SAXON BURIALS IN WEST LANGTON PARISH, LEICESTERSHIRE: A *TIME TEAM* INVESTIGATION

Andrew B. Powell and Jörn Schuster

with contributions from:
Jacqueline I. McKinley, Lorraine Mepham and Gareth Perry;
illustrations by Rob Goller and S. E. James

An archaeological evaluation on land between Foxton and West Langton, near Market Harborough, Leicestershire, located up to seven Anglo-Saxon inhumation graves, representing part of a larger cemetery of late fifth and sixth century date. Whilst little human bone survived, there was also evidence for cremation burial in the cemetery. The grave goods, which include beads, brooches and other pieces of metalwork, suggest that three of the graves contained female burials, and one contained a dual female and male burial, the male being buried with a shield. A further inhumation grave, within the area of a Roman villa complex about 500m to the north, contained a Roman coin, although the previous finding of Anglo-Saxon pottery and metalwork at this location could indicate a second Anglo-Saxon burial ground. This grave is, therefore, of uncertain date.

INTRODUCTION

In July 2010 a geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation were undertaken by Channel 4's *Time Team* on land between Foxton and West Langton, near Market Harborough, Leicestershire (Fig. 1). In 1974 the remains of a probable Romano-British villa complex were discovered during trial trenching on the site, while in 1988 evidence for Saxon activity was indicated by metalwork and pottery collected during fieldwalking and metal detecting. The aims of the *Time Team* investigation were to determine the extent and preservation of the villa, and to investigate the nature of the Saxon activity (Wessex Archaeology 2012).

The site (centred on NGR 471480 292070) lies on both sides of Langton Brook, an east-flowing tributary of the River Welland. It represents the first area of dry soils suitable for settlement upstream from the Welland floodplain (Bowman 1995, 48).

To the south the ground rises from 79m OD to the top of a small hill at 94m OD. The northern part of the site is flatter, rising to just 83m OD on the southern flank of a ridge that rises to over 130m OD at Church Langton.

The underlying geology is mapped as Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation, with deposits of Alluvium along the valley floor and Mid Pleistocene Till on the higher ground, including on the hill to the south (British Geological Survey online viewer). Soils belong to the Wickham 2 association, characterised as

slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged (Soils of England and Wales Sheet 3, Midlands and Western England).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest evidence for settlement on the site is represented by concentrations of Middle to Late Iron Age finds recovered from both sides of Langton Brook during the 1988 fieldwalking survey (Bowman 1995, 41–4, fig. 4).

Evidence of Romano-British settlement was first indicated in 1970, when a spread of Romano-British pottery and building debris was found on the north side of the brook (McWhirr 1972, 75), and in 1974 limited trial trenching in this area revealed robbed Romano-British wall trenches and floor surfaces, and a metalled road, probably part of a heavily plough-damaged villa complex (Sheppard 1975). A magnetic resistivity survey conducted at the same time suggested that it comprised at least two main buildings, with indications of further outbuildings. Further light was thrown on the villa complex during the 1988 fieldwalking survey, which revealed a more extensive area of settlement (Bowman 1995, 48–50, fig. 5) (Fig. 1).

The fieldwalking survey, in combination with finds recovered by metal detecting, also provided evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement and mortuary activity, with two probable cemeteries being identified on the site (*ibid*, 71–3, fig. 8). One, to the north of Langton Brook, was in an area of Romano-British settlement 100m west of the main villa buildings, with finds including a small-long brooch and a fifth-century cruciform brooch fragment, as well as sherds of stamped decorated pottery. Later finds included a possible eighth-century sceat and two ninth-century strap ends. The second cemetery, on the top of the hill to the south of the brook, was indicated by pottery sherds of probable cremation urns spread over approximately a hectare (one sherd identified as of probable sixth-century date), a pair of complete cruciform brooches and annular brooches, along with beads. Although no human bone was recovered from either area, the indications were that these finds represented mixed inhumation and cremation cemeteries (Bowman 1995, 72).

METHODOLOGY

The *Time Team* investigations were focused on those parts of the site which had produced high concentrations of pottery and other finds, to both the north and the south of the brook (Fig. 1). Five areas (Areas 1–5) were subject to a geophysical survey, using a combination of magnetometry (fluxgate gradiometer) and ground penetrating radar (GPR). Subsequently, nine evaluation trenches were excavated, positioned to examine geophysical anomalies.

Small quantities of finds of prehistoric date (34 pieces of worked flint, one sherd of Iron Age pottery), and medieval and later date (two sherds of medieval pottery, 13 sherds of post-medieval pottery, two pieces of roofing slate, animal bone), were also recovered but are not further discussed.

Further details of the Roman villa complex were uncovered by the evaluation trenches – structures with stone walls and tessellated floors, cobbled surfaces and

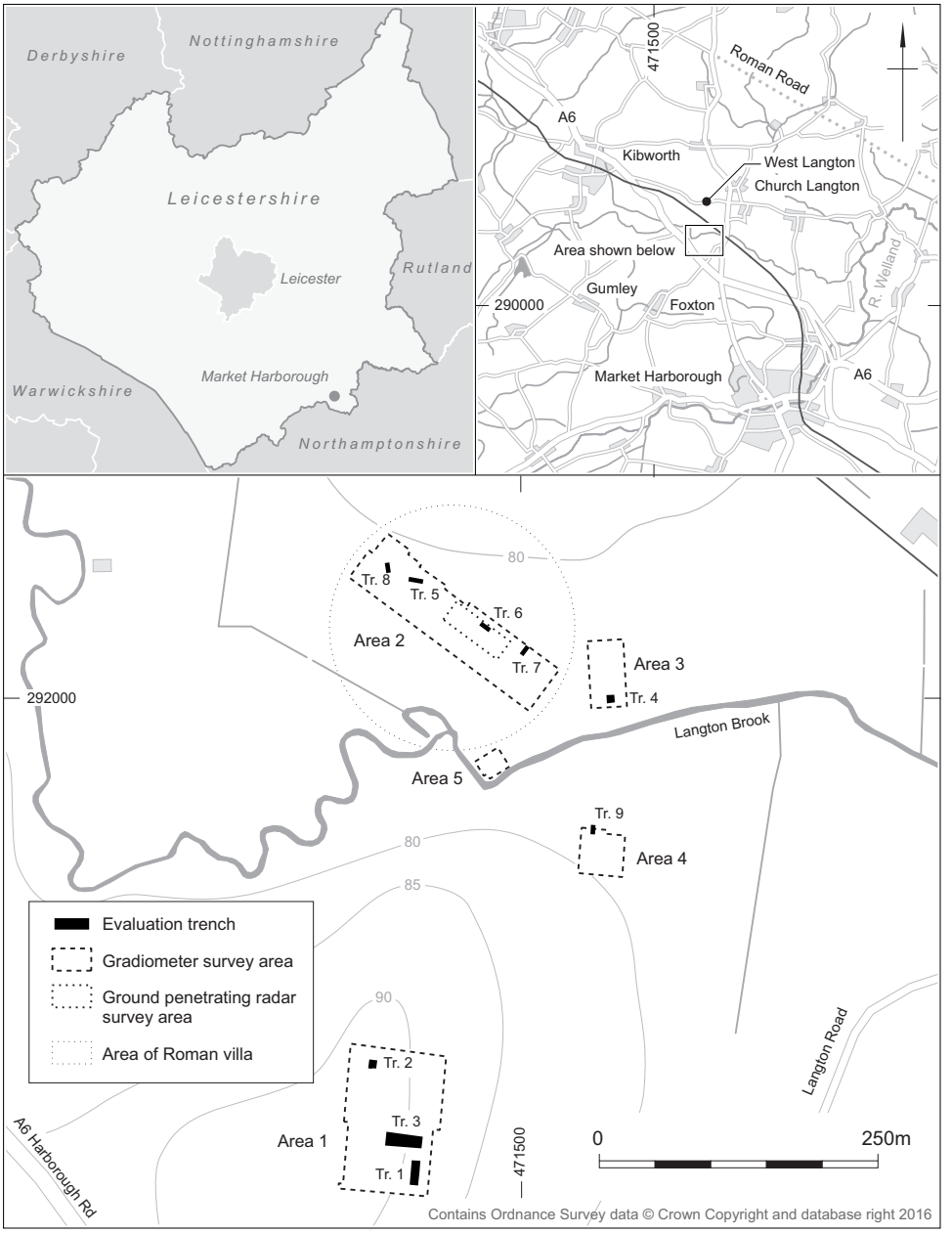

Fig. 1. Site location.

roads, field boundaries and garden plots on regular, rectilinear alignments – but the structural remains were found to be extensively robbed and plough-damaged. These features, described in detail in the post-excavation assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2012), are not further discussed in this report.

RESULTS

Eight possible inhumation graves were recorded, seven of them (319, 321, 326, 327, 328, 335 and 340) at the western end of trench 3 (Fig. 2), on the hill on the southern side of the brook, and the eighth (809) in trench 8, to the north. As noted above, previous finds from both these locations have indicated the presence of Saxon cemeteries (Bowman 1995, fig. 8). The Saxon date of the graves in trench 3 was confirmed by excavation, while that in trench 8 is of less certain, but also possibly Anglo-Saxon, date. The graves and their contents are summarised in the grave catalogue (see below).

North of Langton Brook

An undated inhumation grave (809) was recorded at the southern end of trench 8. Its northern end was heavily truncated and its southern end was cut by another feature (806), from which further, redeposited human bone was recovered. The grave contained part of the upper torso of an individual aged 18–45 years (808), aligned north to south, but was not fully excavated and the burial was left *in situ*. A copper alloy Roman coin (ON 1701), issued *c.*AD 270–96, was recovered from the grave. However, as curated Roman coins were sometimes placed in Saxon graves, it is not a reliable indicator of the grave's date. An iron nail was also recorded.

South of Langton Brook

Seven probable graves were recorded in trench 3, in an area no more than 10m wide, but their concentration at the western end of the trench makes it likely that there were other graves in the immediate area (Fig. 3). Three of them (graves 321, 328 and 335) were fully excavated, the others only partly examined. All contained human bone and/or grave goods apart from grave 326, but the latter's location, orientation and shape strongly suggested that it was also a grave.

