

Chapter 9 : The pottery

Part 2: The mortaria

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Chapter 9 : The Pottery

Part 2: The Mortaria

Mortaria stamps

K.F. Hartley

Stamps and Graffito from the Housing Scheme

Stamps

MS1 HS 77 BC Context 134. 50gms. Flange fragment in Fabric 40 (5YR 6/6); stamped at least twice, close together, with a die of Anaus, which probably gives N reversed and NV ligatured. (Serial no. 537)

MS2 HS 79 YK2 Context 872. 128gms. Dr 340mms. 11% In very hard, sintered purplish-grey fabric (5YR 7/1) with darker grey core; a surface skin of red-brown under the flange represents the intended colour. The inclusions include very ill-sorted transparent quartz and black fragments. No trituration grit survives. The broken stamp is from another die of ANAVS, possibly followed by F for fecit. (Serial no. 233).

Four unstamped flange fragments (my Serial no. 234) in Fabric 40, are in the same context; they are from a different mortarium which has a groove in the distal end of the flange, which is particularly characteristic of Anaus (Birley and Gillam 1948, 175 and fig 1, 1Ai for an exact parallel), and see below, Tofts Field.

A maximum of 125 mortaria stamped by Anaus have now been recorded, including five from sites in Scotland. The evidence suggests activity in at least two and perhaps three workshops at Binchester, Corbridge and perhaps the Catterick area. It is likely that production in the Binchester/Catterick¹ area was primarily in the period AD120-140 and pre-dated his well-attested production at Corbridge; for details of his distribution area and the evidence available, see Hartley, K. in Wilson 2002a, fig. 213 and 467-468. His mortaria at Piercebridge should probably be dated AD 120 -140. This waster (Serial no.233) and that of Mascellio below (Serial no. 469) do raise the possibility of activity at Piercebridge. There is no doubt of Anaus's activity at Corbridge and Dr Evans's information concerning occupation dates points to his activity being at Catterick rather than Binchester and Piercebridge, but details of his activity will only be clarified by analyses of his varying fabrics, his distribution and very careful sifting of the available dating evidence.

¹ Activity at Binchester, however, in this period is pretty well ruled out by the lack of occupation there in the period cAD 125-160. There is also relatively slight evidence at Piercebridge for occupation before the Antonine period which would suggest Catterick is probably the most likely single source for the widely distributed products of this potter. - JE

It is also worth noting that in this sample of mortaria from Piercebridge there are stamps from at least three mortaria of Anaus; in addition there are unstamped fragments from four other mortaria, (my Serial nos. 234, 237, 401 and 409), which can be attributed to him on account of the combination of rim-profile and fabric. This gives a total of at least seven, not counting my serial no. 402 whose stamp is probably his, and not considering the fact that he produced other rim-profiles which can not be readily recognised.

MS3 HS 79 sf4096 Context 1112. 52gms. Dr 300mms. 8%. Flange fragment from a mortarium in Fabric 38 with self-coloured slip, generally similar in Type to Hartley in Wilson 2002a, fig 184, M17. The stamp reads CAHSI, and is from one of three dies attributable to the same potter (this example shows either damage to the die or mis-stamping, but the reading is not in doubt). There is a precedent in mortarium stamps for using H to represent E and the potter's name could be Caesius. Five of his mortaria are now known, from Catterick (2); Corbridge; Newstead and Piercebridge. A workshop in north-east England may safely be inferred and the Catterick area is the likeliest source. His work would fit with production in the period AD 100-140 (see Hartley in Wilson 2002a, 339, MS41 for further details (Serial no. 468).

MS4 HS 79 4097 Context 1112. 80gms. A flange and spout fragment; the fabric can be equated with Fabric 40. This fragment is too incomplete to be drawn; its distinctive feature lies in the flange being turned in at the distal end. It is overfired, but may have been saleable as a second. The poorly impressed stamp is from a die which gives the reading MASC retrograde. The three dies with this reading probably belonged to a potter who had a die giving MASCEL(L)IO. Twenty mortaria are known, which are probably attributable to him; see Hartley in Wilson 2002a, 446, MS5, and fig. 206 for further details of his work. The English distribution points to his primary workshop being in north-eastern England, probably in the Baines/Catterick area. Production within the period AD 120-165 is likely and since the Piercebridge example is not from the die represented in Scotland, it could well be earlier than AD 150. (Serial no. 469).

