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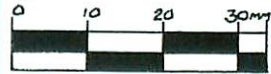


Plate 4. Wookey Hole Cave Fourth Chamber.

A. Bronze bracelet and bronze stained forearm bones.

B. Enamelled Bronze Brooch.

C. Finger ring found around and staining ring-finger bone.

Photo: R. Goderton.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE FINDS

by
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COINS

Fifteen coins were found adherent together, surrounded by a stain in the sandy matrix which was that of the small leather bag or purse in which they had been kept. They are all regular *antoniniani*, such as formed the currency c. A.D. 275 when, on grounds of the very small degree of wear which they exhibit, they were deposited. No other coins were found during the excavations in the Fourth Chamber. Balch's list, mainly from the entrance passage, is predominantly of the fourth century, with very few of the late third, although most of the earlier coins are so very worn that they would certainly have been in currency then (Balch 1914 a). (For the record it may also be pointed out that the series as preserved in Wells Museum includes one, a *sestertius* of Hadrian, which is certainly a modern cast.) It is of interest that no "barbarous radiates" are included in the present group of fifteen; they were extremely common at this period.

Reference below is to *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, Vol. 5, in which all the varieties are listed under the regions in question—Gallienus, Claudius II and Quintillus for the Central Empire, coins struck at Rome; and Victorinus and Tetricus I representing the short-lived Gallic Empire, coins struck at Cologne.

Gallienus, Sole Reign, A.D. 260-8

1. DIANA CONS AUG (stag to right), mintmark XI, *RIC* 179.
2. JOVI PROPUGNAT, mintmark XII, *RIC* 214.

Claudius II, A.D. 268-9

3. ANNONA AUG, *RIC* 18.
4. GENIUS EXERCI, *RIC* 49.

Quintillus, A.D. 269-70

5. CONSECRATIO (eagle): posthumous issue for Claudius II, *RIC* 265 Claud.

Victorinus, A.D. 269-71

6. INVICTUS (star in left field), *RIC* 106.
7. SALUS AUG, *RIC* 71.
- 8-9. VIRTUS AUG. *RIC* 78.

Tetricus Senior, A.D. 271-4.

10. LAETITIA AUG, RIC 88 (unusually heavy at 4.51 g.).
11. PAX AUG, RIC 101 or 102.
- 13-15. SPES PUBLICA, RIC 272.

METAL OBJECTS

1. Fig. 10.a Pl. 4. Handsome bronze plate-brooch, well preserved with a good green patina, 31 by 29mm., slightly convex, hinged pin in the open position, imperfect, worn. The enamelled face contains an opaque yellow centre and the outer ring has a Maltese cross in turquoise-blue with translucent dark green in the spandrels; the corner lugs have turquoise spots on the short, and dark green spots on the long, axis. A close parallel in design from Camerton (Som.) has a red centre and an outer ring of red and green with red lugs (Wedlake 1958 a). Prolonged search has produced no other brooch of the same design, though the type is in general common. Wedlake suggested that the Camerton brooch may be of British manufacture and with this the character of the green enamel is in harmony; it occurs for example on a Silchester brooch (Boon 1974 a) which is certainly British. The development of this type of brooch is plain. The progenitor is a Conquest-period continental brooch with lugs and usually an attached central setting (Boon 1969). This gave rise to brooches well known on the Continent and also in Britain, e.g. from Caerwent (Ward 1911) or Nor'nour (Hull 1968) which retain the lugs and have a convex centre rising to a tiny finial or stud. These latter are second-century brooches. The Wookey brooch may be of the late second or early third century but was far from new when deposited in the Cave.
2. Fig. 10.b. Silver finger-ring, inner diameter 17-18mm. There is a stud-like bezel between expanded shoulders bearing simple linear decoration. The ring is third-century, a simple counterpart of e.g. the gold ring with a setting from the Sully (Cardiff) hoard of coins running down to c. 296 (Grueber 1900). Cf. also Charlesworth (1961 a) and Henkel (1913).
3. Fig. 10.c, Pl. 4. Bronze finger-ring, found in place on a right index finger, inner diameter 17-18mm., much worn. It is of unusual design. The front of the hoop is demarcated by an almost imperceptible moulding to either side of the triangular protuberance (with a casting flaw at the base), above which there is a pierced excrescence. The most obvious comparison, with finger-ring keys for caskets etc., is wrong, for the bits on these are mostly squarish and waisted at the junction with the hoop. The Wookey ring is an example of the ultimate devolution of a different type, for which the finger-ring key may yet have been the inspiration. In this type the excrescence is in the form of a pair of panthers resting forepaws, like heraldic supporters, on a vase between them, e.g. Charlesworth (1961 b) from Corbridge. Another Corbridge ring (*ibid* 1961 c)