Possibly associated with the graves was a north–south ditch (306), up to 0.7m wide and 0.45m deep. It ended, at the north, at a northwest-facing terminal that was recorded as being cut by Saxon grave 328 (below), although the two features barely overlapped and their intersection was partly obscured by a later land drain (307). Part of a small-long brooch (ON 1006) and a sherd of Saxon pottery were recovered from the ditch terminal, but could be associated with the grave.

Due to the soil conditions, the graves were hard to identify and bone preservation was very poor, with only a few teeth and degraded fragments of skull and long bone surviving. The richest grave (335), which contained five cruciform brooches, a belt buckle, tweezers, beads and other objects (Figs 3, 5, 10–12), had no surviving human bone.

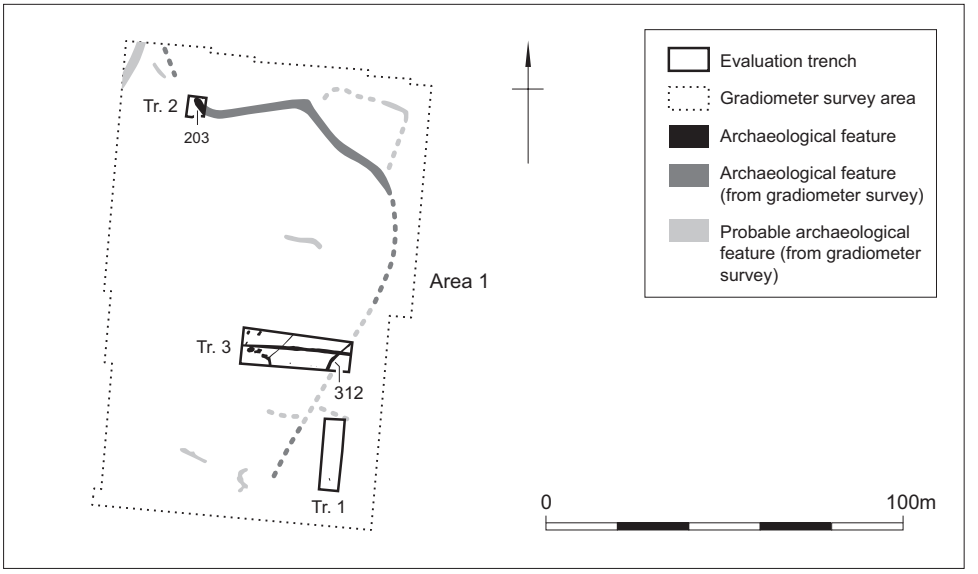

Fig. 2. Features Area 1, trenches 1–3.

Very small quantities of cremated human bone were also recovered from the fills of two of the features (grave 328 and possible grave 319). While this material may be residual in these features, its presence demonstrates that cremation was being practised in the area, possibly prior to the site's use for inhumation burial.

All the graves were of a size suitable for adults (1.2–2m+ long and 0.45–1.15m wide), and the range of grave goods (predominantly brooches and beads) recovered suggests that at least three of them (321, 327 and 335) contained females.

The human remains (teeth) and grave goods in grave 328 (Fig. 3), however, indicate that it contained two individuals, probably laid supine and extended with their heads to the west, a fact reflected in the grave's large size. The suggested individual (329) on the north side, associated with small-long brooches (ONs 1223 and 1224), was also probably female, while that to the south (330), found with an iron shield boss (ON 1222) and a ferrule (ON 1225), perhaps from a spear, was probably male. A ceramic vessel (ON 1216) had also been placed between the legs of these two individuals. The eastern end of the grave was recorded as cutting the terminal of ditch 306, from which part of a small-long brooch (ON 1006) was recovered, and it is possible that this object (a joining part of which was found unstratified) is also associated with the grave.

Probable grave 340 was not fully excavated, and only its southern portion was exposed, its northern end being preserved *in situ* and its eastern side cut by possible grave 319 (below) (Fig. 3). Fragments of adult human skull (342) were exposed in its fill close to the south-facing section, but because excavation was halted at this point it remains uncertain whether they represent part of a complete burial or are redeposited remains. A 0.25m diameter hollow in the base of the feature contained a complete pottery vessel (ON 1239) (Fig. 6). The grave also contained a flint scraper, presumably residual.

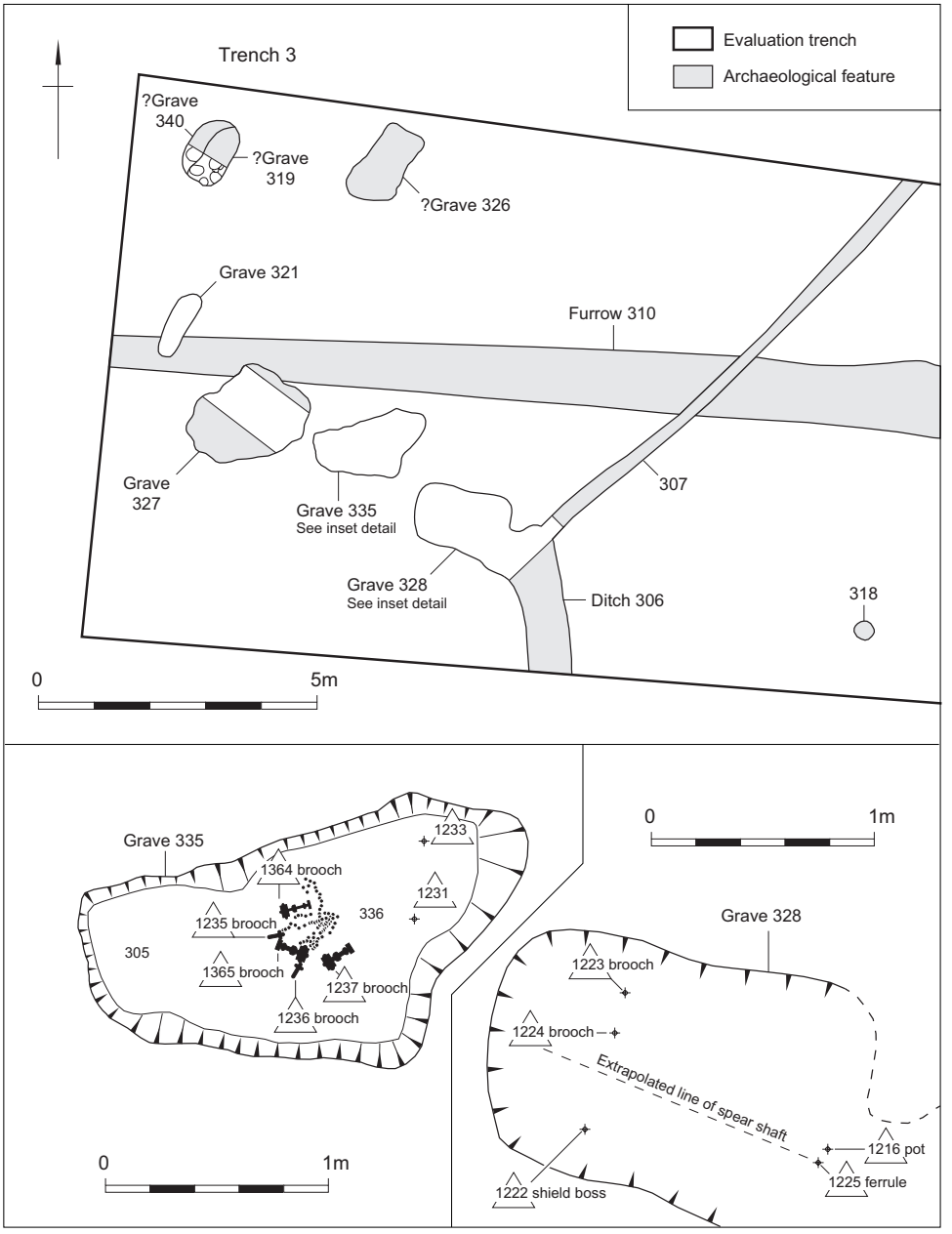

Fig. 3. Features in trench 3, with detail of graves 328 and 335.

The south-eastern side of grave 340 was cut by another grave-shaped feature (319), with the same orientation (Fig. 3). It was 1.1m long, 0.6m wide and 0.08 deep, and like grave 340 only its south-western part was excavated. Also like the grave, it had three small hollows, in this case interpreted as possible post-holes, in its base at the south-west end (Fig. 6). Its fill (320) contained fragments of cremated human bone (<1g), charcoal and a fragment of a small copper alloy rod, as well as large pieces of sandstone in the centre of the cut, but it is unclear whether or not this material had been deliberately deposited, and the nature of this feature remains uncertain.

Grave catalogue

Descriptions of the grave goods are given in the relevant finds reports (see below); for the location of the graves, see Figs 1–3.

Trench 3

?Grave 319 (cremation-related deposit in fill 320)

SW–NE; subrectangular, irregular shallow sides and flat base, with arc of 3 shallow post-holes/sockets around SW end; 1.1m × 0.6m, 0.08m deep (base at 93.92m OD); cuts fill of grave 340

Human bone: 0.4g worn burnt bone, possibly human incl. long bone shaft fragment; scraps burnt bone (0.2g); possibly human ?fibula shaft fragment; 0.1g ?human rib shaft, and charred animal bone

Finds: fragment of copper alloy rod (not illustr.)

