Trial Excavations at Brockley Hill part 2

photography by the author

STEPHEN CASTLE

FOLLOWING the excavations at Site B,[1] a trench was hurriedly cut at Site C, immediately south of the 1956 kiln[2] and 112ft. east of the A5 fence (c.TQ 174940). Plough-soil was found to be 8in. deep, below which was an accumulation of light-brown soil with tile rubble (layer 2) and below this, clayey soil with tile fragments and burnt clay daub (layer 3). Both layers contained large quantities of coarse-ware sherds, including wasters, representing ring-necked flagons, reed-rimmed bowls, cordoned jars, small jars with beaded rims and mortaria (Figs. 4 and 6). Included amongst the mortaria are stamped vessels of the potters Arentus (?), Doinus and Driccius.

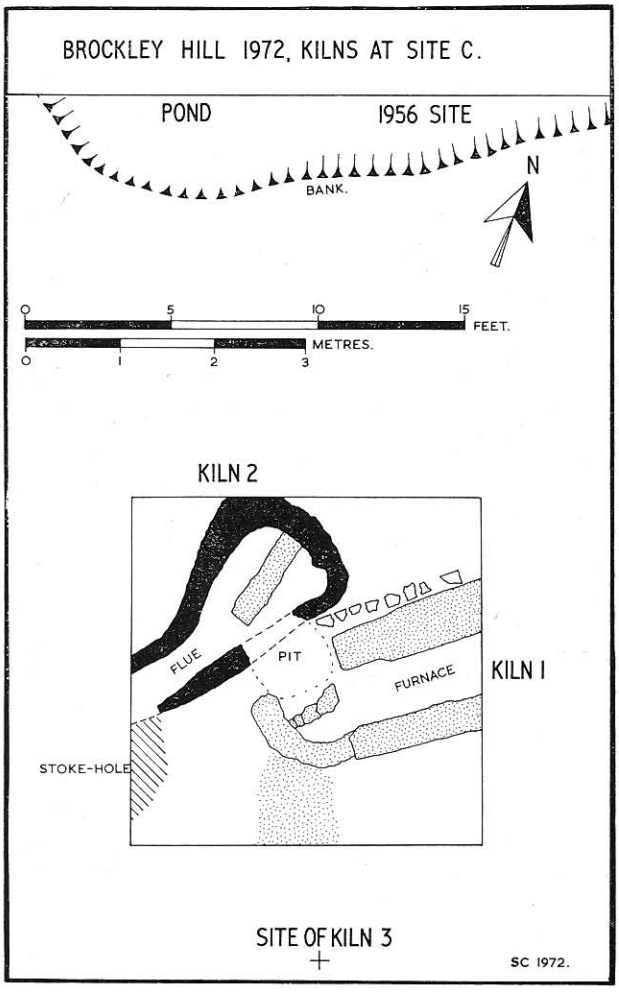

Fig. 1. Provisional plan of the kilns at site C.

Kiln I (Figs. 1 and 2)

At a depth of 9in. were the tops of the walls of Kiln I; which consisted of a rectangular furnace, 5ft. 4in. wide by at least 5ft. 8in. long, with walls 9in. high built or bonded tile, tile rubble and pot-sherds fused together with burnt clay daub. At the west end was the flue entrance and the stoke-hole with apparently, an incomplete retaining wall built of tile rubble and burnt clay daub.

Coarse-ware recovered from the furnace includes an unstamped mortarium, reed-rimmed bowls, a jar and a ring-necked flagon of short-expanding neck type, typical of the period c. A.D. 110-160 (Fig. 4). These vessels are presumably from the last firing of the kiln.

Kiln 2 (Figs 1 and 3)

A little to the west was Kiln 2, which was of normal up-draught type with walls at a depth of 1ft. 1in. The pear-shaped furnace with adjoining flue was 8ft. 3in. by 5ft. 3in. wide with walls 1ft. high built of tile rubble and pottery wasters fused with burnt clay daub. Projecting from the back of the furnace was the pedestal, built of mortarium sherds, one with the stamp of Driccius, c. A.D. 110-150; and tile rubble fused with burnt clay daub. Pottery-

1. *London Archaeol* 2 No. 2 (1973) 36-39.