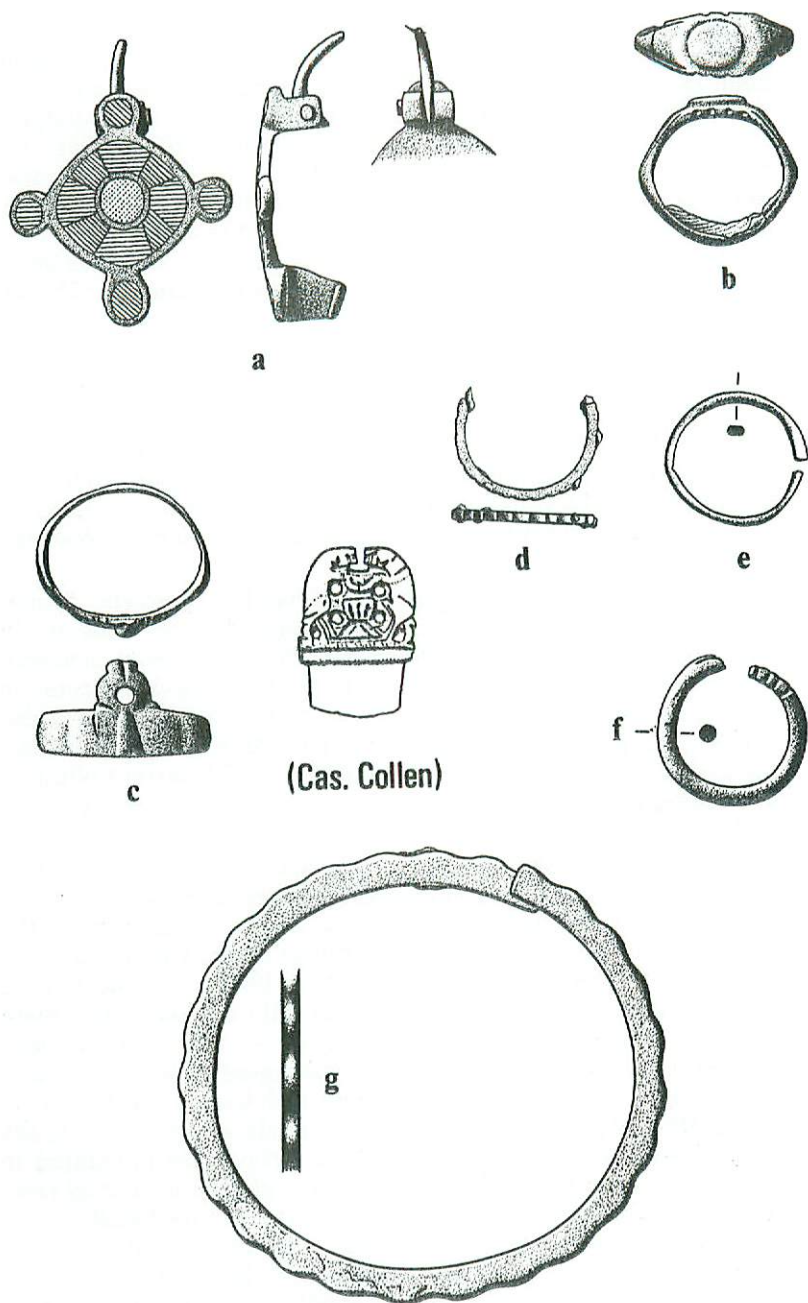


