Roman Buildings at Ringstead, Northants

by D A JACKSON

In 1971, a drainage trench dug prior to gravel extraction revealed part of a previously unrecorded Roman structure. The site lies in Ringstead parish, at the junction of the modern road from Ringstead to Great Addington and that of the road from Ringstead to the former railway station[1] (FIGS 1 and 2). The building lies in the Nene Valley, some seven miles north east of Wellingborough.

The threatened area was excavated during the late autumn–early winter of 1971–2 on behalf of the then Ministry of Public Building and Works. Thanks are due to the gravel company, Ferrasand Limited, for their co-operation and permission to excavate.

The plans, sections and Iron Age pottery were drawn up by P J Foster, and the Roman pottery by R E Turland. The small finds and wall plaster were drawn by P Goff of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Unit.

THE SITE

PREVIOUS HISTORY

The site of the excavation was under pasture prior to quarrying, but during the last war the field was ploughed and the stone disturbed by the plough was carted away[2]. The site would presumably also have been disturbed during the construction of the modern roads, which overlay the site (PL 1), and by earlier ridge and furrow cultivation. However the site was not recognised then. In recent times the slightly raised area in the corner of the field, where the building was sited, was used as a stackyard[2].

CONTEXT

A number of Roman buildings are spaced fairly regularly along this stretch of the Nene valley (FIG 1) and it is possible that there may be others as yet undetected, but the majority of those already known appear to be extensively damaged by the plough. The nearest known buildings to Ringstead are just half a mile away on the opposite side of the river valley.

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is some 500m south east of the River Nene, with a small stream running parallel to the river, midway between the building and the river itself. It lies on the extreme edge of the gravel terrace and the flood plain, with rising ground immediately to the east (OD125). Oolitic limestone outcrops on the valley slope a few hundred metres south east of the buildings and this could presumably have provided a convenient supply of stone for building and lime burning.

THE EXTENT OF THE SITE (FIG 2)

The main extent of the Roman occupation appears to lie in a small field to the east of the excavated area. This field, now under pasture, was fortunately by-passed during the gravel quarrying and appears to be under no immediate threat. However to the east of this field a considerable stone scatter was revealed as quarrying progressed and a watching brief was carried out whenever this was practical. Virtually no mortar or roof tiles were noted and it seems likely that the stone scatter represents the remains of floors, yards, or trackways, perhaps associated with agricultural activity. No stone foundations were

[1] SP977748.

[2] Information from local farm workers.

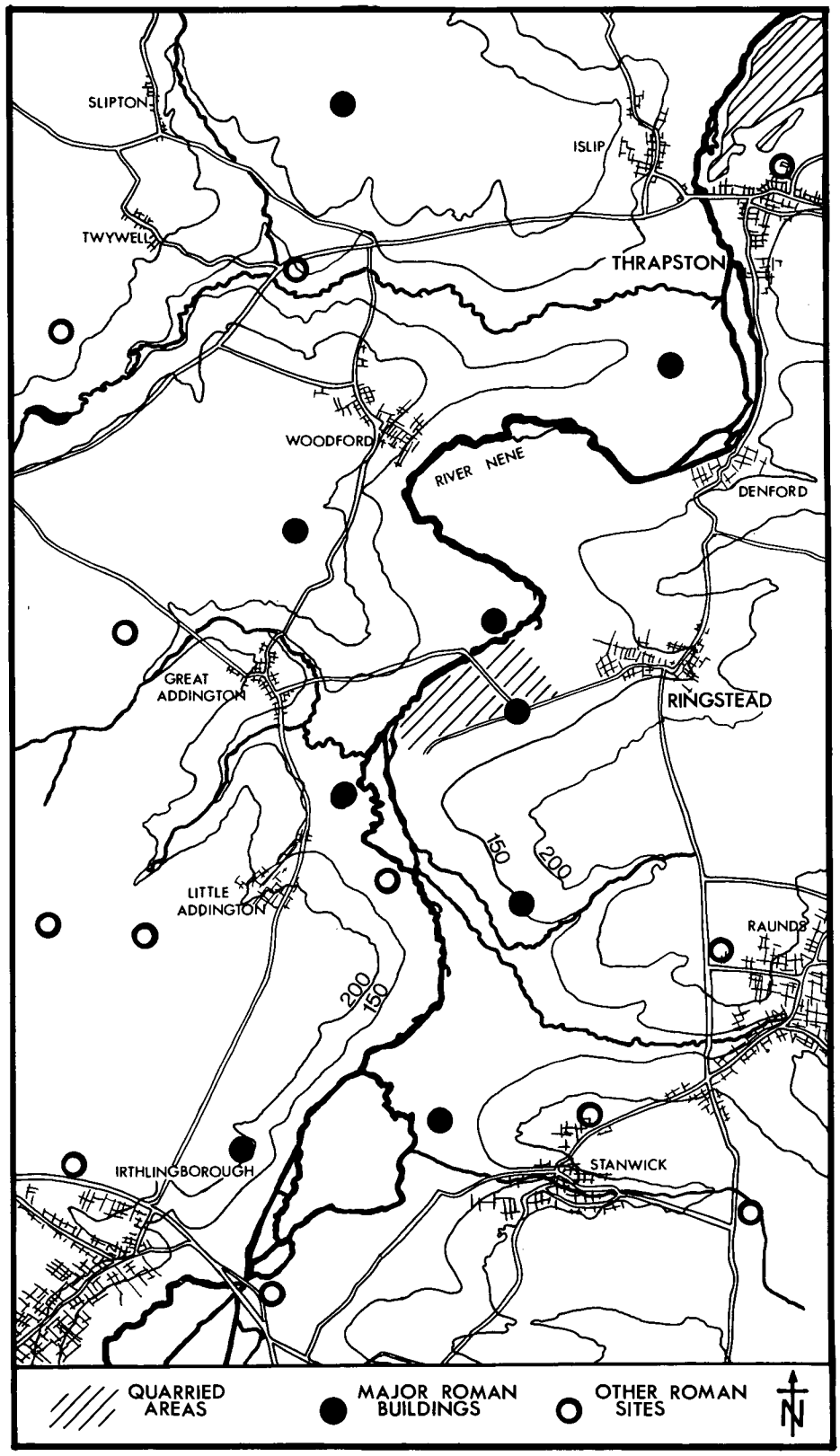

Fig. 1 Ringstead: location map, showing the distribution of known Roman sites in the Ringstead area

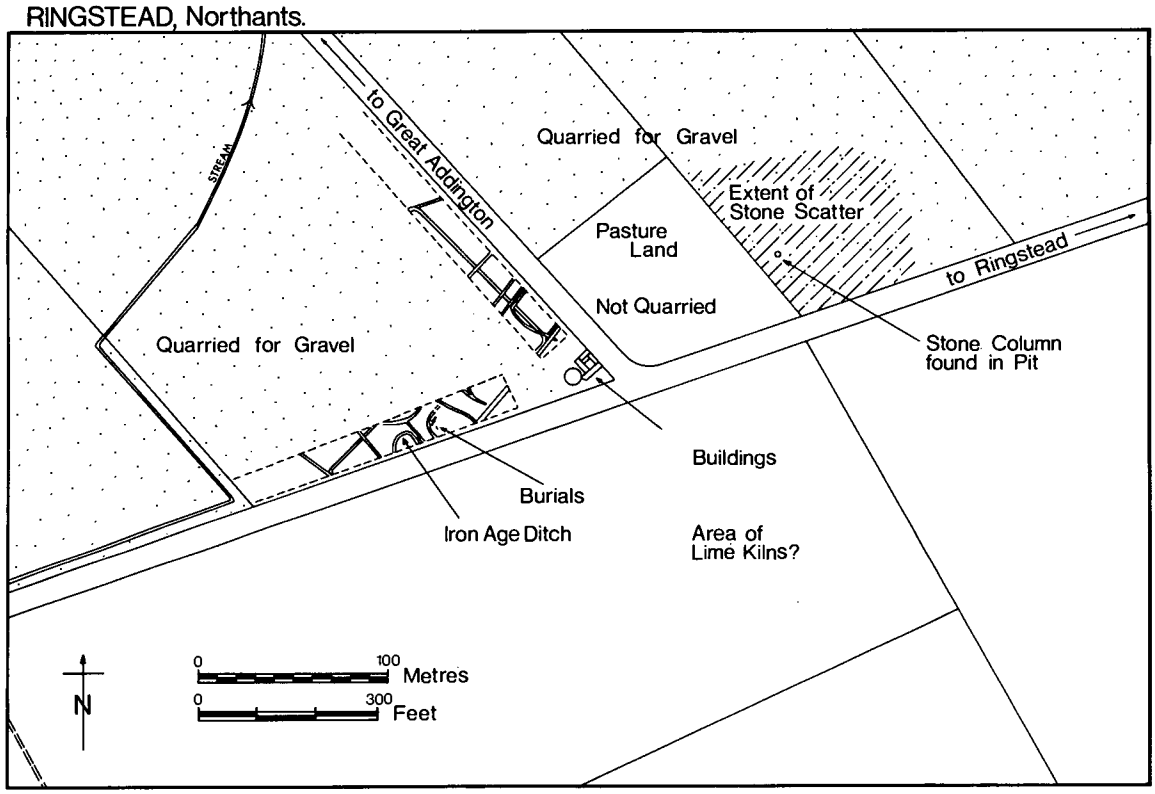

Fig. 2 Ringstead: map showing the planned ditches in the area of the site, and the extent of the stone scatter to the north east

revealed here although stripping by dragline made the detection of robber trenches or post-holes almost impossible. A significant find from this area was a segment from the shaft of a decorated stone column (PL 4, and P-). It was found buried in a clay filled pit 2.5m in diameter and 2.3m deep below the modern surface[3]. The pit contained no dating evidence. It is possible that the site extends to the south of the modern roadway (FIG 2) but any surface evidence would probably be buried by downwash from the adjacent hillside.

THE LIME KILNS?

In 1972 patches of set, carbonated lime and burnt stones were revealed when ridge and furrow, to the south of the structures was levelled by ploughing (FIG 2). It seems reasonable to assume that the patches of lime represent the site of lime kilns, and although not strictly dateable, it is tempting to associate these with building activity on the site, particularly in view of the spread of lime found during the excavation. At Weekley, Northants, a lime kiln was found in close proximity to a villa (Jackson 1973).

THE EXCAVATIONS

IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

The earliest Iron Age features found at the quarry were a series of pits and ditches; some bone from one of these had a radiocarbon age of 2180 ± 80bp (HAR-1664, 230bc). Calibration according to Clark (1975) yields a range of 150–415 BC (single standard deviation). The features were some 500m east-north-east of the present excavations and will be the subject of a further report.

THE CURVING DITCH (FIG 2)

100m south-south-west of the buildings part of a curving ditch, possibly a hut site, was revealed after the overburden had been cleared. A single

[3]Thanks are due to the quarry manager Mr B Pye, who notified the writer when the stone was unearthed.

section across the ditch showed this to be 1m wide and 550mm deep at gravel level, with a fill of dark silty soil. A small amount of pottery was recovered from the excavation, including part of a curvilinear decorated bowl (FIG 6,1). This suggests that the site is likely to date to a period within the first century BC. Other ditches in the immediate area may be Iron Age in date but there was no evidence to substantiate this.

THE PITS

Four Iron Age pits were found during quarrying, to the west and north-west of the curving ditch. They were up to 100m from the ditch and widely dispersed. Excavation showed the pits to be between 1.2m and 1.5m in diameter and from 250 to 350mm deep in the gravel. They were mainly filled with clayey silt and contained a little late Iron Age pottery.

No pottery was found on the site that could positively be assigned to the Belgic period so there is no proof of continuous occupation from the Iron Age into the Roman period. However in view of the small area investigated this may not be significant.

ROMAN DITCHES AND PITS (FIGS 2 and 4)

When quarrying began a strip some 18m wide was cleared of overburden along the south and east edges of the field where the remains had been found. A number of ditches were exposed and planned at this time, but the objective of ultimately plotting part of the field system had to be abandoned because the subsequent method of overburden clearance made this work impossible. No excavation of the ditches was carried out, apart from recording the sections of Ditches 1 and 2 which were close to the main excavation area (FIG 5). There was no dating evidence from the majority of the recorded ditches and it is possible that some, particularly along the south-west side, may have been of Iron Age date.

Three pits were excavated close to the building (see below and FIGS 4 and 5) but it was apparent that there were numerous pits, both in the neighbourhood of the excavations, and in the area of the stone scatter to the north-east. It seems likely that the primary function of these pits was to provide gravel for floors, roads etc.

