

# Excavations at Castor, Cambridgeshire in 1957–8 and 1973

by CHARLES GREEN, IDA GREEN, and CAROLYN DALLAS,  
with J P WILD

## INTRODUCTION by J P WILD

The village of Castor has been a focus of antiquarian tradition-building, learned interest, and practical research since at least the time of Hugh Candidus (AD 1115–70) and the Medieval Chroniclers. Such interest has sound justification, for there is a rich archaeological record of communal life on the site of the modern village since the beginning of the Roman period, if not earlier.

Modern archaeological research and excavation began in the early 19th century with Edmund Artis, Steward to the Earls Fitzwilliam and a geologist and archaeologist of international standing (Artis 1828; Tomlinson 1974). Both before him and after him there was much random digging for finds; but he identified sundry parts of a vast and well appointed Roman building complex (his *praetorium*) under the lanes and cottages around Castor Church. He was not concerned with the less substantial evidence for later occupation over the Roman buildings and did not record it.

This article presents the results of two separate campaigns of excavation which have shed new light on the post-Roman periods which escaped Edmund Artis' attention. The work of Mr and Mrs Charles Green in 1957 and 1958 was financed by the then Ministry of Works and in the first instance was directed to re-examining part of Artis' building complex (the 'temple', Site II) and uncovering further Roman remains in the churchyard extension below the Church. In the extended graveyard they discovered not only Roman structures, but also two Saxon sunken-floored huts and three middle Saxon pits, together with evidence of later medieval habitation nearby. Miss Dallas' excavation in 1973 in the garden of Elmlea, north of Castor Church, developed from a series of 'sondages' which I undertook in 1970 to add more building elements to Artis' plan of

the *praetorium*. She investigated a middle Saxon cess-pit and traces of considerably later medieval structures.

Sadly, Mr Charles Green died in 1972, and his report (in draft before his death) is printed here with additions and revisions by various hands. It is accompanied by Miss Dallas' Elmlea report. Miss Dallas has prepared the pottery reports and edited the small finds reports for both sites, and her paragraphs of discussion effectively draw together the archaeological evidence for middle Saxon and medieval settlement both north and south of the Church and set it in its historical context. The entire text has been re-edited for publication by Mr Brian Dix.

The report is divided between a discussion of the evidence in printed text and microfiche containing supporting data. A list of the contents on microfiche follows the printed Bibliography which contains details of the published works referred to in both sections.

## GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Castor lies north of the River Nene, 6.5km (c 4 miles) west of Peterborough (FIG 1), and is situated upon a succession of Jurassic Period strata of the Great Oolite Series which outcrops on the slope rising from the relatively level alluvium and terrace-gravels in the valley bottom. The strata run through Lower Lincolnshire Limestone, Upper Estuarine Series, to the Blisworth Limestone lying directly under Elmlea to the north of the church; the upper surface is weathered to a brown flaggy state, but becomes increasingly massive with depth. The limestone is in turn overlain by Blisworth Clay which begins to occur in the north-east corner of Elmlea garden and forms the solid geology underlying the extreme north of the village.

Above the floodplain, and roughly co-terminous with the A47 Peterborough Road,

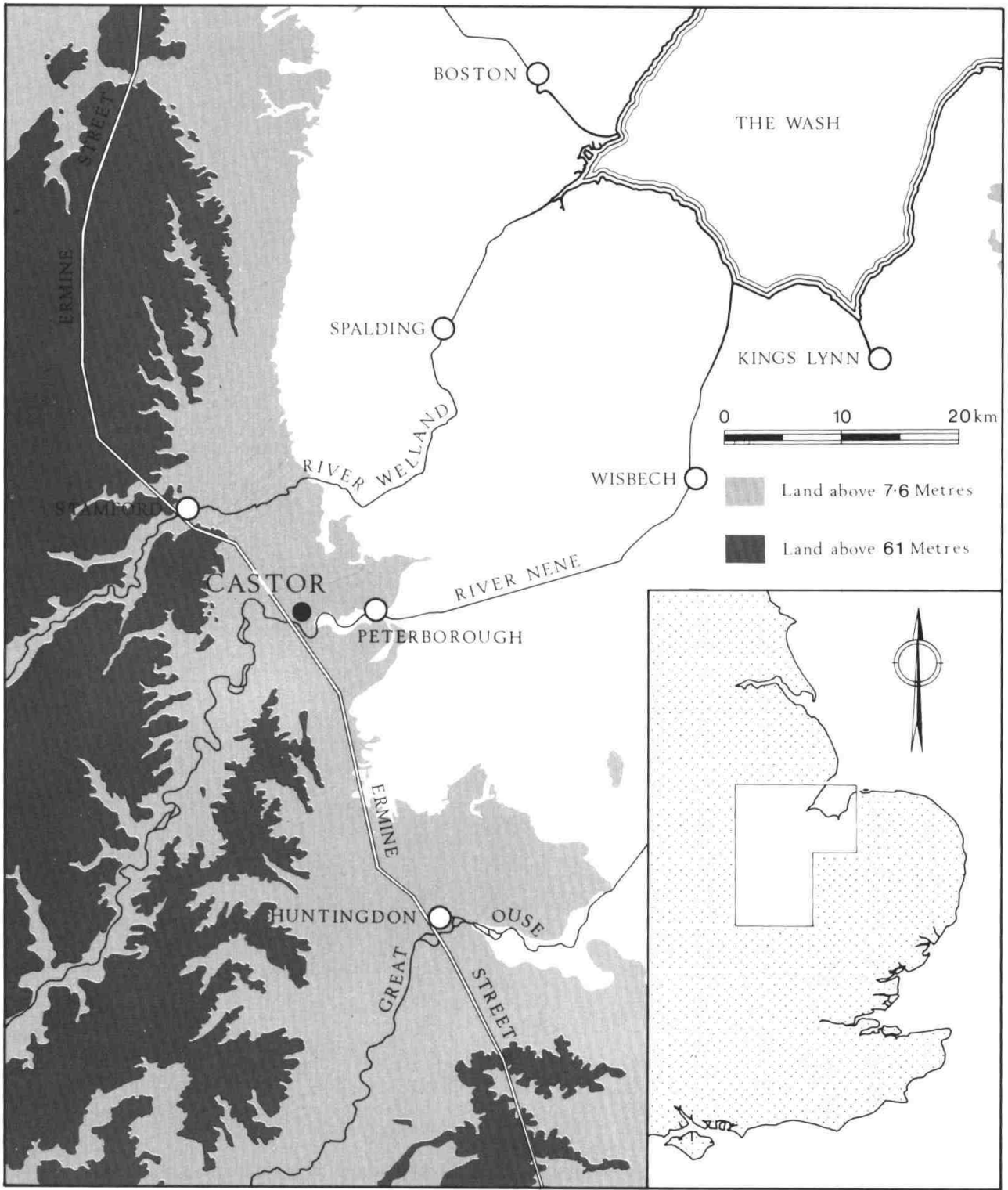


Fig 1 Location map

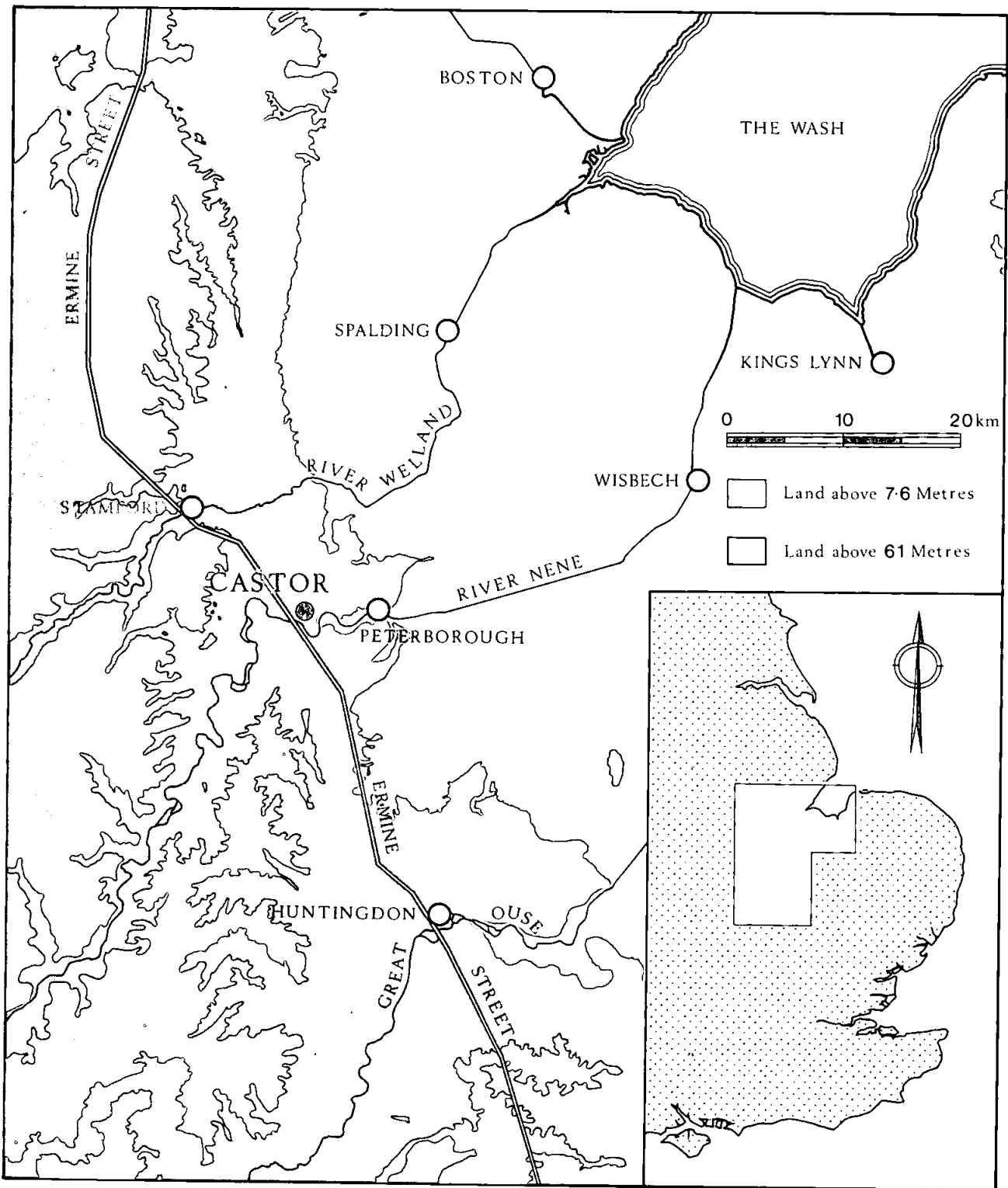


Fig 1 Location map

the ground beneath the village rises fairly steeply and the roads which border the churchyard, Church Hill on the west and Stocks Hill at the east, meet at the north-east angle of the yard at 21.34m (70 ft) above OD

(FIG 2). Beyond this point the upward slope is more gradual. The principal sites examined lay on and around the steep-sided hill. All the finds and various site records will be kept at Peterborough City Museum.

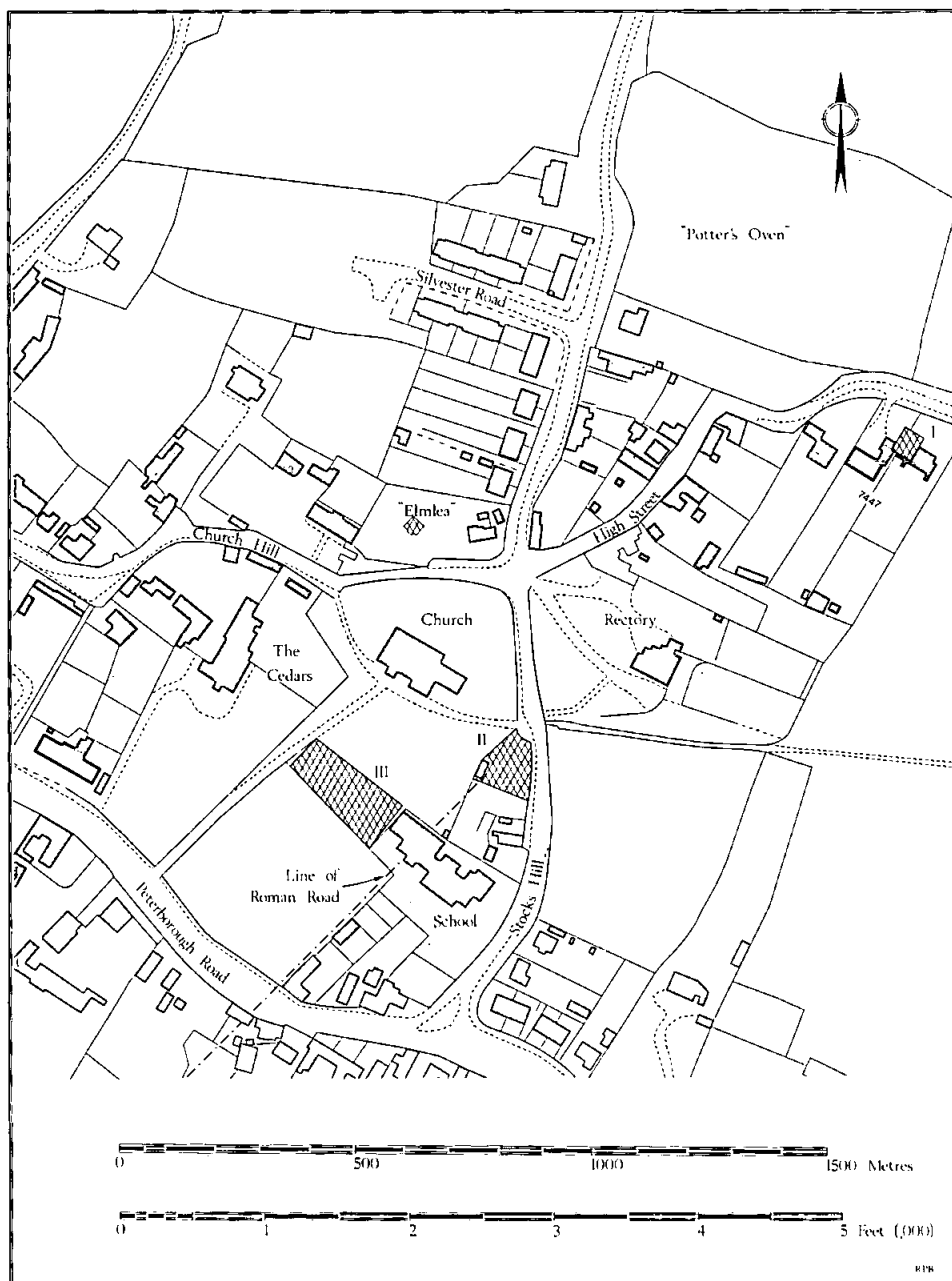


Fig 2 Central Castor showing the locations of individual excavation-sites

## EXCAVATIONS IN 1957-8

by Charles and Ida Green

In 1957 and 1958 we excavated on behalf of the then Ministry of Works three sites near the centre of Castor village (FIG 2). Site I, close to the eastward extension of High Street, proved to be archaeologically sterile and was primarily of interest in showing how both an air photograph and a resistivity survey using a megger testing instrument can mislead.

Site II, an extension to the east side of the churchyard burial area, covered the southern half of the building exposed previously by Artis and called by him a 'temple'. Owing to other commitments this work was carried out in two stages. In addition, the laying of sewer pipes in the village in 1958 enabled an inspection to be made of the intersections of the north half of the building which underlay Stocks Hill—exposures which went far to confirm that Artis' plan of this area was not correct.

Site III was a second addition to the churchyard, where a resistivity survey using a megger testing instrument had suggested the existence of two parallel buildings lying roughly north and south. That on the east side proved to be the wing of a Roman building underlying the existing burial area. The western half, however, was quite different and though containing Saxon and Medieval features appeared to bear little relation to the results of the survey.

All of the work here reported was undertaken by small parties of professional labour and thanks are due to Messrs W Brick and Sons of Stamford and Messrs T Measures and Son of Peterborough who, at different times, provided the workforce and gave other valuable assistance. In addition, in 1958 we had occasional help from a few voluntary workers and to them our thanks are also due.

Site I was owned by Mr Griffin and the others by the Rector and the Parochial Church Council, and our thanks are due to them all for permission to dig. To the Rector, the Reverend T P Adler, we are also grateful for much kindness and assistance, without which our tasks might not have been completed. The schoolmaster, Mr A Berridge, gave us valuable

topographical information and Mr and Mrs R Hill were also most helpful.

The occasional references to field and enclosure numbers are to those of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map TL 1298, revised in 1969.

### SITE I

Site I, excavated in May-June 1957, was situated on boulder clay in OS field 7447 (NGR TL 12679862) between the Rectory and a former green lane which extended eastwards from High Street. A resistivity survey had shown a roughly rectangular anomaly at the point where a published air photograph showed a rectangular white patch (Margary 1935, pl XIII). Despite this, the site proved to be archaeologically sterile except for a few worn potsherds in the topsoil. In fact, the existing surveys had each revealed a natural dome of heavy boulder clay projecting above the deeper soil of the surrounding area. For full description see M1.

### SITE II

Site II lay on the west side of Stocks Hill, immediately south of the churchyard gate (NGR TL 12519849; cf FIG 2). Here, again, there was a boulder clay subsoil.

It was at this point that Artis had exposed the southern part of his 'temple'. Shortly after his excavations were completed, a terrace of four cottages was built on the site, fronting on to Stocks Hill. These were burned down in October 1911 and during the 1914-18 war the area was used as a potato-plot. Thereafter it lay fallow and became much overgrown until, in 1957, it was decided to incorporate it in the churchyard as an additional burial area. A small brick-built mortuary had already been erected some years earlier on the western edge of the site and the boundary wall which had divided this plot from the churchyard had been demolished, leaving a raised bank on the churchyard side of the line. A new fence had also been erected a little to the south of this building, thus adding the southern strip of the original plot to the garden beyond. Our excavation was carried out in two periods, in June and August 1957. In 1958, the laying of sewer pipes gave opportunity to examine the walls underlying Stocks Hill.

After clearing the site of overgrowth, the baseline of the excavation-grid was laid down as a projection of the line of the north wall of the mortuary (FIG 3). This was of importance as it enabled the orientation of the Roman structure to be determined precisely.

The excavation of the area proved to be difficult. Under the recent accumulations was the soil layer of the 1914-18 potato plot. In turn, this rested in part on scattered and very variable spreads of burnt debris resulting from the destruction of the cottages in 1911 and apparently roughly levelled to permit the wartime cultivation. All this was spread over the eastern part of the occupation level of these dwellings, rooms, yards, and gardens. The walls and yards had been set on the Roman structure below, which had been cut away very variably to receive them; also, around most of the walling, Artis' trenches had gone down to the undisturbed clay which underlay all, thus effectively

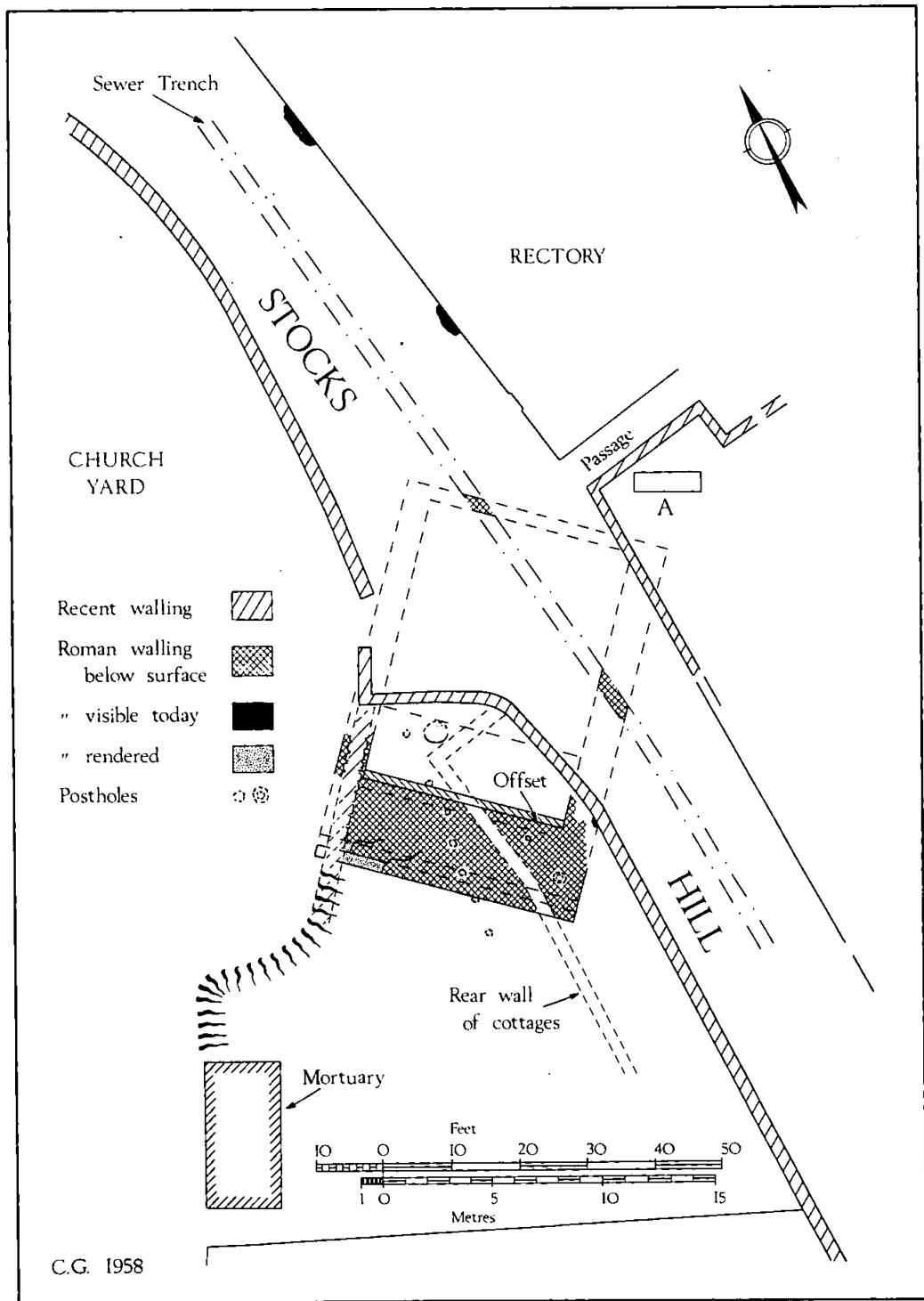


Fig 3 Castor, Site II

destroying most of the original stratification outside the foundations. Consequently, although Roman pottery was found, and accounts for over 100 of the 130 sherds which survive, most pieces were disturbed from their original deposits and had become mixed with later material. They cannot be used to date the building.

### *The Roman Temple*

The Roman building identified previously by Artis as a temple lay with its long axis almost exactly NE-SW, thus differing from that of the excavation-grid by 15°, so that the accompanying section-drawings are not at right-angles to the walls and exaggerate their various thicknesses. Almost the entire southern end of the structure was available for excavation beneath the vestiges of later cottages (FIG 3. For detailed plan see M3, with description of the post-Roman remains contained on M2).