MS5 HS 80 / ER 80 sf 4622 Context 1510. 45gms. A badly weathered rim-fragment, too fragmentary to be drawn, in Fabric 9, with brown iron-staining on the surface. The weathered and eroded stamp is from a die which begins in LEG, followed by less certain IVL[?], both lambda Ls; the last letter may be E for FE or LFE ligatured. His distribution is a typical one for a small number of potters who worked in Norfolk; manufacture in the workshops at Brampton is highly probable though his work has not yet been attested there. An example from Staxton, Yorks was found in a deposit dated AD80-120. He was at work in the Trajanic period if not earlier. For further details and a clear example of the stamp see Wenham and Heywood 1997, 111, no. 3. (Serial no. 461).

Graffito

MS6 HS 78 KK sf2086 Context 505. 110gms. Diameter 490mms. 6% A flange fragment from a mortarium similar in form to serial no. 45, but with a wider rim in Fabric 6 (cf Miller *et al* 1986, 111, illustration 1.75 for a comparable example). There is no

potter's stamp present on the fragment but perhaps in place of one, a graffito, neatly cut ante cocturam, depicting a spray of leaves. It can be attributed with certainty to a pottery close to Soller, Kreis Düren in Lower Germany; the form and fabric are entirely characteristic of this workshop. Although there is no parallel for this particular motif this workshop quite often used cut-out decoration on its mortaria and on some other vessels (Haupt 1984, Taf. 177). The Soller pottery appears to have produced mortaria for markets in the Rhineland and in Britain, perhaps throughout the period AD 150 – 250, the most likely date for mortaria of this precise type being AD 160 – 220. This fragment cannot be dated more closely without a stamp. In the second century, at least, the workshop was owned by Verecundus 2, whose stamps appear on the earlier mortaria produced there. See Frere 1984, 289 no. 100 and Richardson 1986, 110-111 for further details of Verecundus 2 and his workshop (Serial no. 82). A body sherd attributable to the same pottery was found in the same context.

Stamped mortaria from Tofts Field

MS7 TF 74 2BC Context 3228 150gms. Four flange fragments and two joining base fragments almost certainly from one mortarium which has the same characteristic distal groove as serial nos. 234 and 401, in Fabric 40 (5YR 6/8). The fragmentary stamp is from the same die of Anaus as (HS 77 BC; Serial no. 537) above but these are from a different vessel. See p. 9-129 for comments on Anaus.

An unstamped rim fragment with the same distal groove characteristic of Anaus's work (as in Serial nos. 234 and 403-406) was found in context TF 74 25C.

MS8 TF 74 28C Context 3228 115gms. Dr 310mms. 9% Three joining sherds from a mortarium in Fabric 41. The stamp cannot be interpreted with certainty but it is from a die of Anaus or a contemporary potter working in the same area and tradition. See p. 9-129 for comments on Anaus. (Serial no. 402).

MS9 TF 74 54C Dr. 28cms. A mortarium of Type M2.1, in Fabric 13, which has been subjected to heavy burning. The partially impressed stamp reads]OIIIC[, but conflation of stamps from the same die permit the reading]BISO, S reversed, followed by strokes which should probably be read as FIICI for FECIT;. This gives a full reading of [.]BISOHICI?; stamps from a second die show I before B, giving the name Ibis. The full reading being 'Ibis feci' or 'fecit', H representing FE for 'Ibis made it'. His mortaria are now known in England from Carlisle (2); Chester (2); Lincoln (3); Littleborough, Notts; Piercebridge; Scunthorpe; Templeborough; Wallsend; and Watercrock (2); and in Scotland from Newstead. Ibis used two distinct fabrics; this much more common cream or greyish-cream one can be attributed to Lincoln where one of his mortaria was found at the Technical College kiln (unpublished). The source of his orange- to buff-brown fabric recorded at Chester is unknown. One of his Carlisle mortaria has been found in a Flavian-Trajanic context (Hartley 1990, 260, fig. 195, no. 8), and his rim-profiles belong primarily to the period AD 110-130, despite his mortarium at Newstead. A date of AD 110-140 should cover his production. (no. 416A).

MS10 TF 74 92C Context 3292 135gms. Dr 270mms. 17% A mortarium of Type M7.1, in Fabric 12, made in the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries in Warwickshire. The fragmentary stamp is from one of three dies which give Carita, perhaps for Caritanus. His stamps have now been noted from Binchester; Carrawburgh; High Cross; Ilkley; Lancaster; Piercebridge and Wroxeter (7). He produced mortaria with indisputably late features which can be closely matched in mortaria made after the practice of stamping ceased in these potteries. He is also one of a small group of Warwickshire potters whose work, although widely distributed in northern England, was on the verge of being too late to appear in Scotland. His activity is certainly to be dated within the period AD 150 – 180 with an optimum date of AD 150-170. (Serial no. 415).

