

Excavations at Gatcombe, Somerset, in 1965 and 1966.

By

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THE SITE

(Figs. 28 and 29)

The Roman site at Gatcombe (Grid Ref. ST 526698) lies on the south slope of the Failand Ridge, about 4 miles west of the centre of Bristol. The southern part of the site is crossed by the Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare railway, which runs in a deep cutting; immediately alongside is the main road (A370) built, at this point, on the ridge of spoil thrown up at the time of the railway works (Tratman 1962, *Fig. 39*). North of the road, and almost in the centre of the Roman settlement, lie the buildings of Gatcombe Farm and Gatcombe Court. The geology of the area is varied. The northern part of the site is composed of Carboniferous Limestone, but most of the modern buildings were erected either on the overlying Triassic Marl or on the small patch of Dolomitic Conglomerate which outcrops at this point. South of the buildings, below the 150 ft.

GATCOMBE 1965

BUILDINGS 1 AND 2

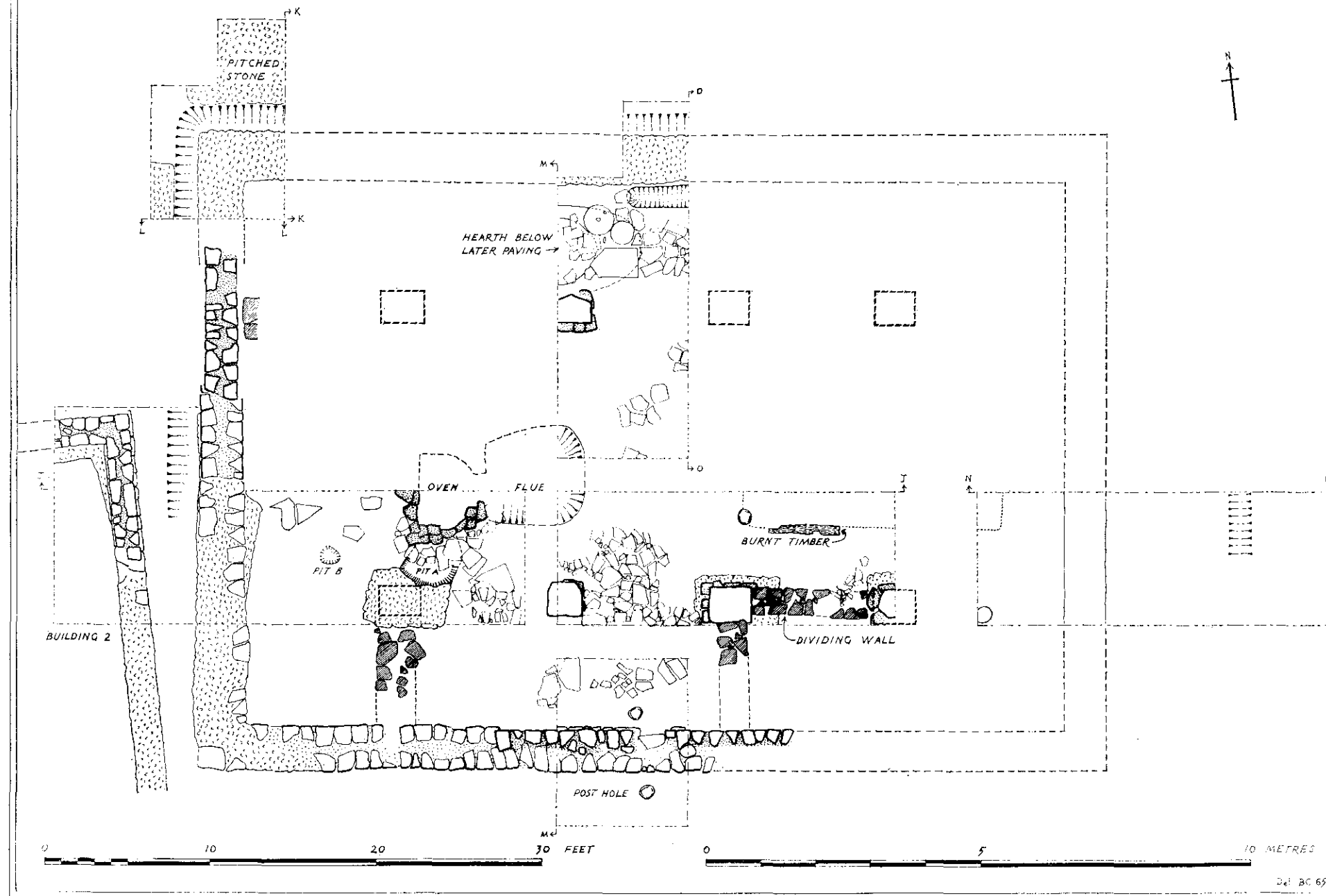
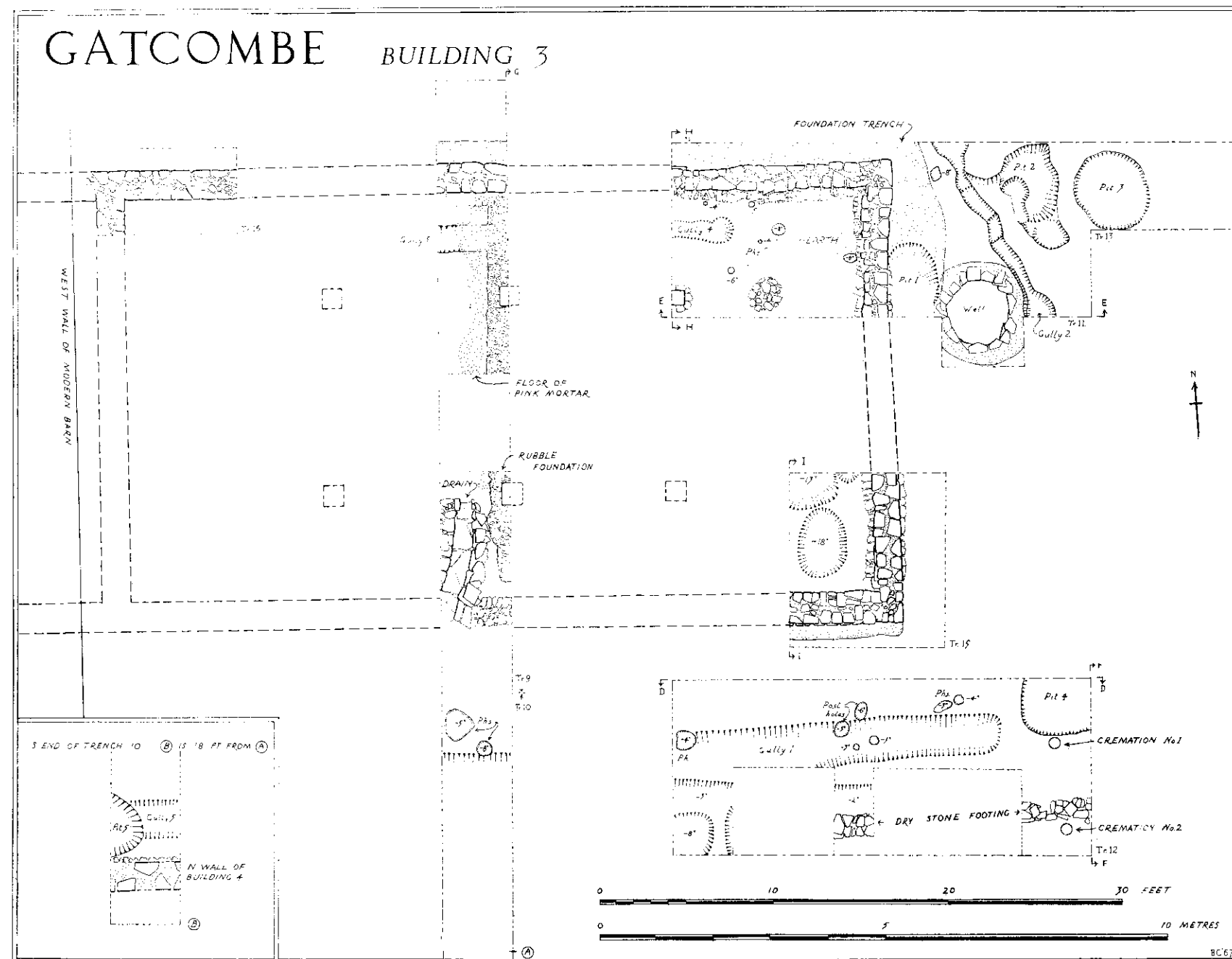


PLATE 20



contour, the older rocks are sealed by a deposit of alluvium which marks the extent of the former river valley. The river, now reduced to a stream, was diverted when the railway was built and was made to cross the cutting by means of a culvert.

The Roman site, in its late form, was defended by a substantial wall, the line of which is known on the east, north and west sides. The southern side, obscured by the railway works, has not yet been defined. Since the west wall was seen in the south section of the railway cutting, but is not known to appear beyond the wide bank of spoil spread along the cutting's southern lip, it is reasonable to suppose that the south wall lies somewhere beneath the spoil heap. The exact size of the walled area cannot therefore be defined precisely, but it must measure 700 ft. east to west by about 1,000 ft.—i.e. an area of about 16 acres.

There are few surface features visible below the 175 ft. contour, but above this, terraces caused by the underlying Roman buildings may be seen clearly, particularly in the orchard immediately north of the farm, where the steep slope combined with the rooting activities of pigs have caused the soil to erode, exposing the walls of Roman buildings. The defensive wall itself stands out vividly as a grass-grown ridge of rubble

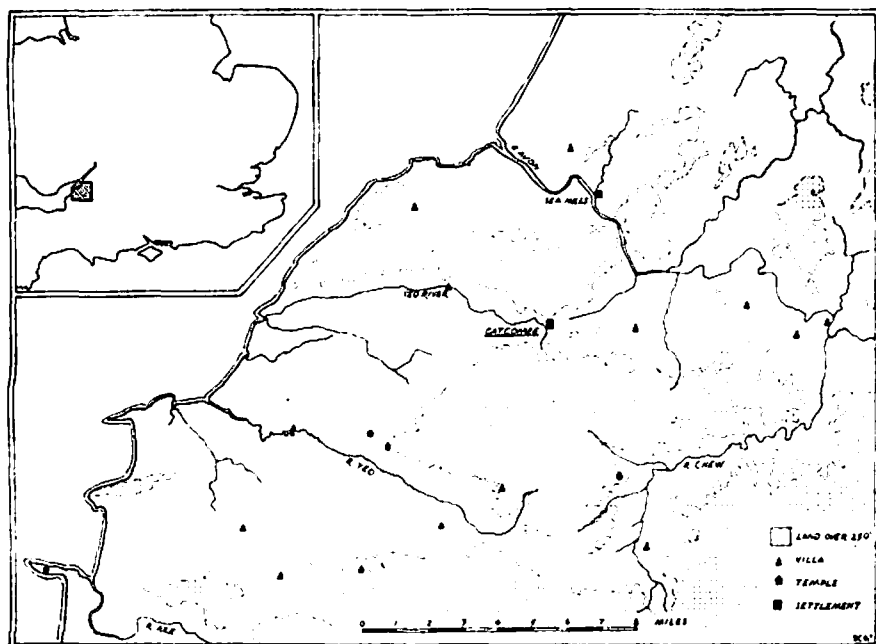


Fig. 28. Area map.

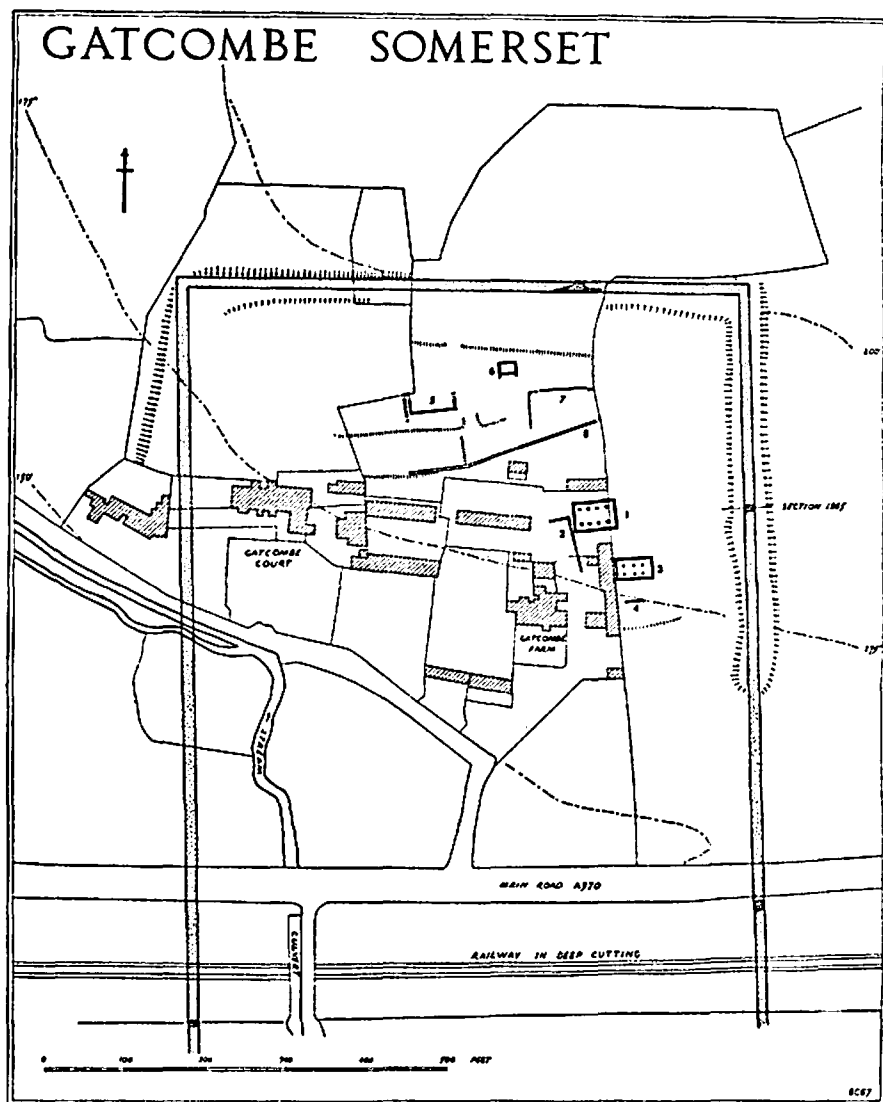


Fig. 29. Local map.

running through the field to the east of the farm and turning at its north-east corner to cross the orchard, where erosion, quarrying and excavation have combined to expose a considerable section of its inner face. It is remarkable that such a striking group of remains were not recognized until 1954.

Traces of Roman occupation have, however, been recorded in the area from time to time. The first reference appeared in Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal*, 17 November, 1838 and 9 February, 1839, which gave an account of Roman antiquities, including coins, coffins, columns, foundations and other trinkets, found at the time when the railway cutting was being dug, but according to Haverfield, writing in the VCH Somerset (Haverfield 1906, 305), subsequent excavations by the Rev. G. S. Master produced only a few potsherds. Haverfield clearly considered the site to be of restricted size—perhaps a villa—and of Farley's claim that he had found "a village about a quarter of a mile in extent" he concluded cautiously that it "must be exaggeration". Little was added to our knowledge of the site by J. A. Davies' account published in the *Bristol Times and Mirror* for December 1st, 1928, which relies almost entirely upon the earlier descriptions.

The realization that the site was, in fact, a substantial walled settlement finally came in 1954, when the Clevedon Archæological Society carried out a series of trial excavations, exposing parts of several buildings and sectioning the wall on the north side of the defended enclosure.* The final report on this work has not yet been published, but a brief note appeared in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, Vol. 103, 15, and Eichholtz (1955) gave a short summary of the finds.† Finally an account of the main features of the site was published by Tratman (1962), together with a plan upon which he marked the positions of Roman remains known to him.

The present series of excavations, under the direction of the writer, were carried out for two weeks in June 1965 and for a similar period in June 1966 as a training excavation for students from the University of Bristol. The work was made possible by the kindness of Mr. J. Butler, the owner of Gatcombe Farm, and was financed largely by the University. A grant was also received from the Ministry of Public Building and Works, since part of the work was carried out as a rescue excavation in advance of the erection of new farm buildings. Mrs. M. Rule and Mr. A. French acted as supervisors during both seasons and Mrs. Rule took the photographs which illustrate this report.