The front platform was of pitched limestone slabs set in horizontal courses, the direction of the pitching alternating in successive courses to produce a vertical 'herringbone' pattern. This structure rested on a foundation of heavily mortared limestone boulders laid horizontally. Owing to the downward slope of the ground towards the south and east, the base of the foundation layer was lower on these sides where the layer was correspondingly thicker, so that the superstructure could be coursed horizontally. In addition, on the north, inner side of the front platform, the foundations projected beyond the line of the superstructure, giving an offset of some 15 in, or 0.38m (PL 1).

The side walls had a similar structure and on both sides were bonded into the platform, but in them the foundations were flush with the wall-faces above. A tiny fragment of the

east wall still remained visible, incorporated above the modern surface in the boundary wall to Stocks Hill. Owing to the proximity of graves, it was possible to expose only a small part of the outer face of the west wall (FIG 5, section Y-Z), but nevertheless sufficient to determine the overall width of the temple.

In order to bring the cottage floors close to the level of the Stocks Hill roadway, the builder had cut away much of the pitched stonework. On the east side, below the cottage floor, it had been completely removed and, in places, some of the underlying foundation structure had also gone. Immediately outside the cottage wall there was a single course of pitched stone still *in situ*, on which lay the gravel spread of a pathway. A line of postholes cut into the stonework doubtless carried the uprights of a fence which divided this pathway from the western part, where two courses of pitched stone remained. Only on the extreme western edge of the area, where the former boundary wall of the churchyard had protected the underlying structure, did it approach completeness. Even here it appeared that a single course might have been removed, as the surface was somewhat irregular and the riser of the third step was only half as high as those of the two lower ones (PL 2; FIG 4, section A-D). In front of the lowest step, the churchyard wall had been set on a deep layer of limestone rubble set in mortar. Here the risers were seen to be still rendered with stiff mortar and the treads had been similarly finished, though on them the mortar was reinforced with some fine brick fragments and fine gravel. On the lowest riser this rendering was taken down to Roman ground level, where there was a discoloured, though otherwise undisturbed, heavy clay over which a thin seam of mixed clay had accumulated near the step. Exposures a little further to the

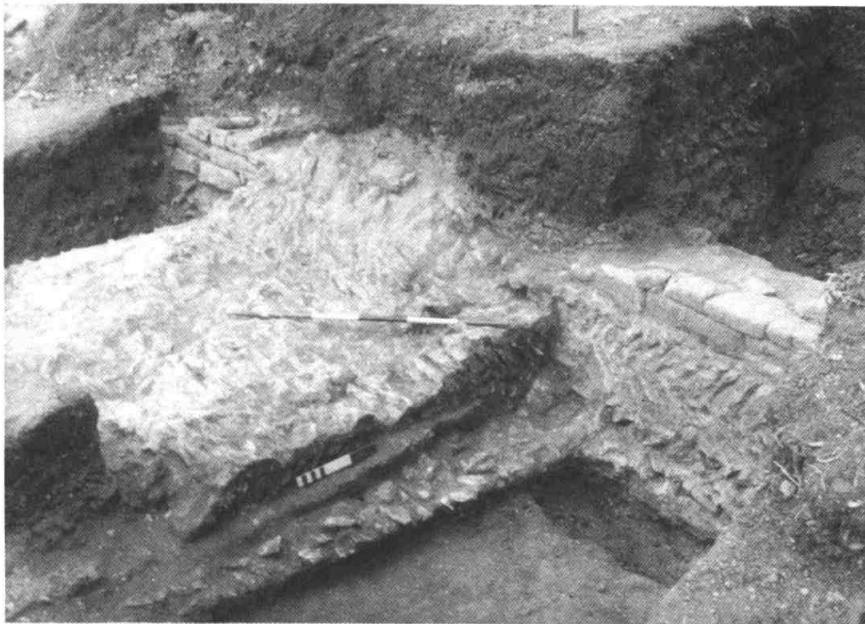


Plate 1 Castor, Site II: 'temple', junction of the front platform and west wall

south showed occasional traces of a gravel layer on this original clay, suggesting that the area had at one time been so covered. There was not, however, sufficient of this gravel remaining to be certain. Pottery finds from the old surface comprised several local colour-coated and grey ware sherds, with one rim of a 4th-century AD colour-coated flanged bowl.

To the north of the front platform, inside the walls, postholes and a pit dug from the 19th-century level were encountered and the eastern area, both below and outside the cottage area, was much disturbed. However, close to the west wall there remained the original Roman filling. Here, laid over the natural clay, was some 7 in (0.18m) of stiff clay, the surface of which still bore patches of a carefully-

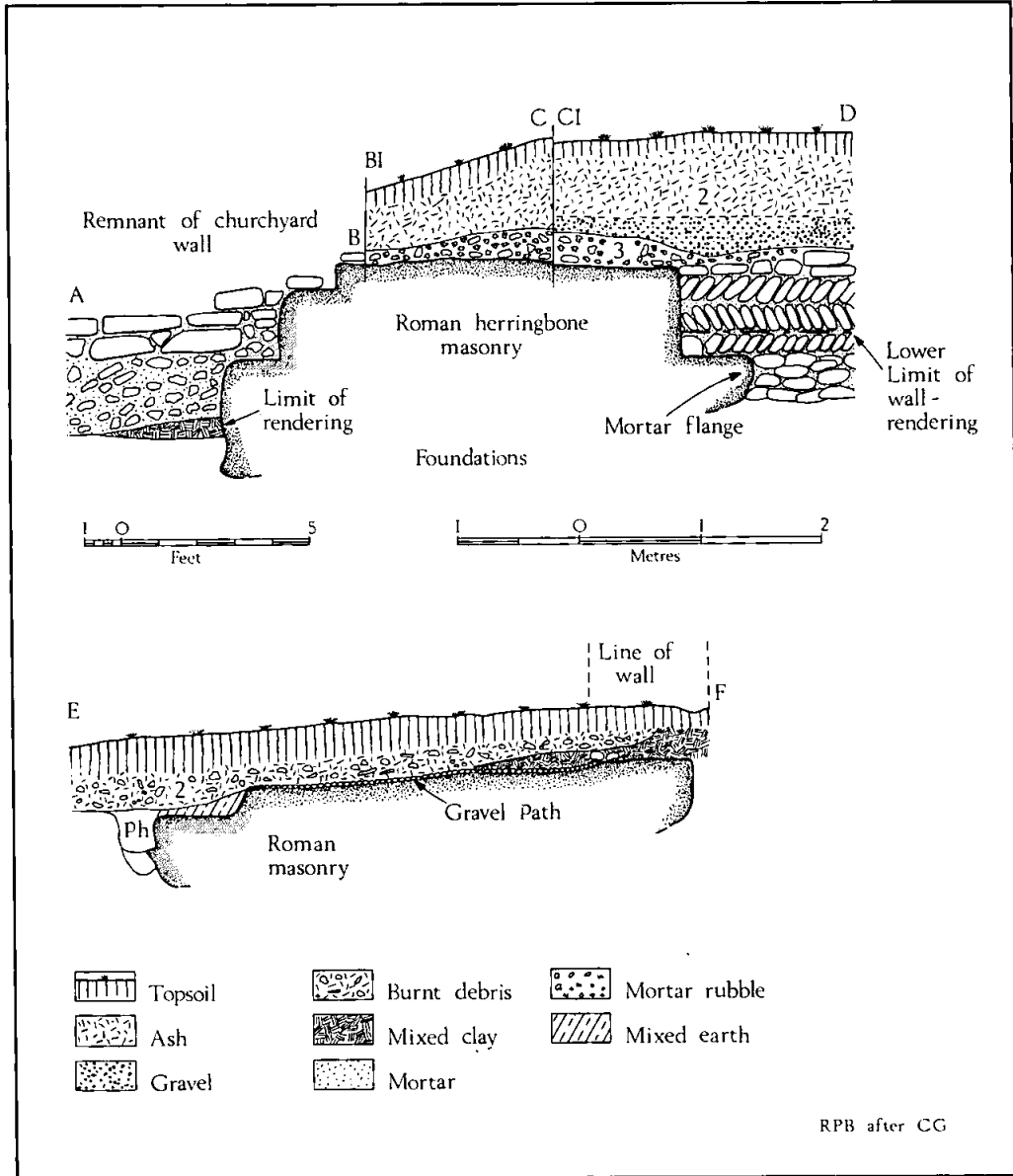


Fig 4 Castor, Site II: north-south sections



spread mortar coating (FIG 5, section Y-Z, Layer 8). This layer of clay and mortar also extended to cover the foundation offset of the front platform and obscured the whole of the lowest course of pitched stone. Close to the platform the mortar coating was still about an inch thick, though farther north it had been reduced to a mere skimming, probably by the attrition of use. In a small part of the area, all traces of the mortar had disappeared and its place was taken by a roughly triangular patch of fine gravel which, however, showed no evidence of having been mortar-bound. No pottery was found in the make-up of the floor.

Above the level of this mortar coating, which showed clearly on both the side wall and the inner face of the front platform, the vertical wall-faces bore remains of mortar rendering. Sundry fragments of maroon-painted plaster had been found in the upper mixed layers of the later occupation, but none remained *in situ* on the Roman wall-faces.

Attempts were also made to record the northern part of the building. During the excavation, opportunity was taken, by permission of the owner, Mr Longfoot, to dig a test trench in the 'Rectory Field' on the east side of Stocks Hill. This was dug in the north-west corner of the field

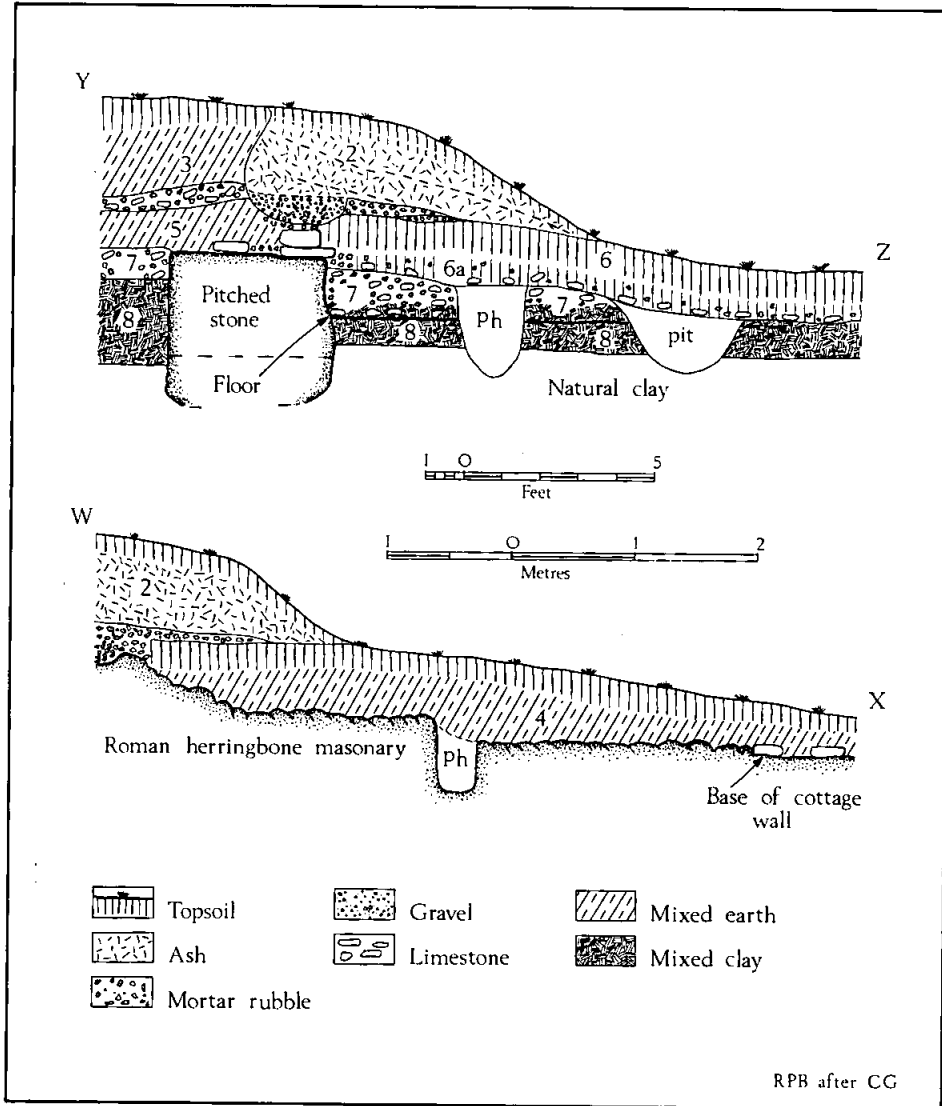


Fig 5 Castor, Site II: east-west sections



Plate 2 Castor, Site II: 'temple', steps

(FIG 3, A), on the line of the temple's east wall which Artis had shown as continuing to join the building underlying the Rectory garden. This corner, which had formerly been the site of a gateway, showed only churned-up dark earth down to the natural clay subsoil. No trace of walling was seen, nor were any loose objects of Roman date found.

In 1958 opportunity offered for a further examination of this part of the building. A narrow trench to receive a sewer pipe was excavated along Stocks Hill by a mechanical digger. This cut through the east wall, which was seen to correspond with that part exposed to the south. The exposure of the rear wall, however, was less satisfactory. Though this was certainly present, as we recorded (FIG 3), it was so badly broken by the digger that its thickness was extremely difficult to ascertain and appeared to be no more than 2 ft (0.61m) though Artis had shown it as some 4 ft (1.22m). North of this point, where Artis had shown the west wall continuing to join the still-visible wall stub in the Rectory garden wall, no trace of it appeared. Here, as in other parts of the trench, there was only an odd fallen stone fragment. Furthermore, no traces of any flooring were seen in any part of this trench.

#### Discussion

Though Haverfield (1902, 172) expressed the view that Artis 'very rashly called [this] a temple', there can be little doubt that its original excavator was correct, and that the building, as Lewis (1966, 61) has said, was 'a temple of classical type'. Since Artis' day, however, the front platform and steps of the *podium* have suffered serious mutilation, so that it is not possible to produce any evidence of Lewis' suggested 'row of prostyle columns', though these may

indeed have once been present. Artis, however, was not altogether correct in the detail of his plans and section, and at two points he appears to have been more seriously at fault.

The overall dimensions of the structure were 39 ft (11.89m) wide and, apparently, 57 ft (17.37m) long. One slight asymmetry may be noted. The west wall was 4 ft (1.22m) thick, but the east wall was at least 4 ft 9 in (1.45m). Artis also showed the rear wall as 4 ft (1.22m) thick, but in the narrow exposure in the sewer trench it appeared to be some 2 ft (0.61m) thick only, and is so shown in our plan (FIG 3). It had, however, been very badly broken by the mechanical digger, so that its true thickness was very uncertain. As this would seem to be an unlikely dimension in this building, Artis' 4 ft (1.22m) wall is probably correct. If so, the overall length of the building may be as much as 59 ft (17.98m).

However, north of this point, Artis' record is wrong. Our test trench on the east side of Stocks Hill gave no evidence for the continuation of the east wall to join a building under the Rectory garden and, as this was confirmed by the absence of a similar wall on the west side, where the line was crossed by the sewer trench, there can be little doubt that the temple stood detached from other buildings (*contra* Mackreth 1984).

Further confirmation may be found in the true orientation of the buildings. On the key plan published by Artis (1828, pl XIII, Plan 1) the north point is wrongly placed. If this is corrected, it shows his temple's long axis as lying N 49°E S 49°W, whereas our plan shows its true orientation as N 40°E S 40°W. (It should also be noted that Lewis (1966, fig 58) wrongly orientates the temple: the front faces to the south, not the east). Dr J P Wild has prepared

an enlarged plan of the village centre, showing all the Roman buildings recorded by Artis. He has, however, used our corrected orientation for the temple (cf Wild 1974, fig 4). This makes quite clear that the temple cannot be a continuation of the south-east wing of the building under the Rectory garden. Again, it should be remembered that Artis in his key plan marked the room which linked the temple to the main block as having a mosaic floor. It is of course possible that this floor may have been removed in the past, though there is no evidence and no traces of walls were observed either in our test trench or in the sewer trench. Not even a single loose tessera was found in either.

Artis appears also to be at fault in his section drawing of the temple *cella*. He shows the front platform as continuing beyond the front wall of the *cella* at a slightly lower level to form its floor for about a quarter of its length. The remainder he makes the same level as that of the tread of the first front step. But, as our section shows (FIG 4, section A-D), the true level of the front part of the *cella* is only some 6 in (0.15m) higher than the tread of the first step, so that in reality the difference between the two inner floor levels should be 6 in (0.15m) and not 2 ft (0.61m) or more, as he makes it.

Unfortunately, the line of the level-change at the west end, where it would have been best preserved, lay under the boundary wall (cf FIG 3) and in the immediately adjoining area, where it might have survived, the overburden was so great and the wall-condition so poor that, with the limited time available, it was not possible to expose it. Farther east, where it might more easily have been done, the disturbance close to and below the north end of the cottage buildings had destroyed the underlying floor.

The mortar rendering on both risers and treads of the front steps and the traces of similar rendering on the inner wall-faces, together with the mortar spread over the clay floor, point to the whole structure having been so finished. The triangular patch of gravel close to the west wall (cf plan, M3) appears to have been either a repair or stiffening to the floor base, as no other trace of such a finish was seen elsewhere. It is perhaps possible that, laid on this mortared base, there may have been a more ornate floor, but of this there was no true evidence. The side walls showed no line of such a floor surface and, indeed, the only hint of it came from a single brick tessera found in the garden soil of Layer 2: evidence quite insufficient to justify any further suggestion.

The fragments of maroon-painted plaster found in the upper layers of the filling most probably came from these rendered wall surfaces, but in the absence of a single fragment seen *in situ* it would be injudicious to accept this as certain. The many roofing tile fragments found in the upper layers indicate with fair certainty that the temple was roofed with *tegulae* and *imbrices*.

Artis also showed an altar-base in the *cella*, but as this must have underlain Stocks Hill and was not on the line of the sewer trench, no further evidence of its presence was found. It is indeed clear from his plans that Artis extended his excavations into the minor roads around the churchyard, which at that time would be unpaved. His professional position on the Milton Estate doubtless made this possible, but it is extremely unlikely that he uncovered the whole of a building which he shows as completely

crossing a thoroughfare. More probably it was investigated by a few test-trenches, with the details between completed by inference. As, however, he provided no indication of this in the published plans, it would be unwise to accept uncritically his delineations of these more doubtful areas, particularly where more satisfactory survey and recording methods have shown them to be, in part at least, incorrect.

One other point may be noted. Margary (1935, 116, pl XIII) shows his 'Road V' as leaving the complex in Normangate Field to run north-east before leaving this direct line for a somewhat uncertain meander. In his later general survey (Margary 1967, 230, fig 8) he does not discuss this in detail but makes reference only to 'other short connecting links' between the major roads, which 'could also be distinguished upon the air photographs of that district'. In an inset text-map of the 3rd edition of the Ordnance Survey *Map of Roman Britain* (1956, fig 3), the same road is shown to run on a revised line, though this is mainly inferred, leading direct to the Castor 'villa'. An air photograph taken by Professor J K St Joseph shows this true line from Normangate Field very clearly (JG 30; also RCHM 1969, pl 3 and fig 10). When plotted on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan of the village, the line is seen to cross Peterborough Road some 200 ft (60.96m) west of the junction with Stocks Hill. It then runs directly along the west wall of the buildings immediately to the west of the 'Royal Oak', underlies the 'Infant School', and ends at the very centre of the temple front (FIG 2), suggesting that this was a focal point.

### SITE III

Site III (NGR TL 12449847) was also a recent addition to the churchyard and a few burials had already been inserted near the east, north, and west sides. The plot lay at the foot of Church Hill, immediately north-west of the 'Infant School', to which it had formerly belonged (FIG 2). Before the school was built, the area had, at least in the 19th century, been the Rector's vegetable garden, presumably in the days when he lived in the 'Old Rectory'. A new straight wall had been built on its south-west side, beyond which a nursery garden (today a playing field) extended to the Peterborough Road. This almost level strip was apparently the extreme edge of the floodplain area, beyond which the churchyard rose steeply. The subsoil comprised layers of fine gravel and loam. This area was excavated between April and June 1958.

Superficially, it appeared to be a simple site. The surface was of well-cut turf, approximately level at c 39 ft (11.89m) above OD, but when opened the area revealed a complicated series of pits, ditches, and buildings of Roman, Saxon, and Medieval date (FIG 6). The details of the excavation are contained on M4-11 and can be summarised as follows.

#### Romano-British occupation by J P Wild

In the time and with the resources available it was not possible to establish the full extent and character of the Roman features on Site III, but evidence was found for two successive periods of Roman occupation. Both of them appear to ante-date the construction of the great Roman house or *praetorium* in Castor village.

