131. Knife. Blade-like flake. Bulbar and distal ends both trimmed. One edge shows wear indicative of use. Dark grey, opaque. R105, C2. SF 123.

132. Knife. Blade-like flake. Distal end snapped off. One edge shows fairly heavy wear indicative of use. Dark grey, opaque. R105, A1, 22. SF 121.

133. (unill.) Roughly triangular point crudely flaked on both faces, possibly made from a core. Dark flint heavily patinated white. Length 36mm., width 30mm. R97, SF 42.

Discussion

As a group these are consistent with a Neolithic date. However, 130 would not be out of place in a microlithic industry and could be Mesolithic. 131 and 132 are probably from composite knives. 129 is slightly unusual in having retouch on both faces.

The differing degrees of patination probably reflect no more than variations in local soil chemistry.

STONE (all unill.)

134. Whetstone: square section, end broken off. Transverse wear on all sides away from complete end. Medium-grained micaceous grey sandstone, probably Pennant Grit from the Bristol coalfield. Ellis Group IIB(6) rock type (1969, 160-2) (Identified by D. T. Moore of British Museum (Natural History) Mineralogy Dept.) Length 111mm. (incomplete), section 22 x 18mm. R105, C2. SF 49.

135. Whetstone: square section, broken end. Grey fine-grained micaceous sandstone, probably from coal measures, possibly Pennant Grit (D.T. Moore). Length 35mm. (fragment), section 18 x 13mm. R105, B1. SF 4.

Both whetstones bear close macroscopic resemblance to broader medieval hones of Pennant Grit from St. Peter's Street, Northampton, thin-sectioned by D. T. Moore (1977, forthcoming) and the same rock type is widely used elsewhere.

136. Quern, rotary: two fifths of lower stone with convex grinding surface and rough flat bottom. Coarse ferruginous sandstone? Carstone from East Anglia. (Identified by F. W. Anderson AMLAB No. 750624)).

Diameter 370mm., centre hole 35mm., widening at bottom to 50mm. Centre thickness 64mm., edge 20mm. rounded. R97 topsoil. SF 41.

137. Phallus? Brown flint elongated pebble, oval section, with natural concentric ridge formation probably fossil shell, on surface at one end. Surface apparently worn smooth but no evidence at all of the stone being actually worked. Perhaps of no significance whatsoever but could have been a fertility talisman. Not necessarily Roman period. Carved chalk phalli from Neolithic sites: Windmill Hill (Smith, 1965, 132, fig. 57, 9), Thickthorn Down (Drew and Piggott, 1936, 86-7, figs. 3 and 4, with refs. to others). Also in ritual foundation deposit in Middle Bronze Age settlement on Itford Hill (Burstow and Holleyman, 1957, 200, fig. 26; Holden, 1972). Length 44mm., section 24 x 18mm. (oval). R105, A1. SF 138.

Also one small fragment of coal. R105, C2, 3: SF 134.

THE BUILDING MATERIALS *by* J. H. WILLIAMS

Tile

i Flat tile 27mm. thick, 145mm. long at least, 100mm. wide at least. Hard fabric, red to grey, few scattered limestone grits. Combed surface decoration. R97, A.

ii Flat tile 29mm. thick, 170mm. long at least, 100mm. tapering to 90mm. wide. Poorly fired friable fabric, red to grey, some limestone gritting. Also other small fragments probably from same tile, R97, A.

iii Small tile frags. 18mm. thick. Poorly fired friable fabric, slightly sandy, some limestone grits. Grey surface pink core. R105, C3.

iv Piece of *tegula*. Tile 23mm. thick, flange 48mm. deep, 25mm. thick rounded internally and curved groove between flange and base. Flange 95mm. long from end of tile to vertical cutaway — gap at least 25mm. long. Grey pink to grey, hard slightly sandy fabric. R105, C2, 3. Two other pieces from same or similar tile. R105, C2.

v Small tile frags. 13-15mm. thick. Hard, well fired slightly sandy fabric, R105, B1 and D1.

vi Piece of *tegula* flange. Flange 40mm. deep at least, 17mm. wide, slightly rounded internally. Hard, well fired fabric, red surface, grey core, some small gritting. R105, F4.

vii Flat tile (no edge), 18-20mm. thick, 80mm. x 120mm. at least. Brownish surface, grey core. R105, F4.