The Department of Classics of the University of Bristol hopes to continue the excavations. While work is in progress the finds will be temporarily stored at the University, but their final resting place has not yet been settled.

* I am grateful to the members of the Clevedon Archæological Society, particularly Mr. C. M. Sykes and Mr. G. Usher, for discussing the earlier work with me.

† This final report is in press and expected soon; see Solley, T.J.W., 1967, *Proc. Som. Arch. N.H.Soc.* Vol. 111, 1967.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXCAVATIONS

The Defences (Fig. 30)

The wall, which is known to have bounded the nucleus of the settled area, appears to have been cut at least once when the railway cutting was made (Tratman 1962, 174) and indeed a section of the west wall was still visible in the southern edge of the cutting until quite recently. These pieces of evidence all suggested that the wall was of considerable thickness, but it was the Clevedon Archaeological Society's excavation of the north wall in 1954 which showed its true nature and led to the firm conclusion that the settlement was defended by a stone wall 15 ft. thick.

In 1965 a section was cut across the line of the east wall (*Fig. 30* and *Pls. 24A* and *24B*), represented now by a sizeable ridge of grass-covered rubble. It showed that the wall was built on a massive foundation, 16 ft. wide, constructed of courses of Carboniferous Limestone blocks pitched on end and packed tightly together; the foundation alone was more than 3 ft. deep. Of the superstructure of the wall only the front facing survived, the rest having been robbed; sufficient remained, however, to show that this outer "facing wall" was built of coursed Lias Limestone blocks, reducing in width by two offsets, its inner side being brought to a rough but reasonably regular finish. Presumably the inner "facing wall" would have been similar in structure and the space between the two filled with pitched rubble: this at least was the method used in the construction of the better-preserved north wall.

The wall had been built on land which sloped down slightly to the west. This meant that although the top of the footings on the outside was level with the contemporary surface, inside the footings projected almost a foot above the ground. To protect them from weathering they were subsequently covered, to a depth of almost 2 ft., by spoil dug from the foundation trench (layer 3). The redeposited marl was, as might be expected, almost barren of finds, but from the underlying old ground-surface (layer 4) came a coin of Commodus (A.D. 186-192) and a sherd of late second-early third century colour-coated beaker, showing that the erection of the wall in all probability post-dated the early third century. No further dating evidence was obtained.

In the period following the construction of the wall red silty clay gradually slipped down the hill and accumulated to a depth of about 2 ft. against the outer wall face (layer 9). Then followed a major collapse of the superstructure (layers 2 and 7), after which more silt accumulated (layer 8). The final stage came in 1924 when an Irish labourer was employed for about a year by the father of the present owner, to remove stone from the wall and to cart it off for sale. The robber trench (layer 6) was presumably his work, for a piece of modern china was found in the bottom of it.

Although the excavation extended for a distance of 12 ft. in front of the wall, no ditch was found. Surface indications however suggest the existence of a wide flat ditch, as was the fashion in fourth-century defensive works, lying some way in front of the wall. It is hoped that the future excavations will examine this problem.

No trace of bastions is evident, but extensive robbing may account for this and until more work is done the problem must remain unsolved.

The Revetting Wall

The orchard north of the modern farm buildings is crossed by a wall, built in straight sections, which appears to act as a revetment for the terraces of the building beyond it on the uphill side. In 1954 an examination at the point marked 8 on *Fig. 29*, showed that Roman occupation levels butted up to the wall, which was thus shown to be of Roman construction. In 1966 a small section was cut through the area in front of the wall to examine the nature of the bedrock at a point where most of the soil had been eroded away. It showed that the Carboniferous Limestone was here extensively worn, quite possibly by Roman traffic using the space in front of the wall. The revetting wall above survived to a height of only two courses.

Building 1 (Pls. 20 and 22)

In the farmyard to the north of the main farm buildings at Gatcombe was an area of bare hillside, so trampled by cattle and rooted over by pigs that vegetation failed to grow and the soil began to creep down the hill-slope. This erosion gradually exposed the walls of an underlying Roman building. Part of it was visible in 1962, when Tratman visited the site, and by 1965 most of the south wall could be seen. As the owner of the land, Mr. J. J. Butler, planned to erect a new pig-house on the spot, the area was the first to be examined during the 1965 season. Two Roman buildings were found, Buildings 1 and 2.

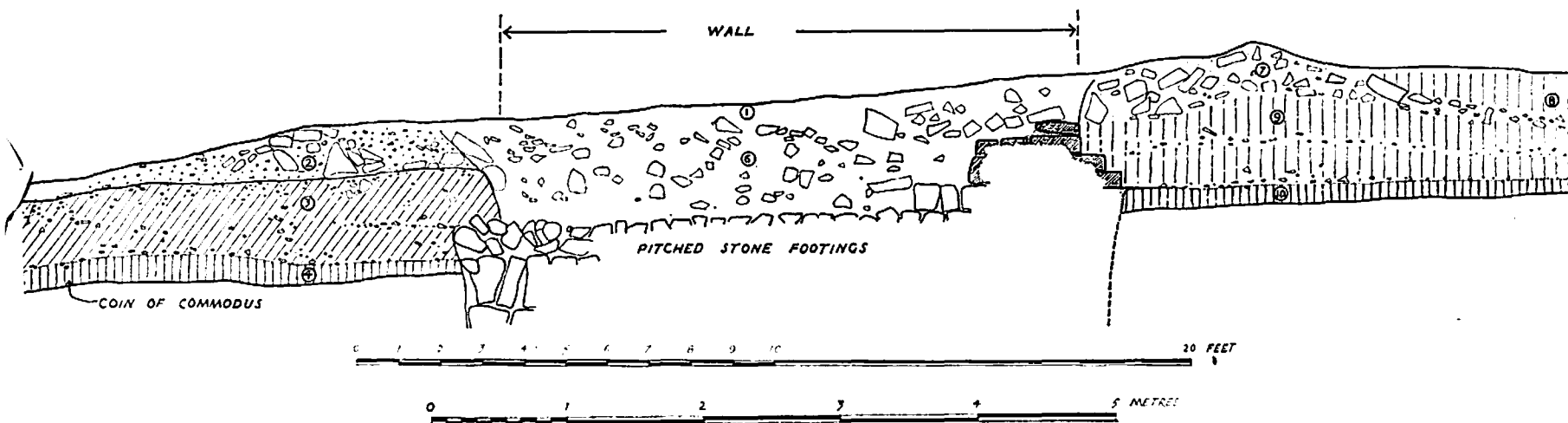


Fig. 30. Defensive wall. Section.

In the period before these buildings were erected the area appears to have been open, but the site was not unoccupied for the original ground-surface, which survives in several places (Section MM, layer 5), consisted of dirty marl into which had been trodden a number of sherds of pottery, including part of an amphora, together with animal bones and a coin of Hadrian (coin No. 3). No structures can be assigned to this pre-building occupation.

To create a level platform for the building, a terrace had been cut into the Triassic Marl of the hillside, involving the removal of up to 2 ft. of soil on the uphill side and the deposition of a layer of rubble up to 9 in. thick on the downhill side (Section MM, layer 3). Upon this almost level surface a rough pavement of limestone slabs had been laid (Pl. 25A), but much of it had subsequently been removed or replaced. The outer wall of the building, enclosing an area of 49 ft. by 33 ft., consisted of a foundation of pitched Carboniferous Limestone fragments packed tightly in a foundation trench 3 ft. wide; the depth was not ascertained. Upon this was built the superstructure of the wall in coursed Lias Limestone masonry, reducing by off-sets to a standard width of 21 ins. The north and east walls had been robbed to the footings, but elsewhere superstructure, in varying degrees of preservation, remained. No trace of a door survived. The terracing of the site makes it unlikely that the building was entered from the north side, and the excavation of the west and south walls shows that there were no doors here. This only leaves the east side, which was so robbed as to have destroyed any trace of an entrance.

Internally the building was divided into a "nave" and two side "aisles" by four pairs of massive piers, for which the bases were exceptionally solid, each consisting of a pitched stone foundation at least 2 ft. deep supporting a course of limestone blocks capped with a single large slab (Pl. 25B). The pier itself, presumably a timber baulk, would have stood on this. At a later date several partition walls, of dry-stone construction, were inserted between the piers, dividing the aisles into smaller units (Pl. 27A).

The date of the erection of the building is difficult to demonstrate with precision, but sometime in the third century would seem probable. Second-century material was found below its floors and in the late third century a small pit, pit A, was dug into the floor of the nave, cutting into the extreme edge of one of the pier foundations, but not destroying sufficient of it to imply that the pier was no longer standing (Pl. 26A). The pit, 3 ft. deep, was filled with occupation material containing a group of late third-century pottery together with five coins, Nos. 4-8, the latest of which was of Claudius II (268-270). All that can safely be said therefore is that the building was probably erected some time within the period after about the middle of the second century and before the end of the third, though a slightly later date, perhaps early in the fourth century, is not entirely ruled out.

In its early form the building contained, within its north aisle, an oval hearth set in a hollow in the floor. This had eventually become choked with ash and burnt daub, and later the entire area had been repaved with limestone slabs incorporating the top and bottom stones of two different querns (see Pl. 26B; and p. 151). Immediately adjacent to the paving was a gully, 1 ft. deep and 1½ ft. wide, which had been dug along the inner edge of the wall foundations, presumably to drain away surface water percolating from the higher ground outside. The gully was open at the time of the building's final destruction.

The abandonment of the hearth in the north aisle was probably connected with the construction of an oven in the western part of the nave, consisting of a D-shaped oven chamber lined with limestone blocks, subsequently heavily-burnt, and served by an almost circular shallow flue-pit which had been allowed to fill up with ash and oven rakings. The oven had cut through the late third-century pit, and the new paving contemporary with it sealed three coins (Nos. 9-11), the latest of which was issued between A.D. 330 and 341. Thus the oven can be assigned to a date towards the middle of the fourth century. The nave contained a second structure of undefined date, represented now by a rectangular hollow 15 ft. long cut to a depth of 2-3 in. in the natural marl floor. One corner was marked by a post 9 in. in diameter and 10 in. deep, and along the southern side lay the charred remains of a beam (Pl. 27A). No certain function can be assigned to these features. Close to pit A was a smaller pit, pit B, measuring 13 in. across and 11 in. deep. It had been cut from the floor-level and filled with occupation material containing a few sherds of pottery. Finally, two post-holes, 8-9 in. deep, lying astride the south wall should be mentioned. While it is possible that both belong to the pre-building occupation, the stratigraphy shows that the holes were open at the time of the construction of the masonry building, and therefore are more likely to be identified as holes for scaffold posts used by the builders.

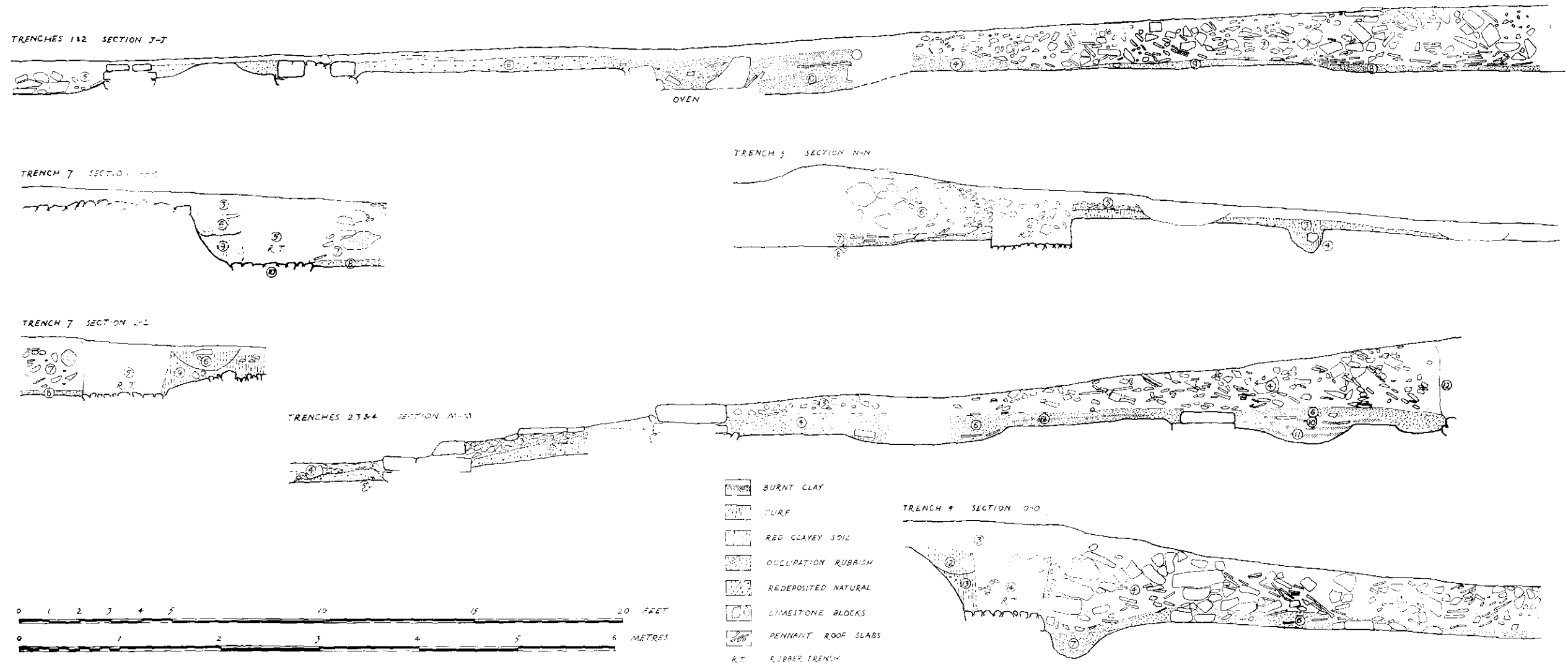


PLATE 22

Sections across buildings 1 and 2. For their positions see *Plate 20*.

The building is bounded on the north and west sides by a shallow gully dug into the top of the foundation trench filling against the outer face of the main walls. It seems probable that it served as a means of draining off the excess water, which, in wet weather, would have flowed down the hill towards the building. The gully along the north side would also have collected the cave-drips from the main roof. A further length of gully was sectioned beyond the east wall of the building. This, too, may have been connected with drainage problems, but its limits were not traced. The excavation of the north-west corner of the building showed that both to the north and to the west there were substantial areas of pitched-stone foundations similar to those belonging to the walls of the main building. Their extent and function could not be further examined.

During the final decades of occupation the building seems to have been much used, and it was probably during this time that most of its original floor paving was worn out and patched. Rubbish was allowed to accumulate on the floors together with a number of coins (Nos. 16-38), the latest dating to the House of Valentinian (364-78). The final destruction in the late fourth-century was by fire; the north wall fell inwards and the rafters bearing the roof of pennant slabs caved in on the rubble. Much of the collapsed roof and rubble lay where they had fallen, but the upper levels, particularly in the nave, seem to have been disturbed and raked over—perhaps by people salvaging building stone and roof slabs. Indeed it is almost certain that the ruins would have been used as a quarry on many occasions from the late fourth-century until the present day.

Building 2 (Pl. 20)

Immediately to the west of building 1 lay the corner of a second structure built in a similar fashion but in a rather more precisely-laid masonry (Pl. 27B). In its final phase at least its floors had not been paved, with the result that the natural marl subsoil had been worn away to below the level of the top of the footings. The extent of the building could not be traced, since in both directions the walls ran beneath the cobbled area of the modern farmyard, nor could its chronological relationship to building 1 be demonstrated for, as section JJ will show, the crucial levels had been removed by recent erosion. However, from the collapsed rubble associated with its destruction came a few sherds of fourth-century coarse ware.

Building 3 and the adjacent areas (Pls. 21 and 23)

In the field to the east of the farm buildings several minor terraces are noticeable; a trial trench cut across one of them in 1965 showed that it took its form from an underlying Roman building. Accordingly, the excavation was extended in 1966 to examine as much of this structure as time allowed.