MS11 TF 74 94D Context 3294 140gms. Dr 270mms. A mortarium identical in form to Hartley in Wilson 2002a, fig.184, M16 in Fabric 38. The stamp shows the border and the very ends of letters of a stamp from the same die as MS25 found at Catterick Bridge (*ibid*, Fig. 204). The die gives SATVR, presumably for Saturninus. His mortaria have now been recorded from Bowes; Catterick (2); Chesters; Corbridge (2), and Piercebridge. Distribution and fabric strongly point to production in the Baines/Catterick area (for further details see *ibid*, 448, MS10 and fig. 207). He is not to be confused with the Saturninus whose die was found at Corbridge (Birley and Gillam 1948, nos. 48 and 49), Saturninus 1 who worked in the Verulamium region (Frere 1972, fig. 146, no.36, or the Saturninus 2 who worked at Colchester in the first century (Symonds and Wade 1999, 207, fig. 4.26, MS87-108). His work fits a date within the period AD 100 – 140. (Serial no. 374, my no. 16K).

MS12 TF 74 106D Context 3306

A mortarium in Fabric 12, similar in type to Hartley 1961, fig 4, no.19, and attributable to a workshop at the Mancetter end of the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries in Warwickshire. The fragmentary stamp is from the same die as a stamp (*ibid*. fig 6, no. 6) from a kiln at Manduessedum, published in Hemsley 1961. No complete example has been recorded, but it is likely to show the M at the beginning of the name Maurius, one of the potters who are believed to have been using this kiln; the stamp reads outward from the inside, the first stroke of the M being only partially present. Three stamps from the same die were found during that excavation and two others in 1964, all associated with the kiln. Other stamps from the same die have been noted from Leicester (unpublished, from the Jewry Wall excavation) and Binchester (old find, unpublished). The collated stamps could give a reading of MA[...], but other examples are needed to complete the reading; however, given the names of the potters associated with the kiln it is reasonable to assume that it is a stamp of Maurius. Excluding finds from the kiln-centre, thirty-six mortaria attributable to Maurius have been found at sites in the midlands and north of England. None have been recorded from Scotland which suggests that he was largely active at a time when Scotland was not occupied or not receiving mortaria from the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries. At Mancetter he was largely associated with the potter Sennius whose date is not in doubt (Swan *et al* forthcoming mortarium stamps 9 and 10). The rim-profiles of both Maurius and Sennius clearly belong to the latest period of stamping at these potteries. The optimum date for their activity is AD150-170, though they may have been active slightly before and even slightly later.

Maurius is probably a better interpretation of the stamps than the 'Maurus' in Hartley 1961, but without a stamp in full in the nominative form, some slight doubt remains. The most complete stamps read MAVRI, which could, of course, be the genitive form of MAVRUS, but the Mancetter-Hartshill potters commonly stamped their name in the nominative case where this can be checked. There are also three dies which give MAVRIIM, presumably for Mauremus or even 'by the hand of Maurius', (MAVRII M(anu)); the latter formula was never used in the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries and where it was used they used at least 'MA' for '*manu*' so this interpretation seems unlikely. While it is possible that MAVRI and MAVRIIM are stamps of the same potter the rim-profiles used with each group of stamps fall neatly into two different types; it seems, therefore, sensible to retain the two different groupings. Further examples of his stamps are also needed to complete fragmentary readings for some dies.)

Stamp from unidentified site

MS13 RF 84 2 61 in circle. 180gms. Diameter 270mms. 12%. Type M7.5 Fabric 12, attributable to the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries. The retrograde stamp reads MA[...]/ Only one other stamp is known from the same die, found in Weekley Hall woods, Northamptonshire (unpublished, seen in Kettering Museum). The latter stamp reads MAN (MA ligatured) with the possibility of ER following, suggesting a name like Manertus. The rim-profiles point to an Antonine date, AD 140-180. (Serial no. 538)

Painted inscription from Carlbury Vale West

PB 73 SF153 (CVW) 430gms. Dr. 440mms. 12% Type M6.1, in Fabric 12, with a band of thin red-brown slip painted along the bead. This mortarium is, in form and fabric, a typical product of the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries in the period AD 170 – 220 and this type of decoration was not uncommon on mortaria made there after about AD 170/180, when they ceased to stamp mortaria with the potter's name or mark.

