

# Excavations on the Mayorhold, Northampton, 1971

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with contributions by M. R. McCARTHY and G. E. OAKLEY

## INTRODUCTION

Excavations on a small site on the east side of the Mayorhold, Northampton, during the summer of 1971 recovered evidence of occupation stretching back at least to the twelfth century. Earlier activity is possible but traces of this would either have been removed by later disturbances or have lain beneath the west end of the site which was not excavated below late medieval levels.

The excavations, necessarily limited because of available resources and the need to deposit spoil within the site boundary, were situated between Bearward Street and Bull Head Lane on the site of the Green Dragon, one of Northampton's older public houses (FIG. 1). The site lay immediately north of Lee's postulated Saxon defensive perimeter (1954).

## Mayorhold: Site Location

$\times 182\% = 1:1250$

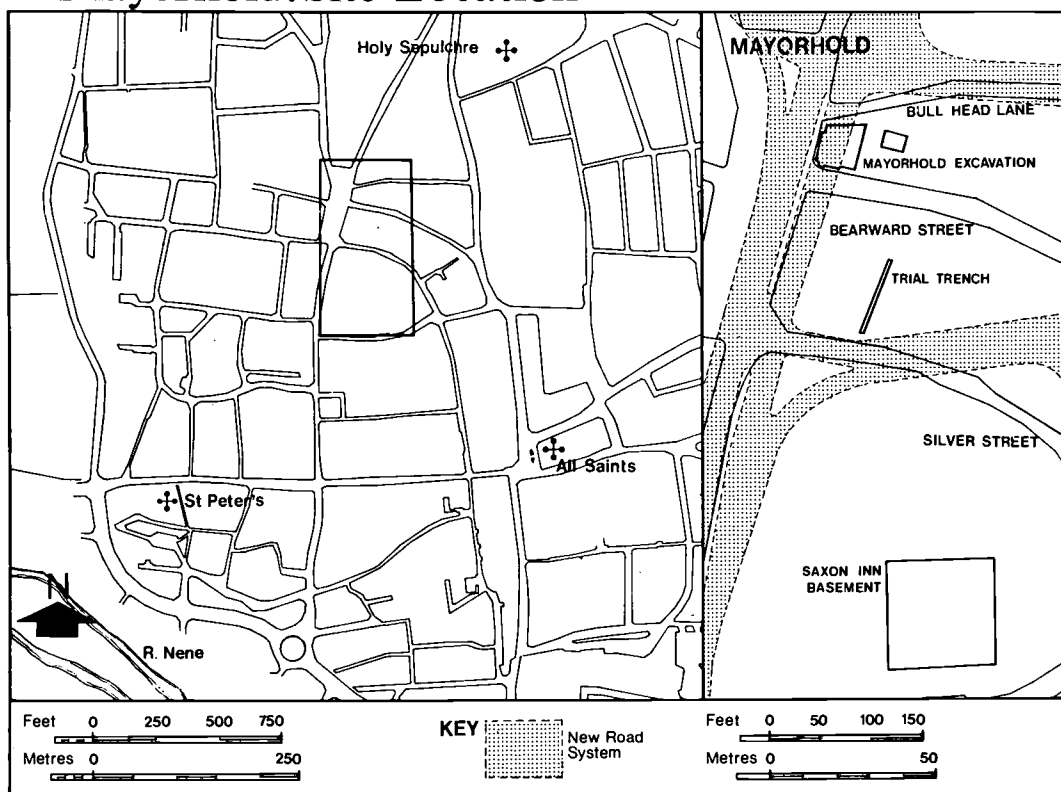


Fig 1

In addition to the purely archaeological results the site was important as the first venture within the medieval town walls by the then newly established Development Corporation Archaeological Unit. The considerable interest shown in the site by Northamptonians and the local media provided an invaluable stimulus for subsequent archaeological work within the town.

### THE EXCAVATION (FIG. 2)

Modern deposits were removed by a Hymac 580. Because of the limited nature of the subsequent excavations coupled with the very extensive post-medieval disturbances the results are somewhat tentative. The features have therefore been described in numerical sequence without any attempt at phasing. It is thought that some deposits, for example pit 12, date to the twelfth century whilst layers 3, 6, 11, 101, 102 can be attributed to the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. Walls 109-112, floor 104 and hearth 113 may belong to one building, dating perhaps to the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries on the evidence of pottery found overlying the floor. Pits 8, 10, 16 and well 30 are of similar date though it is not clear whether they belong to the same or another property. A great many post-medieval features were discovered but nearly all were very badly disturbed. A clay-lined pit (21), possibly a tan-pit, contained late eighteenth century pottery.

#### LIST OF FEATURES

- F3 Quarry pit, uncertain lateral extent but at least 3.50 m. deep. Fill — tip-lines of mixed brown, sandy soil, stones and charcoal. Cut by 6, 8, 10, 16, 101, 106.
- F5 Pit, 0.95 m. deep. Sloping sides and flat base. Fill — mixed brown sandy soil, stones. Overlaid by 108, relationship to 105 uncertain.
- F6 Pit, 0.50 m. deep. Vertical sides and fairly flat base. Overlaid by 108, relationship to 105 uncertain.
- F8 Pit, 0.60 m. deep. Irregular profile. Cut by modern cellars to north.
- F10 Pit, 0.95 m. deep. Irregular profile.
- F11 Pit. Depth uncertain below cellar floor.
- F12 Pit. Cut into bedrock and not excavated below a depth of 2 m. underneath cellar floor because of water table.
- F16 Pit. 0.35-0.50 m. deep. Irregular profile.
- F21 Pit. Vertical sides lined with thick, blue clay. Fill — bricks, blue clay and pottery.
- F28 Possible garderobe, 1.40 m. deep. Sides lined with stone walls and floor with white, sandy clay.
- F30 Well, 1.00 m. diameter at top widening to 1.50 m. at a depth of 5 m. Fill — chiefly tile and stone to a depth of 4.00 m., then fine sandy silt. Not excavated below 5 m. because of water table.
- F101 Robber trench cuts 102, other relationships uncertain.
- F102, 104, 105. Earth floors; extent and relationships uncertain.
- F106 Wall. Relationship to 107 uncertain.
- F107 Robber trench at least 0.50 m. deep. Fill — stone, and brown sandy soil.
- F108 Wall. Small stones abutting east face at north end.
- F109 Wall. Irregular faces. Foundation c. 1.30 m. deep. A buttress-type feature abuts east face. Relationships with walls 110 and 111 uncertain.
- F110 Wall. Probably abutted by 113.
- F111 Wall.
- F112 Wall.
- F113 Hearth, area of edge-set sandstone blocks surrounded by patch of burnt sandy soil. Possibly contemporary with 104.