First- and second-century features. South and east of the masonry building it was possible to recognize traces of earlier occupation. In trench 12 the remains of a narrow foundation of drystone was found, which may well have served as the base for a horizontal timber sill. In any event, the dry-stone feature appears to have been the northern limit of a structure, since to the south of it the natural clay had been worn away and its surface trampled. A few feet to the north was a gully (gully 1) serving to catch the surface water and thus to keep the building free from flooding in wet weather. Associated occupation layers (Section DD and FF layer 6) contained pottery dating largely to the second century, but perhaps continuing into the early part of the third.

A further length of gully (gully 3) lay beneath the floor of building 3. It was filled with occupation material and lumps of limestone, and contained second-century pottery. The upper levels had been destroyed when the terrace for building 3 had been cut. Pit 4, filled with red marl, was apparently of the same date though datable finds were few.

Mixed up with the later material is a smaller quantity of mid first-century pottery (Fig. 33, nos. 1-22), which had already been trampled into the contemporary ground-surface at the time of the second-century occupation. It may well be that these sherds were of the same date as the few post-holes found nearby, four of which had been truncated by the second-century gully. Unfortunately, too little survives to give any idea of the form which this first-century timber structure may have taken.

Cremations. Two pots, each containing cremated bones, had been buried in small pits cut into the second-century occupation level, presumably at a time after occupation had ceased. The pots are illustrated below, Fig. 40, and the cremations are described on p. 157.

Well. East of the building a well lined with dry-stone work was discovered and excavated to its bottom, 12 ft. 9 in. below the contemporary surface. It measured 3 ft. 6 in. internally and was built within a well-pit about 6 ft. in diameter. The lower

filling (Section EE layer 15), which had been considerably compressed by the weight of material above, consisted of a greenish clayey silt almost free of occupation debris, with the exception of a coin of Hadrian (no. 40) and the skeleton of a dog. Above this (Section EE layer 14) came a thick deposit of red-brown clayey silt containing the substantial part of a pot (Fig. 39, no. 178) in the bottom few inches. A small quantity of third-to fourth-century pottery, and pieces of pennant roof slabs were recovered from the top 15 in. Finally, the top of the well was sealed with large quantities of building stone (Section EE layer 10) thrown in and levelled up with the top courses. Since the filling of the well-pit was cut by the foundation trench for the masonry building, the well must pre-date the building. It cannot, however, be claimed that the upper rubble fill was deposited at the time of the building's construction, for the possibility must remain that the well was open throughout much of the life of the building. Indeed, the presence of fragments of roof slab in the middle fill might suggest that the well was filling up at the time when bits were falling off the adjacent roof.

The masonry building. The part of the building excavated consisted of a single aisled unit measuring internally 23 ft. by 43 ft. Sufficient of its north-west corner was exposed to show that a second room, of unknown size, lay to the west, but the immediately adjacent modern barn will have completely obscured, and to some extent destroyed, it. The building is constructed on a terrace cut into the slope of the hill. Its walls, of coursed Lias Limestone blocks, are built on a foundation up to 2 ft. 6 in. wide and of unknown depth, composed of tightly-packed lumps of Carboniferous Limestone. For the most part several courses of superstructure survive, but parts of the southern wall have been destroyed to foundation level and the line of the north wall is distorted by the pressure of the soil from the uphill side.

Within the walls three Oolitic Limestone blocks have been found, representing the bases of the two rows of three piers which supported the roof. The central pair stood on a continuous sleeper foundation consisting of a trench filled with lumps of closely-packed limestone. The third pier base to be examined, in the north-east corner of the building, was placed on an isolated circular foundation constructed in the same way. A similar foundation lay between this and the east wall of the building, slightly off the line of the north row of piers. It may well represent the base of an additional roof support added at a later date, but there is no way of examining this possibility further.

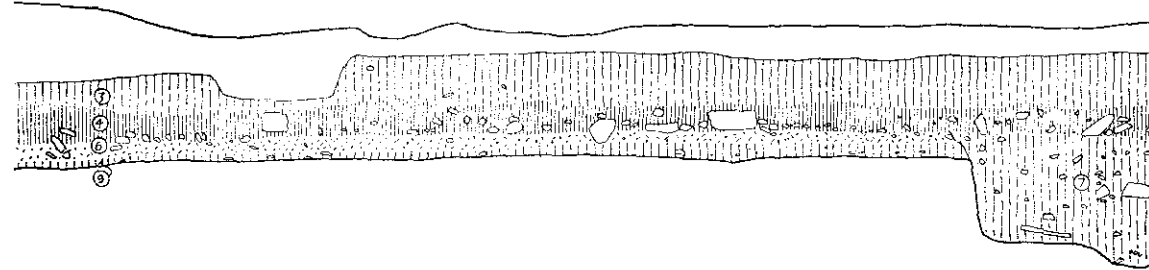
The southern aisle was crossed by a roughly-built culvert consisting of a channel 14 in. wide floored with slabs of pennant grit and walled with dry-built limestone blocks. Since it would originally have been below the floor-level, it is likely to have served as a drain running from the "nave" of the building and emptying through its southern wall. Unfortunately, much of the area around the drain had been destroyed by pits dug for the all-too-recent burial of animal carcasses.

Trench 9 sectioned two floor levels, the lower consisting of the surface of the natural marl and the top of the adjacent rubble-sleeper wall, the upper of a 2 in. thick layer of pink mortar (Section GG layer 8) laid between and around the pier bases. Between the two was a thin occupation layer (Section GG layer 9) containing a few sherds of third-or fourth-century pottery; above the pink mortar was another layer of occupation material (Section GG layer 7) without datable material. The ragged west edge of the pink mortar floor was traced in trench 9, but the precise eastern edge has not been delineated, although it is known that it did not extend into trenches 11 or 15, for in this area the worn surface of the natural marl served as the latest floor-level.

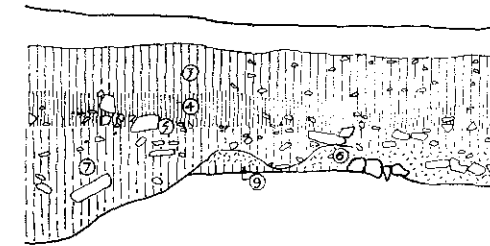
Into the marl floor of the eastern part of the room were cut several hollows, a gully (gully 4) and six stake-holes, all of which were filled with black occupation material continuous with that spreading over the entire floor. Single coins dating to mid-late fourth century were stratified within this latest occupation material (coins nos. 43-60), together with the two small mid-fourth century "hoards" (p. 153) which presumably represented the contents of two purses dropped into the filth. At one stage a small fire had been lit on the floor, up against the east wall, it post-dated the stake-hole sealed beneath it.

The building collapsed without having been burnt, the rubble from the walls and roof falling inwards. There is no clear evidence of subsequent robbing, indeed on the basis of the quantities of roof slabs found in trenches 11 and 15 it is clear that the roof, at this part of the building at least, was entire at the time of abandonment, and that the roof slabs were not subsequently removed. The rubble contained large numbers of faced limestone blocks from the walls, which one would have expected to have been carried off had stone-robbers raked through the ruins. If, however, the stone blocks lying amid the rubble represent *all* the stone originally used in the walls, it must imply that the

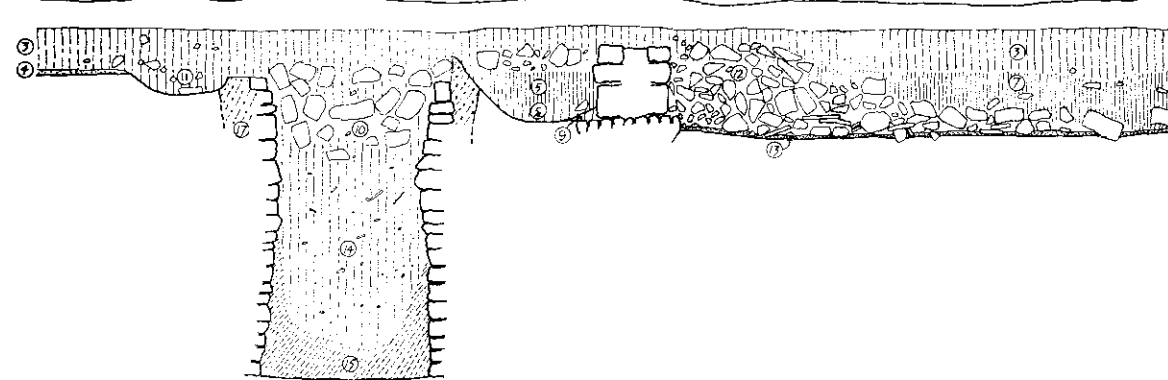
TRENCH 12 SECTION D-D



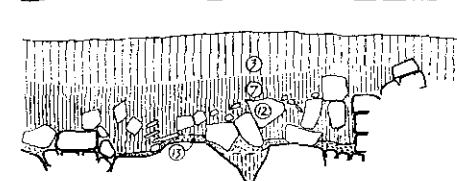
TRENCH 12 SECTION F-F



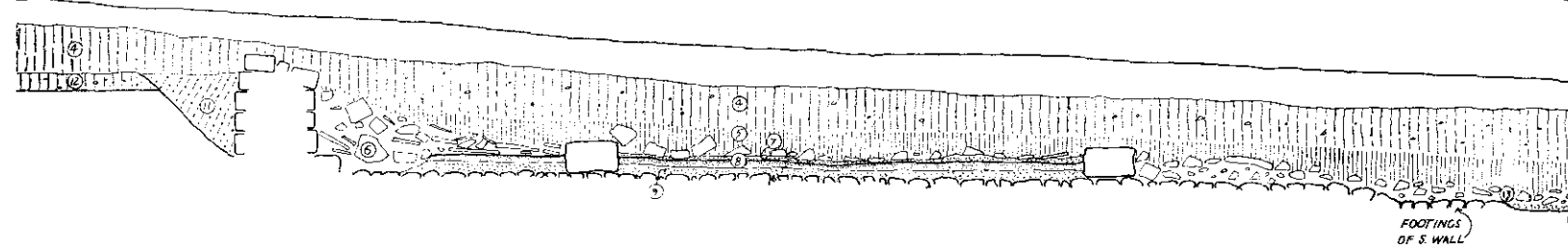
TRENCH 11 SECTION E-E



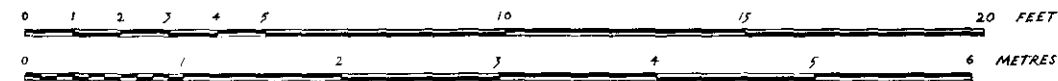
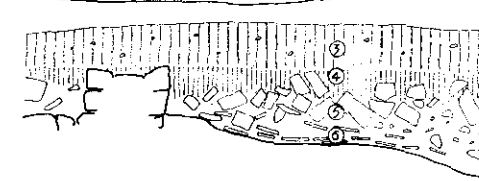
TRENCH 11 SECTION H-H



TRENCH 9 SECTION G-G



TRENCH 15 SECTION I-I



SECTION G-G CONTINUED FROM ABOVE AFTER GAP OF 24 FEET

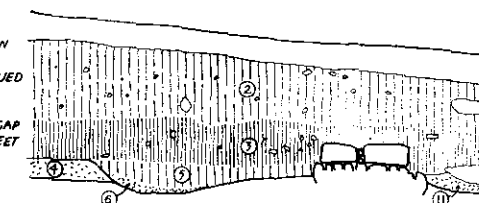


PLATE 23

Sections of building 3. For their positions see Plate 21. For key to layers see Plate 22.

masonry stood to a height of no more than 5 ft. If this is so, the upper part of the building would have been of timber. Such an arrangement would be reasonable, for the walls are surely too narrow to have stood, in masonry, to roof-height. After the collapse, soil accumulated in the hollow between the walls (Section EE layer 7 and Section GG layer 5), eventually to be sealed by a colluvial deposit of red marl more than 12 in. thick, which gradually slipped down the hill during the centuries following the Roman occupation.

Late-Roman gullies and pits. Beyond the buildings, to the east and south, were several pits and gullies of late-Roman date. *Gully 2*, filled with stony marl, was later than the well but was otherwise undated. *Pit 1* was cut into the foundation trench of building 3: it was filled with a dark loamy marl with large stone blocks in the top few inches, and its filling produced two late third-century coins (nos. 41 and 42). *Pit 2* was irregular in shape and filled with a clayey silt containing small fragments of animal bone. *Pit 3* was circular, 18 in. deep and filled with large stone blocks. It contained a fourth-century pot (Fig. 39, no. 179).

Building 4 (Plate 21)

To the south of building 3, the trial trench, no. 10 (Section GG), sectioned the north wall of another masonry building similar in structure to the walls of building 3. No floor existed within the limited part of the building excavated. North of (i.e. on the outside of) the wall was a shallow gully (gully 5) pre-dating the building and containing second-century pottery; it had been cut by a large pit (pit 5) of undefined size.

It is clear that a considerable excavation will be required before the nature of this building is understood.

Building 5 (Figs. 31 and 32)

The construction of a deep-litter chicken house in 1966 exposed part of the corner of a Roman masonry building lying on the west side of the orchard north of the farm. A small rescue excavation was carried out here in 1966 with the limited objective of examining only that part of the building which was likely to be obscured by the entrance to the new timber building.

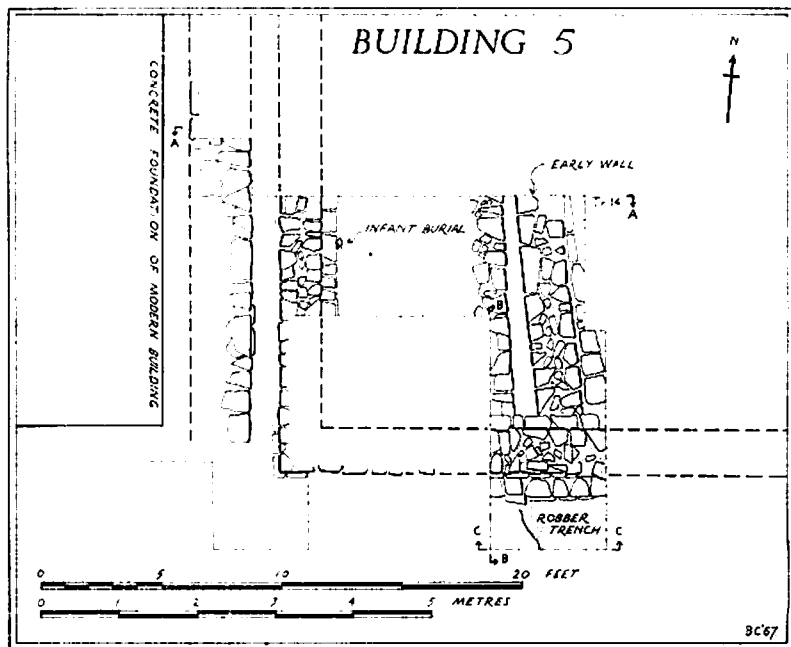


Fig. 31. Building 5. Plan.

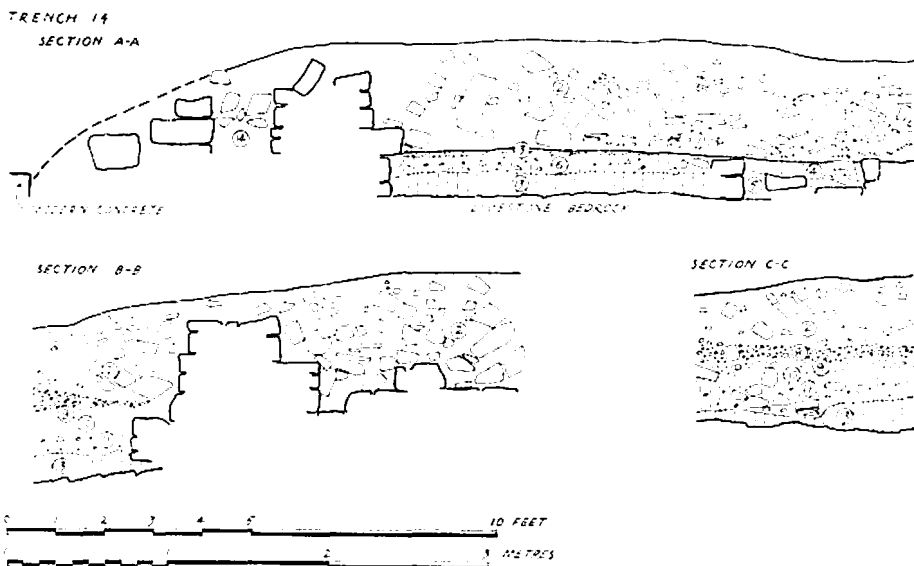


Fig. 32. Building 5. Sections.