THE ROMAN BUILDINGS

The topsoil was mainly removed by quarrying machinery but in limited areas (i.e. Building 1 and Room 6, FIG 4) it was excavated by hand from the surface. Before quarrying began the area had been disturbed by a water main trench, and truncated by medieval furrows. The archaeological levels in the excavated area have been divided into two broad periods. All levels earlier than the stone foundations have been assigned to Period 1, and the stone using phase to Period 2.

PERIOD 1 (FIG 3)

Phase A. In the earliest phase the site appears to have been used as a working area, presumably when buildings sited north east of the excavated area were erected. Lumps of uncrushed lime, partially fired bricks, as well as a wide scatter of lime and both burnt and unburnt clay were cut by the later foundations (FIG 3 shows only the heaviest concentrations of lime and clay). A small amount of late 1st or early 2nd century pottery was found in these deposits, and the date of the two brooches found on the site (FIG 10) provides supporting evidence for activity at this time.

Phase B. The round hut. The vestiges of a shallow gully or trench, surviving beneath building 1 and Room 2 and cutting through the Phase A lime and clay deposits, is interpreted as being the remains of a round hut, some 10m in diameter. There was probably an entrance on the south east side: a double pair of postholes, just over 1m apart may represent another entrance on the north west. There was an area of burnt stone, presumably the remains of a hearth, positioned centrally within the hut, and a spread of gravel around the hearth was perhaps the remains of a floor. Outside the north west doorway a layer of limestone chippings may have been part of a contemporary floor or yard. No secure dating evidence was found for the hut.

Several layers of gravel were found in the excavated area, which were earlier than the stone foundations and therefore belonged to Period 1. It is possible that the area of gravel, at least 13.5m long and 2.5m wide, running up to the south east side of the round hut, could have been associated with this structure.

Pits 1, 4 and 5 (FIGS 4 and 5). Three pits were excavated to the north west of the building complex which produced most of the pottery and

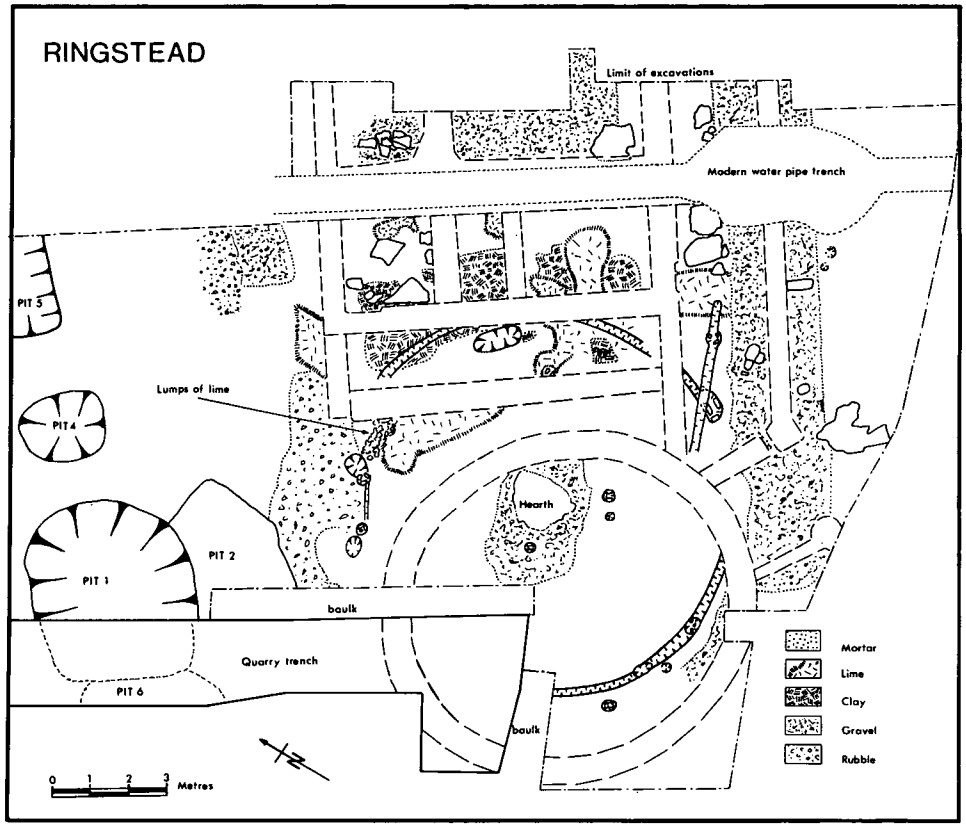

Fig. 3 Ringstead: period I

finds found during the excavation. The pits were presumed to have been dug initially as gravel quarries, but each contained rubbish deposits in their upper layers. Pit 1 was, on average, 4.5m in diameter and 2m deep (below the modern ground surface), Pit 4 was 2m in diameter and 1.4m deep, and Pit 5 which was rectangular, 1.5m by 3m long and 1.6m deep.

Pits 4 and 5 produced pottery which was probably not later than the 2nd century, but the upper layers of Pit 1 contained some sherds that can be dated to around the end of the 3rd or 4th century. Pit 1 also contained a considerable amount of painted wall plaster and other building debris in its upper layers, which seems to suggest that either building alterations or reconstruction were being carried out at about the time the pit was filled in. It is not clear to which site period this activity should be assigned.

PERIOD 2 (FIG 4)

It is not possible to say when the stone foundations in the excavated area were first constructed, but considering the evidence from Period 1, it seems likely that these structures represent an extension or addition to an earlier building that probably lay to the north east. The only relevant dating evidence consists of a number of unstratified coins dating from Tetricus I to Valens, but these do little more than suggest occupation on the site in the 4th century.

The foundations were drystone walls of limestone rubble, with the majority of the trenches being dug down onto the natural sand, an average depth of 550mm below the first course of stonework.

Building 1. The remains of this roughly circular room or building, originally possessing a

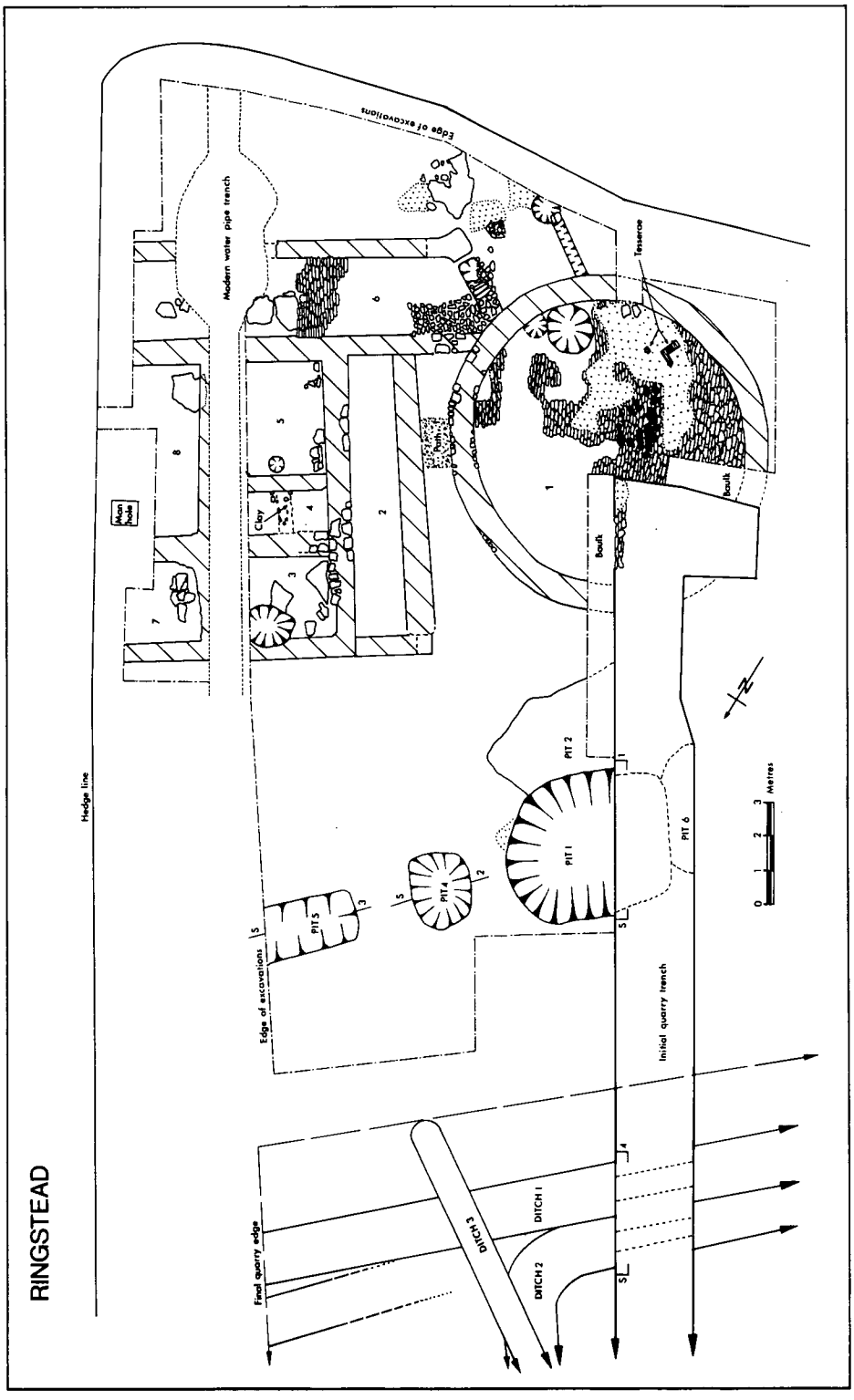

Fig. 4 Ringstead: buildings of period II

tessellated floor, had been partially destroyed by a quarry trench before excavation began (PLS 2 and 3). The room was on average 8m in diameter internally, with walls 750mm thick that had been extensively robbed on all but the north east side. The floor of the room was solidly constructed with a lime-based screed laid over pitched limestone. Only a few small areas of tesserae survived *in situ* on their mortar bedding; their colour was predominantly white, but the largest surviving group included a band of red, four tesserae wide. Off-set from the centre of the room some flat stone slabs were laid horizontally over the pitching. Their function is uncertain but they may have been a crude attempt to patch the floor. A coin of Valens was found beneath one of the horizontal slabs, probably indicating some kind of occupation in the final years of the fourth century.

There was almost certainly a doorway on the north east side of the room, where the curvature of the wall seemed to have been straightened to form a threshold. Immediately outside the doorway a gravel path survived between the door and the foundations of Room 2.

Abbutting Building 1 on the east, (at the south west end of Room 6) there was a shallow trench which seems to have originally held a course of large pitched stones; 2.4m south of this trench or wall, and running parallel to it, was another trench with a deeper pit or posthole at its east end. Although other explanations are possible it is tempting to see these features as representing a porch or entrance way to Building 1. To the east of the 'porch' the remnants of a paved floor on a lime-based bed had survived. It is possible that this was also associated with an entrance to Building 1.

Room 2. This was presumably a corridor, some 8.3m long and on average 1.4m wide. The foundations were not bonded into the adjacent walls which suggests they may have been constructed later than the rest of the building. In this respect it may also be significant that the foundation trench on the south west side was filled with large unbonded blocks of stone, a method of construction that differed from that of the other foundation walls. There was probably a post inserted into the foundation trench at the outer west corner of the room, where the walls did not meet at the external angle. This would support an assumption that the superstructure of Room 2 was mainly of wood or timber framed.

Room 6. This appears to have been a long corridor, some 2.3m in width. There were two surviving patches of limestone flooring, or foundations for floors, in the area of Room 6, but each was different in character. One group of stone had been pitched, whereas the other was crudely laid as cobbles; the stone of the latter, which was greenish in colour, evidently had a different geological origin from the former. A few pieces of painted wall plaster were found beneath the pitched flooring.

On the south east side of the room the foundations had been widened by 100mm at the top, whilst on the north west side the pitched stone flooring slightly overlay the wall foundations; suggesting the wall above may have been reduced in width.

The different types of flooring in the area of Room 6 suggest there may have been a partition across the room at some stage, perhaps on the line of the south west wall of Room 2. The cobbled area to the south west would then represent the late use of an area outside the confines of the main structure. The south west end of the south east wall appeared to have been robbed; however, is is possible that the end of the trench originally contained a post, perhaps associated with a porch to Building 1.