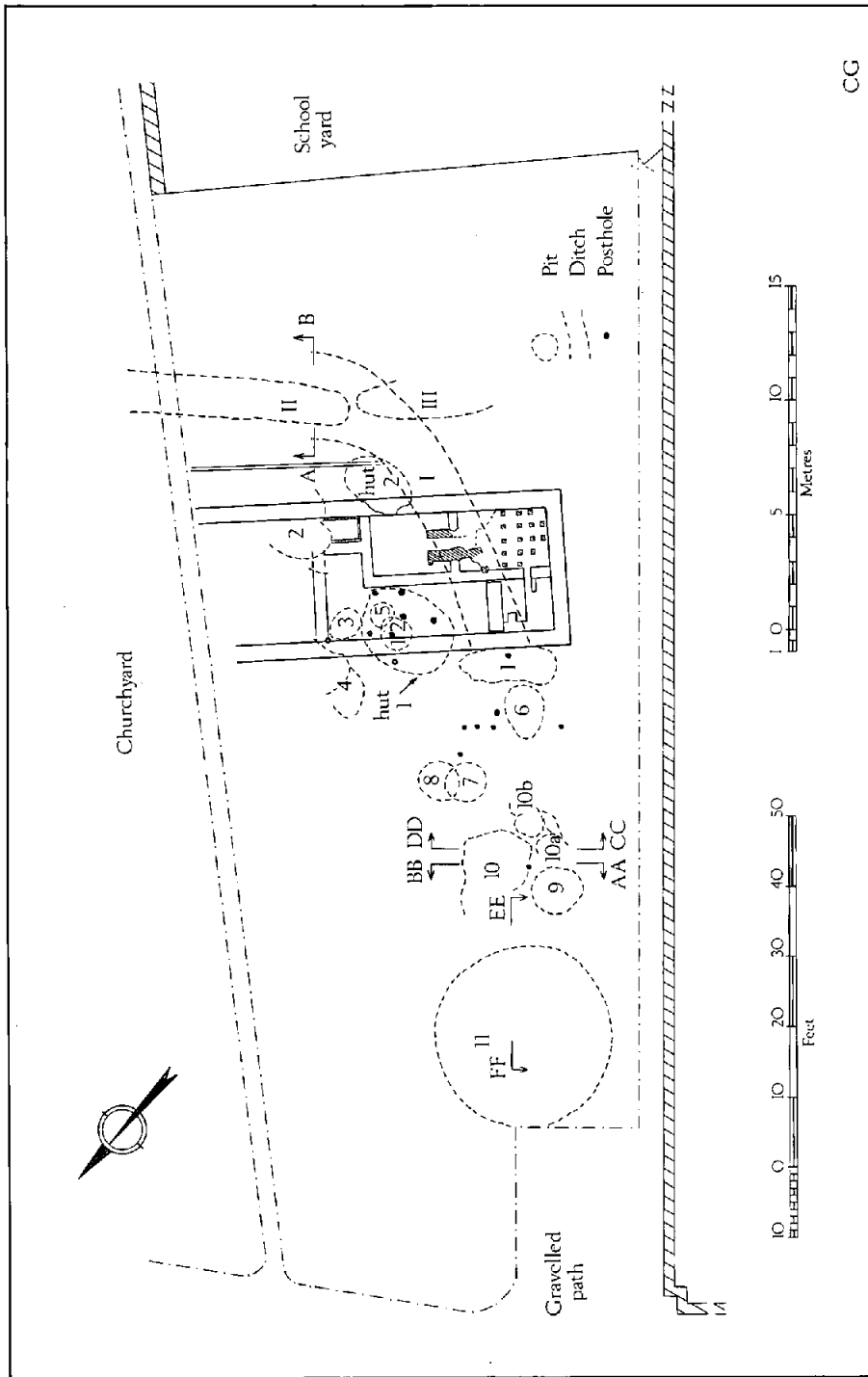


Fig 6 Castor, Site III, general plan



*Plate 3* Castor, Site III: rooms 2 and 3 and cement-lined tank



*Plate 4* Castor, Site III: room 1 from the north-west showing hypocaust and stokehole

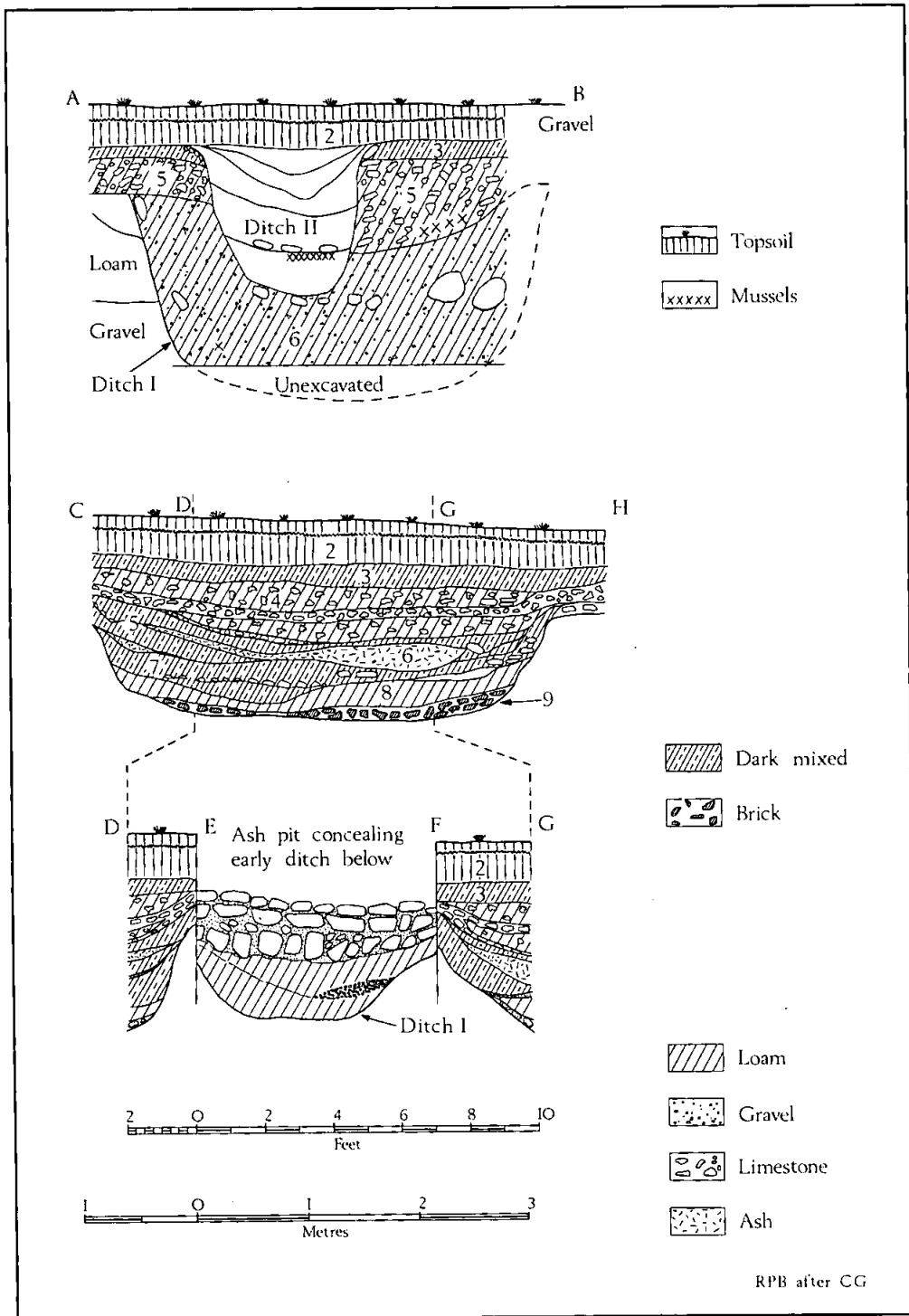


Fig 7 Castor, Site III: sections outside Roman building

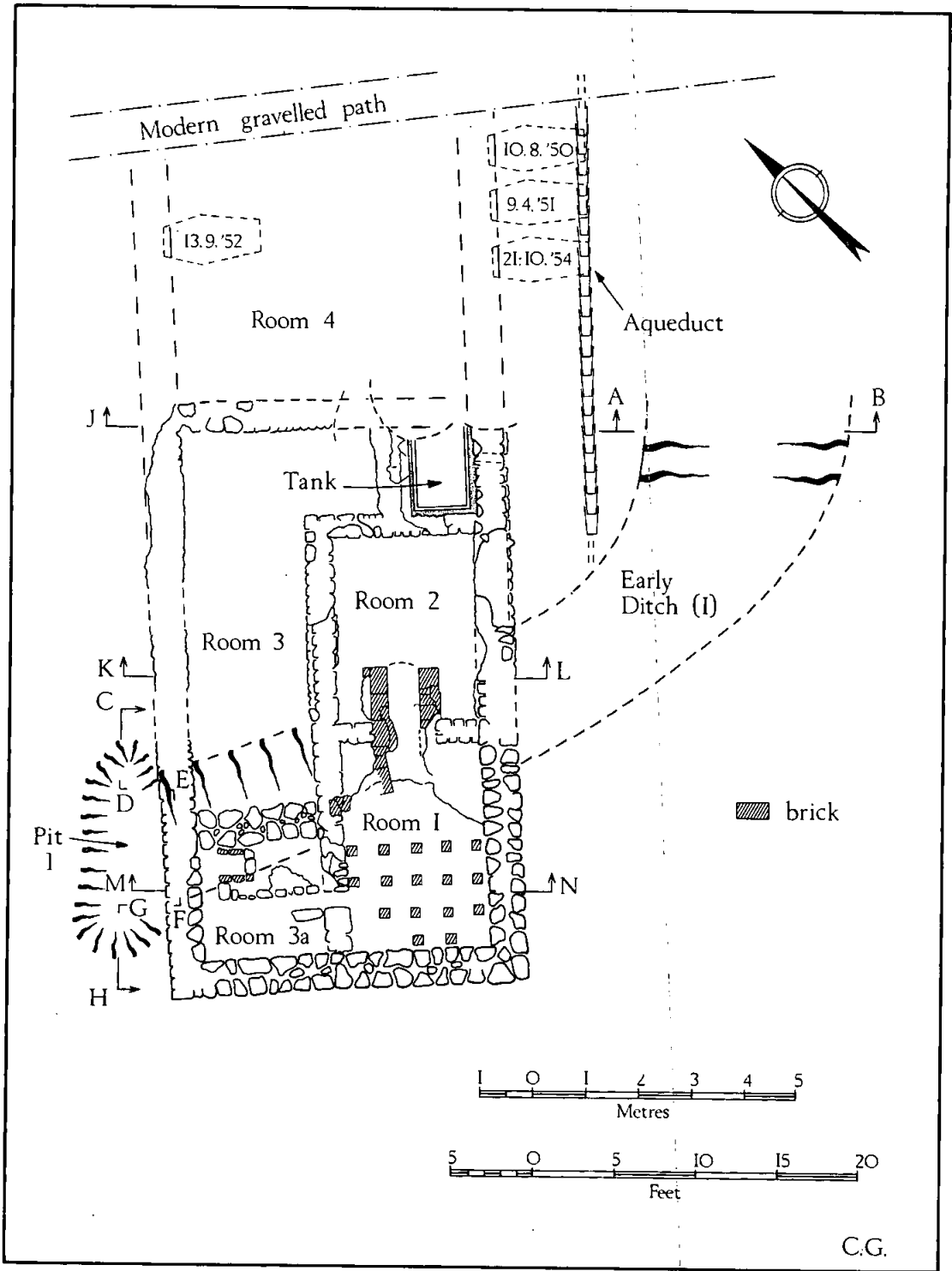


Fig 8 Castor, Site III: Roman building and associated features

### Period I

The earliest feature on the site was a single deep ditch, Ditch I (plan, FIGS 6, 8; sections, FIG 7), running from west to east across the excavated area. In the west it terminated in a butt-end, still visible despite the subsequent digging of Pit I in that immediate area. From there its line was traced eastwards beneath the Roman building of Period II to a point where it was seen to be widening and bearing north-east. At its western end the ditch was about 4 ft (1.22m) deep (FIG 7, section E-F), but where it was sectioned east of the building (FIG 7, section A-B) it was already 8 ft (2.44m) deep. Its steep sides and uniform filling indicate that it cannot have been open long when the decision was made to backfill it. Its original purpose is obscure: if it were meant to divert stormwater, it should have led south, not north.

The ditch produced little pottery, and while four rims in its filling are Roman (FIG 10, 5-8), they are not more closely datable. This is unfortunate since it is the only feature which certainly pre-dates the building.

### Period II

The backfilling of Ditch I was probably a necessary preliminary to the construction of the Roman building which was the principal feature of Period II (FIG 8). The plan of the southern part of the building appears to be complete. While the existence of modern graves made it impracticable to locate its northern limit, the topography of the site suggests that the building could not have been much longer than its known length of 52 ft (15.85m). However, it is just conceivable that another wing once ran westwards at right-angles to the northern end of the excavated building, along the base of the hill.

The outer walling of the building was of coursed limestone slabs, superior in material and technique to most later Roman building in the Nene Valley (Wild 1974, 157ff). The excavators found no sign of an entrance, but post-Roman interference with the east wall of Room 2 (cf FIG 6) could have removed all trace, if there had been a door there.

The interior was subdivided into three, later four, relatively small rooms. The partition wall bounding Rooms 1 and 2 was of similar character to the outer walls and was probably contemporary with them: a butt-joint at the south-west corner of Room 1 merely indicates the logical order of the construction of the building. A cement-lined tank in the north-east corner of Room 3 also appears to have been an integral part of the building from the beginning since a line of fine herringbone masonry in the partition wall north of Room 2 was designed to support its weight (PL 3). However, Room 3a appears to be a later insertion as its north wall has two butt-joints and is of irregular masonry and build. It once contained a T-shaped channelled hypocaust of which only the northern part survived. Heat was supplied through a narrow passage in the west wall of Room 1 which connected with a further hypocaust represented by rows of brick *pilae* built mainly on a coarse concrete floor (PL 4). Whilst this appears to have been heated from the north by a stokehole in Room 2, there is no evidence to settle the question whether these arrangements were original features of the building. If they were, it seems unusual, and risky, to have stoked the

furnace from *within* the roofed building. The area of suspended floor in Room 1 was reduced to 8 ft 6 in (2.59m) × 9 ft (2.74m) by solid masonry platforms on either side of the flue at the north end of the room. The length of the flue and flue-cheeks in Room 2 was about 7 ft 6 in (2.29m), and must have created a more than adequate draught to distribute the hot gases beneath the floor of Room 1.

Whilst Rooms 1 and 3a may simply be heated rooms in domestic quarters, the layout of the whole building is reminiscent of a bath-suite. Room 1 could be the *caldarium*, Room 3a the *tepidarium*, and Room 3 with its water-tank the *frigidarium*. Fragments of box-tile in the demolition layer and of tessellated pavement in Pit I (see below) add little to the argument.

No stratified pottery can now be related to the period of use of this building. There is 4th-century pottery in the medieval layers over the building, but none apparently from the demolition layer.

In the later 3rd or early 4th century a new and palatial Roman house, the so-called *praetorium*, was laid out on the south-facing slope of Church Hill (Wild 1974, 152, fig 4). Site III lay in the centre of its courtyard. In architectural scale and execution the new house was quite different from the structure on Site III, and one may presume that the latter was demolished before the *praetorium* was built.

### Unassignable features

The western end of Ditch I had been partly removed by the excavation of Pit I (FIGS 6 and 8). Unfortunately, the pit cannot be related stratigraphically to the Period II building for it seems to have been outside the line of the west wall. This is galling, since the pit contained an interesting group of coarse pottery among the ash and other rubbish which filled it (FIGS 10, 9-22; 11, 23-42). The date at which the material was assembled seems to lie within the second quarter of the 2nd century, to judge by the samian ware (FIG 9) and by the lack of Nene Valley colour-coated wares. The absence of grey ware vessels of the Old Sulehay horizon of c AD 140-50 (Hadman and Upex 1975) is suggestive also.

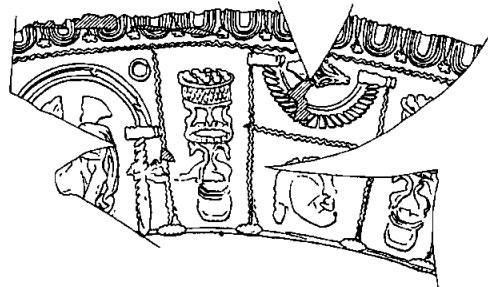
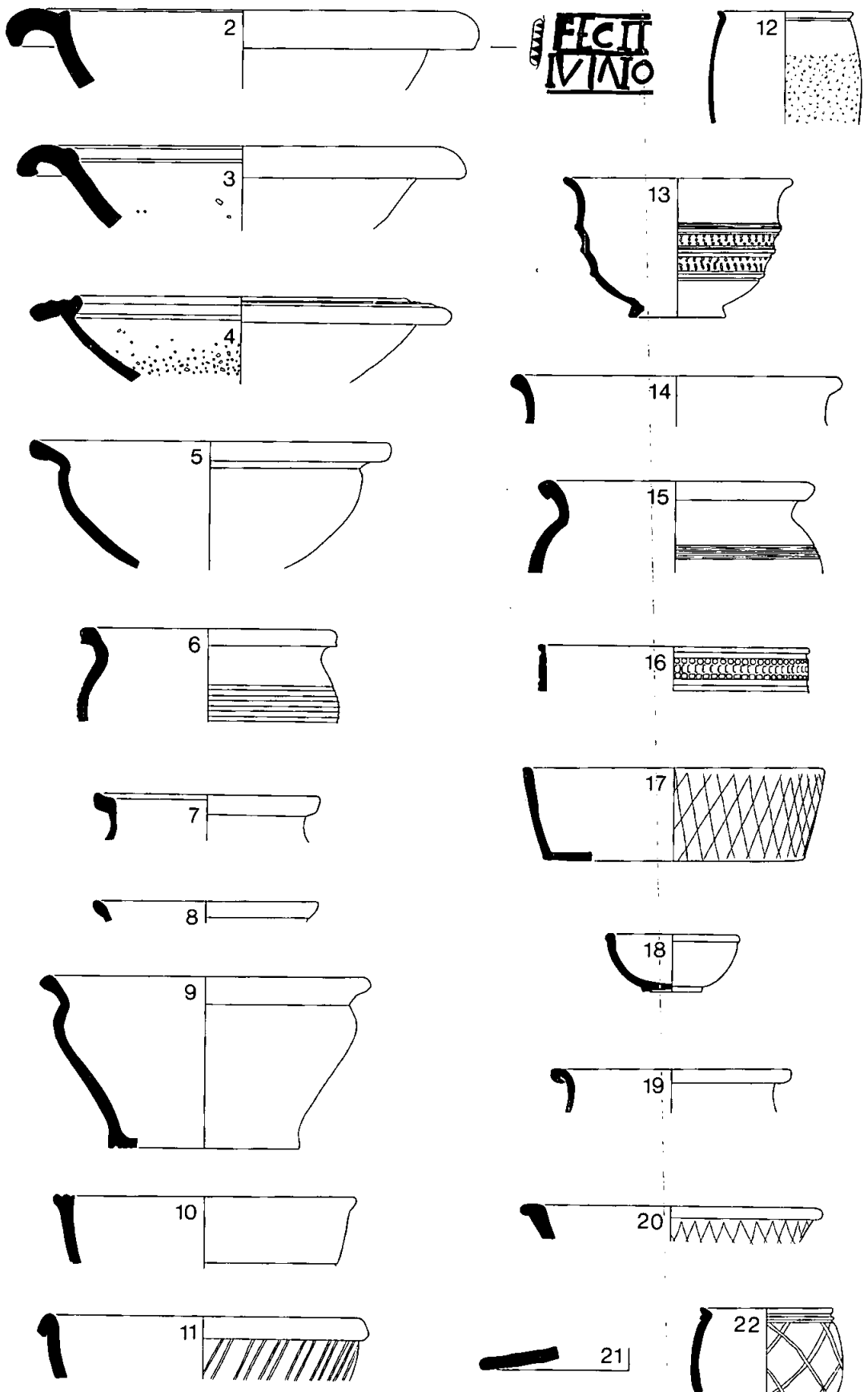
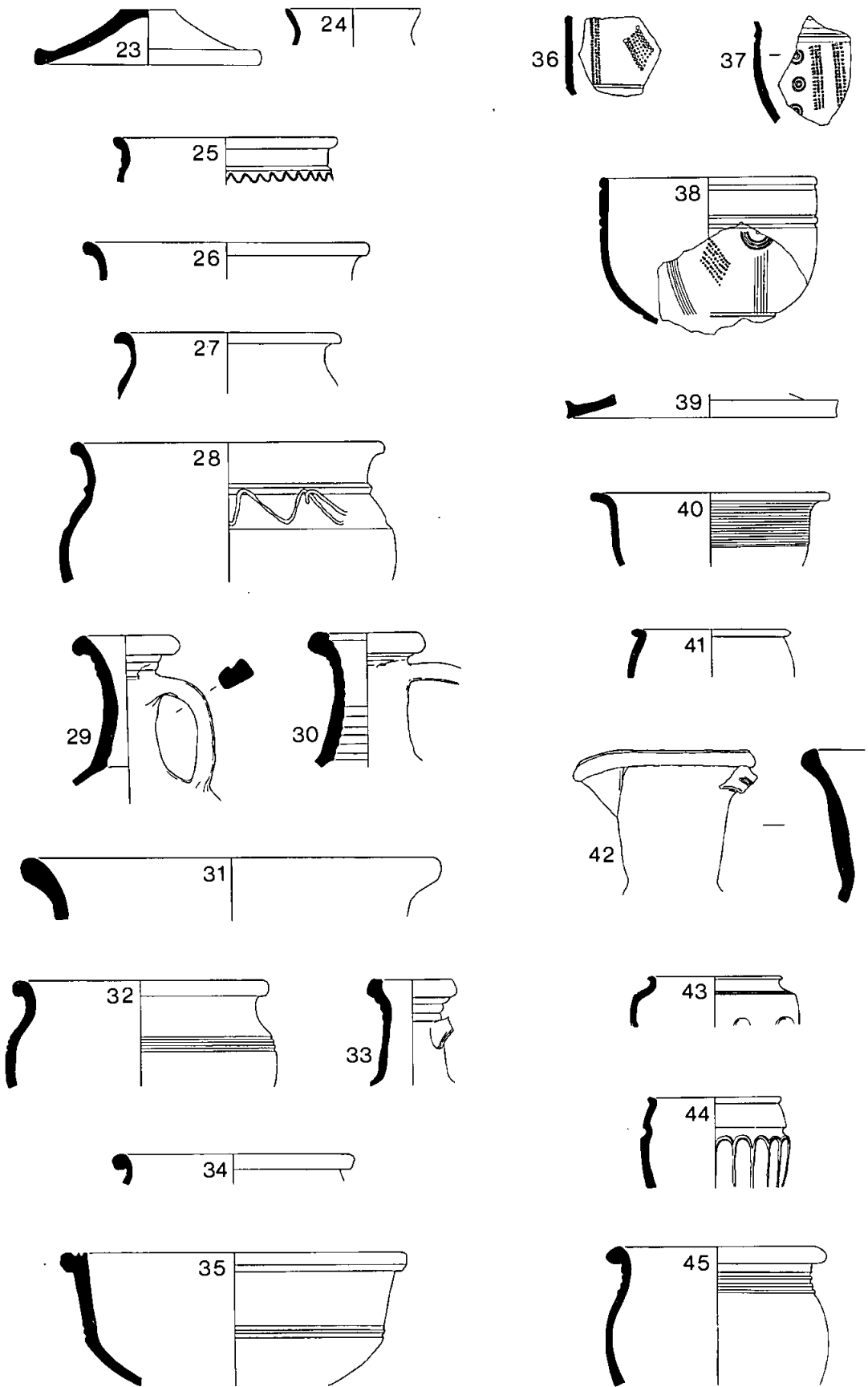


Fig 9 Castor, Site III: decorated samian, scale 1:2.  
For description see M49, no 1





Northamptonshire Archaeology 1986-87, 21  
 Fig 10 Castor, Site III: Roman pottery, scale 1:4: Nos 2-8 from Ditch I; remainder from Pit 1. For description see M50 and M52-3



At present we know very little about the late Flavian and Trajanic pottery of the Nene Valley; but it would probably be safe to say that this accumulated collection of apparently residual pottery reflects considerable activity of an ill-defined nature on and around Site III in the early years of the 2nd century.

Neither the pit nor the material found in it can be assigned with any confidence to our Period II or to an intermediate period between Periods I and II: the dating of the pottery may indicate that this pit, while being later than

Period I, is actually earlier than the building. The relationship of the pit to the building is not adequately presented in any drawn evidence (cf FIG 7, section D-E-F-G) and, therefore, despite the excavator's claim (M6), it is felt that the associations of the pit are ambivalent. A fragment of concrete underlay for tessellated pavement, recorded on the bottom of the pit, could be from the Period II building or an undiscovered contemporary structure.