# Mayorhold: Plan of Features

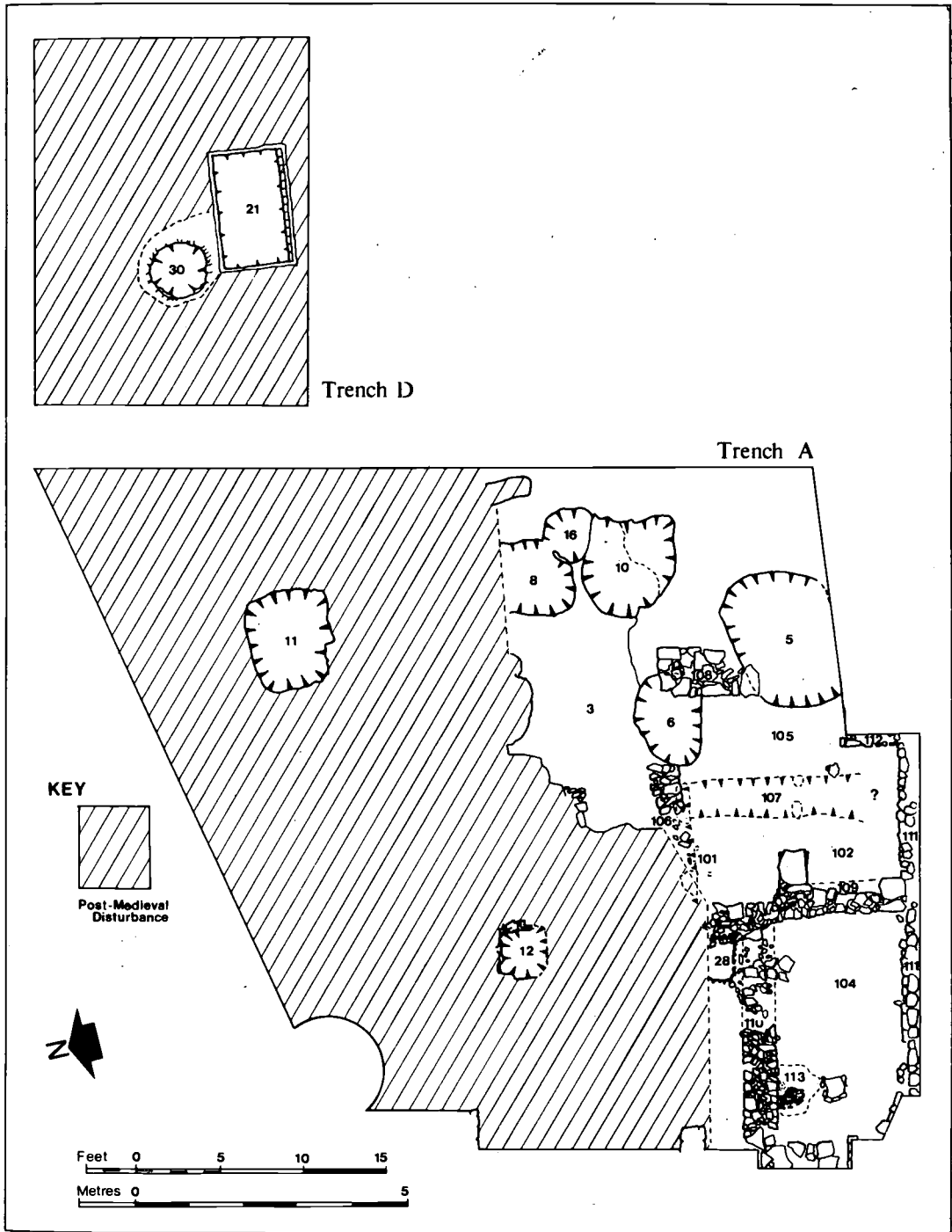


Fig 2

Two other sites close to Mayorhold were also investigated in the same year (FIG. 1).

1. At the Saxon Inn no excavation was possible in advance of construction but the contractors kindly allowed the sides of the basement trench (c. 30 m. square) to be examined. Walls, surfaces and pits were seen in all sections and pottery was collected. The pottery included a similar range of wares to that recovered from the Mayorhold with the addition of sherds of Oxford-type tripod pitchers. There was nothing certainly earlier than the twelfth century.

2. A trench 22 m. long and 1 m. wide was excavated by machine between Bearward Street and Silver Street in the hope of locating the Saxon defences postulated by Lee (1954). Although the excavators were unable to inspect the sections closely for reasons of safety, they felt that a large feature, possibly a quarry pit, could be seen.

### THE POTTERY

by M. R. McCarthy (FIGS. 3-5)

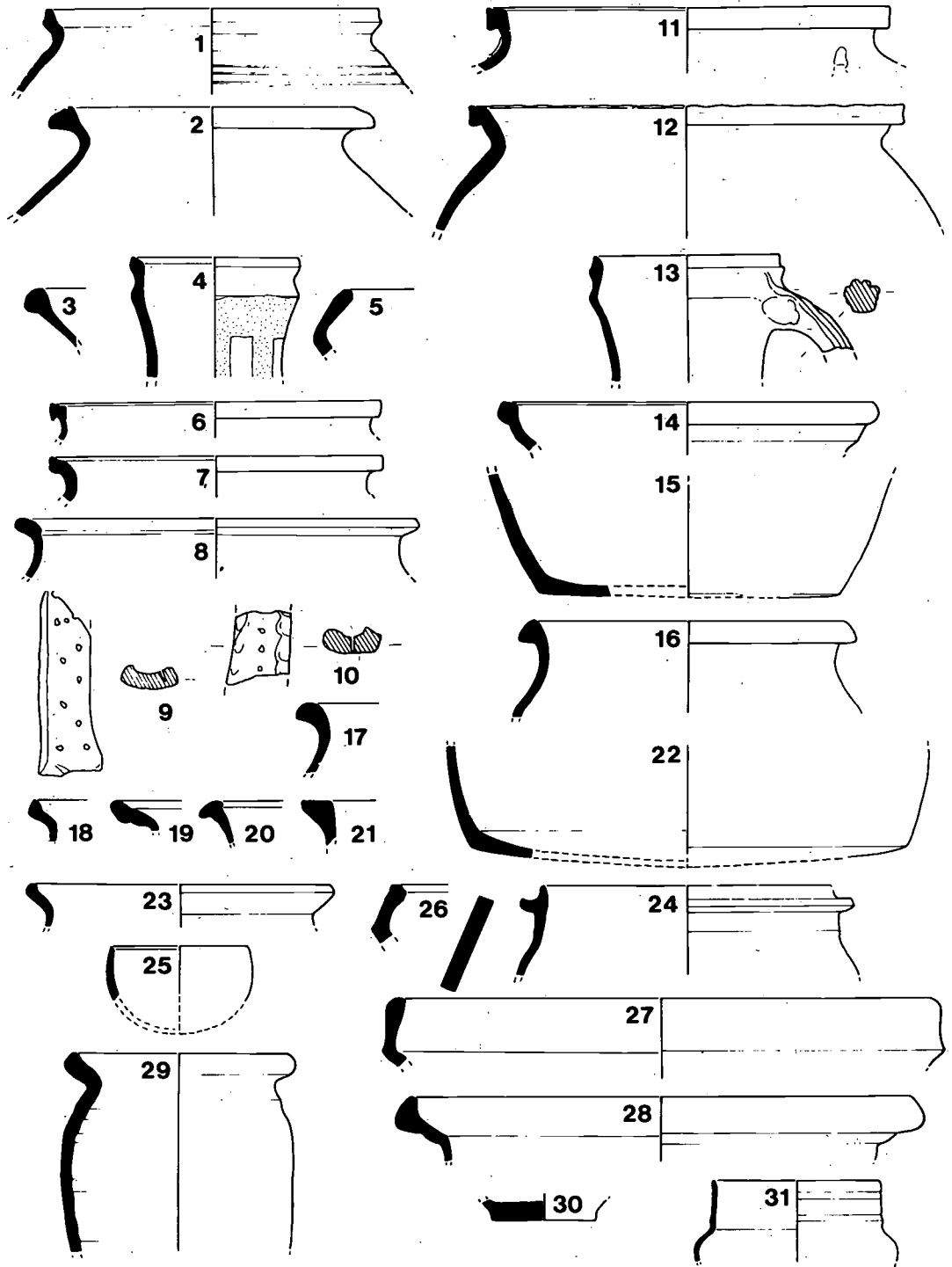
The pottery from the Mayorhold is an important supplement to that subsequently recovered from excavations on the Castle (*Medieval Archaeol.* 6-7 (1962-3), 322; 8 (1964), 275f; 9 (1965), 191), Greyfriars (Williams, 1973), St. Peter's Street (Williams, 1975), and Chalk Lane (Williams, 1976). As the medieval pottery from Northampton will be discussed in detail in the forthcoming St. Peter's Street volume (McCarthy, in Williams, 1977) the material from the Mayorhold will be dealt with briefly and in a conventional manner.