Rooms 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. No contemporary floor levels survived in these rooms, and their exact size or function could not be determined. The foundation wall separating Rooms 3, 4 and 5 from Rooms 7 and 8 was built on soil and only one course of stone survived. It appeared to be bonded into the intersecting walls but had been badly disturbed by the modern water main trench. The foundations between Rooms 4 and 5 were not bonded into the main wall at the south west end and in Room 4 itself a narrow band of clay may have been the base for a short wall.

The first course of masonry, above the foundations partially survived at the junction of Rooms 2, 3 and 4. This revealed that the wall between Rooms 3 and 4 was off-set 100mm from the centre of its foundations, and that the wall at the south west end of Room 3 had been thickened internally to bring the face in line with the wall to the south east. A large block of stone was positioned as if to support this overhang.

There was a small pit near the north west wall of Room 5, which contained some iron slag and some colour coated pottery. Its relationship with

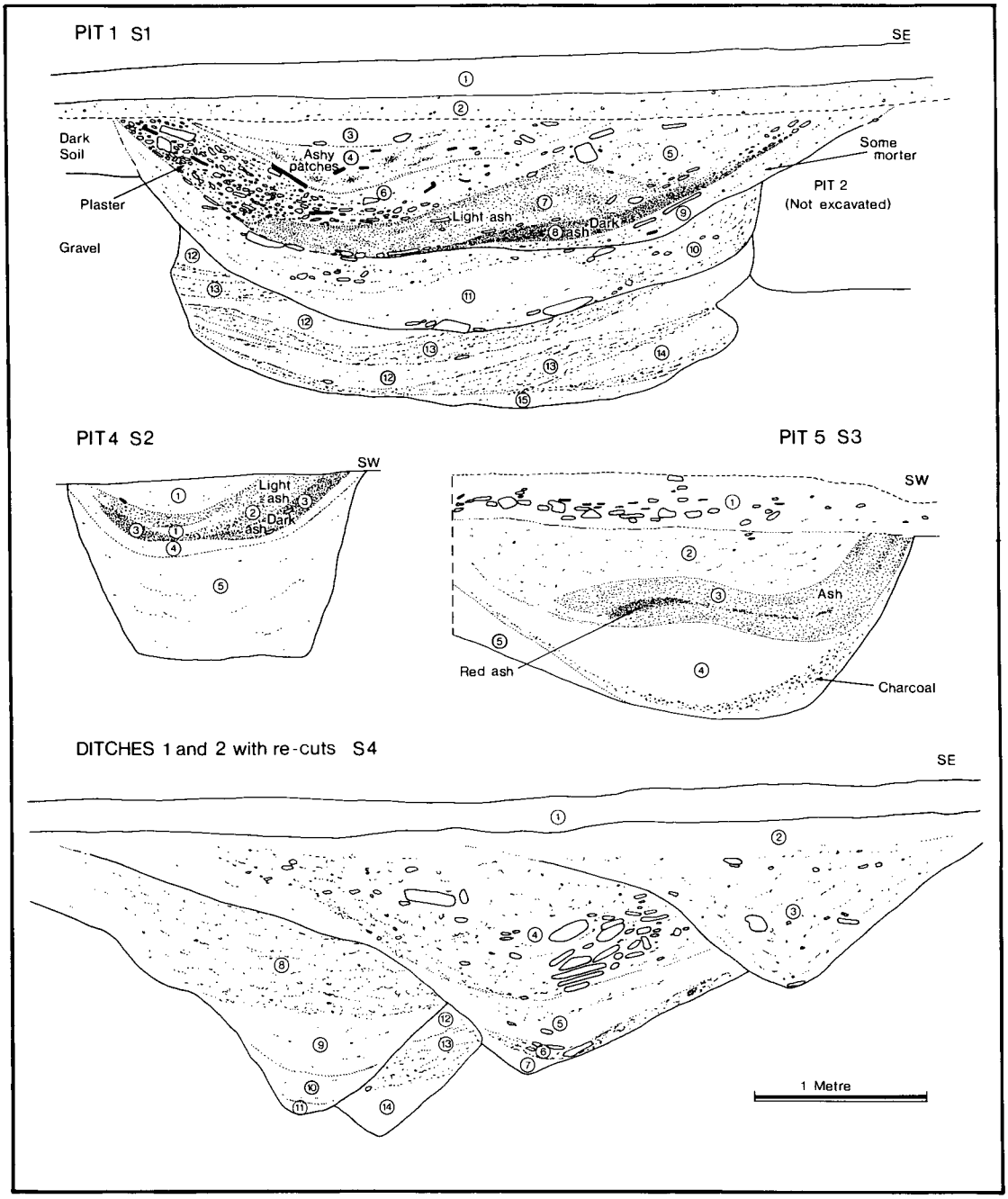

Fig. 5 Ringstead: pit and ditch sections

the building is uncertain. Another pit partially cut away the foundations on the north west side of Room 3 but this contained no dating evidence.

The foundation walls enclosing the rectangular area formed by Rooms 4, 5 and 8 were thicker than elsewhere and this part of the building may have been built to a greater height than the adjacent corridor/rooms. If this was so then the latter probably had roofs of a lean-to variety. It is assumed the foundation walls of Building 1 were thick enough to support a stone built superstructure.

The chronological development in Period 2. It is probable that Building 1 was the earliest structure with stone foundations in the excavated area. While this structure could have been built at the same time as the rooms or corridors to the north east, it seems more likely that the latter were annexed to an existing building. The extension of a corridor (Room 6) up to the postulated porch of Building 1 may have been designed to give direct access to this room.

The corridor, Room 2, may have been added at a later date, with access to Building 1 through the doorway on the north east side of the circular structure. One possibility is that the south west wall of Room 2 continued south eastwards across Room 6 on a timber sleeper beam and the latter's connection with Building 1 was no longer necessary. There is evidence that the superstructure of certain rooms may not have been contemporary with the underlying foundations and that not all the foundation walls were bonded into each other or were dug to the same depth. Several reconstruction phases could in fact have occurred in Period 2, but the limited evidence available prevents a detailed interpretation of any chronological development.

THE BURIALS (FIG 2)

At least three human burials were disturbed when the overburden was being removed by dragline, some 75m west-south-west of Building 1. The bones of a horse and a dog were also noted in the cemetery area. The top of a curving ditch, just west of the burials, had been filled with stone but it is uncertain if this was in any way associated with some structure or activity connected with the cemetery.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The small area excavated at Ringstead revealed three main phases of activity; these can be described as follows:–

(1) During the earliest phase the area was used as a working area or as a 'builders' yard', presumably when building(s) sited to the north east were constructed or altered.

(2) A circular timber building was erected on the site, after the deposition of the building debris, but before the first stone foundations were built. Surfaces of gravel and stone chippings also indicate floors or pathways in use during this phase.

(3) In the later stages of the site's history, buildings with stone foundations were erected in the excavated area. It seems likely that the circular Building 1 was originally free standing, and may have been built before the structures abutting it to the north east, although there is evidence that it was, at some stage, in contemporary use with the adjacent rooms or corridors. No votive objects were found to suggest it had a religious function, yet the presence of a tessellated floor means it is unlikely to have been a workshop, as was the suggestion for a circular building excavated at Weldon, Northants (Smith, 1955).

Roman free-standing circular buildings are quite common in the Northamptonshire and Peterborough areas, and these have recently been discussed by Williams (1976, 112-14). At Thorplands, Northampton, a circular stone building was constructed on the site of an earlier timber round hut (Hunter and Mynard 1977). Both buildings had the same diameter and it was suggested that occupation was probably continuous.

Perhaps the nearest comparison is provided by two shrines, of circular and polygonal shape and similar sizes, at Brigstock, some six miles due north in a straight line (Greenfield 1963). Probably part of a larger group, they were erected about 6m apart in the latter part of the 3rd century AD and used continuously until late in the 4th. But they lacked any refinements such as painted wall plaster or tessellated pavements, though they both had stone foundations.

There are also parallels with the circular building underlying the later rectangular temple building at Thistleton, Leicestershire (formerly

Rutland). This also had a tessellated floor (Greenfield forthcoming) and is of similar dimensions to Building 1. However the religious function of the Brigstock and Thistleton buildings is certain, while at Ringstead the evidence is insufficient to confirm such an interpretation, and the building may have had domestic or other functions.

In the later period, the circular structure is of particular interest and it is tempting to see here, too, some continuity of use or purpose with the earlier circular hut.

Unfortunately very little evidence was found to date the various phases at Ringstead, but a brooch found in the earliest 'lime' deposits suggests that building activity in the vicinity could have been taking place in the late 1st or early 2nd century AD. At Thorplands it was suggested that the stone structure probably replaced the timber hut in the late 3rd century. The coin evidence at Ringstead suggests the circular stone building was in use in the 4th century and it could well be of roughly the same date as the Thorplands example.

It is unlikely that the decorated column drum (PL4 and p 31) found in a pit, would have been used in the construction of the buildings at Ringstead. It seems more likely that it was part of a free-standing column dedicated to Jupiter and as such is an unusual find on a rural Roman site. If this is correct it lends weight to the suggestion that part of the site may have had a religious function.

The excavation was too limited to add any significant knowledge about the economy of the villa system in the Nene valley. The known sites are fairly evenly spaced and it seems likely that the rich meadowland would have been shared by the occupation sites strung along the river valley.

THE FINDS

THE POTTERY

THE IRON AGE POTTERY

by D A Jackson

A small amount of Iron Age pottery was found when the area to the west was quarried. The pottery is typical of other local late Iron Age collections and can be paralleled in a recently published assemblage from Aldwincle (Jackson 1977), another river valley site that lies 3½ miles N N E of Ringstead.

The decorated vessel, FIG 6,1, is worthy of further comment. It is ornamented in the Hunsbury-Frilford style (Cunliffe 1974, A21) and pottery of this type has now been widely found on many Northamptonshire sites. The various decorative motifs used on the Ringstead vessel can be paralleled locally at Aldwincle and more especially at Weekley, near Kettering[4].

CATALOGUE (FIG 6)

Nos 1 and 2 came from the Iron Age ditch shown on FIG2 and Nos 3–5 came from an isolated pit to the north west of this ditch.

1. Ext: smooth, dark grey to brown ware; int: as ext; section dark grey; sparse grits.
2. Ext: moderately smooth, dark grey ware; int and section: dark grey; sparse, but moderately large stony grits and a little shell.
3. Ext: moderately smooth, but uneven, dark grey to brown ware; int as ext; section brown; 'corky' fabric, with many cavities.
4. Ext, int and section: dark brown; heavy sand content causing hard abrasive surfaces.
5. Ext: smooth brown ware, spaced scored lines; int: brown; section: grey; sparse fine grits.

ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY

by R E Turland

With the exception of four vessels, all of the illustrated pottery was derived from three pits (Pits 1, 4 and 5). Each of these features has shown a final levelling off layer, somewhat later than their main fillings. It is from these later levels that most of the colour-coated wares were recovered. Each illustration either represents one of a group of similar forms, or a single vessel representative of a type. From all of the pottery recovered it was found that 72% belonged to the grey wares, 10.6% was Samian, 7.36% colour-coated, and the remaining fabrics accounted for the other 9.98%. Total sherds examined: 616. Weight: 24.04 kilos. Estimated number of vessels represented: 304. For the purposes of this report the following conventions have been used. (The term calcareous has been used to describe any pottery which contains either crushed shell or limestone inclusions).

Nature and size of inclusions

Calcareous	*Ironstone*		*Size*
sparse	a few	tiny	up to 1mm
moderate	some	small	1–2mm
prolific	many	medium	2–5mm
		large	5–7.5mm
		very large	over 7.5mm

Examination of the coarse pottery has highlighted the difficulty in trying to designate from which kiln site any particular vessel came. This situation will continue until production centres are identified and excavated. Many of the vessels examined show similarities with the pottery illustrated by Mr D E Johnston, from his excavations at Ecton, in 1962. Other materials are comparable with grey wares published by Mr P J Woods, from his Brixworth villa site in 1970. A little known kiln site, discovered during ironstone quarrying at Scaldwell, lies less than 2 miles away from Brixworth. The full range of forms from this site is unknown, making it impossible to distinguish its products in published groups. It is possible that much of

[4]Excavations by the Author.