2. Information kindly provided by the late Mr. A. E. Ridley, who excavated part of a kiln, constructed of burnt clay reinforced with pottery wasters. Associated with the kiln was a quantity of small jars, sherds of poppy-head beakers and other types of vessels, and a multi-coloured glass ring. These finds were handed over to the North Middlesex Archaeological Research Committee in 1960. Cf. N.M.A.R.C. *Sundry Correspondence File,* in which are photographs of some of the finds — now lost.

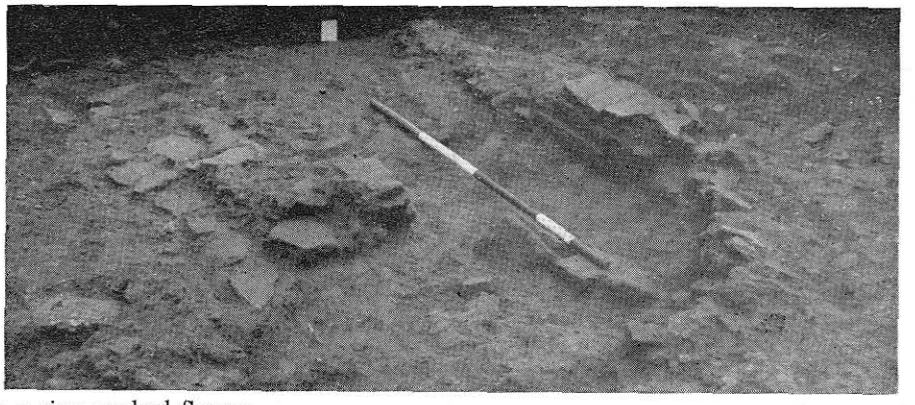

Fig. 2. Kiln 1 from the West.

types from the furnace include a ring-necked flagon, small jars, reed-rimmed bowls, lids and both stamped and unstamped mortaria (Figs. 5 and 6). Many of these vessels are wasters and there is little doubt that some are the products of this kiln.

Kiln 3 (Position on Fig. 1)

A trial hole cut a few feet to the south of the trench, revealed part of the furnace wall of another kiln. It was built of burnt clay daub.

Summary of Results

These excavations have provided further evidence of pottery production at Brockley Hill in the Hadrianic-Antonine period. The staple products of the kilns were clearly mortaria, ring-necked flagons (short-expanding neck type), small jars or beakers, cordoned jars and reed-rimmed bowls (Figs. 4-6).Of particular interest are the stamped mortaria of Driccius, c. A.D. 110-150; in view of the quantity and presence of wasters, there can be little doubt that his workshop was situated in this area. An interesting feature of this pottery group is the transition in mortarium forms. Stamps are present only on the conventional types with large flanges and small beads, with elaborate spouts (MS1-22). These are superseded by unstamped vessels with smaller, sometimes inturned flanges, high beads and simplified, rather crude spouts (Figs. 4, 5 and 7, M1-19). A date of c. A.D. 140-150 is generally indicated for this transition,[3] therefore it is suggested that the kilns date from this period.

It should be stressed that these were trial excavations and in the short time between harvesting and ploughing, it was not possible to complete the excavation of these kilns. With the walls of Kiln 1 only 9in. below the surface and ploughsoil 8in. deep there can be little doubt that continual ploughing will result in destruction. It seems likely that further kilns are situated nearby, therefore if the ploughing continues, full-scale excavation is clearly desirable.

The Pottery: Products of the kilns

Unless otherwise stated, the vessels described below are in granular fabric typical of pottery produced at the kilns in the Brockley Hill, Radlett and Verulamium region. With the exception of No. 15, the remainder are in fine-textured fabric with cream slip, which was in common use at Brockley Hill in the 2nd century.

Fig. 3. Kiln 2 from the South-West.

Kiln 1. (Fig. 4).