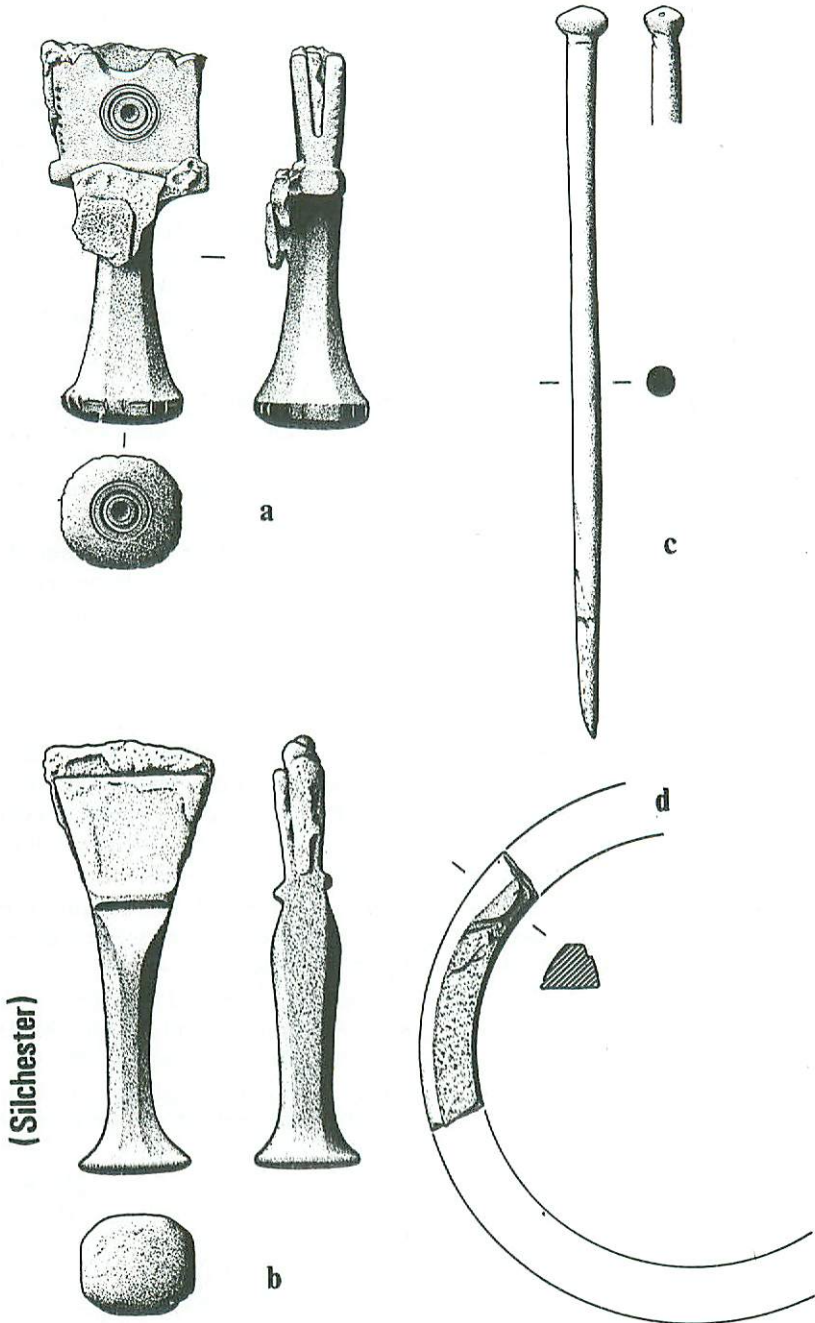
Fig. 10. Metal objects.

