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EXCAVATIONS OF PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN SETTLEMENT AT ALDERMASTON WHARF 1976–77

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SUMMARY

Late Bronze Age features; a mid-Iron Age field system; two distinct phases and areas of first century occupation; and a late third–fourth century bath-house were excavated or recorded prior to gravel extraction.

INTRODUCTION

In 1976 crop marks showing in aerial photographs (Fig. 1 and Gates 1975, 28–9 Map 8) were threatened with destruction by the advance of commercial gravel extraction. Rescue excavation was undertaken by the Department of Archaeology, University of Reading, on behalf of the Berkshire Archaeological Committee over three weeks in April and May, 1976. Of the two sites (I-II) excavated in some detail (Fig. 1), the southern one, principally of late Bronze Age date, is to be published elsewhere (Bradley, forthcoming). In August and September 1977 a further area (III) adjacent to sites I and II was opened up when the overburden was removed and a watching brief was carried out by the Berkshire Archaeological Unit. Excavation was undertaken over one weekend with the help of the Berkshire Field Research Group. All three sites have now been destroyed by gravel extraction. The Marley Tile Co. Ltd. allowed access to their site and were generous in their help throughout the excavations. We are also extremely grateful to H. H. Carter for reporting on the animal bones, S. Esmonde-Cleary for reporting on the coins, J. Johnston for his preparation of the Site III pottery for this report, J. W. S. Jones for identification of slags and Dr B. W. Sellwood for identifications of the stone. The finds and records are deposited in Reading Museum. The publication of this report has been greatly aided by a grant from the Department of the Environment.

THE SITE

The site (centred on SU 605681) is located at a height of 100 m O.D. about 4 miles (6 km) to the west of Reading (Fig. 1). The wide level terrace on which the site lies (2–3 m above the height of the river) is part of the Beenham Grange Terrace of the River Kennet which is about 500 m to the south-east. The silt-capping overlying the gravel, thought to have been deposited by riverine sedimentation, varies in depth from 0·5 m to 2·0 m (Chartres 1975, 67–72). The underlying gravels have an irregular surface and are characterised by step-like changes in level. Due to the clayey nature of the subsoil the site is poorly drained. Previously the site had been cultivated for arable farming and ploughing is thought to have been carried out for some considerable time.

PREVIOUS EXCAVATION AND RECORDS

Aerial photographs of the site taken in 1956 and 1963 show several linear features, trackways, two incomplete rectangular enclosures, a complete rectangular enclosure, an old gravel quarry (the large, solid cropmark at the eastern edge of the field) and a ring ditch (Fig. 1). The last was excavated in 1963 and found to be of late Neolithic date. In the same year a cremation in a coarse ware urn of Belgic

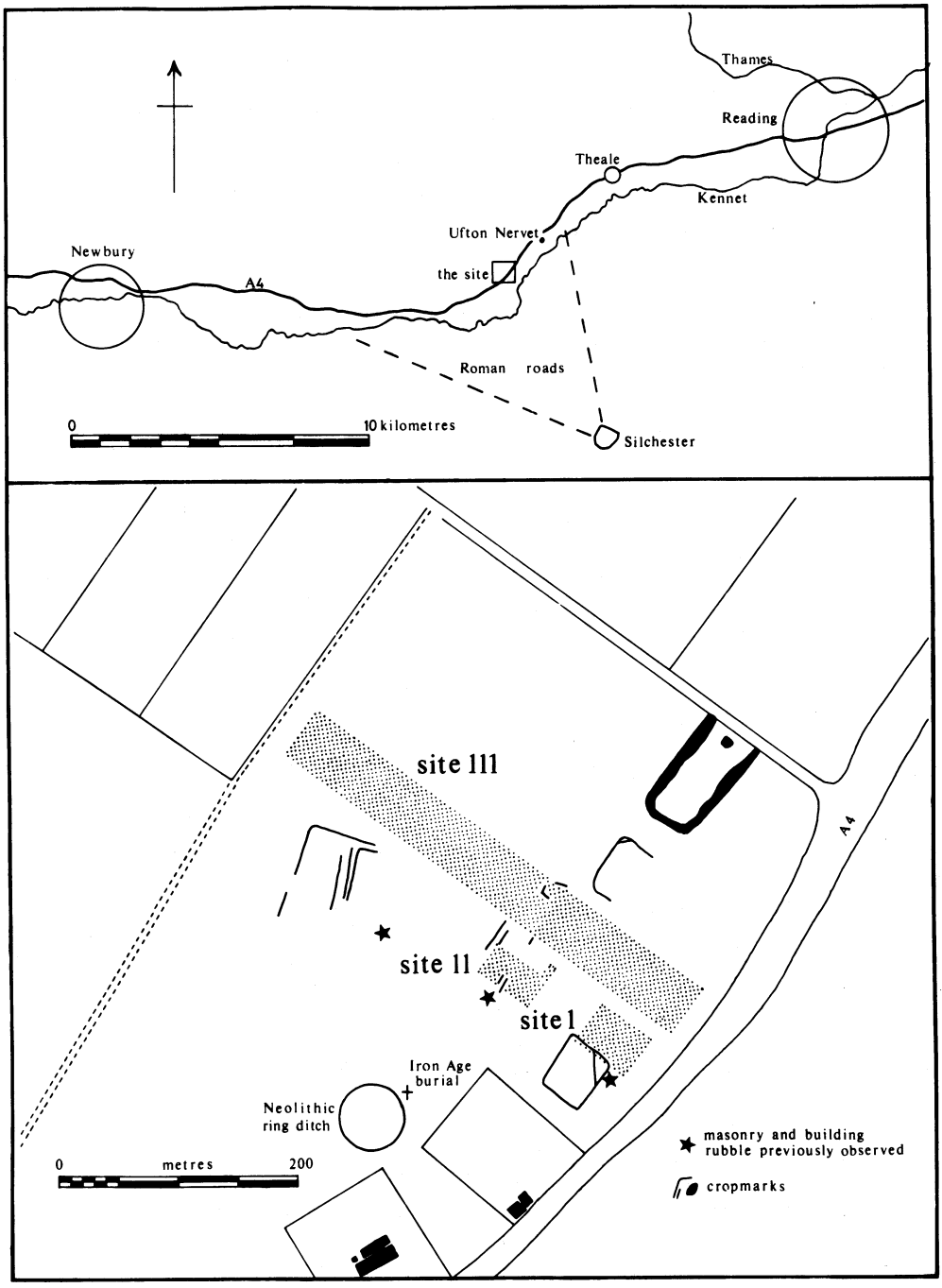

Fig. 1. Location Map.

(? early first century A.D.) date was discovered close to the ring ditch (Anon. 1963–64, 99, 102–3). On several separate occasions since 1974 ditches, building material, flint and mortar wall-footings and pottery of Roman date have also been observed (Fig. 1). The implications of these finds for the 1976–77 excavation will be discussed below.

METHOD OF EXCAVATION

Sites I–II

The topsoil was taken off by machine to the level of the silty clay, where the features were recognised by concentrations of tile, mortar and charcoal in the surface of the machine-trample. An area 30 m by 20 m was then scraped and cleared by hand to define the features (Site II). Those that survived were found to have suffered badly from robbing and plough damage so that only the foundations remained. The area was extended 8 m by 20 m to the north to follow the ditch (F.4) and c. 8 m by 25 m to the south, as further machine clearance revealed more features (5–11). Due to lack of time the latter were not completely excavated. To the south (Site I) machine-stripping and hand-clearing revealed the gravel subsoil. The main interest here lay in the late Bronze Age settlement and lack of time allowed for only a cursory examination of late Iron Age and Roman features to obtain dating evidence.

Site III

An area of c. 400 m by c. 40 m was stripped of topsoil and subsoil down to the gravel with a mechanical scraper. All features were recorded during topsoil stripping with a prismatic compass and excavation was undertaken where time allowed. Brief excavation over one weekend was undertaken to sample most of the remaining features.

THE PRE-ROMAN SETTLEMENT

LATE BRONZE AGE (Figs. 2–3)

Site I mostly consisted of features of an unenclosed late Bronze Age settlement (Bradley, forthcoming). Other probable late Bronze Age features on Site I may include F.16 and F.18. The former contained large amounts of burnt clay and a few sherds of coarse flint-gritted pottery, probably late Bronze Age. F.18 was a short length of ditch cut by F.19 and contained similar flint-gritted sherds.

Site II produced one pit (F.11) which contained coarse flint-gritted sherds of late Bronze Age type. This was about 1 m in diameter and c. 0·3 m deep. Its filling consisted of moist, brown clay sandwiching a layer of charcoal, the base of which was about 0·05 m from the bottom of the pit. Above the charcoal layer were pot-boilers and sherds of the pottery described above.

Site III similarly produced only one feature (47) which can definitely be dated to the late Bronze Age. This was a bowl-shaped pit containing a relatively large amount of pottery of this date (Fig. 13, nos. 1, 3–4). One of the ditches (F.39) contained several sherds of late Bronze Age pottery (Fig. 13, no. 2) in one part of it where exposed by the scraper. This feature was not excavated by hand. This ditch adjoins F.8 at right angles and it seems more likely to be part of a field system of mid-Iron Age date, the Bronze Age sherds being residual. The relationship with F.8 was not determined.

MIDDLE IRON AGE

On Site III the evidence possibly suggests a field system laid out during the mid-Iron Age. The main components of this are three roughly parallel ditches (F.8, 20, 57). All the ditches must have been kept clean for some time before being left to silt up. F.8 and 57, both rounded in profile, had homogenous fills presumably indicating rapid silting. Both contained pottery of mid-Iron Age date (third–first century B.C.). F.20 was much wider and deeper than the other two ditches. A sherd of mid-Iron Age pottery (Fig. 13, no. 8) was found in the primary silt of this ditch with a mixture of mid-Iron Age and early first century pottery in the upper layers (Fig. 13, nos. 9, 11, 13). The ditch was presumably recut and used

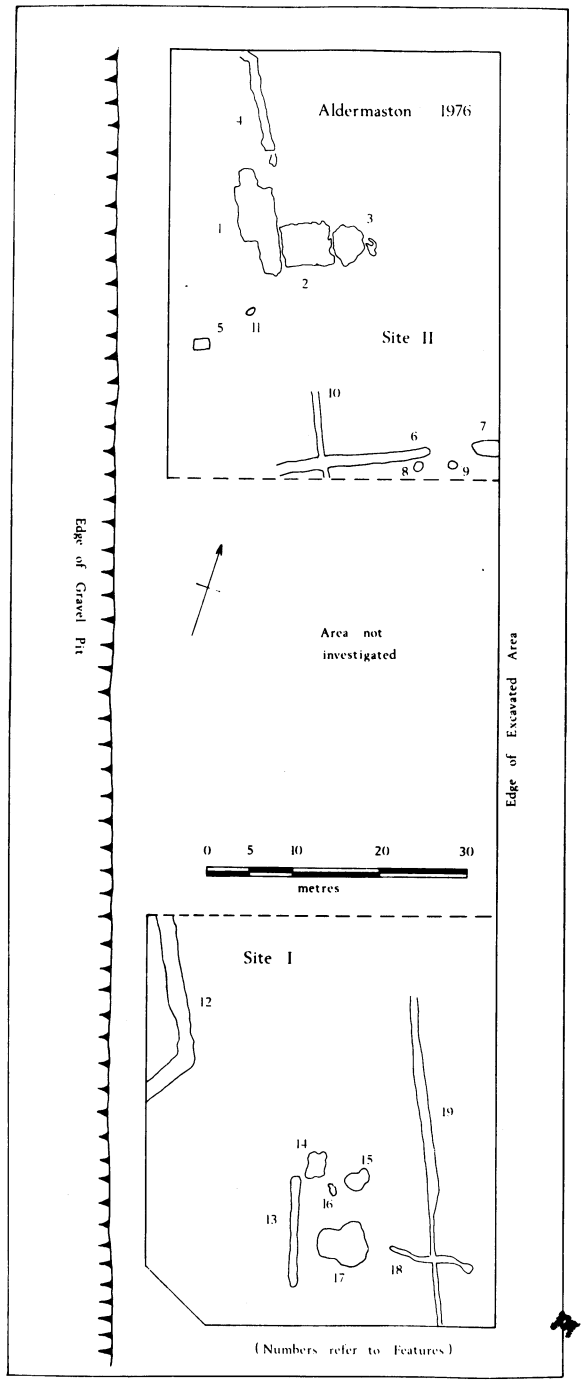

Fig. 2. General Plan of Sites I and II.

in the first century A.D. F.18 is a short length of ditch with a square butt-end, in which part of a horse jaw-bone was found. It is also dated by pottery to the middle Iron Age (Fig. 13, no. 5). F.19 was unexcavated and so it is not known whether it formed part of the same system. F.39 is also thought to be part of this field system on the basis of its alignment although late Bronze Age pottery was recovered from it (see above, p. 3). F.1, a large, roughly flat-bottomed pit probably dates from this period. No diagnostic sherds were found in it, but those that were recovered are in a fabric similar to that of the identified middle Iron Age sherds. Likewise F.2, a deep bowl-shaped pit, can also be ascribed to this period. F.19 (Site I) which is described below and which runs at right angles to the mid-Iron Age ditches (F.8, 20 and 57) may possibly be part of the same system.

LATE IRON AGE

Occupation of late Iron Age date is present on Sites I and III. Whereas the Site I occupation is early in the first century, the main period of activity on Site III appears to have been concentrated in the mid-first century A.D., although the exact nature of this site is difficult to ascertain. Features (Site III) that can definitely be dated to this period include several ditches and gulleys, a scatter of pits and a few post-holes, a possible tank or pond of unknown function (F.37) and an occupation layer (F.7) sealing some of the earlier features.

Ditches and Gulleys (? Field System)

During the course of excavation on Sites I–II it became apparent that the ditch which was described first as F.4 (Site II) was the same feature as F.10 (Site II) and F.19 (Site I). This feature averaged about 1 m in width and generally had a U-shaped profile (c. 0.35–c. 0.45 m deep) with a small gulley cut in the bottom (Fig. 11). The upper fill of this ditch to the north of Site I contained building rubble, particularly Old Red Sandstone roofing slates, from the adjacent bath-house and fourth century pottery. The primary silting in this area was sterile. In the other sections examined, F.10 and F.19, further late third–fourth century pottery was recovered from the upper fill (Figs. 16–17, nos. 24–27). In addition F.19 produced first century pottery similar to that from F.12 (Site I) (Fig. 17, no. 27). This is reminiscent of F.20 (Site III), (above) which seems to have been recut in the late Iron Age; its alignment is at right angles to F.19 (Site I). That F.4, F.10 and F.19 (Sites I–II) are originally of late or mid-Iron Age date, forming part of a field system is also supported by a section cut through it *beneath* the late third–fourth century bath-house (Fig. 9); at this point the ditch was seen to have been almost completely silted up at the time of the building of the foundations; no finds were recovered there.