All the pottery was examined but only the 1605 sherds from useful archaeological contexts have been typed for form and fabric.

### THE FABRICS

(All are wheel thrown except some in A)

- A Hard, coarse-textured limestone-gritted wares sometimes hand made in grey and brown colours. Lyveden and Olney Hyde type. Jugs from Lyveden are often decorated with white painted lines and grid stamps below a patchy olive green glaze.
- B Hard, slightly sandy, usually oxidised buff wares with a watery olive green glaze on bowls and jugs. Potterspury type.
- C Hard, very sandy, dark grey ware. Possibly Great Brickhill type.
- D Hard, very fine, slightly sandy, white to buff ware often externally covered with a green glaze and decorated with brown lines of slip and square-notched rouletting. Brill type.
- E Hard, brown to red fabric with little visible filler and completely covered with a chocolate brown glaze. Cistercian wares and Midland Blackware (Brears 1971).
- F Hard, very sandy, often harsh textured buff fabric. Possibly Leicestershire type.
- G Hard, fine, grey to dark grey ware. Leicestershire type.
- H Very hard, slightly sandy, purple, patchily covered with a clear glaze. Midland Purple.
- J Fairly hard, fine, white ware often covered on both sides with a clear glaze giving a bright yellow appearance. Midland Yellow.
- K Hard, slightly sandy grey ware. Northampton ware.
- L Hard, sandy buff ware often covered with an olive green glaze and sometimes decorated with applied and thumbed strips of clay and incised wavy lines. Oxfordshire type.
- M Fairly hard, smooth, white ware with patchy yellow or green glaze. Stamford ware.



Scale 1:4

mm 0 50 100 150

Mayorhold, Northampton: pottery.

Fig 3

## EXCAVATION ON MAYORHOLD, NORTHAMPTON 1971

- N Fairly hard, slightly sandy, off-white ware often completely covered with an olive or emerald green glaze. 'Tudor Green' Surrey type.  
 O Hard, sandy, dark grey ware of uncertain kiln source.  
 P Very hard, slightly sandy orange-red ware.  
 Q Hard, sandy, partially oxidised wares often with splashes of yellow-brown glaze with central 'pin-holes'. Nottingham splashed ware type.  
 U Unidentified fabric.

With the exception of Cistercian ware and Midland Black and Yellow wares, post-medieval fabrics are not described in detail as this would add little further useful information. Suffice it to say that they included coarse brown and red fabrics, chiefly pancheons with black iron glazes, Staffordshire salt-glazed wares and press-moulded dishes with slip trailed designs, delft, cream and Nottingham stonewares as well as a variety of nineteenth century printed wares.

In the following description the sherds per layer were counted and the figures are quoted below. The fabric letter is followed by the number of sherds and the forms per fabric.