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shows a simplified motif. Summary in execution too is the Castell Collen (Rads.) fragment shown in our fig. 1 (Boon 1973), third century A.D., a date which would suit other rings of the same kind; cf. especially Henig (1977) with a further discussion of the type. Those quoted so far are recognizably close to the prototype; cf. now a bronze ring from Kenchester (Walton 1951) where the panthers have taken on a grub-like shape, which is well on the way to the extreme stage of degradation seen in the Wookey specimen. On this all we see are their curved backs and heads, divided by a filed line, and underparts outlined by the hole; the vase has gone. Somewhat similar is a Camerton specimen, dated c. 250-380 (Wedlake 1958 d).

- 4-6. Fig. 10.d,e,f. Three simple bronze finger-rings, 15-16mm. inner diameters, the last probably made from a bracelet; the cogged edge of No. 4 resembles that of the bracelet, No. 7; No. 5 is made from a strip with butted ends.
7. Fig. 10.g, Pl. 4. Bronze bracelet, very much worn, found around the forearm bones of a young woman. The pattern is well known in late contexts, e.g. Gatcombe (Cunliffe 1967 a) or Camerton (Wedlake 1958 b).
8. Fig. 11.a. Heavy cast and filed bronze handle, complete, 50mm. long, 18mm. wide, having a flat cleft socket 3.5mm. thick at the base, in which the base of an iron or steel blade has been clenched, as the sole method of attachment. There is ring-and-dot decoration and the mouth of the socket is scalloped on both sides; there is also a little nicking on one edge and around the end of the grip. The best parallel known to me is a plainer handle in the Silchester Collection at Reading Museum (fig. 11.b) and another, not so close, is shown by L. Jacobi (1897).

The mode of attaching the blade shows that no heavy pressure was to be placed upon it; the comparison therefore is not with any form of paring-knife or chisel but with razors. The same clenching of the blade is found for example in the Osprunge razor, with a handle in the form of a bust of Minerva (Whiting 1923 a) — the type is common and a list (very incomplete) will be found in Hilary Walton's paper cited under No. 3 above — which has a blade 147mm. long and 50mm. wide at the cutting-edge. This edge is at right-angles to the plane of the blade and handle, so that such razors differ almost in principle from the modern barber's type; but very similar ones, of Roman and Punic origin, are illustrated in Daremberg and Saglio. There is a plain one-piece iron or steel razor with such a blade and a grip not unlike the bronze handle under discussion in the Silchester Collection. This type is indeed shown on a cutler's monument in the Vatican (Brit. Mus. 1929) but on an Ostian terracotta relief (Meiggs 1960) we additionally see a different type with curved blade and Y-shaped handle, fitting into the palm and clasping more of the base of the blade. This second



(Silchester)

Fig. II. Artefacts.

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type has been studied by M. E. Mariën (1971-1973) and appears to have been much more common than the other in the north-west provinces of the Roman Empire. The character of the decoration of the Wookey specimen is typical of the later third or fourth century.

9. Fig. 7. Iron latch-lifter, length 22cm.m common type, Iron Age and Roman, e.g. from Wookey Hole itself (Balch 1914 b) and Verulamium (Manning 1972).
10. Pl. 5. Over forty domed or conical-headed studs from shoe-soles, thoroughly corroded, some in lumps in the sandy matrix, some singly. The illustration (from a radiograph) shows something of the original arrangement on the sole. Shoes, when not of the one-piece "sandal" type, usually had stout soles built up of several layers of fragments or offcuts between the inner and outer soles. The nails therefore helped to hold these together, as well as protecting the outer sole. The dead were frequently buried in their shoes and many accounts refer to the presence of such nails at the feet, e.g. Crook (1946), Rahtz and Grinsell (1956). Nails also occur with cremation-burials (Boon 1974 b).
11. Not illustrated. Two short pieces of squared iron, as from the shanks of nails, 80mm. long, joined by rust into a T-shape resembling the hilt of some instrument; one other length of thicker bar, featureless.