Enclosure

F.12 (Site I) (Fig. 2) can be seen to be the corner of a rectangular enclosure visible on the aerial photographs (Fig. 1). Pottery from the fill of this is of early first century A.D. date (Fig. 14, nos. 1–14, p. 28). The ditch was about 1·5 m to 1·75 m wide and about 0·4 m to 0·75 m deep. The fill of dark soil and gravel contained large amounts of charcoal and burnt clay (Fig. 11). Three quernstone fragments were recovered (pp. 22–3). The rest of the enclosure which presumably contained the settlement had already been quarried away at the time of excavation. Horse and cattle have been identified from the very small number of animal bones recovered from this feature. The cremation (p. 3) was found near this enclosure.

Site III: Linear Features (Fig. 3)

On Site III F.14, 21 and 26 were ditches containing first century pottery. The latter is of a slightly later date to that from Site I and belongs nearer the middle of the century (Figs. 14, 15, pp. 28–9). F.14 was a small, shallow ditch, U-shaped in profile and only contained body sherds. F.21 was observed as a shallow, flat-bottomed and slightly curved ditch. F.26,

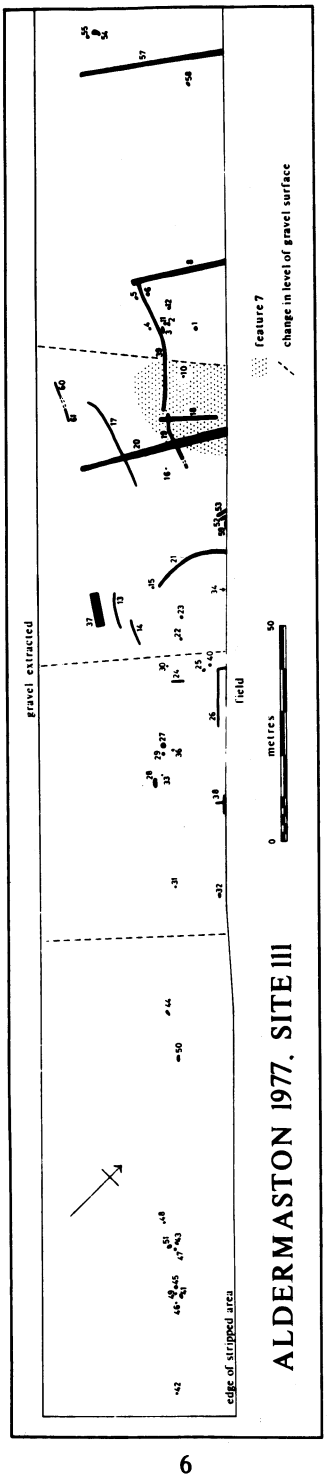

Fig. 3. General Plan of Site III.

although shallow, is possibly the corner of a ditched enclosure or field. F.17 was a small gulley, possibly for drainage.

Although the section across F.13 produced no dating material it can, perhaps, be assumed to be contemporary with F.14 since it is of similar shape and dimensions and the two are concentric. F.24, a short linear feature, was not excavated but may be contemporary with the other ditches since most of the dated material from the immediate vicinity was of early/mid-first century date. F.38 appeared to be a short length of ditch meeting another feature, possibly another ditch, at right angles. This was not excavated and its full extent could not be traced into the unstripped area. A sherd of Silchester ware was found in its upper fill.

Other Features

After excavation nine features (nos. 3, 22, 23, 27, 29, 30, 40, 42 and 45) were found to be pits dated by pottery to about the mid-first century or a little later. These vary in shape and size from a shallow scoop (F.3) to a deeper pit with undercut sides (F.40). Most of them were simple, bowl-shaped pits. None of them appears to have had any special function; for the most part they contained a few sherds of pottery and some fired clay (daub or crushed loomweight), but F.27 contained several fragments of tile and some pieces of iron slag.

F.37 was a large rectangular feature c. 7·2 m long and 2·4 m wide with almost vertical sides, a fairly flat bottom, and was c. 0·5 m deep. This clay-filled feature produced little to indicate function, but in view of its size it may have served as a pond or tank.

F.10 and F.28 represent concentrations of pottery of first century date (Figs. 14, 15, pp. 28–9). F.10 overlay F.7 which appeared to be a large spread of dark-brown clay containing much burnt material, pottery (predominantly of first century date) and burnt clay. This is interpreted as part of an occupation layer. It was located at the bottom of a step in the gravel surface (a drop in level of c. 0·8 m) and it is perhaps worth noting that F.3 is the only feature of first century date observed on the northern edge above this step. It may be that the step in the gravel surface represents an edge to the mid/late first century occupation in this direction.

LATE THIRD–FOURTH CENTURY SETTLEMENT

BATH-HOUSE (SITE II) (Figs. 4–9)

The bath-house comprised two structural elements (F.1, 2) adjacent to a well to the east (F.3). It overlay the field-ditch already described (F.4, 10, 19, p. 5).

Feature 1 (Figs. 5, 7)

This survived as a rectangular foundation 6·2 m long by 5 m wide, with a southern extension 4·2 m long and 2·2 m wide. At the north-western edge of the building was a flue with two projecting arms of tile-blocks lying on the natural clay with their upper surfaces level with the foundations of the rest of the building. The tiles were set in a compact, light-yellow mortar with occasional patches of pink mortar and small flints. The flue was 0·4 m wide and c. 0·15 m deep from the top of the tile-blocks widening outside the structure into a depression (c. 0·23 m, maximum depth). The central area of F.1 had lost its mortar footings and consisted simply of the natural clay. The southern extension was made up entirely of light-yellow mortar with occasional patches of pink mortar on the surface. The north-western third of the clay surface in the centre of the feature was heavily stained by burning. It was also cut by a profusion of small holes averaging 0·05 m in diameter and depth, usually filled with earth and charcoal.

Set within the mortar on the northern side of F.1 were two patches of the original white mortar floor, with a smooth, hard surface. Resting on them were the bottom tile-courses of three *pilae*. Possible remnants of two more rows lay to the south on the natural clay. One of these was three courses high.

Over the natural clay had accumulated patches of sandy coloured soil with occasional lumps of mortar in it (Layer 3), c. 0·1 m thick

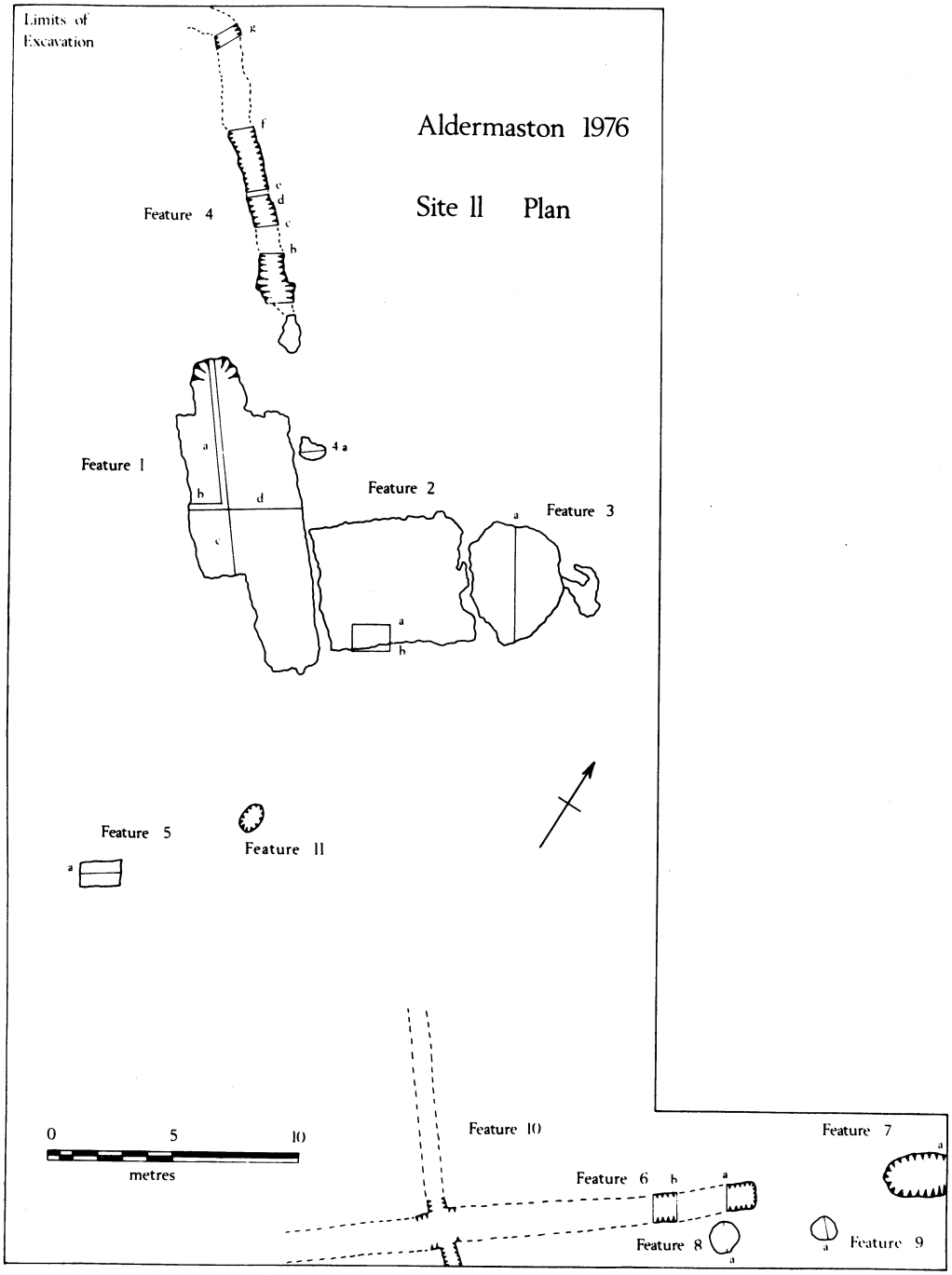

Fig. 4. Plan of Site II, showing the position of the sections.

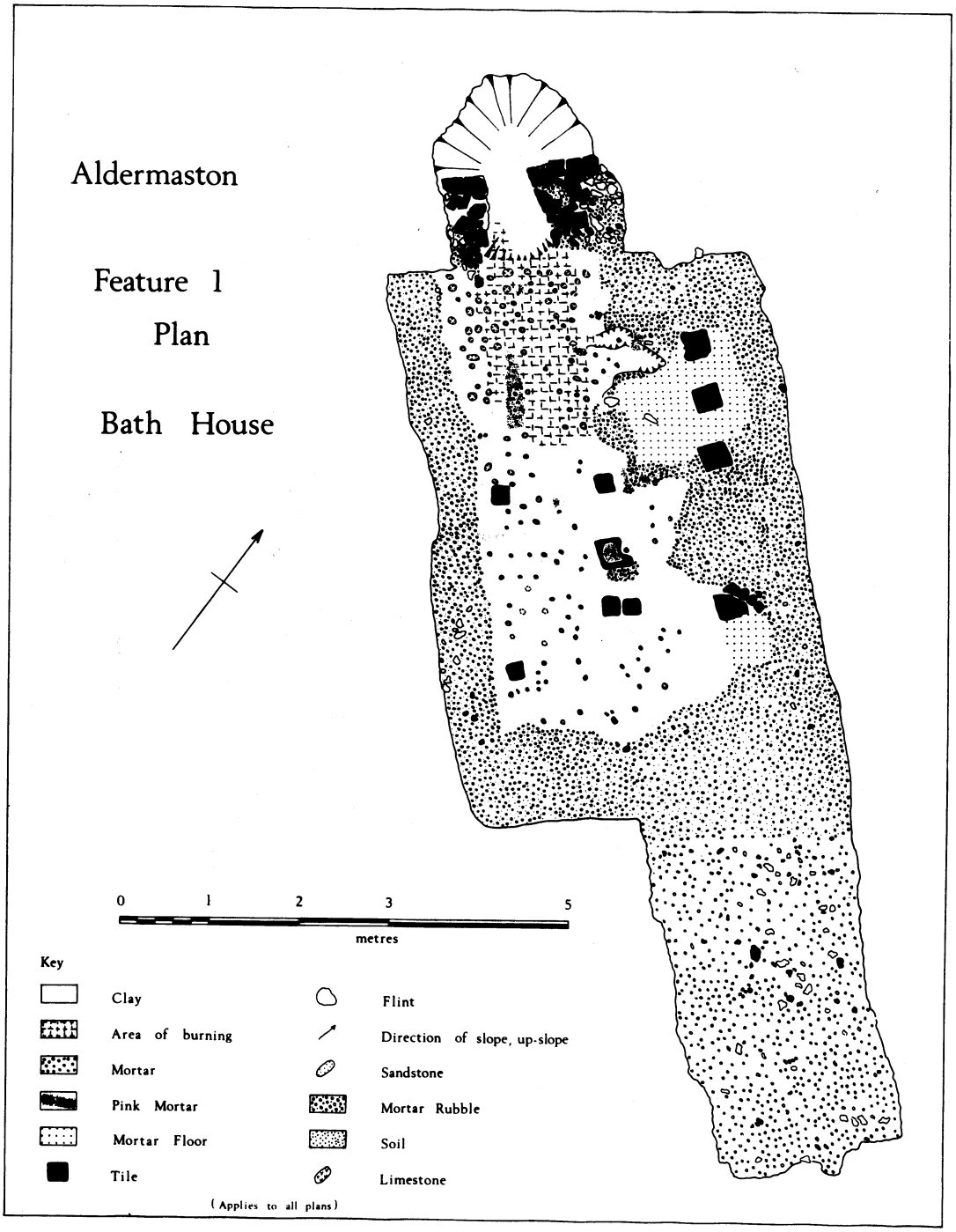

Fig. 5. Site II: Bath-house (F.1).