Stone

i Piece of shelly limestone probably local, 23mm. thick, 110mm. x 80mm. Long edge rounded, one surface very smooth. Possibly part of wall cladding or step edge. Surface find, field walking, R97.

MOLLUSCA

Land snails present were too few for useful analysis.

Common Oyster *(Ostrea Edulis)*: 15 valves (6 upper, 9 lower), only 4 fairly complete. One lower valve perforated near the centre perhaps by man. (R97, A. SF 27). Size variable. R105, A2, C2, D1, D3, E3 (1 valve in each). R97, A(6 valves), B(3 valves), C(1 valve).

Freshwater Mussel *(Unio Pictorum?)*: one fragment of hinge with teeth. (Evans, 8-9). R105, B1.

THE ANIMAL BONES *by* MARY HARMAN

There was only a small quantity of bone. It was well preserved and most of the fragments were identifiable. All the bones were examined, including the unstratified groups, though these were not listed and contained nothing of note apart from an ulna and parts of two femora from one or more human infants which had died at or near birth: this is unexceptional on a site of this kind. The stratified bones are considered as a Romano-British group and have not been divided into different phases. (For the purpose of the bone report some layers were considered to be stratified which were not so regarded for the other finds. These layers were immediately on top of the yard surfaces and were fairly distinctive compared with the plough soil. There could be a small post-Roman intrusive element but this would be negligible.)

Though two different areas (R97, R105) were excavated, there is no great difference between the two groups of bones, and as the sample is a fairly small one, the two groups are considered together.

The age of the animals was assessed where possible from the state of tooth eruption and degree of tooth wear, and from the state of epiphyseal fusion, using the criteria published by Silver (1963).

The minimum number of animals represented was estimated from the maximum number of a particular bone on the right or left side of each species, the age of the individuals represented also being taken into consideration. In a small sample such as this it would be unwise to make any but the most general conclusions as to the relative importance of the different species.

Table 1 shows the number of bones present from each species, the total number of bones present, and the minimum number of animals represented.

Most of the cattle bones were from adult animals over three years old, though there were four mandibles from animals of about six months or less, and a few bones which may have belonged to these or come from animals between this age and maturity; four more mandibles were from animals approaching maturity at an age of about two and half years (four to five years based on old figures). The sheep give much the same picture, most of the bones being from adult animals, and the mandibles including four from animals dying at about a year old, and four from animals dying at about two years (two and a half to four years based on old figures), while the rest were all from animals of over two (over four) years. There was one bone from a very young lamb. The age range of the pigs varied considerably, though it lay mainly between one and two and a half years (one to three and a half years). One very young animal was represented, of three months or less. One would not expect many pigs to be kept beyond the age at which they reach maximum size. Two of the horses represented were quite young animals, one aged between two and two and a half years, and one under two years, the third being over four or five years, though these adult bones may represent more than one animal. The presence of the red deer suggests hunting on a small scale, but this would not seem to be of any economic importance. Cattle and sheep were obviously the animals kept in greatest numbers.

Table 1. Number of bones found from each species, and minimum number of animals present:

	Cattle			*Sheep*			*Pig*		*Horse*	
	L		R	L		R	L	R	L	R
Skull	3	2	11		4	5		1		
Maxilla	5		1	1		1	1			
Mandible	18		21	6		10	4	7		1
Vertebra		30			4					
Rib		109			26					
Scapula	9	1	6	4		4	2	1		1
Humerus	6		7	6		4		2	2	1
Radius	15		11	13	1	13	1	1	1	1
Metacarpal	5	5	7	4	13	4			1	
Pelvis	7	12	12	6		3	1		1	1
Femur	7	6	3	3	16	1		1		1
Tibia	9	2	7	22	19	10		3	1	2
Astragalus	3		7						1	
Calcaneum	7		7							2
Metatarsal	10	6	8	14	13	12		2	1	
Phalanx 1	8		12			2			3	
Phalanx 2	3		7			1			1	
Phalanx 3			1							
	+ whole skull									
Total	480			308			36		39	
Total excluding teeth	404			245			29		25	
Minimum number of animals	22			24			11		3	
+ Dog	two R mandibles part radius L ulna									
Red deer	L metacarpal									

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The Society is grateful to the Department of the Environment and to Northampton Development Corporation for a grant towards the cost of printing this paper.