Grave 321 (fill 322)

NNE–SSW; subrectangular; irregular shallow sides and flat base; 1.3m × 0.45m, 0.01m deep (base at 93.95m OD)

Human bone: no human remains

Grave goods (Fig. 7):

ON 1208 gilt copper alloy equal-armed brooch; Böhme type Nesse

ON 1209 monochrome glass bead; irregular coiled, medium, blue

ONs 1246, 1248, 1250, 1367 four monochrome glass beads (1248 and 1250 not illustr.); wound, large, annular, blue

ONs 1245, 1249 two monochrome beads; wound, medium, globular; blue crossing waves on opaque blue-white body (Koch 34)

ON 1247 polychrome glass bead; wound, medium, globular; blue spiral on opaque blue-white body

Residual finds: burnt flint

?Grave 326 (fill 325)

SW–NE; subrectangular, partially excavated (0.06m depth); 1.5m × 0.9m (surface at 93.99m OD)

Human bone: no human remains

Residual finds: worked flint

Grave 327 (fill 323)

SW–NE; sub-oval; partially excavated, very irregular, shallow (and diffuse) edges, uncertain base; 1.9m × 1.7m, 0.15m deep (limit of excavation at 93.83m OD)

Human bone: no human remains

Grave goods (Fig. 7 and 8):

ON 1214 (not illustr.) iron object, approx. 100 fragments

ON 1230 (not illustr.) copper alloy belt buckle; Marzinzik II.22a

ON 1232 gilt copper alloy brooch foot; Hines group X (Fig. 8)

ONs 1210, 1211, 1215, 1228, 1229, 1234 amber beads (only 1234 illustr.); two of Evison's form A03 (cylindrical), others fragmentary

Grave 328 (burial remains 329, 330; fills 331, 332)

Human bone: 329 – northern of two individuals; only teeth survived; some mixing with 330; adult 25–35 years. 330 – southern of two individuals; only teeth and heavily degraded remnants of femur shaft; adult 18–28 years. 332 – cremated bone 1.1g; subadult/adult >15 years

Grave goods (Fig. 9):

ON 1216 pottery vessel (top half only); Sandstone Fabric (SST); Perry 3Bii, 3Biii, 4aii, 4aiii, 4Biii, 5Bi or a 5Biii

ON 1221 (not illustr.) iron sheet

ON 1222 iron shield boss; Dickinson & Härke Group 1; Høilund Nielsen SB 1

ON 1238/1243 iron, ?leather and ?wood; fragments of grip of shield boss 1222

ON 1223 copper alloy small-long brooch (pair with ON 1224)

ON 1224 copper alloy small-long brooch (pair with ON 1223)

ON 1225 iron spear ferrule

Residual finds: worked flint

Grave 335 (fill 336)

SW–NE; subrectangular, irregular acute sides and flat base; 1.2m × 0.7m, 0.18m deep (base at 93.79m OD)

Human bone: no human remains

Grave goods (Figs 10–12):

ON 1231 (not illustr.) copper alloy ?wrist-clasp

ON 1233 copper alloy strip

ON 1235 copper alloy and iron cruciform brooch (pair with ON 1236)

ON 1236 copper alloy and iron cruciform brooch (pair with ON 1235)

ON 1237 copper alloy and iron cruciform brooch (pair with ON 1364)

ON 1363 iron belt buckle; Marzinzik II.19a (unlocated in grave)

ON 1364 copper alloy and iron cruciform brooch (pair with ON 1237); Martin Type 3.2.1

ON 1365 copper alloy and iron cruciform brooch; Martin Type 3.2.1

ON 1366 copper alloy tweezers (unlocated in grave)

ONs 1261, 1263–71, 1273–5, 1309–10, 1313–17, 1319–34, 1336–44, 1346, 1351, 1353–5, 1358; 52 monochrome glass beads (1333 and 1358 illustr.); wound, medium to large, annular, blue

ONs 1255, 1262; 2 monochrome glass beads (1262 not illustr.); wound, large, ribbed, transparent pale blue

ONs 1312, 1349; 2 monochrome glass beads (1349 not illustr.); wound, medium to large, disc, opaque blue-white

ON 1348 monochrome glass bead; wound, large, thick-walled cylinder, opaque blue-white

ONs 1260, 1318, 1335; 3 polychrome glass beads (1260 and 1318 illustr.); wound, medium, short globular, blue crossing waves and opaque red dots on opaque blue-white body (Dot 34)

ON 1276 polychrome glass bead; wound, large, short globular, blue crossing waves on opaque blue-white body (Koch 34)

ON 1288 polychrome bead (not illustr.); wound, large, short globular, blue crossing waves and row of dots on opaque blue-white body (Koch 20)

ONs 1251–4, 1256–9, 1277–87, 1289, 1291–9, 1305–8, 1347, 1350, 1352, 1356–7, 1359–61; 39 amber beads (1253, 1295, 1257, 1280, 1283, 1307 illustr.); medium to large, 1 Evison's form A03, 34 A04, 3 A04/A10, 1 fragmentary.

Grave 340 (burial remains 342; fill 341)

SW–NE; subrectangular; vertical sides, base not exposed; 250mm diameter socket/setting with pottery vessel (ON 1239); overall >1.2m × 0.88m, >0.13m deep (surface at 93.97m OD); cut by ?grave 319

Human bone: fragments of skull vault (not excavated), thickness consistent with adult

Grave goods (Fig. 7):

ON 1239 pottery vessel; Sandstone Fabric (SST); Perry 5Biii

Trench 8

Grave 809 (burial remains 808; fill 807) (Fig. 4)

N–S; truncated, subrectangular; >0.5m × 0.6m, not excavated.

Human bone: truncated remains of *in situ* burial; adult 18–45 years

Finds (not illustr.):

ON 1701 copper alloy coin, irregular radiate *antoninianus*, *c.*AD 270–96; iron nail

Fig. 4. Inhumation grave 809, viewed from the east.

Anglo-Saxon finds

Metalwork

Jörn Schuster

Thirty-one items of metalwork were recovered from trench 3, but refitting during analysis has reduced the individual object count to 27. This number may have been even smaller, as some of the remaining items are evidently fragments of larger objects. The assemblage is dominated by brooches, but includes also belt buckles and fittings, a pair of tweezers, a probable wrist clasp, a shield boss and a spear ferrule.

Equal-armed brooch

The most striking of the brooches is a gilt equal-armed brooch ON 1208 (Fig. 7), found near the western edge of grave 321. The scrollwork in the trapezoidal fields and the animals along all outside borders identify it as Böhme's type Nesse (Böhme 1974, 18). Apart from the inside border on the narrower arm, the quadrupeds are carefully executed as openwork. Animal borders in openwork are a trait indicative of the developed examples of the type and mainly found in England (Collingbourne Ducis, grave 6; Westgarth Gardens, grave 55; Abingdon, cremation 26: Evison 1977, figs 4c, 5a–b. Hollingbourne: PAS KENT-109B46; for a distribution map see Bruns 2003, 2–3, map 1), although there are Continental examples, for instance from Liebenau (grave II/218) and Oberhausen, both Germany, and Zweelo, Netherlands

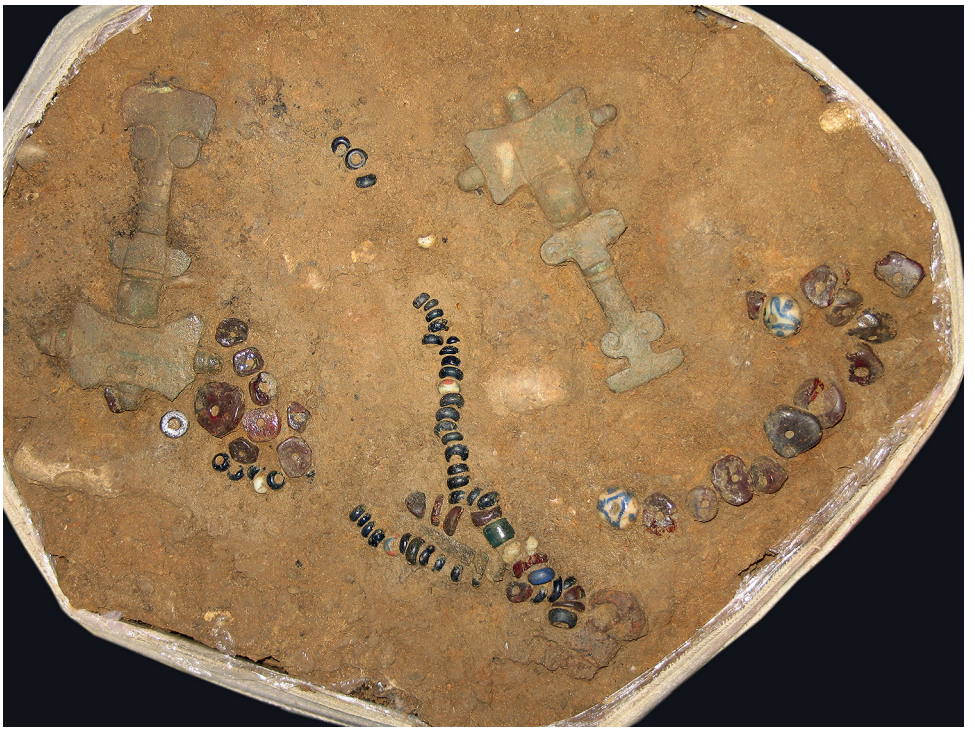

Fig. 5. Grave goods in grave 335 during excavation, viewed from the east.

(Böhme 1974, Taf. 29, 12; 31, 5; 73, 13), showing various degrees of the opening of the animal borders.

The most accomplished of the above-mentioned brooches is that from Zweelo, with the scrollwork executed in complete symmetry, and the animals neatly decorated and with well-defined bodies. Compared to this, the West Langton brooch only falls down on the symmetry of the scrollwork of the bow. Unlike the brooches from Oberhausen and Zweelo, the animals along both outside edges are additionally bordered by a triple-band. These two bands are attached immediately above the animals' heads in a way only paralleled on the wider arm of the Liebenau brooch, which also exhibits similar but generally less carefully made scrollwork that may, however, be the effect of it being placed on the funerary pyre. Although such outer bands also occur on two of the English brooches (Collingbourne Ducis and the fragmented example from Abingdon), their outer bands are not immediately attached to the quadrupeds' heads, but instead fixed to their sinuous bodies by means of short spacers reminiscent of another brooch from Liebenau, Brandgrab VIII/65 (Böhme 1974, 18, 347, Taf. 29, 15). Böhme included this brooch in his type Nesse, but the present author agrees with Bruns (2003, 20) that, apart from its openwork borders, this brooch shares all the details of type Sahlenburg. Interestingly though, the backward glancing animals on the inner borders of type Sahlenburg brooches would appear to be closer precursors to the joint inner border animals found on

Fig. 6. Vessel 1239 in grave 340, viewed from the south-south-west.

the developed type Nesse brooches (Collingbourne Ducis, Westgarth Gardens and Abingdon).