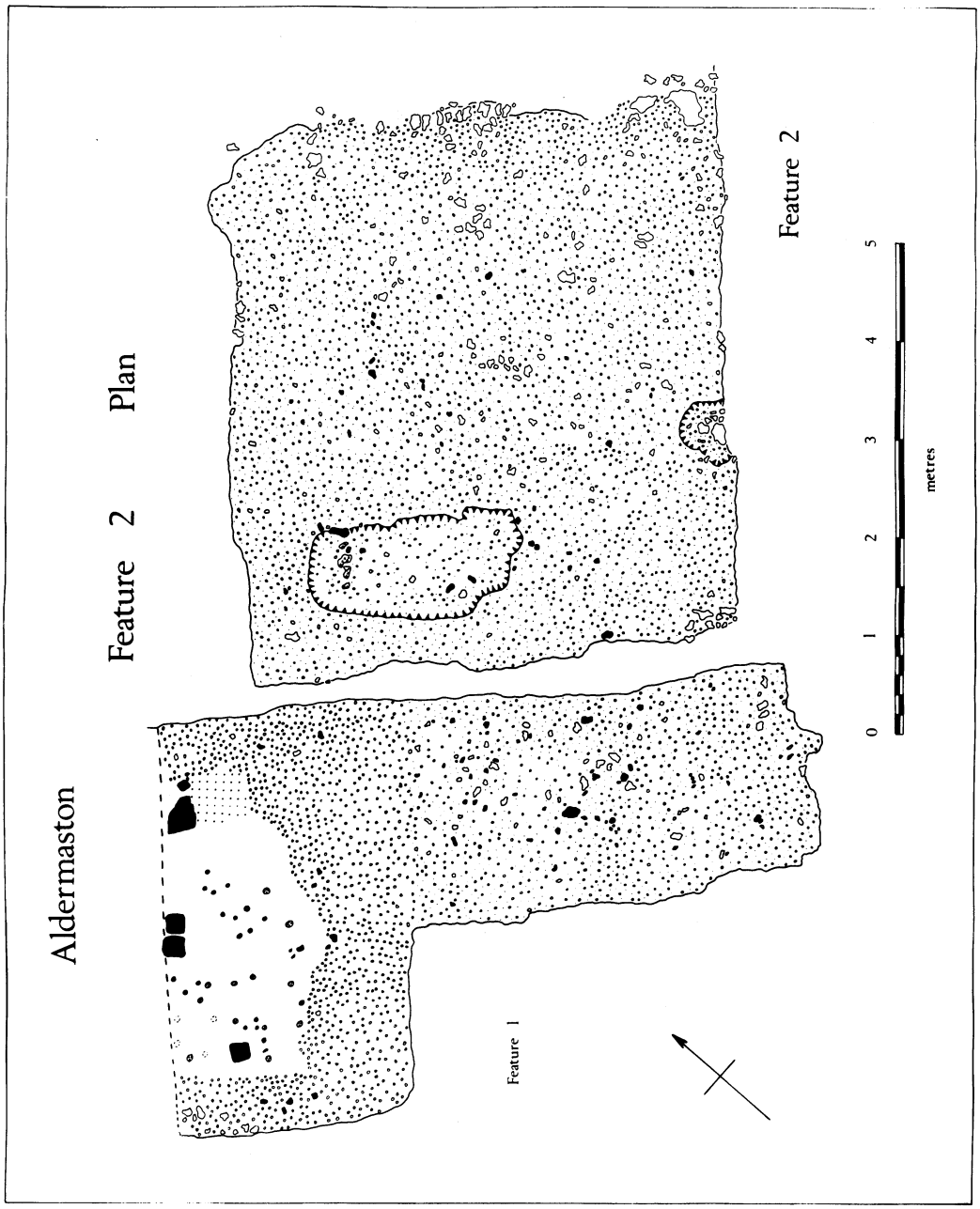

Fig. 6. Site II: Bath-house (F. 1 and 2).

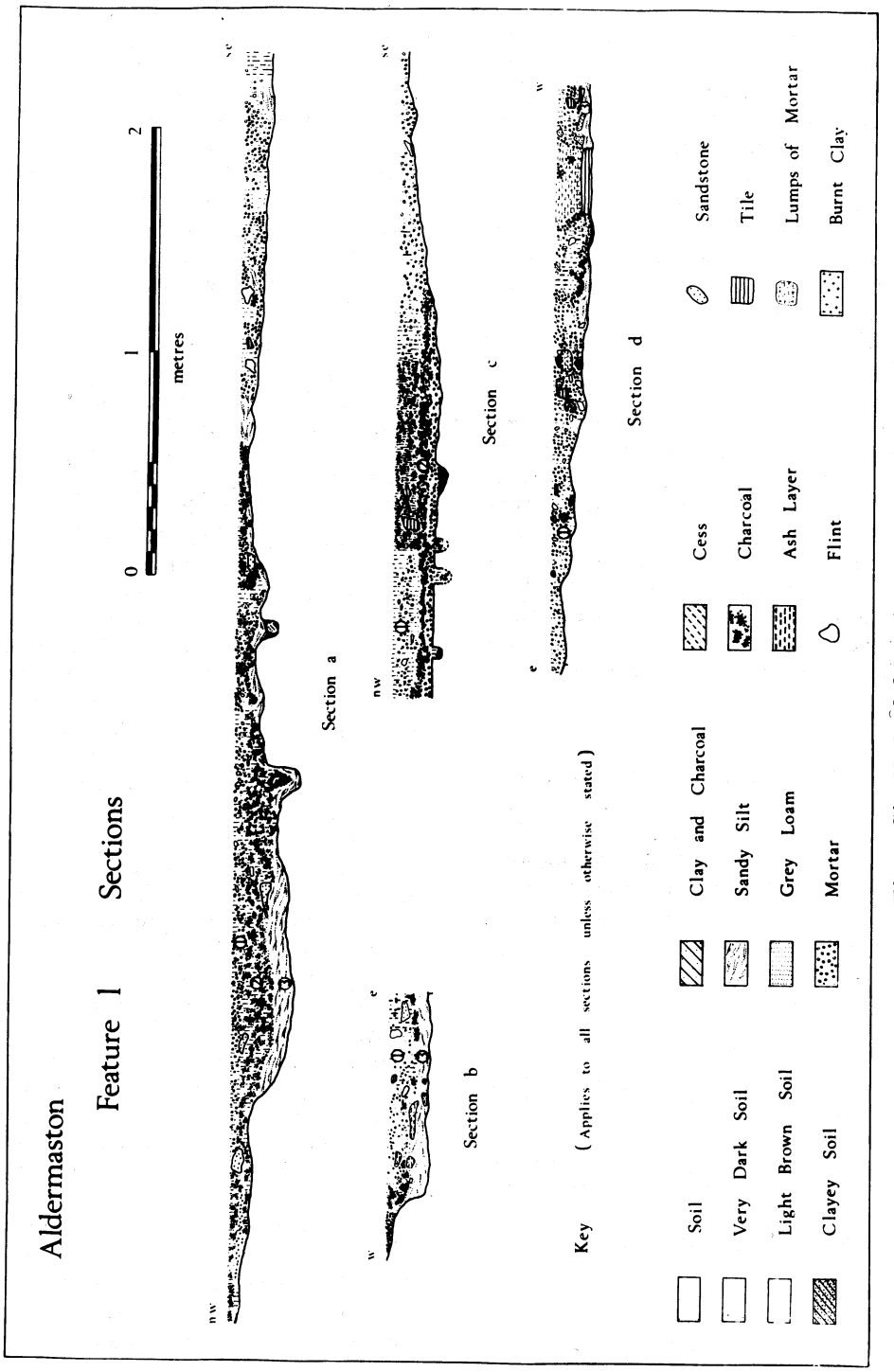

Fig. 7. Site II: Bath-house (F.1): Sections.

in places, particularly in the northern depression or stoke-hole and the south-western central area. Above this and more widespread, though still in localised areas, were patches of ash, charcoal and soil mixed together. The charcoal was particularly concentrated in the flue-depression where it was about 0·15 m deep. It also spread into the north-central sector, reaching depths of 0·05 m–0·1 m deep in the south-western area around the junction of clay and mortar. This charcoal-rich layer mostly underlay a layer of loose, sandy, white and pink mortar mixed with soil and small flint gravel. It was not always possible to distinguish clearly between these two layers. The upper, loose mortary layer covered the entire foundation to a uniform depth of c. 0·1 m. From it came *tegulae* and several fragments of box-tiles, particularly from around the stoke-hole. A few box-tiles, came from the narrower, southern extension of the building. Fragments of flat-tile, red sandstone roofing tiles, some limestone roofing tiles, nails, ?iron slag, bone and pottery were also found (Fig. 16, nos. 7–12, p. 31).

Feature 2 (Figs. 6, 9)

To the north-east of F.1, separated by a 0·3 m strip of natural clay, was a roughly square foundation, c. 5·8 m by 5 m. There was no direct evidence of a relationship between F.1 and F.2 but alignment and similarity in the mortar suggests that they are contemporary. The composition of the platform was of white and yellow sandy mortar with flint gravel. There were clusters of larger flints around the north-eastern and southern edges and a depression c. 1 m by c. 2 m and 0·1 m–0·2 m deep cut into the mortar surface on the western side. Several limestone roofing slates were found in this depression. This structure overlay the field-ditch (F.4, 10, 19) which had almost completely silted at the time of the construction of F.2 (Fig. 9). Besides pottery, a few bones of cattle were recovered.

Feature 3: The Well (Figs. 4, 8)

About 0·1 m to the east of F.2 was a roughly circular feature c. 4 m in diameter, which was excavated to only a depth of just over 2 m. The pit which was probably a well consisted of two main elements: the well-pit and the well-shaft itself (c. 1·4 m in diameter) around which the gravel had been packed. The subsidence of the latter and the gradual filling of the well-shaft seems to have caused the slumping of the layers, so evident on Fig. 8. The cone at the top of the pit probably resulted from weathering and the slumping of the original fill of the well-pit.

The lowest layer (6) of the pit and the well-shaft was loose, wet gravel. Towards the edge of the pit it was possible to detect tip lines, representing the back-filling of the latter, and only where these became indistinct in the middle did it seem possible to postulate the well-shaft itself. It is suggested that this represents the packing of the well-pit where it collapsed into the well-shaft. From this layer came occasional tile fragments, and pottery dateable to the fourth century A.D. Layer 5 contained gravel, mortar and charcoal and overlay 6 both in the well-pit and the shaft. This is presumably the first layer of deliberate back-filling of the well itself. From it came fragments of flue-tile, red sandstone and oolitic limestone roofing slates and pieces of chalk and cattle-bone. Layer 4, above 5 and covering the full width of the pit, was wet, dark soil and gravel with flue-tile, *tegulae*, flat-tile, oolitic and red sandstone roofing tile fragments, lumps of chalk and cattle-bone. Layer 3, above 5 and below 4, was a limited layer of silty clay in the northern part of the well-pit. Layer 2, with an earth, gravel and mortar fill, occupied the top part of the shaft and contained *tegulae*, flue-tile, sandstone roofing slates, a large number of large (0·2–0·3 m) flints, shell (oyster), bone and pottery of late third–fouth century date. Layer 1 comprised the same material as Layer 4 although it was drier. From it came nails, bone of cattle and horse, pottery, shells, flint, sandstone slates and tile fragments. In the centre of the pit on Layer 1 was a small patch of flint nodules (0·2–0·3 m).

Although the upper layers contained late third–fourth century pottery (Fig. 16,

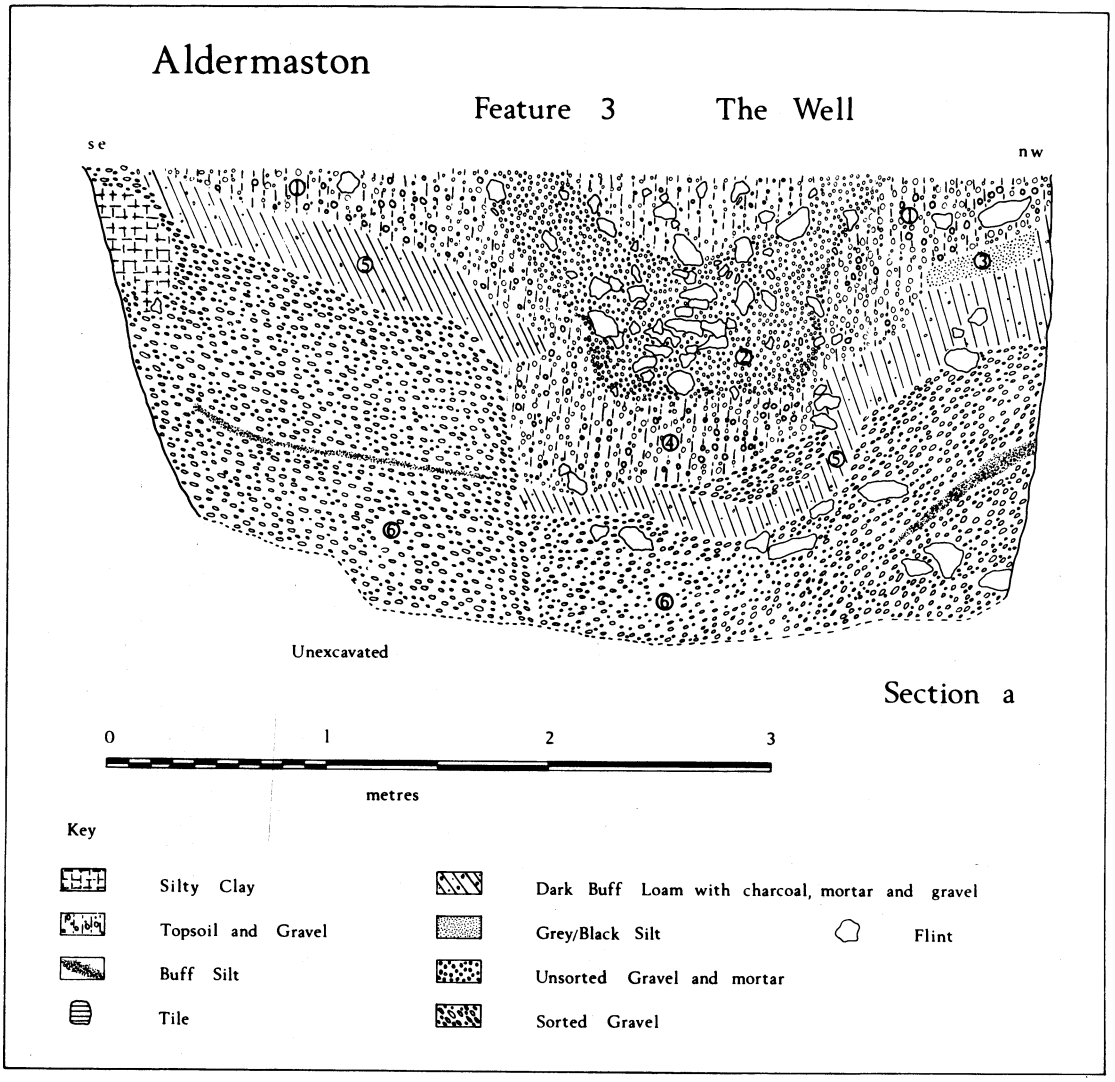

Fig. 8. Site II: Well (F.3): Section.