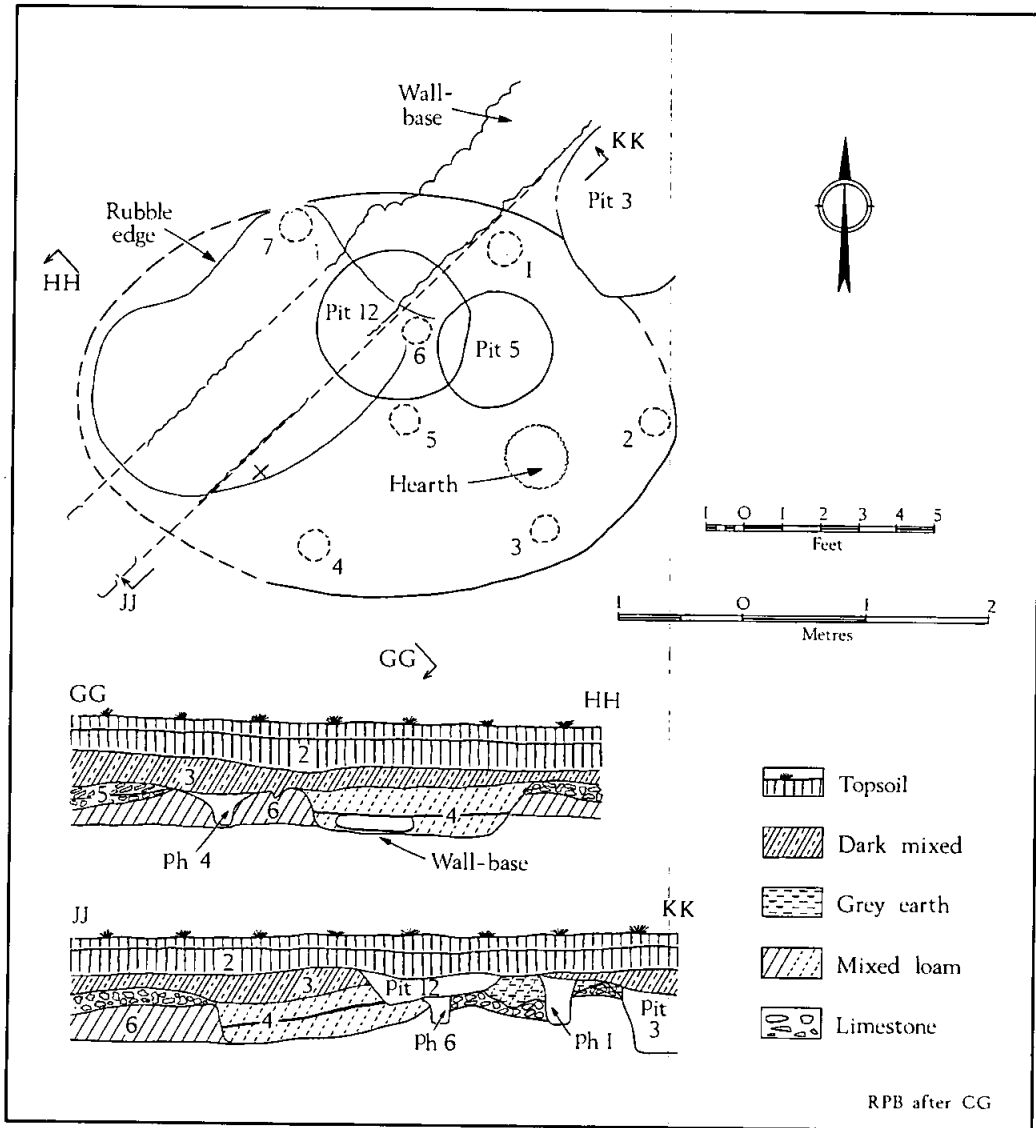


Fig 12 Castor, Site III: Saxon hut I

A separate feature, comprising a line of *imbrices* and therefore presumably also of Roman date, ran parallel to the east side of the Period II building at a distance of c 5 ft (1.52m) away from it (FIG 8, 'Aqueduct'. Cf M6). It is likely that the tiles, which had been laid out so that each overlapped the next, formed a small water-conduit, but the feature remains undated apart from the fact that its southern end lay below an Anglo-Saxon hut (cf FIGS 6 and 13).

Church Hill is an extremely attractive spot for a residence, and it seems probable that the building on Site III constitutes the first evidence for a comparatively modest predecessor to the *praetorium*. The pottery from Pit 4 suggests that domestic occupation of the site had begun perhaps as early as AD 100, but at the moment we can hardly guess its character.

#### Saxon activity

##### Huts

Hut 1 (FIGS 6 and 12) straddled the west wall of the Roman building as an oval area some 15 ft 6 in (4.72m) × 10 ft 6 in (3.2m). It had been constructed from the surface of the building rubble which immediately overlay the Roman level. Except near the edges, most of this rubble had been cleared to expose the loam of the Roman floor and the segment of wall inside its line had been removed except for some remnants of the foundation layer. The area was distinguishable by a slight darkening of the floor, apparently a film of carbonised wood or other vegetable matter. The outer edge coincided approximately with the 'crest-line' of the adjacent rubble which, indeed, appeared to have been heaped up along the line. Only at the west end was this somewhat obscured by later activity. Seven postholes were identified, five of them just inside the perimeter of the eastern part and two close to the centre. Comparable holes, however, could not be found in the western part. The extreme eastern end of the floor had been slightly overlapped and cut away by Pit 3 and two later pits (5 and 12) had been dug into the area from a higher level.

In the western part a definite area of the floor had been sunk from the central posts almost to the west end. The floor of this excavated area sloped gently down from the normal level of the floor to a depth of about 1 ft (0.30m). In the eastern half was a circular hearth, a calcined black patch with some carbonised wood, the whole resting on thin limestone slabs of roofing slate type which lay scattered in the immediate area. No traces of wattled daub were seen.

Scattered Roman potsherds were found at various levels: one of Saxo-Norman type and a few of Anglo-Saxon handmade pottery were in the layer over the upper floor. More Saxon potsherds occurred in the lowest disturbed loam, or trodden floor, of the sunk area where there was also found a 4th-century radiate coin of Licinius I, which had been pierced for suspension as a pendant (M13, coin 1).

Of the total of 22 Saxon sherds from Hut 1, one is of a grass-tempered fabric, with the remainder comprising local gritty wares which include sherds with calcareous inclusions. The vessel-forms are principally those of jars, bowls and cooking pots (cf FIGS 14, 86-8; 15, 89). The occurrence of a possible 5th-century sherd, with faceted angle and in a

dark brown sandy fabric, suggests the existence of early Saxon occupation on the site or nearby, but its presence here is presumably residual since the group as a whole is likely, on both form and fabric grounds, to be later. The absence of diagnostic Middle Saxon material suggests that a 7th-century date may be appropriate.

Hut 2 (FIG 13a) was recognised as a probable hut-base, as it was seen as a roughly oval area, some 9 ft 6 in (2.9m) × 5 ft 6 in (1.68m) which, like Hut 1, was differentiated by a thin coating of black carbonised matter on the Roman loam surface outside the east wall of Room 2 of the earlier building. The west end of the oval area, indeed, rested on the wall and here the wall stones had been thrust over into the room, leaving the top of the foundations at floor level. There was, however, no stone packing as was seen around Hut 1. No true postholes could be recognised but, round the east end, there were five slight depressions of some 6 in (0.15m) diameter which may have been made by the bases of posts resting on the surface. Towards this end there were two distinct hearths. These were slight hollows in the underlying loam filled with black ash which contained a few sticks of carbonised brushwood. From the edge of one hearth came a few sherds of handmade pottery of Anglo-Saxon type which are now unfortunately lost.

Hut 2, if indeed it was a hut, can hardly have been a very permanent structure. Its comparatively small size, and the possibility that its posts rested on the surface, suggest a conical hut of the type used most recently by charcoal-burners and described by many writers. Innocent (1916, 8-12, figs 1 and 2) quotes Yorkshire examples and mentions their persistence in the forests of various parts of north-west Europe. An Anglo-Saxon example was excavated by G C Dunning and Mrs H E O'Neil at Bourton-on-the-Water (Dunning 1932, 284ff, pl LVI), though this was a more permanent structure. Huts of the foresters' type were commonly roofed with sods and the film of carbonised matter which covered the whole area of Hut 2 could have been the residue of a collapsed sod-covering.

By contrast, Hut 1 appears to have been more solidly constructed, although it too presents some difficult problems. Though the posts in the eastern half were quite substantial, no scrap of wattled daub or other walling was found. Furthermore, the apparent absence of postholes at the west end makes a suggested reconstruction difficult, though it is possible that these had been disturbed by the later activity. The hollowed floor area in the west half perhaps hardly justifies calling this a true *Grubenhaus*, though some of the Sutton Courtenay huts had rather similar partly-hollowed floors (Leeds 1922-3, 154ff; 1926-7, 62ff; 1947).

##### Pits

Anglo-Saxon pottery was the latest material in Pits 2, 6 and 7 (and also probably Pit 4a, although these finds are lost). However, the occurrence of Middle Saxon wares in each of them (see M59) could indicate that they were not as closely connected with the huts as their proximity might otherwise suggest (FIG 6). All of the pits were comparatively small, roughly oval in plan, and were clearly not used as rubbish or food-storage pits. Their individual layering suggests that their infilling was a gradual process and it may be

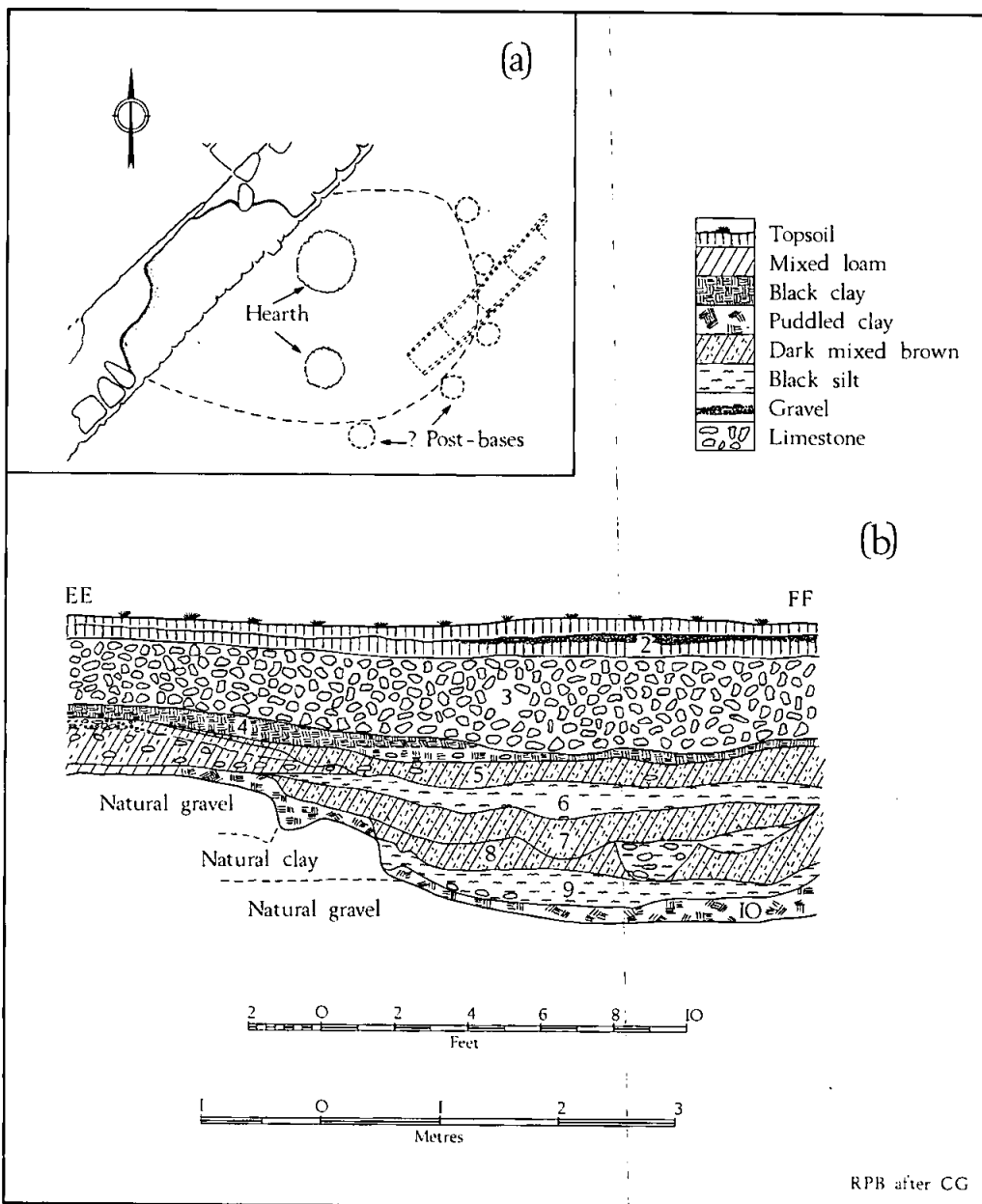


Fig 13 Castor, Site III: Saxon hut 2 (a) and section across part of later pond (b)

conjectured that they were latrine-pits. For further description and illustration see M7 and M9-10.

*Pottery and dating by Carolyn Dallas*

Approximately 25% of the Anglo-Saxon pottery was stratified in contemporary features (see above; cf M58-9), with the remainder occurring as residual material in later layers, principally in the vicinity of Hut 1 and above the Roman building. The assemblage comprises mostly bowls

and cooking pots with some jars (FIGS 14 and 15). Although overall quite varied, it can be divided into the following fabric groups, which are further considered in M59-60.

*i Ipswich-type ware* Of 20 sherds of this hard, grey, wheel-made pottery, only two were stratified, and those in Pits 2 and 6, so that none of the material is from the huts. Five body sherds and a possible pitcher fragment (no 73) can be described as a fine sandy ware but otherwise the pottery occurs in pimply fabrics with varying temperings (cf

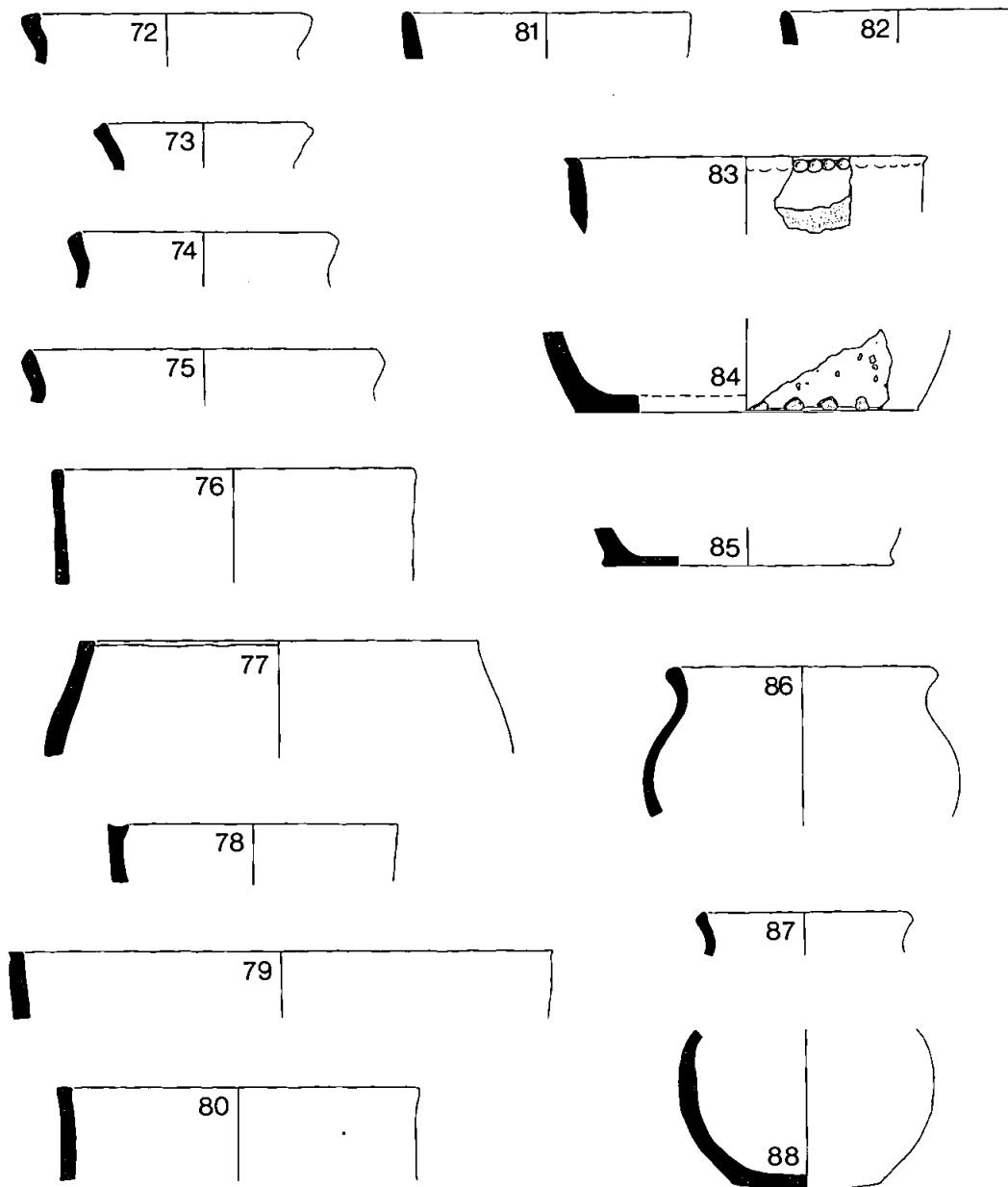


Fig 14 Castor, Site III: Anglo-Saxon pottery, scale 1:4. For catalogue see M61-2

below, p 138). The rims are mainly from cooking pots (nos 72, 74, and 75).

ii *Maxey Group III-type wares* Handmade shelly wares directly comparable to Group III wares from Maxey (Addyman 1964, 48: fabric G). Apart from two pieces in Pit 6 (cf FIG 14, 76), all examples occurred in later deposits (nos 77-85).

iii *Grass-tempered wares* Eight bodysherds in a reduced

black fabric contain chaff-tempering in addition to varying amounts of sand and grit. Apart from one abraded sherd from Elmlea (p 142) and a few sherds from Tout Hill Close, Peterborough (D F Mackreth, pers comm), the fabric is lacking from other sites in the area.

iv *Gritty fabrics* These can be divided into two basic types:  
 1 those with sand and grit temper, often including quartz or quartzite, which are comparable to Maxey Group I, fabrics B and F (Addyman 1964, 47). They

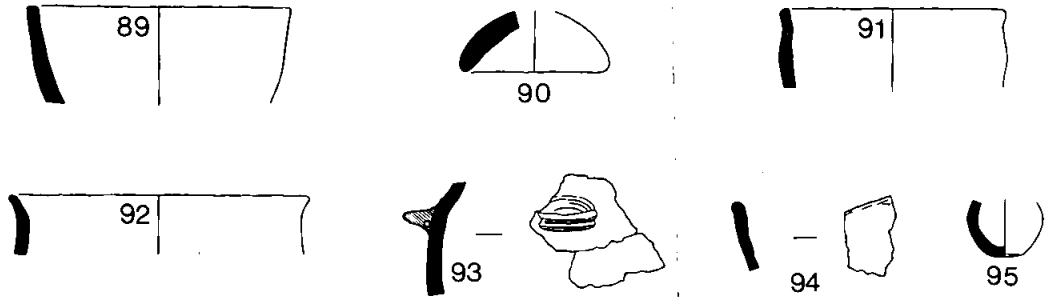


Fig 15 Castor, Site III: Anglo-Saxon gritty fabrics, scale 1:4. For descriptions see M63

are usually reduced to a black or brown colour throughout and often have smoothed or burnished surfaces. Both bowls and cooking pot forms exist, with simple upright or slightly everted rims, eg nos 89 and 95;

- those which may have sand or grit in the temper but also obviously include calcareous or calcite particles. These white inclusions are usually round oolitic particles but can include some visible shell or small limestone pieces. Both bowls and cooking pot forms exist, also with simple rims, but some everted or lugged examples are additionally present, eg nos 86-88, 90-94.

It seems at present that this distinction may be significant in the local sequence. No calcareous sherds of fabric 2 were found at the Early Saxon site at Orton Hall Farm where, however, fabric 1 is probably represented (D F Mackreth, pers comm). In contrast, no gritty sherds like fabric 1 were found on the Elmlea site, north of Castor church, which is certainly Middle Saxon. The black gritty fabrics of fabric 1 are also normal for the pagan cemetery material in the area, but it should be noted that a possible 5th-century faceted angle sherd from Hut 1 (p 125) contains some calcite shell particles. Clearly more work is needed on an increased sample of material.

Unfortunately, the forms in the local gritty fabrics are simple types with long usage and, other than noting that raised lugs such as no 94 are unlikely to be earlier than the 6th century and that everted rims like no 87 may not be Early Pagan either, close dating cannot be offered for individual sherds. It seems best to suggest a 7th-century date for the only stratified group in the collection, from Hut 1, as neither forms nor fabric of the vessels are exclusively Early Saxon while at the same time diagnostic Middle Saxon material, comprising Ipswich-type ware and probably Maxey Group III-type wares (cf below, pp 142-3), is also lacking.

#### Later features

While it may be supposed that the area around Site III remained in fairly constant use throughout the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods, the evidence of habitation is confined to the preceding Roman and Anglo-Saxon phases. No building remains of later date were observed, unless the fragmentary groups of postholes to the west of the Roman building had once formed parts of huts (cf FIG 6). As they occurred close to the surface of the stratified sequence, any possible floors or wall debris would have been destroyed by later agricultural activity.

The most complete features comprised a series of pits of Medieval date which were essentially similar to those of Middle Saxon times (FIG 6, Pits 3, 4b, 5, 8-10. See further M8). Although their pottery contents cannot be so closely dated that breaks in the sequence may be detected (cf M64), the general impression they leave is that the type of activity evidenced was broadly similar throughout.

Confirmation of the prolonged use of the area is provided by the existence of a clay-lined pond which, though of obscure origin, had certainly survived until after the Medieval period and was only backfilled in the 18th century (Pit 11: FIG 13b. See further M11). A hollow which formed above its surface continued to collect water until it was finally infilled with limestone rubble in the first half of the 19th century. Pottery mixed with the rubble comprised a mass of broken beer-mugs which included several examples bearing appliqué medallions of a royal crown with the legend 'IMPERIAL GR. IV' (cf M75, 180).

The location of contemporary boundaries is uncertain, although it is possible that Ditches II and III were elements of the local property division (FIG 6: see M11). Both date from the 16th century, if not later, and had presumably fallen into disuse by the time that the Rector's vegetable garden occupied the area.