Early building. Two distinct periods were recognized: the first was represented by a wall ("early wall", Fig. 31) built in a shallow foundation trench cut into the original red turf-line, which here overlies the bedrock of Carboniferous Limestone. To the west of the wall the soil was kept back by a line of stone blocks, thus leaving a space of 6-9 in. between the main wall and the face of the revetment. The function of such an arrangement is obscure, but it may have served to drain the area and prevent the wall footings from becoming waterlogged. Immediately to the east of the wall were found several worn limestone slabs, presumably part of a floor. The early wall and its revetment continued outside the south wall of the later building, but here they had been robbed before the later structure had been erected.

A few fragments of an infant burial lay in a shallow grave a few feet to the west; it was undated but had been largely destroyed by the wall of the later building.

Later building. The only part of the later building to be excavated was the corner of a substantially-built room which, from surface indications in the orchard, appears to be about 58 ft. long. The masonry, of coursed limestone blocks, was of excellent quality. Internally a thin floor of crushed limestone mixed with mortar was sectioned (Section AA layer 3). It had been laid directly on the early ground-surface, with no make-up, and the room had evidently been kept clean, for no rubbish was found on the floor. Above the floor lay a mass of rubble which had evidently fallen there from the walls. There was no trace of burning, nor were there many roof slabs in the rubble, implying that the roof had been largely removed before the final collapse.

Immediately to the west of the building the remains of another substantial wall were seen, but whether this served as a revetting wall or was part of another building cannot be determined without further excavation.

Building 6 (Fig. 29)

The site marked as building 6 was partly examined by the Clevedon Archaeological Society in 1954. The results of this work are being prepared for publication by Mr. W. Solley.

Building 7 (Fig. 29)

The terrace occupied by a Roman building can be clearly traced and a considerable stretch of its north wall can be seen projecting above the surface of the orchard. The building has not been excavated.

Building 8 (Fig. 29)

In 1954 the Clevedon Archaeological Society excavated an area in front of the revetting wall at this spot and discovered paving and a prolific occupation level. The report on this work is being prepared by Mr. W. Solley.

THE MATERIAL

POTTERY

The excavations of 1965 and 1966 produced a moderate amount of pottery, but not enough to warrant, at this stage, the compilation of a type-series. The pottery has therefore been published here only in its stratigraphical groups so that the evidence for the dating of each layer can easily be appreciated. Indeed, before a type-series can be contemplated the closed groups must be individually illustrated, particularly in an area, such as this, from which practically no coarse ware has yet been published. This method has caused the more common forms to be illustrated several times, but in these circumstances such a treatment is thought justifiable. No attempt has been made to quote parallels for the individual types, except to refer to the Chew Valley Lake Report (CVL) for the local coarse ware forms.* Generally speaking, the groups are sufficiently closely dated by stratified coins to render the detailed listing of parallels unnecessary.

Pottery from the early occupation layer south of building 3: Trench 12 layer 6. (Figs. 33 and 34).

- 1-8. Pottery in pre-Roman Iron Age form and ware. All are in a coarse soapy grey ware tempered with crushed limestone grits, which in most cases has been leached out during use. Where evidence survives they seem to have been made, or finished, on a wheel. Some of the vessels show signs of having been heated over fire, presumably during cooking.
9. Red sandy ware.
10. Hard grey sandy ware.
11. Grey sandy ware with smooth black outer surface.
12. Grey-brown gritty ware with a burnished exterior.
13. Smooth light-grey sandy ware.
14. Grey sandy ware with a burnished exterior. CVL 70.
15. Hard grey sandy ware.
16. Hard light-grey sandy ware.
17. Grey sandy ware with lighter grey surface.
18. Grey sandy ware with light grey-buff outer surface. CVL 119 (for form).

* A typescript of the Chew Valley Lake Report was kindly made available to me by Mr. P. A. Rahtz in advance of its publication. The comments on the samian-ware are based on a report provided by Mr. G. B. Dannel.

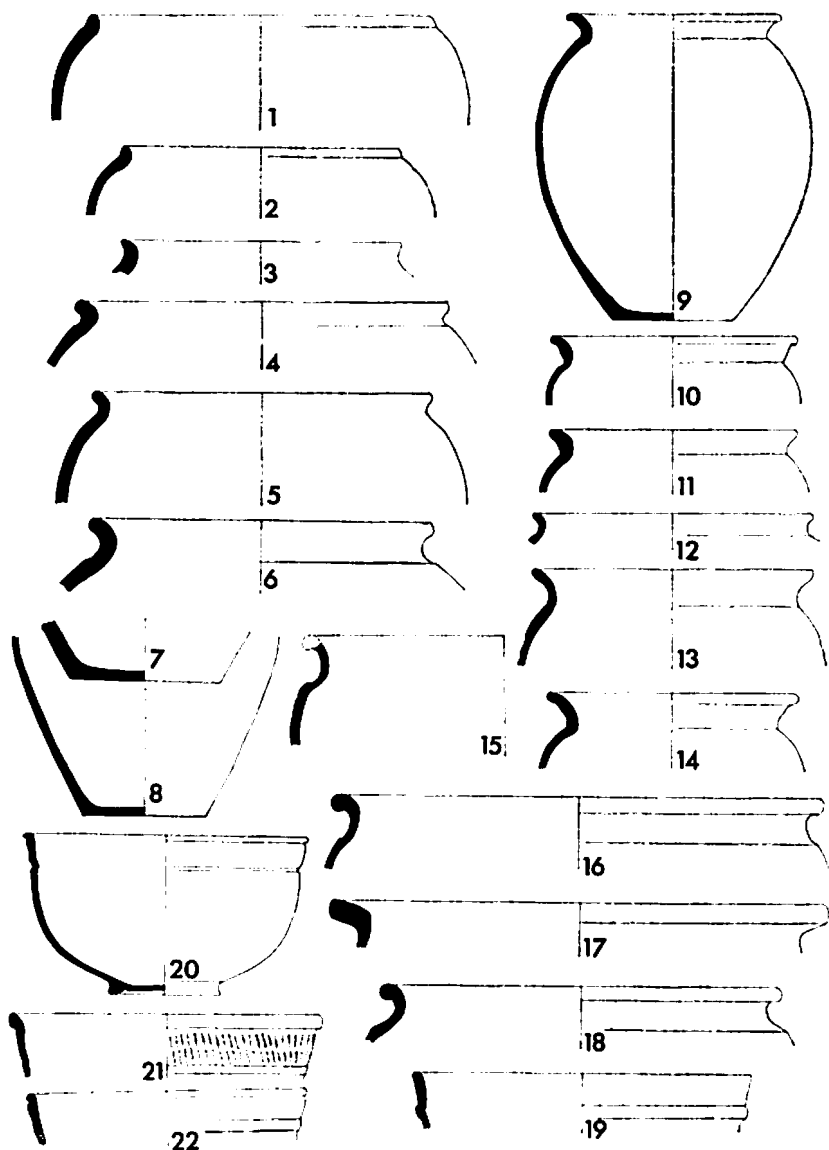


Fig. 33. Pottery 1-22. ($\frac{1}{8}$ of natural size).

19. Grey-brown sandy ware.
20. Grey-buff ware.
21. Smooth buff ware.
22. Grey-brown sandy ware. This and No. 21 are similar to the series of mugs, CVL 151-161. The Gatcombe examples are characteristic of second-century types.

23. Smooth grey ware fired to a buff-red on the surfaces.
24. Smooth grey-brown sandy ware with darker outer surface.
- 25, 26. Hard grey sandy ware.
27. Grey sandy ware fired red with a buff external colour coat. Similar to CVL 104.
28. Reddish-buff sandy ware. Similar to CVL 93.
29. Black sandy ware.
30. Soft white ware.
31. Grey ware fired red on the surfaces with a cream colour coat. Quartz grits. Common in Bath in late second-early third century contexts.
32. Hard grey ware with a light-grey external slip. Somewhere in the range CVL 165-172.
33. Grey sandy ware. CVL 167.
34. Amphora handle; buff ware. Also several body sherds of an amphora (not illustrated).
35. Amphora neck; buff sandy ware.
- 36, 37. Light-grey sandy ware. 37. CVL 74.
38. Hard grey sandy ware with a dark-grey surface. In range CVL 185-187.
39. Hard light-grey sandy ware.
40. Blue-grey ware fired buff with a brown external colour coat. *Jewry Wall Fig. 43, 6.* Early second century.
- 41, 42. Grey sandy ware.
- 43, 44. Buff-brown sandy ware.
- 45, 46. Light-grey sandy ware.

A few fragments of samian were recovered. These include forms 27 and 29, probably Flavian; 18/31, Hadrianic; 31, Antonine. This group of pottery represents an accumulation over a considerable period of time. It was impossible to separate the finds stratigraphically, for the layer from which they were derived had been churned up in antiquity resulting, in some cases, in second-century sherds being found below those dating to the first century. What caused the disturbance is not clear, but in parts of the present-day farmyard, where the natural red marl is exposed, the constant movement of cattle causes the soil to be disturbed down to a depth of a foot. Some such activity may have operated in the early Roman period.

The earliest sherds, 1-8, clearly date from the middle of the first century. Although the form continues into the Roman period, the fabric of the present examples might suggest a pre-Conquest date. Other types, e.g. nos. 35, 36 and 37, probably are of the second half of the first century. The second century is better represented: No. 40 and probably nos. 16, 18 and 20 are early; other types, such as nos. 14, 27 and 31, date to the second half of the century. Nothing of distinctive third-century character was found.

The pottery may therefore be assigned to the period mid-first to late-second century.

Pottery from pit 4, south of building 3: trench 12 layer 7 (Fig. 34).

47. Vessel in pre-Roman Iron Age ware and form. Coarse dark-grey ware with limestone grit tempering.
48. Hard grey sandy ware. Similar to CVL 117.
- 49, 50. Black sandy ware. 50 has a burnished surface.
51. Grey ware fired to red on the surfaces, with a buff colour coat. Quartz grits.

Apart from the one early sherd (No. 47), which must be rubbish survival from an earlier period, this small group dates to the late-second or early-third century. Nothing distinctive enables a more precise date to be offered.

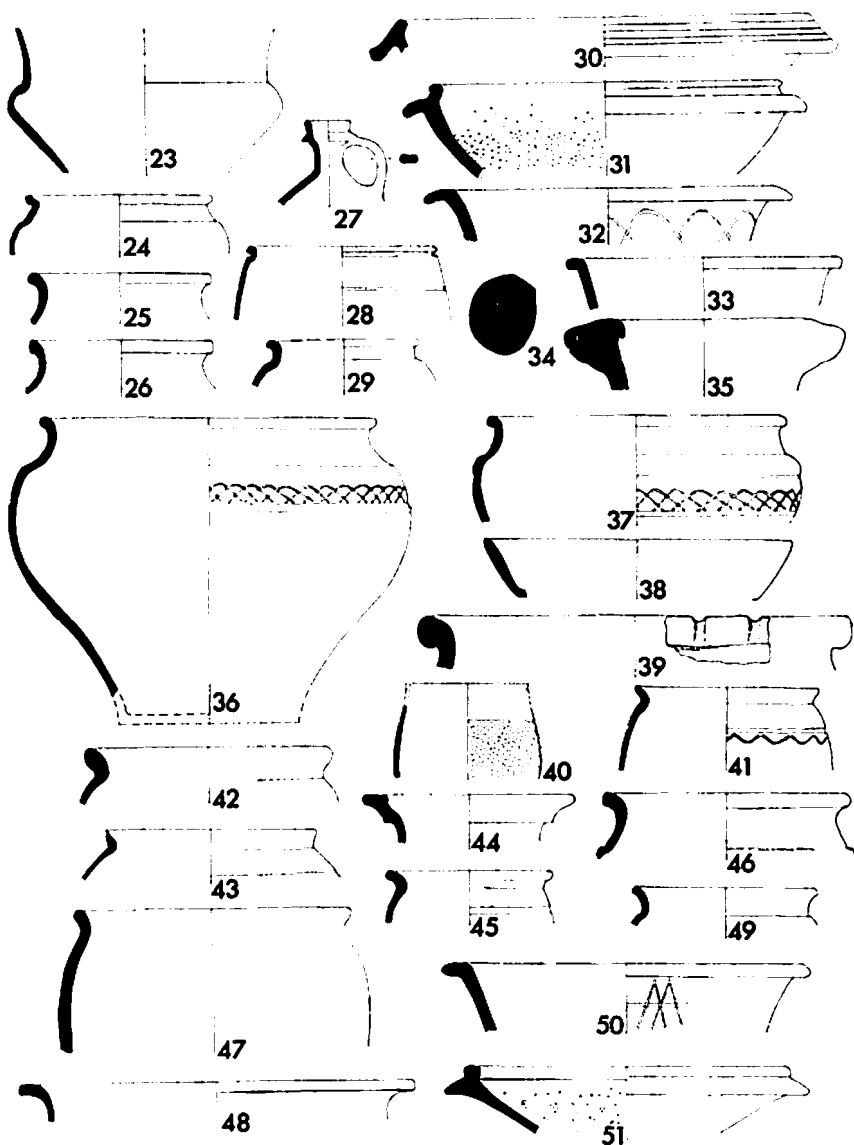


Fig. 34. Pottery 23-51. ($\frac{1}{2}$ of natural size).

Pottery from gully 1, south of building 3: trench 12 layer 8 (Fig. 35).

52. Smooth sandy grey ware fired to red-buff on the surfaces. CVL 191.

53. Hard grey sandy ware. CVL 151-158.

54. Buff sandy ware. CVL 93.

These sherds from the bottom of gully 1 suggest an early second-century date. Both No. 53 and No. 54 would best fit this period, though 52 is a little earlier.

Pottery from early gully, north of building 4: trench 10 layer 6 (Fig. 35).

- 55. Light-grey sandy ware.
- 56. Grey-brown gritty ware.
- 57. Black sandy ware.
- 58. Red sandy ware with a cream colour coat.
- 59. Grey sandy ware.
- 60. Hard light-grey sandy ware.

The group is not easy to date with precision, but No. 58 is a second-century type, which at Bath is usually found in the second half of the century. No. 60 is more likely to be late first-century, but in this context it is probably a stray from earlier levels.

Pottery from early layers below building 1 (Fig. 35).

- 61. Black sandy ware. (Trench 1 layer 6).
 - 62. Smooth buff ware. (Trench 3 layer 5).
 - 63. Handle of amphora; buff sandy ware. (Trench 3 layer 5).
- Also from trench 3 layer 5 were two sherds of samian: form 31, Antonine; 18, pre-Flavian. Though not particularly distinctive, these sherds are of late-first to mid-second century type. A coin of Hadrian (coin No. 3) was found with them.

Sherds associated with building 5 (Fig. 35).

- 64. Grey sandy ware with dark-grey outer surface. Pre-building 5. (Trench 14 layer 5). Third century?
- 65. Black sandy ware, burnished outer surface. Occupation layer between west wall of building 5 and revetting wall. (Trench 14 layer 14). Fourth century.
- 66. Hard grey sandy ware. Pre-building 5. (Trench 14 layer 13). Second-third century.

Pottery from the trench across the eastern defensive wall (Fig. 35).

- 67-70. From trench 6 layer 3, the marl piled up behind the wall, contemporary with its period of construction.

- 67. Grey sandy ware with a light-grey external slip.
- 68, 69. Light-grey sandy ware. 68 has a dark-grey external slip.
- 70. Grey sandy ware.

A few chips of second-century samian were also recovered. The group is therefore of the late-second or early-third century.

- 71-72. From the old turf-line, trench 6 layer 4, below layer 3.

- 71. Light-grey sandy ware.
- 72. Black sandy ware.

(Not illustrated). A small body sherd from a colour-coated beaker. The sherds themselves are not particularly distinctive, but No. 72 is likely to be third-century rather than second-century. They were stratified with a worn coin of Commodus (coin No. 1).

- 73. Red-buff sandy ware. From trench 6 layer 7. Second-third century type.

- 74. Black sandy ware. From trench 6 layer 9. Third-fourth century type.

