



Excavations at Wessex Court Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset, 1990



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**EXCAVATIONS AT WESSEX COURT, CHARLES STREET,
DORCHESTER, DORSET, 1990**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background to the excavation

Outline planning permission for the Wessex Court retail development was granted in July 1988. The joint developers, West Dorset District Council and MEPC Developments Ltd. commissioned and funded an initial period of excavations which were carried out in 1989, the results of which are described in a separate report (Adam *et al.* 1992). A second season of excavation in a single trench, Trench 6, was undertaken between the 9th October and the 19th December 1990 and is the subject of this report.

The development area lies within the southern part of the Roman town, *Durnovaria*, extending northwards from the late 2nd century defences for 200 m and encompassing 6% of the area of the town. It covers approximately 1.7 ha (centred on SY 69359045) and is bounded by South Walks Road, Acland Road and Charles Street, but with extensions north and west across the latter (Fig. 1). The area is important archaeologically because it lies in a coombe filled with deep soil deposits which have been little disturbed by medieval or post-medieval building; the only area of significant disturbance is along the Charles Street frontage, where most of the houses had cellars.

The trench was located in the central eastern part of the development area, between Trenches 3 and 4 of the 1989 excavation and near previously excavated sites at Greyhound Yard (Waitrose: Woodward *et al.* 1993) and Wollaston House (Batchelor forthcoming a). Excavation in this area was intended to clarify the sequence of development of the Roman town suggested by the earlier excavations (Fig. 2).

Local archaeological context

The early importance of the Dorchester area is suggested by the concentration of prehistoric monuments and earthworks by which the modern town is surrounded. Maiden Castle, the largest and most visible of these, dominates the landscape to the south-west of Dorchester, but the smaller earthwork of Maumbury Rings stands within the modern town, and other lesser monuments such as barrows, still survive in the surrounding countryside (Fig.1).

Maiden Castle represents the earliest site in the area, since, although in its present form it appears as an Iron Age hillfort, evidence of a Neolithic causewayed enclosure, constructed *c.* 3800 BC, has also been found at the eastern end of the hilltop. A second, smaller causewayed enclosure, dating to between 3250–2750 BC, has recently been excavated at Flagstones on the eastern outskirts of the modern town (Woodward and Smith 1988; Smith *et al.* 1997). Nearby and also dating from the third millennium BC, were other large monuments: a henge and enclosure at Mount Pleasant, a henge at Maumbury Rings and a large post alignment beneath the present centre of Dorchester. Environmental evidence from excavations at Mount Pleasant (Evans and Jones 1979) and Maiden Castle (Evans 1991) indicates that clearance and some cultivation of the land surrounding the monuments was already taking place. Settlement evidence for the Neolithic period is scarce, but pottery, worked flint and animal bone found in pits at Maiden Castle (Sharples 1991), Poundbury (Smith 1987)

and Flagstones (Woodward and Smith 1988) provide some indication of occupation activity in the vicinity.

By the Bronze Age, the land clearance initiated in the Neolithic period had progressed towards a more formalised method of land allotment and the establishment of well-defined field systems. The large Neolithic timber monuments had generally fallen into decay by the earlier part of the Bronze Age, although at Mount Pleasant some of the posts were replaced by stone settings and a substantial timber palisade was also constructed (Wainwright 1979). Land within the monuments at Mount Pleasant and Maiden Castle was subsequently used for grazing and, intermittently and briefly, for arable cultivation. Elsewhere in the countryside the long barrows of the earlier Neolithic period were replaced by the more numerous Bronze Age round barrows. These were often grouped in roughly linear cemeteries on higher ground, sometimes focussed on the sites of earlier burials, and occupying the more peripheral areas which had not been incorporated into the expanding field systems of the period. Few settlement or occupation sites of the Bronze Age are known in the Dorchester area, although evidence of ditch-enclosed circular and rectangular post-built structures has been recorded at Poundbury.