#### EXCAVATION AT ELMLEA IN 1973 *by* Carolyn Dallas

The site lies at NGR TL 125985 in the garden of a private house named 'Elmlea' at 29 Stocks Hill, Castor (FIGS 2 and 16). The property is the home of Mr and Mrs F Sismey, without whose kindness and co-operation the work would not have been possible. Work was carried out on a very small scale at intervals during 1970-3 using mainly local labour and digging only short seasons or at weekends. The small budget was provided variously by the Department of the Environment, the Nene Valley Research Committee, the Carnegie Trust, and the Middle Nene Archaeological Group. Originally the project began at the owners' suggestion in 1970 when Dr J P Wild was able to undertake trial-trenching to investigate the north wing of

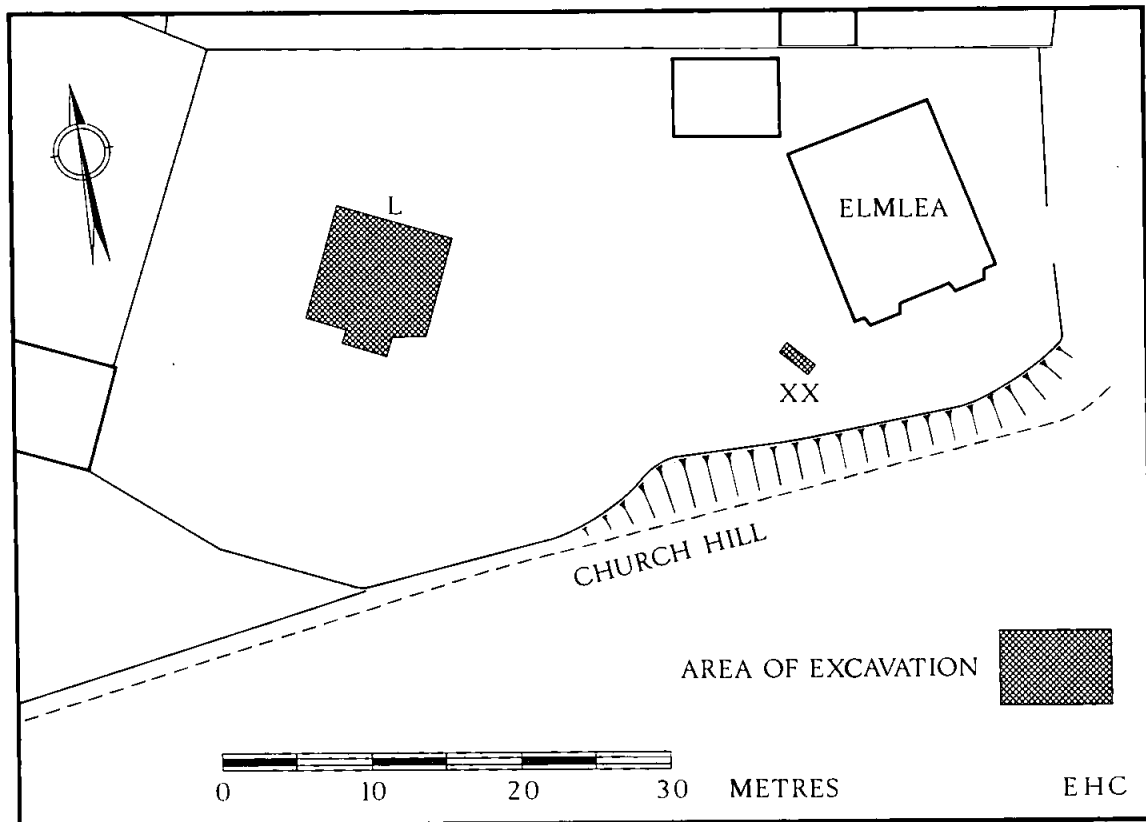


Fig 16 Castor, excavations in the garden of 'Elmlea'

the extensive Roman building complex which underlies Castor village. Intensive post-Roman activity was encountered in these trial-holes and it was eventually possible in 1973 to open a larger area, Trench L. Within this trench a middle Saxon cess-pit was seen to cut through Roman layers beneath the remains of medieval structures.

The finds are kept at Peterborough City Museum and with the site-owners. A small sample of the Middle Saxon pottery is also available for examination in the British Museum reference collection and includes drawn sherds as follows: FIG 23, no 19; FIG 24, nos 29, 33, 34, 43, 44, 48; FIG 25, 68; and FIG 26, nos 88, 89, 92, 93.

In addition to thanks owed to Mr and Mrs Sismey, particular thanks are owed to Dr J P Wild, the site director, for his co-operation and advice, to Mr D F Mackreth, without whose assistance the excavation of the vital layers of Trench L could not have been completed, and also to Mrs J King, Mr J A Hadman, and the

late Mr A S Wilson for their work both on and off the site. All the small finds and glass were drawn by Mrs J Coombes, and the pottery handle illustrated in M84 by Miss S White.

#### PREVIOUS EXCAVATION

Two Anglo-Saxon features were encountered by Dr Wild in 1970 but both lay only partly in the trenches concerned. The first was found in Trench XX (FIG 16) near the south-west corner of the modern house and consisted of a hollow covering some 1.50m (5ft) x 0.90m (3ft) of the trench. It was cut c 0.23m (9in) into Roman floor underpacking and had sloping sides. The filling was soft, dark grey loam with some rubble derived from the Roman levels. Four sherds of pottery were found in this feature: two were Roman but one was a bodysherd of Ipswich-type ware and the other a handmade Middle Saxon sherd (FIG 26, 93). The feature was sealed by a medieval wall. Its function is not clear, but it could be either a sunken hut or a pit.

The other feature which produced Anglo-Saxon pottery was on the southern edge of the garden, some 1.20m (4 ft) below the present surface. Here, just south of an east-west Roman wall, the clay and rubble floor-packing had been cut away by a sub-rectangular intrusion 0.83m (2 ft 9 in) wide north-south which extended 0.60m (2 ft) into the



trench from the west bank. The filling was of redeposited clay containing much Roman debris. It is worth noting that the dark gravelly loam over the Roman deposits in this trench was well compacted and seemed to be a heavily trampled surface some 70–80mm (3 in) thick around the feature, which it certainly did not seal. The feature produced some Roman pottery and also a handmade Saxon rim-sherd (FIG 26, 78).

Other features were found cut into Roman layers, but did not produce any pottery other than Roman, and thus cannot be closely dated: a problem frequently encountered in Trench L.

1973 EXCAVATION

Trench L (FIG 16) was 8m square with a small extension on the south side to allow more space for examining a large Middle Saxon pit which was found in one of the 1971 trial-trenches (Trench XLV) and to establish its relationship to surrounding layers. The area opened to the north of this pit was as large as possible within limits imposed by the garden trees; it was not possible to dig to the south or west because of an orchard. The trench was entirely hand-dug, with some pickaxes being used on the medieval layers but only trowels on the earlier layers down to the top of

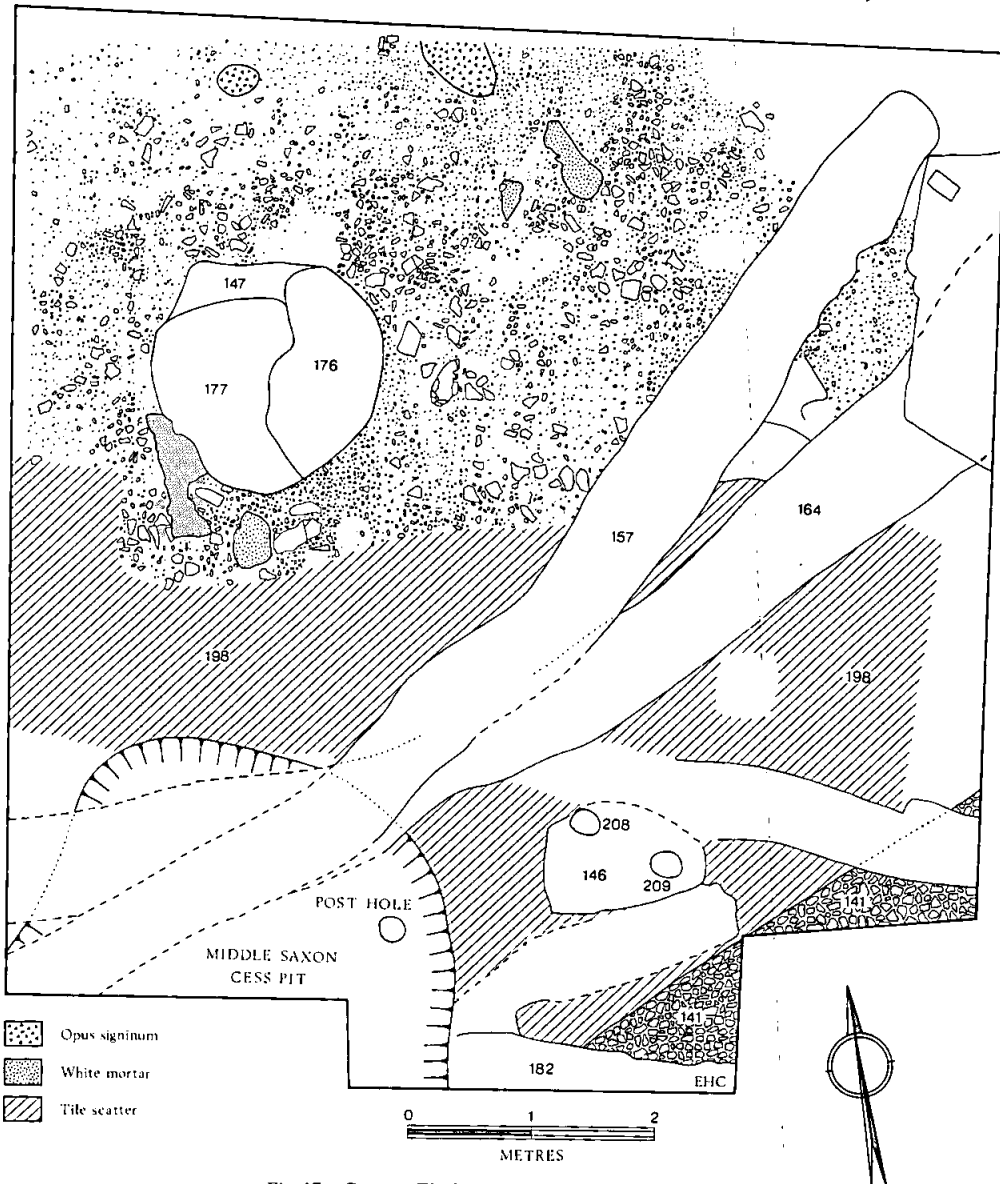


Fig 17 Castor, Elmlea: Trench L, early features. Cf M18

recognisable Roman deposits. A continuous layer number sequence was used.

Excavation was difficult and less rewarding than had been hoped. It was found that the intense ancient activity had resulted in small localised layers, the significance of most of which could not be determined. There was also little colour variation in the soils. The early layers, however, were slightly different in character from the dark medieval loams, with considerably more sand and decayed mortar present and a greater amount of Roman debris such as tile and tesserae. Although not more closely dated, a range of features sealed beneath demonstrably medieval layers and structures, but otherwise above or cutting identifiable Roman deposits, are likely to represent Saxon occupation.

The principal excavated features are described below by chronological period and reference is made to supplementary information contained in microfiche. The finds from the site are considered separately on pp 133-43.

Roman

To deal with the Roman occupation of Castor is beyond the scope of the present report and only a few comments on Trench L are needed. Firstly, the area excavated is likely to be outside the Roman buildings, as no Roman walling was seen either at the top of the Roman deposits or in the sides of the excavated Roman features. Secondly, it could not be determined whether the character of the Roman surface, Layers 192-196, found throughout the trench was original or had been altered by subsequent activity. It seemed to have been made up as follows: over some 0.30-0.50m of

clay was a layer of yellow mortar reinforced with limestone pieces, and above was a thin layer of white mortar on which were two small patches, each less than 0.50m across, of coarse *opus signinum*. The appearance of the surface was not only variable in the material it presented to the eye (FIG 17) but also in the amount of wear which each of these materials had received. It needs to be considered (a) if the variations are part of the original scheme (ie, was the *opus signinum* surface everywhere, or were there changes in the surface depending on the presence of flimsy buildings, pathways, work-floors, etc) and (b) whether the wear they represent is Roman or post-Roman. Unfortunately, none of these questions can be answered as the absence of post-Roman pottery is no guide to the date of a layer.

The only excavated soil (Layers 111 and 115) which might possibly be Roman was a skim no more than c 50mm thick over the yellow mortar in the northern part of the trench and under or cut by all other layers. It was a sandy loam with a 'dirty' mottled appearance caused by much charcoal. This was the only place where the Roman sherd-number represented almost as many single vessels, thereby indicating a period of time between their breakage and final deposition. If this layer immediately over the defined Roman deposits is taken to be Roman, it implies that the damage sustained by these deposits occurred during the Roman period. The question, however, remains open.

The Middle Saxon Pit (FIGS 17 and 18)

The only definite Anglo-Saxon feature was a large pit in the south-west corner of the trench, extending 2.8m N-S and

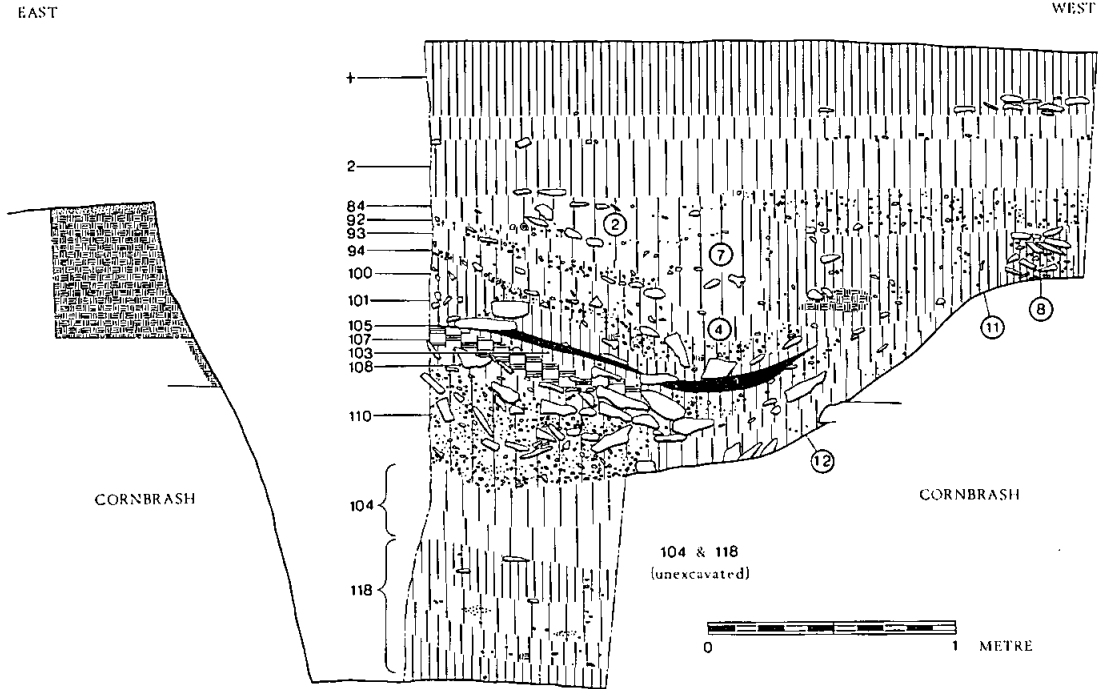


Fig 18 Castor, Elmlea: section of middle Saxon cess-pit

2.6m E-W. It was cut through the Roman mortars and the underlying redeposited clays, natural clay, and natural limestone to a depth of 1.85m below the top Roman surface, and was itself cut by an early medieval pit on the western side. It had steep sides and a flat bottom in the one quadrant where its base was reached.

The purpose of the pit was quite plain as the lower 0.90m was filled with cess which was composed of thin deposits varying in colour from all shades of green to blue and silvery grey (Layer 118). These layers were interspersed with thin silts of decayed mortar. A posthole 0.18m in diameter was found in the north-east corner of the pit (FIG 17) and

inclined away from the centre of the pit at an angle of approximately 45° towards the corner. The post had clearly been in position when the cess-layers were accumulating as they had banked up behind it and the hole itself was filled with silty material from the layers above.

The cess-deposits contained only one Anglo-Saxon potsherd (an Ipswich-type ware rim, although there were joining sherds from the upper fill: FIG 23, 3) and much Roman debris, especially tesserae, tile, limestone pieces and mortar lumps. All of the rubbish layers were removed from the pit where it lay in Trench L, but the silt and cess-layers were removed only on the eastern side.

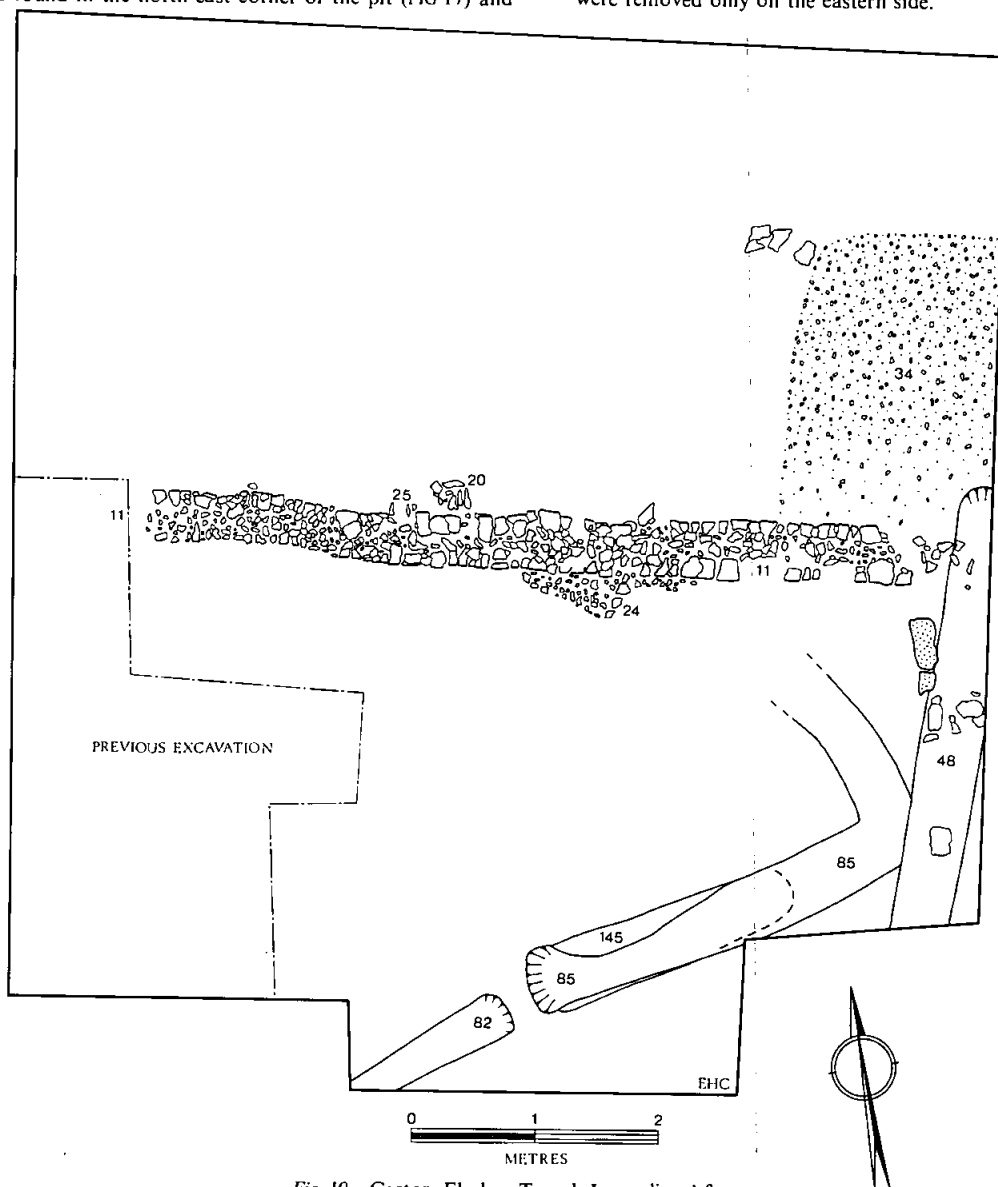


Fig 19 Castor, Elmlea: Trench L, medieval features

After the pit had ceased to be used it was left open for an indeterminate length of time and the cess-layers became covered by c 0.70m of clean silt, Layer 104, mainly composed of decayed mortar which had washed down the hill. The deposit seemed to be the product of a gradual build-up and not to be a deliberate fill. The resulting hollow was then used as a rubbish pit, being left to fill gradually with layers of clay silts and light sandy loams in which much broken Anglo-Saxon pottery and many objects were found (see below).

#### Other pre-Medieval features (FIG 17)

A series of features which either cut or lay above the Roman surface were stratigraphically earlier than the medieval deposits, but otherwise cannot be more closely dated. Among them, however, a possible pathway formed of broken Roman roofing tiles may be an early feature (198) and with several pits (147, 176-7; 146) could pre-date the Middle Saxon pit. Later features included a steep-sided, flat-bottomed gully, 164, which ran downhill over the top of the cess-pit and had been subsequently recut on a slightly shifted alignment (157); a separate gully, 182, partially exposed at the southern edge of the trench, also seemed to cut the top of the Middle Saxon pit fill.

A number of postholes and related features could represent separate or successive structures. They were probably not all contemporary and none of their original groupings can be reconstructed (see M19 for plan). The principal features are described further in M18-21.

#### Medieval (FIG 19)

Several phases of building activity, interspersed with various soil-accumulations and pit-digging, can be attributed to the Medieval period. Details of the major features are given in M21.

The earliest feature, 145, contained pottery of the 11th to 12th centuries. Its location directly beneath a beam-slot suggests that it may have been structural, but no associated features were apparent. The south-east corner of the later building survived as two irregular gullies, 82 and 85, which ranged between 0.32-0.42m wide and were up to 0.10m deep. A slight gap existed in the south wall and at either side the slots terminated in shallow post-pits. The building extended across the top of the Middle Saxon pit and its remains contained Stamford ware of the 11th to 12th centuries. The corner of the structure was cut by a linear feature which may represent the western side of a separate building lying mainly outside the excavation-area (48). It likewise contained Stamford ware of 11th- to 12th-century type, together with an early Medieval St Neots-type rim (FIG 26, 100). Similarly dated Stamford ware was also present in the compacted gravelly loam of an earthen floor which partly overlay the wall-line (34). The former extent and function of this surface remains uncertain, but a group of stones at the north-west corner could represent the packing of an associated posthole.

A deposit of limestone rubble (layer 29) which covered part of the floor may not have been introduced until as late as the 14th century (cf M21). It was sealed by a layer of loam beneath a stretch of limestone walling which contained Lyveden-type pottery. The wall, 11, was 0.50m wide and its two surviving courses lacked evidence of mortar-

construction. A small posthole, 25, was built into the north side and an adjacent example may have been related (20). A spread of small stones beside part of the south face could also be connected, but no clearly associated floors were found.

#### Post-Medieval

Between the medieval deposits and the modern topsoil an accumulation of post-medieval loam was cut by two 19th century intrusions in the southern end of the trench. They were possibly dug by Artis during his investigation of the Roman building. No post-medieval structures were found.

#### FINDS

Catalogues of the artefacts from Elmlea are provided on M23-36 (non-ceramic objects) and M76-99 (pottery).

Many items occurred as residual material in later layers or represented object-types which are not closely datable within the Roman and later periods. They include building ironwork and lock-furniture in addition to glassware, personal items, and other objects of stone, iron, and copper alloy.

Among more securely stratified material is a group of finds from the Middle Saxon pit (p 131). The series of pins of both Roman and Saxon types shown in FIG 20 includes several decorated examples from the pit (eg, nos 25-28), together with plainer types which may originally have been set in a large comb such as a hackle (nos 16-18: see M25. Cf Brodrick *et al* 1972, 71-2 and fig 31, 158-61, 164-73). The pit also contained fragments of two small, composite, bone combs, the most complete of a type common from the 7th century onwards (FIG 21. Cf Waterman 1959, 88-90); a third comb-fragment was found in topsoil (no 36). Other items from the pit may have been connected with textile-production and comprised several bone 'pin-beaters' (FIG 22, 37-9), needles (nos 41-3), a stone spindle-whorl (no 46), and a possible fragment of a baked-clay loomweight (no 47). (Note: FIG 22, 45, a bronze thimble of early Medieval type, was found in 85, a later beam-slot).