Neither provides significant dating evidence since they were probably derived from earlier layers further up-hill.

Pottery from the occupation layer contemporary with the use of building 1. Various trenches and layers. (Fig. 36).

- 75. Hard dark-grey sandy ware. CVL 333-338.
- 76. Hard dark-grey sandy ware.
- 77. Fine, hard light-grey ware.
- 78. Black sandy ware.
- 79. Dark-grey sandy ware.
- 80. Grey sandy ware.
- 81. Black sandy ware with lightly burnished surface.
- 82, 83. Dark-grey sandy ware. 83 has traces of light-grey external and internal slip.
- 84. Black sandy ware.
- 85, 86. Light-grey sandy ware.
- 87. Fine, hard light-grey sandy ware.
- 88, 89. Grey sandy ware, 88 has a dark outer surface.
- 90. Dark-grey sandy ware.
- 91. Hard grey sandy ware.
- 92. Micaceous red ware with red colour coat.
- 93. Red ware with red colour coat.

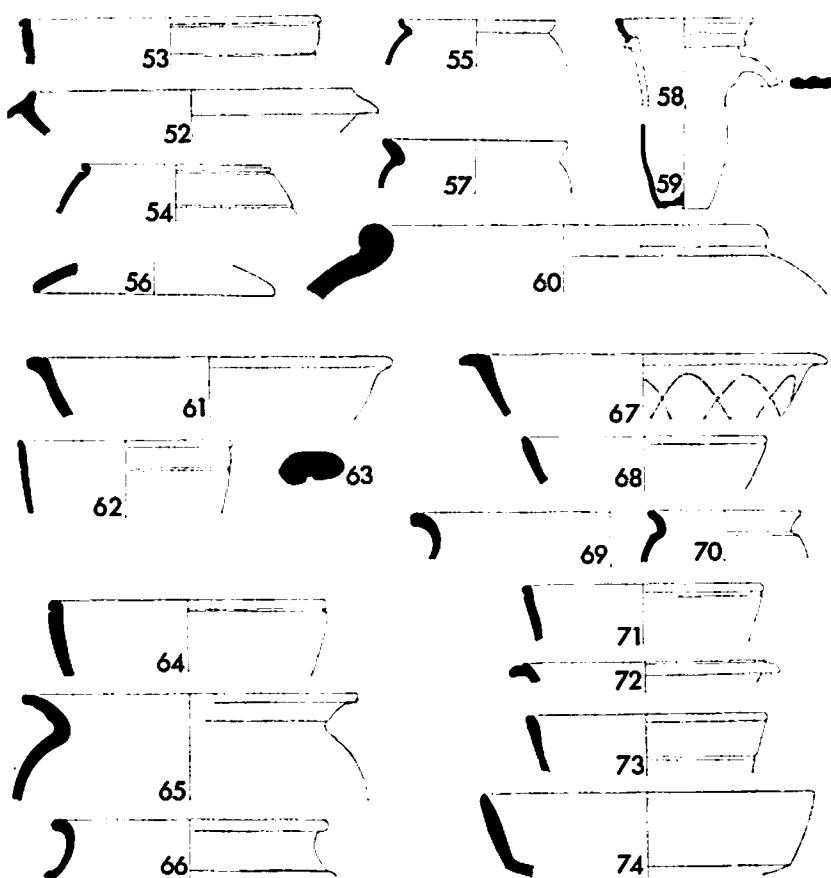


Fig. 35. Pottery 52-74. ($\frac{1}{2}$ of natural size).

94. Micaceous grey-red ware with red colour coat.
95. Micaceous red ware with red colour coat.
- 96, 97. Red-brown ware with brownish colour coat.
98. Red-brown ware with brown colour coat (possibly part of No. 95).
99. Metallic grey ware with glossy blue colour coat.
100. Grey sandy ware.
101. Red-brown sandy ware fired to grey on the surfaces.
102. Smooth red ware with an external and internal buff colour coat. Quartz grits.
103. Smooth bluish-grey ware fired light-red. The surface is decorated with scales and is coated with a blue colour coat. Castor-ware type.
104. Grey sandy ware.

The coin series (coins nos. 15-38) show clearly that building 1 was in use during most of the fourth century, probably until the 380's. As might be expected, the pottery falls exactly into this date bracket. It would be possible to quote many parallels for the individual types, but to do so would be unnecessary in the face of the coin evidence. The red colour-coated bowls, nos. 92-96, comprise an interesting group, the origin of which is

not yet clear, but on the present showing it would seem more likely that their source was the Oxford region rather than the New Forest.

105. Black sandy ware. Fourth-century type.

Pot from the occupation rubbish on the floor of building 2. Trench 8 layer 6 (Fig. 36).

106. Hard light-grey ware. Fourth-century type.

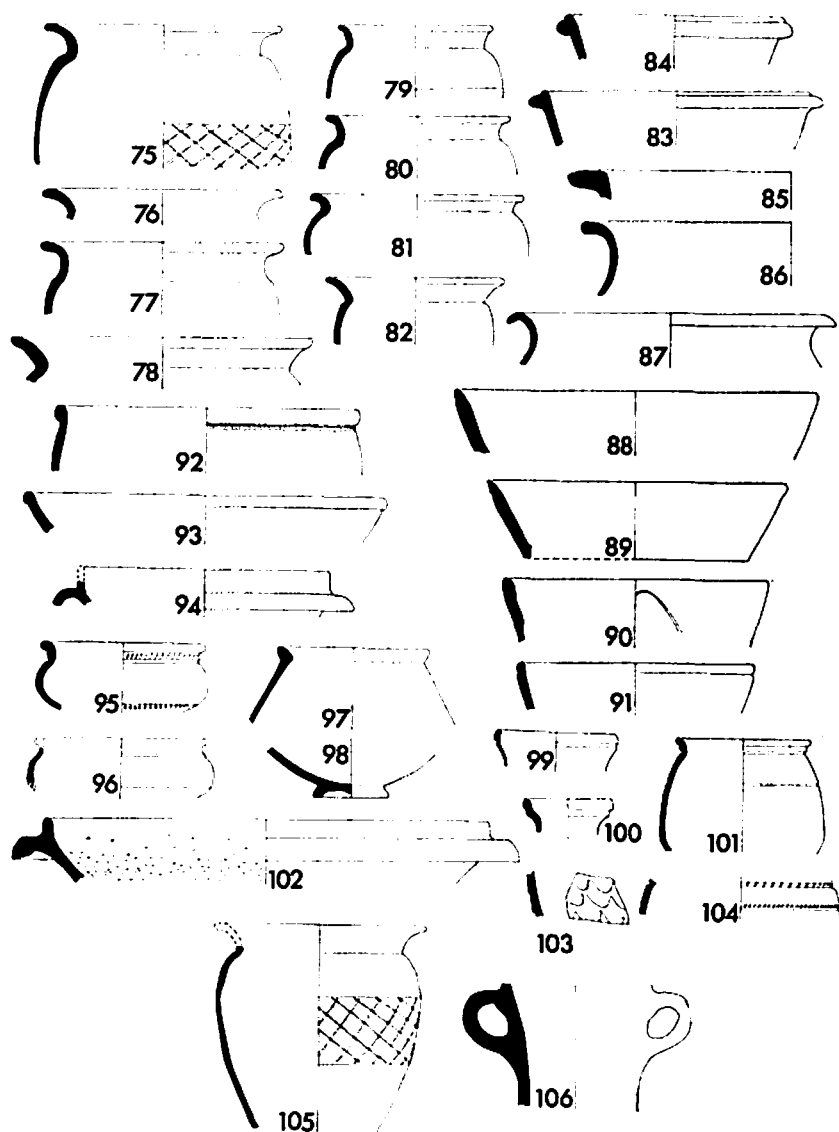


Fig. 36. Pottery 75-106. ($\frac{1}{3}$ of natural size).

Pottery from the pit A, cut into the edge of the pier base in building 1. Trench 1 layer 11 (Fig. 37).

- 107, 108. Red ware with red colour coat.
- 109. Red ware with reddish-brown colour coat.
- 110. Grey ware fired red, with reddish-brown colour coat.
- 111. Red ware with red colour coat. Quartz grits.
- 112. Light-red ware with brown colour coat.
- 113. Dark-grey sandy ware with burnished interior. Two examples, the one not illustrated was decorated with wavy lines on the outer surface.

The coins recovered from the pit (coins nos. 4-8) were in use during the last quarter of the third century. No fourth-century coins were found, but in so small a collection their absence need not be significant. The pit is, however, stratigraphically earlier than the oven which seals coins of the first half of the fourth century (coins nos. 9-11). It is probable therefore that the pit belongs to the last quarter of the third century and that the pottery can be similarly dated.

Pottery from drainage-gully along the outside of the north wall of building 1. Various trenches and layers (Fig. 37).

- 114, 115. Black sandy ware.
- 116. Light-red ware with brown colour coat.
- 117. Light-red ware with an external red colour coat decorated with white paint.
- 118. Red ware with brown colour coat.
- 119. Hard light-grey ware.
- 120. Black sandy ware.
- 121. Grey sandy ware.

The vessels in this group are all of fourth-century type (except 119, which is second-third century), they represent occupation debris which accumulated during the use of the building, and are thus of the same date-range as nos. 75-104.

Pottery from the robber-trench dug to remove the north-west corner of building 1. Trench 7 layer 5 (Fig. 37).

- 122. Oval dish (long axis drawn). Black sandy ware.
- 123. Light-grey sandy ware.
- 124. Grey sandy ware, burnished inside.
- 125. Grey sandy ware with a darker grey slip outside and on the inside of the rim.
- 126, 127. Light buff-red ware with red colour coat.
- 128. Grey ware with darker grey slip outside. CVL 310-309.
- 129. Dark-grey sandy ware.
- 130. Buff red ware with traces of an external red colour coat.
- 131. Colander. Grey sandy ware.
- 132. Light-grey sandy ware.

Although these sherds were recovered from the filling which lies within the robber-trench, the filling itself consisted largely of occupation material which had slumped into the trench left after the wall had been removed. The finds are therefore strictly of the same range and derivation as nos. 114-121, and date to the fourth century.

Pottery from gully below the floor-level of building 3. Trench 9 layers 9, 15 and 16 (Fig. 38).

- 133. Grey sandy ware with a black outer surface.
- 134. Light-grey sandy ware.
- 135, 136. Soft grey sandy ware.
- 137. Smooth light-grey sandy ware.
- 138. Smooth grey sandy ware.
- 139. Grey sandy ware.
- 140. Light-grey sandy ware.
- 141. Dark-grey sandy ware.

The samian-ware includes 35/6, Hadrianic; 31 Antonine. All the types represented in this group can be dated to the second or, at the latest, early-third century. It seems likely therefore that the sector of the gully which lay within the limits of building 3 was the truncated bottom of a pre-building gully.

Pottery from the occupation layer within building 3. Various trenches and layers (Fig. 38).

- 142. Hard grey sandy ware.
- 143. Grey ware with burnished darker grey surfaces.
- 144, 145. Dark-grey sandy ware. 145 has some small grits.

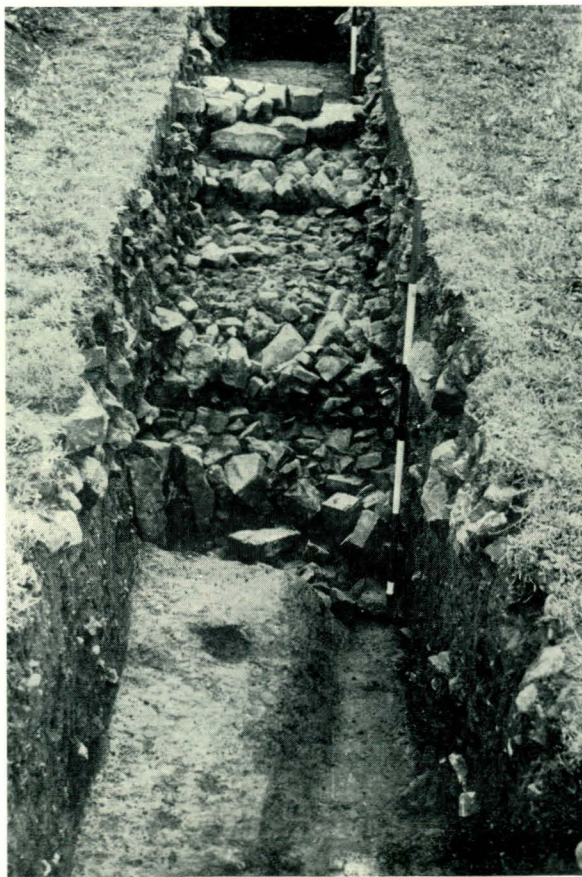


PLATE 24A

Section across the east defensive wall, showing the inner side of rubble footings.

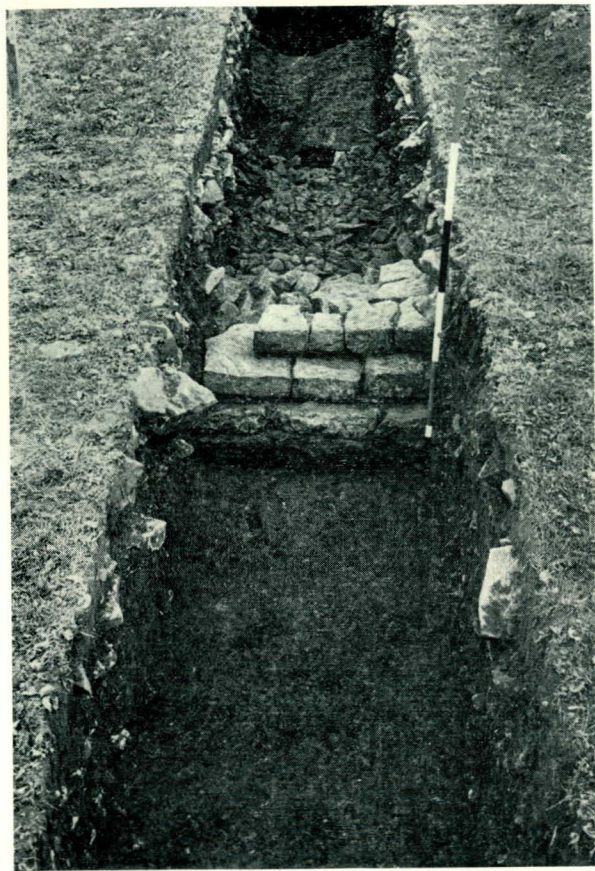


PLATE 24B

Section across the east defensive wall, showing the outer wall face.



PLATE 25A

Building 1. In the foreground is the original paving between the pier bases.

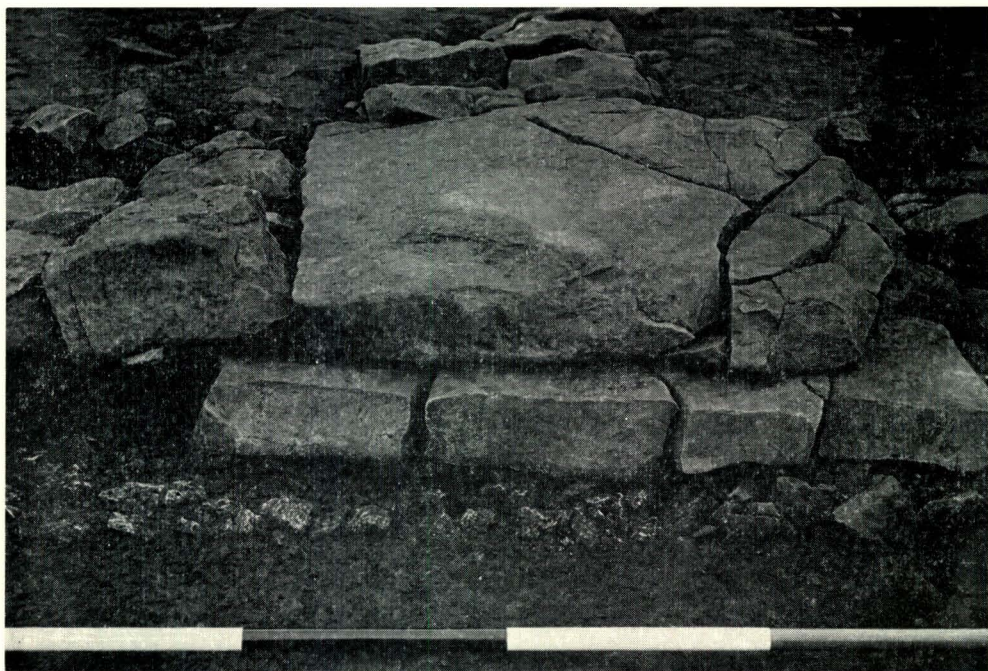


PLATE 25B

Building 1. Detail of one of the pier bases.