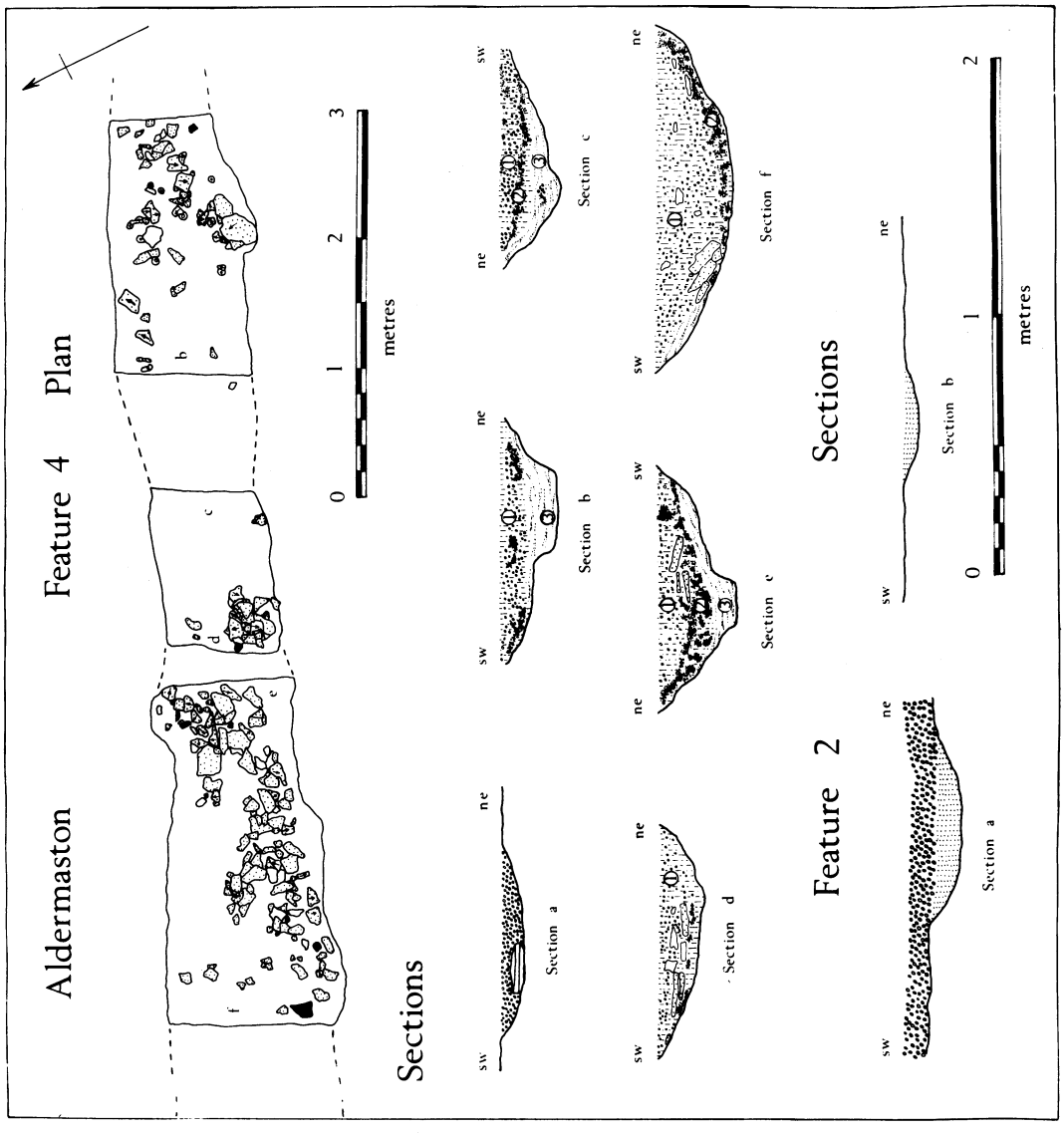

Fig. 9. Site II: Sections of F.2 and F.4.

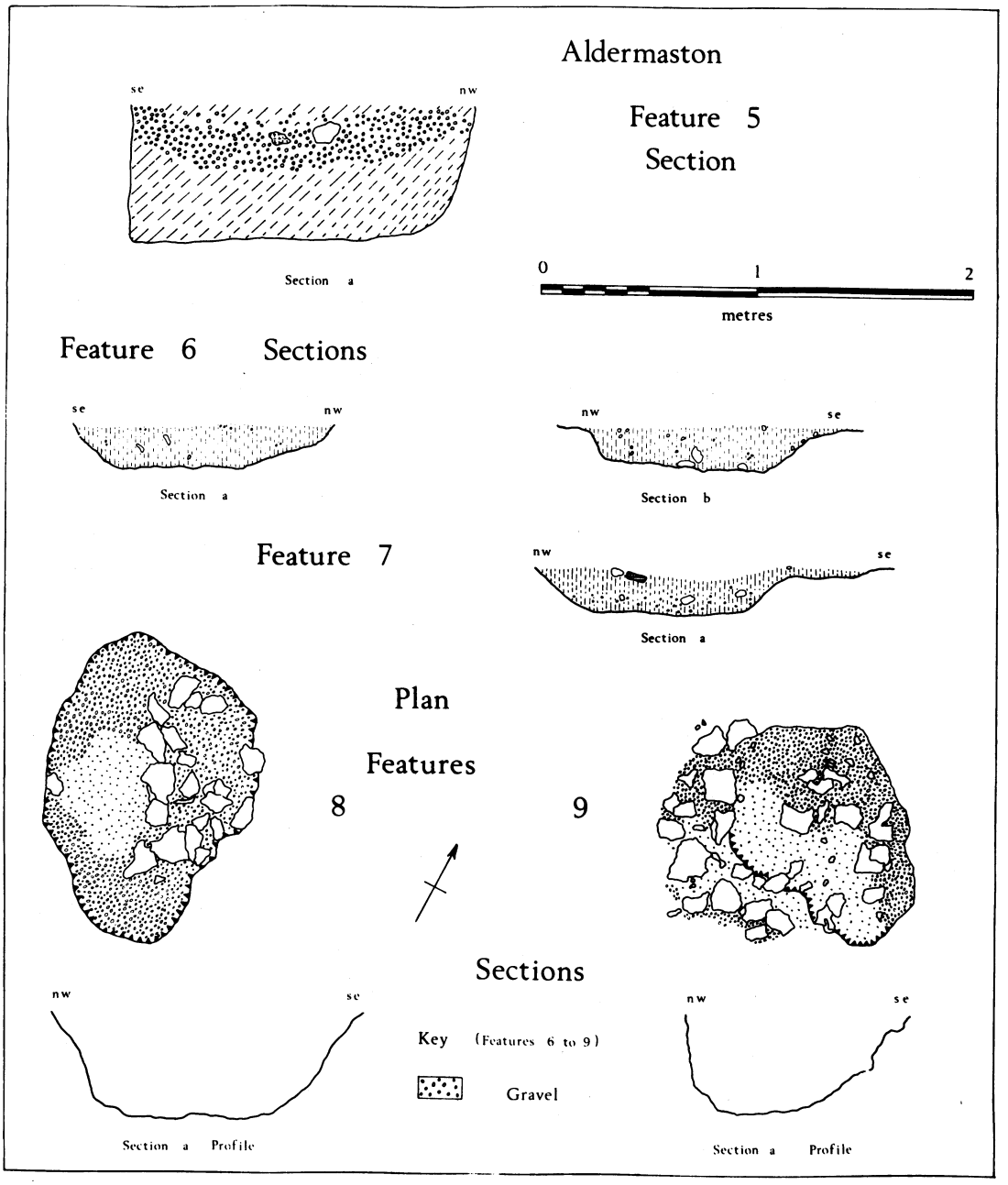

Fig. 10. Site II: Sections of F.5–9.

nos. 1–5) only one sherd proved to be more closely dateable. This was a stamped sherd of Oxfordshire ware (Fig. 16, no. 2), dated c. 350–c. 400 from Layer 2.

Features 4 and 10 (Field-ditch) (Figs. 4, 9)

This feature has already been described and discussed (p. 5) but it is appropriate to mention its upper fills in the vicinity of the bath-house. Above the primary grey to yellow silt was a layer of charcoal (2), varying from 0·05 m–0·1 m thick. Above this was a layer consisting of loose black soil and mortar (3) varying from 0·05 m–0·13 m in depth. From this came red sandstone roofing slates in very large quantities (cf. Fig. 9), along with tile fragments, burnt flints, nails, pottery, bone and oyster. The bones, mostly of cattle and sheep/goat, also included examples of deer, duck, fowl, horse and pig. The density of roofing slates declined with distance from the building as did the charcoal (2) upon which it lay. The sandstone was rare and the charcoal layer absent in F.4, section g (Fig. 9). The full profile of this ditch was not established throughout its length north of the building; only the upper layers were removed.

The course of the ditch under F.2 was demonstrated (Fig. 9, F.2, sections a and b), where it had completely silted at the time of the construction of F.2. To the south of the bath-house the ditch appeared to have been cut by F.6. The upper fill of dark soil contained pottery (Fig. 16, nos. 13–14 and 24), but no building material.

Feature 5 (Cess-pit) (Figs. 4, 10)

Approximately 10 m to the south of the bath-house was a rectangular feature about 1·5 m by 1 m and 0·45 m deep. From the primary fill (Layer 3) of black organic soil, c. 0·3 m deep, came flue-tile, flat-tile, nails, bone of cattle and horse, and pottery. Layer 2, above, consisted mainly of mortar-rubble and building material including fragments of red sandstone slates, flue-tile and bone. The top layer consisted of a black homogenous soil. It contained coins dated A.D. 337–341 and c. A.D. 330–60 (p. 22), as well as tile, limestone roofing slates and pottery (Fig. 16, nos. 15–18). The character of the organic-type fill and the sealing, rubble layer argue that this was a cess-pit.

Features 6–7 (Ditch) (Figs. 4, 10)

To the south-east of the bath-house, F.6 a generally flat-bottomed ditch was traced for a distance of c. 18 m, its eastern butt-end, separated by a 5·6 m causeway from the butt-end of another, flat-bottomed ditch, F.7. The filling of both ditches was an homegenous black soil containing flint nodules and small stones as well as fragments of tile and *tegulae*. F.7 contained relatively smaller quantities than F.6 which also had small amounts of nails, bone and pottery (Fig. 16, nos. 19–21, pp. 31–2).

Features 8 and 9 (Gate-posts) (Figs. 4, 10)

About 0·5 m south-east of F.6 were two circular features: one (F.8), c. 1·3 m in diameter and c. 0·5 m deep, and the other (F.9) c. 1 m in diameter and depth. Flints averaging 0·25 m in F.9 and 0·15 m in F.8 were presumably used as packing. They filled each pit except for a central core of dark soil. The section of F.8 suggests that the post may have been as large as 0·35 m in diameter. F.8 produced pottery of third–fourth century date (Fig. 16, nos. 22–23), while F.9 contained nails and tile fragments.

Feature 11 (Fig. 4)

For this feature see p. 3

DISCUSSION OF THE LATE ROMAN BUILDING (SITE II)

Intepretation of this building is hindered by the extent of its destruction prior to excavation. In essence one of the buildings contained a hypocaust system, while the other was represented as an almost square mortared foundation. A large pit, presumably a well, lay to its east.

Function

A study of buildings of a similar plan and size, which have not suffered as much damage,

suggest that the late Roman buildings represent the remains of a bath-house. At Feltwell in Norfolk a similar L-shaped plan contained three adjoining rooms, two with hypocausts and one without, the whole measuring 12 m by 6 m. The small room at right angles to this block, 3 m by 2·3 m contained a cold bath. The building was dated to the fourth century (Wilson, 1963, 137). Another free-standing rectangular bath-house building of the mid-fourth century was found at Denton in Lincolnshire. This had three rooms arranged in a straight line, two with hypocaust systems and one without, measuring in all c. 9 m by c. 4 m. Joined to the southern wall were three semi-circular baths; hot, tepid and cold, associated with two ditches (Greenfield, 1971). A second century A.D. bath-house at North Cray, Kent also had an L-shaped plan with a furnace area next to two rooms with hypocausts which themselves joined a square building without heating. Joined at right angles to the latter was a semi-circular bath associated with a lead-lined drain (Wilson, 1957, 223–4). The bath-house at Chipping-Warden, Northants., was an L-shaped building with two rooms with hypocausts served by a furnace at the eastern end and joined at right angles to a larger room with an apsidal bath at one end. It was dated from c. A.D. 250–c. A.D. 390. The whole complex, measured c. 12·5 m by c. 4 m with the building at right angles adding c. 3 m to the width (Haverfield, 1902, 200).

Perhaps the best parallel to the Aldermaston building is at Kintbury, 23 km to the west along the Kennet Valley. Here a rectangular building with hypocausts, 6 m by 4 m, with a stoke-hole at its northern end, had a narrow, mortared-floor extension to the south c. 3 m by 2·5 m, with no trace of a heating system. Set into the north-western wall of the heated room was an apsidal hot bath (Connah, forthcoming).

Since these buildings, interpreted as bath-houses, are similar in plan and dimensions to the Aldermaston structures, they argue for a similar function for it.

The oval pit to the east of F.2 appears to have been a well. Its close physical association with the building further enhances our interpretation of the latter as a bath-house.

Structural Details

The depression at the north-western end of the building with its charcoal-rich fill would appear to be the stoke-hole, with the cheeks of mortared tiles acting as revetments for the furnace-flue leading into the hypocausted room. The boiler might be expected to have been placed higher on these supports. At Chatley Farm, Cobham, Surrey, the first phase furnace consisted of a setting of greensand blocks, on the surface of which probably rested a boiler, perhaps of lead (Frere, 1949, 81–2). Whether the Aldermaston furnace was originally enclosed cannot be argued on the surviving evidence.

After passing along the flue, the hot air would then enter the hypocaust of the adjoining room. Whether this was one large room, or divided into two to form a *caldarium* and *tepidarium*, is uncertain. If it was divided, it would give two rooms, each c. 3 m by 5 m. That this is a probable interpretation is seen in other fourth century free-standing bath-houses. At Feltwell, Norfolk the *caldarium* and *tepidarium* each measured c. 3 m by 6 m (Wilson 1963, 137).

Possible evidence for the division of the main block at Aldermaston into two rooms might be seen in the areas of charcoal which overlay parts of the footings. It seemed to be particularly concentrated in the south-central section of the main hypocausted building (Fig. 5). This might indicate a wooden screen between the two areas. At Denton, Lincolnshire, Greenfield suggested a wooden screen dividing the room in two (1971, 36). Further support for a division might also be argued from the tongue of mortar which projects from the middle of the north-eastern side of F.1. To its south are the traces of a curving line of mortared tiles suggesting that the *tepidarium* or second room was apsed.

If we are justified in assuming a *caldarium* and *tepidarium* in F.1, then the narrow

extension in which the *pilae* were found might have been the *frigidarium*. At Kintbury this function was argued by the excavator for a similar extension (Connah, forthcoming).

Owing to excessive robbing reconstruction of the building above foundations is difficult. It would appear that the floor of the hypocaust was laid with a hard, white mortar over the yellow-mortar foundations. The tile *pilae* then rested on this surface. In one case the *pilae* consist of three courses resting on the natural subsoil and must surely represent a secondary repair after the action of repeated heating had perhaps destroyed the original surface. The raised floor surface of the bath would probably have been of pink mortar. This was commonly used, as at Denton (Greenfield, 1971, 31) and at Aldermaston small quantities of this material were recovered in the rubble and from the hypocaust floor. One of the *pilae* still had some pink mortar adhering to it.