While there seems to be general agreement that equal-armed brooches were female dress accessories mainly dating to the fifth century, both the stylistic development and the dating of individual types has been a matter of controversy over the years (see e.g. Genrich 1964, 26; Böhme 1974, 18–19; Evison 1977, 134; Brieske 2001, 53; Bruns 2003, 28–30; Penn and Brugmann 2007, 24; Hills and Lucy 2013, 39–40). The West Langton brooch clearly belongs to a developed stage of

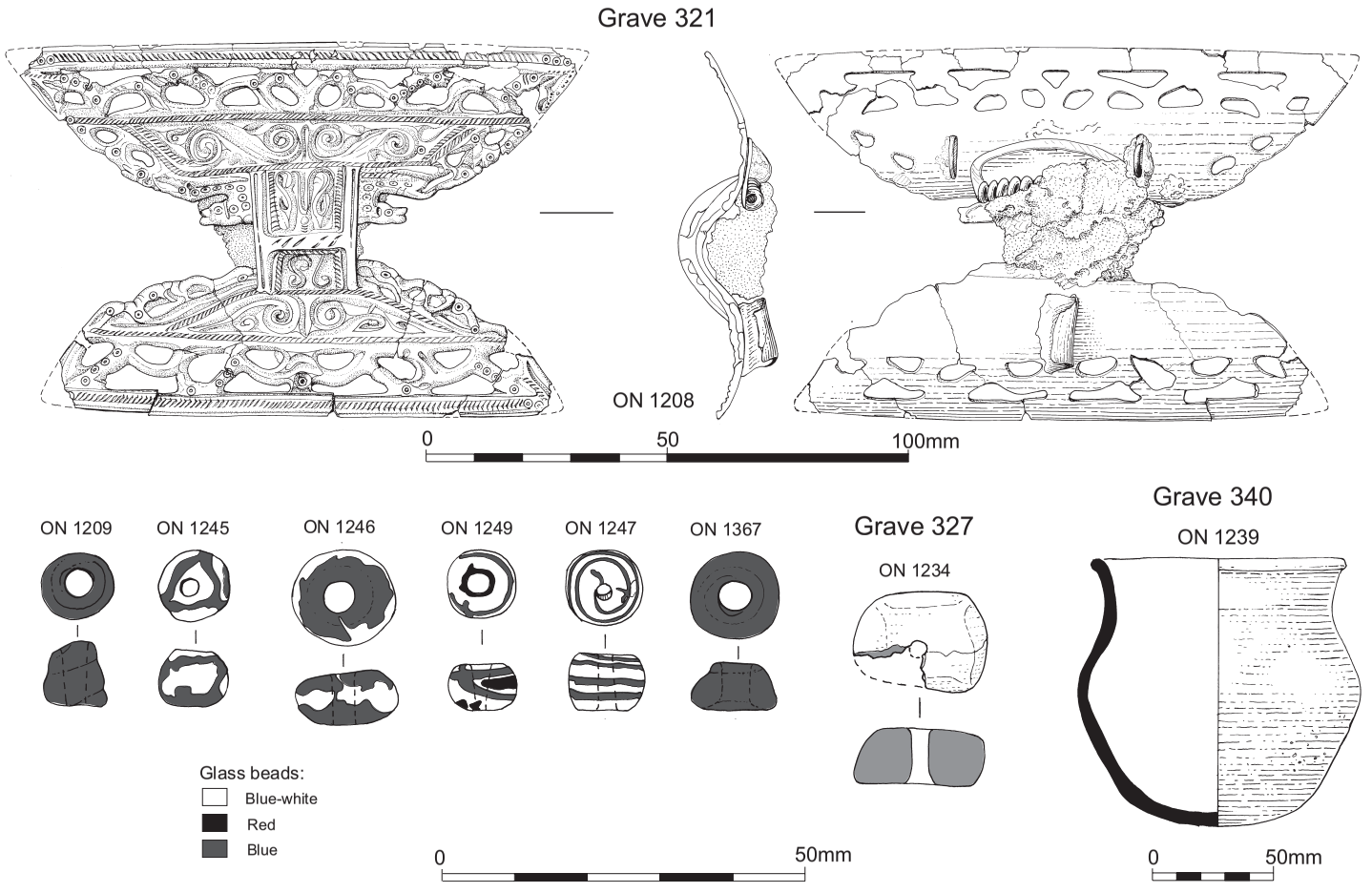

Fig. 7. Selected objects from graves 321, 327 and 340.

type Nesse, but as it is lacking the bow-like connections between the arms, it may be an intermediary stage between Bruns' types Nesse and Nesse 2. Although this may not allow its manufacture to be dated more closely than the middle or later fifth century, it is clear from its abrasion, especially along the inside borders, that it had been in use for a considerable amount of time (for estimations of the correlation between wear over time, see Richthofen 1998, 256). The fact that it was found in association with glass beads, some of which are of type Koch 34 (see Mepham below), suggests a date of deposition towards the later sixth, maybe even as late as the early seventh century.

Cruciform brooches

Five cruciform brooches were found in grave 335 (Figs 10–12). Additionally, a half-profiled, hollow knob with trapezoidal plate, probably part of a further cruciform brooch from a disturbed grave, was recovered from the spoil-heap. The brooches from grave 335 comprise two pairs: the smaller (ONs 1235 and 1236) appear to be relatively plain examples with half-round knobs cast in one with the wings and spatula-shaped/triangular foot terminals. The brooches have not been cleaned before analysis, some fine detail may therefore be obstructed. They could be placed into Reichstein's late types Foldvik-Empingham or Barrington of the later fifth and earlier sixth century (Reichstein 1975, 37, 43–4, 94). In their analysis of four East Anglian cemeteries, Penn and Brugmann (2007, 24, 70, fig. 5.21) included comparable brooches in their type X1, dating to their phase FA1 of the earlier part of the second half of the fifth century.

The other three brooches (ONs 1237, 1364 and 1365) belong to Martin's type 3.2.1 (Martin 2011, 58–9). The first two form an almost identical pair with spiral nostrils slightly above the foot terminals, while the circular nostrils in ON 1365 are closer to the terminal and only decorated with five ring-dots each. With 81 examples distributed from north-east England to southern East Anglia, this is the most numerous type in Martin's typology and dated to his phase B, which covers the last quarter of the fifth to the middle of the sixth centuries (Martin 2011, 119, table 3.7, 131, plate 276). All three brooches show signs of long use. Additionally, two have been repaired at some stage: the catchplate of ON 1237 was soldered onto the back of the foot. A more substantial repair was necessary on ON 1365, where the entire right wing had to be replaced by riveting a replacement onto the head-plate, and the half-knob was soldered onto the outer edge of the new wing. Furthermore, this brooch stands out in that it has a rare left-facing catchplate, an element not unfrequently observed in late fourth-century crossbow brooches, where it may be indicative of the way the brooch was worn (Mackreth 2011, 204–5), but exceedingly rare in other types. A very close comparison, probably from the same workshop, for the pair of brooches ON 1237 and 1364, an unusual form of Martin's type 3.2.1, comes from an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Wigston Magna, 12km to the north-west of the site (Liddle and Middleton 1994, illustr. 5; Martin pers. comm.).

Small-long brooches

Eleven whole or fragmented small-long brooches were recovered, belonging to no more than eight brooches overall. Only two were found in a recognisable grave

context (ONs 1223 and 1224, in grave 328; Fig. 9). In two instances, it was possible to rejoin fragments: the head of a brooch (ON 1006) found in the terminal of ditch 306 (recorded as cut by grave 328) joined a bow and foot (ON 1000) recovered from the topsoil; and the top cross arm (ON 1202), as well as the rest of brooch ON 1200, were retrieved individually from the spoil-heap. A further two bow and foot fragments (ONs 1001 and 1003), possibly belonging to a matching pair, were found in the topsoil, while two head plates with rests of bows (ONs 1204 and 1212) and a cross pattée arm fragment (ON 1203) came from the spoil-heap.

Identification of the highly variable small-long brooches has relied on the typology devised by Leeds (1945, 4–44, 88–106), which placed tight chronological emphasis on the various shapes of the head-plate and foot terminals, although an update of his study is long overdue (for a summary of the subsequent research, see Scheschkewitz 2006, 99–102; Penn and Brugmann 2007, 24–5; Hills and Lucy 2013, 34–5). Small-long brooches are considered to have been developed during the fifth century in northern Germany. The English groups, mainly found in East Anglia and the southern Midlands, show particular influence from types developed in the (Anglian) areas north of the River Elbe (Böhme 1986, 555–7 Abb. 72). For their recent analysis of four East Anglian cemeteries, Penn and Brugmann defined three groups: *sm1* with square head plates or lappets to the head plates; *sm2* with trefoil heads and *sm3* with lappets to the bow and spatula-shaped foot-plates. Only the first two groups are represented at West Langton (*sm1:* ON 1200, 1202; *sm2*: ONs 1203, 1223, 1224), and due to fragmented preservation it is not possible even to distinguish between these broad groups in many cases. Both groups started in Penn and Brugmann's phase FA1, with group *sm2* still in use in phase FA2a, thus roughly covering the last two quarters of the fifth century to first decade of the sixth century (Penn and Brugmann 2007, fig. 5.20; 71).

Great square-headed brooch

A triangular footplate terminal lobe of a great square-headed brooch was found in grave 327 (ON 1232) (Fig. 8). It is decorated with a chip-carved bearded human mask. Great square-headed brooches are among the most conspicuous elements of female dress in north-west Europe during the later fifth and sixth century (Scheschkewitz 2006, 89). The closest comparison for this brooch can be found at Broughton Lodge, Nottinghamshire, grave 16 (Hines 1997, fig. 45a, plate 35a). The brooch belongs to Hines' group X, roughly dated to the first half of the sixth century (*ibid*, 230–2).