PLATE 26A

Building 1, showing the foundation of one of the pier bases cut by pit A, which in turn is cut by the oven.

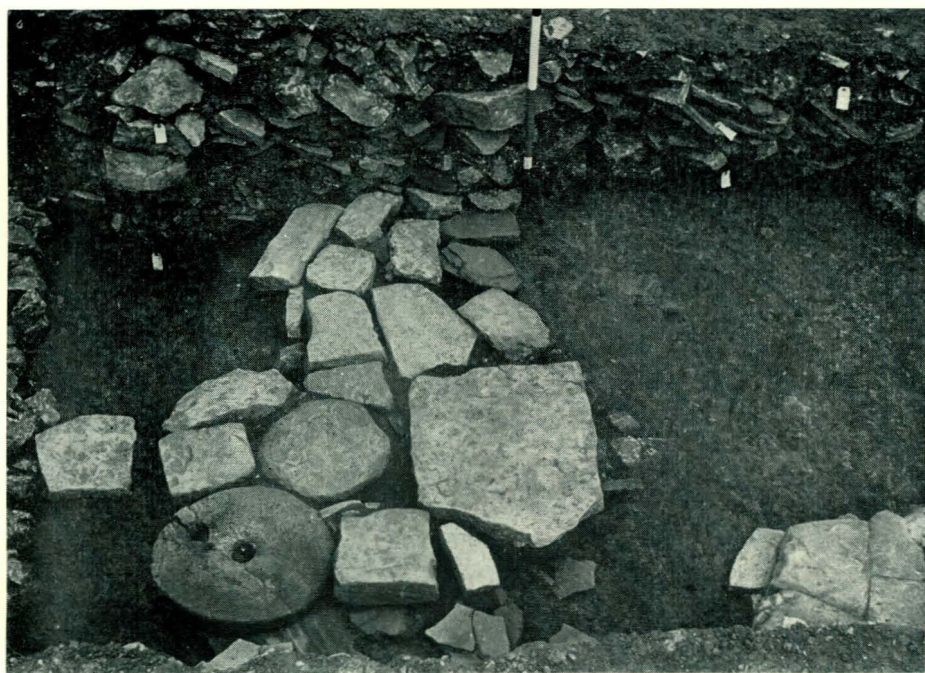


PLATE 26B

Building 1. Late paving, incorporating two quernstones, in the northern part of the building: the drainage gully can be seen adjacent to the footings of the north wall, on the left of the plate.

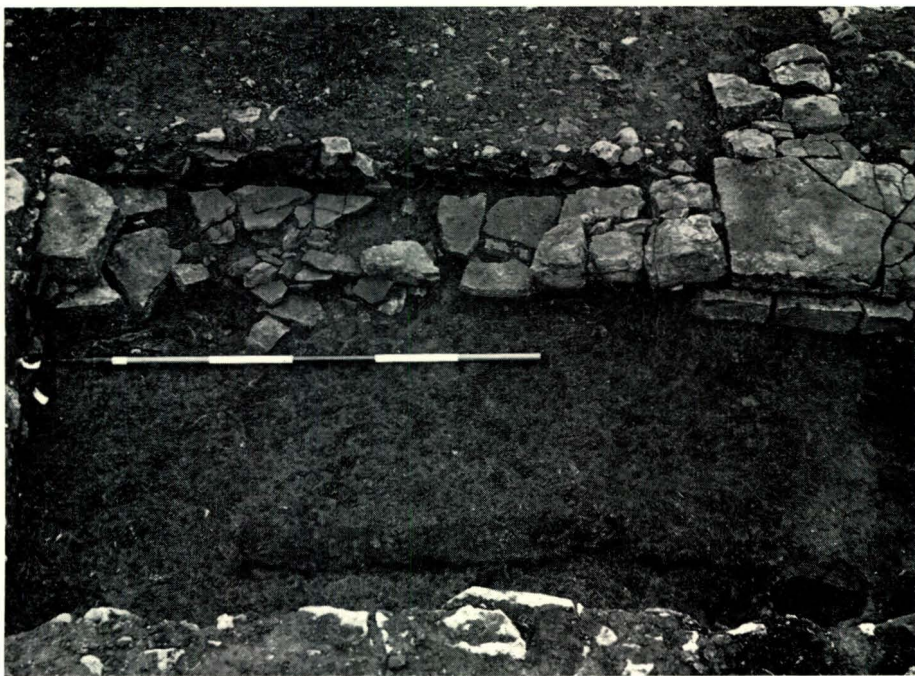


PLATE 27A

Building 1. Partition wall between two of the pier bases. In the foreground is the burnt timber with a posthole nearby.



PLATE 27B

Building 2 in the foreground with the wall of building 1 beyond.

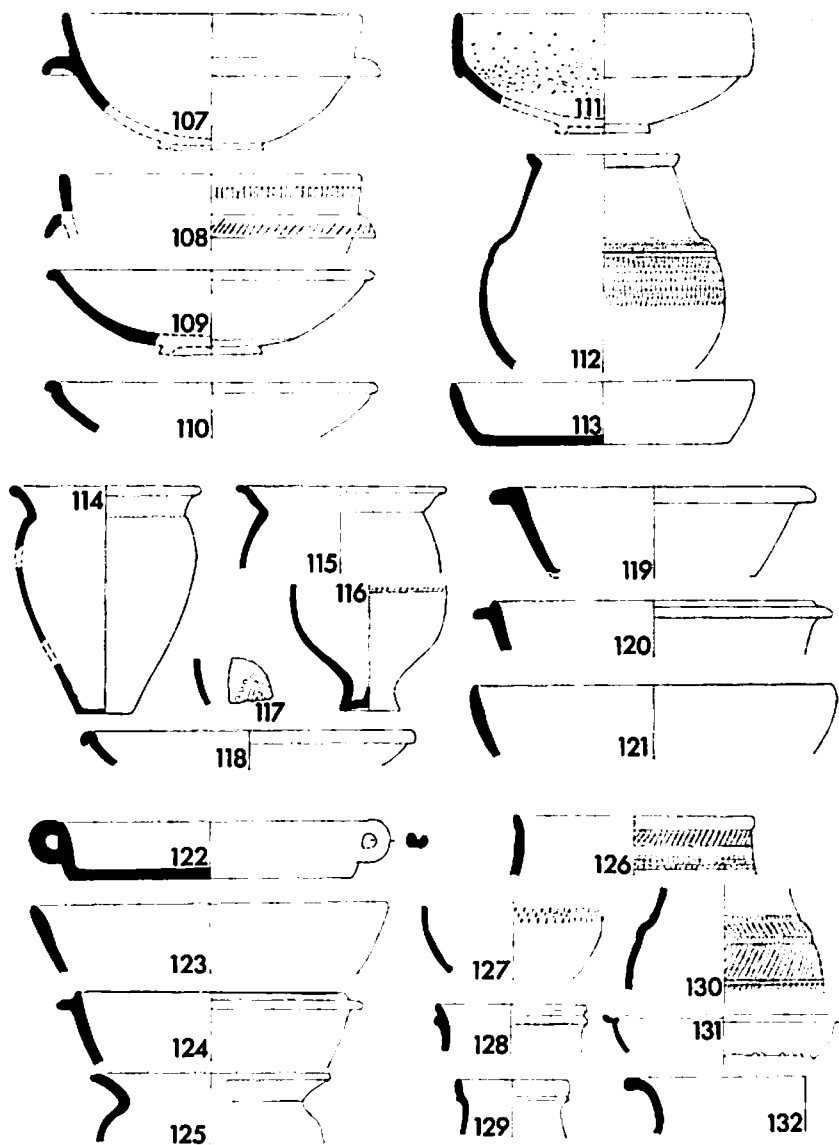


Fig. 37. Pottery 107-132. ($\frac{1}{2}$ of natural size).

- 146. Dark-grey sandy ware.
- 147. Hard dark-grey sandy ware.
- 148. Grey sandy ware.
- 149. Hard grey ware with burnished outer surface.
- 150. Hard cream-coloured ware. Quartz grits.

146 EXCAVATIONS AT GATCOMBE, SOMERSET, IN 1965 AND 1966

151. Light-grey sandy ware.
 152. Micaceous grey ware fired to buff on the surfaces, decorated with a red colour coat.
 153-155. Light-red micaceous ware with traces of a red colour coat.
 156. Grey sandy ware.
 157. Hard dark-grey sandy ware with a roughly burnished exterior.
 158. Smooth buff ware with a dark-blue colour coat.

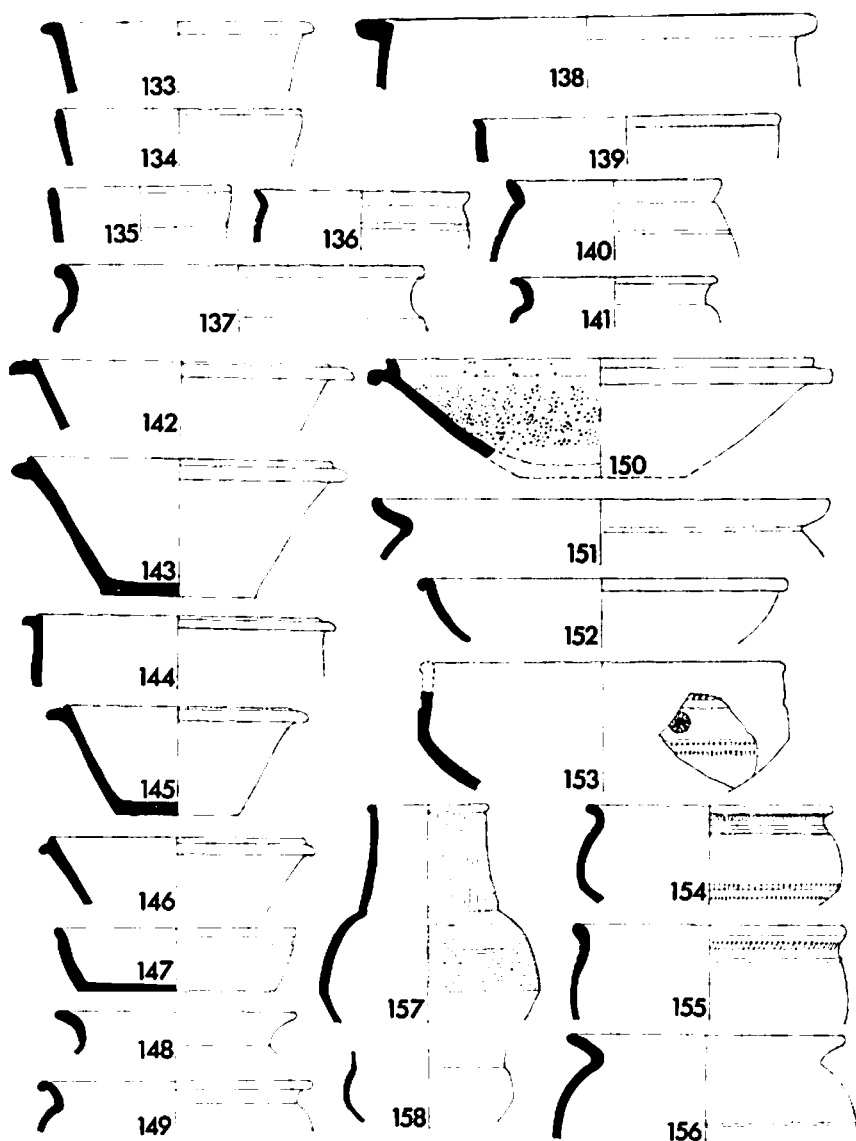


Fig. 38. Pottery 133-158. ($\frac{1}{8}$ of natural size).

The coin series (coins 43-76) shows that the building was occupied throughout the fourth century until probably some time in the 380's or 390's, the densest occupation being in the third quarter of the fourth century. The coins represent fairly the date range of the pottery stratified with them.

Pottery from the occupation layer east of building 3. Trench 11 layer 4 (Fig. 39).

159. Black sandy ware burnished inside and on the flange.

160. Light-grey sandy ware.

161. Hard dark-grey sandy ware.

162. Hard grey sandy ware. (Diameter uncertain).

163. Light-grey sandy ware. (Diameter uncertain).

164. Grey ware fired red on the surface.

165. Light-grey sandy ware.

166. Black sandy ware with a burnished surface.

167. Grey-brown sandy ware.

The occupation layer east of building 3 produced three coins (coins 84-86), the latest belonging to the Theodosian period. The stratified pottery is therefore likely to be of late fourth-century date, although some of the vessels may have begun to accumulate here a little earlier.

Pottery from pit 1, dug immediately outside the east wall of building 3. Trench 11 layer 5 (Fig. 39).

168, 169. Black sandy ware burnished inside.

170. Light-grey sandy ware.

Two late-third-century coins (coins 41 and 42) were found in the pit. This date would be acceptable for the pottery.

Pottery from pit 2, east of building 3. Trench 11 layer 6 (Fig. 39).

171. Light-grey sandy ware.

172. Grey sandy ware with a burnished interior.

173. Hard dark-grey sandy ware.

One coin of Tetricus (coin 83) was recovered from this pit. A late third-century date would suit the pottery but precise dating is impossible on so small a sample.

Pottery from the well. Trench 11 layer 14 (Fig. 39).

174. Black sandy ware.

175. Hard grey sandy ware.

176. Black sandy ware.

177. Light-grey sandy ware.

178. Black sandy ware with burnished outer surface.

One samian sherd, form 31R, of Antonine date, was recovered. The nature of the filling suggests that the well silted up over a considerable period of time. On the bottom was a very worn coin of Hadrian (coin No. 40). In the bottom inches of layer 14 lay the sherds of No. 178, for which a second-century date would seem most suitable. The remainder of the illustrated sherds come from the upper 15 in. of layer 14. Of these, No. 176 should be dated to the late-third or the fourth century; the others probably have a similar date-range.

Pottery from pit 3, east of building 3. Trench 11 layer 8 (Fig. 39).

179. Light-grey sandy ware. Same type as CVL 309. Early fourth century.

The Cremations (Fig. 40).

180. Cremation 1. Grey sandy ware with very faint traces of a wavy line decoration on the surface—too shallow to trace. The vessel is similar to CVL 87, but the form is very generalized. Probably early third century.

181. Cremation 2. Reddish-brown sandy ware fired to a light-grey on the surface. Similar to CVL 114. Difficult to date precisely, but probably late-second or early-third century.