The relative abundance of flint nodules, particularly around F.2 suggest that some or all of the walls were in this material, presumably imported from the chalk. Some squared-off fragments of limestone could have served as quoining, rather than roofing material. The remainder of the rubble included flue-tile and some *tegulae*, although the largest proportion of building material besides flint consisted of Old Red Sandstone roofing slates, with a comparatively smaller proportion of oolitic limestone slates. The distribution of the sandstone slates argues strongly for their employment in the building (p. 16), rather than as rubble spread from an adjacent structure.

The relationship of F.2 to the bath-house is not clear but it is presumably contemporary. From its positioning it would seem that it was an integral part of the whole, although its function remains extremely uncertain. If we accept that the main block (F.1) contained the three most typical rooms of a Romano-British bathing suite, then F.2 might have served as the vestibule and changing room. Alternatively F.1 may only represent two rooms (*caldarium* and *tepidarium*), while F.2 may have been the *frigidarium*, or that and a changing room. No drainage channels survived although F.4 and F.10, which existed as very shallow gullies in the late Roman period could have taken some water away.

In conclusion, all that can safely be said concerning the layout of the bath-house is that it consisted of a hypocaust-chamber, probably divided into two with a vestibule/changing room and *frigadarium* adjacent.

Other Structural Evidence

Beneath the floor of F.1 where the natural subsoil was exposed were a large number of small, shallow holes (Fig. 5), filled with loose soil and charcoal. In the central part of F.1 these holes lay directly beneath the rubble fill covering the structure. Since none of them contained clean mortar, it is possible that they were filled at least after the mortared surface of the hypocaust had disappeared. At Frocester villa, Gloucestershire, many small holes of a similar diameter, but apparently over 1 m deep had been dug beneath the hypocaust floors of the bath-house and a nearby heated room. They were filled with loose gravel and sand and, like Aldermaston, without mortar; their purpose remains a puzzle, although Richmond had suggested to Gracie they were for insulation (Gracie, 1970, 28). At Farnham, Surrey, similar arrangements of holes of unknown depth were found in a similar context. There it was suggested they had taken wooden piles to act as foundations, but no trace of timber survived (Lowther, 1955, 52–4). If the Aldermaston holes had contained clean mortar it might be suggested that they were designed to key the mortar floor into the natural subsoil.

Date of Construction

No feature either of the bath-house itself or its associated elements produced anything that could be dated outside the range of c. 250–c. 400 at its widest. No dateable material was found which could date the *construction* of any feature. The only relationship was the sealing of the ditch F.4/10 by F.2. The date of this ditch is argued elsewhere (p. 5); the fact that

certain lengths of it produced late Roman pottery in the upper layers suggests some continuity of use at that date rather than a *terminus post quem.* However, a late third–mid-fourth century date is preferred for the *construction* of the building on the basis of the whole assemblage of Roman pottery from Site II.

Post-Construction Phases

It has already been suggested that some reconstruction of the hypocaust took place after the original floor had worn. Subsequent to this the building collapsed or was dismantled with its rubble lying spread over F.1. Although charcoal was evident and was particularly dense in the flue and stoke-hole it is not necessary to argue that the building was burnt down. The charcoal may simply represent the spread of waste from the furnace and its general distribution supports this idea. Building rubble almost certainly from the bath-house also occurred in the upper fills of the well-shaft and pit (F.3), the cess-pit (F.5) and the section of ditch (F.4). The date of the end of the bath-house is suggested by the sherd of pottery from the well giving a *terminus post quem* of c. 350, and the fairly unworn coins from the top of F.5 of c. A.D. 337.

Other Features adjacent to the Bath-house

It has already been suggested that F.5 was a cess-pit although it might have belonged to other settlements in the area where gravel had already been extracted. It lay within the alignment of F.6 and F.7 which with the entrance marked by the large post-pits (F.8–9) seems to have partly enclosed the bath-house complex. All these features produced pottery of late third–fourth century date. Other features within the area (F.4, 10–11) are of earlier date and have already been discussed (p. 5).

Altogether it is clear that the bath-house complex represents only part of a late-Roman villa or settlement. Observations prior to 1976 suggest that the main focus of the villa/settlement lay to the west in the area where gravel had already been extracted prior to 1976. This is supported by the scarcity of late Roman material to the east (below, p. 20). Although there were no traces of wall-plaster or mosaic, a building of some pretensions is indicated nearby by virtue of the impressive array of non-local building materials employed in the bath-house. On the other hand functional considerations determined that the bath-house should be of masonry to avoid the risk of fire and the adjacent farm could have been of timber. This seems to have been a common arrangement in Roman Britain and is exemplified at Gadebridge, near Hemel Hempstead, Herts. in the late first century (Neal, 1974) and at Garden Hill, East Sussex in the early second century (Money, 1977).

OTHER LATE ROMAN OCCUPATION (C. A.D. 250–C. A.D. 400)

Site 1 (Fig. 2)

Owing to the importance of the late Bronze Age settlement (p. 3), it was only possible to examine and section a few of the late Roman features.

F.14. This feature was recognised on the surface by an area of dark soil and charcoal in which a tile-block was partly buried. Preliminary cleaning of the surface revealed a layer of clay several centimetres thick. From the upper layer came sherds of late third–fourth century pottery (Fig. 17, nos. 28–30). This feature may have been some kind of corn-drying oven.

F.17. This feature was only cleaned to show a fill of dark soil and charcoal containing pottery of late third–fourth century date (Fig. 17, nos. 31–34).

F.19. (Fig. 11). This ditch which is in alignment with F.4 and F.10 (Site II) has already been discussed (p. 5). It was c. 0·8 m wide and c. 0·3 m deep (cf. F.10, Site II). Besides the earlier pottery mentioned above (p. 33), the fill also contained late third–fourth century pottery (Fig. 17, nos. 25–27) which probably suggests continuity of use in the late Roman period.

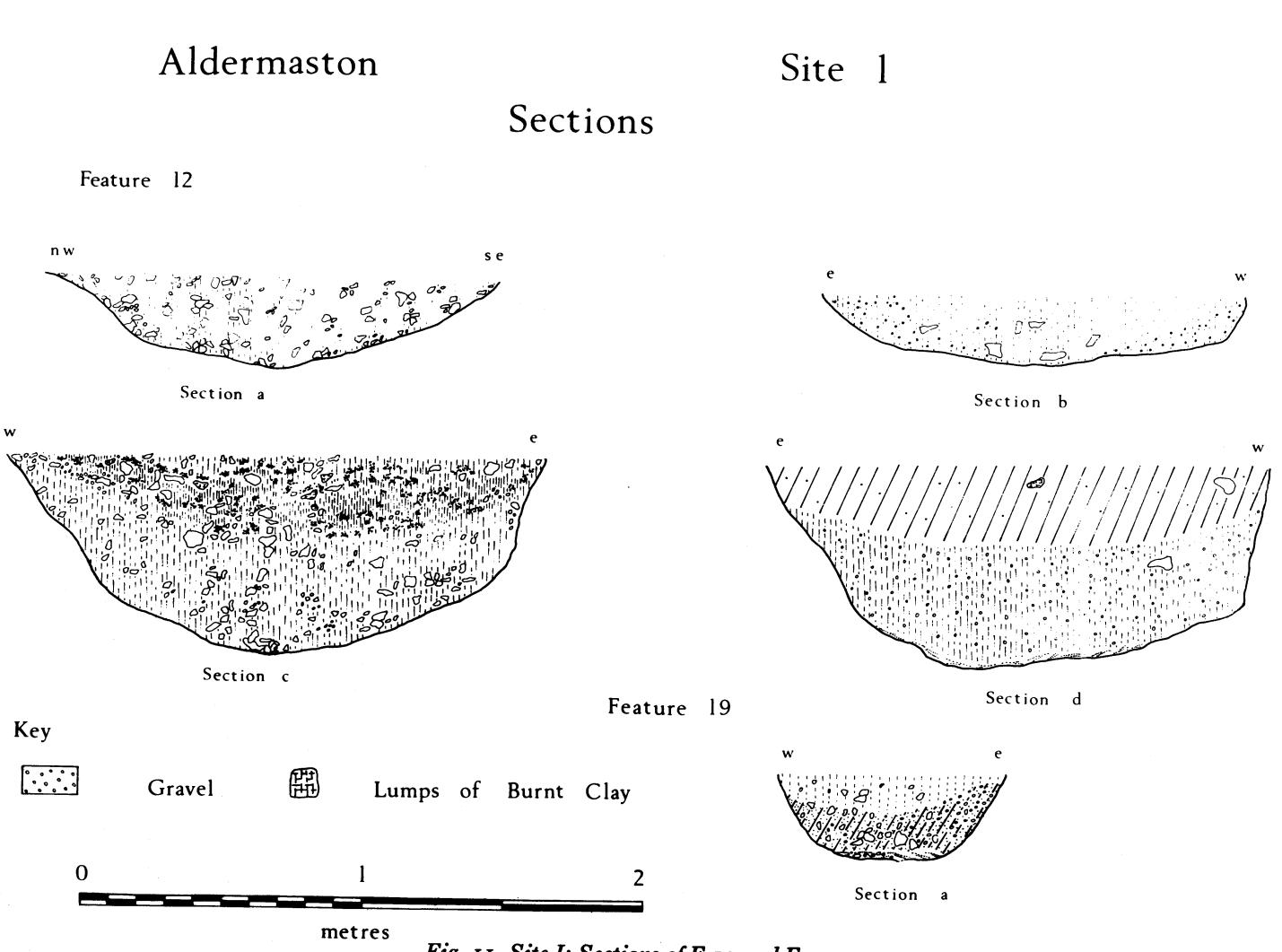

Fig. 11. Site I: Sections of F.12 and F.19.

Site III (Fig. 3)

Two features appear to belong to the late Roman period.

F.34. This was visible in the section against the unstripped field to the east. It was cut into the subsoil which also sealed it. It was rounded in profile, c. 0·25 m in diameter and c. 0·2 m in depth. It was filled with compact black clay containing lumps of fired clay and burnt flint. There appears to have been burning *in situ* and the clay round the sides had been fired to a reddish colour. Possibly part of an oven, the exact function of this feature may only become clear when further topsoil stripping takes place. It produced a sherd of Oxfordshire ware (late third–fourth century), a tile fragment and a piece of mineralised iron, possibly a nail.

F.59. This feature is also partly obscured as it too was observed in the eastern section of the stripped area against the field. It was fairly deep with a flat bottom and steep sides. It produced a fragment of an Oxfordshire ware bowl of fourth century date (Fig. 17, no. 36), as well as abraded tile fragments. Further investigation of this feature must await the next phase of gravel extraction. A few other unstratified finds of late Roman pottery were also recovered from Site III (Fig. 17, nos. 35–40).

UNDATED FEATURES

Site I (Fig. 2)

F.13. This was a short length of ditch and contained large amounts of burnt clay but no dateable artefacts.

F.15. This feature was observed as a spread of dark soil and charcoal on the surface. It was not excavated.

Site III (Fig. 3)

Many features were identified on the surface and appear on the plan. These produced no dating evidence and cannot be assigned to any particular period.

After excavation F.54/56, 55 and 58 appeared to be natural solution hollows. F.5 and F.6 also appeared to be natural, containing large quantities of a substance which may be fulgerite, a silicate mineral formed when lightning strikes sand (we are grateful to Mr J. W. S. Jones for this information).

F.15, 16, 31 and 33. On excavation these three features appeared to be post-holes. F.15 has a diameter of 0·68 m. F.31 was unexcavated, appearing on the surface to be a large post-hole or small pit. One sherd of first century A.D. pottery was found on the top of the fill.

F.4, 32, 41, 43, 46, 48, 49 and 51. These features or pits were partially excavated and produced no dating evidence. They were all roundish or oval in shape with a rounded profile; their depths varied from very shallow to 0·3 m. Other finds give little clue to date or function. F.4 was a shallow scoop, containing much fired clay (daub or ?crushed loomweight) whereas F.48, again very shallow, contained much charcoal and unidentifiable bone fragments.

F.11, 12, 36 and 50. These were unexcavated but may be similar to the previous group. From the surface of F.12 came one sherd of late Bronze Age pottery (? residual) and a piece of iron slag.

F.44. This was a very shallow deposit of black sand and clay and may represent the remains of a pit left after the machine had scraped most of it away.

F.52 and 53. These consisted of two, parallel, short lengths of ditch protruding from the east section of the stripped area. Both were very shallow; F.52 being little more than a gulley. They produced no dating evidence but are adjacent to F.59 which is probably of late third–fourth century date (above). Further comment must await until the adjacent area is stripped and more of the features exposed.

F.60 and 61. These are probably parts of the same feature, representing a small gulley which produced no dating evidence.

FINDS

THE SMALL FINDS

1. Stone

Querns (Fig. 12, nos. 4–6). Three fragments of quern stone came from the filling of F.12 (Site I) of early first century A.D. date. Identifications are by Dr B. W. Selwood, Department of Geology, University of Reading. They are all lower stones of a tertiary (Glauconitic) sandstone which outcrops in Berkshire, north Hampshire and Wiltshire.

Building Materials. Apart from brick and tile of probable local manufacture the bath-house buildings appear to have preferred imported stone for roofing. Most abundant (100+ pieces) is an Old Red Sandstone which is similar to that from the Forest of Dean. Identical roofing material was used nearby at Silchester in the *basilica* and at the Great Bedwyn and Littlecote villas near Hungerford, further west along the Kennet (Williams, 1971a). This kind of roofing material probably from the Mendips or the Forest of Dean is commonly used in the Cotswolds and Somerset (Williams, 1971b Map 3). Aldermaston and Silchester are at the periphery of the eastern distribution. Less commonly used was an oolitic limestone (a ratio of about 1:4 of Old Red Sandstone), probably from the Corallian outcrops in Oxfordshire (Oxford to Faringdon). This is very similar to the limestone used to bond the walls of Silchester. Two other limestones were also found in the bath-house rubble. The first is Stonesfield Slate and the second which was very rare, is a fine, pelletal limestone, possibly from the Chalk or Portland limestone and so either from the Dorset coast or the Vale of Pewsey: Stonesfield Slate was apparently also used in one building at Silchester and in some Hampshire villas (Williams, 1971a), but its distribution is particularly strong in the Cotswold region (Williams, 1971b). The nodular flint for walling was presumably imported from the chalk.

2. Bronze (Fig. 12, no. 2)

Part of a bronze bracelet, with a section of staggered, opposing diagonal indented lines, terminating in a panel of transverse indented lines at each end. The whole decorative panel is set between two continuous indented lines running the length of the bracelet fragment. Probably fourth century; Site I; unstratified.

3. Bone (Fig. 12, no. 1)

Part of a plain bracelet. One end is tapered and pierced transversely with a round hole, c. 0·5 mm in diameter above which is a small corroded iron fixture, ? a clasp.

Site II: F.5, Layer 3, the bottom fill of the cess-pit.