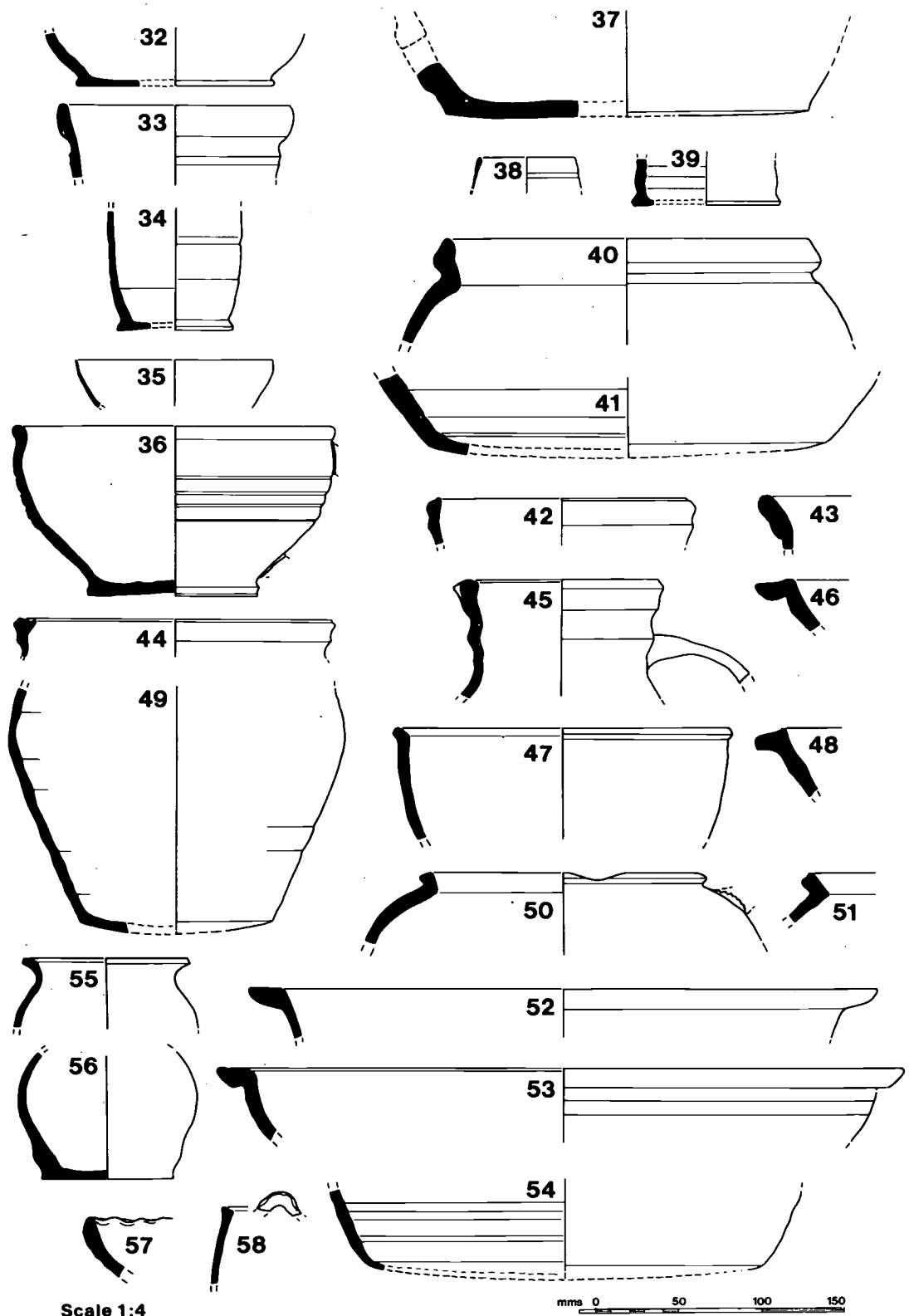
### DESCRIPTION OF THE POTTERY

Feature No.	No. Sherds	Description
3	93	A,83, c/pots, bowls and Lyveden-type dec. jugs. E,2, cups. K,1. M,2, pitcher. U,5.
5	61	A,41, c/pots. B,13 c/pot. U,7.
6	258	A,244, c/pots, bowls, Lyveden-type dec. jugs. L,1, jug. M,10, pitcher. O,1, c/pot. U,2.
8	91	A,28, c/pots. B,19, jugs. D,10, jugs. E,2, cups. N,23, cups. U,9, jugs.
10	35	A,6, c/pots. B,5. E,11, cups. J,1. O,1. P,9. U,2.
11	96	A,76, c/pots, bowls and Lyveden-type dec. jugs, lamps. O,20, c/pot.
12	278	A,269, c/pots, bowls. F,1, lamp. M,5, pitcher. U,3.
16	19	A,2, c/pots. E,5, cups. H,1. The Cistercian ware joins with sherds in pit F8. The other sherds are too small for positive identification.
21	109	Residual medieval sherds, 8. Nottingham stoneware bowls and a mug, 36. Slip-trailed press-moulded dishes, 9. Staffordshire salt-glazed and cream wares, 22. Manganese glazed ware, 1. Iron glazed coarse wares, 32. A probably intrusive modern sewer pipe fragment, 1.
30	310	A,2. B,187, c/pots, bowls, jugs, bung-hole pitchers. C,4. E,38, Cistercian types 1 and 4, cups. E,5, Blackware mugs type 2 and 3. H,26, c/pots, bowls, bung-hole pitchers. J,4. M,1. N,4. P,17, bowls. Frechen stoneware, 2. U and late post-medieval from upper metre only, 20.
101	29	A,25, c/pots, bowls and Lyveden-type dec. jugs. Q,1. U,3.
102	18	A,16, c/pots, bowls. G,1. K,1.
104	153	A,59, c/pots, bowls and dec. jugs. B,69, bowls, jugs, a bottle and possible fish dish. D,5. E,12, Cistercian-type cups. G,1. H,1. M,1, pitcher. Frechen stoneware, 1. U,4.
105	65	A,22, c/pots, Lyveden-type dec. jug, lamp. B,31, c/pots. D,10, jugs. N,1. U,1.

### CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED POTTERY

The order of description is drawing number, feature number, fabric letter and colours of internal surface, core, external surface. The colours, numbered 1-14, are related to the *Munsell Book of Colour* (1973) as follows.

1. Black N2/0; 2. Grey N5/0; 3. Light olive grey 5Y 6/2; 4. Weak red 2.5YR 4/2; 5. Red 2.5YR 5/6; 6. Brown 7.5YR 5/4; 7. Light brown to reddish yellow 7.5YR 6/4-6/6; 8. Reddish yellow 7.5YR 7/6-7/8; 9. Very pale brown 10YR 7/3; 10. Yellow 5Y 8/6; 11. Olive 5Y 5/6; 12. Green yellow 7.5 GY 7/6-6/8; 13. Red 2.5YR 5/8; 14. Very dark brown 10YR 2/2. Colours 10-14 are glazes. Because of the vagaries of medieval firing techniques, usage and burial conditions often result in vessels being polychromatic, the numbers allocated are only a general guide to those most prevalent on the sherds.



Scale 1:4

mm 0 50 100 150

Fig 4

Mayorhold, Northampton: pottery.  
 Northamptonshire Archaeology 1976, 11

FIG. 3

1	5	A	7:1:7	17	12	A	7:3:7
2	6	A	7:2:7	18	12	A	1:1:1
3	6	A	7:3:7	19	12	A	7:3:7
4	6	A	6/7:3:6/7	20	12	A	2/3:2/3:2/3
5	6	A	6:6/3:6/3	21	12	A	1:1:1
6	6	O	7:7:7 most sherds in this fabric are fully reduced	22	12	A	7:1:1
7	6	A	3:3:3	23	12	A	7:3:7
8	6	A	3/9:3:3/9	24	12	A	1/2:1/2:1/2
9	6	A	7:7:7	25	12	F	3/9:3:3/9
10	6	A	8:1:8	26	12	A	3:3:3 possibly pre-Conquest
11	11	O	1:3:1	27	12	A	6:3:1
12	11	A	3:3:3	28	12	A	7:3:6
13	11	A	7:3:6/7	29	12	A	1:1:1 hand made
14	11	A	7:3:7	30	12	A	6:3:6/3 probably hand made. Form and fabric similar to St. Neots type wares.
15	11	A	3/6:3:3/6 sooting in underside of base	31	8	N	12:9:9/12
16	12	A	6:3:2				

FIG. 4

32	30	E	14:6:14 Midland Blackware (Brears, 1971)
33	30	B	8:8:8
34	30	E	14:4:14 Midland Blackware type 2 beaker (Brears, 1971)
35	30	E	14:6:14 Cistercian ware type 4 cup (Brears, 1971)
36	30	B?	10:7:7 handle missing
37	30	H	4:4:4
38	30	E	14:6:14 Cistercian ware type 1 posset pot (Brears, 1971)
39	30	E	14:6:14 Midland Blackware type 3 mug (Brears, 1971)
40	30	H	4:4:4
41	30	P	7:2:6/7
42	30	P	4:3:4
43	30	B	6:2:6
44	30	B	8:8:8 splashes of green glaze on rim
45	30	B	7/8:3:7/8
46	30	B	7:8:7 splashes of green glaze on rim
47	30	B	7/8:8:7/8
48	30	P	4:3:4
49	30	H	4:4:1/4
50	30	H	4/5:4:4
51	30	B	2:3:2
52	30	P	7:3:6
53	30	B	6:3/8:6
54	30	C	1:2:1
55	16	A	7:3:7
56	16	B	7:7:9
57	104	B	11:2:1 possible fish dish with thumbled rim
58	104	B	5/9:3:9

FIG. 5

59	105	B	1/10/11:1:1 Two zones of sooting separated by area containing wear marks on underside of base. Sooting all over internal surface but not on top of rim flange. Sooting all over hole deliberately pierced from outside. Position of hole found by scoring two lines across underside of base. Glaze on internal surface of base is pimply but that higher up on walls is smooth. Fabric in the core is darker on base than on rim but has not been substantially affected by heat.
60			1:1:1 Unstratified. Vitrified fabric. Lumps of shiny, black metal accretions around external basal angle and traces of green copper corrosion internally. Crucible.
61	21		Cream ware, possibly Staffordshire.
62	21		Cream ware, possibly Staffordshire.
63	21		Cream ware, possibly Staffordshire.
64	21		Blackware, local country potter.
65	21		Nottingham stoneware.
66	21		Press-moulded dish with slip-trailed decoration, local country potter.



## DISCUSSION

The presence of four pre-Conquest sherds on a site located immediately outside the Saxon defensive perimeter suggested by Lee (1954) is worth noting but their significance cannot be assessed because of the limited nature of the excavations and the extensive disturbances.

The rest of the pottery is of post-Conquest type. The earliest group is probably that from F12 which consisted almost entirely of local calcareous gritted wares and a single hard, sandy lamp in a form paralleled elsewhere to the period c.1050-1200.<sup>1</sup> Although this pit contained 278 sherds there was only a minimum of 20 positively identifiable vessels so that the absence of distinctive elements such as jugs of post-Conquest St. Neots type, glazed tripod pitchers and Lyveden-type decorated jugs is difficult to assess. Typologically the group belongs to the twelfth or thirteenth century but if the absence of the elements noted above is significant a closer dating within the first half of the twelfth century may be suggested.