The Early Iron Age saw the construction of a second group of major monuments in the area. These were the hillforts at Maiden Castle and Poundbury, the latter at the north-western edge of modern Dorchester. Of the two, Poundbury was the smaller but may be the earlier in origin, the enclosing bank and ditch perhaps dating from the Late Bronze Age (Green 1987). Evidence of occupation within the enclosure at Poundbury appears considerably more scarce than that at Maiden Castle, and the former site may, as the importance and status of Maiden Castle grew, have become ancillary to the latter. The greater defensive potential of Maiden Castle may have influenced and aided such a process to the extent that the enclosure at Poundbury appears to have become almost derelict by the Middle Iron Age and a new, unenclosed settlement became established to its east; this latter site continued in use until and beyond the time of the Roman conquest (Green 1987). The Poundbury hillfort defences were refurbished and augmented during the Late Iron Age, but by then Maiden Castle had become the main focus of activity in the area and an important centre of the local people, the Durotriges. Following the Roman conquest of Britain in AD 43, a planned Roman town, *Durnovaria*, was established to provide a market and administrative capital (a *civitas* capital) for the Durotriges, while smaller 'satellite' settlements grew up around it.

Durnovaria, on the evidence of finds recovered during earlier excavations, thrived until the 5th century AD when Roman administration ceased. Thereafter, as elsewhere, the picture becomes obscure, with little archaeological or historical evidence surviving to clarify developments. Scarcely any conclusive record of closely post-Roman activity has been found within the walls of the Roman town, but structures dating to the 5th and 6th centuries AD were recorded at Poundbury (Green 1987) and several slightly later burials have been excavated south-west of the town (Penn 1980). Some indication of continuity is also suggested by the record of the place-name *Dornwaraceastre*, subsequently to become Dorchester, in AD 868 (Keen 1984). Documentary evidence suggests that Dorchester was a royal residence by the seventh century AD and Fordington, lying outside the Roman town walls, is recorded as a royal manor at the time of the Domesday survey (Penn 1980).

Some time in the post-medieval period the proposed development area started to be used for arable farming, and this continued until the open field was enclosed in

1596. The enclosed field was divided into several small closes and used as pasture. By 1623 some of the plots had been divided still further and barns had been built on at least two of them. During the late 17th or early 18th centuries a bowling green was laid out on one plot and another seems to have been converted into a garden and orchard. Around 1800 the barn at the north end was converted to a cottage and a house was built at the south-west corner. Later in the 19th century a large malthouse was built in the middle of the site, and on the southern part many flimsy buildings were constructed for the cattle market and as stables. The northern part was a nursery and then school playing fields, but in 1898 it was sold for building and the Charles Street side lined with a terrace of small houses. The eastern side sold more slowly, as plots for detached properties. Gradually from the late 1950s the buildings at the south end were cleared to make way for car-parking, and between 1989 and 1992 the whole area was cleared of buildings.

Summary of previous archaeological work in Dorchester

Dorchester has been the focus of much excavation, survey and research in recent years, as a result of which information about the Roman town, its defences, road pattern and layout has been gathered, together with evidence of such earlier features and later development as has survived the construction and reconstruction of Dorchester to its present form. The sequence of Roman and later building within some areas the town has been clarified, but there still remain many areas of uncertainty.

Pre-dating the construction of the Roman town by almost three thousand years, the first significant indications of human activity in what is now Dorchester are the pits of the massive Late Neolithic post-alignment or stockade, constructed between 2920–2340 BC. First discovered, although not immediately recognised, during excavations at Church Street, the post-pits were more thoroughly investigated during the excavation at Greyhound Yard (Batchelor 1983; Batchelor forthcoming a and b; Woodward *et al.* 1993). The broad arc of the alignment suggests a monument of some considerable size, perhaps 300 m in diameter here, and, therefore, significance. A further section of the monument was investigated during the Wessex Court excavations in 1989; its configuration now appears less regular than was previously supposed (Fig.2). The lifetime of the monument was relatively short and its decay such that, by the Early Bronze Age, the land was used only for arable farming. The area continued to be used for agriculture, although latterly predominantly as pasture, until the arrival of the Romans.

It has been suggested that the town of *Durnovaria* was preceded by a Roman fort, probably near a crossing of the Frome river; no structural evidence of this has been recorded, although a few items of possible military equipment have been found in the town (RCHM 1970; Wachter 1974). Development of the town is thought to date from *c.* AD 60 or perhaps a little earlier (RCHM 1970; Woodward *et al.* 1993).