Other dress accessories and personal artefacts

What may have been part of a wrist clasp was recovered from the south-eastern edge of grave 335 (ON 1231). The soil block contained very corroded fragments of copper alloy sheet with traces of white metal coating and possibly repoussé decoration. Four minute pin-holes were observable along one edge. It could be that two sheets were separated by mineralised organic remains (maybe the two sides of the cuff either side of the slit?). It is likely that the clasp belongs to one of the types in Hines Class B, which includes roundels, plates or bars of copper alloy fitted to the garment by stitches or rivets (Hines 1993). Wrist-clasps became a standard element

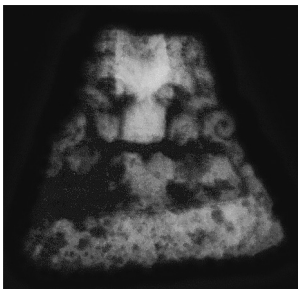

Fig. 8. X-radiograph of great square-headed brooch ON 1232 from grave 327.

of Anglian female dress in the fifth century and went out of fashion during the second half of the sixth century. Given the fragmentation of ON 1231, it cannot be assigned to an individual type in Class B and thus cannot be dated more closely than Penn and Brugmann's phase FA2, covering the later fifth and earlier sixth century (Penn and Brugmann 2007, 28–9).

Two buckles and a belt plate were found. Grave 327 contained the very fragmented remains of a (possibly iron) buckle with tongue-shaped copper alloy plate (ON 1230) of Marzinzik's (2003) type II.22a, with a broad date range covering the sixth and seventh centuries. In grave 335 the completely corroded remains of an iron D-shaped buckle with folded, rectangular plate (ON 1363; Fig. 12) were found more or less in the centre of the grave. It belongs to Marzinzik type-group II.19a, ranging in date from the later fifth to the middle/second half of the seventh century. Additionally, an originally gilt, rectangular, almost square plate (ON 1002) with rectangular central setting (6.7mm × 7.4mm) for a now lost stone or glass, surrounded by chip-carved Style 1-animals, was recovered from the topsoil. It belongs to Marzinzik type II.14a/Høilund Nielsen type BU5-a, dated to the first half/middle of the sixth century (cf. Høilund Nielsen 2013, 145). While the two buckles were found in probably female graves, the gilt belt plates usually have a male association.

A thin strip of copper alloy sheet (ON 1233; Fig. 12), decorated with triangular punches along the outer edge, was found at the north-eastern end of grave 335. Another fragment (ON 1205; Fig. 12; most likely of the same object, although the fragments do not join) was recovered from medieval furrow 310, which passed to the immediate north of grave 335. The two strip fragments could be part of a tag end (see e.g. Bergh Apton, grave 29; Green and Rogerson 1978, fig. 82 Hxiii), but are most likely part of the stem of a girdle-hanger (e.g. *ibid*, Hvi). In this country girdle-hangers are predominantly found in eastern English graves of well-equipped women, which is also the case in this instance (Hills and Lucy 2013, 60–1). The lack of the usually T-shaped or grid-like terminal of the girdle-hanger prevents it being assigned to one of the three types distinguished by Penn and Brugmann. Thus, the object can only generally be assigned to their phase FA, covering the period between *c*.480 and 550 (Penn and Brugmann 2007, 30).

Grave 335 also contained a pair of plain copper alloy tweezers (ON 1366; Fig. 12) with the fragments of a suspension loop (locations in grave not recorded). At

a length of probably just above 50mm, they fall at the dividing line for full-size tweezers at Spong Hill (Hills and Lucy 2013, 62). As a long-lived type, this item cannot be dated more precisely within the fifth to seventh centuries.

Weapons

Double grave 328 contained the very fragmented remains of a shield boss (ONs 1222, 1238, 1243; Fig. 9), found on or above the upper right chest/shoulder area of the inhumation on the southern side of the grave, and a ferrule (ON 1225; Fig. 9) which lay somewhere near the outside of the right foot. The typological identification of the shield boss is hampered by its extremely corroded preservation; thus the representation in Fig. 9 should be considered nothing more than a 'best guess'. The boss appears to have a slightly convex cone with a disc-like apex and a concave wall, which would suggest that it belongs to Dickinson and Härke Group 1 (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 10–12), Penn and Brugmann type SOC3 (Penn and Brugmann 2007, 22) or Høilund Nielsen group SB 1 (Høilund Nielsen 2013, 153). However, neither the number of the discoid rivets on the flange, nor the shape of the grip and handle (including fragments ON 1238 and ON 1234) , could be determined. On this basis, the shield boss can only broadly be dated to the second half of the fifth or sixth century.

Grave assemblages as indicators of gender

The majority of the metal grave goods would appear to belong in the female sphere (Stoodley 1999, 78, 218, table 43). On this basis it can be assumed that graves 321, 327, 328 (burial remains 329) and 335 – as well as several other now completely obliterated graves whose presence is merely indicated by the large number of small-long brooches – contained the burials of women. The shield boss and spear ferrule in double grave 328 (burial remains 330) is the only male burial, although the square belt plate (ON 1002), recovered from the topsoil, is an artefact probably indicative of a destroyed male grave.

The male assemblage, including spear and shield, from grave 328 represents the most common masculine combination in Stoodley's national sample (44 per cent of 346 burials), and this is also true for his East Midlands subsample (Stoodley 1999, figs 70 and 77, tables 46 and 52). The individual on the northern side of the same grave appears to have been buried with only two trefoil-headed small-long brooches. Combinations only comprising dress fasteners were the third most common feminine combination, both nationally and in East Anglia (*ibid*, figs 72 and 78). Considering the wealth displayed in the two burials, the double grave is at variance with the observed pattern for the East Midlands in that it does not display the usual discrepancy between the frequently lower number of grave goods accompanying male/masculine burials and the higher number of grave goods in female/feminine burials (*ibid*., 98, fig. 86).

Grave 335 contained the remains of a woman afforded the full feminine kit; i.e. the combination of dress fastener, jewellery and personal equipment. This was Stoodley's second most common female combination, although the inclusion of a girdle hanger only occurred in 9 per cent of his national sample, while it was more frequent in the East Midlands (*ibid*., 87, fig 78, table 53).

Reconstructing clothing and costume

The truncation of most graves makes it difficult to comment on questions of dress and costume, but the relative completeness of the assemblage in grave 335 allows it to be compared to similar richly furnished graves like, for instance, Mildenhall, Holywell Row grave 79 (Walton Rogers 2007, 196–7, fig. 5.50). Cleatham grave 30 is an even better parallel, as it is the only other example of a grave containing five cruciform brooches, including two matching pairs (Martin 2011, 260, 417–19, table A1.5–6). Thus, it appears that the woman buried here wore two cloaks, a mantle dress and possibly a buckled cape, although in this case the buckle may also have been worn around one of the cloaks at about hip height. Such multiple layered clothing frequently occurs in the graves of older women (*ibid*, 196). An advanced age is furthermore suggested by the fact that the individual wore five cruciform brooches (Martin 2011, 234). Direct evidence for at least one outer garment covering some of the brooches comes from the corrosion patterns observed on the bows of brooches ON 1364 (left mid- to lower chest area) and ON 1365 (centre of upper chest area between brooches ON 1235 and ON 1236).

The richly decorated equal-arm brooch in grave 321 lay near the western edge of the grave cut, with glass bead 1209 a few centimetres further north. Since no bone was preserved and the position of the brooch is probably due to plough damage, it remains uncertain whether it lay nearer the head or foot of the grave. However, it is noteworthy that the equal-armed brooch in Collingbourne Ducis grave 6 was found in a similar position, although in that instance it is clear that the brooch lay above the right humerus (Gingell 1978, 68). The occurrence of equal-armed brooches as the sole brooch is more frequent on the Continent, whereas this is rare in England; the two instances referred to above are the only ones. They are more commonly found as cloak fasteners, with arms sideways, in the centre of the chest, in combination with one or two (frequently disc-) brooches at the shoulders (Evison 1977, 134; Walton Rogers 2007, 121).

Chronology

Based on this consideration of the metalwork, the cemetery as a whole can be roughly dated to the end of the fifth and sixth centuries, although the identifiable graves might in fact all belong to the sixth century. If the two individuals in grave 328 were indeed buried at the same time, this might well be among the earliest of the graves, while the majority of the earlier element in the cemetery is merely represented by some of the small-long brooches from destroyed graves. It is obvious that some of the metalwork in grave 335, and, especially, the equal-armed brooch in grave 321, were quite old when finally deposited, probably not earlier than the middle/second half of the sixth century.

Pottery – Vessels 1239 and 1216

Gareth Perry

Two pottery vessels were associated with Saxon inhumations in graves 328 (vessel 1216) and 340 (vessel 1239). Neither was complete and the level of preservation meant that only the profile of vessel 1239 was fully reconstructable. Both vessels

were examined using a binocular microscope, at ×20 magnification, for evidence of use, manufacturing techniques and characterisation of the fabric. All sherds from vessel 1216 were examined, but as only one sherd from the basal angle of vessel 1239 was available for study, observations relating to it are not necessarily representative of the rest of the vessel.

Vessel 1216 (Fig. 9)

Fabric: Sandstone Fabric (SST); non-plastics account for approx. 30 per cent of the fabric; poorly sorted, fine to coarse grains of sub-angular quartz and feldspar dominate the suite of non-plastics (modal size 0.25mm); these grains derive from fine to coarse grained sandstones (<2.5mm), fragments of which are present in the fabric; also includes rare, coarse, sub-rounded ferruginous grains, voids deriving from burnt-out organics such as roots and blades of grass, and very rare coarse laths of golden biotite mica.

Firing colour: reduced throughout with grey-brown to grey-black patches; small oxidised patch (approx. 15mm diameter) close to the rim.

Form: only the top half remains and thus it is difficult to be certain (could be classified as either a Perry 3Bii, 3Biii, 4aii, 4aiii, 4Biii, 5Bi or a 5Biii).

Surface treatment: heavily wiped with clear striations resulting from grass wiping; in places the wiping has polished the surface to an almost burnished sheen.

Method of manufacture: coil joins are evident in fresh fracture; the orientation of the fabric indicates that the coils were joined by smearing upwards on the exterior surface and downwards on the interior surface.

Evidence of use: no clear evidence, although the interior surfaces of two small sherds are missing; this form of attrition is reminiscent of the internal pitting that develops as a result of vessels having contained fermented produce (Arthur 2002; 2003); fragments are too small to be sure that they represent evidence of this type of use.