Pottery from features 3, 6, 11, 101 and 102 is all of thirteenth-fourteenth century date including Lyveden-type decorated jugs and other regional imports, the exception being two sherds of Cistercian type which may be intrusive in the quarry pit F3.

F6 included sherds of Potterspurty ware normally dated to the fourteenth century or later but no other distinctive fifteenth century types. F105 also included Potterspurty ware as well as Surrey 'Tudor Green' types but no Brickhill or Cistercian wares. F105 is probably to be attributed to the early fifteenth century. Other later features, 8, 10, 16, 30 and 104, all contain Cistercian wares and must be seen as Tudor deposits. The largest group, F30, also included other post-medieval types notably Midland Black and Yellow wares as well as Frechen stoneware and a date from the mid-sixteenth century would be acceptable.

F21, the possible tan-pit, contained the only useful later post-medieval group on the site. The absence of nineteenth century printed wares is probably significant in this feature and a date towards the end of the eighteenth century is suggested.

One vessel which merits further comment is a bowl with internal glaze from F105 (Fig. 5, 59). The deliberately pierced hole in the centre of the base, the wear marks on the underside and the distribution of soot on both surfaces except the top of the rim flange suggest a specific function. A possible explanation is that the bowl was placed over a low heat on a smoky fire perhaps for smoking fish or some other foodstuff. Other vessels with pierced holes and sooting have been recovered from sites in Northampton. An unglazed bowl of Lyveden-Olney Hyde type with a hole 8 mm. diameter and with heavy sooting on both surfaces was recovered from a builder's trench close to the Mayorhold (NDC ref M 95.6) and another with a hole 20 mm. diameter with 'fur' on the inside but no sooting on either surface was found on St. Peter's Street (NDC ref M 115 A 619.1). A small St. Neots ware bowl with inturned rim found on Chalk Lane (NDC ref M 139 A 46.2) has a centrally placed hole 8 mm. diameter and patchy sooting on both surfaces; it may be interpreted as a lid with an air vent.

## SMALL FINDS

by G. E. Oakley

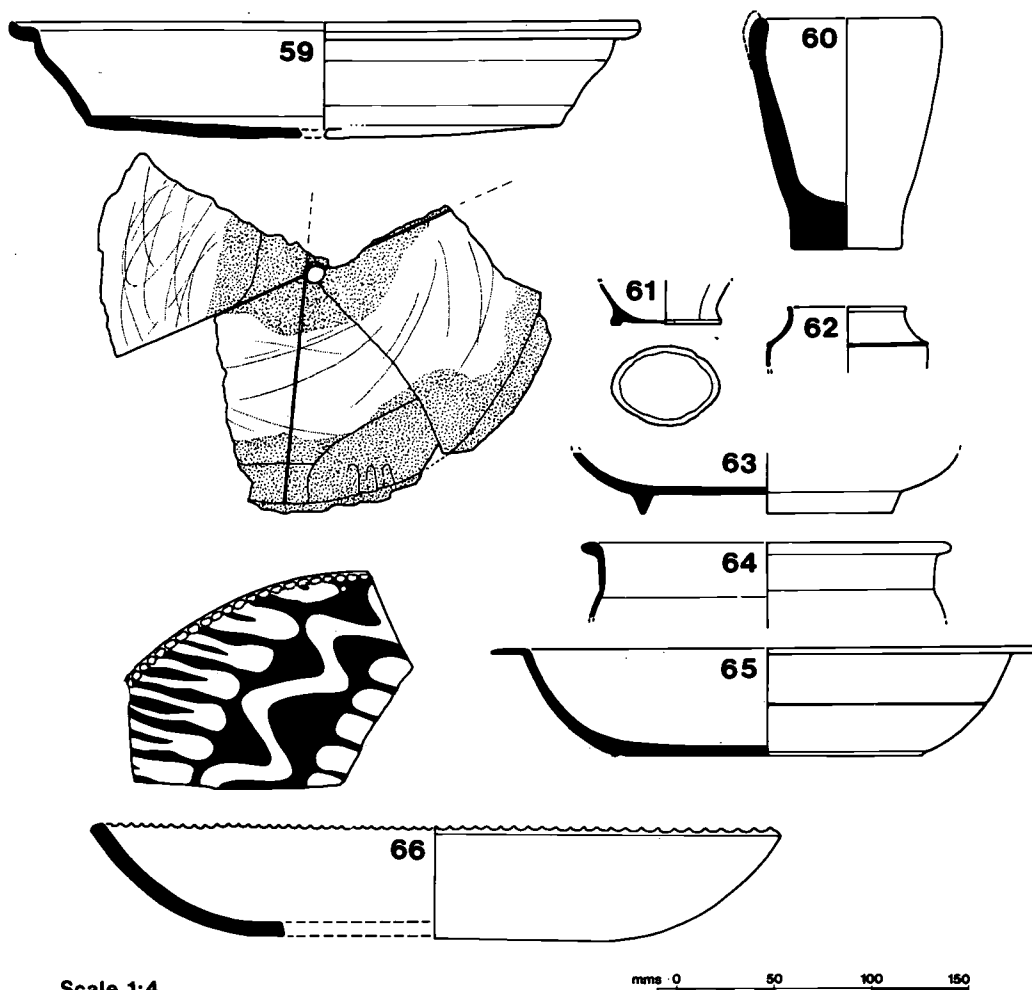
## BRONZE (FIGS. 6 and 7)

67. Strip probably from long narrow buckle or strap end. Very thin, rather bent, ends torn. Tinned or perhaps soldered on reverse for attachment to metal. Fine engraved design between borders of winged dragon with long pointed ears shown full face with body and foot to right. Facing him, on left, an open-mouthed creature with lentoid eye and possible ear, perhaps another dragon, serpent or fish. Rest of body torn off. Irregular cross-hatched background. John Cherry suggests a date in the second half of 13th century or early 14th century. Brian Spencer extends this to mid 14th century and suggests comparison with long narrow buckles and strap ends worn by ladies in the early 14th century (Fingerlin, 1971, 312, 446).

Discussion: The dragon motif continues in metalwork tradition as in manuscript illumination. Romanesque dragons appear in later MSS but are rarely shown full face. Two with long pointed ears are squashed into a border on a late 12th century Psalter (Bodleian MS Douce 293, f. 10; Boase, 1953, 245, pl. 79b) which has northern or eastern English connections.

Later MSS dragons have comical faces and a naturalistic appearance (cf. Luttrell

<sup>1</sup> For example St. Peter's Street, Northampton, pit C 121 dated to 12th century. Others from London associated with a coin hoard of c.1070 and York with a hoard of late 11th century (Thompson, 1956, hoard nos. 250 and 386). Another unassociated example from Redcross Street, Leicester, Leic. Mus. Acc. no. 47.11.



Scale 1:4

0 50 100 150  
mm

Fig 5

Mayorhold, Northampton: pottery.