4. Bronze Coins

1. Æ Illegible; possibly a late third century radiate (Site I, unstratified).
2. House of Constantine. Rev.: *Gloria Exercitus* (1 standard), mint-mark Trier $\frac{M}{TRP}$, A.D. 337–41 (Carson, Hill and Kent 1972, no. 132).
3. Fourth-century copy. Obv.: Head laureate, with rosettes. Legend: VICT . . . and some meaningless characters. mm. TR?S in exergue. Rev.: Figure advancing l.; prostrate figure to l. Legend: CONSTAN . . . A; c. A.D. 330–60.

THE POTTERY

1. Late Bronze Age (Fig. 13)

The late Bronze Age pottery is all from Site III. It can all be paralleled in fabric and form with the assemblage from Site I (Bradley, forthcoming).

Fabric. The fabric has a fine sandy matrix with sparse haematite or grog inclusions. The predominant tempering material is flint, some of which is calcined. The grits are ill-sorted in the matrix, angular and sub-angular ranging in size up to 5 mm, but mainly of 2–5 mm. The colour of the fabric and surface ranges from orange to dark brown with some sherds partially burnt or blackened. Surfaces are smoothed, showing evidence of finger-smearing. All vessels are hand-made.

1. Sherds from shoulder of a rounded, bi-partite jar; prominent finger-smearing

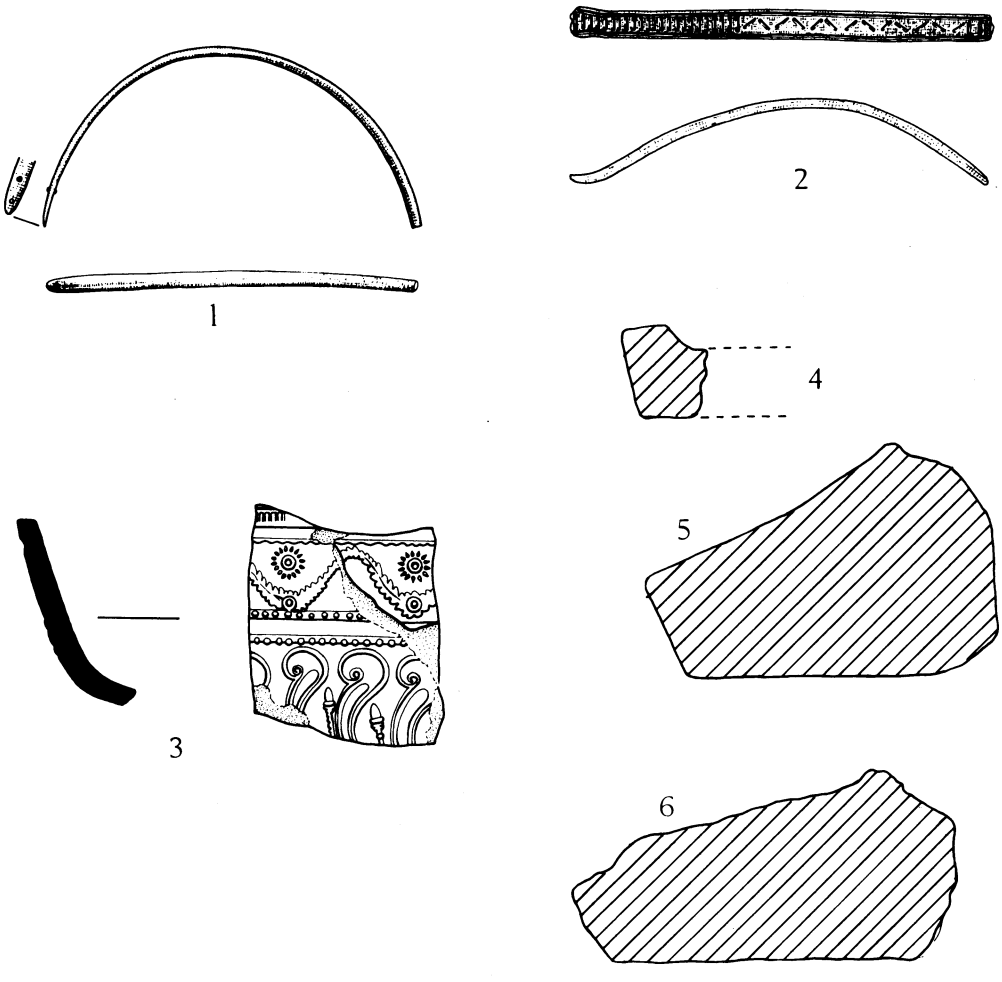

Fig. 12. Objects of Bone (no. 1); Bronze (no. 2); Samian (no. 3); Stone (nos. 4–6). Scales: no. 1 at $\frac{1}{2}$; no. 2 at $\frac{1}{1}$; no. 3 at $\frac{1}{2}$; nos. 4–6 at $\frac{1}{3}$.

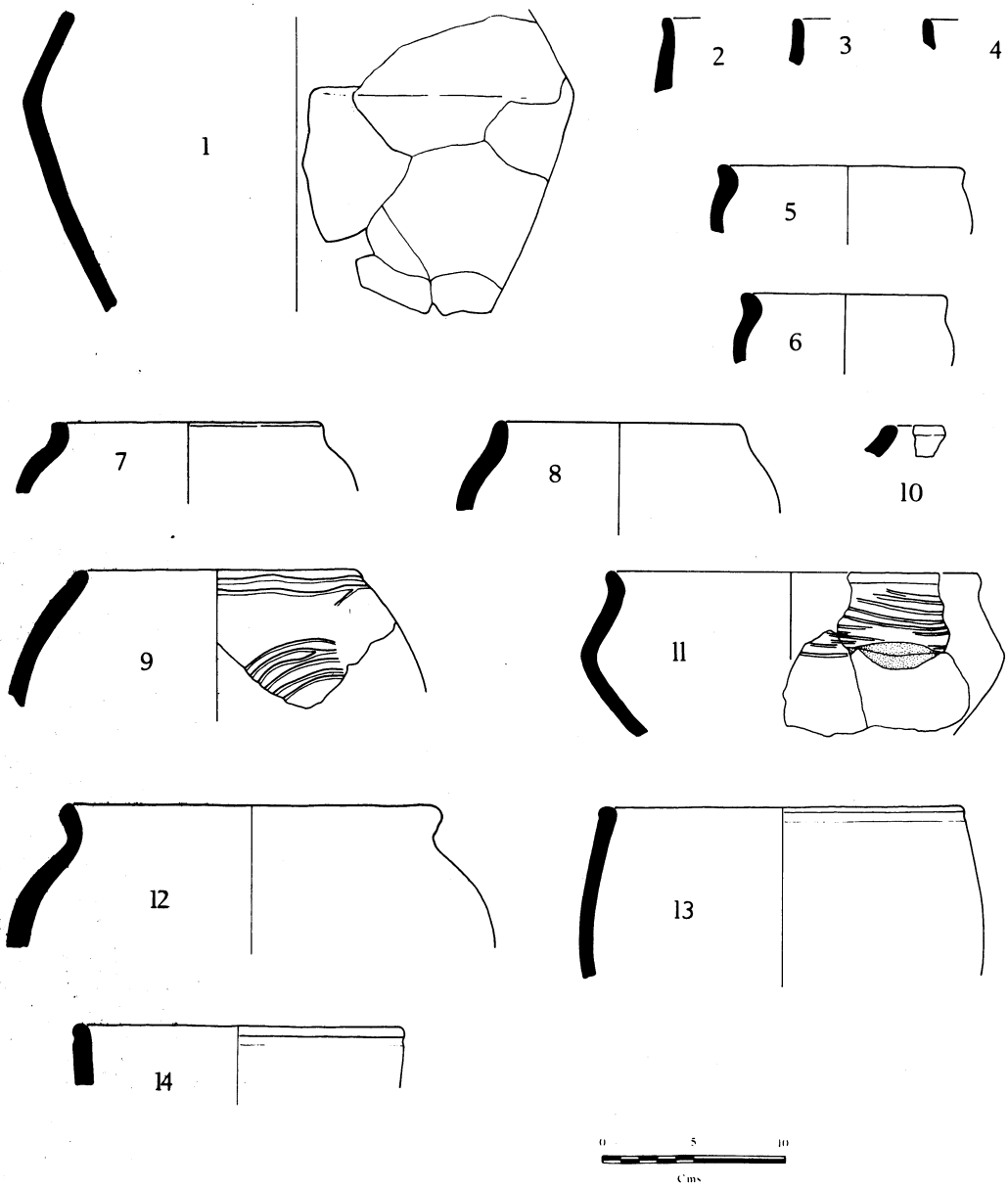

Fig. 13. Late Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age Pottery. Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$.

outside with some internal vegetable-smearing (F.44).
2. Convex-sided bowl; the rim is rounded and slightly everted (F.39).
3. Jar with a simple, upright rim (F.47).
4. Shallow bowl with an upright rim (F.47).

2. Middle Iron Age (Fig. 13)

The middle Iron Age (third–first century B.C.) pottery is all from Site III. Only definite examples are listed here; further examples *may* be included amongst the early flint-tempered Roman wares (e.g. Fig. 14 nos. 15–19). The group is fairly homogenous but in style and fabric appears to be paralleled with a variety of sites, either to the west, south or north.

Fabric 1. Hard, fine sandy fabric tempered with sparse ill-sorted flint grits of small to medium size (1–3 mm); larger, angular grits also sometimes occur as does crushed shell. Fabric and surface are dark brown to black. The surfaces are smoothed with some burnishing evident; one vessel has linear-tooled, another has shallow-scored decoration. Vessels are hand-made. (Illustrated Sherds nos. 5–7, +9).

Fabric 2. Coarse brown to black fabric with abundant well-sorted small to medium (1–3 mm) angular flint grits. Larger rounded flints and grog also occurs. The external surface is smoothed and sometimes burnished with some linear-tooling. (Illustrated Sherds nos. 10–14).

Fabric 3. Hard sandy ware. The sand is coarse, dense and well-sorted with occasional rounded flint inclusions. The fabric is slightly micaceous. Fabric and surfaces are light brown to dark grey or black. Some examples are burnished. All vessels are hand-made. (Illustrated Sherd no. 8).

5. Globular bowl with bead rim; Fabric 1. This vessel has some crushed shell and some larger quartz inclusion; traces of external burnishing (F.18).
6. Small globular bowl with bead rim; Fabric 1; traces of external burnishing (unstratified).
7. Globular vessel with a short, upright flattened rim; Fabric 1; traces of external burnishing (F.7).
8. Jar with short neck and simple, rounded rim; Fabric 3; traces of external burnishing (F.20, Layer 5).
9. Globular bowl, Fabric 1; traces of external burnishing and simple curvilinear shallow-tooled decoration (for form cf. Harding 1972, p. 67) and for decoration, cf. Cunliffe's St. Catherine's Hill style (1974, Fig. A: 15, 5); or the Yarnbury-Highfield group (1974, Fig. A: 15, 10); third–first century B.C. (F.20).
10. Jar; bead rim; Fabric 2 (unstratified).
11. Bi-partite bowl with bead rim; Fabric 2; smoothed exterior with linear-tooled decoration above the shoulder (cf. Cunliffe's Southcote-Blewburton Hill style (1974, Fig. A; 17, 5) or the St. Catherine's Hill-Worthy Down style (1974: Fig. A; 15, 11); third–first century B.C. (F.20).
12. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 2; smoothed exterior surface (cf. Cunliffe 1974: Fig. A; 17, 7 or, jars of Yarnbury-Highfield style, *ibid.*, Fig. A; 16, 11–13. (Unstratified).
13. Saucepan with a groove below the rim; Fabric 2; with evidence of external burnishing (cf. Harding 1972, p. 66); third–first century B.C. (F.20).
14. Saucepan with a groove below the rim; Fabric 2; trace of external burnishing; third–first century B.C. (F.37).

3. First century A.D. (Figs. 14–15)

The pottery of first century A.D. date falls into two discrete chronological groups. The earlier group is from Site I (F.12) and is dominated by soapy, grog-tempered wares (Fabrics 1–2) which accounts for over 88% of the assemblage by weight. Heavily flint-tempered 'Silchester Ware' vessels only account for 2% of the group. This contrasts very strongly with the material from Site III which is overwhelmingly of 'Silchester Ware' type (Fabric 3) with only a few examples of grog-tempered vessels. As none of the Site III features produced enough pottery for weight

comparison to be useful, considerations are based on the group as a whole, taking typologically distinctive sherds where there is less risk of confusion with Iron Age material. Whereas the first group from Site I can be best paralleled with the pottery found by Boon beneath the banks of the Inner Earthwork at Silchester (1969, 74–79) and two pits (H+R) at Ufton Nervet (Manning 1973–4, 33–37), the second assemblage from Site III finds its closest parallels with the assemblages in the filling of the Inner Earthwork ditch (Boon 1969, 62–67) and the earliest assemblages derived from the interior of the same earthwork (Fulford, forthcoming). The 'Silchester Ware' assemblage is dated by Gallo-Belgic and samian imports to the period c. A.D. 30/40 – c. A.D. 60/70 (Boon 1969, 80; Fulford, forthcoming). Thus the first group from Site I would seem to date to the earlier part of the first century, perhaps c. A.D. 1 – c. A.D. 30, although there is really no evidence on which to hang a starting date, which might go as far back as c. 50 B.C. Absence of imported Gallo-Belgic and Samian imports to the period character need have no implications concerning the date of the assemblages.

Discontinuity with the mid-Iron Age assemblage is demonstrated by the contents of Site I, Feature 12 where grog-tempered fabrics predominate. It should be stressed that confusion between mid-Iron Age and early-Roman flint-tempered wares may arise when occupation of these two periods is present (as on Site III) *without* the presence of assemblages like feature 12 (Site I) which belong to the end of the first century B.C. and the beginning of the first century A.D.

Fabric 1(a). A brown or black, slightly soft fabric tempered with grog in a slightly sandy matrix. The inclusions of grog range from c. 0·5 mm to 2 mm; some sherds have very occasional flint grits (c. 0·5 mm); hand-made. The surfaces are usually buff or light-brown and smoothed rather than burnished. There were about 15 vessels in this fabric on the basis of rim and base calculations from a total of c. 250 sherds. By weight this fabric represented 77% of the total assemblage of F.12 (Site I).

Fabric 1 (b). As Fabric 1a but with harder and finer examples. The surfaces are burnished both inside and out; hand-made. Five vessels in all are represented from a total of 13 sherds. By weight this fabric represented 11·5% of the assemblage of F.12 (Site I).

Fabric 2. A grey, light-brown or black fabric, heavily tempered with large flint inclusions, averaging c. 3 mm in size. Sparse grog inclusions also occur; hand-made. Surfaces are smoothed or partially burnished. This fabric is May's 'Silchester Ware' (1916). There is considerable variation in the frequency and size range of the flint temper which in body sherd material makes this fabric difficult to distinguish from late Bronze Age or middle Iron Age vessels. The problem is exacerbated with bead rim jar forms (as nos. 15–19) which also occur in mid-Iron Age contexts. Five sherds in this fabric were recovered from F.12, accounting for only 2·3% of the weight of the group.