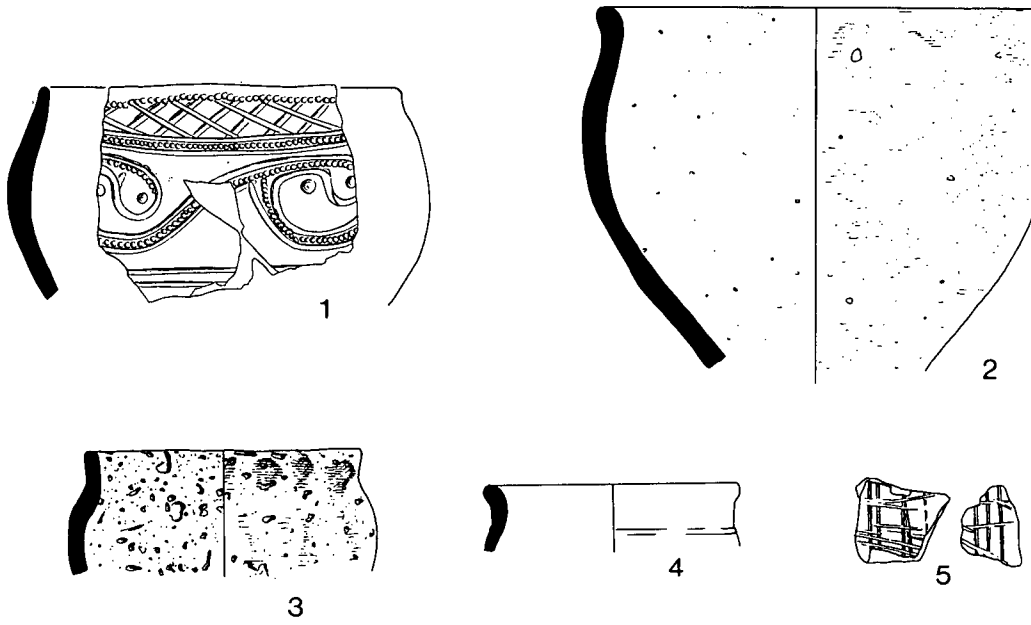

Fig. 6 Ringstead: Iron Age pottery (⅓)

the material published in the Brixworth report derives from Scaldwell, owing to the villa's close proximity to these kilns. Unless further kilns are uncovered at Scaldwell this question will remain unresolved.

Grey wares. Not illustrated

Many of the medium-mouthed jars from Ringstead can be paralleled at Brixworth (FIG17, nos 99 and 101). Other sherds from narrow-necked jars with rouletted decoration are identical to jars again recorded from Brixworth (FIG 22, no 143), all from mid-Antonine groups.

Cooking-pots and jars in crushed shell-tempered ware. Not illustrated.

Only 16 sherds in this fabric were recovered, with possibly no more than six vessels represented. Most of these sherds came from the two uppermost layers in Pits 1 and 5. The fabric is hard buff-brown ware. Three well-fired sherds in the same ware and datable to the late 3rd or first half of the 4th century, also occurred in Pit 1, layer 4. Some of the jars combed externally are heavily sooted, indicating use as cooking pots. Included in these are forms identical to Brixworth (FIG 34, no 251) also dated late 3rd or first half of 4th century AD.

Dishes and bowls (12, 13, 14, 22, 29, 41 and 42)

All of these vessels have been grouped together for discussion. The well-known Ecton type bowl or dish, with its internal groove and chamfered base (22) accounts for 17.8% of all such vessels recovered. Many of these bowls/dishes (35.7%) show only the external chamfer (41 and 42). Another 10.7% display only the internal groove, while 7.2% have no groove or chamfer whatsoever. The remaining 28.6% are vessels that have broken off short of both chamfer and groove. Amongst the vessels not illustrated are bowls with everted rims pressed sharply downwards, with a depth exceeding 70mm; these deeper bowls were more common in the 3rd century AD at Brixworth and are probably the latest examples of this type, before the late flanged bowls (13) became popular. Possibly late 3rd century AD.

Frilled wares (6, 17 and 20)

Three sherds showing decorated frilled rims were found in Pit 1. Mr D E Johnston noted that these may be a distinguishing feature of the Ecton assemblages. However the brief reference to Scaldwell in the *Northampton Independent* of 4th September 1926, shows that at Scaldwell, as well as Ecton, vessels were being made with frilled rims. Possibly Antonine.

Notwithstanding the homogeneity of form and fabric in the pottery from the three pit groups a high percentage of the material from Pit 1 was found to be residual and is much later than that from the other two groups. Pits 4 and 5 probably belong to the latter end of the Antonine period and Pit 1 to the late 3rd or 4th centuries AD.

Conclusions

Although there are similarities between the various forms and fabrics from these three sites, there is no firm evidence that the Ringstead pottery came from either Scaldwell or Ecton. The fabrics used are much the same throughout the Nene Valley. The many outcrops of grey Jurassic clays with their high natural iron content and the plentiful supply of fine white translucent sands, make it difficult to pinpoint the exact quarrying areas. Perhaps we are trying to distinguish between products that would be far better grouped together under one area heading, than treated individually.

Nevertheless, there is the possibility of another

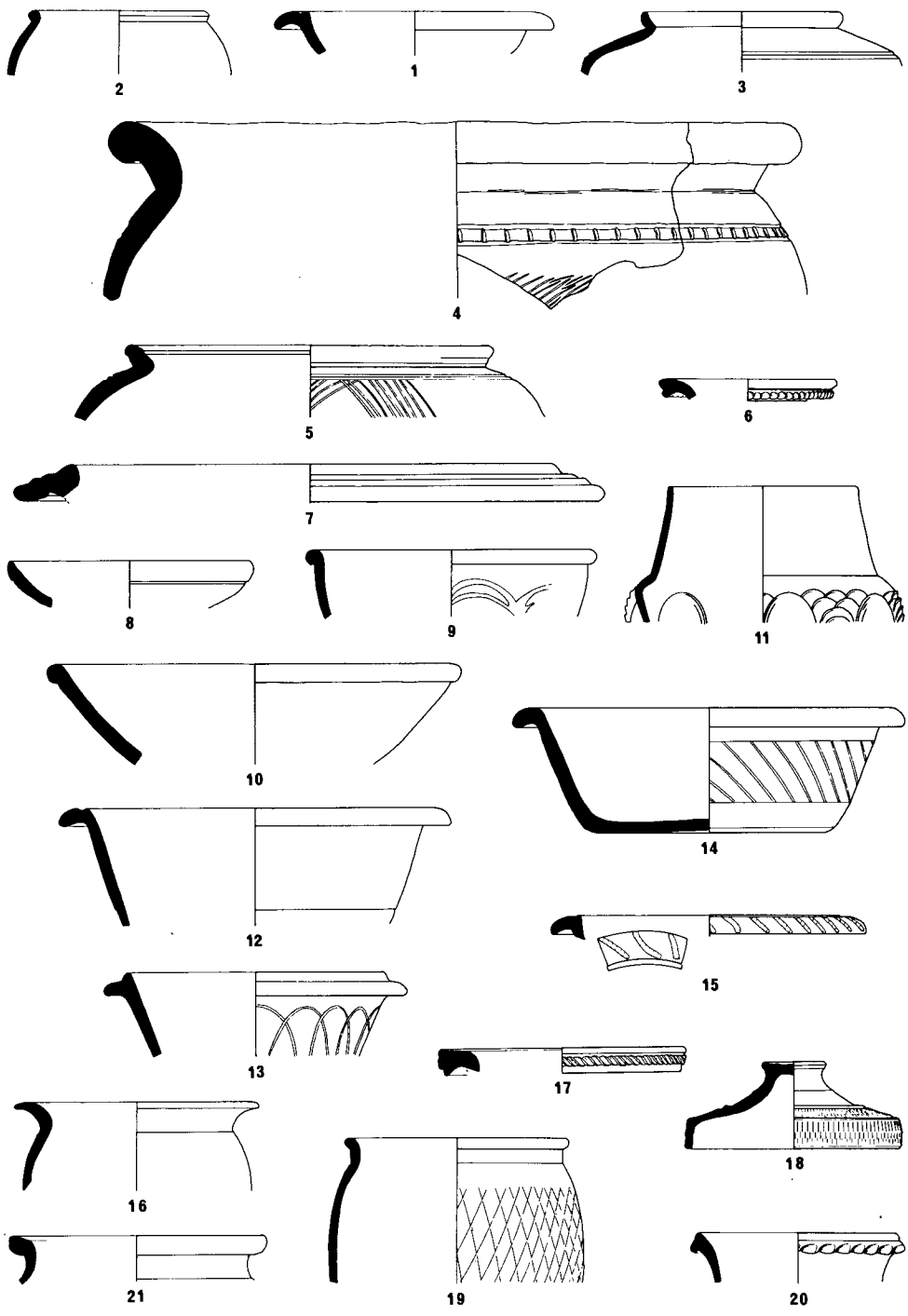

Fig. 7 Ringstead: Roman pottery (¼).

unknown kiln site within this group, producing pottery much nearer to Ringstead, sharing a common influence created by geographical and/or possible traditional culinary requirements of the period or area.

CATALOGUE

1. Rim sherd in hard, sandy grey ware from segmental bowl; off-white to light-grey core.
   Prov. Tr II 2.
2. Two joining sherds from small jar in hard, sandy grey ware with off-white to light-grey core; small beadlike rim.
   Prov. Tr II 2.
3. Fragment from high-shouldered jar in hard, sandy dark-grey fabric; small everted rim with concave inner edge, possibly for lid seating. Sharply angled shoulder terminating in a shallow, double groove.
   Unstratified.
4. Large sherd from storage jar in hard orange ware (area of buff) with grey core; prolific, medium, calcareous (sandy) inclusions; decorated with a single band of impressed toolmarks 30mm below base of rim and further decoration showing diagonal combing a little further below.
   Period 1, phase A.
5. Two joining fragments from large jar in hard, very sandy grey ware; grooved shoulder and band of multiple burnished line decoration in chevron design.
   Prov. B 1 3.
6. Rim sherd from narrow-necked jar in hard, sandy grey ware; everted rim with frilled collar.
   Pit 1, layer 1.
8. Rim fragment from small bowl in hard off-white ware; some tiny ironstone inclusions; heavily abraded orange-brown colour-coat.
   Pit 1, layer 1.
9. Fragment from bowl in hard off-white ware; some, tiny, ironstone inclusions; Yellow-brown colour-coat and decorated with cream painted, joined arches Hartley 1960, FIG3, no. 6).
   Pit 1, layer 1.
10. Two joining sherds from dish in hard, thick white ware; few, tiny, ironstone inclusions; red-brown to dark-brown colour-coat.
    Pit 1, layer 1.
11. Large rim fragment from folded beaker in hard orange ware; some tiny ironstone inclusions; decorated with multiple scales.
    Pit 1, layer 1.
12. Rim sherd from flanged bowl in hard, sandy, buff-grey ware; broken off short above the possible chamfered base.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
13. Flanged dish in hard, sandy burnished black ware; highly burnished internally and externally; decorated with intersecting arcs (Woods FIG 11, no. 42).
    Pit 1, layer 2.
14. Pie dish in hard, sandy grey ware with whitish-grey core; exterior discoloured by sooting; tiny, sandy (sparse, medium, black, gritty) inclusions; burnished except for central zone, left matt and decorated with additional diagonal lines.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
15. Fragment from segmental bowl in hard, sandy, off-white ware; sparse, medium, calcareous (prolific, tiny, sandy and gritty) inclusions; flange decorated with diagonal stripes in orange paint.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
16. Rim sherd of Black-burnished ware, category 1; showing areas of grey; tiny, translucent, sandy, grit (few, small, ironstone and shale) inclusions. Hand-made; everted rimmed jar with shoulder and rim burnished. Evidence of wiping on its inner surface. Sherd broken off short from any lattice decoration it should display upon its girth. Source probably Purbeck, Dorset.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
17. Rim section of narrow-necked jar in hard, sandy grey ware; everted rim with flat face, divided into three by two grooves; the central raised area has been tooled to give a twisted cord effect.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
18. Three joining fragments from box or casserole in hard off-white fabric with orange-brown to dark-brown colour-coat.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
19. Sherd from hard, sandy grey ware jar with off-white core; external sooting indicates use as a cooking-pot. Acute burnished lattice decoration.
    Pit 1, layer 3.
20. Narrow necked jar fragment in hard, sandy grey ware with white core; tiny, sandy inclusions; rim folded under by hand giving a frilled effect.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
21. Rim of bag-shaped jar in grey-white fabric; moderate, tiny, sandy, gritty (some, fine, ironstone) inclusions. Heavily abraded yellow-brown colour-coat.
    Pit 1, layer 3.
22. Coarse rim fragment from straight-sided dish in hard, sandy grey ware; moderate, small, calcareous (prolific, tiny, sandy, grit) inclusions. Chamfered base with internal groove at junction of wall and base. Irregular tool impressions on outer rim and wall.
    Pit 1, layer 4.
23. Complete rim, neck and shoulder section (12 shreds) of narrow-necked jar in hard, sandy grey ware; some, black, gritty inclusions.
    Pit 1, layer 2.
27. Fine rim fragment from bag-shaped beaker in hard off-white ware with dark-grey metallic colour-coat. Dot and grass like decoration with intersecting, diagonal, multiple S's, in creamy-white barbotine.
    Pit 1, layer 4.
28. Small rim sherd in moderately hard buff-orange ware; some, tiny, ironstone inclusions (similar to the fabric of 11); beaker with external decoration of incised triangular panels that contain multiple stabbed dots in every alternating zone.
    Pit 2, layer 3.
29. Sherd from small dish in smooth, hard grey ware; fine, sandy (moderate, tiny, calcareous) inclusions. Continuous arc decoration externally with the flat base chamfered.
    Pit 4.