The pit contained a total of 556 pottery sherds, of which 297 are Roman, 67 are undatable shelly ware bodysherds, and 192 are Middle Saxon. Of the latter, 77 sherds are Ipswich-type ware (all pimply or intermediate pimply), 4 are Maxey Group III-type, 104 are other handmade wares, and 7 are possible imported sherds. If joining sherds are excluded, the number of Middle Saxon sherds is 156 but the precise number of vessels is impossible to ascertain, as there are variations of colour, thickness, and even sometimes tempering in the same pot. It would seem, however, that there are approximately 43 vessels of Ipswich-type ware and c 50 handmade vessels at a maximum, plus 4 Maxey Group III-type vessels and one certain and one possible Continental import (see p 142). All the rims are illustrated in FIGS 23 and 26.

It is unfortunate that no complete profiles of any of the groups could be recovered, since some vessels were represented by large or numerous sherds which were often found together in a heap as though the broken pot had been gathered up for disposal. Only one sherd (an Ipswich-type ware rim, FIG 23, 3) came from the cess-deposits, with all the other material having been thrown into the upper layers

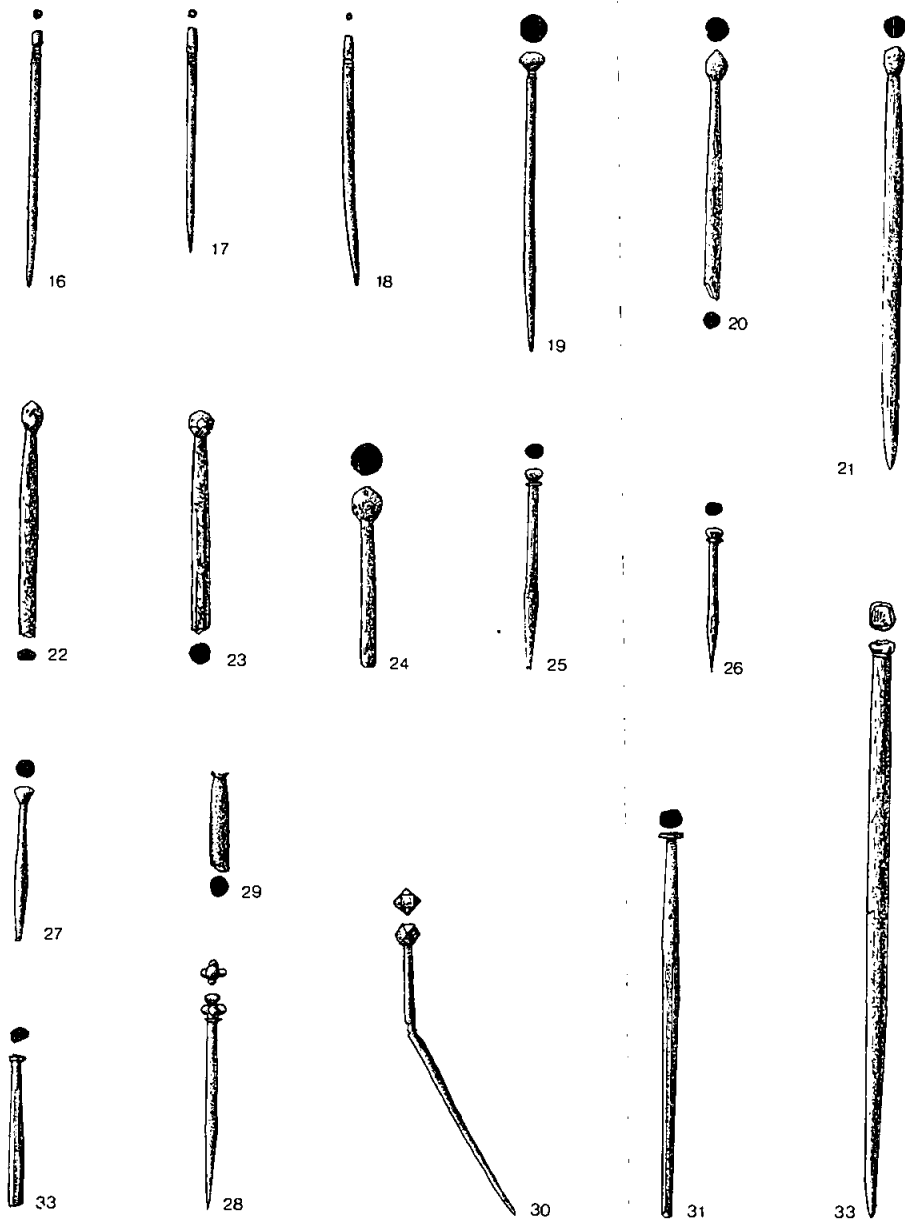


Fig 20 Castor, Elmlea: Roman and Anglo-Saxon pins, scale 2:3. For description see M25-6

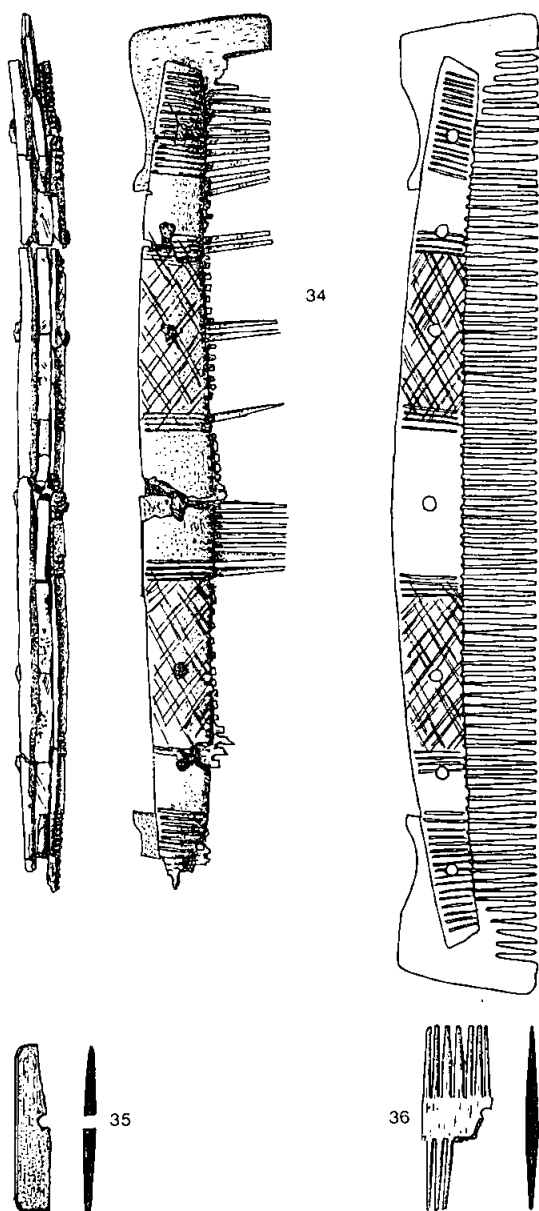


Fig 21 Castor, Elmlea: bone combs, scale 2:3.  
For description see M26

as rubbish. These sherds form a useful group, probably of limited date-range, and all the Anglo-Saxon pottery groups represented by the total site assemblage, other than burnished and fine sandy Ipswich-type ware, are present. The smallest percentage of the total site assemblage belongs to the Maxey Group III-type wares and, as the percentage of them in the pit is even lower, it may be that they were not commonly in use at the time when the rubbish was discarded, but only became more frequent after the pit had been filled.

The total assemblage of Middle Saxon pottery is fully discussed below. The much smaller collection of Medieval and later pottery from the site is described and illustrated in M96-8. The absence of definite Late Saxon material suggests that this area of the village was not occupied in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

#### *Anglo-Saxon pottery* (FIGS 23-26. Cf M76-84)

The total number of Anglo-Saxon sherds from the Elmlea site is 414, plus some 40 sherds which join other pieces and have not been counted separately. The maximum number of vessels is approximately half of the sherd total. The pottery is all residual or unstratified except for the following:

- a 156 sherds forming a group from the large middle Saxon pit (FIG 23; cf pp 131-2).
- b one Ipswich-type ware bodysherd and one handmade base (FIG 26, 93) from the feature excavated in 1970 (XX.5; cf p 129).
- c one handmade rim sherd from the 1970 feature described on pp 129-30 (XXV.5; FIG 26, 78).
- d eleven sherds representing three pots from Gully 164 where it cut into the middle Saxon pit.

The pottery can be divided into four basic groups:

*i Ipswich-type ware.* This comprises some 171 sherds of the site total. Eleven sherds were found which may be described as fine sandy (see below) but otherwise the sherds are pimply and intermediate pimply, eight of which are burnished. There are no coarse sandy sherds resembling Hurst fabric B (Dunning *et al* 1959, 14).

*ii Maxey Group III-type ware* (Addyman 1964, 56-8). These are calcite-gritted or shelly wares with flat-topped rims. They represent some 44 sherds of the site total although the full count may be much higher, as only rim and base sherds have been considered since body sherds are not readily distinguishable from similar fabrics of other periods.

*iii Other handmade wares.* These are probably local in origin and comprise 192 sherds of the site total. They can be divided into:

- 1 sandy fabrics
- 2 fabrics with a mixture of sand and calcite inclusions.
- 3 a few sherds with gritty tempering.

*iv Continental imports.* Ipswich-type ware represents some 41% of the site total and 40.1% of the pit group assemblage. The Maxey Group III wares are 10.6% of the site total and only 2.1% of the pit group. There are only seven sherds of possible imported pottery, and the rest of the assemblage is local handmade wares, with fabrics 1 and 2 present in equal quantities.

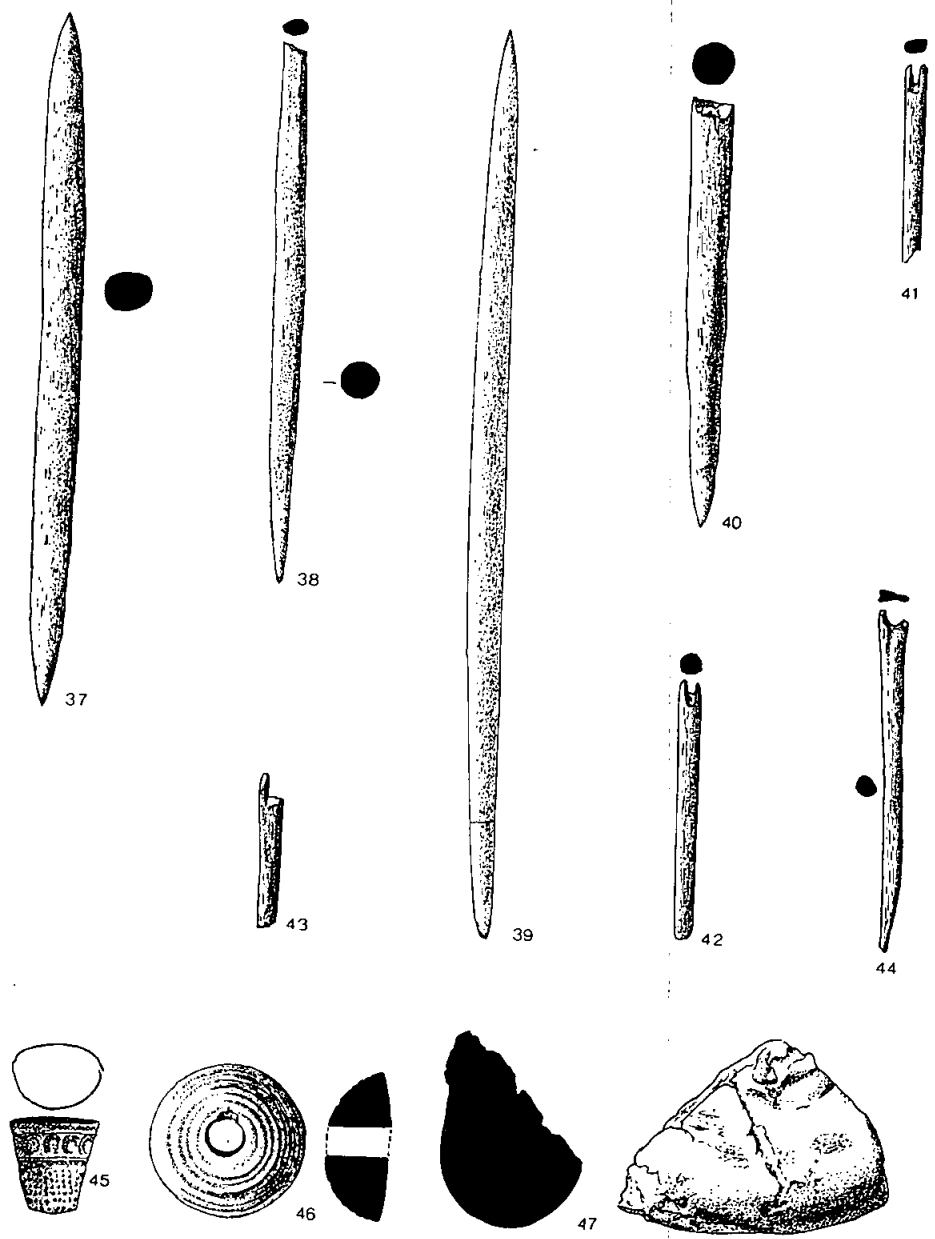


Fig 22 Castor, Elmlea: objects possibly associated with textile-production, scale 2:3. For description see M27

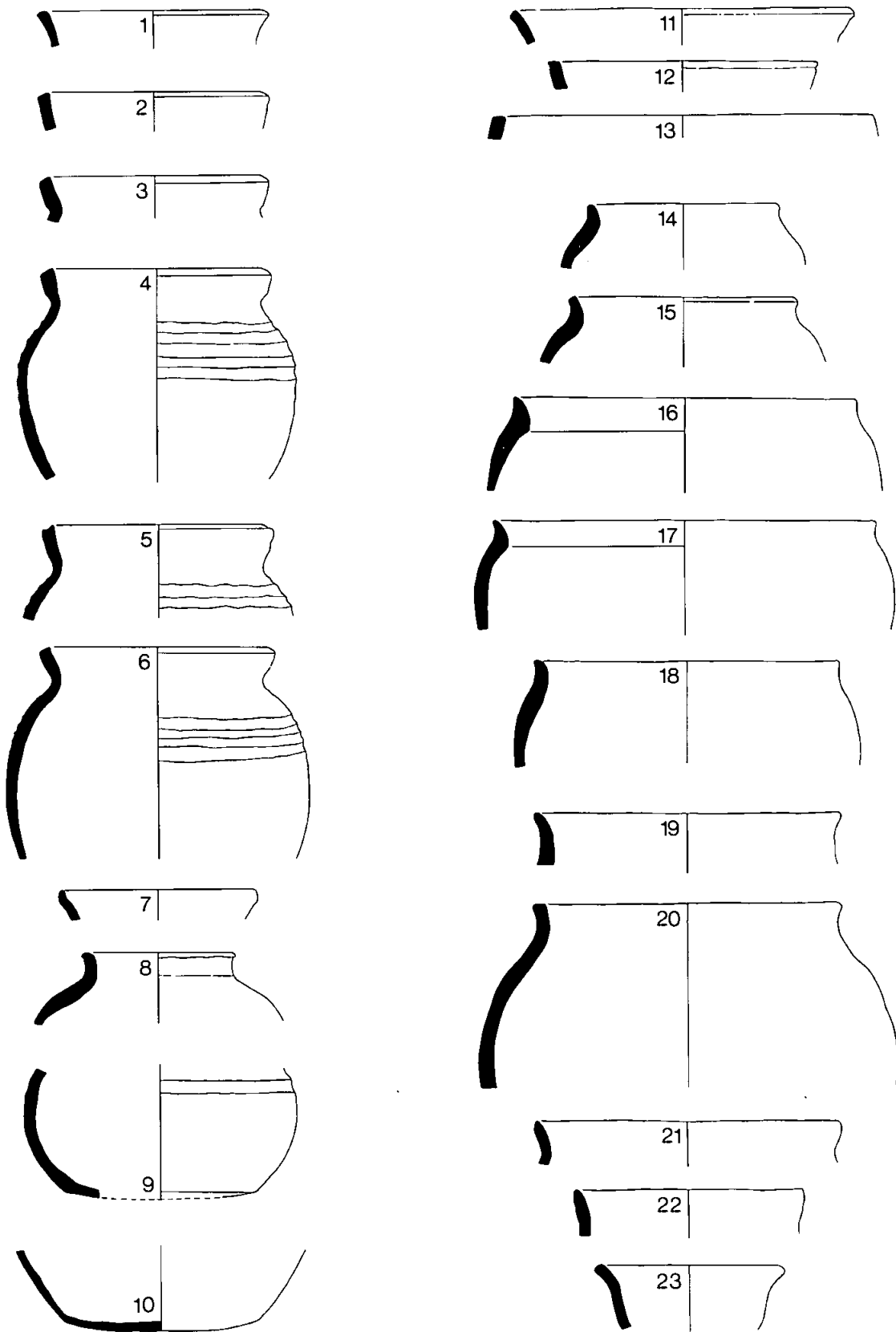


Fig 23 Castor, Elmlea: pottery from middle Saxon cess-pit, scale 1:4. For description see M76-7



*The wares*

## i Ipswich-type ware

Made on a turntable, the ware comprises nearly half the site assemblage, with a similar proportion for the sherd count in the Middle Saxon pit. Ipswich-type ware is normally grey, with some variations towards red or brown, usually only in the core. It has previously been divided into four different fabrics (Dunning *et al* 1959, 14) but not all are represented at Castor. The Castor fabrics can be classed as follows:

- 1 fine sandy—Hurst fabric A. Fine grained, with virtually no grits visible to the naked eye but sandy to the touch. The surfaces can be well smoothed. Although common at Ipswich, the fabric is rare in the Castor assemblage: there are only 11 sherds (including two rims and six bases) out of a total of 171.
- 2 intermediate pimply—probably the same as Hurst fabric C, it consists basically of a matrix of fine sandy fabric (Hurst A) with some quartz sand tempering, but not as much as in the pimply fabric (Hurst C). The particles are usually small (up to 1mm), rounded, and evenly distributed. In some instances, the assignment to fabric 2 or 3 proved difficult. The 81 sherds grouped as intermediate pimply comprise almost half of the site total of 171 and include 13 rims and one base.
- 3 pimply—Hurst fabric D. Heavily tempered with rounded grains of quartz sand, average size *c* 1mm. It forms nearly half the Castor group, with 71 sherds, including 11 rims and 3 bases, out of the total of 171.
- 4 some Ipswich-type ware sherds are highly burnished and this type of finish seems more common on the intermediate pimply group, 2. There are eight such bodysherds from Castor and some of these may be continental imports impossible to distinguish visually from Ipswich-type ware. Where identifiable, the vessels are pitchers.

There are no examples in the Castor group of coarse sandy Ipswich-type ware (Hurst fabric B), with the possible exception of one unstratified bodysherd treated as intermediate pimply.

*Forms* All the rims seem to be from cooking pots, with the exception of no 8 from the middle Saxon pit which may be of West's Group III with external beading (West 1962–3, 248). This rim not only has a restricted mouth but also shows signs of being shaped to form a spout, which is now missing. Other than this unusual vessel, and no 42 which may be a bowl rather than a cooking pot, the rim forms are rather limited. There are three rims, nos 7, 28 and 41, with an internal hollow which can be placed in West's Group II, and the rest, where of sufficient size to be classifiable, are West's Group I, with type C rim form (squared, everted, with external bevelling) being by far the most common (19 examples). Two examples each of West's Group I, A (with plain rounded top) and I, E (squared upright) are also present.

All the bases are sagging. Most of the shoulder sherds show the girth-grooves which are one of the characteristics of Ipswich-type ware. Sooting occurs both internally and externally and many of the rims show discoloration on the inside which ends in a level line about 20mm below the rim top. At least one of the bodysherds shows internal lime accretion, which is possibly the result of boiling water.

## ii Maxey Group III-type ware

The fabrics and forms are directly comparable to those of the Group III handmade pottery from Maxey (Addyman 1964, 48: fabric G). The term refers only to vessels in which quantities of shell are present and all other kinds of inclusion are noticeably absent (Adams 1977, 45). The fabrics are often soft and have a smooth, sometimes soapy, feel, even when particles of tempering protrude from the surface. It is not clear whether the shell was added or if it was a fossil component of the clays used. The shell is usually evenly distributed throughout the fabric and the particles can be up to 5mm in size. The colours of the vessels are mainly red, but can be reddish brown, brown, or black in part as most vessels are mottled and uneven in colour. There is a darker core in some dozen vessels, but usually the core is red or varies to match the surfaces.

A typical feature of these pots is a horizontal wiped line just below the rim. The internal surfaces of many vessels indicate that they were coil-built and it is likely that all were, although many are well smoothed.

The forms of the vessels are basically open with no shoulders; there are no constricted mouths and all have plain rim tops. On some examples clay had been displaced when the tops of the rims were levelled, and since it was not wiped away the resultant thickening is accidental. As well as the bucket and barrel forms found at Maxey, the Castor assemblage contains many open forms which probably represent bowls, although no complete profiles are present. The variety of forms is, therefore, greater than it would seem from the Maxey group itself. All but four of the Maxey Group III-type rims at Castor are unstratified, and it may be possible that some of these vessels are Late Saxon, a ceramic period still (in 1978) absent from recently excavated material in the Peterborough area. As, however, the fabric and shapes make up a homogeneous group, they are treated here as being Middle Saxon, although their dating limits are not clear. The fabrics and forms of the Maxey and Castor material are very similar to each other, but they do not closely resemble the flat-topped shelly ware from North Lincolnshire which is likely to be a regional variation of the same style, perhaps continuing into the late Anglo-Saxon period. Forms with an everted rim (Addyman and Whitwell 1970, 100–1, fig 2, 2–3) are absent from the Maxey/Castor group. There are no raised lugs in the Castor group, with the possible exception of nos 58 and 63, and only one from Maxey (Addyman 1964, fig 14, 44). Material closely comparable to the Maxey Group III-type has also been found in South Lincolnshire from Fleet (published as Iron Age: Thompson 1954, fig 3, 28–9).

The rim diameters of the vessels at Castor range from 90mm to 300mm, but the majority of vessels are between 150mm and 250mm in diameter. Sooting is not normally present, but when it is, can be either internal or external. One sherd has an internal accretion, possibly due to heating lime-rich water in the vessel. Eight rims have an internal colour change on an even horizontal line *c* 250mm below the top of the rim, and in these cases the rim is usually darker than the interior. On base sherds the interior of the vessel is often black and pitted, as if the temper had dissolved or worn away and the original surface had flaked off. Colour and sooting changes are visible in sherds of other types, but this is the only group which appears to show signs of wear.