What makes this example truly exceptional is the lettering painted along the flange. The word [F]ECIT has been painted in large letters by the potter; his name would have appeared elsewhere on the flange; part of what is probably a wide bar of paint survives at the break, so there may have been some decoration as well as the name. Examples of the potter's name being painted on mortaria are extremely rare; only two other examples are known and one of these, an old, unpublished, find from Cirencester, was made in the Warwickshire potteries. This has the letters CAV[, painted along the flange, clearly representing the beginning of the potter's name. The potter is otherwise unknown. The rim-profile is almost identical to that of this mortarium from Piercebridge, which suggests a similar date. The latter could be the work of the same potter but this, of course, is unlikely. However, the spout of the Cirencester mortarium survives to establish a second-century date, cAD 170 – 200, the most probable date being AD 170-180 because the spout is the type used by the latest potters to stamp mortaria in these potteries; this type of spout may well have been used on the earliest mortaria made there after the cessation of stamping but if so a new type was swiftly introduced. The Piercebridge example is to be dated within the period AD 170 – 220 but it is probably AD 170 – 200. (Serial no. 467).

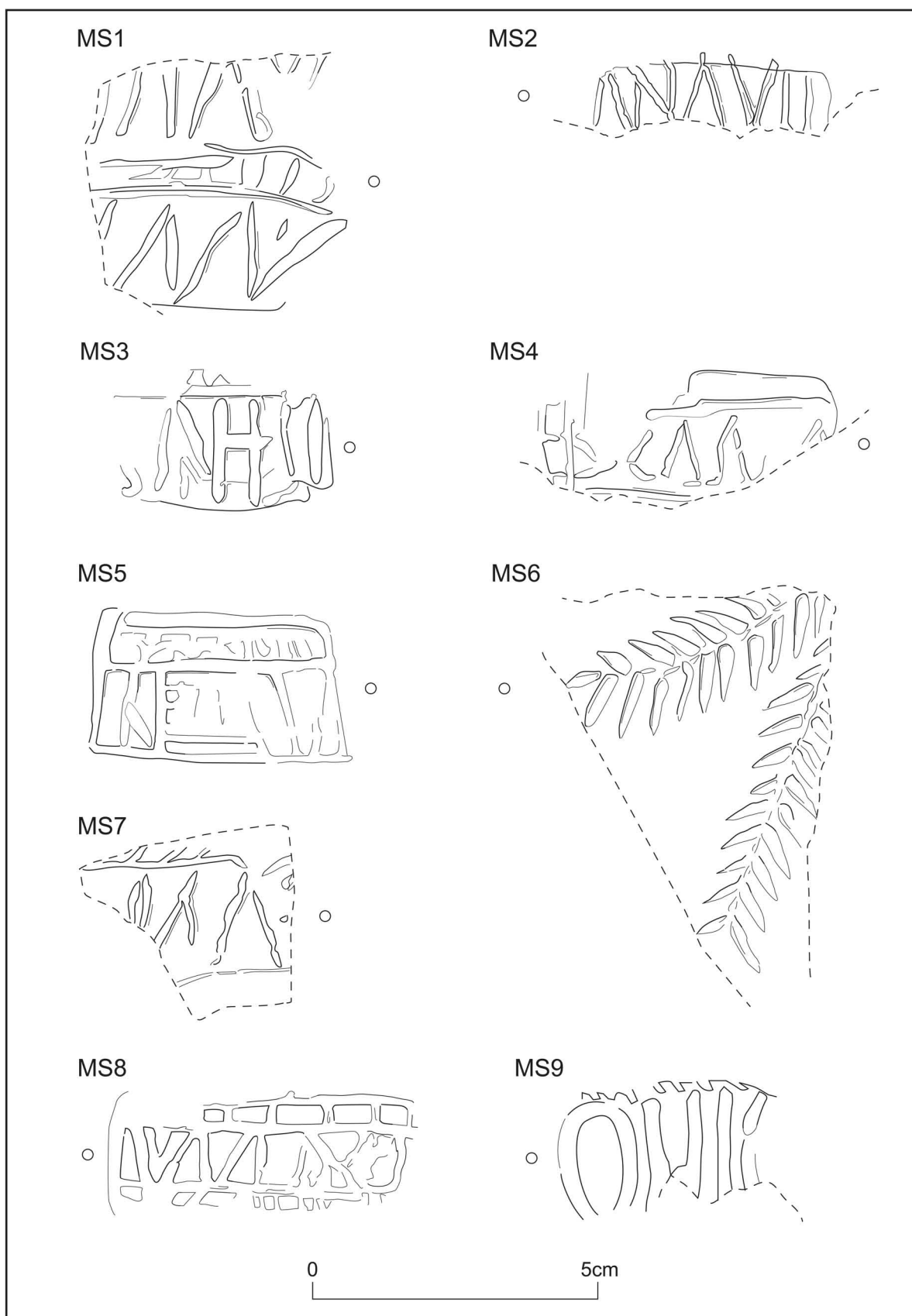


Fig. D9.26. Mortaria stamps (MS1-5) and graffito (MS6) from the Housing Scheme and mortaria stamps (MS7-9) from Tofts Field 1974. Scale 1:1

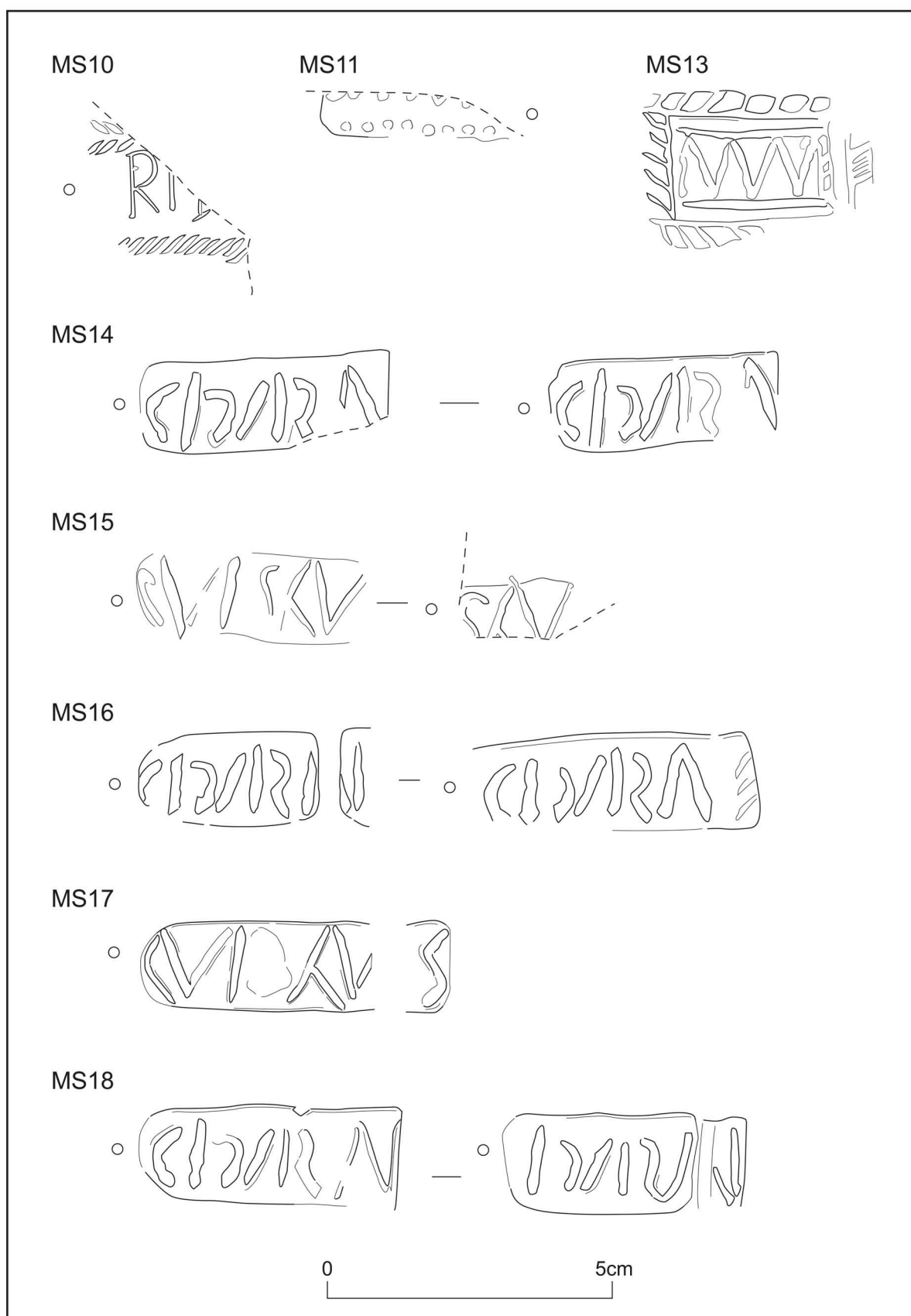
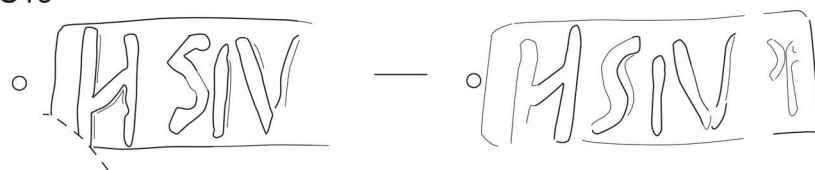
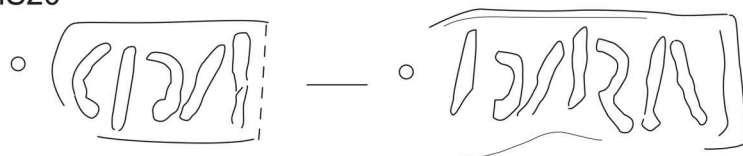