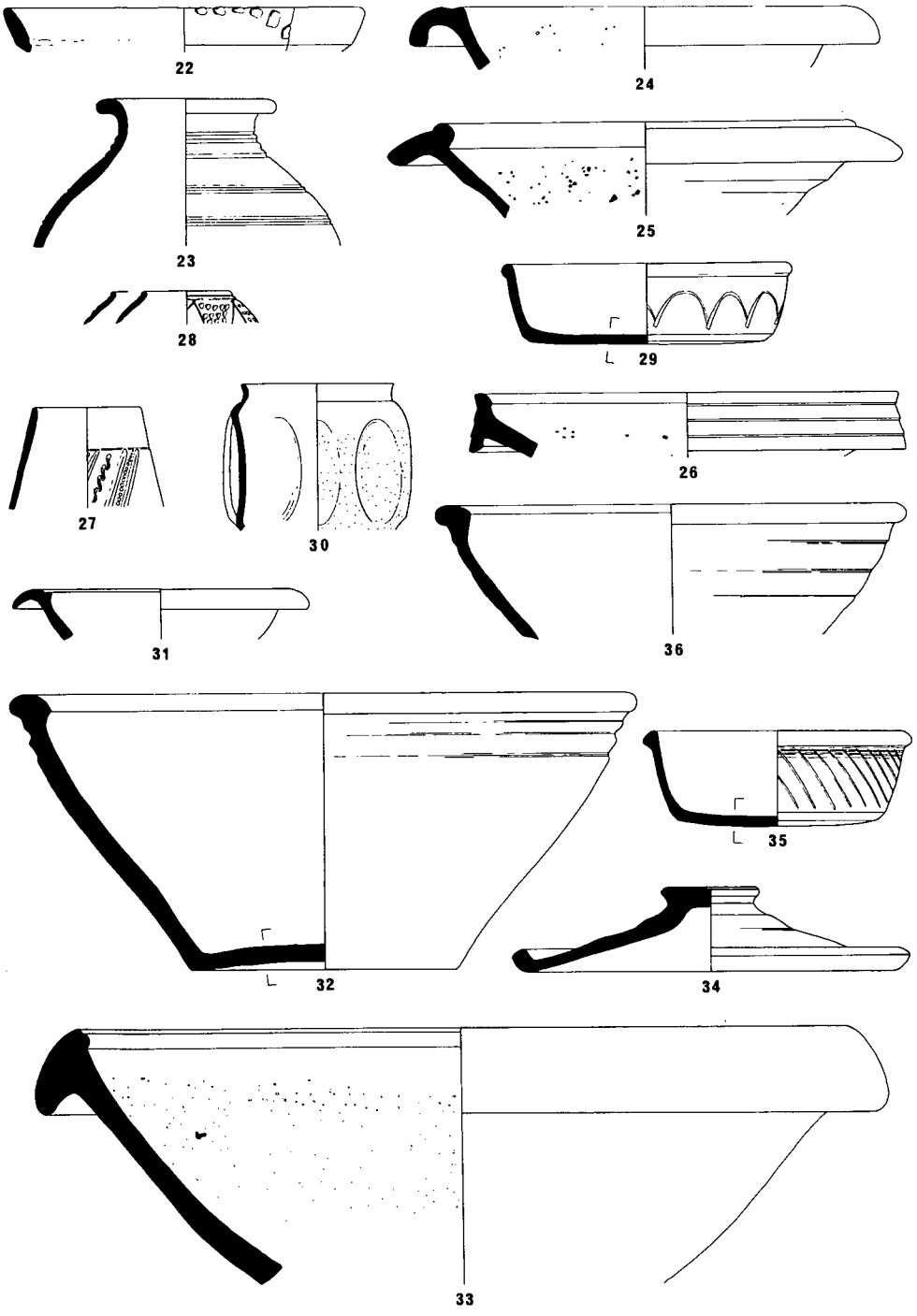

Fig 8 Roman pottery (¼)

30. Four joining sherds from a folded roughcast beaker in hard off-white ware; some, tiny, ironstone inclusions; brown to dark-grey colour-coat. (Frere 1972, FIG132, no 1070).

Pit 4.

31. Small rim sherd from a segmental bowl in hard off-white fabric; tiny sandy (some, tiny, ironstone) inclusions. Heavily abraded yellow-brown colour-coat.

Pit 5, layer 1.

32. Three joining fragments from large bowl in coarse, hard, pinky-buff ware; prolific, medium, calcareous (many, medium, ironstone) and sandy inclusions. Similar vessel to 36 below.

Pit 5, layer 1.

34. Lid in hard buff ware with grey core and sooted rim; prolific, tiny, gritty (sparse, medium, calcareous) inclusions.

Pit 5, layer 1.

35. Large fragment from pie dish in smooth burnished black ware; tiny, sandy inclusions and additional diagonal burnished lines that end short of its chamfered base.

Pit 5, layer 2.

36. Part of a bowl in moderately hard, very coarse, pinky-buff ware with areas of lighter grey; prolific, medium, calcareous (many, tiny, ironstone) inclusions. Heavily abraded.

Pit 5, layer 2.

37. Upper part of a flagon in hard, sandy, off-white fabric; many tiny, gritty (few, small, ironstone) inclusions. Triple ringed, cleanly joined neck with thick, everted, well-rounded, undercut rim. (Frere 1972, no 806).

Pit 5, layer 2.

38. Upper part of a flagon in hard, very coarse buff ware with darker areas of buff-yellow, greatly discoloured by sooting (subsequent to the vessel being broken and discarded). Large, prolific, calcareous (many, tiny, ironstone) and sandy inclusions. This pinched mouth vessel with the body cleanly morticed onto its neck displays two finger impressions where the handle joins the body.

Pit 5, layer 2.

40. Small cornice-rimmed beaker in moderately hard, fine off-white (pipeclay) fabric; lightly rilled body and dark-brown colour-coat; few, tiny, ironstone inclusions.

Pit 5, layer 2.

41. Straight sided dish in smooth, hard grey ware; fine, sandy inclusions burnished internally and externally; base sagging and chamfered.

Pit 5, layer 3.

42. Large part from deep, straight-sided dish with single groove below rim; medium hard, smooth and slightly soapy grey-brown to dark-grey ware; few, sandy inclusions; slightly sagging and chamfered base, internally burnished in the form of a square upon its base.

Pit 5, layer 3.

43. Three joining sherds from grey ware bowl in smooth, soapy fabric; prolific, crystalline, gritty inclusions; imitating samian form 30 and displaying multiple dotted, impressed comb decoration in the form of chevrons.

Pit 5, layer 3.

44. Rim fragment from amphora in hard, coarse and sandy buff ware; thickened, slightly everted rim with narrow raised lip internally. (e.g. Fishbourne, Cunliffe 1971, 210, FIG100, no 160).

Pit 5, layer 3.

45. Rim sherd from small beaker in off-white (pipeclay) fabric, smooth, with few ironstone inclusions; heavily abraded. Yellow-brown colour-coat.

Pit 5, layer 3.

46. Two joining fragments from small roughcast, cornice-rimmed beaker in hard, off-white ware; dark-grey colour-coat.

Pit 5, layer 4.

47. The greater part of a lid in hard, calcareous grey ware, sooted externally: this tall, everted and grooved rim is possibly developed or closely allied to the forms in use during the mid-first century AD at Rushden.

MORTARIA

by Mrs K F Hartley

7. A burnt flange fragment from a mortarium in a cream fabric with rim-profile similar to some made in the Stibbington area in the late 3rd or 4th century AD.

Pit 1, layer 1.

24. An abraded rim fragment from a mortarium in softish, fine-textured creamy-white fabric, tempered with a little brown and quartz grit; it is typical of mortaria made in the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries in Warwickshire AD 130–160.

Pit 1, layer 5.

25. A slightly burnt mortarium in similar (to 24) though slightly harder fabric with dark-brown trituration grits; made in the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries in the 3rd century AD.

Pit 1, layer 4.

26. A reeded hammerhead mortarium in a cream fabric with grey core and brownish slip, with ironstone trituration grit; made in the lower Nene valley probably in the late 3rd or 4th century AD.

Pit 1, layer 5.

33. A burnt mortarium in hard, off-white fabric, tempered with quartz and a little red-brown grit; a hard, abrasive surface has been made by the addition of abundant, small-sized quartz trituration grit on the inside. This is an import from the Rhineland where this form was very popular; its use in Britain is to be dated in the period AD 150–250.

Pit 5, layer 1.

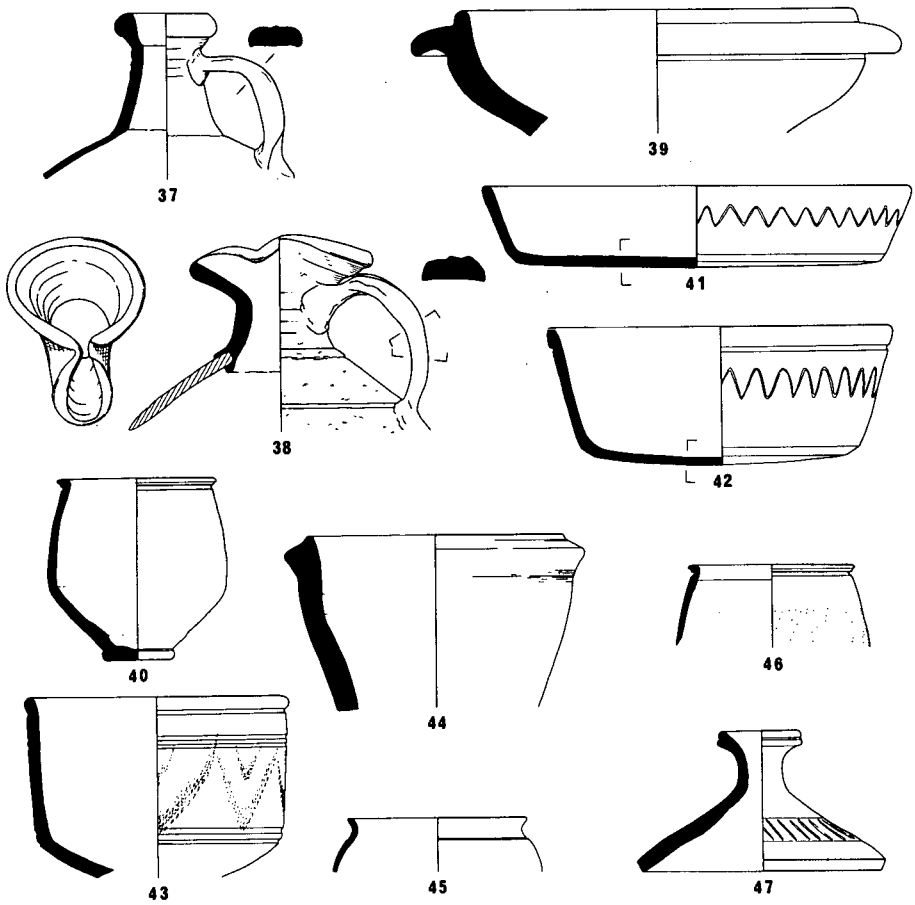

Fig 9 Roman pottery (¼).

39. A mortarium in hard, creamy-buff fabric with grey core and thin creamy-buff slip; the fabric is made granular by the addition of much quartz grit but no trituration grit has been added. The fabric points to manufacture in the Northamptonshire region and the rim form would best fit a date in the late 3rd or 4th century AD.

Pit 5, layer 2.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr R A H Farrar for his comments on the black-burnished ware.

THE BROOCHES

by D F Mackreth (FIG10)

The two brooches are both Colchester Derivatives and made from a copper alloy.