1. Ring-necked flagon of short-expanding neck type in fine-textured red and grey ware with cream slip. Part of the body near the base is severely buckled and there is a waster crack. This vessel could never have been used and

3. Information from Mrs. K. Hartley

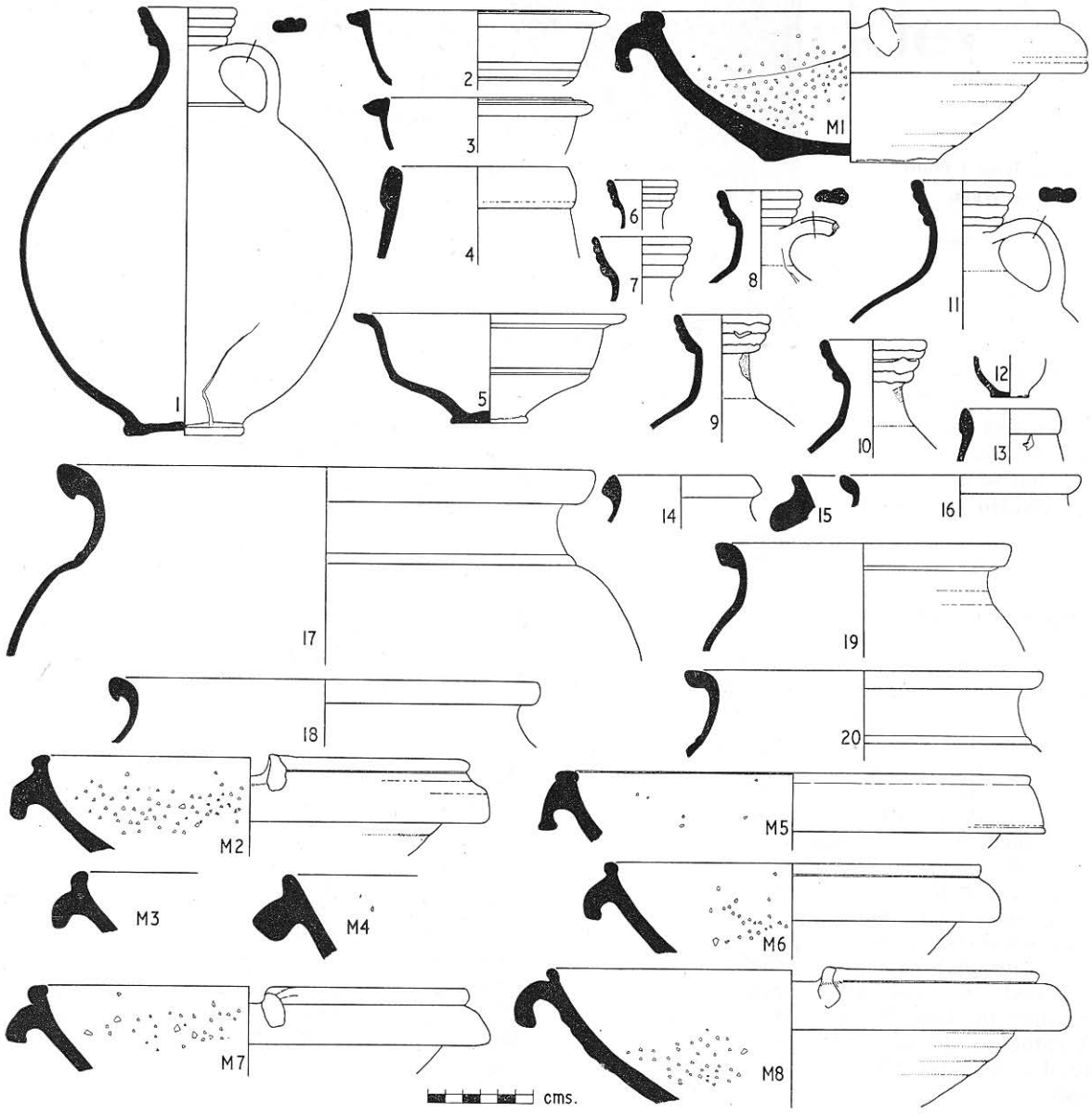

Fig. 4. Coarse pottery from Kiln 1 and layers 2/3 ($\frac{1}{4}$).

is clearly a waster. Cf. *Verulamium*,[4] 320, 798-807, which date from c.A.D. 150-155/160.

Reed-rimmed bowls.