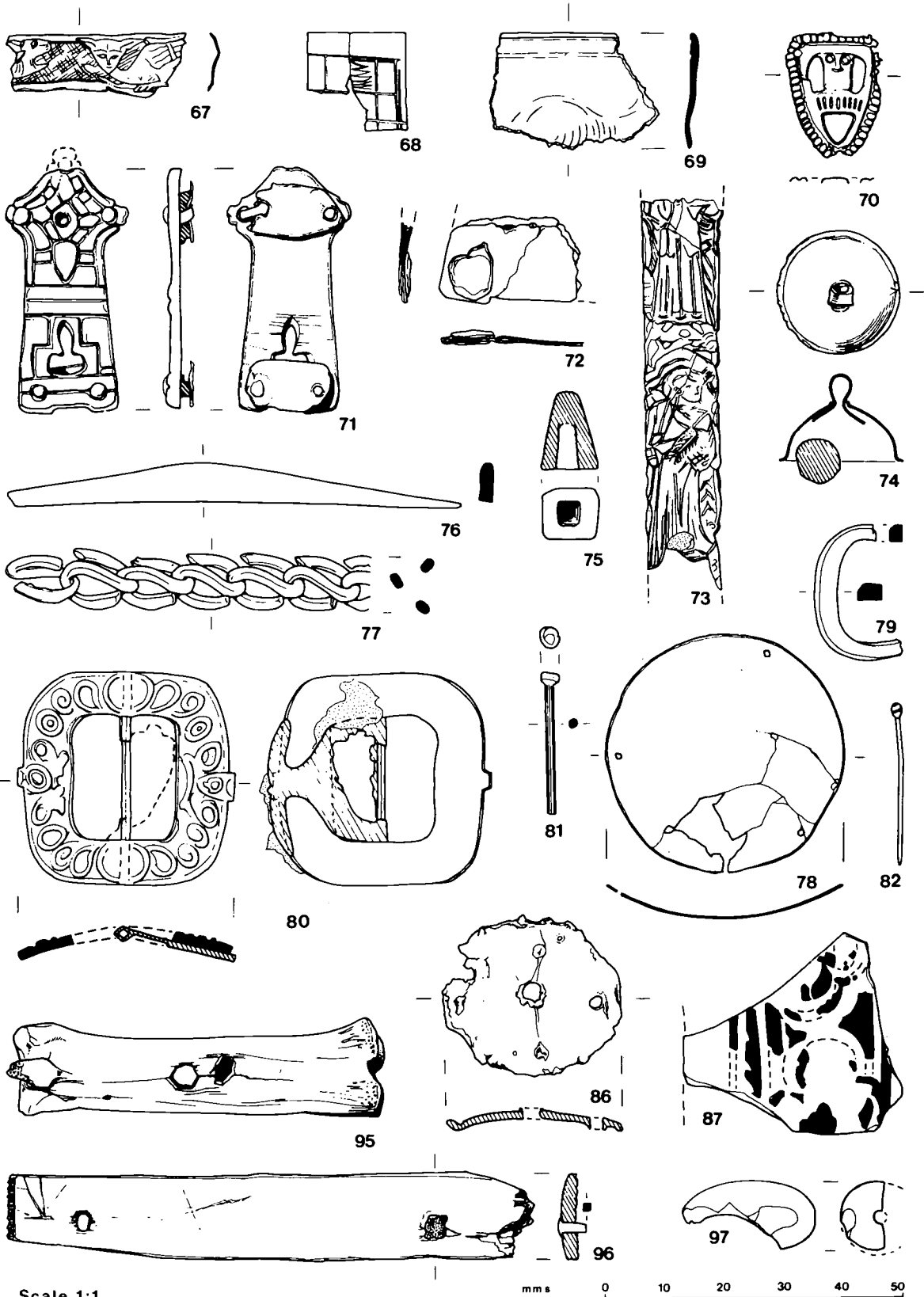
Psalter, c. 1340 A.D. B.M. Add. MS 42130) and become hairy (Book of Hours, c. 1300 A.D. B.M. Stowe MS 17). The motif seems to persist later in the East Anglian school (e.g. Walter de Milemete: *De Nobilitatibus* . . ., c. 1326-7 A.D., Christ Church, Oxford).

Metalwork styles are more conservative, cf. an earlier buckle plate with similar decoration, though tapering in width, from Beckery (Rahtz and Hirst, 1974, fig. 23, 13) with Fingerlin, 1971, 312, 446. The latter shows composite strap ends in which stylised dragons adjoin panels with realistic figures. 13th-14th century leather workers used similar motifs as shown by a sheath from London (*L.M.M.C.*, 190, pl. XLIV, 3, A 3681).

Two other possible uses for the strip, both requiring solder, are suggested by a knife-dagger with engraved bronze plating on blade and grip, first half of the 14th century (*L.M.M.C.*, 54, pl. XIV, A 1955) and a sword with engraved scabbard mounts, one showing identical cross-hatched background with full face stag's head surmounting a scroll (*L.M.M.C.*, 37, pl. V, 52. 12. Not later than 1350 A.D., if as late). F104, Ae 2.

- 68. Square plate, broken, with deeply incised lines and rocked tracer pattern in centre. Traces of ?solder on reverse. F104, Ae 2.
- 69. Plate fragment, uneven, with parallel grooves along thicker undamaged edge. F3, Ae 14.

70. Repoussé mount or strap end. Very thin sheet, shield-shaped, beaded border, small hole in each corner for attachment (two corners are broken across the holes). Three large cut-out holes in central area. On two levels a stylised face is suggested. The whole object, viewed at a distance, represents a face with the upper two cut-outs as large oval eyes and the lower triangular hole as a grinning mouth. Above the mouth is a row of vertical depressions, perhaps intended to represent a moustache. On closer inspection another face is revealed in the panel between the two upper holes. Two round eyes, straight nose and mouth are outlined in repoussé technique. Brian Spencer suggests this is too light a mount for leather and would have been sewn onto braid of similar width which would show decoratively through the large holes. Medieval, probably 14th century. F3, Ae 14.
71. Belt chape. Heavy front plate, possibly broken at apex since edge shows signs of third rivet hole. Roughly tooled deeply incised design above and below moulded bars. Above, the panels outlined together suggest a cross of primitive form. Below, the incision outlines a T-shaped hole. Re-used on leather strap, traces of which remain, riveted to two thin sheets at back. Rivets are too small for holes and one is too long so has been bent over sideways. John Cherry remarks that the shape is odd and could be either early or late medieval. Belt chapes came back into fashion in the 16th century. U/S, SF18.
72. Corner of two thin sheets riveted tightly together. Remains of ?leather between. Both sheets extend outwards at edge beside rivet. Probably medieval. U/S, Ae 12.
73. Belt or buckle plate. Long and narrow, relatively thick, ends broken, leather fragment adhering. Two figures with drapery stand one above the other in slight relief between narrow raised borders. Details of decoration not clear since corroded. Could be 14th century. (cf. Fingerlin, 1971, 446). F8, Ae 10.
74. Top half of rumbler bell. Suspension loop a narrow strip pushed through hole from inside, ends splayed within. Solid bronze clapper (once loose) corroded to inside. Bottom half, missing, was probably soldered on. Sometimes attached to garments. Cf. Bryant and Steane, 1971, 51, fig. 12, c1-2; Steane *et al.*, 1975, 115, fig. 43, 64 (MSS and monumental brasses cited). Examples in Southampton dated early 13th century to 16th century (Platt and Coleman-Smith, 1975, nos. 1711, 1726, 1806. Closest parallel is 1726, pl. 120, late 13th century). 15th century examples from Writtle (Rahtz, 1969, no. 128), Seacourt (Biddle, 1962/3, fig. 28, 10-11). F3, Ae 14.
75. Pyramid, roughly shaped, with off-centre square hole in base. No visible surface marks. Top has transverse groove which may indicate loss of tip with suspension hole. Weight? F8, Ae 10.
76. Bar, tapering from central wide part to ends, one broken. Surface corroded. One wide face flat, other rounded at top edge. U/S, Ae 12.
77. Chain, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$  links (only 6 illustrated). Original length 267 mm. Flat oval section wire twisted into S-shaped links so that chain is 3-sided. Similar but smaller chain from Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith, 1975, 1791). F16, Ae 4.
78. Scale pan. 3 equispaced holes for suspension. F3, SF15.
79. Buckle, fragment of hoop, slightly bent. F5, Ae 3.
80. Large buckle with relief design drawn from X-radiograph. Thin iron bar, diamond section, unsuitable for carrying pin. Traces of iron plate attachment on back (hatched on illustration). Probably 18th century. Area D, U/S, Ae 13.
81. Large pin with broken shank showing lengthwise facets from wire drawing. Large head made from twist of wire around shank roughly moulded. Unusually thick shank (1.4 mm). F16, Ae 4.
82. Three small pins, one illustrated. All have globular heads moulded from twist of wire around shank as described by Tylecote (1972, 184) but top of shank not pointed first. Two show traces of tinning on shank, one has wire drawing marks. Lengths of two not illustrated 25, 23 mm; diameters of shank 0.8, 0.7 mm, head 1.7, 1.4 mm. F104, Ae 2.
83. Pin with globular head imperfectly shaped, end of shank protrudes slightly. Length 26.7 mm., diameter of shank 0.8 mm., head 2 mm. F10, Ae 7.
84. Pin, corroded but point intact, head damaged. Middle of shank shows wire drawing marks. Length 40.4 mm., shank diameter 0.9 mm. F8, Ae 10.  
For discussion of pins from Northampton see Williams, 1977.
85. Bowl or dish fragment (FIG. 7). Finely shaped rim polished internally but externally rough, perhaps unfinished. Ridge with signs of rough trimming with file may be at mould junction. Very similar rims at Writtle in 14th-15th century deposits (Rahtz, 1969, no. 107) and Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith, 1975, no. 1861). U/S, Ae 1.