Fig. D9.27. Mortaria stamps from Tofts Field 1974 (MS10-11), and the pottery kiln (MS14 - 18). MS13 - site unknown. Scale 1:1.

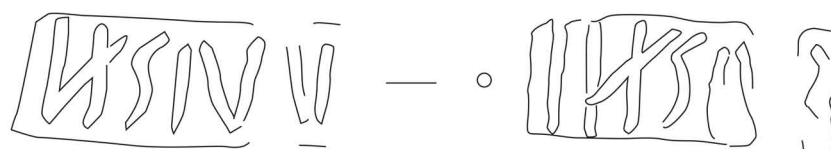
MS19



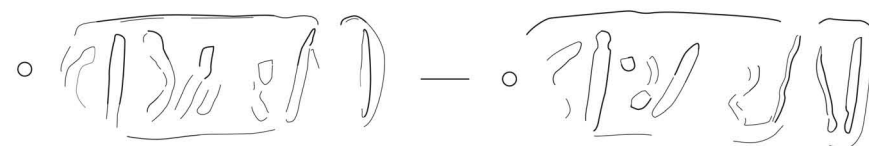
MS20



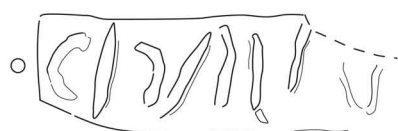
MS21



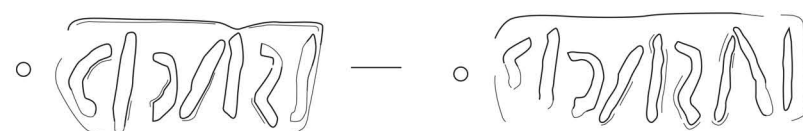
MS22



MS24



MS25



MS26



0 5cm

Fig. D9.28. Mortaria stamps from the pottery kiln. Scale 1:1.

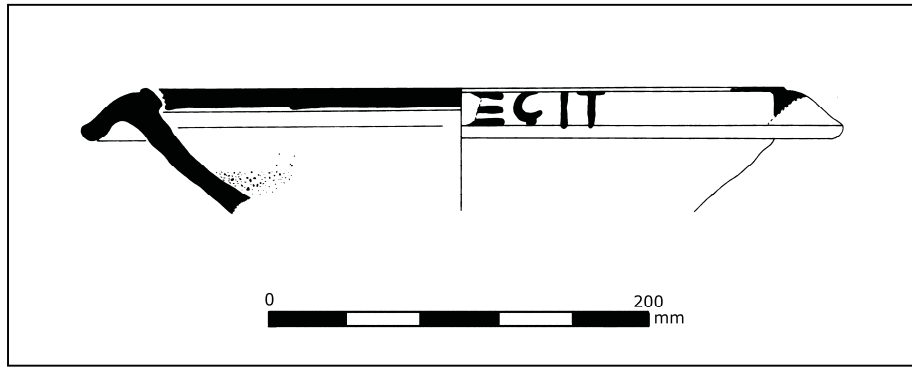


Fig. D9.29. Mortaria with painted inscription from Carlbury Vale West. Scale 1:4.