OTHER RELICS

12. Fig. 11.c. Well-made bone pin, complete and well preserved, length 91mm.; highly polished by use, especially near the head. Cf. Balch (1914 c), lower, for others similar. Possibly used to fasten a garment or shroud, or possibly a hairpin, as in the well-known case at York, where two jet pins were found in place in a knot of hair (Home 1924). One further bone pin was found (not illustrated).
13. Fig. 11.d. Section of a plain, lathe-turned bracelet of Kimmeridge shale, split; inner diameter about 58mm. This size is average, cf. A. J. Lawson (1976) on the Silchester bracelets.
14. Fig. 12.a. Small glass bead, milky-blue, squared section, 5mm. long. Common late Roman type; several for example in the fourth-century necklace from a grave at Verulamium (Wheeler 1936).
15. Fig. 12.b. Small glass bead, black, of wound construction, 4mm. diameter. Common late type, found for example in the Winchester (Lankhills) cemetery.
16. Fig. 12.c. Small, flat, oval glass bead, about 8.5 by 6.5 by 2.5 mm., black with a central band of turquoise-blue; the piercing is through the short axis. A rare type: Mrs. Margaret Guido kindly cites two others, somewhat larger, of the same design (black with opaque white or turquoise-blue band) from Housesteads fort and Bracknell (Berks.) respectively, the latter in the Beck Collection at Cambridge (No. 2247). These beads are of Central European ("Sarmatian") origin and belong to the third or fourth century.

ADDENDA

Not illustrated: (a) small glass bead, opaque turquoise-green, about 3.3 by 2.5mm. cf. No. 14 above; and (b) cylindrical jet bead, much worn, 17.5mm. long, 3.3mm. in diameter; divided by circumferential grooves into seven rings; cf. the necklace of over 150 such in single, double or multiple segments up to five, found at Ospringe in Group 13 (Whiting 1925 b and 1931), late second or third century. These two beads were found by Mr. E. J. Mason in association with cervical vertebrae in the Fourth Chamber some years ago. Unfortunately they were reduced to dust during their passage through the post and it was only with difficulty that sufficient was pieced together (in the laboratory of the Dept. of Archaeology, Nat. Mus. of Wales) to provide the above details in conjunction with Mr. Mason's measurements.

POTTERY

1. Fig. 12.d. Several sherds of a bowl with base-ring, Oxfordshire ware, slightly micaceous, orange fabric, darker red core, softish; dull light red slip. There is a decoration of impressed demi-rosettes. Cf. Porchester (Fulford 1975 a) where finds suggest that Form 36 began to be exported from the Oxfordshire kilns c. A.D. 325 but the stamped varieties come in later, c. 345. This piece could go well in date with the numerous coins of the House of Valentinian from Wookey Hole, recorded by Balch. Similar bowls from Somerset include Camerton (Wedlake 1958 c) and Lufton villa, Yeovil (Hayward 1972).
2. Fig. 12.e. About half a one-handed flagon in warm dark grey ware, somewhat sandy, with a lighter grey to black surface, smoothed at neck and shoulder, where faint burnished lines appear; there is a rough reserved zone below and the remainder has been wiped while on the wheel or turntable. Much used. A similar piece but less bulbous was in Pagans Hills well (Rahtz and Harris 1958 a), late third to early fourth century; the type is common in the New Forest potteries, and on Porchester evidence is datable c. 270-350 (Fulford 1975 b). Balch (1914 d) shows somewhat similar vessels but they are ill-drawn.
3. Fig. 12.f. Wide-mouthed jar in many small fragments; warm light grey ware with light grey core and traces of a very thin warm black slip on both sides. Not much used. About the same date as No. 2 above, cf. a Pagans Hill well specimen (Rahtz and Harris 1958 b) with a less hooked rim. An earlier version from Gatcombe is described by Cunliffe (1967 b).
4. Fig. 12.g. Jar with everted rim (one sherd; and a body-fragment with burnished parallel lines, not drawn), in very hard warm light-grey ware and dark buff core. Third or fourth century.
5. Fig. 12.h. Eleven fragments, sooty, of a plain dish of black burnished ware. Same date.