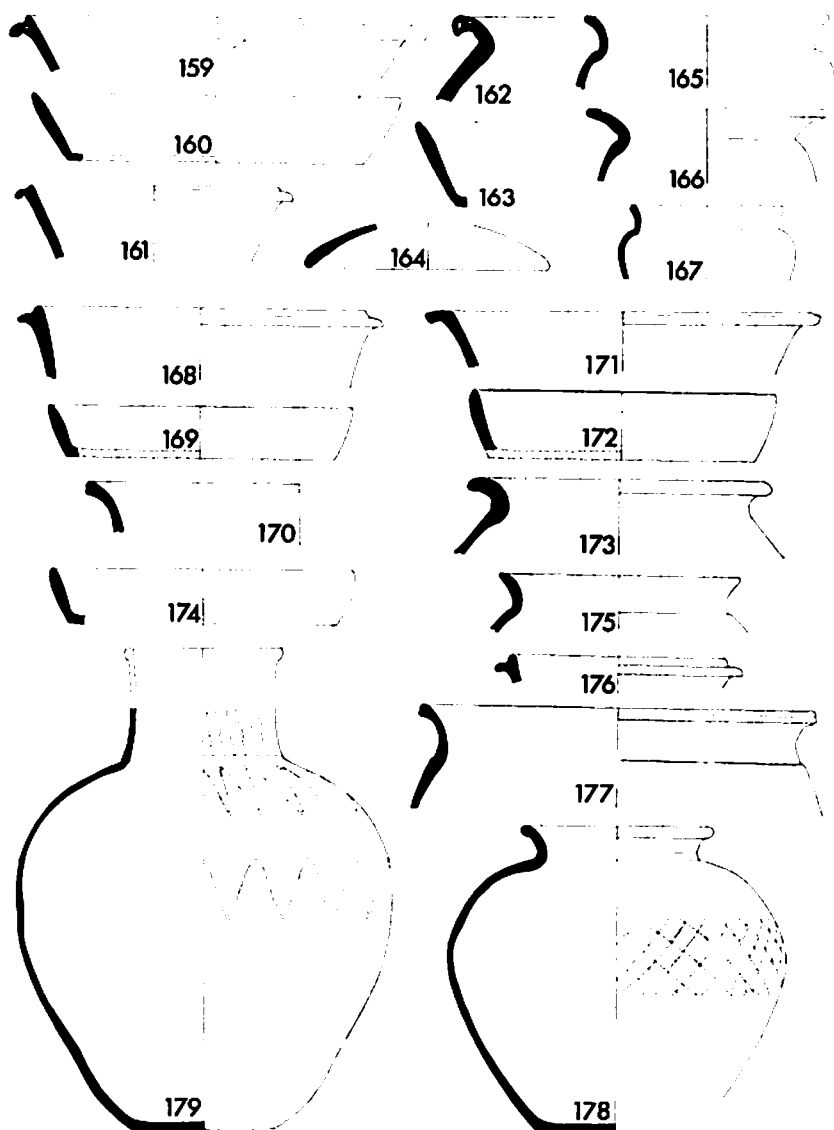


Fig. 39. Pottery 159-179. ($\frac{1}{3}$ of natural size).

SMALL OBJECTS OF METAL, BONE, GLASS AND STONE.*

1. (Fig. 41, No. 1). A T-shaped brooch with its pin hinged in a thin crossbar, one end of which is missing; the ends may have been grooved. The brooch had been tinned. The bow is hollow behind and projects over the catchplate on one side only; on the head is a double ridge or crest.

Close parallels are difficult; perhaps the nearest is from Caerleon (*Arch.* lxxviii,

* The comments on the brooches were kindly supplied by Mr. M. R. Hull.

162, No. 5), unfortunately unstratified. All other comparable brooches have the short, linear appendages on the side of the head, which this brooch lacks, these are from Hole Ground, Wookey (Hull 1964, p. 19); London (Guildhall Mus., No. 20778); Chew Stoke (M.o.W. excavations); and South Wilts (British Mus.). Trench 10 layer 6; second-century occupation layer.

2. (Fig. 41, No. 2). Upper part of a very corroded bronze brooch, the foot missing. The spring has eight or nine turns with the chord held in a small crest. The arms are apparently vertically ribbed, imitating a spring. The upper part may have been enamelled, but the example is too corroded to be sure.

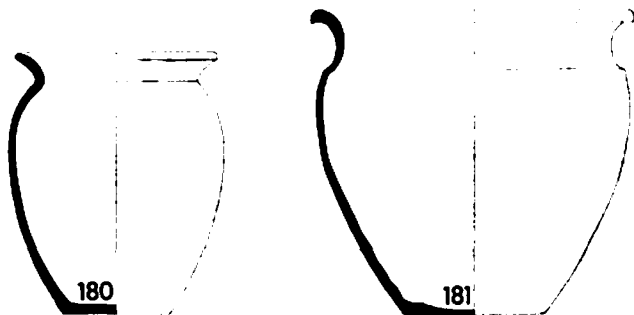


Fig. 40. Pottery 180-181. ($\frac{1}{2}$ of natural size).

This belongs to a south-western enamelled type which lacks a name. Examples with a similarly sharp angle at the head of the bow are known from Bilbury (Salisbury Mus.); Warwick (British Mus.); Bokerley Dyke (Pitt-Rivers, pl. clxxiii, 4); Chew Valley (M.o.W. excavation); and Cirencester.

But many are quite similar, with a less pronounced angle, such as Cold Kitchen Hill (*W.A.M.* xliii, 1, B.); Caerleon (*Arch.* lxxviii, 162, Fig. 13, 9) in a deposit not later than A.D. 125; Caerleon (*Arch. Camb.* 1932, 79, Fig. 31, 4) dated to late-first or early-second century; Wroxeter (Shrewsbury Mus., H 40) dated to first half of second century; Caerwent (three examples, one is *Arch.* lxxx, 239, Fig. 2, 2); and one from Silchester (Reading Mus.). The distribution is north to Wroxeter and east to Silchester and Farley Heath.

Trench 2 layer 9; from the occupation layer below building 1.

3. (Not illustrated). Pin from bronze fibula.
Trench 12 layer 6; second-century occupation layer.
4. (Not illustrated). Pin from bronze fibula.
Trench 10 layer 4; occupation layer contemporary with building 3.
5. (Not illustrated). Pin from bronze fibula.
Trench 12 layer 6; second-century occupation layer.
6. (Not illustrated). Fragments of a much-corroded bronze disc brooch.
Trench 2 layer 6; floor surface of building 1. Fourth century.
7. (Fig. 41, No. 5). Bronze hook made in one with a flat triangular plate decorated with stamped circles.
Trench 11 layer 13; occupation on floor of building 3. Fourth century.
8. (Fig. 41, No. 4). Bronze toilet instrument.
Trench 1 layer 6; occupation layer below building 1. Second or third century.
9. (Fig. 41, No. 7). Half of a pair of tweezers, decorated with impressed circles.
Trench 10 layer 2; colluvial deposit sealing the collapsed building.
10. (Fig. 41, No. 9). Bronze bracelet with scalloped edge.
Trench 12 layer 6; second-century occupation layer.
11. (Fig. 41, No. 6). Bronze finger ring.
Trench 9 layer 7; occupation on floor of building 3. Fourth century.
12. (Not illustrated). Plain bronze ring, 1.9 cm. in diameter externally; circular in section 1.5 mm. across.
Trench 12 layer 6; second-century occupation layer.
13. (Not illustrated). Plain bronze ring, 2.5 cm. in diameter externally; D-shaped in section 4 mm. across.

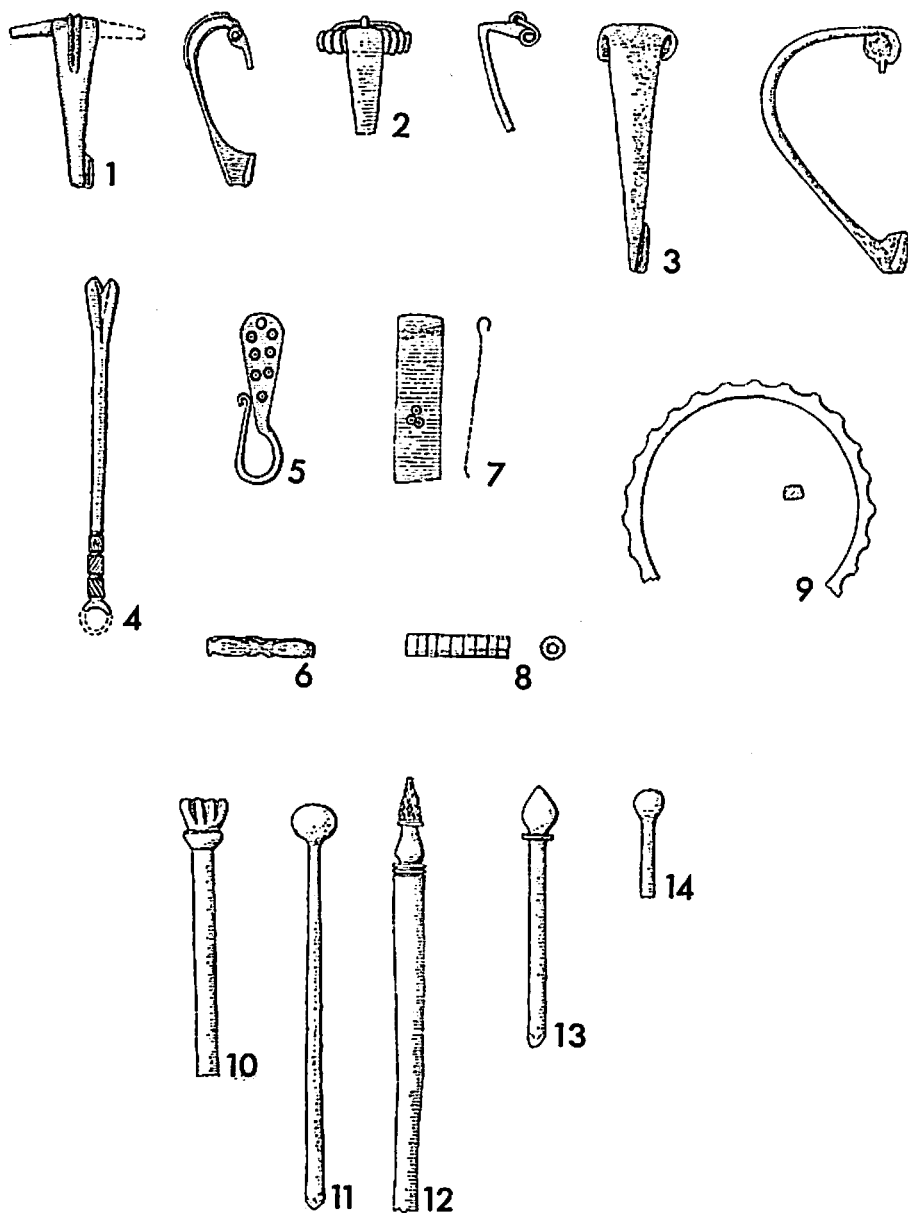


Fig. 41. Small objects. ($\frac{1}{3}$ of natural size).

- Trench 2 layer 8; occupation on floor of building 1. Fourth century.
 14. (Fig. 41, No. 3). Hinged iron brooch with a flat and tapered bow, boldly curved.
 The brooches of this type may be curved or almost straight; the list of sources for each form is much the same. The main examples of the boldly curved type are

as follows:— Rotherley (several); Rushmore; Woodcuts (three); Cold Kitchen Hill (three at least); Fifield Bavant; Camerton (several); Bokerley Dyke; Ham Hill; Hod Hill; Rushall Down.

Clearly a native and pre-Roman type, which scarcely survives the Conquest.

Trench 12 layer 6; first-second century occupation layer.

15. (*Fig. 41, No. 10*). Bone pin.
Trench 2 layer 11; occupation layer within building 1. Fourth century.
16. (*Fig. 41, No. 11*). Bone pin.
Trench 7 layer 7; occupation layer within building 1. Fourth century.
17. (*Fig. 41, No. 12*). Bone pin.
Trench 10 layer 6; second-century occupation in gully north of building 4.
18. (*Fig. 41, No. 13*). Bone pin.
Trench 11 layer 13; occupation layer in building 3. Fourth century.
19. (*Fig. 41, No. 14*). Bone pin.
Trench 11 layer 7; turf-line over collapse of building 3. Late fourth century.
20. (*Fig. 41, No. 8*). Cylindrical jet bead.
Trench 11 layer 4; occupation layer east of building 3. Late fourth century.
21. (Not illustrated). Green glass bead, flat, 4 mm. in diameter, with a perforation 1 mm. across.
Trench 11 layer 13; occupation layer in building 3. Fourth century.
22. (Not illustrated). Blue-green glass bead, globular, 7 mm. in diameter, with a perforation 1.5 mm. across.
Trench 12 layer 6; second-century occupation layer.
23. (Not illustrated). Blue-green glass bead, cylindrical, 4.5 mm. in diameter, 11 mm. long, with a perforation 2 mm. across.
Trench 2 layer 4; occupation layer in building 1. Fourth century.

The stone column-base (Fig. 42).

Base of a baluster. The torus mouldings are capped by a high cyma reversa. Found in the rubble filling building 1 though it is unlikely that it ever stood in position in that building. Probably it was brought from a neighbouring structure.

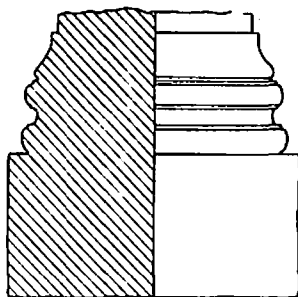


Fig. 42. Baluster base. ($\frac{1}{4}$ of natural size).

QUERNSTONES (Fig. 43).

1. Top-stone of a wide flattish quern.
Built into the late paving in building 1. Fourth century.
2. Bottom-stone of quern.
Built into the late paving in building 1. Fourth century.
3. Part of the top-stone of a wide flat quern. The grinding surface has been roughened with parallel grooves.
Found in gully 4, cut into the floor in the north-east corner of building 3. Fourth century? or an earlier type stray in a late context.
4. Part of the bottom-stone of a small thick quern. The upper (grinding) surface has been grooved.
Found in pit 4, south-east of building 3. Second century.
5. Part of the bottom-stone of a small thick quern. The upper (grinding) surface has been grooved.
Found in pit 4, south-east of building 3. Second century.

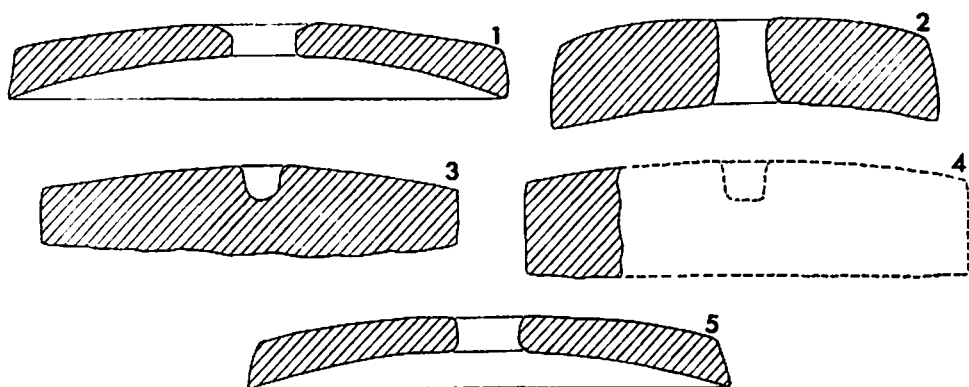


Fig. 43. Quern stones. ($\frac{1}{4}$ of natural size).

THE COINS

The complete list of Roman coins found at Gatcombe includes the coins from excavations in 1965 and 1966 together with a collection of 148 coins in the possession of Mr. J. Butler, which have been collected on the site over several years and preserved at Gatcombe Farm.

The two lots of coins are listed separately, with the coins from the excavations of 1965-6 grouped according to their stratigraphical position. Since some of the coins give individual dates for layers, and some fit into groups, an attempt has been made to suggest how long each coin was in circulation. As this cannot be done with any hope of complete accuracy, each coin has been fitted into one of four groups: α , β , γ , δ , or, if corroded, into an indeterminate group ω .

α —apparently uncirculated coins.

β —coins in a good state of preservation, slightly worn.

γ —coins which are still legible despite much wear.

δ —coins almost worn smooth.

References used in the list are:—

RIC—"Roman Imperial Coinage" by Mattingly, Sydenham and others.

NC—"Constantinian hoards . . ." by Carson and Kent in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1956.

HK—"Late Roman bronze coinage" by Carson, Hill and Kent, part I.

CK—The same, part II.

Stratigraphical position of the coins from the excavations.

From the turf line pre-dating the defensive wall. (Trench 6 layer 4).

1. Commodus as RIC 557. δ .

From the collapse of the defensive wall. (Trench 6 layer 2).

2. House of Theodosius as CK 162. β .

From layers pre-dating building 1. (Trench 1 layer 6).

3. Hadrian. Rev. illegible. γ .

Building 1; from pit cut into the pier base. (Trench 1 layer 11).

4. Claudius II RIC 266. β .

5. Tetricus II RIC 270. α .

6-8. Barbarous radiates. Reverse from Spes (α), illegible (2ω).

Building 1; from below the paving contemporary with the oven. (Trench 1 layer 9).

9. Tetricus II. Rev. illegible. ω .

10. Constantine I HK 53. α .

11. Constantinopolis HK 71. ω .

Building 1; from the fill of the oven. (Trench 1 layer 10).

12. Urbs Roma HK 184. β .

13. Valens As CK 280. γ .

14. House of Valentinian. Rev. illegible. ω .

Building 1; from the occupation layers within the building. (Various layers).