The Roman town was approached by roads from the west, south and east which entered the town through gates; the exact positions of the gates are not known, but they probably coincided with the ends of High East and West Streets and, approximately, the southern end of South Street; a north gate may also have existed, allowing access to fields and the river (RCHM 1970). The defences, built some 120 years after the foundation of the town, consisted principally of an earth bank and three ditches, although a wall was subsequently built in front of the bank. The line of the

defences is known for the most part, the exception being at the north-eastern side of the town where it approached the river.

The sites of a number of important areas and buildings have been established or can be inferred. The forum, the main market place and administrative centre, probably lies a short distance north of the current development site, in the area of Cornhill; a broad gravel spread has been noted in this area, although no evidence of buildings has been recorded (RCHM 1970). The Roman bath house lay to the east of the current site, further down the coombe (now under the Wollaston House car park). The bath house, probably built in the 2nd century AD, appears to have been enlarged to approximately twice its original size quite early within its lifetime and then to have undergone further smaller additions and alterations before finally going out of use in the 5th century (Batchelor forthcoming a). An aqueduct which could have supplied the water for the baths approaches the town from the north-west, traversing the southern side of the Frome valley from the direction of Maiden Newton, and probably terminating in an as yet undiscovered reservoir in the Colliton Park area, the highest part of the town (RCHM 1970). Outside the town defences, the Neolithic henge monument of Maumbury Rings was converted for use as an amphitheatre (and, in the 17th century, incorporated into the town defences during the Civil War) (RCHM 1970).

The layout of a number of roads within the town is also known. These form a fairly regular grid with one exception, a road running from the south gate diagonally across the grid to the east gate (Fig. 2). This road crossed the Wessex Court site. Other Roman roads are known to have run approximately on the lines of Acland Road and Durngate Street, and a fourth, probably defining the western side of the *insula* or block in which much of the proposed development area lies, ran at right-angles to the latter towards the defences (RCHM 1970; Woodward *et al.* 1993).

Excavations at the Old Methodist Chapel/Greyhound Yard sites indicate that the earliest Roman buildings had either timber slot foundations or were post-built, the timber structures being subsequently replaced by more substantial and complex ones of stone (Woodward *et al.* 1993). The precise nature and use of some of the buildings, however, remain obscure, although it is suggested that the earlier ones may simply have been small domestic structures. In this earlier period, before the encroachment of buildings, the centre of the *insula* was divided into a series of enclosures, some of which were possibly used as animal pens.

The later structures comprised parts of several town houses and ancillary buildings, some of which underwent considerable improvement and refurbishment. The nature and quality of some of the finds and the surviving structural and decorative elements, such as decorated wall plaster and mosaic fragments, suggest that a considerable degree of wealth existed in the town in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. Although no clear evidence of major commercial or industrial activities was found, large localised deposits of animal bone and iron slag suggest that butchery and smithing both took place nearby and crucibles and clay moulds suggest that other metalworking also took place in the vicinity. The overall picture presented by this and other excavations and observations is one of an important, busy and thriving town, a commercial and administrative centre of considerable importance during the Roman period.

The cessation of Roman administration is marked by an apparent break in the archaeological record. Many of the buildings fell into disuse and then either disintegrated or were taken apart. The degree of deliberate demolition is not known

but in many cases the walls were dismantled for reuse elsewhere, a practice which carried through from the post-Roman period into post-medieval times; many buildings at Greyhound Yard for example were robbed in the 13th century. A considerable part of the town within the Roman defences reverted to agricultural use, particularly in the south-western and south-eastern quarters, with a resultant build-up of deep, dark and homogeneous, loamy soils. Open fields were established, the strips defined by boundary ditches, and, in some areas of more steeply sloping ground, terraces were created (Woodward *et al.* 1993). Some parts of the town, including much of the Wessex Court site, remained open until the 19th century. Elsewhere, particularly along the town's principal north-south and west-east streets (the positions of which were initially dictated and subsequently fixed by the locations of the Roman gates) the building and rebuilding processes continued (Penn 1980), the earlier structures being lost beneath later ones.