1. The separate spring and pin are held to the body by means of a plate with two holes behind the head of the bow. The chord passes through the upper hole while the lower carries a wire axis bar which runs through the coils of the spring. The plate is carried over the head of the bow and down onto the bow, giving the appearance of the hook on a Colchester type brooch. The wings are plain and curved to fit the spring. The bow has a ridge down the front, decorated with a line of rocker-arm ornament, relieved to either side by a concave surface. The catch-plate has a pin groove and two piercings. The upper one is circular and the lower is triangular with a curved upper edge. The shape of the piercings is obscured by 'flash' on the joint line of the brooch mould.

This specimen belongs to a common type found in the south east of England. Its characteristics are the shape of the bow, the presence of the pseudo-hook and, except for the earliest examples, the pierced plate behind the head of the bow. Decoration is almost always present and the catch-plate piercing is frequent. The type is the first known Colchester Derivative to have developed before the Conquest. Its distribution conforms almost exactly with the parent.

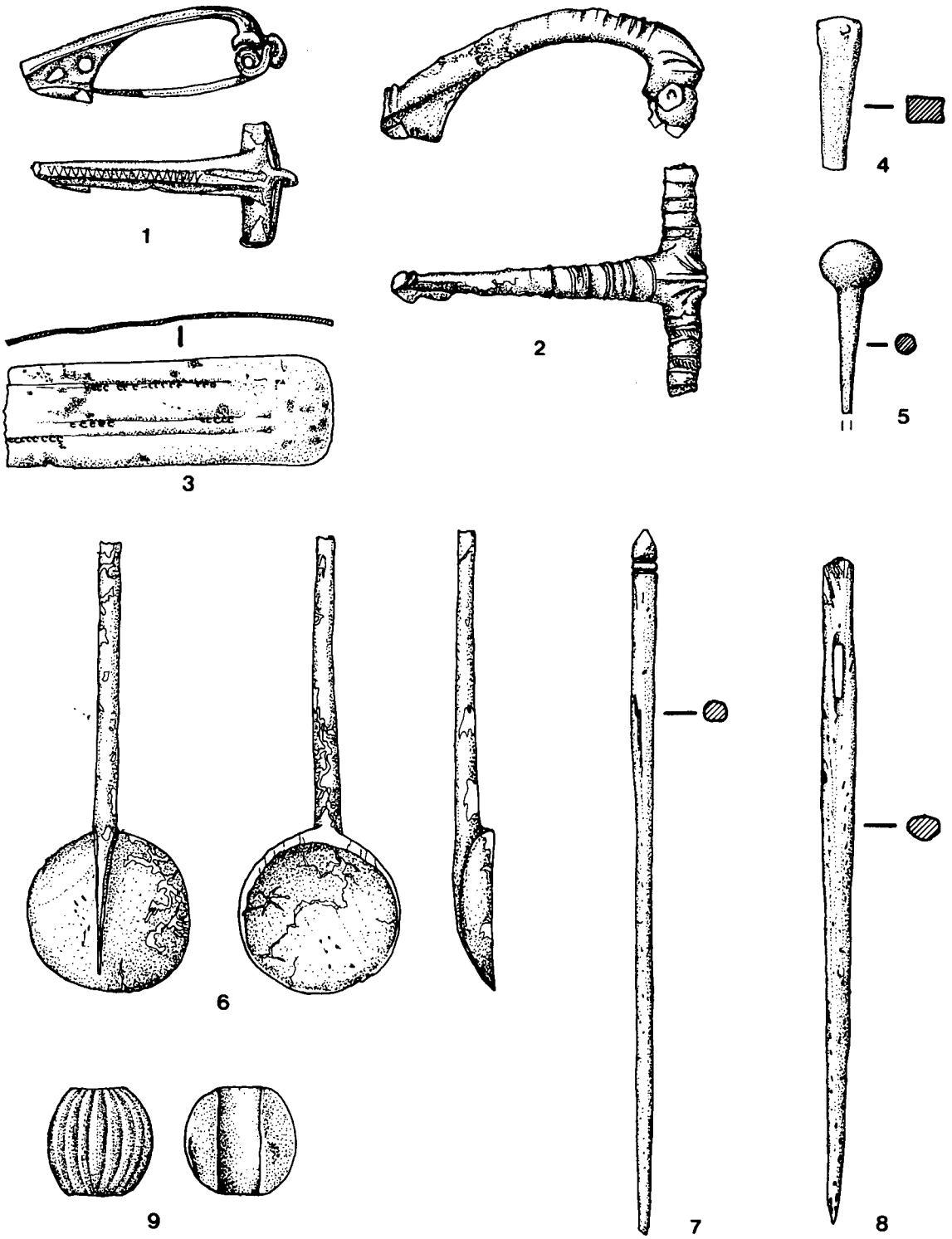

Fig. 10 Ringstead: objects of copper alloy, bone and paste

Typologically, the earliest specimen is one from Holbrooks, Old Harlow[5]; the spring and chord holding arrangement is that to be found on a Colchester type. The only Colchester Derivative to be found in the large, essentially pre-Conquest, collection from Skeleton Green, Puckeridge, Herts[6]., was a fully developed example of the present brooch. The King Harry's Lane cemetery, St. Albans[7], produced a silver brooch which was deposited late in the sequence of graves. The general indication of date is that the type may have been developing as early as *c*AD35 and it was probably still in manufacture *c*50. From a pit, possibly a gravel quarry, south west of the villa, SF34.

2. The pin is hinged and the axis bar is trapped between two flanges on the casting along the length of the wings and which have been closed round it. The wings each have three buried beaded ridges separated from each other and the bow by a flute. The bow rises above the wings and has, on the head, a vertical beaded ridge and, to either side, a raised lenticular ornament down the junction of the bow with the wing. Each lentoid has an outer ridge with a central flute edged by a step. Below the head there are three transverse slots each of which retains traces of enamel. Between the slots lie three ridges and there is a further one above and below the transverse ornament. Below the main decoration on the bow is a shallow flute with a central arris which is repeated below a groove down the rest of the bow to the foot. This is finished off with a projecting moulding divided by a groove. The catch-plate is plain with a small step where its upper edge runs up to the bow.

Here, the main characteristic is the cells for enamel which lie across the bow. Apart from these, the other unvarying feature is the hinged pin. Not enough published reports mention the manner of fastening the axis bar to the body of the brooch for it to be certain that this is another diagnostic feature. The distribution appears to be in the East Midlands with what seems to be a concentration south of the Humber. There is no established dating for the type and its range may be suggested as being in the second half of the 1st century, and possibly into the 2nd. Period 1, phase A. SF26.

THE COINS

by W R G Moore

1. Tetricus I (270-3) Antoninianus, very slightly worn.
   obv Imp C Tetricvs P F Avg
   rev Hilaritas Avgg Top of Pit 1
2. Tetricus I (270-3) Antoninianus (copy ?), slightly worn.
   obv Imp Tetricvs P F Avg
   rev Hilaritas Avgg Unstratified.
3. Constantine I (307-37) Follis, v slightly worn.
   obv Imp Constantinvs P F Avg
   rev Soli Invicto Comiti, Sol standing I, in ex Plg. (Lyons mint). Building 1, unstratified.
4. Constantinopolis (330-46) AE4 (copy ?), slightly worn.
   rev Victory on prow. Building 1, unstratified.
5. Constantinopolis (330-37) AE4, worn.
   rev Victory on prow, in ex Plg (Lyons mint).
6. Constantinopolis (*c*330-5) AE4 copy, slightly worn.
   rev Victory on prow, in ex Plg (Lyons mint). Unstratified.
7. Helena (337-41) AE4, slightly worn.
   obv Fl Ivl Helenae Avg
   rev Pax Pvblica. Unstratified.
8. Fel Temp Reparatio (*c*346-61) AE4 copy, diam 12mm, slightly worn.
   rev Falling horseman. Building 1, unstratified.
9. Magnentius (350-1) Centenionalis, v slightly worn.
   obv Im Cae Magnentivs Avg
   rev Felicitas Reipvblicae Trp (Trier mint). Building 1, unstratified.
10. Valens (364-78) AE3, slightly worn.
    obv D N Valens P F Avg
    rev Secvritas Reipvblicae, in ex Pcon (Arles mint). Building 1.

OTHER OBJECTS OF COPPER ALLOY (FIG 10)

3. Flat strip, possibly part of a bracelet: decorated with faint lines and rows of dots. Width 16mm. Pit 1. SF28.
4. Part of a square section tapering rod or bar. Pit 1. SF27.
5. Head of pin or stud. Pit 1. SF24.

OBJECTS OF BONE AND PASTE (FIG 10)

6. Bone spoon. Bowl 22mm in diameter. The handle extends along the back of the bowl. Unstratified. SF37.
7. Bone pin. Length 111mm. Pointed head above double grooves. Pit 4. SF8.
8. Bone bodkin. Length 103mm. The section flattens above the eye. Pit 1. SF32.
9. Melon bead. Incomplete. Bright blue. Diameter 18mm. Vitreous paste? Unstratified.

OBJECTS OF IRON (FIG 11)

13. Stud head. Diameter 30mm. Disturbed floor levels, Building 1. SF10.
14. Latch lifter. Pit 1. SF33.
15. Part of a handle. Pit 1. SF4.
16. Fragment, end bent over. Pit 1. SF30.
17. Heavy object with a hooked end. Pit 5. SF21.
18. Flat object, or part of an object. Pit 1. SF5.
19. Flat bar or band. Width 30mm. Surviving length 145mm. Pit 1. SF29 (not illus).
20. Flat bar or band. Width 25mm. Surviving length 122mm. Unstratified. SF35 (not illus).

Nails

Approximately 140 nails were found. 95 came from Pit 1, 13 from Pit 4, and the rest from rubble deposits. All were probably of the flat headed variety.

MISCELLANEOUS

21. Slab of lead. Average size 200mm x 100mm x 35mm (weight 9lbs). Found in Phase 1 lime deposits. SF31 (not illus).
22. Folded thin sheet of lead. 70mm long. Possibly from a window. Pit 4. SF15 (not illus).
23. Part of a cone-shaped object of fired clay. Weight or pounder? Diameter at bottom 65mm. Height 46mm. Tapering hole in top, 35mm deep. Pit 5. SF22 (not illus).

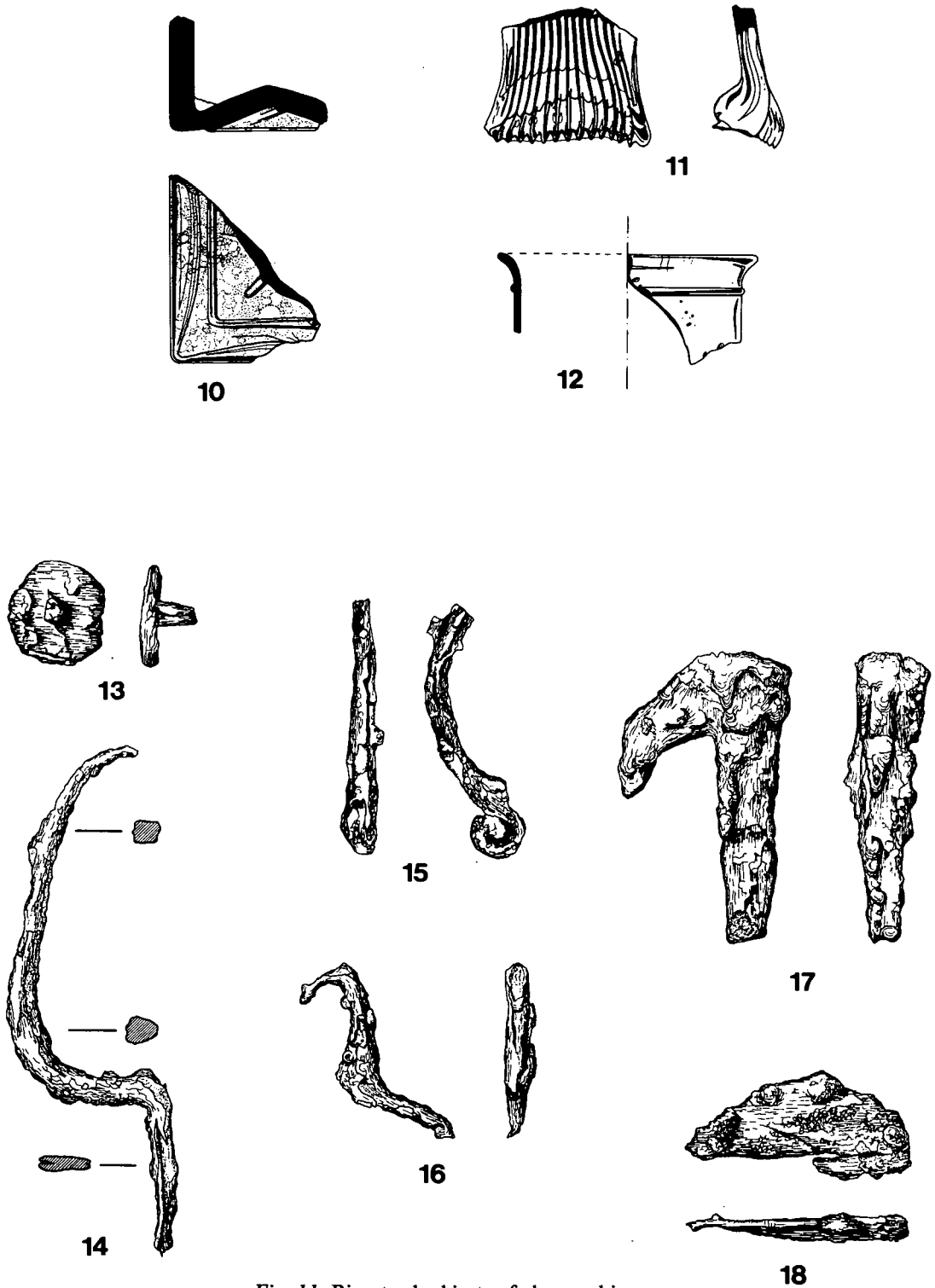

Fig. 11 Ringstead: objects of glass and iron

THE GLASS

by Dorothy Charlesworth (FIG 11)

Drawings and descriptions of three pieces of glass were submitted.