Vessel 1239 (Fig. 7)

Fabric: Sandstone Fabric (SST); non-plastics account for approx. 30 per cent of the fabric; poorly sorted, fine to coarse grains of sub-angular quartz and feldspar dominate the suite of non-plastics (modal size 0.25mm); these grains derive from fine to coarse grained sandstones (<2.5mm), fragments of which are present in the fabric; also includes rare, coarse, sub-rounded ferruginous grains, voids deriving from burnt-out organics such as roots and blades of grass, and very rare coarse laths of golden biotite mica.

Firing colour: outer surface of the sherd is oxidised and there are oxidised patches on the interior surface; margins and core reduced throughout.

Form: Perry's 5Biii (see Perry 2014).

Surface treatment: appears to have been wiped, though there is much abrasion on the basal angle and therefore is difficult to be certain.

Method of manufacture: coil joins visible in the fresh fracture, demonstrating that vessel was coil-built.

Evidence of use: pedestalled temper on the exterior basal angle and the base exterior has a well-developed abraded patch; the interior is much abraded with a well-developed abraded patch, pedestalled temper and missing temper pits.

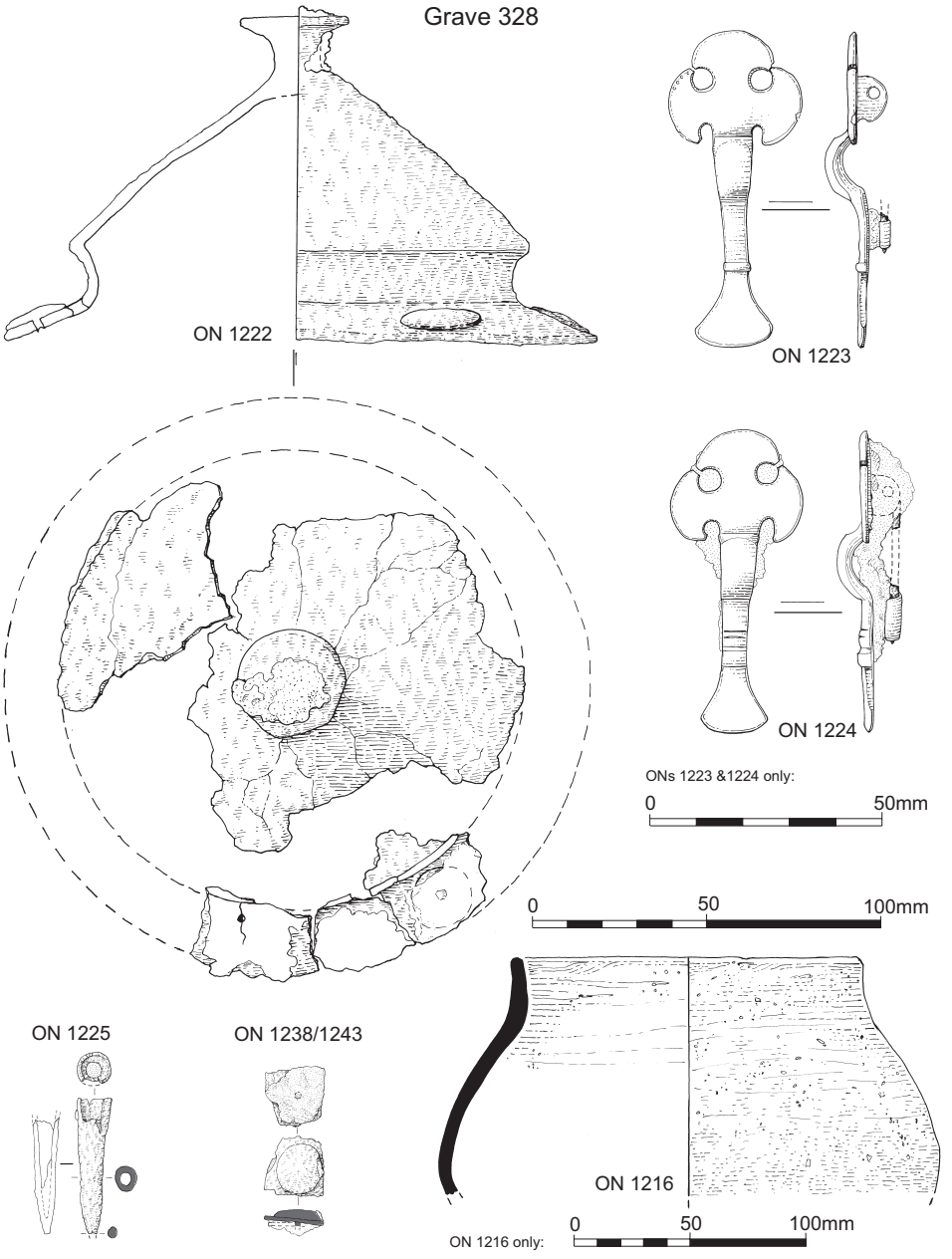

Fig. 9. Selected objects from grave 328.

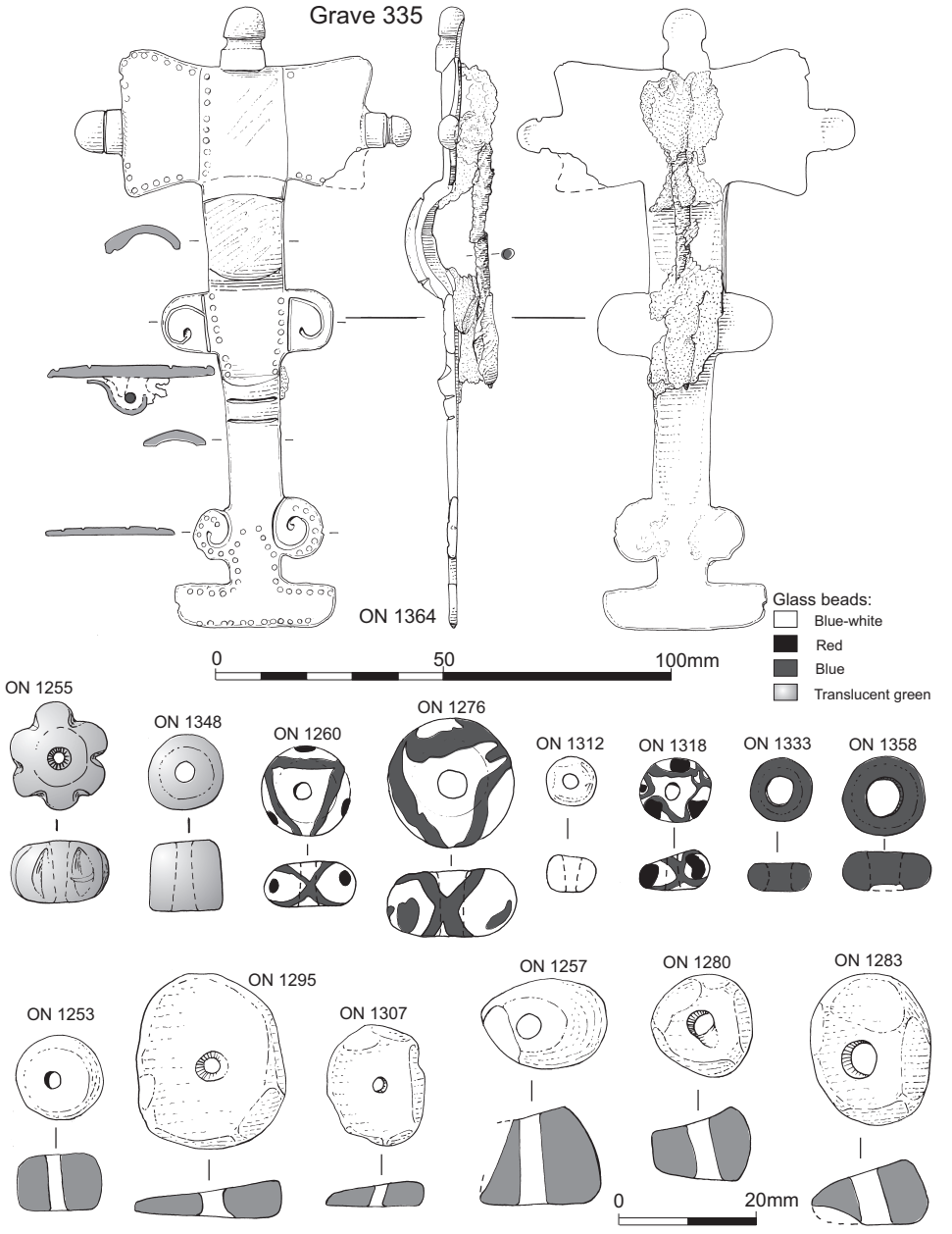

Fig. 10. Selected objects from grave 335.

Fabric

Both vessels are of the same fabric type, characterised by poorly sorted fine to coarse grains of quartz deriving from sandstone, and including rare ferruginous concretions, voids from burnt-out organics and flakes of golden biotite mica. Sandstone-type fabrics are a relatively common occurrence in assemblages of early to middle Anglo-Saxon pottery, having been found on both domestic and funerary sites; e.g. Flixborough and Cleatham (Lincolnshire) (Leahy 2007, Young and Vince 2009). Notwithstanding the attention that has been paid to fabrics containing fragments of granodiorite, deriving from igneous outcrops in the Charnwood Forest area of Leicestershire (Williams and Vince 1997), scholars have given little consideration to the broader fabric-types that were used by Leicestershire's early Anglo-Saxon potters. For example, both decorated and plain pots have been found at Birstall (approx. 20km north of West Langton), yet no mention is made of the pottery fabric (Wilson and Hurst 1959; 1960; Meaney 1964, 144), whilst descriptions of the fabrics of the urns from Thurmaston provide only cursory insight in to their character; e.g. Urn 97A: 'poorly fired, highly micaceous, sandy coarse grey/orange ware, with white quartz grits' (Williams 1983, 47). It is difficult, therefore, to ascertain how representative these two vessels are of wider Anglo-Saxon potting traditions in Leicestershire.