Excavation Strategy and Method

The single trench of the 1990 season, Trench 6, was located on the eastern edge of the development area and lay approximately 40 m south of Trench 3 of the 1989 excavations (Fig. 2). An area of 421 m² was excavated, although a larger area was opened to allow for safety measures to be incorporated in the trench; this took the form of a perimeter step 1 m wide. It was intended that machining should remove modern, post- and late medieval soils to a level where early medieval or Roman structures or deposits became clearly visible; in practice the first structures recognised were all of late Roman date and very few later deposits were excavated manually. As far as was possible all features were half-sectioned or dismantled in the case of walls and floors, although this was not always possible because of time or safety constraints. At the end of the excavation the remaining areas of uninvestigated early Roman and prehistoric soils were removed by machine, exposing a number of features cut into a natural clay-with-flints deposit extending across the whole site.

The excavation used the standard recording system of Wessex Archaeology to provide a full written, graphic and photographic record of the site. A unique numbering sequence was used for all features and contexts: numbers 2000–2523 were assigned for Trench 6. Unique numbering sequences were also given in pre-assigned blocks for special finds (object records): numbers 3300–3437 were assigned on site, 5000–5404 were assigned by the finds supervisor. All site records and finds are held by the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester under the accession code 1996.31.

The Impulse Radar Survey

Prior to the commencement of the 1990 excavation an impulse radar survey of the site was carried out by Harry Stanger Ltd on the 9th October 1990. This was intended to test the ability of the technique to locate and identify archaeological remains by comparing its results with the results from the excavations which were to follow. The results of the survey were presented in a report, a copy of which is reproduced as Appendix I.

In summary, the survey located a number of linear features which were interpreted as walls, some of which appeared to be up to 0.5 m in height. These walls were subsequently uncovered during the excavation, although none were more than

0.2 m in height (see below). The discrepancy may indicate that the radar reading had included the disturbed soil of the robber trenches located above each wall, the disturbance producing an identical readout to that of the wall base. A number of layers were located in the central part of the site which, following comparison with site plan and section drawings, were interpreted as the Roman flooring surviving in that area. The survey also identified a number of other features, one of which appeared to be the early Roman ditch, 2217 (see below), in the south-western corner of the site, and located and mapped the surface of the chalk bedrock and the natural clay-with-flints which overlay it.

2. DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURAL REMAINS AND SITE DEVELOPMENT

Phase 0: Geology

Dorchester and its immediate hinterland lies on a spur of Upper Chalk bounded by river terraces of the Frome to the north and the South Winterbourne to the south, both of which contain deposits of Alluvium and Valley Gravel. In many places the Upper Chalk lies beneath redeposited chalk, Coombe Rock, the result of periglacial activity; the consistency and degree of natural disturbance of the Coombe Rock varies considerably.

The development area extends across a coombe running from south-west to north-east towards the River Frome. The surface of the chalk (Coombe Rock) therefore slopes down to the east in Trench 6, although, except where exposed in the deeper excavated features, it was masked by clay-with-flints in soliflucted chalk and flint gravel. These deposits, the result of periglacial and later disturbance were noted at 57.22 m OD at the western end of Trench 6 and at 56.88 m OD at the eastern end.

Phases 2–3: Prehistoric (c. 2000 BC–AD 43)

None of the features of the pre-Roman period are securely dated, and, by analogy with the 1989 excavation, they are assigned to Phase 2, a general prehistoric phase. Stratigraphically all appeared to pre-date Roman activity, but since some early features were located by machine at the end of the excavation this may not have been the case; no artefacts which might have provided dating evidence were recovered. No features in Trench 6 have been assigned to Phase 1 (the Neolithic period), although it is possible that some might date from that period. Phase 3 is also imprecise, encompassing the soil accumulation which preceded and was disturbed by early Roman construction activity.

Phase 2: Ditches 2443, 2521, 2502, 2500

Ditch 2443 (Fig. 3) was aligned on a south-west to north-east axis and ran for 11 m across the north-western corner of the trench. The ditch, which was cut by Roman wall foundation trenches, was V-shaped in profile, had a maximum width of 1.5 m and was up to 0.82 m deep. The primary fill of the ditch was dark brown silty clay loam 0.3 m deep, above which was a lens of brown silty loam 0.16 m deep which contained many natural flint nodules. The upper fills of the ditch, dark yellowish brown clay loam 0.29 m deep beneath dark brown clay loam 0.1 m deep, may have been remnants of prehistoric soils which had slumped into the top of the feature; some Roman artefacts were recovered from these layers.