1. Part of a base of a square bottle in natural green glass with a moulded base marking, a square with a St. Andrew's cross on it. *c*60-130. The type is discussed in Charlesworth 1966. Pit 1.
2. Part of a multi-ribbed handle in greenish-colourless glass. Probably from a 3rd-4th century cylindrical bottle. The metal rules out the possibility that it is from an earlier square or cylindrical bottle as these are invariably in natural green glass. Unstratified.
3. Rim and part of side of a beaker in colourless glass, rim rounded in the flame and slightly everted, straight side with a trail. A complete example in known from a grave at Baldock (*Archaeol J*, 88, 1931, 170, PL343 and from Housesteads (*c*128-139/42)). The type is discussed in Charlesworth 1971. Pit 5.

Not ill. 36 pieces of flat window glass found in Pit 1.

THE WALL PLASTER FROM PIT 1

A large quantity of painted wall plaster was found deposited in the upper layers of Pit 1. At least a third of this pit had been destroyed before excavation began so the original amount of plaster in the pit could have been greater.

It is estimated that there was enough painted plaster surviving to have covered about 7 sq m of walling, but it was not possible to reconstruct any large designs. The predominant colours in the assemblage were as follows:

(1a) Plain yellow. Shades ranging from deep yellow to buff. Approx 1.9sqm.
(1b) Yellow background with a red stripe bordered by white. Approx 1 sq m. Total length of stripe about 12m. In the case of 21 pieces the stripe or band crossed at right angles and with eight pieces the bands met diagonally.
(1c) Yellow background with a white stripe. Approx 0.6m.

The overall area of plaster with a yellow background was therefore about 3.5 sq m, or half the total amount.

(2) 'Red'. Various shades ranging from maroon to pinkish buff, with some pieces having a combed surface. Approx 2 sq m.
(3) White. A number of pieces had pale green overlying white. Approx 0.5 sq m.
(4) 'Blue'. A small quantity of plaster painted with a 'blue' background was found in the assemblage. However Miss Liversidge is of the opinion that this was originally black, and it is therefore described as black both in her report below and on FIG 12.

Details of the wall-painting

by Joan Liversidge

A number of fragments painted with a variety of designs were excavated from a pit on the site. The associated pottery suggests that they were deposited there in the late 3rd or 4th centuries.

The materials included evidence for a small quantity of white stippled with grey or red; and yellow with blue and white. Pink with bright red also occurred as well as a larger quantity of pink spotted with white and maroon. Presumably these pieces came from dado level near the base of the walls. White painted with a maroon curvilinear motif and traces of pale brown may also come from a dado (FIG 12,7).

Other designs were painted on white, black, red and yellow ground colours, the red being of particularly good quality and showing the most elaborate decoration. This consisted of a leaf pattern, probably from a swag, in green with yellow details, perhaps stalks or highlights. One piece shows this had a width of 22mm. (FIG 12,1). There were also yellow tendrils and green leaves, sometimes with white dots or petals (FIG 12,2/3), and one piece may depict white stalks or ribbons with small green leaves and stalks. One chip shows the red ground separated from green by a white line 7mm wide, perhaps part of a panel framework.

More foliate decoration occurred on a black ground possibly bordered by a yellow band or panel. Green leaves and yellow stalks and tendrils suggest a scroll design (FIG 12,4-6, 8). One piece in particular has a roundel with a maroon centre placed perhaps above the corner of a red panel outlined in white (FIG 12,8). This might come from a frieze. Another fragment has a maroon motif outlined in green, next to a yellow semicircle(?) outlined in white. Several pieces have the black ground with its foliate decoration framed by a white line 11mm wide next to a pink which might come fromt the stippled dado.

Other designs include curved light blue and white lines side by side and each 7mm wide, painted on pale buff near a solid black motif (?semicircle), separated from yellow on one piece by a straight black line 10mm wide. Elsewhere more light blue is divided from maroon by a white line 11mm wide. Then there is a light green and white motif on a maroon ground, and straight lines in two shades of green on white. Traces of fine black or maroon lines on white, or black on yellow may come from panel frameworks and on one yellow fragment is a red band 27mm wide edged in white. Such decoration may well be evidence for yellow, red, black and white panels associated with the foliate and other decorative motifs.

On some yellow pieces, however, the red band is only 17mm wide and crosses a similar band sometimes at right angles and sometimes at a wider angle suggesting an octagon or a geometric pattern. Other pieces show maroon and light green stripes radiating out perhaps from corners. Both these designs might come from geometric patterns on a dado. Another find was plaster from a window or doorway painted maroon and white.

THE RINGSTEAD COLUMN DRUM

by P Woodfield

In September 1975, a large drum of a column decorated with scales was found during gravel extraction near Ringstead, Northants[8]. It was recovered and removed to the entrance hall of Northampton Museum where it remains on public display.

The drum is 625mm in diameter, 550mm high, and weighs approximately 128.5kg. Top and bottom faces are dressed, and the face is decorated with a pattern of scale-like leaves overlapping in five horizontal rows, each row containing 13 leaves around the circumference. Each succeeding row is offset horizontally by half a leaf, the hollow midrib of one row lining up vertically with the point of the leaf above. Although

[8]First reported in *Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 11, 1976 193.

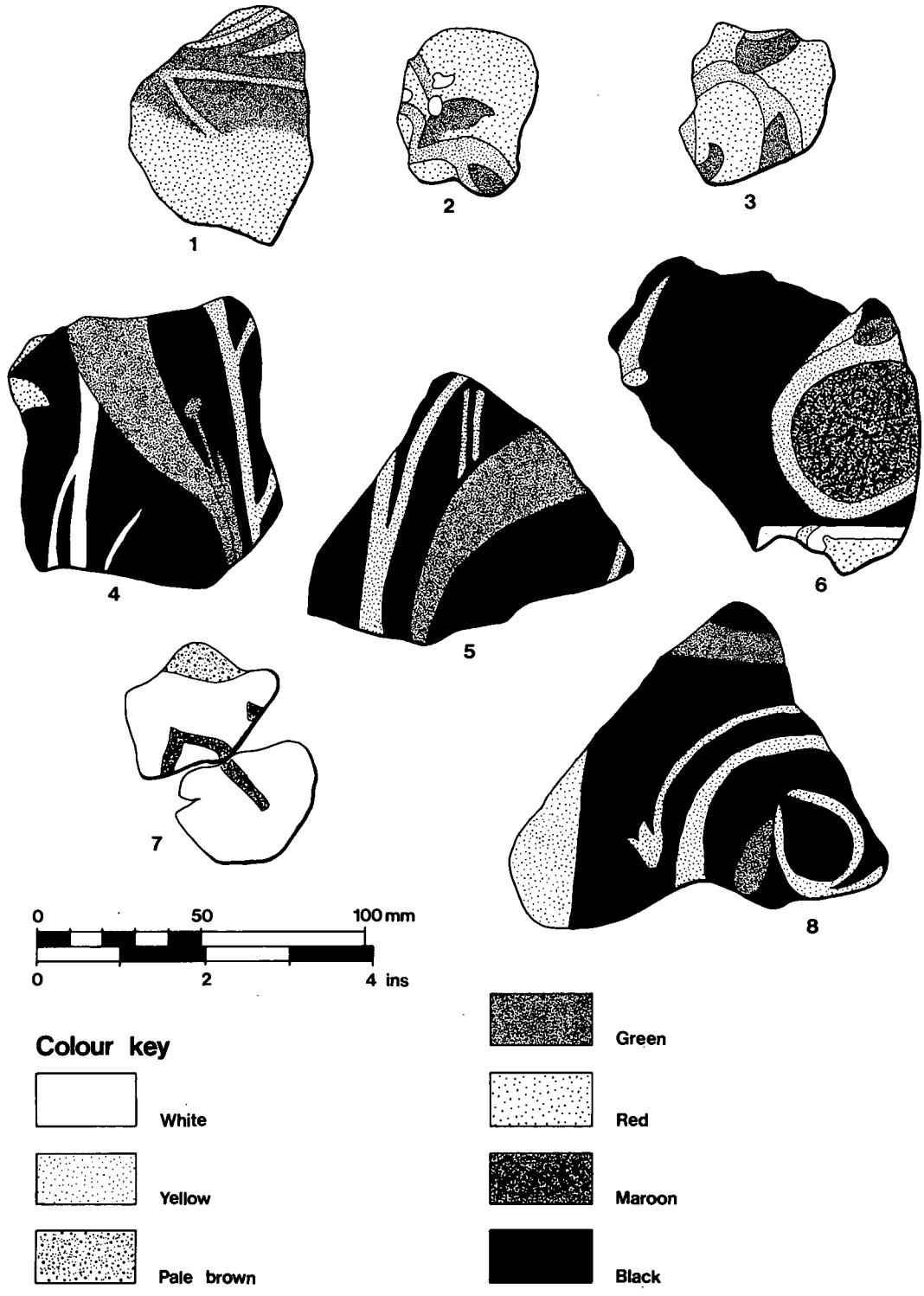

Fig. 12 Ringstead: decorated wall plaster

the relief is low, the state of preservation is generally good, with the original setting out lines for the curves of the leaf point preserved on two rows.

The stone is a buff coloured fine to medium grained oolitic limestone with comminuted fossil material and larger shelly fragments, identified as Lincolnshire limestone, probably from the Weldon-Stanion area of the county, approximately 8½ miles north west of the find spot.

Both top and bottom faces of the drum have rectangular mortices 90mm x 20mm x 35mm deep, roughly squared at the bottom. These received the wood or metal dowels used to locate the drum during erection, and to prevent subsequent movement in the shaft column. Being not undercut they are not lewis holes, but may have incidentally assisted in the handling of the stone.

The survival of the diametric measurement in this specimen permits some tentative estimate of the complete column height to be made, as a series of rules were widely known and used in the classical world. Thus the overall height, including capital and base, of the Ringstead column is estimated at between 4.5 m and 5.0 m (14ft 9in and 16ft 5in). This takes the Vitruvian proportion of 8 : 1, modified by the provincial preference, for which there is some evidence[10], for a slightly more squat proportion.

The appearance of a column on such a scale on a relatively rural site at some distance from any known town would seem to call for some comment.

The original column, it is argued, reached the equivalent of two storeys in height, and if from a building, must represent a major work of architecture. Columns of similar diameter, for instance, flanked the forum entrance at Wroxeter, and stood *ex antis* of the temple building at Bath (Cunliffe 1969, 183; 1-1). The only structure of this scale likely to be erected well outside an urban context is a temple.

The presence of the imbricated leaf pattern amplifies this suggestion. Shafts with similar treatment are well known, if not common, some twelve examples having been recorded in Britain on free standing columns[11], two examples on pilasters, on a tombstone at Lincoln and a relief at Richborough. All these, with but one exception, occur in major towns, and in some cases closely associated with civic buildings[12]. Here the scale pattern must be seen, after straight or spiral fluting, to be merely a less common variant in the treatment of the column shaft. However, the one exception to the general urban distribution occurs at the roadside religious site at Springhead, Kent (Penn 1967, 123). Although much more fragmentary than the Ringstead drum, the leaf size at Springhead is practically identical, indicating a monument of similar size.