2. Cream ware.

3. Creamish-buff ware.

4. Jar in creamish-buff ware.

MI. Mortarium with high bead and hooked flange in fine-textured red ware with cream slip and a crack. Grey and white flint grits.

Layer 3. (Fig. 4).

5. Reed-rimmed bowl with badly finished base, in creamish-buff ware.

6-11. Ring-necked flagons of short-expanding neck type in fine-textured red ware and cream slip. No. 8 has an open crack and is clearly a waster, whilst 9-11 have badly finished rings. Cf. as 1.

Small beakers or jars with beaded rims.

12. Cream ware with pink core.

13. Greyish-buff ware.

14. Fine-textured grey ware with cream slip.

15. Flanged-bowl in hard sandy light grey ware with dark grey slip. A 3rd-4th century date is suggested. The fabric is non-local.

16. Jar in fine-textured red ware with cream slip.

4. S. S. Frere, *Verulamium Excavations* 1 (1972).

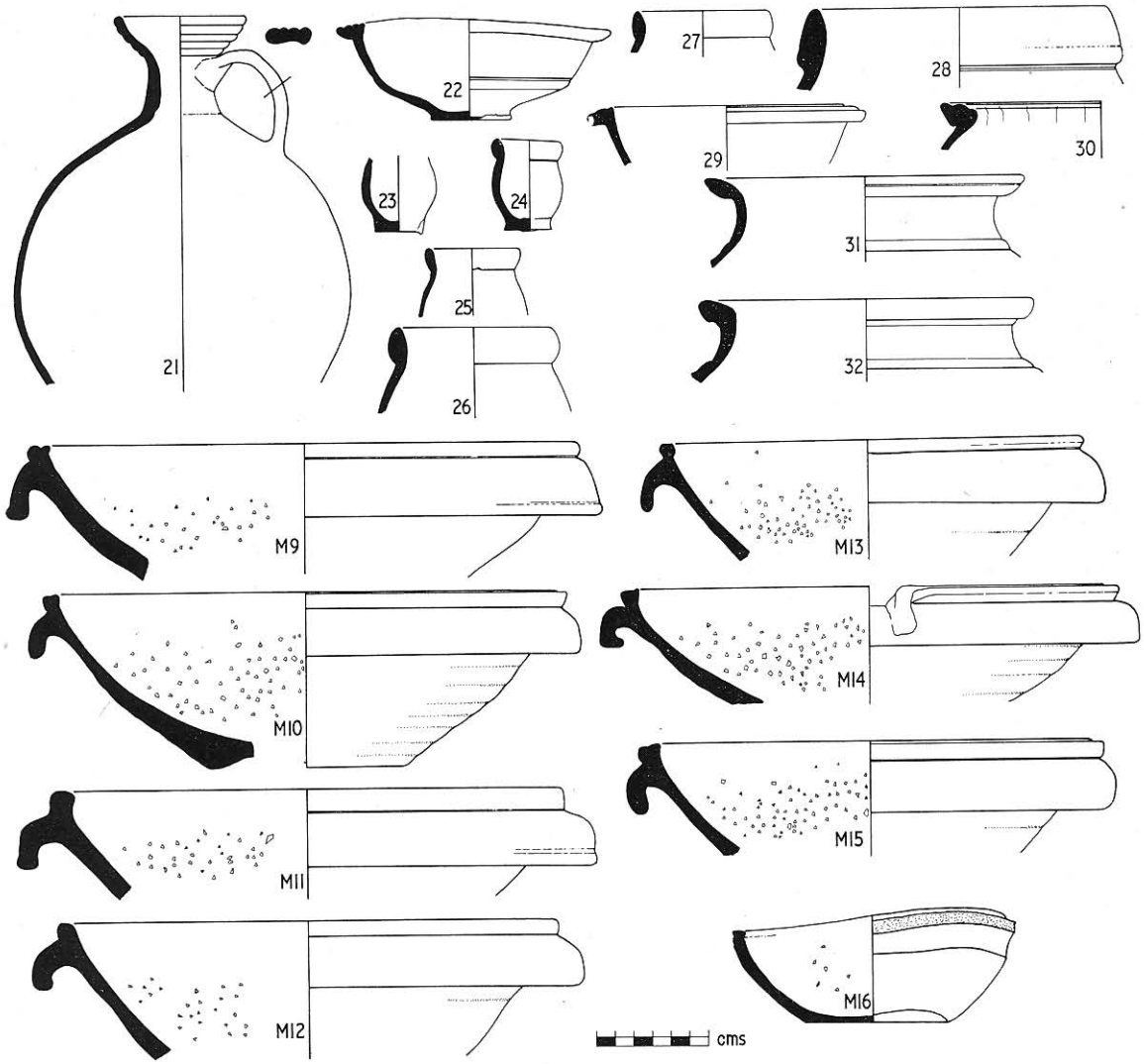

Fig. 5. Coarse pottery from kiln 2 (¼).

17-18. Cordoned jars in buff ware.
19. Jar in overfired grey ware.
20. Cordoned jar in greyish-buff ware.

Stamped Mortaria (*Figs.* 6-7. *See detailed report*).

MS3-4. Arentus (?), c.A.D. 110-140.
MS-5. Doinus, c.A.D. 70-110.
MS7-16. Driccius, c.A.D. 110-150.

Unstamped Mortaria.

M2. Overfired bluish-grey ware with pink core and grey and white flint grits.
M3. Fine-textured red ware with grey core and cream slip.
M4. Creamish-buff ware.
M5. Fine-textured red ware with cream slip and white flint grits.
M6. Buff ware overfired to grey on exterior; grey and white flint grits.
M7. Overfired dark bluish-grey ware with unworn grey and white flint grits.
M8. Creamish-buff ware with grey and white flint grits.
M18. Fine-textured ware overfired to bluish-grey and with cracking (Fig. 7).