15-16. Victorinus RIC 116, ω , illegible ω .

17. Constantius I NC 233. α .

18-19. Constantine I RIC 7 Lon. 168 γ , HK 565 γ .

20-22. Urbs Roma HK 51 β , 371 β , as 51 ω .

23-24. Constantinopolis HK as 52 (2 ω).

25. Constantine II HK 226 γ .

26-28. Constans HK 449 β , as 102 β ; CK 33 β .

29-31. Constantius II HK 126 γ , 242 ω , as 57 α .

32-34. Valens As CK 280 α , 2 ω .

35-36. House of Valentinian As CK 275 γ , illegible ω .

37. Gratian CK 335 α .

38. Fragment ω .

Building 1; from gully beyond east wall. (Trench 5 layer 4).

39. Constantine I RIC 7 Lon. 225 β .

From the well. (Trench 11 layer 15).

40. Hadrian Rev. illegible δ .

Building 3; from pit 1 cut into the foundation trench. (Trench 11 layer 5).

41. Claudius II RIC 108 β .

42. Carausius RIC 98 α .

Building 3; from the occupation level within the building. (Various layers).

43. Carausius As RIC 878 ω .

44. Barbarous radiate Rev. from Pax β .

45. Urbs Roma HK 184 β .

46-50. Constans HK 148 γ ; CK 29 β ; 46 α , 181 α , good copy of 180 γ .

51-52. House of Constantine Copy as CK 256 ω (2 δ).

53-55. Magnentius CK 4 β , 54 β , 211 α .

56. Constantius II CK 452 γ .

57-58. Valentinian I CK 525 γ , as 317 γ .

59. Valens CK 516 β .

60. House of Valentinian As CK 96 ω .

Hoard 1:

61. Constantine I HK 352 β .

62. Constantine II HK 93 β .

63-67. Constans HK 133 α , 148 α , 150 α , 159 α , 160 α .

Hoard 2:

68. Constantine I HK 186 β .

69. Urbs Roma HK 151 β .

70-71. Constans CK 29 β , 888 β .

72. Constantius II CK 400 β .

73-75. Magnentius CK 58 β (2), as 5 δ .

76. Decentius CK 14 β .

Building 3; from the soil accumulation above the collapse of the building (Trench 11 layer 7).

77. Tetricus Illegible δ .

78. Constantius II HK 74 γ .

79-80. Valentinian I CK 338 γ , 527 β .

81. Theodosius I CK 391 β .
82. Illegible ω .

From the pit 2, east of building 3. (Trench 11 layer 6).
83. Tetricus II RIC 132 ω .

From the thin occupation layer east of building 3. (Trench 11 layer 4).
84. Urbs Roma HK 85 β .
85. Constantinopolis HK 59 γ .
86. House of Theodosius As CK 552 ω .

From the pit east of building 3. (Trench 11 layer 8).
87. Barbarous radiate Rev. from Pietas β .

From the occupation layer south of building 3. (Trench 10 layer 3).
88. Barbarous radiate Rev. from Virtus β .
89. Urbs Roma HK 58 β .
90. Helena HK 112 α .
91. Constantius II As CK 256 ω .

From the pit 5, north of building 4. (Trench 10 layer 9).
92. Valentinian I As CK 317 γ .

From the rubble within building 5. (Trench 14 layer 2).
93. Gallienus As RIC 275 ω .
94. Valentinian I As CK 317 β .

From post-Roman and disturbed layers.

95. Valerian I RIC 124 γ .
96. Gallienus Illegible γ .
97. Tetricus II RIC 255 γ .
98. Urbs Roma HK 70 γ .
99. Constans As HK 90 β .

Coins found before the excavations of 1965-6.

These include coins found during the previous excavations and those picked up around the farm.

1 Hadrian	Rev. illeg.
1 Antoninus Pius	Rev. illeg.
1 Commodus	Rev. illeg.
1 Lucilla	Rev. illeg.
1 Macrinus	RIC 182.
1 Elagabalus	139.
1 Julia Mammæa	360.
1 Severus Alexander	As 67.
1 Valerian I	11.
1 Claudius II	Rev. illeg.
1 Victorinus	118.
3 Tetricus I	101, 146, illeg. (1).
1 Probus	Illeg. (1).
1 Carausius	Illeg. (1).
1 Maximian	(Carausius) 36.
2 Barbarous radiates	Rev. illeg. (2).
5 Constantine I	RIC 7 Lon. 168, Thess. 88; HK 48, 60, 352.
2 Crispus	RIC 7 Lon. 211; As HK 4.
10 Constantine II	HK 56, 93 (3), 187, 239 (3), 589, as 88.
9 Urbs Roma	HK 51, 58, 70, 76, 184 (2), 190, 355, copy as 51 (1).
10 Constantinopolis	HK 52, 192 (2), as 52 (7).
1 Populus Romanus	HK 1067.
7 Helena	HK 119, 128, 616.
3 Theodora	HK 105 (2), 120 (2), 129, as 105 (2).

14	Constans	HK 138 (3), 140 (3), 142, 148, 227, as 100 (3), as 138 (2).
11	Constantius II	HK 94, 139, 145 (3), 188, 581, 614, as 317 (2); CK as 25.
9	House of Constantine	HK as 48 (3), copies as 87 (2). CK as 25 (4).
1	Magnentius	CK 50.
4	Valentinian I	311, 525, as 96, as 275.
11	Valens	283, 303, 315, 352, 514, 730, as 97 (5).
9	Gratian	297, 529 (2), 536 (2), as 503 (4).
5	House of Valentinian	Rev. as 96 (4), as 275.
1	Theodosius I	As 565.
1	Magnus Maximus	As 560.
2	Arcadius	As 566 (2).
7	House of Theodosius	As 562 (7).
7	Fragments	Completely illegible (7).

General considerations

Several suggestions about the history of that part of the site examined can safely be made from this list of coins. It is interesting that the seven earliest coins are so worn as to be almost illegible. This suggests that they ante-date any intensive occupation. There is however an unusual proportion of coins of the early third century, several in very good condition, and these must presumably have been lost when little used, by people living on the site.

The radiate period is not so well represented as the fourth century, and although in a total of only just over 200 coins detailed statistics are impossible, the ratio of one coin of Probus and one of Maximian, struck by Carausius, to only eleven of the Gallic Empire may be meaningful.

In the fourth century the site must obviously be fitted into Dr. Ravetz's (1964) work published in the *Numismatic Chronicle*. Gatcombe can be seen to fall into her class A, that is, it has a maximum number of coins in the period 330 to 346. Since she has shown that the paucity of coinage between 346-364 and 378-387 is a phenomenon common to all British sites, the main point to be gained by a numerical study of the coins from Gatcombe is that there seems to have been a gradual decline after 340.

294-317 — 1	346-364 — 14
317-330 — 6	364-378 — 45
330-346 — 95	378-388 — 1
388-402 — 13	

The two hoards yield more problems than information. They were found as quite distinct deposits trampled into a single occupation layer on the floor of building 3, and therefore may have been lost at the same time by the same person. If this is so, they probably represent two purses, one mostly of larger coins, and the other of small change. That they were lost at precisely the same moment is however unproven, and it is therefore safer to consider them as separate units.

Hoard I consists solely of small change which would have been in circulation around 346. Little more can be said about it, for such small coins were quite distinct from the immediately later and larger issues, and may well have had a quite separate circulation for ten years or more. It is however likely that the hoard was lost sometime before the smaller issues (which followed the year 356) were minted.

Hoard II ends with three coins of the "Two Victories" reverse of 352, but it also contains two smaller coins of 330-335, and three of the comparatively rare *Fel Temp Reparatio* "Hut" reverses of 346-348. Two types of coin, the "Emperor in Galley" and "Pheonix" reverses of 346-350, are noticeably absent, but this is probably due to chance. In such small totals no great weight may be attached to these proportions except to point out that they run counter to the general trends. In the reign of Magnentius his reverses containing the Chi-Ro monogram appear late in 352. They too are absent from this hoard but their absence cannot be used as evidence for a closing date since they are usually far less common than the earlier "Two Victories" issue and their absence may also be due to chance. In summary, it can be said that the hoard was probably deposited between 352 and 355.

The loss of the two hoards seems to be unconnected with any large-scale events on the site, suggesting perhaps that the cause was an accident rather than a catastrophe, and from there the coinage tails away to the end of the fourth century. The good state of preservation of the coins of Theodosius and Arcadius, together with the absence of coins of Honorius, may be used as evidence to support the idea of an abandonment of the site before about 395, but there is not yet sufficient evidence to prove any such theory.

EVIDENCE OF METAL-WORKING

Iron. Evidence of iron-working was found in occupation layers dating from the late-second century to the late-fourth century. Samples were submitted to Dr. R. F. Tylecote of the Department of Metallurgy, The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who reported that iron ore, slag and tap slag were represented. He pointed out that the slags were of fayalite type and that there was no trace of furnace lining. He considered it possible that the samples were the products of a slag-tapping bowl hearth. The ore was of a hydrated iron ore type, probably from a Forest of Dean type of deposit.

Lead. Several fragments of lead ore (galena) were recovered and a slab of lead fused with charcoal was found on the floor of building 1. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that lead-smelting was also carried out on the site. The sample of lead was analysed by Dr. Tylecote and found to contain 0.00905 per cent or 2.9 oz. of silver per ton. He comments "This is a very typical value for the Roman period and may be the result of desilverising rich silver ores such as those from the Mendips, or the straight smelting of silver-poor ones such as those from most areas in the rest of the country".

THE CREMATIONS (Fig. 44)

The parts identifiable are shown in *Fig. 44* and the report is here summarised.

Cremation 1. This is of a child aged 5-10 years. The age estimation is based on the degree of ossification of the bones. These, other than the long bones, are not much distorted by heat although burnt.

Cremation 2. This is of an adult, probably female, in the prime of life. The lack of strong muscle markings indicate the probable sex.

ANIMAL BONES

A number of fragments of animal bone have been recovered from the excavations. Since material of this nature requires a statistical treatment to be meaningful, it has been thought advisable not to report on the relatively small collections made in 1965 and 1966 until a much greater quantity has been amassed from future excavations. Only then will useful details of the faunal economy be recoverable.

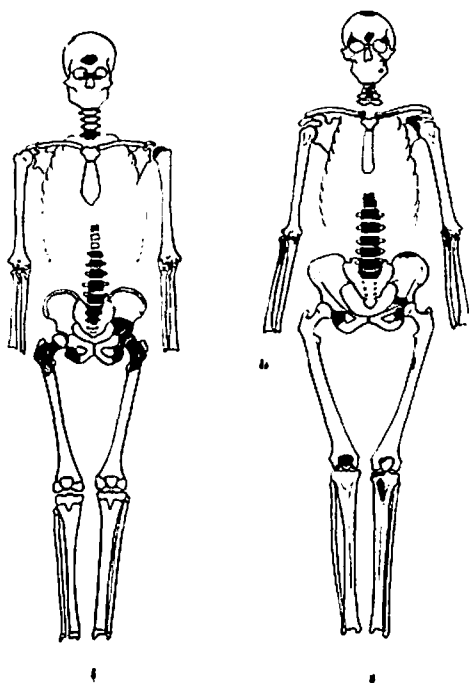


Fig. 44. Cremations diagrams.

SYNTHESIS AND SUMMARY

The four-week period of excavation which has taken place at Gatcombe is by no means sufficient to provide answers for all the outstanding problems posed by the discovery of the site, but much information has been amassed and several general development trends are at last beginning to emerge.

It is now clear from pottery and associated post-holes, which came to light in trench 12, that occupation on the site began as early as the middle of the first century A.D. but the extent, and indeed the nature, of the early occupation can be determined only by further extensive excavation. Habitation in the same area seems to have continued, if only sporadically, through the second and into the third century, as is shown by the possible timber building and its associated features, which succeeded the earliest occupation. That such a limited excavation should chance upon these features may well be an indication that the early settlement was moderately extensive, at least by the second century. Some support is given to this view by the discovery of early coins and samian-ware when the railway was being built. These finds raise the further possibility that the nucleus of the second-century site lay towards the valley bottom and that the 1966 excavation was on the periphery of the occupied area. Certainly the discovery of two cremation burials at this point, dating to the late-second to early-third century, implies as much, for burials of any kind are not usually found within an inhabited area and were forbidden by law to be placed within the area enclosed by a town wall.

Nothing has yet been found to throw any light on the nature of the second to early-third century settlement. It could have been simply a villa with outbuildings or it may have been far more extensive, perhaps a village or even the beginnings of a town. If it were a settlement of any size it would be tempting to equate it with the place called *Iscalis* by Ptolemy, which according to him lay to the west of *Aquae Calidae* (Bath). To suppose that *Iscalis* was Gatcombe would be as reasonable as any of the other situations proposed for it, but the suggestion must remain pure conjecture until further evidence concerning the size of the settlement becomes available.

Some time, probably in the second half of the third century, at least two masonry buildings were erected (buildings 1 and 3), both were of "basilican" type and were otherwise similar in structure and general size, but building 3 could boast an additional room at its west end. They both continued in use throughout much of the fourth century, but the nature of their use differed. The rather more massively constructed building 1 seems to have functioned as a workshop, perhaps a bakery, with quernstones and ovens and with its aisles divided by partition walls into useful storage compartments. Building 3, on the other hand, was at one time floored with pink mortar and even supplied with a well-built drain. Its slender piers and relatively thin walls, whilst being sufficient for a dwelling, would not have allowed heavy goods to be stacked against them. The two buildings therefore appear to differ in function. The nature and form of the other buildings so far partly examined cannot yet be determined

on the limited evidence at present available. Their constructional details, however, are similar to buildings 1 and 3 and it seems likely that they were occupied during approximately the same period; further than this it is impossible to go. It should also be remembered that finer buildings might lie undiscovered. A colonnade is mentioned in the accounts of the remains discovered along the line of the railway, and a base of a fine baluster was found in the rubble filling building 1.

The archaeological evidence shows that sometime after the beginning of the third century a massive 15 ft. thick defensive wall was constructed, enclosing an area of about 16 acres. If we are correct in supposing there to be a wide flat-bottomed ditch in front of it, the known features would fall conveniently into the class of fourth-century defences represented elsewhere in Britain, only the sheer size of the Gatcombe wall would serve to distinguish it. The purpose of the wall is not immediately apparent: it was put up to enclose part of all of an already existing settlement at some time after a coin of Commodus had been dropped on the original ground-surface, and the buildings which it defended appear to be of normal domestic character; this much is evident. There is no suggestion in anything that has yet been found that the site was of a purely military nature. Although superficially the wall resembles those of the "Saxon shore" forts, its size and inland position contrast sharply with others of the series. But it should be emphasised that the position of Gatcombe in the latter part of the Roman period was one of some significance—at least in a local context—for the site lies on the watershed between the stream flowing east to the Avon and the Yeo River, which flows west to the Bristol Channel. In late Roman times, after the sea-level had risen, the upper reaches of these valleys would have been wet and impassable, and the whole area of the Failand Ridge to the north could only have been reached across the neck of land upon which Gatcombe stands. These facts are, however, more likely to have given the site an economic significance as a market-centre than to imply a purely defensive role. At present, then, Gatcombe seems to be one of a group of small settlements scattered throughout the country which during the fourth century defended themselves with a wall, perhaps as a response to growing unrest. The nearest and most impressive parallel is Mildenhall in Wiltshire.

It is clear from the excavated evidence that Gatcombe continued to be occupied to the fifth century. Building 1 and building 3 were both in use into the late-fourth century, but Theodosian and later coins are noticeably absent from their occupation layers, implying disuse sometime in the 380's. Building 3 simply collapsed, whereas there is some evidence to show that building 1 caught fire. This does not necessarily imply that it was destroyed by fire, for the observed facts could equally well be

explained by supposing that the old timbers in the ruins subsequently ignited. Building 5 seems to have been left in part roofless at about this time. That occupation continued elsewhere on the site is clear from the coins of Theodosius, Magnus Maximus and Arcadius which occur, albeit infrequently. One was found in the soil which accumulated over the ruins of building 3, another in a nearby occupation layer, but no structure occupied at this late date has yet been discovered, nor have any traces of Dark Age occupation come to light. These and many other problems remain to be solved by future excavation.

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