Fabric 3. A light-grey to buff, hard fabric. Abundant, coarse well-sorted sand with very sparse, large angular flint grits. Either orange to brown core with reduced or oxidised surfaces with a darker core; wheel-thrown.

Less common fabrics. These are described in the pottery list.

Residual late Bronze Age. Coarse flint-tempered body sherds identical to the material from the late Bronze Age settlement on Site I were recovered from later features. Sherds of this kind, for example, account for 9·2% of the total weight from Site I.

For individual parallels the reader is referred to the sites and groups mentioned above (p. 00).

Site I: F.12 (Fig. 14, nos. 1–14)

1. Jar with bead rim; Fabric 1 (a); brown.
2. Jar with cordon on the shoulder; Fabric 1 (a); brown; sparse flint inclusions.
3. Jar with out-bent rim; Fabric 1 (b); brown; ?wheel-thrown neck and rim.

4. Jar with cordon; Fabric 1 (a); brown; smoothed surface giving 'soapy' feel; occasional small flint inclusions.
5. Bowl; Fabric 1 (b); central core brown, outside in orange.
6. Jar with bead rim; Fabric 2; black with a buff surface.
7. Jar with ?cordon on the neck/shoulder.
8. Jar with cordon on the shoulder; Fabric 1 (a); brown with a smoothed surface.
9. Jar with bead rim; Fabric 1 (a); black to brown with a smoothed surface.
10. Jar with bead rim; Fabric 1 (b); brown, very sparse flint inclusions.
11. Jar with cordon on the shoulder; Fabric 1 (b); brown; sparse flint inclusions.
12. Jar with cordon; Fabric 1 (a); brown with a smoothed surface.
13. Jar, probably with a cordon; Fabric 1 (b)—brown.
14. Jar with flaring rim; Fabric 2; brown with a light-brown surface.

Site III

Samian (Fig. 12 no. 3). Dr. 29, south Gaulish, fairly soft pink-buff fabric with an orange-red glossy slip. Tiberian or early Claudian (cf. Hawkes and Hull, 1947 p. XXIII, 27 and pl. XXIV, 2 for basal decoration; pl. XXI, 1 for the upper design) (F.28).

15–19. Jars with bead rims; Fabric 2 (F.17, 21, 28). This form and fabric is indistinguishable from mid-Iron Age vessels and some of our examples may be of that date, given that definite mid-Iron Age vessels are present in Site III.
20–22. Jar with everted, flaring rim; Fabric 2 (F.10, 29).
23–24. Bases either for jars as nos. 15–19 or as nos. 20–22; Fabric 2 (F.7).
25. Jar with upright rim; shallow groove below; Fabric 1 (a) with sparse flint inclusions; dark grey (F.17).
26. Sherd from the shoulder of a necked bowl; with a cordon; Fabric 1 (a) with a smoothed, buff exterior (F.10).
27–28. Sherd with cordon on the shoulder; Fabric 1 (a) with a smoothed reddish-brown to dark-brown surface (F.7 and 20).
29. Base of jar ?as nos. 26–28; Fabric 1 (a) (F.37).
30. Jar with everted rim and high shoulder in a hard grey sandy fabric (wheel-thrown) (F.28); ?first century.
31. Jar with bead rim defined by a groove; hard grey coarse sandy ware; about mid-first century (F.28).
32. Jar with bead rim; Fabric 3; grey core with an orange-buff surface (F.8).
33. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 3; grey surface and an orange core; mid-later first century (F.28).
34. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 3; grey (F.28).
35. Jar with bead rim; Fabric 3; orange core with light red-brown surfaces, (F.37).
36. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 3; orange core with grey surfaces (F.37).
37. Jar with shallow grooves below the rim; Fabric 3; orange core with grey surfaces (F.28).
38. Jar with a slight cordon on the shoulder, and a groove below the rim. Dark grey/black sandy fabric with moderate, well-sorted small to medium angular flint grit and sparse grog. Smoothed or partly burnished surface (F.9).
39. Jar with everted rim; Fabric as no. 38; dark grey-black surfaces with a pale-grey core; ?late first century (F.17).
40. Jar with bead rim; fine sandy black ware with small grog and quartz inclusions; micaceous; smoothed exterior (unstratified).
41. Jar with everted rim; hard, dark grey sandy ware; smoothed, slightly burnished (unstratified).
42. Dish in hard, sandy light grey/brown fabric; imitation Gallo-Belgic (unstratified).
43. Globular beaker with everted rim; soft sandy fabric; buff-orange surface and a grey core (unstratified).

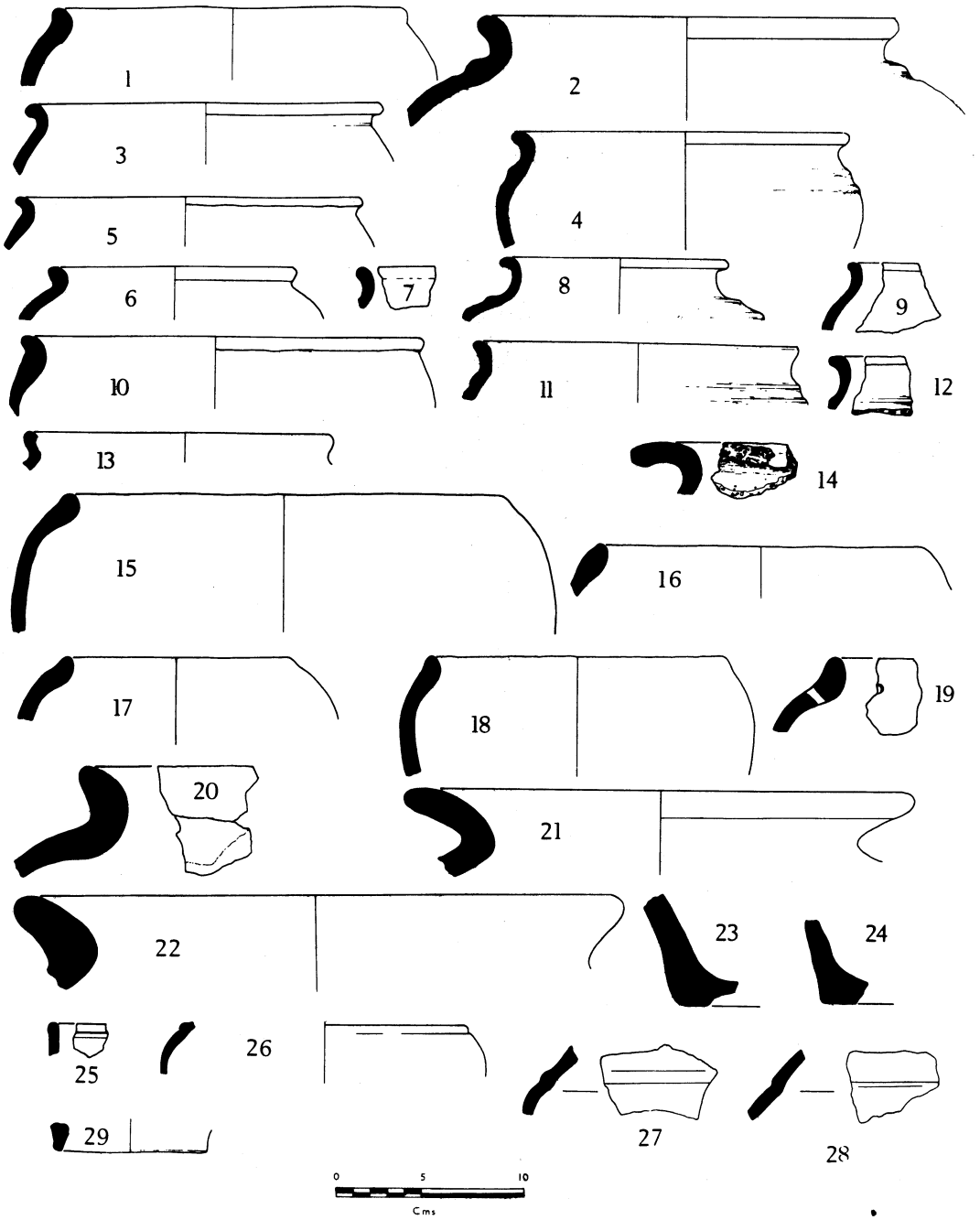

Fig. 14. Late Iron Age and Early Roman Pottery. Scale: ¼.

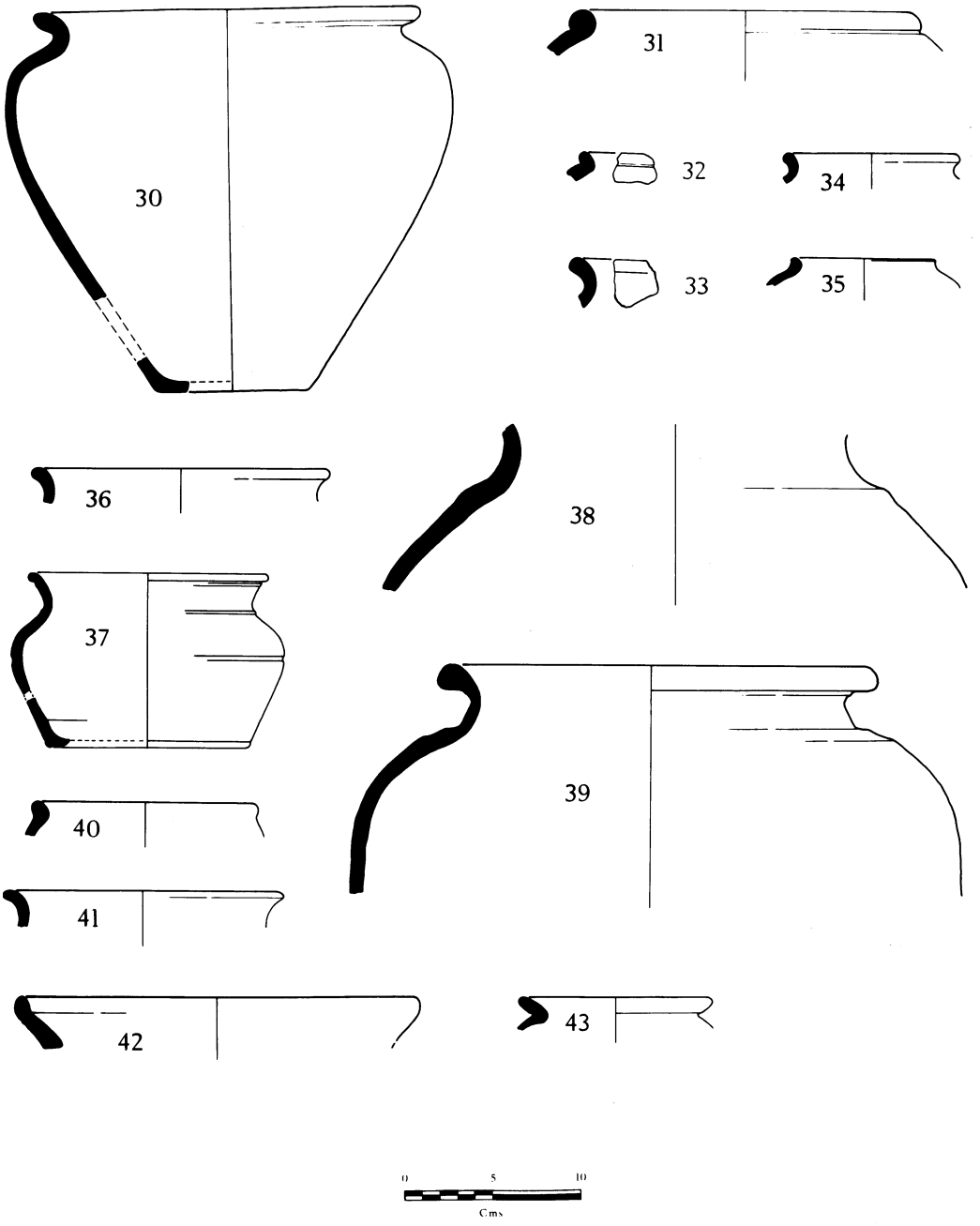

Fig. 15. Early Roman Pottery. Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$.

4. Later Roman (late third–fourth century) (Figs. 16–17)

With the exception of a very few coarse-ware vessels which *could* belong to the second century rather than the first or later third–fourth century, there is a conspicuous absence of characteristic forms and fabrics of the second–third century. The late assemblage which is derived mostly from Sites I and II contains fabrics and forms from the Alice Holt, Oxfordshire and New Forest potteries all of which are typical of a late third–fourth century assemblage. None of the features, either of the bath-house or Site I and III produced large groups of stratified material.

Fabric 1. A grey, brown or yellow-brown sandy fabric varying in hardness. The matrix contains specks of grog or iron ore whose average size is less than 0·5 mm. Surfaces are usually grey, sometimes accompanied by a partial grey or silvery-grey slip covering the inside of the rim, the neck and the upper part of the body. This fabric which is typical of the Alice Holt potteries accounts for almost two-thirds of the entire late assemblage of Site II.

Fabric 2. A grey, creamy-brown or pinkish-red, very hard fabric. It contains well-sorted, rounded translucent quartz grits whose average size is about 0·5 mm; these are usually visible on the surface. Consequently the latter is slightly rough. Like the fabric the surface ranges in colour from a creamy-yellow or pale-brown to a light pink-red or sometimes grey. This fabric accounts for about one-sixth of the assemblage (Site II). It compares well with fabric D at Portchester (Fulford, 1975) and an origin in the Alice Holt group of potteries has been suggested (Orton, 1977, 35).

Fabric 3. A grey, very hard fabric with ill-sorted, sub-angular translucent inclusions, averaging c. 1 mm in size, thus producing a rougher surface than Fabric 2. The surfaces are either grey or orange. Rare.

Fabric 4. A very hard, bright orange fabric with very sparse, small rounded inclusions ?quartz (less than 0·5 mm). The surfaces are treated with a black or grey slip which can be burnished. Rare.

Fabric 5. A light-brown, very coarse and hard fabric with frequent, ill-sorted angular flint inclusions (average size 1·5 mm). The inside surface is smoothed and coloured brown, while the outside is smoothed with traces of a black slip. Only body sherds of this fabric were recovered (Site II, F.4). This kind of fabric is typical of storage-jar vessels.

Fabric 6. A reddish-brown, hard, sandy fabric without evident inclusions. The surface is fired black. Rare; only body sherds were found in this fabric (Site II).

Fabric 7. Grey, extremely hard, very gritty fabric with very occasional, sub-angular inclusions (average size 1 mm). The surface is fired grey. Rare.

Other Fabrics. The colour-coated wares whose sources are well-known (e.g. Oxfordshire, New Forest) are not described in detail.