Scale 1:1

mm s 0 10 20 30 40 50

Northamptonshire Archaeology 1976, 11  
 Mayorhold, Northampton: objects of bronze (67-82), lead (80), glass (87), bone (95-6) and jet (97).

Fig 6

LEAD (FIG. 6)

86. Oval sheet with central hole and 6 others. Scored lines on both faces. F10, L2.

Not illustrated: fragment of window came, Y-section. length 135 mm. F101, L3. Also scraps from F3(L7), F5(L1), F8(L5), F21(L6).

GLASS (FIG. 6)

Medieval window glass

87. Painted fragment from edge of pane, part of grozed edge on left. Border pattern of parallel lines with roundels or quatrefoils between. Devitrified. 2.5-3 mm. thick. Area D, U/S, G16.

Nine other fragments from small panes (not illus.), 2-5 mm. thick, devitrified: one painted (F12, G22), rest plain (F5, G7; F10, G13; F30, G34; F104, G18, G26A; Area D, U/S, G24; Area E, U/S, G21).

Vessels (not illustrated)

88. Base fragment of urinal, pontil mark on convex bottom. Devitrified, 3-8 mm. thick. 13th-14th century? Charleston, 1975, 205 and 213; no. 1517. F3, G11.

89. Thin vessel, possibly bottle. Several fragments, devitrified, 1 mm. thick. Globular body, mould-blown vertical fluting on neck, rim and base missing. Charleston, 1975, 213; no. 1547. F16, G26B.

90. Base fragment of urinal, pontil mark on convex bottom. Weathered pale blue-green bubbly glass; thickness: base 5 mm., wall 1 mm. Probably late 15th-16th century. Cf. three from Basing House (Moorhouse, 1971, fig. 28, 33-5). Area D, U/S, G15.

91. Base fragment, rounded, from thin bottle/flask. Blue-green bubbly glass. Late 15th-16th century. F30, top 2 m., G34.

92. Beaker rim, straight everted, mould blown vertical fluting, top folded inwards. Colourless, 1.5 mm. thick. Late 16th century? Cf. Charleston, 1975, no. 1564. F21, G20.

Several unstratified rim fragments of late 15th-16th century vessels in thin pale blue-green bubbly glass including bottle or beaker with wrythen spiral mould-blown ribbing on neck (Charleston, 1975, 213; no. 1536. Charleston, 1972, fig. 64, 76-81). Also weathered thin folded rim and double pedestal foot, 0.5 mm. thick. Area D, G15, 31, 38.

Thick bottles

93. 3 sherds of thick green bottle closer in shape to no. 1611 than nos. 1609-10 in Charleston, 1975. Late 16th century? F30, top 2 m., G34.

94. Neck with triangular turned down flange, brown glass, 18th-19th century. F21, G21.

WORKED BONE (FIG. 6)

95. Bobbin or toggle. Pig metapodial lacking epiphysis at distal end. Rough hole 3.5-4 mm. diameter near centre of shaft. An incomplete hole adjacent to it was abandoned halfway. Polish from wear on shaft but none at all on ends. F12, SF8.

Two others with same wear characteristics (not illustrated), single hole only. F3, SF1; F3, SF19.

These bone bobbins were possibly used in weaving. Further examples from St. Peter's Street, Northampton (Williams, 1977).

96. Side plate, probably from knife handle, 2 off-centre holes for rivets, one *in situ*. Large animal rib, cut, split and inside smoothed. One end broken, other sawn halfway through and snapped off. F12, SF9.

JET (FIG. 6)

97. Jet bead, ovoid shape. Lathe-turned, then polished, lengthwise hole drilled. Broken, showing scars of conchoidal fracture with surface cracks. Chemical analysis by Dept. of Mineralogy, British Museum (Natural History) gave: 68.7 per cent carbon, 5.1 per cent hydrogen, 0.6 per cent nitrogen. D. T. Moore notes that this composition corresponds reasonably closely to jet. F8, SF7.

IRON (FIG. 7)

98. Bell, probably for cow or sheep. Loop handle pushed through top and now broken inside. No trace of means for suspending clapper. F30, depth 3-4 m., IW41B.
99. Staple for attachment to wood, rectangular section. An unstratified example (IW43) has narrow iron loop 153 mm. long attached. F16, IW13. Another similar F6, IW8.
100. Loop on square shank, broken. Delicate loop. Key? F16, IW13.
101. Knife. Wooden handle plates attached to strip tang with non-ferrous rivets. Two strips at junction of handle with blade may be bronze. F16, IW13.
102. Small knife with pointed tang, badly corroded (not illus.). Length 70 mm. Width 10 mm. F104, IW31.
103. Shears (not illus.) with distinct loop handle, straight junction with blade, probably late medieval, length 220 mm. U/S, IW35.
104. Thin object (not illus.), pointed end bent up, thin flat loop one side, other side broken? Possibly hunting-type arrowhead with barbs (*L.M.M.C.*, pl. XV, 14). F5, IW6.
105. Thick blade-like plate (not illus.). Laminated, slight lengthwise curve, 3 complete edges chamfered, one thinner, broken. Rectangular, 108 x 82 mm., 4-5 mm. thick. F105, IW38.
106. Door bolt. Cf. Moorhouse, 1971, fig. 18, 39. F8, IW18.
107. Horseshoe fragment. 3 holes, one with nail. X-rays show notch on inner edge, at centre of hoop? Not wavy edge, hence later than 13th century (*L.M.M.C.*, 115). F16, IW13.