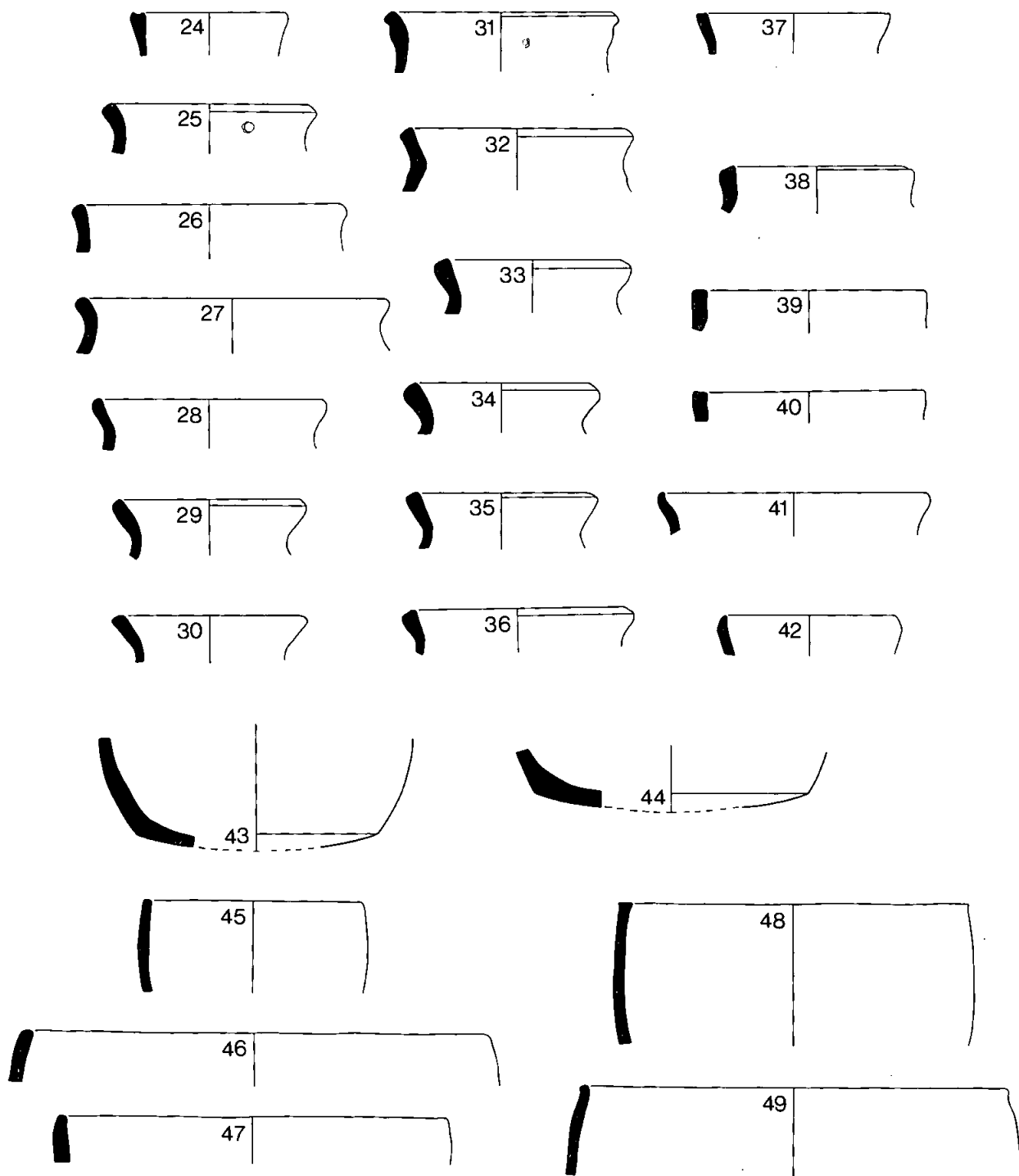


Fig 24 Castor, Elmlea: other middle Saxon pottery, scale 1:4. Nos 24-44, Ipswich-type ware; 45-49, Maxey Group III-type ware. For catalogue see M78-80

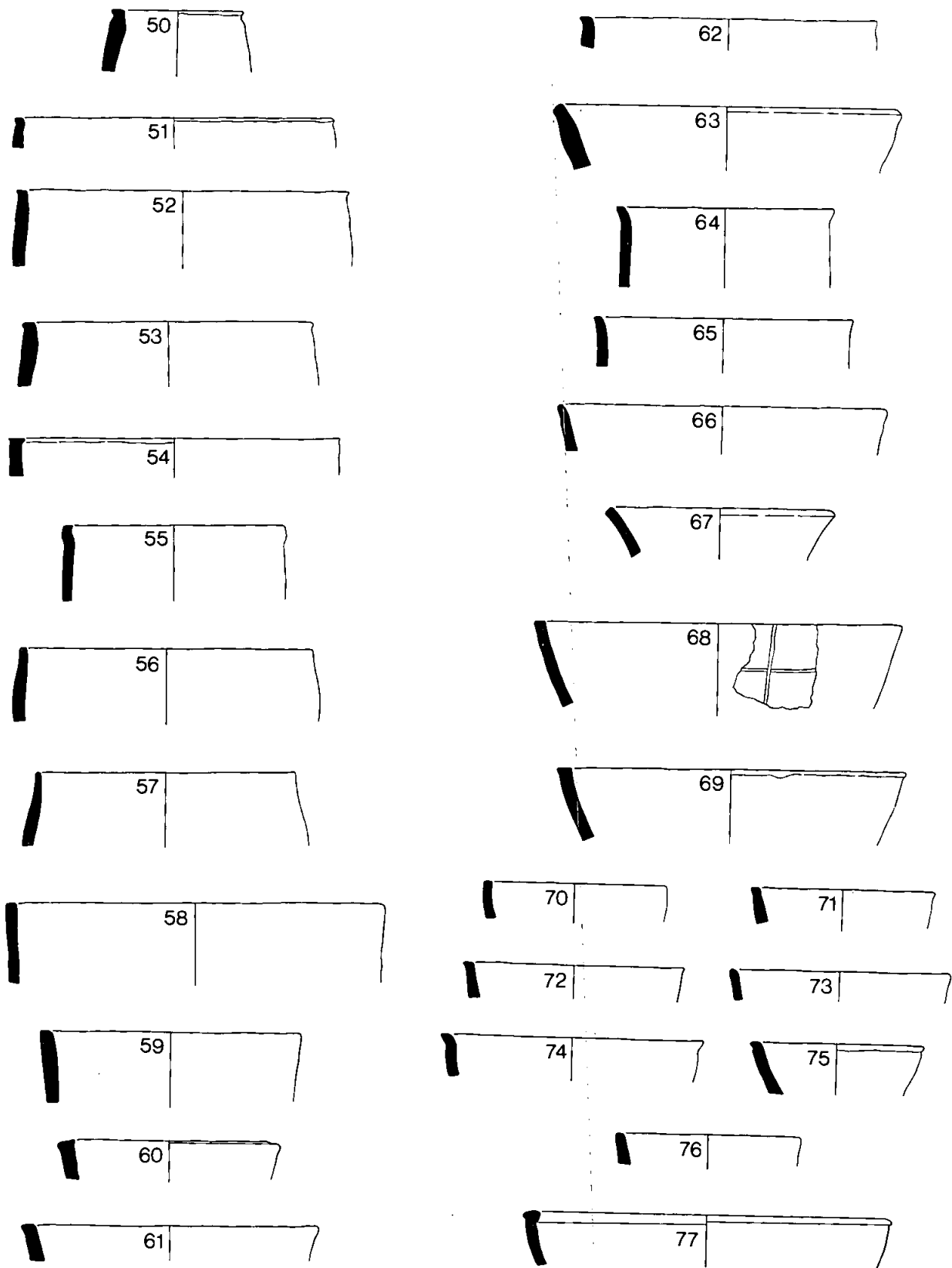


Fig 25 Castor, Elmlea: Maxey Group III-type ware from various contexts, scale 1:4. For catalogue see M80-1  
*Northamptonshire Archaeology 1986-87, 21*

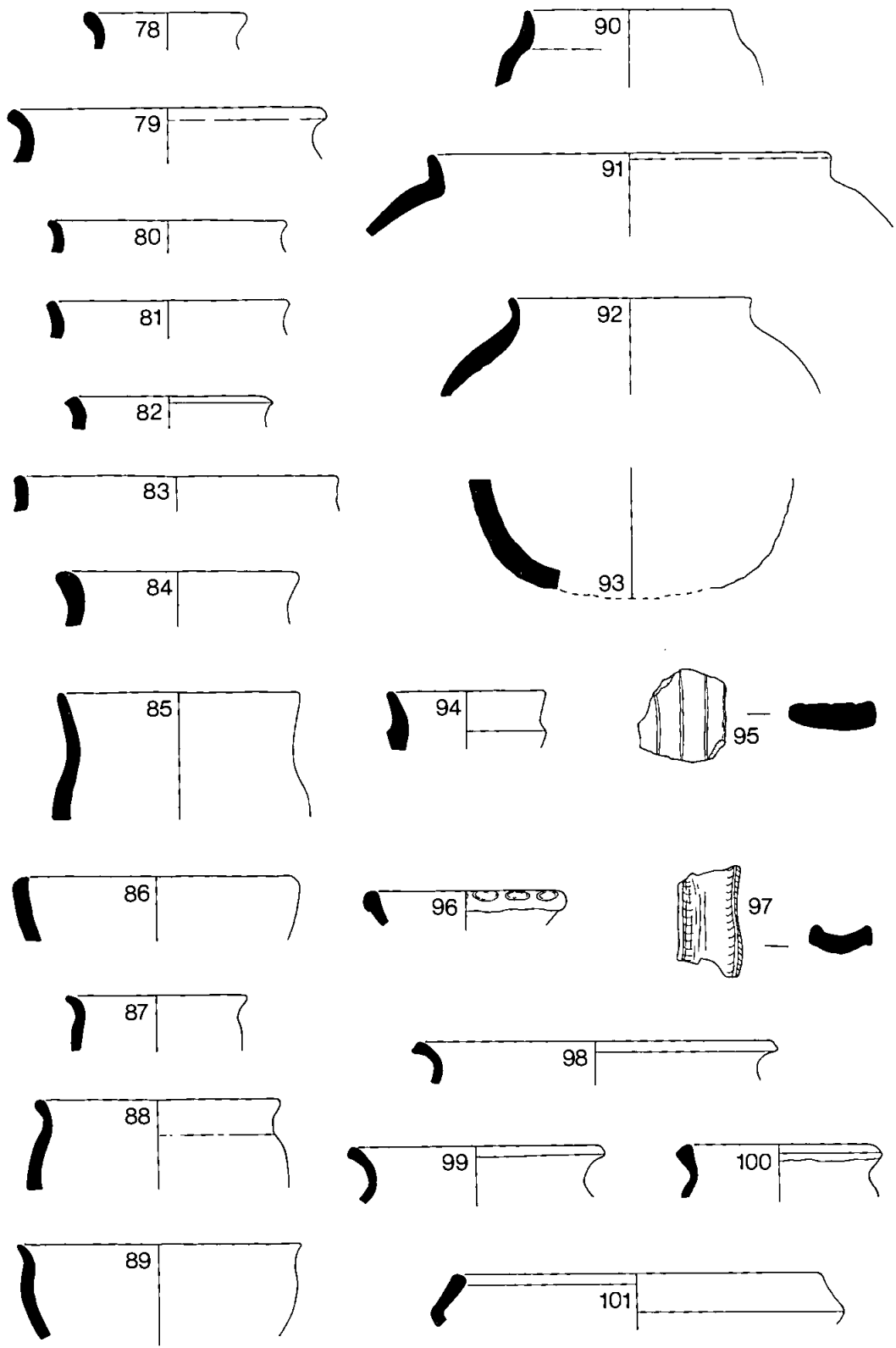


Fig 26 Castor, Elmlea: Middle Saxon and miscellaneous medieval pottery, scale 1:4. Nos 78-94, handmade wares; 95-99, uncertain; 100-101, St Neots-type ware. For descriptions see M82-3 and M97

## iii Other handmade wares

Division is by both fabric and form, although the two groups are not mutually exclusive.

- 1 coarse sandy fabrics. These are usually thick walled (up to 20mm) and of mottled reddish colour. They are friable and the surfaces have often flaked away; where present, they seem to have been smoothed. The temper consists of harsh sand with mainly small particles (up to 1mm) of various shapes and colours: quartz or quartzite, the occasional calcite particle, and some red and black particles of local ore are all visible. Detailed petrological identification has not been undertaken.
- 2 mixed sand and calcite fabrics. A slightly larger group in which calcite is the predominant but not the only tempering. Oolites are usually present, often in quantity, and their presence is typical of this class. The sherds vary in texture and thickness, but are usually thinner and smoother to the touch than Group 1. They are all reduced or partly reduced to grey and black, usually mottled. The surfaces are often smoothed and some sherds show traces of external burnishing; the internal surface has often been grass-wiped (see below).
- 3 other handmade fabrics. Less than a dozen sherds in the site assemblage, representing three or four vessels, do not fall into classes 1 and 2 above. Most of the sherds belong to a thin dark grey vessel whose fabric contains some sand and fine grit inclusions, eg no 85. The pot surface was finished with a small blunt tool both inside and out. There are two sherds which may be described as black and gritty, similar to some Early Saxon fabrics such as fabric B at Maxey (Addyman 1964, 47).

*Forms* The division of forms, while appearing to hold true for the material from Elmlea, may eventually prove dubious. However, it would appear that rims which are plain, upright, or slightly everted (eg, nos 19–22, 78–84) can be separated from those which are sharply everted and have an internal thickening (nos 14–18, 90, and 91). The plain upright or simple everted rims are not closely datable. The second group is likely to be Middle Saxon since this type of rim is not only lacking from pagan pottery groups so far collected, but also occurs in datable contexts at Southampton (Addyman and Hill 1969, 84, fig 35) and Portchester (Cunliffe 1976, figs 106, 49–50, 57; 116, 303). Confirmation must await the availability of a greater body of excavated material from the area. There are no complete profiles in the Castor group, but a globular form is perhaps to be expected. There are also several bowl forms, eg nos 23, 86, 87, and 89.

'Grass-wiped' pottery: Several vessels of handmade fabric 2 had been wiped internally with plants, leaving distinct grass-like impressions on the surface. Dr M Hooper, of Monkswold Experimental Research Station, has examined these pieces and reports that the imprints, which are upwards of 5mm wide, are closely matched by dried leaves of modern wheat and barley, with the mid-vein area producing a surface akin to at least one type of impression found on all five sherds submitted.

There is only one sherd from the site with organic tempering, comprising a small abraded bodysherd of dark

brown colour with elongated black particles in the fabric. Dr Hooper reports that these particles are carbonised wheat chaff. He therefore concludes that it is probable that all the grass-like material in the sherds came from cultivated wheat, although rye and oats were not examined.

## iv Imported wares

Apart from no 94, which may be an import from an unknown source, there are six bodysherds which all appear to be from a single wheel-made vessel. Although only two sherds join, its original form appears to have been a globular pitcher. The surviving sherds are thin-walled (c 2mm) with a light red core and black surfaces. The outside is heavily burnished and some fine grit temper is visible in section.

The sherds have been examined by Dr Richard Hodges who considers that they may be comparable to 'Class 14' pottery at Southampton which occurs in 8th to 9th century contexts (Holdsworth 1976, 56). Such material occurs widely in northern France and Belgium, but at present it is not possible to provide a closer provenance or date-range.

A possible imported black ware strap handle from Dr Wild's excavation at Elmlea is reported in M84.

*Discussion*

The composition of the Middle Saxon pottery group from the excavation ranges from rough handmade vessels, through wheel-made Ipswich-type ware, to possible fine imported pottery. Of these, the Ipswich-type ware is the most distinctive Middle Saxon material. It consists almost entirely of well-used cooking pots. The fabrics are predominantly pimply and intermediate pimply, and, apart from no 8, there is an absence of the externally beaded rims which formed a quarter of the rims from Ipswich studied by West (1962–3, 248: Group III). It is not clear if there is any significance in the lack of variety at Castor. The quantity and condition of the pottery shows that it is typical of what was being used on the site, although it is always possible that it was all obtained at one time and/or from one source.

The Ipswich-type ware from Charles Green's excavations in Castor (see above, p126) formerly constituted the most westerly findspot of such material and its inland distribution was explained by analogy with the later trade of Barnack stone which demonstrated an extensive navigability of the River Nene. However, there are now so many findspots of Ipswich-type ware that a purely coastal and riverine dispersal seems to be largely irrelevant, and other methods of distribution are likely (Dunmore *et al* 1975, 57–9 and fig 33). Since first found at Castor, other sites west of the Fens have been found and Ipswich-type ware has now been recognised as far north as the mouth of the Humber (R H Healey, pers comm; Coppack 1970, 16–17 and fig 11, 6; Addyman and Whitwell 1970, 98 and fig 2, 25) in addition to further up the Nene Valley (Everson 1977, 91; Jackson 1977), in Bedfordshire (Kennett 1966), in Leicestershire (there is one sherd in the Kirby Bellars material: Hurst 1967–8), and London (H J M Green, pers comm; M Rhodes, pers comm).

The only known area producing the ware is still in Suffolk, with the Broomeswell Heath kiln (Hurst 1957, 39) supplementing those at Ipswich (Smedley and Owles

1962-3, 311 and 314). The results of neutron activation analysis of some of the Castor sherds show that while they could have originated in that area, they may not have been made of clays from the vicinity of Ipswich itself (see further M85-95). Further scientific examination is desirable in order to distinguish between the London Clay, which in East Anglia only outcrops at Ipswich, and the boulder clays which are generally widespread in both Norfolk and Suffolk. The dense and wide distribution of the ware in those two counties argues for a definite East Anglian origin, but probably from a multitude of production centres.

Little new evidence for the dating of Ipswich-type ware has come to light since it was summarised by Hurst (in Myres and Green 1973, 240-2), beyond noting that the bottle in the Sutton Hoo ship burial is not Ipswich-type ware and therefore cannot be used to demonstrate a starting date for the pottery. Indeed, the absence of Ipswich-type ware in the Late Pagan cemeteries suggests that it was probably not produced before the later 7th century. It also seems probable that the transition from Ipswich-type ware to Late Saxon Thetford-type ware came about late in the 9th century as:

- a it is now realised that the dating of the Rhenish material at Ipswich, which is of central importance in the argument, is far more complicated than was originally thought, and the change-over cannot now be closely dated to the mid-9th century;
- b the 9th-century start for Thetford-type ware, largely based on the 1947-52 excavations at Thetford by Group-Captain G Knocker, cannot now be supported.

The Maxey Group III-type ware (Maxey fabric G; AdDYman 1964, 49-50) vessels at Castor are in many cases almost exactly similar to those from Maxey (eg, nos 46-48 and 51-54) although they comprise a greater variety of forms. The fabric is consistent and it is probable the shell particles are derived naturally from the clay, as in other shelly wares (Adams 1977, 45). At present it seems to be a Middle Anglian type found throughout the area wherever shelly clays occur, as for example in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, and Lincolnshire. Several tentative subdivisions of these handmade shelly wares in the East Midlands can be suggested. Jars with slightly flaring or angled rims, such as from Normanby-le-Wold (AdDYman and Whitwell 1970, fig 2, 2-4 and 10), are not present at either Maxey or Castor, and bowls seem to be lacking from the Maxey group. There is still no satisfactory explanation of the origins of the bucket-shaped vessels. The handmade shelly wares further south produce more normal 'cooking pot' shapes (eg, Eaton Socon, Cambs: AdDYman 1965, 57-8 and fig 8, 12-35). Also, northern Lincolnshire fabrics are much more shell-filled than those found in south Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. The Maxey Group III-type wares as such therefore seem confined to the area between the rivers Nene and Witham, although what might be found in the rest of Cambridgeshire is still unknown.

The other rough handmade vessels are assumed to be of local or fairly local origin, partly because they are often poorly fired and friable, and partly because the oolites, so conspicuous in many sherds, are readily derived from the local Jurassic limestone-deposits. The fabrics have yet to be paralleled closely. Although Castor fabric 2 might be

thought to bear some relationship to Maxey fabric D (AdDYman 1964, 47), Maxey fabrics A-C, E, and F have not been identified with certainty. Until more middle Saxon sites have been excavated, it will be impossible to determine if the Elmlea pottery is exceptional.

The Middle Saxon ceramic assemblage at Castor therefore ranges from a new kind of local pottery at present without parallels, through other local groups paralleled in Lincolnshire, to wheelmade wares (probably from East Anglia) and the occasional possible Continental vessel. Except for one sherd, wares with any organic tempering are lacking and, more surprisingly, vessels in the usual early Anglo-Saxon black gritty fabrics are almost entirely absent.

Despite the lack of associated coinage and other closely datable objects, it is possible that the pottery is of a date later in the Middle Saxon period rather than earlier. A date-range of the later 7th to 9th centuries seems certain in view of the diagnostic Ipswich-type ware, while the virtual absence of earlier pottery suggests that the site is not of the 7th century. In contrast, earlier Saxon wares were present in Charles Green's excavation at the foot of Church Hill, c 130m to the south (Site III, above). They included a 5th-century carinated sherd and 'grass-tempered' pottery in addition to black gritty fabrics and Ipswich-type ware. It is likely that the area of their discovery was open ground in the 4th century, whereas further to the north, around Elmlea, Roman buildings probably offered some obstruction to Anglo-Saxon settlement. Thus, whilst the presence of Ipswich-type ware in features on both sites indicates that they were surely part of the same settlement complex, the absence of earlier Saxon material at Elmlea may suggest that development there was secondary.

## CONCLUSION

### *The Roman Period*

Edmund Artis deserves credit for having recognised the architectural importance of the *praetorium* under Castor village and he recorded a good deal which is no longer extant or accessible (Artis 1828). Excavations by Mr and Mrs Charles Green in 1957 (Site II, above), by Dr J P Wild in 1970-3, and by Messrs Calum Rollo and Donald Mackreth in 1979-80 and 1982, while far from completing his plan, have added significant details to it and provided an historical framework (Wild 1974, 151, 159-60, fig 4; Mackreth 1984).

The earliest known building complex on the site is that found by Mr and Mrs Green at the foot of the slope up to Castor Church (Site III). It appears to date to the first half of the 2nd century AD and its coursed masonry is quite different from that of the *praetorium*. In its final form at least it probably contained a bath-suite, and it may be assumed to have accompanied

other contemporary structures not yet located.

The *praetorium* was conceived and built (some time after AD 250) on an altogether more ambitious scale. Set on a series of terraces, its principal range of rooms lies under the gardens of Elmlea and the former Victorian Rectory at the top of Church Hill, and further structural units in the same characteristic style were noted by Artis south of the present Peterborough Road. A modest bath-building was uncovered by Artis and re-examined by Dr Wild in 1971 in the Primary School playing field, close to the Green's bath-suite (Site III). Mr Mackreth's restored diorama gives us an inkling of the grandeur of the North Wing (Mackreth 1984, fig 12B). The structure projecting south from its eastern end, which was examined both by Artis and Mr and Mrs Green, is less likely to have been a classical temple (as Artis proposed) than a balancing element of a monumental facade distinctly reminiscent of Palladius.

It is tempting to suggest that such an imposing building had a public rather than a private function. When all the investigations of the *praetorium* subsequent to the work of the Greens are published, it will be opportune to raise this question again.