Despite the lack of consideration of broader Anglo-Saxon fabric types, Vince's (2007a; 2008a) petrographic analyses of prehistoric pottery from Leicestershire does allow this pottery to be placed within a regional setting. The fabric of Iron Age pottery from Humberstone and Birstall (Vince 2008a) included fragments of sandstone, as did Bronze Age pottery from Ratcliffe on the Wreake (Vince 2007a) – all sites are within 25km of this site. Vince noted considerable variation in the character of these sandstones, both in terms of the size, sorting and shape of the grains and the cements that held them together. He acknowledged the difficulty in providing a precise provenance for this pottery as such features are typical of the Triassic sandstone-derived clays and sands that occupy much of the East Midlands.

As sandstone is a typical component of East Midlands pottery, and the golden flakes of biotite mica are characteristic of the Charnwood Forest granodiorite (see Williams and Vince 1997), it is highly likely that these pots were produced locally. The combination of igneous and sedimentary rock-types suggest that the clay used to make this pottery was of mixed composition – a boulder clay, for example. As West Langton sits upon boulder clay, and there are deposits of glacial sand and gravel to the east and west, at Welham and Kibworth Harcourt, there are a number of locations close to the site which offer potential sources for the raw materials used to make this pottery. Detailed thin section analysis of this pottery and samples of this local clay may provide further insight into its origin.

Form and function

The abrasive attrition noted on vessel 1239 – pedestalled temper and abraded patches – suggests that this vessel was used prior to being buried. These characteristics develop when the clay paste is removed from the surface of the vessel as the pot rubs against abraders such as soil and sand. Activities that might cause abrasion include setting the pot down, tipping or dragging it during the course of serving, or even

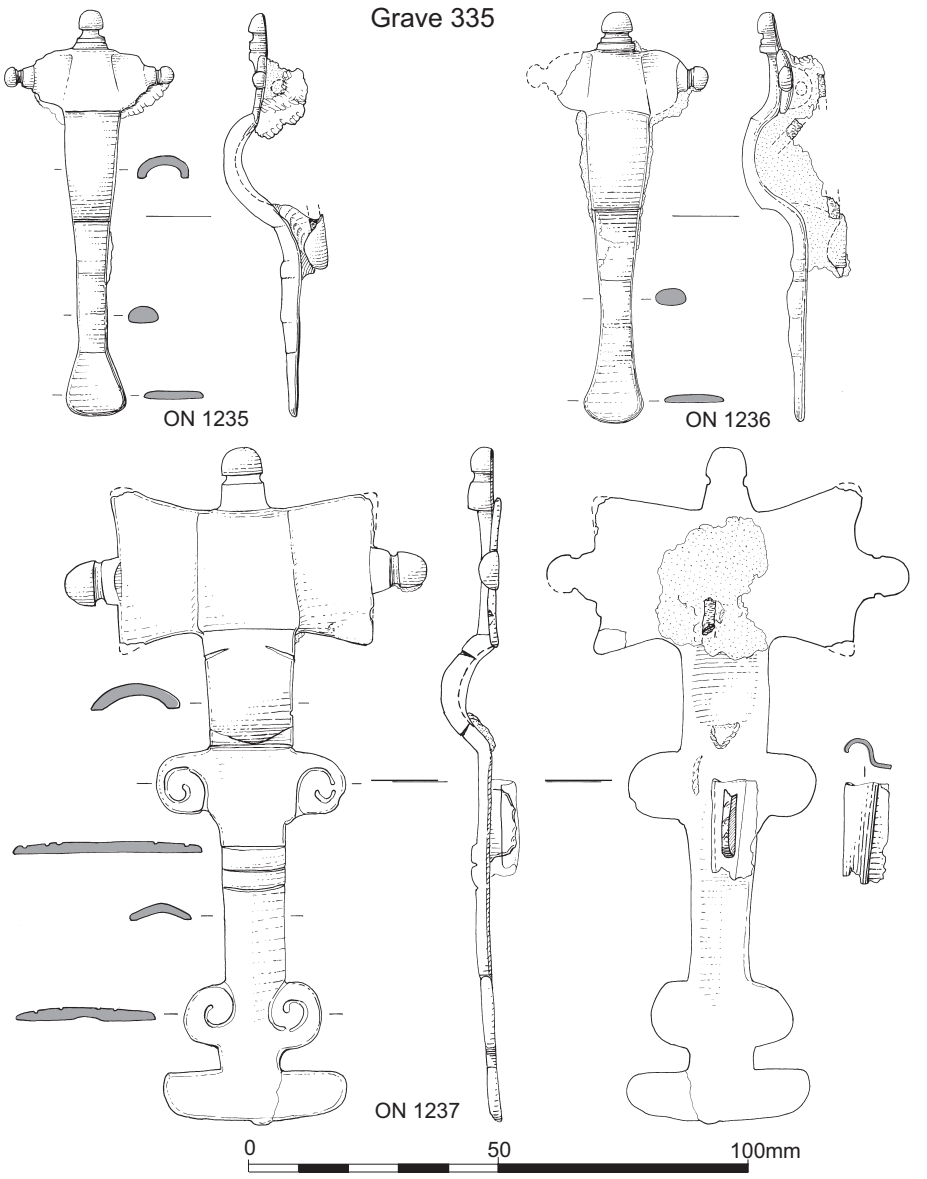

Fig. 11. Selected objects from grave 335.

cleaning (see Skibo 1992). There is no clear evidence of use on vessel 1216, but as only the top half of this vessel remains, it is quite possible that this evidence has been lost. It has long been thought that Anglo-Saxon cremation and inhumation pottery were produced especially for the funeral (e.g. Wilson 1965; Richards 1987). Recently, evidence has come to light which demonstrates that urns and accessory vessels were not specialist funerary products, but they were selected from the domestic sphere

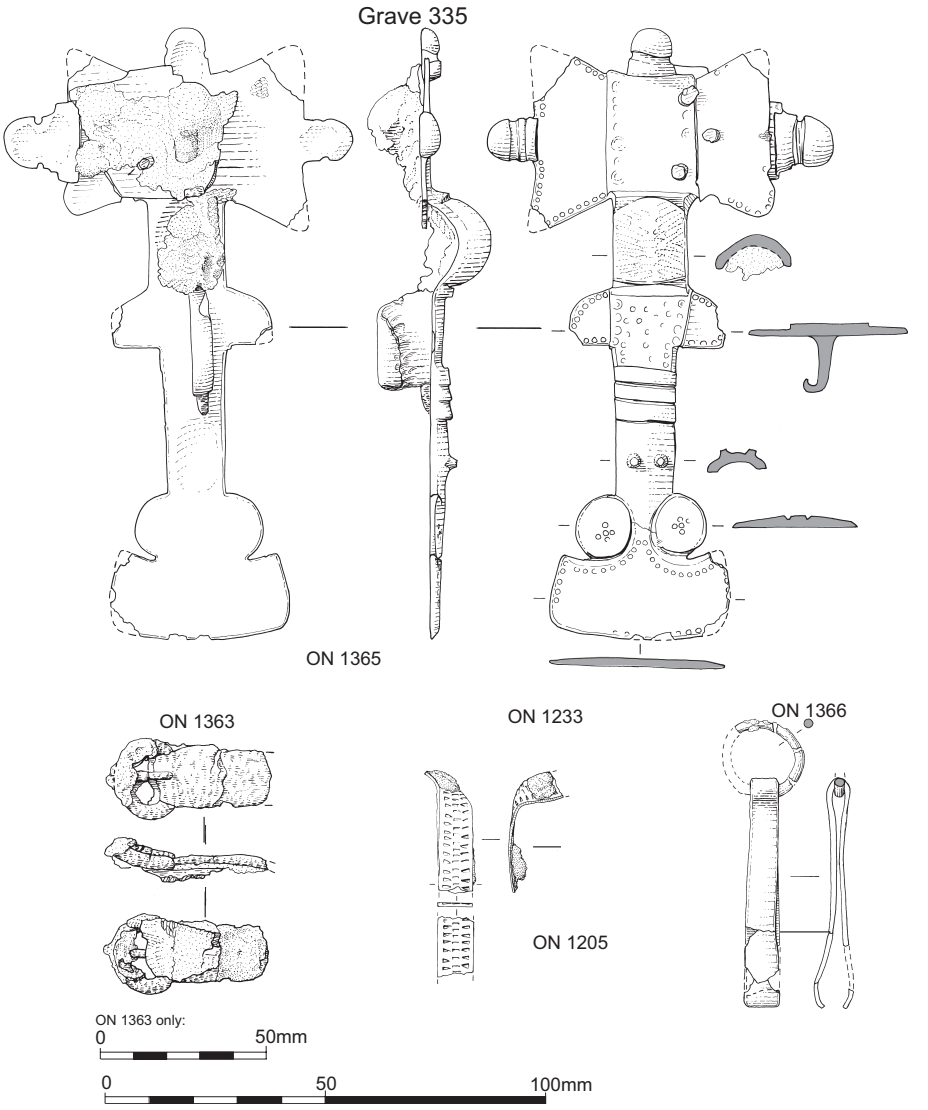

Fig. 12. Selected objects from grave 335 and furrow 310 (ON 1205).

according to the functions that they fulfilled in life (Perry 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014). This evidence of use on these vessels reinforces these recent findings.

The forms of vessels 1239 and 1216 are typical of Saxon pottery found in both cremation and inhumation graves. The form of vessel 1239 is a Perry 5Biii – very small vessels with unrestricted mouths which appear 'tall', due to their heights being greater than their widths. Such small vessels have been interpreted as 'cups', possibly used in the consumption of fermented beverages (Perry 2014). As only the top half of 1216 remains, it is difficult to be certain of its form, although the rim

diameter and ratio of rim diameter to maximum diameter would allow this vessel to be classified as either a 3Bii, 3Biii, 4aii, 4aiii, 4Biii, 5Bi or a 5Biii.

Manufacture

Relict coils are visible in the fracture surfaces of sherds from both vessels. The orientation of the fabric in 1216 demonstrates that the coils were joined by smearing upwards on the exterior surface and downwards on the interior surface. The method of joining coils in vessel 1239 could not be determined on the single sherd examined.