M19. Fine-textured orange-brown ware with cream slip. (Fig. 7).

Kiln 2. (Fig. 5).

21. Ring-necked flagon of short-expanding neck type in cream ware and with cut marks on part of the handle. Type as No. 1.
22. Reed-rimmed bowl in cream ware with pink core. It is badly buckled and is clearly a waster.

Small jars, as 12-14.

23. Pink ware with excess fired clay on base.
24. Cream ware almost completely overfired to grey and badly buckled. A waster.
25. Buff ware almost completely overfired to dark grey.

26. Cream ware.
27. Cream ware with pink core.
28. Larger vessel in buff ware.
29. Reed-rimmed bowl in white ware.
30. Jar in overfired bluish-grey ware and with heat cracking.

Cordoned Jars.

31. Buff ware with grey and pink core.
32. Fine-textured red ware with cream slip.

Stamped Mortaria (Figs. 6-7).

MS1-3. Arentus (?), c.A.D. 110-140.
MS17. Atcirtitus (?), c.A.D. 90-140.

Unstamped Mortaria.

M9. Overfired greyish-purple ware with grey and white flint grits.
M10. Buff ware overfired in part to light grey with grey and white flint grits.
M11. Cream ware with pink core with grey and white flint grits.
M12. Overfired greyish-buff ware with grey and white flint grits.
M13. Fine-textured ware almost completely overfired to grey, with grey and white flint grits.
M14. Overfired bluish-grey ware with white flint grits.
M15. Red ware overfired to grey and with grey and white flint grits.
M16. Overfired to greyish-blue with a few white flint grits. Badly buckled; with small bead but no part of flange remaining. A waster.
M17. Overfired to dark bluish-grey (Fig 7).

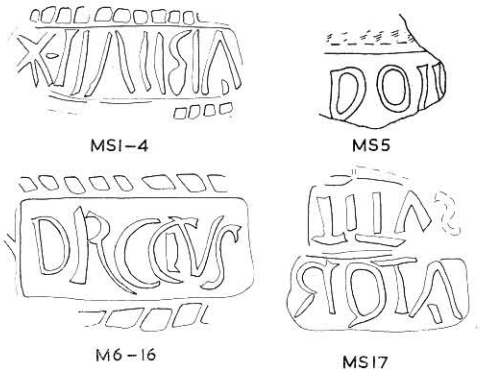

Fig. 6 Mortarium Stamps from Site C($\frac{1}{2}$)

The Stamped Mortaria. (Figs. 6-7), by Mrs. K. F. Hartley.