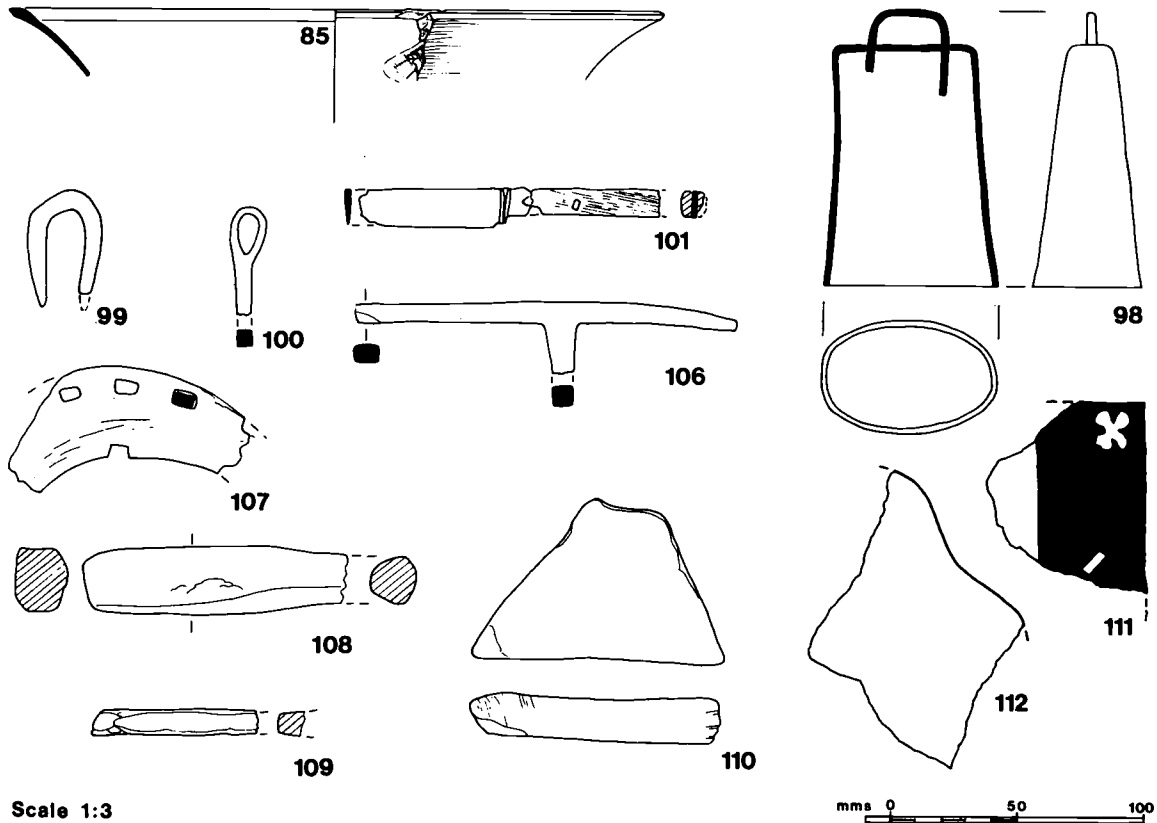


Fig 7

Mayorhold, Northampton: objects of bronze (85), iron (98-107), stone (108-110) and tile fragments (111-112).

## NAILS

69 stratified nails all badly corroded, most in pits. 2 fiddle-key shaped nails possibly used in horseshoes. (F10, IW12. Area E, U/S, IW24).

## SLAG

In addition to the crucible (60 above) containing traces of bronze-working, bronze slag was found in F3 (Ae 15), F21 (SL2) and U/S (SS2, SL1 — containing coal inclusion). Some bronze objects may have been scrap for re-melting.

Small lumps of iron-working slag occurred in F12 (SL3), F3 (SL4, 9, 11, 13) with more in F21 (SL2).

## WHETSTONES (FIG. 7)

Identified from examination under binocular microscope by D. T. Moore of Dept. of Mineralogy, British Museum (Natural History).

108. Grey quartz-mica-schist whetstone, Eidsborg type. Square section worn to circular in centre, one end missing. U/S, SF5.
109. Grey quartz-mica-schist whetstone fragment, Eidsborg type. Wear on both faces. F21, ST1.  
22 further examples of this type — Ellis Group 1A(1) (1969, 148-150) from St. Peter's Street, Northampton. For discussion see Moore, 1977.
110. Fine-grained pinkish buff limestone containing quartz and mica. Two edges and parts of both faces worn by use as hone. F3, FT3.

## BUILDING MATERIALS

by M. R. McCarthy

39 stratified tile fragments and 12 pieces of stone slate were recovered from the excavation.

### TILE

*Fabric 1.* Very sandy with a large number of quartz grains, occasional larger pieces of calcareous material, some grog and red-brown inclusions that might be iron-ore. The upper surfaces are generally smooth to sandy textured whilst the lower are very sandy. The surface colours in the Munsell range are 5YR 6/3-6/8 reddish yellow and the cores N5/0 grey.

The 25 fragments in this fabric from features 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 16, 21, 30, 104, 109 included 7 possible floor tiles and 18 possible roof tiles.

Amongst the former is a single inlaid, glazed corner piece from F5, 20 mm. thick decorated with a broad stripe and a quatrefoil (FIG. 7, 111). Another unglazed fragment 20 mm. thick from F11 has part of an S-shaped edge reminiscent of mosaic floors (FIG. 7, 112). The other pieces which vary in thickness from 13-19 mm. and have olive green or clear glaze on the upper surface, were found in F3, F6 and F10.

The only certain ridge tile was found in F10 and has dimensions of at least 200 x 185 x 25 mm. There is no sign of a crest but the apex has a patchy mottled green glaze on the upper surface. The remaining pieces are very fragmentary, most being unglazed and varying in thickness 11-22 mm.

*Fabric 2.* Fine, sandy with a small number of quartz grains that could be a natural constituent of the clay. The upper surfaces are slightly sandy or smooth and the lower heavily sanded. The tiles are evenly fired throughout with colours in the range 2.5YR 6/6-6/8 light red.

All 14 fragments were found in F30. Although the lengths are uncertain the width of one is c. 140-160 mm. and the thicknesses vary from 12-15 mm. All appear to be flat roof tiles.

### STONE SLATES

12 fragments of shelly limestone slates with holes of 6, 7 and 9 mm. diameter were recovered from F104. All were too small to reconstruct the shape.

### DISCUSSION

There were too few fragments on which to base any firm conclusions. Inlaid and mosaic floor tiles are usually associated with aristocratic or ecclesiastical structures and their presence may

## EXCAVATION ON MAYORHOLD, NORTHAMPTON 1971

indicate a substantial stone building in the vicinity. The very fragmentary design cannot be paralleled amongst the inlaid tiles from Greyfriars (Eames in Williams, forthcoming) or with examples from Northampton in Northampton Museum.

Roof tiles in fabric 1 were found in deposits dated to the thirteenth-fourteenth century as well as the Tudor period but those in fabric 2 were discovered only in the well F30 associated with sherds of c. 1550 or later. The stone slates were found both in and on floor 104 associated with Tudor pottery.

The roof tiles from Greyfriars (*ibid.*) are less sandy and lighter in colour and often have a distinctive flanged edge. Only one example of this type was found on the Mayorhold (F8).

### SHELLFISH

Common oyster (*Ostrea edulis*): present in F5, F8, F12, F16, F28, F30, F105. More than 10 shells in F3, F10, F21, F104.

Cockles (*Cardium edule*): present in F3, F104.

Marine mussel (*Mytilus edulis*): present in F3, F16, F104.

Winkles only in U/S deposits.

Freshwater mussel (*Unio margaritifera*): F21, SH26(3); F6, SH11 (frag.).

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### ABBREVIATION

L.M.M.C. *London Museum Medieval Catalogue* (1967).

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