Machining at the end of the excavation exposed a short length of ditch, 2521, on a similar alignment to and some 9 m east of ditch 2443 (Fig. 3). This second ditch, which was not excavated, was filled with compact reddish brown clay.

A short length of a third ditch, 2502, also apparently on a north-east to south-west alignment, was recorded in the south-east corner of the trench (Fig. 3). The ditch, which was 1.5 m wide, was filled with dark yellowish brown clay loam.

Another ditch, 2500, was located in the south-eastern corner of the trench (Fig. 3). The ditch had been much disturbed by Roman buildings but appeared to run from east to west. The feature was filled with dark yellowish brown silty clay loam but was not excavated.

Phase 3: Early soil levels

Some areas of yellowish brown silty clay soil pre-dated the construction of the first Roman buildings. In several places the soil had slumped into earlier features, such as ditches 2443 and 2502. It is probable that much of the deposit was removed during the construction of the early Roman buildings. Those areas which remained were covered with a crust of Roman debris and contained artefacts from the earliest period of Roman occupation, pre-dating the development of the Roman town of *Durnovaria*; one area of subsoil, 2501, yielded a very early Roman coin dated to between 41 and 64 AD.

Some soil survived only as small, isolated patches, such as the 0.15 m thick deposit to the west of the early Roman ditch 2217 in the south-western corner of the site, which was sealed below a series of soil dump layers. More substantial deposits were located in the extreme south-eastern corner of the trench, although one of these, from which sherds of early Roman pottery were recovered, lay to the east of ditch 2500 and may have been a remnant of a bank associated with the ditch. In the area south-east of ditch 2502, a similar deposit was recorded, 2501 (Fig. 6), up to 0.5 m deep.

Phase 4: Early Roman (c. AD 43–200)

The early Roman period was represented principally by one timber structure, Structure 1, and two stone-built ones, Structures 2 and 3. These structures were preceded by a number of other features and deposits.

Ditches 2472 and 2494

One of the earliest Roman features in Trench 6 was a shallow, irregular ditch, 2472, which ran across the site from east to west for a distance of 24 m before petering out approximately 9 m from the western edge of the trench (Fig. 4). The ditch had been cut by later wall foundation trenches in several places. The ditch had a shallow, rounded profile, was up to 1.5 m wide and varied in depth between 0.15 m and 0.4 m; it was filled with fine brown silty loam interspersed with thin lenses of sandy loam. There was evidence that the ditch had been recut, part of an earlier ditch, 2494, surviving to the south of 2472 at the eastern side of the trench (Fig 6). The earlier ditch had a depth of 0.22 m. Most of the pottery recovered from the ditches dates to the 1st century AD, although some is of the 2nd century AD. Two infant burials, 2464 and 2480, were found in ditch 2472 (Fig. 4: see below).

Ditch 2217

Ditch 2217, running from north-east to south-west, was located in the south-west corner of the trench (Fig. 4). The ditch was V-shaped in profile and was 1.7 m wide and 1.4 m deep (the basal fill was excavated by machine). The highest layers filling

the ditch had slumped or been dumped into and extended beyond it: they consisted of very dark greyish brown silty clay over greyish brown slightly silty clay, and together were 1.2 m deep. Pottery dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD was recovered from these layers. A layer of dark yellowish brown silty clay 0.18 m deep lay beneath the upper fills at the south-eastern edge of the ditch only and overlay a primary fill of dark yellowish brown silty clay with chalk fragments. Pottery recovered from the primary fill also dates to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The ditch was not seen in any of the wall construction trenches to the north and exploratory machining at the end of the excavation showed that it terminated 2 m north-east of the section excavated. Ditch 2217 may have been a precursor of the south-westward extension of wall 2334 which was on the same alignment but lay slightly further to the west (see below).