Not all of the mortaria or stamps listed below are illustrated.

ARENTVS (?)

Kiln 2, flue.

MS1. Buff ware overfired to brown and grey.
MS2. Ware overfired to bluish-grey and with heat crack.

Layers 2/3.

MS2. Also part of this vessel from the furnace of Kiln 2. Overfired to brown and bluish-grey.
MS4. Overfired to light bluish-grey.

Fragments from four different mortaria. MS2 has a bad waster crack and all are overfired. All have incomplete impressions of stamps which when complete are likely to read ARIINT followed by X as a space-filler (retrograde) perhaps for Arentus. Two other such stamps are known from Brockley Hill and twenty-seven from other sites in south-eastern England, including thirteen from Verulamium and five from London. It is clear that he was working at Brockley Hill, and the rims point to activity in c. A.D. 110-140.

DOINVS.

MS5. Layer 2. In buff ware with grey core. It bears the stamp of Doinus, Die D. Doinus worked at Brockley Hill in c. A.D. 70-110.

DRICCIVS

MS6. Pedestal of Kiln 2. Overfired to reddish-brown and bluish-grey.

Layer 3.

MS7. Pinkish-cream ware.
MS8. Stamped DRICCIVS/DRICCIVS. In pinkish-buff ware.
MS9. Also layer 2. Stamped DRICCIVS/DRICCIVS. Buff ware overfired to brownish-grey.
MS10-10i. Two fragments, each with stamp, possibly from the same vessel. Fine-textured orange-brown ware with dark core and thick cream slip.
MS11. Spout and flange fragment in orange-buff ware with grey core.
MS12. Orange-brown ware.

The fragments represent eleven or twelve different vessels and at least five (MS6, 8, 10 and 12-13) show obvious signs of misfiring. MS6-9 and 11-16 are in a coarse granular fabric varying slightly in colour but basically orange-brown with white, red-brown and grey trituration grit. MS10, one or two vessels, is in totally different fabric—fine-textured ware with cream slip but similar trituration grit. All have stamps of the potter Driccius. At least three of his mortaria have been found at Brockley Hill in the past (one in the granular fabric and two in the fine-textured fabric), and the total suggests that Driccius, whose work is uncommon, used kilns here. However, eleven of his mortaria, some showing waster cracks and with overfiring, were found at Radlett, Hertfordshire in 1959.[5] As kilns are also known at Radlett there seems every likelihood that Driccius had kilns at both places, which produced virtually identical mortaria. Other stamps from the same die are known from Elstree; ? the Braughing area (2); London and Verulamium (6).

His market seems to have been a very restricted one and entirely in keeping with manufacture at Brockley Hill and Radlett. There is no site dating evidence for his work but rim-forms used would fit a date c. A.D. 110-150. No other potter in either pottery is known to have made mortaria in the fine-textured fabric but there seems no reason to doubt that he was experimenting with another clay