Site II (Fig. 16)

F.3

1. Bowl with thickened rim; Fabric 2; grey with a cream surface (Layer 2).
2. Hemispherical bowl with a bead rim and a cordon decorated with stamp-impressions; rouletting below the rim. Oxfordshire, red-slipped (cf. Young, 1977, type C61, Fig. 60): c. 350 – c. 400 (Layer 2).
3. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; grey with traces of a white slip on the neck and inside of the rim. A fragment of the same vessel occurred in the rubble of Feature 2 (cf. Fulford, 1975 (a), type 127); from c. 300 (Layer 1).
4. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; yellow-brown with a white slip on the interior of rim; incised marks on the neck (Layer 1).
5. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; brown with a sooted rim. Other sherds from Feature 3, Layer 1 included an Oxfordshire red-slipped base, body sherds with lattice decoration in Fabric 1 and a fragment of a flanged bowl in Fabric 1 (cf. Fulford, 1975 (a), type 84.1).

This group gives a *terminus post quem* of c. 350 for the filling of the well.

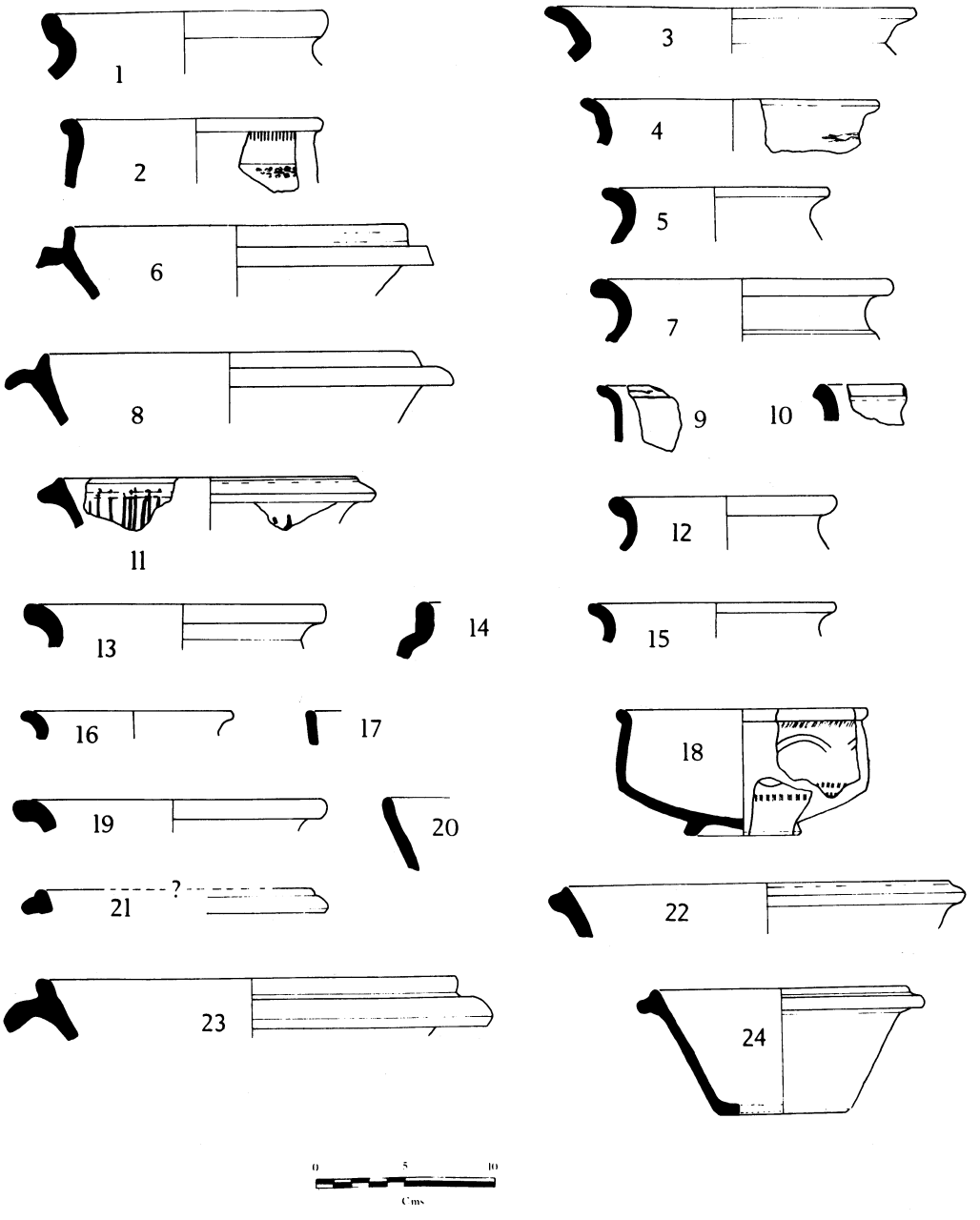

Fig. 16. Late Roman Pottery from Site II. Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$.

F.2

6. Mortarium; red-slipped; Oxfordshire ware (cf. Young, 1977, type C100, Fig. 67); fourth century, but commoner after c. 325/50 (Layer 2).

F.1 (Layer 1)

7. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; grey.
8. Flanged bowl (Dr.38); Oxfordshire ware: red-slipped (cf. Young, 1977, type C51, Fig. 59).
9. Beaker; fine, light-brown fabric; no trace of slip; ?Oxfordshire.
10. Flanged bowl, Fabric 4; black slip with burnished line inside and outside.
11. Jar with triangular rim (cf. Fulford, 1975 (a), type 137.1–3); common in the second half of the fourth century, but present from c. 325.
12. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 2; pink-brown with a light reddish-brown surface.

The majority of the sherds in this group cannot be closely dated, only the jar, no. 11, suggests a date-range from c. 325/50-c. 400, Layer 2 contained a body sherd with lightly burnished decoration in Fabric 1.

F.4 (Layer 1)

13. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 2; creamy-brown with a cream surface and a blackened rim (cf. Fulford, 1975 (a), type 137.4–6).
14. Rim of a 'Castor Box'; hard, fine, white fabric with occasional specks of ?iron ore; traces of red paint on rim, blackened on the shoulder; Nene Valley, probably second–third century.

This group also contained a body sherd of New Forest Fabric 1 (Fulford, 1975 (b)) with some traces of painted decoration (?early fourth century), and a flanged-bowl in Fabric 1 (Fulford, 1975 (a), type 85). No closer date than the range late third century–c. 400 can be assigned to this group.

F.5

15. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 4; black slip outside (Layer 3).

This layer also contained a sherd in Fabric 1 with burnished linear decoration.

16. Everted rim jar or bowl; Oxfordshire, red-slipped (cf. Young, 1977, type C18, Fig. 54): from c. 270 (Layer 1).
17. ?Rim of flanged bowl (Dr.38); Oxfordshire, red-slipped (cf. Young, 1977, type C51): from c. 250 (Layer 1).
18. Bowl with rouletted bands on neck and body; white painted scrolls on the body; Oxfordshire, red-slipped (cf. Young, 1977, type C69.2, Fig. 61); c. 325–400 (Layer 1).

The latter sherd in conjunction with the coin (A.D. 337–41) suggest a *terminus post quem* for this group of A.D. 337.

F.6

19. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 3.
20. Dish; Fabric 1: grey with an external black slip.
21. Flanged bowl; Fabric 1: grey with an external black slip (cf. Fulford, 1975 (a), type 85).

This group also contained an everted rim jar in Fabric 7. The sherds are broadly late third century to c. 400.

F.8

22. Flanged bowl; Fabric 1; buff-orange with a similar coloured surface.
23. Mortarium; Oxfordshire ware, white-slipped (cf. Young, 1977, type WC7, Fig. 38); from c. 240.

This group also contained a rim-sherd of a red-slipped Dr.31; Oxfordshire (cf. Young, 1977, type C45.1, Fig. 58); from c. 270. These sherds cannot be refined in date within the late Roman range.

F.10

24. Flanged bowl; orange, very hard fabric with quite profuse black sand tempering visible on the surface; late third–fourth century. (See also Site I, Feature 19, below).

Site I (Fig. 17)

F.19

25. Dish; Fabric 1; light reddish-brown with a similar coloured surface; c. A.D. 250–400.
26. Jar; Fabric 2 with possible, occasional large flint inclusions.
27. Jar with cordon on the shoulder; late Iron Age Fabric 1. This form is present in Site I, F.12 (e.g. Fig. 14, no. 11).

The group also contains two sherds of Oxfordshire ware including the base of a brown-slipped beaker.

This feature is almost certainly the same as Site II, F.4 and 10. It is puzzling because the pottery it contains is of a similar character, and thus date, as the material associated with the bath-house features and well. However, the presence of rim-sherd no. 27 of early first century A.D. date in F.19 might suggest that the ditch was open then. Thus the late Roman material collected in a ditch which had long been established. This explanation overcomes the problem of a late Roman field-system re-organised in the same period when the bath-house was built.

F.14

28. Necked bowl with rouletting on the neck and body; Oxfordshire, red-slipped (cf. Young, 1977, type C75, Fig. 62); c. 325–400.
29. Body sherd with rouletting; Oxfordshire, red-slipped.
30. Colander; Fabric 1; brown with an external black slip.

This group also contained other sherds of Oxfordshire ware (red-slipped) and grey sandy wares in Fabric 1. There was also a base in a grog-tempered fabric akin to Fulford, 1975 (a), 286–92, Fabric A (vessels in this fabric are also present in small quantities at Silchester (Fulford, forthcoming). The group as a whole has a *terminus post quem* of c. 325.

F.17

31. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; grey with traces of an external black slip.
32. Jar with 'triangular' under-cut rim; Fabric 1; grey to brown (cf. Fulford, 1975 (a), type 136.4); fourth century.
33. Flanged bowl; Fabric 1; brown with an external black slip.
34. Dish; Fabric 1; brown with an external black slip; in the inside small, sub-angular grits (less than 0·5 mm) are frequent and visible.

This group also contained a sherd of a New Forest slipped vessel (?Beaker) in Fabric 1 (Fulford, 1975 (b), 24–25) and a sherd in Fabric 1 with burnished lattice decoration.

Site III

35. Flagon neck; New Forest Fabric 2 (a) with a brown external slip (cf. Fulford, 1975 (b), type 91.1) (unstratified).
36. Flanged bowl (Dr.38); Oxfordshire, red-slipped ware (cf. Young, 1977, type C51, Fig. 59) from c. 250 (F.59).
37. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; grey fabric and surface (unstratified).
38. Jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; grey with a light-brown surface (F.40).
39. Small jar with everted rim; Fabric 1; grey all-over (unstratified).
40. (not illustrated) Base in an essentially grass-tempered fabric; grog and sand are also present.

This group supports the evidence of late-Roman occupation from Sites I and II. The colour-coated sherds are, however, accompanied by sherds (e.g. nos. 37–39) which are not typologically distinctive and *could* be of second century dates. Sherd no. 40 might be post-Roman.

CONCLUSIONS

1. LATE BRONZE AGE

The nucleus of settlement lay at Site I (Bradley, forthcoming). Two definite pits in Site II and III respectively suggested further scattered occupation or activities of a similar date.

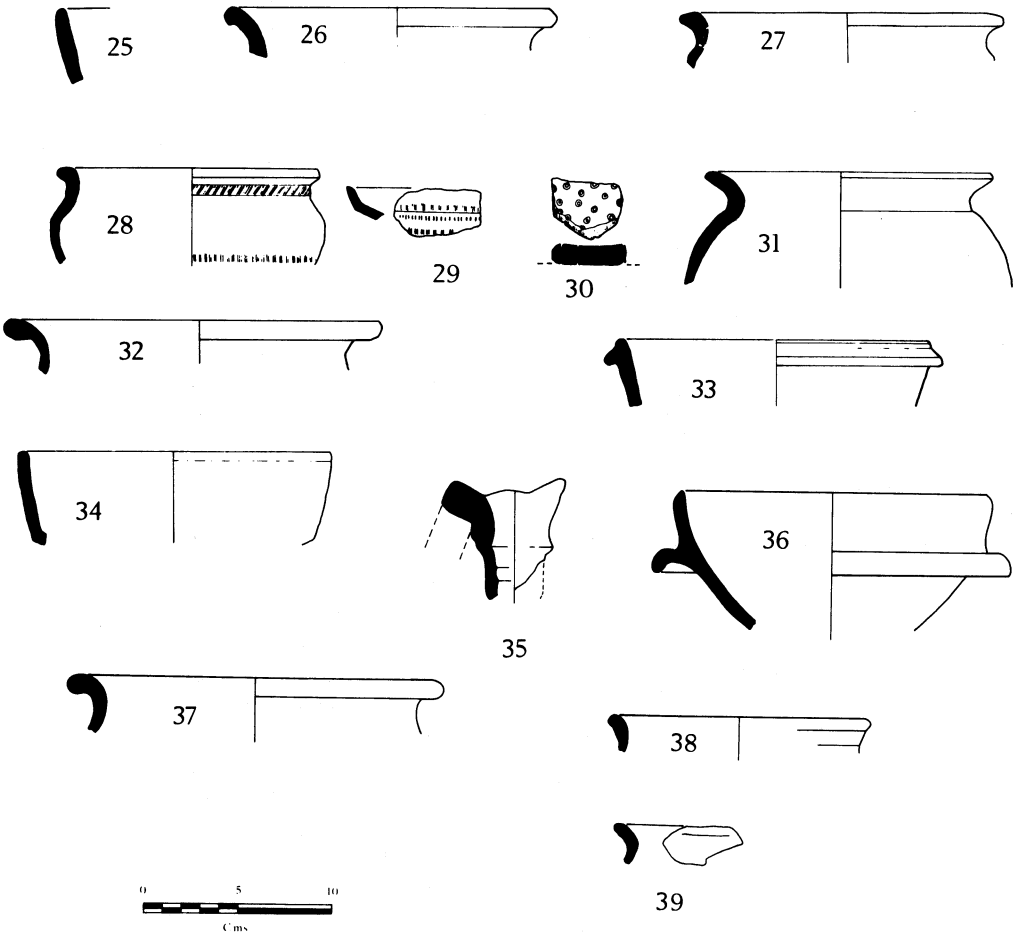

Fig. 17. Late Roman Pottery from Sites I and III. Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$.

2. MIDDLE IRON AGE

Middle Iron Age pottery dated three parallel ditches in Site III which are interpreted as part of a field system. This may have extended across to Sites I-II.

3. LATE IRON AGE-EARLY ROMAN

The corner of a late Iron Age (early first century A.D.) ditched enclosure was excavated on Site I. The rest of the settlement was lost in gravel extraction prior to 1976. Slightly later material, suggested an unenclosed settlement of the mid-first century or pre-Flavian date was recovered from Site III. The middle Iron Age field system appeared to have been reused in this period.

4. LATE ROMAN (LATE THIRD-FOURTH CENTURY)

The main element of the late Roman settlement was the bath-house complex (Site II) which seems to be part of a larger farming settlement, previously destroyed. The bath-building stood in its own enclosure on top of the earlier field system. A small amount of late Roman material was also recovered from Sites I and III but no satisfactory interpretation can so far be offered for it.

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