Imbricated decoration on column shafts is also well attested in Roman Gaul. There it is often associated with a special class of religious monument known as the Jupiter Column or *colonne anguipede*. These columns by contrast stand alone as complete monuments in their own right. They carry on the capital a fully modelled figure of the deity, mounted, the forepart of his horse rearing over a giant monster with a fish-like tail. The capital itself is of the Corinthian order, and the shaft and base of the column are raised on two stages, a high square plinth with or without carvings and inscriptions, and directly above, an octagonal drum with three-quarter relief figures cut into each face in round headed niches. Two varieties of Jupiter Columns seem discernible; the full scale monument as described, standing up to 10m in height, of which two examples still stand, at Mainz (Moguntiacum) and at Cussy-la-Colonne, near Autun (Augustodunum). Unfortunately neither of these has the imbricated decoration. These major columns seem to be confined largely to the middle Rhine and Mosel valleys. The second, smaller version standing to as little as 2m in height seems to be more widely spread through Gallia Belgica. These columns are dedicated to Jupiter alone, or, in Gaul, with his consort Juno, and often in a decidedly Celtic role as, for instance, Jupiter Taranis or Dis Pater, father of the Gaulish peoples.

The scale of the Ringstead drum, on a comparatively rural site, and the presence of the leaf-scale decoration strongly suggest that it is part of a Jupiter Column.

Fragments which have been interpreted as Jupiter columns are known in Britain at a number of sites; in the same county at Irchester, at Catterick, Great Chesterford, Cirencester, Chichester, Colchester, Springhead, and Wroxeter[13]. These, with the exception of Springhead are, it will be noted, all urban centres, and by comparison with Gaul, suggest a change of emphasis of the cult in Britain. The appearance of the Ringstead drum suggests, with the Springhead example, that this difference is not so fundamental. Although the identification of the Ringstead drum as part of a Jupiter Column cannot be taken as proven, it is nevertheless an architectural find of some significance, and it might be hoped that the sheer difficulty in handling such large pieces may result in further pieces appearing in the area.

[9]The stone was kindly identified by hand lens in Northampton Museum by Messrs R Dimes and M Owen of the Institute of Geological Sciences, London, to whom the writer is most grateful.

[10]For example at the York *principia* where the proportion is 7.2 : 1.

[11]I am indebted to Mr Tom Blagg for information on the other examples at Catterick, Caerwent (*Archaeologia*, 1909, 572), Cirencester (two unpublished examples), Corbridge (*Archaeol Aeliana*, 1914, 346, FIG 12, and 1914, 300-1 and FIG 12); Gloucester (unpublished in Museum, A.2648) and another *Trans Bristol Gloucestershire Archaeol Soc*, 1974, 77, FIG 30 and 80, no 4; London (RCHM, *Roman London*, 1928, 100 and PL 19); Winchester (*Antiq J*, 1968, 263), Wroxeter and York, (RCHM, *Eburacum*, 1962, 112 no 9 and PL 48). For pilasters, the London arch (Blagg, *Current Archaeol*, 57, 1977, 313, FIG 5) and Springhead, Kent (Penn, *Archaeol Cantiana*, 1967, 111, 113, FIG 4 and 123).

[12]The forum basilica at both Caerwent and Cirencester.

[13]For Irchester see P Woodfield, Roman architectural masonry from Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 12, 1977, 67-85; Gt Chesterford: Richmond and Hull, Roman Essex, *VCH Essex III*, 1963; also Horsley, *Britannia Romana*, 1733, 331, and 192 N75; Cirencester Collingwood and Wright, *RIB*, Oxford, 1965, 89 and 93; Chichester: *ibid.*

DESCRIPTION OF THE LAYERS (FIG5)

Pit 1 (1) Medium brown loam; (2) dark brown loam; (3) medium brown stony; (4) medium brown loam with much painted plaster; (5) light grey ash; (6) very dark ash; (7) medium-dark loam with some mortar and gravel; (10) dark brown gravelly loam; (11) dark brown loam, some gravel; (12) medium brown loam; (13) heavy gravel; (14) dark brown loam; (15) grey-black silt.

Pit 4 (1) Light brown mortary loam; (2) light grey ash; (3) dark ash; (4) as (1); (5) grey-brown loam with some mortar.

Pit 5 (1) Building debris overlying pit (? medieval ridge); (2) light brown loam with some gravel; (3) very ashy loam; (4) dark loam; (5) sandy loam.

Ditches 1 and 2 (1) Topsoil; (2) light brown loam; (3) medium-brown gravelly loam; (4) medium brown gravelly loam with many stones; (5) dark brown gravelly loam; (6) light brown, very gravelly; (7) dark grey sandy silt; (8) dark-medium gravelly loam; (9) dark brown loam; (10) light grey brown sandy silt; (11) orange silt; (12) grey-brown sandy loam; (13) dirty yellow sand; (14) dark grey sandy silt.

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Roman Buildings at Ringstead, Northants

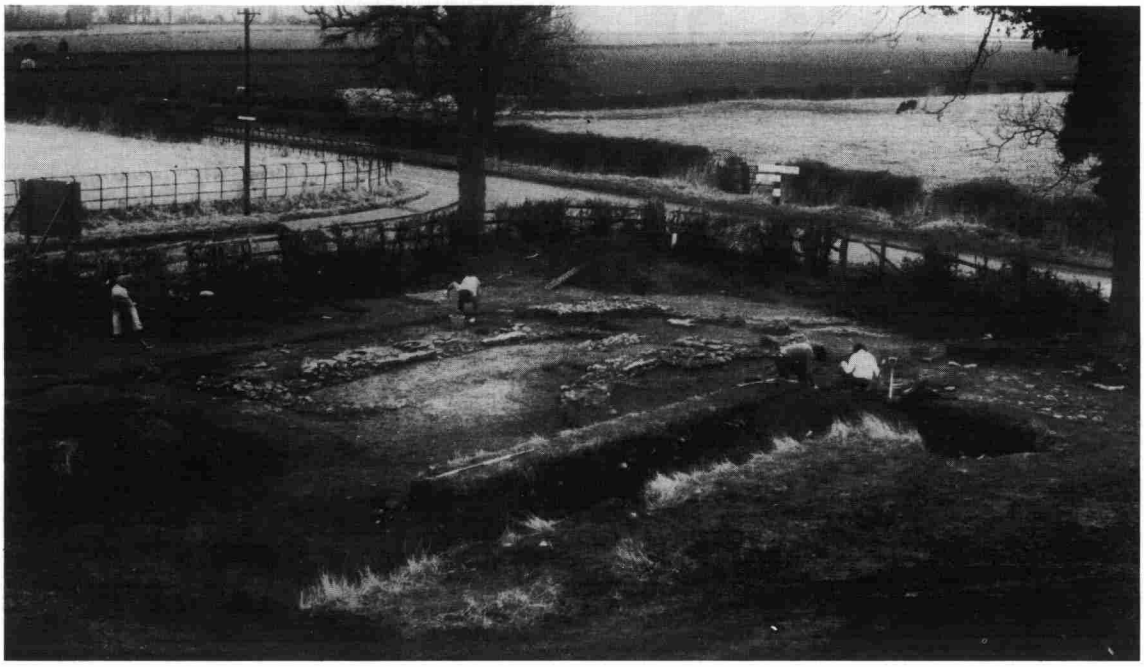

Plate 1 Ringstead: view of the site, looking south-east.

Plate 2 Ringstead: general view, showing building 1 partly excavated.

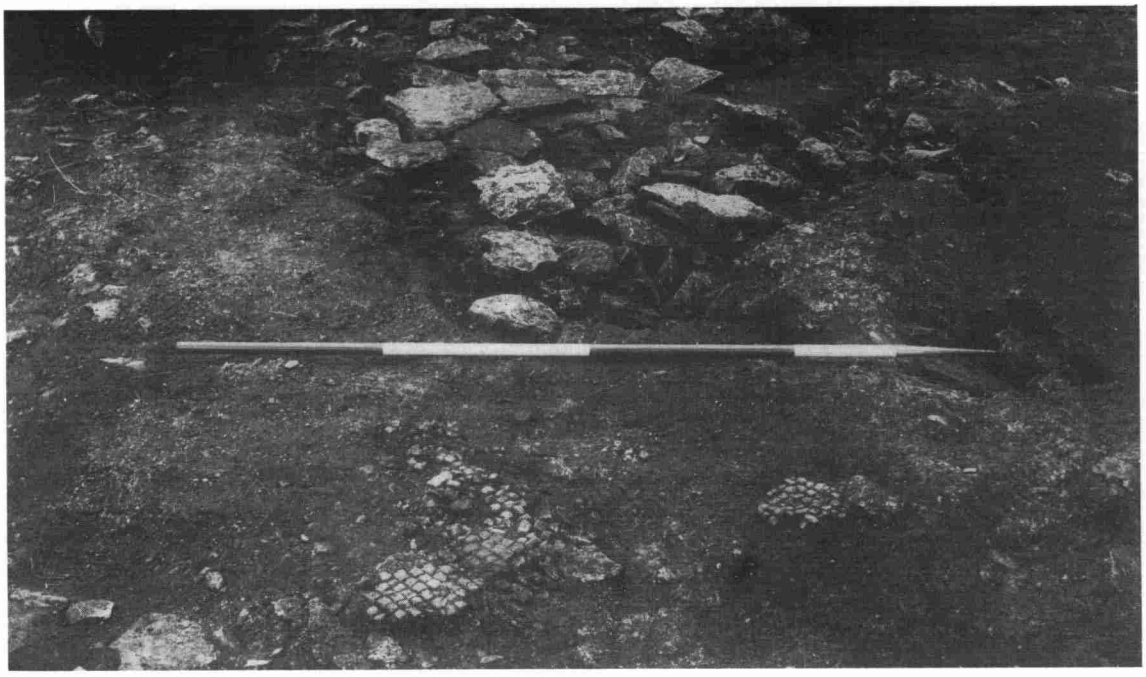

Plate 3 Ringstead: small area of tesserae surviving in building 1.

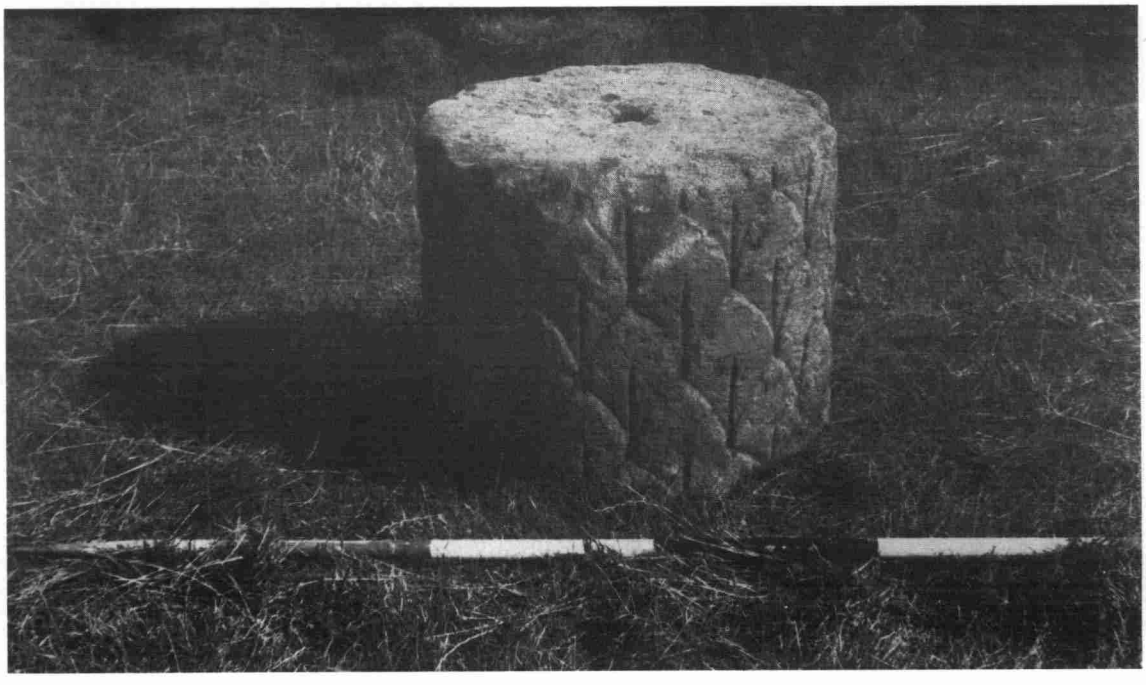

Plate 4 Ringstead: the decorated stone, as retrieved on site.