5. Report forthcoming.

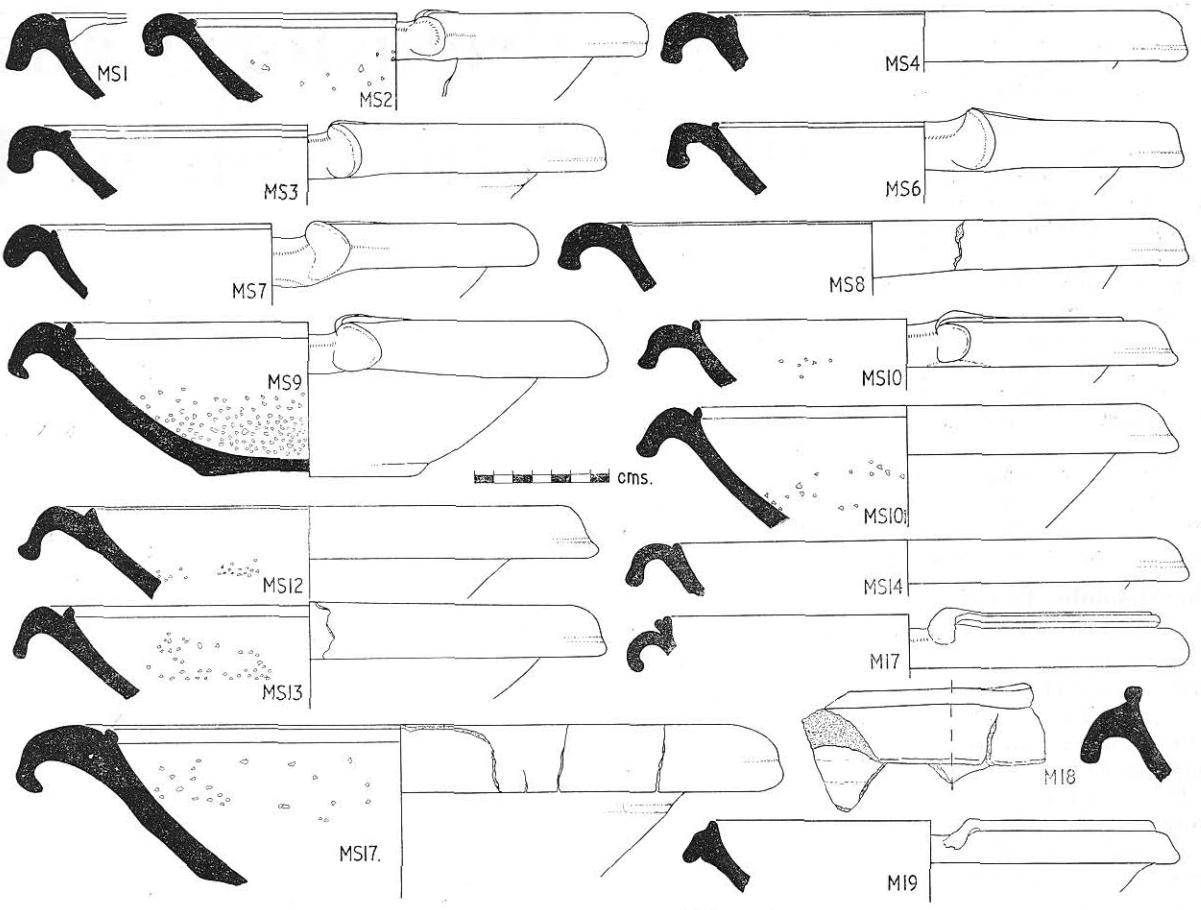

Fig. 7. Stamped and unstamped Mortaria (¼).

which was not traditionally used there for that purpose. A fragment from a mortarium with tiny rim (M19), unstamped, is in identical fabric and is likely to be his or an associate's. The form of the rim is one used by Driccius. Moreover, Driccius was working at a time when the practice of stamping began to die out and he could well have produced both stamped and unstamped mortaria.

Atcirtitus(?)

MS17. Kiln 2, furnace. Two sherds of the same mortarium, heavily overfired to bluish-purple, with waster cracks and clay adhering to the surface. The two identical stamps may read ATCIR retrograde on the lower line and certainly reads TITVS upside down on the upper line. The interpretation is uncertain but Atcirtitus seems possible. No other stamp of this potter is known but the rims can be dated within the period c. A.D. 90-140. These sherds are almost certainly derived from the walls of Kiln 2. MS18-21. Unidentifiable stamped mortarium fragments in granular ware c. A.D. 100-150. Only the finding of more complete examples will enable them to be identified.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the tenant farmer, Mr. J. W. B. Shepherd, for permission to conduct these excavations. All Souls College, Oxford, the owners, have generously donated the finds to the London Museum for eventual inclusion in the Museum of London.

Mrs. K. F. Hartley has kindly reported on the stamped mortaria and Miss C. Johns of the British Museum on the samian from Site B.

These excavations were directed by the writer on behalf of the Brockley Hill Excavation and Fieldwork Group and with the kind assistance of members of the Stanmore, Edgware and Harrow Historical Society. Mr. J. Reeves kindly directed operations while the writer was indisposed.

Lastly, it is with profound regret that the writer records the death of Mr. A. E. Ridley. His help on this, and previous excavations and information about findings in 1956 have been much appreciated.