### *The Anglo-Saxon Period*

The first unmistakable re-occupation of the site of the *praetorium* dates to the 8th century, although residual 5th-century pottery from Site III (p 125) and fragments of possible Pagan glass at Elmlea (M36) suggest some continuity of occupation close by. The evidence of later activity, attested by both excavated remains and unpublished fieldwalking results, is further provided by two pieces of sculpture which survive in Castor Church. One is a free-standing piece of unusual shape which originally stood outside the church to the east (Markham 1901, 36–7). It is carved on all four sides with interlace and beasts in the Mercian or Anglian style of the Gandersheim casket, which is generally considered to be of the 8th or 9th centuries AD (Kendrick 1938, pl LXX, 2 and 169–70; cf Wilson 1964, 9). An animal beside the clasp on the front of the casket is virtually identical to one of the Castor beasts and

indicates a close connection of at least pattern book, if not workshop. The second sculptural piece, found in 1924, is a flat slab which had been re-used face down in the chancel steps (*Antiq J*, 4 (1924), 420–1). It depicts a complete robed figure and part of another within an arcade. The arrangement is closely paralleled by the 'Hedda' stone in Peterborough Cathedral and a date in the second half of the 8th century seems likely (Cramp 1977, 210–11).

There have also been three chance-finds of Middle Saxon date from Castor, comprising a silver penny of Offa (c AD 757–96) from the south-west part of the churchyard (now lost: cf RCHM 1969, 28) and a filigree-headed pin of the early 9th century (in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge: Leeds 1950) in addition to a geometrically decorated strap-end preserved in Peterborough Museum. This last object, illustrated previously by Artis (1828, pl XLI, 16), has an animal head terminal and is considered by Mrs S C Hawkes to be of 9th-century date; its exact findspot is unknown.

The character of part of the associated settlement is revealed by the results of the 1958 and 1970–3 excavations. Site III, south of Castor churchyard, contained two shallow sunken-floored huts (FIGS 6, 12, and 13) and three Middle Saxon pits. The site at Elmlea may have developed slightly later since its narrower Anglo-Saxon ceramic range is principally of the 8th–9th centuries. The two sites lie only 130m apart and it seems reasonable to consider them as part of the same settlement, which thus would have continued beneath the present church and churchyard. Some Middle Saxon pottery has also been found to the north of Elmlea in the Silvester Road housing estate, but no associated features were apparent (A Challands, pers comm).

The precise nature of the Middle Saxon settlement cannot be defined. No stone buildings lay within the areas so far examined, and there is a noticeable absence of daub from at least Elmlea. It therefore remains unproven if the site was part of the nunnery of St Cyneburgh and her sisters which later historical tradition suggests was founded at Castor in the period AD 650–75 (see further M22). However, the conspicuous number of feminine ornaments and implements from the Middle Saxon pit at

Elmlea, accounting for 21 out of 28 small finds, denotes a strong female presence at the very least and may provide a circumstantial link.

Archaeological detail of the layout of Anglo-Saxon monastic establishments is extremely uneven, and the information from most sites is as sketchy and ambiguous as that at Castor (Cramp 1976). It might be expected, however, that the site was enclosed by a boundary ditch and would probably have consisted of separate buildings of specialised function, possibly with more than one church.

The only feature at Elmlea which can be assigned with certainty to the Middle Saxon period is the cess-pit. Its very presence may suggest that it lay on the fringes of the settlement to which it belonged. The post in the feature could indicate that the pit was steyned and floored. Two gullies which cut the cess-pit could have been intended for drainage since they followed the natural hill-slope (FIG 17, features 164 and 157). One was probably a straightforward replacement of the other, and the possibility that each also served as a small boundary-ditch cannot be excluded. It is not surprising that no recognisable structures were located in such a small area of excavation, although possibly both round and square building plans can be postulated.

The scarcity of Middle Saxon pottery in Trench L outside the cess-pit may be significant. Whilst it could be argued that the site was kept clean, as the amount of refuse in the top part of the pit shows that pottery was present in some quantity, it is possible that refuse was discarded in specific locations. Only one sherd of Middle Saxon pottery was found in the cess-fill of the pit (FIG 23, 3).

No Late Saxon pottery was found, possibly suggesting a break of activity in the period *c* AD 850-1050. However, the few residual Late Saxon sherds from Site III and also the Potter's Oven site north of High Street (Mackreth 1973, 14) show that the village continued to be occupied in the period. There is no archaeological evidence, such as burning, to show how the Middle Saxon occupation came to an end: no features datable to the Late Saxon period were identified, but the size of Trench L was against any real understanding. It might be suggested that the 9th-century change was a drastic one,

but this would be to prejudge the issue on the attractive assumption that the Middle Saxon occupation found in Castor village is the nunnery of St Cyneburgh, which is assumed to have been destroyed by the Danes (cf M 22).

#### *The medieval period*

Castor village would repay study since the medieval documentary evidence is rich and the open-field systems survived in use until the Enclosure Act of 1898 and have been well mapped. Two focal points exist in the present village layout – one at the foot of Stocks Hill (cf FIG 2) and another at the small green to the west side of the village. Both areas were connected by droveways to a common pasture north of the village, known as Oldfield by *c* AD 1400 (Gover *et al* 1933, 233), which was also shared by the adjoining parish of Ailsworth to the west. Other than Lammas Closes immediately to the south of the village and an area of woodland to the north-west, the parish was entirely arable and the nature of the occupation was of mixed agricultural small-holdings.

In terms of the two focal points of the village, both the church and the site of Elmlea lying to its north can be seen to be peripheral. The use of timber in the structures of the 11th to 13th centuries is not surprising, as it is unlikely that stone would have been extensively employed at such an early time despite an abundant local supply. The absence of stone buildings could merely reflect the small area of the site or belie its position close to the northern edge of the medieval complex. The discovery, at a further distance, of a site using stone (Mackreth 1973) can easily be explained by the obvious social importance of the occupation there: it is the edges of a village which would reflect the fluctuations of prosperity of the place, once the status of such peripheral sites has been taken into account.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, L, 1977 *Medieval pottery from Broadgate East. Lincoln, 1973*, Lincoln Archaeol Trust Monogr Ser 17.1
- Addyman, P V, 1964 A Dark-Age settlement at Maxey, Northants, *Medieval Archaeol*, 8, 20-73
- Addyman, P V, 1965 Late Saxon settlements in the St Neots area. I: The Saxon settlement and Norman castle at Eaton Socon, Bedfordshire, *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 58, 38-73
- Addyman, P V, and Hill, D H, 1969 Saxon Southampton: a review of the evidence. Part II, Industry, trade and everyday life, *Proc Hampshire Fld Club Archaeol Soc*, 26, 61-96
- Addyman, P V, and Whitwell, J B, 1970 Some Middle Saxon pottery types in Lincolnshire, *Antiq J*, 50, 96-102
- Artis, E T, 1828 *The Durobrivae of Antoninus, identified and illustrated in a series of plates exhibiting the excavated remains of that Roman station in the vicinity of Castor, Northamptonshire*
- Aspinall, A, Slater, D N, and Mayes, P, 1968 Neutron activation analysis of medieval ceramics, *Nature (London)*, 217, 388
- Atkins, I, 1928 An investigation of two Anglo-Saxon Kalendars (Missal of Robert of Jumieges and St Wulfstan's Homily), *Archaeologia*, 78, 219-54
- Baillie-Reynolds, P K, 1931 Excavations on the site of the Roman fort at Caerhun. First interim report. The samian pottery, *Archaeol Cambrensis*, 86, 263-339
- Barton, K J, 1961-5 Settlements of the Iron Age and Pagan Saxon periods at Linford, Essex, *Trans Essex Archaeol Soc ser 3*, 1, 57-104
- Blake, B P, 1959 An Anglo-Saxon farm at Hole Farm, Bulmer Tye, Essex, *Medieval Archaeol*, 3, 282-5
- Blake, H, and Davey, P, 1983 *Guidelines for the Processing of Medieval Pottery from Excavations*, Directorate Anc Mon Hist Bldgs Occ Pap 5
- Boon, G C, 1966 Roman window glass from Wales, *J Glass Stud*, 8, 41-5
- Brears, B, 1967 Excavations at Potovens near Wakefield, *Post-Medieval Archaeol*, 1, 3-43
- Briscoe, G, 1957-8 Combined Early Iron Age and Romano-British site at Wangford, West Suffolk, *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 51, 19-31
- Brodribb, A C C, Hands, A R, and Walker, D R, 1972 *Excavations at Shakenoak Farm, near Wilcote, Oxfordshire, Part III, Site F*
- Bryant, G F, Steane, J M, and Adams, B N, 1969 Excavations at the deserted medieval settlement at Lyveden. A second interim report, *J Northampton Mus*, 5, 3-48
- Bryant, G F, and Steane, J M, 1971 Excavations at the deserted medieval settlement at Lyveden. A third interim report, *J Northampton Mus*, 9, 3-94
- Bushe-Fox, J P, 1932 *Third report on the excavation of the Roman fort at Richborough, Kent*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London 10
- Carr, R, Hills, C, and Wade-Martins, P, 1970-3 First interim report of the excavations at Spong Hill, North Elmham, 1972, *Norfolk Archaeol*, 35, 494-8
- Carson, R A G, Hill, P V, and Kent, J P C, 1960 *Late Roman bronze coinage AD 324-498*
- Charlesworth, D, 1966 Roman square bottles, *J Glass Stud*, 8, 26-40
- Charlesworth, D, 1971 A group of vessels from the Commandant's House, Housesteads, *J Glass Stud*, 13, 34-7
- Coleman, R, 1976 *Neutron activation of St Neots-type ware*, unpubl MA diss, University of Bradford
- Coppack, G, 1970 Two finds of Ipswich ware from Lincolnshire, *Lincolnshire Hist Archaeol*, 5, 16-17
- Corder, P (ed), 1961 *The Roman town and villa at Great Casterton, Rutland. Third report for the years 1954-8*
- Cramp, R, 1976 Monastic sites, in Wilson 1976, 201-52
- Cramp, R, 1977 Schools of Mercian sculpture, in A Dornier (ed), *Mercian Studies*, 191-231
- Cunliffe, B, 1969 *Roman Bath*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London 24
- Cunliffe, B, 1974 Some late Saxon stamped pottery from southern England, in V I Evison, H Hodges, and J G Hurst (eds), *Medieval pottery from excavations*, 127-35
- Cunliffe, B, 1976 *Excavations at Portchester Castle, II: Saxon*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London 33
- Dunmore, S, Gray, V, Loader, T, and Wade, K, 1975 The origin and development of Ipswich, *E Anglian Archaeol, 1-Suffolk*
- Dunning, G C, 1932 Bronze Age settlements and a Saxon hut near Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, *Antiq J*, 12, 279-93
- Dunning, G C, 1952 Anglo-Saxon discoveries at Harston, Leicestershire, *Trans Leicestershire Archaeol Hist Soc*, 28, 49-54
- Dunning, G C, Hurst, J G, Myres, J N L, and Tischler, F, 1959 Anglo-Saxon pottery: a symposium, *Medieval Archaeol*, 3, 1-78
- Everson, P, 1973 An excavated Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured building and settlement site in Salmonby, Lincs, 1972, *Lincolnshire Hist Archaeol*, 8, 61-72
- Everson, P, 1977 Excavation in the vicarage garden at Brixworth, 1972, *J Brit Archaeol Ass*, 130, 55-122
- Forester, T, 1854 *The Chronicle of Florence of Worcester with two continuations*
- Fremersdorf, F, 1967 *Die römischen Gläser mit Schliff, Bemalung und Goldauflagen aus Köln*, Die Denkmäler des römischen Köln 8
- Frere, S S, 1954 Canterbury excavation, summer 1946, *Archaeol Cantiana*, 68, 101-43
- Frere, S S, 1972 *Verulamium Excavations: 1*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London 28
- Gover, J E B, Mawer, A, and Stenton, F M, 1933 *The place-names of Northamptonshire*, Engl Place-Name Soc 10
- Guildhall Museum, 1903 *Catalogue of the collection of London antiquities in the Guildhall Museum*
- Hadman, J A, and Upex, S G, 1975 A Roman pottery kiln at Sulchay near Yarwell, *Durobrivae*, 3, 16-18
- Harden, D B, 1959 New light on Roman and Early Medieval window-glass, *Glastechnische Berichte*, 32K, Heft 8, 8-16
- Harden, D B, 1961 Domestic window-glass, Roman, Saxon, and Medieval, in E M Jope (ed), *Studies in Building History*, 39-63

- Hartley, B R, 1972 *Notes on the Roman pottery industry in the Nene Valley*, Peterborough Mus Soc Occ Pap 2 (reprint)
- Haverfield, F, 1902 Romano-British Northamptonshire, in W R D Adkins and R M Serjeantson (eds), *The Victoria history of the counties of England: Northamptonshire: 1*, 157-222
- Hawkes, S C, Ellis Davidson, H R, and Hawkes, C, 1965 The Finglesham Man, *Antiquity*, 29, 17-32
- Hawkes, F, 1977 *Neutron activation analysis of Thetford-type wares*, unpubl MA diss, University of Bradford
- Healey, R H, 1969 Bourne ware, *Lincolnshire Hist Archaeol*, 4, 108-9
- Hodges, R, 1981 *The Hamwih Pottery: the local and imported wares from 30 years' excavations at Middle Saxon Southampton and their European context*, Counc Brit Archaeol Res Rep 37
- Holdsworth, P, 1976 Saxon Southampton: a new review, *Medieval Archaeol*, 20, 26-61
- Hunter, R W, 1975 *Neutron activation analysis of St Neots-type ware*, unpubl MA diss, University of Bradford
- Hunter, R W, 1979 St Neots-type ware, in J H Williams, *St Peter's Street, Northampton. Excavations 1973-6*, Northampton Dev Corp Archaeol Monogr 2, 230-40
- Hurst, J G, 1956 Saxo-Norman pottery in East Anglia Part I: general discussion and St Neots ware, *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 49, 43-70
- Hurst, J G, 1957 Saxo-Norman pottery in East Anglia Part II: Thetford ware, *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 50, 29-60
- Hurst, J G, 1958 Saxo-Norman pottery in East Anglia Part III: Stamford ware, *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 51, 37-65
- Hurst, J G, 1961 The kitchen area of Northolt Manor, Middlesex, *Medieval Archaeol*, 5, 211-99
- Hurst, J G, 1967-8 Saxon and medieval pottery from Kirby Bellars, *Trans Leicestershire Archaeol Hist Soc*, 43, 10-18
- Hurst, J G, 1976 The pottery, in Wilson 1976, 283-348
- Innocent, C F, 1916 *The development of English building construction*
- Jackson, D A, 1977 Ipswich ware from Thrapston, *Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 12, 190-1
- Jones, R T, 1978 *Computer-based osteometric archaeozoology*, *Anc Mon Lab Rep* 2333
- Kendrick, T D, 1938 *Anglo-Saxon Art to AD 900*
- Kennett, D H, 1966 An Ipswich ware pitcher from Bedford, *Bedfordshire Archaeol J*, 3, 58
- Kilmurry, K, 1980 *The Pottery Industry of Stamford, Lincs, c AD 850-1250*, *Brit Archaeol Rep Brit Ser* 84
- Leeds, E T, 1922-3 A Saxon village near Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire, *Archaeologia*, 73, 147-92
- Leeds, E T, 1926-7 A Saxon village near Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire (second report), *Archaeologia*, 76, 59-80
- Leeds, E T, 1947 A Saxon village at Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire (third report), *Archaeologia*, 92, 79-93
- Leeds, E T, 1950 A bronze Viking pin from Castor, Northants, *Antiq J*, 30, 75
- Le Patourel, H E J, 1965 The pottery, in C V Bellamy, Pontefract Priory excavations 1951-1961, *Publ Thoresby Soc*, 49, 106-22
- Lethbridge, T C, 1931 *Recent excavations in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk*, Cambridge Antiq Soc Quarto Publ n ser 3
- Lethbridge, T C, 1951 *A Cemetery at Lackford, Suffolk*, Cambridge Antiq Soc Quarto Publ n ser 6
- Levison, W, 1946 *England and the Continent in the eighth century*
- Lewis, M J T, 1966 *Temples in Roman Britain*
- Mackreth, D F, 1973 Potter's Oven, Castor, *Durobrivae*, 1, 14-15
- Mackreth, D F, 1984 Castor, *Durobrivae*, 9, 22-5
- Manning, W H, 1976 *Catalogue of Romano-British Ironwork in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
- Margary, I D, 1935 Roman roads near Durobrivae (Castor, Northamptonshire), *Antiq J*, 15, 113-18
- Margary, I D, 1967 *Roman roads in Britain*
- Markham, C A, 1901 *The stone crosses of the county of Northampton*
- Meaney, A L, and Hawkes, S C, 1970 *Two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Winnall, Winchester, Hampshire*, Soc Medieval Archaeol Monogr Ser 4
- Mellows, W T, 1949 *The Chronicle of Hugh Candidus, a monk of Peterborough*
- Mellows, W T (ed), 1966 *The Peterborough Chronicle of Hugh Candidus*
- Moorhouse, S, 1973-4 A distinctive type of Late Medieval pottery in the eastern Midlands, *Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc*, 65, 46-59
- Myres, J N L, 1941 The Anglo-Saxon pottery of Norfolk, in R Rainbird Clarke, Norfolk in the Dark Ages 400-800 AD, part 1, *Norfolk Archaeol*, 27, 185-214
- Myres, J N L, 1969 *Anglo-Saxon pottery and the settlement of England*
- Myres, J N L, 1976 The pottery, in P Mayes and M J Dean, *An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Baston, Lincs*, Occ Pap Lincolnshire Hist Archaeol 3
- Myres, J N L, and Green, B, 1973 *The Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of Caistor-by-Norwich and Markshall, Norfolk*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London 30
- Neal, D S, 1974 *The excavation of the Roman villa in Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead, 1963-8*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London 31
- O'Neil, H E, 1952 Whittington Court Roman villa, Whittington, Gloucestershire, *Trans Bristol Gloucestershire Archaeol Soc*, 71, 13-87
- Peacock, D P S (ed), 1977 *Pottery and early commerce*
- Peers, C, and Radford, C A R, 1943 The Saxon monastery of Whitby, *Archaeologia*, 89, 27-88
- Perlman, I, and Asaro, F, 1969 Pottery analysis by neutron activation, *Archaeometry*, 11, 21-52
- RCHM, 1969 Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), *Peterborough New Town. A survey of the antiquities in the areas of development*
- Sawyer, P H, 1969 *Anglo-Saxon Charters. An annotated list and bibliography*, Roy Hist Soc Guides Handbooks 8
- Smedley, N, and Owles, E, 1962-3 Some Suffolk kilns: iv, Saxon kilns in Cox Lane, Ipswich, 1961, *Proc Suffolk Inst Archaeol*, 29, 304-29
- Stanfield, J A, and Simpson, G, 1958 *Central Gaulish Potters*
- Steane, J M, 1967 Excavations at Lyveden, 1965-67, *J Northampton Mus*, 2, 3-37
- Stenton, D M (ed), 1970 *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: being the collected papers of Frank Merry Stenton*
- Tite, M S, 1972 *Methods of physical examination in*

*archaeology*

- Thompson, F H, 1954 Archaeological notes for 1954, *Lincolnshire Architect Archaeol Soc.* 6, 1-16
- Tomlinson, S, 1974 Edmund Artis, antiquary, *Durobrivae*, 2, 22-3
- Ward, G, 1938 On dating old horse-shoes, *Trans Lancashire Cheshire Antiq Soc.* 53, 140-75
- Ward-Perkins, J B, *et al*, 1940 *Medieval Catalogue*, London Mus Cat 7
- Waterman, D M, 1959 Late Saxon, Viking and early medieval finds from York, *Archaeologia*, 97, 59-105
- West, S E, 1955 Romano-British pottery kilns of West Stow Heath, *Proc Suffolk Inst Archaeol*, 26, 35-53
- West, S E, 1962-3 Excavations at Cox Lane (1958), . . . and at the town defences, Shire Hall Yard, Ipswich (1959), *Proc Suffolk Inst Archaeol*, 29, 233-303
- West, S E, 1969 Pagan Saxon pottery from West Stow, Suffolk, *Berichten van de Rijkdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek*, 19, 175-81
- Wheeler, R E M, 1930 *London in Roman Times*, London Mus Cat 3
- Wheeler, R E M, 1935 *London and the Saxons*, London Mus Cat 6
- Wheeler, R E M, and Wheeler, T V, 1936 *Verulamium, a Belgic and two Roman Cities*, Rep Res Comm Soc Antiq London II
- Whitelock, D, 1972 The pre-Viking age church in East Anglia, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1
- Whitelock, D, Douglas, D C, and Tucker, S I (eds), 1961 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*
- Wild, J P, 1974 Roman settlement in the lower Nene Valley, *Archaeol J*, 131, 140-70
- Williams, D F, 1976 *Ipswich ware: a preliminary report*, unpubl, Dept Archaeology, University of Southampton
- Williamson, G C (ed), 1887-91 *Trade Tokens issued in the seventeenth century*
- Wilson, D M, 1964 *Catalogue of antiquities of the later Saxon period in the British Museum: I: Anglo-Saxon ornamental metalwork 700-1100*
- Wilson, D M (ed), 1976 *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*
- Woodrow, R J, 1971 Cistercian ware from Silcoates School, near Wakefield, *Post-Medieval Archaeol.* 5, 185-8

## CONTENTS ON MICROFICHE

*Microfiche Sheet 1: sites and non-ceramic finds*

- M1 The excavation of Site I
- M2 Site II: evidence of later occupation
- M3 Site II: detailed plan
- M4 Site III: the excavation, including selected sections (M9-10)
- M12 Site III: non-ceramic finds
- M13 Coins *by* T H McK Clough and C Green
- M14 Non-ferrous metals
- M15 Iron
- M16 Clay
- M16 Wall-plaster *by* C G Dallas
- M16 Glass *by* C G Dallas
- M16 Flint
- M17 Other stone
- M17 Tesseræ *by* C Green
- M18 Elmlea: details of selected features
- M22 The nunnery of St Cyneburgh
- M23 Elmlea: finds other than pottery
- M23 Coins *by* A Challands
- M23 Personal ornaments
- M25 Pins
- M26 Combs
- M27 Utilitarian implements
- M28 Knives, cleavers, shears, and hones
- M29 Keys and boot cleats
- M30 Building items
- M31 Miscellaneous
- M33 Glass *by* D Charlesworth
- M37 Animal bones from Site III and Elmlea, with some notes on sampling discrepancies encountered *by* R T Jones

*Microfiche Sheet 2: ceramic finds*

- M49 Site III: the pottery
- M49 Roman *by* C G Dallas, with contributions by G B Dannell, B R Hartley, and K F Hartley
- M58 Saxon *by* C G Dallas
- M64 Saxo-Norman and Medieval *by* C G Dallas
- M70 Post-Medieval *by* C G Dallas
- M76 Elmlea: the pottery
- M76 Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon pottery illustrated in FIGS 23-6
- M84 A strap handle from Elmlea (XLV, Layer 9) *by* Dr Richard Hodges
- M85 Neutron activation analysis of Middle Saxon pottery from Elmlea *by* Richard Hunter
- M96 Medieval pottery
- M98 Post-Medieval pottery
- M99 Scraffiti

*This report has been published with the aid of a grant from the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.*