The colour of the surface, margin and core of vessel 1239 demonstrate this vessel was fired in a reducing atmosphere. Vessel 1216 has orange surfaces and brown-grey-black core. There are a number of possible firing regimes that could have produced this colouration. For example, it may have been fired in an oxidising atmosphere for a short period of time, or it may also have been fired in a reducing atmosphere and subsequently cooled in the open air. Nonetheless, it seems that the methods of forming and firing are typical of pottery production in this period, with coiling and reduction firing being the preferred choices throughout early Anglo-Saxon England (see Brisbane 1980, 215; Vince 2002, 202; Vince 2007b).

Conclusions

The two vessels are unremarkable, both in terms of their fabric, production technology and form. They clearly fit within the broader traditions of pottery manufacture in early Anglo-Saxon England. They add to the growing body of evidence that funerary pottery was, in the main, re-used domestic pottery. The character of the fabric suggests that the pottery was probably produced locally, using raw materials available within a few kilometres of the site. This supports earlier research (Vince 2008b, 4) showing that pottery rarely travelled far from its point of production to its point of deposition.

Analysis of this pottery exposes the lack of detailed analysis of contemporary pottery from Leicestershire. The focus on granodiorite-tempered pottery has potentially masked the subtle, localised differences in raw material choices that have been identified in other regions (e.g. Lincolnshire (Perry 2013) and East Anglia (Russel 1984)).

Beads

Lorraine Mepham

A total of 70 glass and 45 amber beads was recovered from three Anglo-Saxon graves: grave 321 (eight glass beads); grave 327 (six amber beads); and grave 335 (39 amber and 62 glass beads). Poor bone survival and truncation of (and disturbance to) the graves preclude any comment on the position of the beads in the graves.

Glass beads

The glass beads have been classified using Brugmann's typology of Anglo-Saxon glass beads (2004). Of the 62 glass beads from grave 335, 52 are of similar form and colour, monochrome blue annular (BrugmanBlue), with diameters ranging from 7mm to 11mm (but mostly around 8–9mm). There are three other monochrome forms represented: opaque blue-white short globular (two examples); transparent

pale blue ribbed 'melon' (two); and transparent pale blue cylinder (one). The remaining five beads from grave 335 are polychrome, all short globular forms. Four are variations on the double crossing wave and row of spots (Koch20, Koch34 Blue, Dot34), one as blue on opaque blue-white, and three as blue and opaque red on opaque blue-white. The sixth bead has an irregular trail (possibly blue) with a trace of opaque red on an opaque blue-white ground.

Of the eight glass beads from 321, five are monochrome and three polychrome. All of the monochrome beads are blue; four are irregular annular forms, while the fifth is an irregular coiled variant. The polychrome beads all feature blue motifs on opaque blue-white grounds – two with double crossing waves (Koch34 Blue) and one with a single spiral (BlueGreen Spiral).

Using Brugmann's chronological groupings, there is a discrepancy between the dating of the monochrome and polychrome beads, and it seems unlikely that both grave assemblages represent wholly curated groups of blue beads. Brugmann places monochrome blue beads in her Group A1 (*c.*AD 450–530), but the polychrome beads appear to be fairly consistently later, the Koch20, Koch34 and Dot34 beads belonging to Group B (*c.*AD 555–650), with the Koch34 examples dated slightly more closely to *c.*AD 580–650 (*ibid.*, 70, 80–1). The ribbed 'melon' beads (both from grave 335) are dated *c.*AD 530–80. Brugmann places BlueGreen Spiral beads in her Group A (*c.*AD 450–580), but this does have a chronological overlap with the other polychrome beads, and suggests a date range, for the beads from grave 321 at least, in the later sixth century, while the beads from grave 335 could be contemporary or slightly later, although the other grave goods from this grave suggest that the date range does not extend beyond the sixth century.

Amber beads

All but six of the amber beads could be assigned to an overall form, using the typology developed by Evison for the Dover Buckland cemetery (Evison 1987); the other six were too fragmented. The smaller group, from grave 327, was in worse condition: four of the six beads were heavily fragmented; the other two were also fragmentary, but could be identified as rough cylindrical forms (irregular variants of Evison's A03).

The 39 beads from grave 335 survived in better condition. Nearly all of these beads are of similar form, flattish and roughly disc-shaped (Evison's form A04), with diameters ranging from 9mm to 22 mm, peaking at 11–12mm. Three beads are borderline A04/A10; there is one example of a cylindrical form (A03).

Amber necklaces are regarded as a type fossil of the sixth century, although the beads do occur in small numbers in some later graves.

Human Bone

Jacqueline I. McKinley

Most of the (adult) bone from the single mortuary context north of the brook (in trench 8) was left *in situ*, a small sample being retained for possible radiocarbon analysis. Unburnt and cremated bone was recovered from five contexts in trench 3. Four relate to the remains of the dual inhumation burial in grave 328. The fifth was a possible cremation-related deposit in a possible grave (319), cutting grave

340. The backfill of grave 328 also contained cremated human bone. Three other inhumation graves investigated in the cemetery (321, 326 and 327) had no surviving human remains.

The unburnt bone from trench 8 is well preserved. However, that from trench 3 is in very poor condition due to the acidic nature of the soil (silty clay) and the heavily truncated state of the graves. With the exception of a small, heavily degraded scrap of long bone from grave 328, only the tooth crowns survived, occasionally with part of the tooth roots.

The tooth crowns (total 43) in grave 328, while forming adjacent semi-discrete groups towards the west end of the grave, lay only 0.36m apart, and some of those from the individual laid on the south side of the grave (330) had become mixed with those of the individual to the north (329). Slight variations in tooth wear patterns enabled the two sets to be distinguished, however. Both represent the remains of adults – 329 was the older of the two at 25–35 years of age, and 330 at 18–28 years. It was not possible to ascertain the sex of either individual on the basis of these remains.

The only dental pathology observed comprised slight dental hypoplasia in one mandibular canine from 330, suggestive of short periods of arrested growth, linked to childhood illness or periods of malnutrition, at around 5–7 years of age. Slight dental calculus (calcified plaque) was observed in parts of both dentitions.

Small quantities of cremated human bone were recovered from the backfill of grave 328 (1.1g subadult/adult bone – over 15 years of age) and from possible grave 319 (0.7g). Its presence demonstrates that cremation was being practised in the area probably at least prior to the use of the inhumation rite. Although its incorporation in the grave fill was probably accidental, deliberate inclusion of such material in such settings is known and cannot be discounted (e.g. McKinley 2016). The nature of the deposit (320) in possible grave 319 remains enigmatic; the incorporation of some cremated bone, together with charcoal/fuel ash, suggests some link to the cremation rite, but the material could have been redeposited within an otherwise unrelated feature.

DISCUSSION

The aims of the *Time Team* investigation – to confirm the extent and preservation of the known Roman villa and to investigate the nature of Saxon activity on the site – were fully achieved by the fieldwork. The geophysical survey and evaluation trenching confirmed the presence of substantial Romano-British buildings and associated features on the north side of Langton Brook, but found the structural remains to have suffered considerable plough damage (Wessex Archaeology 2012).

The more significant result was the discovery of part of a mixed-rite Anglo-Saxon cemetery of later fifth and sixth century date on the hill to the south of the brook. While its presence had been strongly suggested by finds of Anglo-Saxon pottery, metalwork and beads, no graves, either inhumation or cremation, had previously been found. In addition, a further inhumation grave was exposed on the north side of the brook, close to where further Anglo-Saxon pottery and metalwork had been found in the area of Romano-British settlement. Although the grave contained a

Roman coin, there is a possibility that it is part of a second area of Anglo-Saxon burial.

Very little human bone survived within the Anglo-Saxon cemetery, and no cremation graves were identified. However, the recovery of small quantities of cremated human bone from two contexts, in both cases possibly residual, indicates that the rite of cremation was practised at some point during the use of the cemetery. The nature of the deposit containing cremated bone in possible grave 319 is unclear; the feature appeared to cut the fill of grave 340 and may have been associated with it.

The only identified mortuary features were inhumation graves. Of the up to seven possible graves in the cemetery, only two (328 and 340) yielded any human bone; one (326) also produced no grave goods. On the basis of the grave goods, however, it appears that three of the graves contained the burials of women, and that a further grave (328) contained the dual burial of a woman and a man. As the most common combination in dual burials is of an adult and child (Lucy 2000, 82), grave 328 is of particular interest. None of the graves could be identified as a solely male grave. However, in the absence of significant bone there is at least the possibility that the grave goods do not reflect the sex of the deceased (*ibid*, 89).

The sample of graves is too small to say whether this sex imbalance is significant. The clustering of the graves at the western end of trench 3 suggest that only the eastern edge of a larger cemetery was revealed, within which there may have been a more even balance between the sexes. It is possible that ditch 306 played some role in marking the edge of the cemetery, or it may have defined part of a small enclosure or structure associated with the funerary rites, as found on many Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in eastern England (Wilson 1992, 48–50).

If grave 809 is part of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery north of the brook, it is not at present possible to say whether the two burials grounds were broadly contemporary, perhaps serving different communities or social groupings, or reflect a shift over time. Six other clusters of Anglo-Saxon pottery have been located along a 1.5km stretch of the brook, each 200–400m apart, suggesting that sites of this date were quite regularly spaced along the valley floor (Bowman 1995, 72).

Although no direct evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement activity, in the form of buildings or pits, has yet been recorded, the quantity of settlement and funerary material suggests that the area around the Roman villa may have remained a focal point in the local countryside, possibly indicating a high status settlement here during the middle Saxon period. The documentary evidence for three eighth-century meetings of the Mercian *witenagemot* at Gumley (Stenton 1905, 1–2; Sawyer 1968, 92, 109, 114), a hilltop site 3km to the south-west, may indicate that this area formed a 'central place' in the local countryside throughout the period of *c.*450–850, possibly with Mercian royal connections (Bowman 1995, 73).

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The archive was collated, and all post-excavation assessment and analysis undertaken by Wessex Archaeology. The post-excavation project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Lorraine Mepham, and this report was edited by Philippa Bradley. The illustrations are by Rob Goller (plans and sections) and Elizabeth James (finds).

The archive has been deposited with Leicestershire Museums, under the accession number X.A122.2010.

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