- 6-11. Not illustrated (6), base of flagon (?), six fragments, ware as No. 2 above; (7), half the base and part of the wall of a large grey jar, four fragments; (8), small basal and another fragment of a similar vessel but coarser ware; (9), two conjoining sherds from a globular jar, ware much as No. 3 above, with burnished grooves; (10), body and basal sherds in dull black ware similar to black-burnished ware, same vessel(?); (11), two sherds from the same (?) black-burnished cavetto-rim cooking-pot, one showing the obtuse-angled narrow lattice band of third or fourth century vessels of the kind.

POST-ROMAN RELICS

(not illustrated)

1. Twelve brass pins with spirally coiled globular heads, two or three with traces of tinning, 23 to 30mm. long and one 43mm. The mode of manufacture is described by Tylecote (1972). The first large-scale manufactory was established at Gloucester in 1625 (Longman and Loch 1911) and the wire used will have been made at Stapleton near Bristol or even at Cheddar (Rees 1968). The Bristol and Gloucester area became an important seat of manufacture (Day 1973) until the Birmingham trade, producing pins of the modern form, destroyed it. Machinery for making the coiled-head pins can be seen in the old pin-works at Gloucester (now Bishop Hooper's Lodging Museum), where it was in use from 1743-1850. Tylecote observes that the heads of the Gloucester pins tended towards a conical form about the end of the 18th century; the Wookey pins are therefore probably earlier. How much earlier it is difficult to say; from about 1461 (3 Edw. IV cap. 4 1) there were attempts to protect home manufacture by forbidding the importation of foreign-made pins. About half the pins are more or less bent, probably because they were used as votive offerings. Pins are among the commonest of such offerings. For other finds see Balch (1914e).
2. Thin brass sheath, 23mm. long: a lace-tag, still containing fibres. Probably 17th century and not from a shoe-lace, for shoes were then buckled. It is a tag from the "points" by which a bodice was fastened and gives those "points" their name.
3. Pipe-stem fragment of large bore, about 2.5mm. According to Hamilton's (1967) original diagram of 1954 c. 1620-80.

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| | c | Pl. 27. |
| | d | Pl. 11. |
| | e | p.77, pl. 15. |

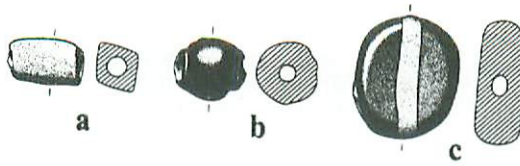
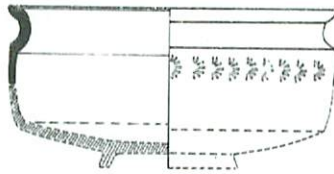
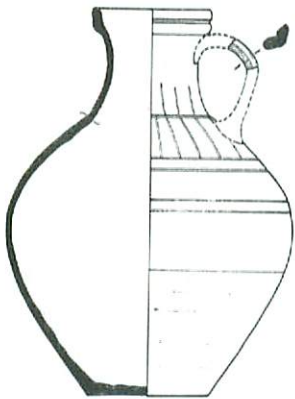


Fig. 12. Beads.

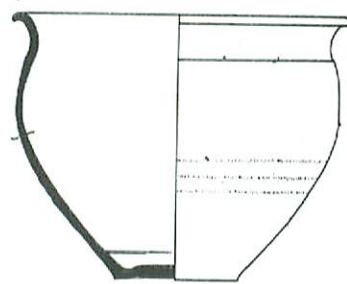
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Fig. 12. Pottery.

Scale 1/4

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