Structure 1

Structure 1, at the western end of the trench is represented by eleven postholes forming the west, south and east sides of the rectangular structure (Fig. 4). The postholes, 2156, 2154, 2152, 2151, 2148, 2158, 2160, 2162, 2166, 2168 and 2170, cut layers 2148 and 2412 of the dumped material described below.

The postholes of the eastern and southern sides had average diameters of 0.43 m and average depths of 0.2 m, with the exception of 2148 which was only 0.1 m deep. Postholes 2166, 2268 and 2170 of the western side were larger, with an average diameter of 0.61 m; 2168 and 2170, at 0.5 m, were also considerably deeper, although 2166 was rather less so with a depth of 0.25 m. The four eastern postholes were filled with dark brown sandy loam, the remainder with greyish brown sandy loam. Several contained pieces of stone packing, generally limestone. The pottery recovered from the postholes dates to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

No internal features associated with this structure survived. Small lenses of occupation debris, 2281, 2286 and 2299, were recorded in north-western corner of the structure, however; 2281 and 2286 contained sherds of 2nd-century AD pottery.

Boundary walls

A series of walls and robbed walls were also excavated in the western part of the trench. Initially considered to be the walls of buildings, these are now thought to be boundary walls, at least one of which is associated with Structure 1.

The earliest wall of the sequence, which survived only as a robber trench, 2379, was at the extreme western edge of the site (Fig. 4). On a north-east to south-west alignment, 2 m of the robbed wall lay within the trench. The wall appeared to have been truncated or superceded by a later north-south wall, 2326, although it may originally have turned to follow the same north-south alignment. No traces an earlier wall were seen in the eastern side of the foundation trench of wall 2326, although the base of the earlier foundation trench was visible as a deeper cut in the chalk at the base of the centre of 2326. Robber trench 2379 was filled with clayey loam which contained sherds of pottery dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

Wall 2326 was 0.5 m west of and parallel with the western side of Structure 1, apparently turning westward through 90° and leaving the trench just south-west of posthole 2162 (Fig. 4). The wall survived as two courses of limestone blocks pitched at an angle of 35°, 0.8 m wide and 0.24 m high. Sherds of pottery dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD were found within the wall. Wall 2326 probably formed the eastern

wall or boundary of a property which otherwise lay entirely west of Trench 6, and may have extended and/or replaced the wall represented by robber trench 2379

Wall 2334 appears to have been built following the construction of both wall 2326 and Structure 1, enclosing the latter. The wall ran parallel with and 0.5 m from the eastern and southern walls of Structure 1 before turning to the south-west by the southern end of wall 2326 (Fig. 4); the two walls did not appear to be contemporary, although wall 2334 respected the alignment of wall 2326. The orientation of the south-western stretch of wall 2334 echoed that of the earlier wall to the north represented by robber trench 2379 and may indicate further enlargement of a property mainly beyond the trench to the west and/or north. The foundations of wall 2334 were 0.8 m wide, consisting for the most part of up to three courses of flint nodules with a maximum depth of 0.6 m; where the wall crossed silted-up ditch 2443 (see above), however, the foundations were deeper. Discrete stretches of foundation could be identified, probably the result of piecemeal construction, but all contained pottery of the 2nd century AD. One short stretch of mortared limestone wall, 2.75 m in length, survived above the foundation courses at the south-western corner.

Structures 2 and 3

The building sequence in the south-eastern corner of Trench 6 is not clear. Stratigraphic relationships have been obscured and in many cases destroyed by post-Roman wall robbing and are additionally complicated by the intensity of activity in this area and the relatively small area investigated. Floors in particular, many of which were repaired or relaid within the early Roman period, had been much disturbed by rebuilding and later wall-robbing, and were rarely continuous. Originally thought to represent two buildings, and described as such below, it is possible that Structures 2 and 3 are both parts of a single early Roman building.

Structure 2

Only a small part of Structure 2 lay within the south-eastern corner of Trench 6 (Figs. 4, 6, 7). A short right-angled section of wall was exposed, the longer side, 4 m, being aligned from east to west. The wall, 2353, consisting of limestone blocks in a fine sandy mortar, had survived in places to a maximum height of 0.2 m, and was set above a 0.86 m deep and 0.96 m wide foundation of roughly coursed, mortar-set, flint nodules.

Within (south-east of) the wall were set layers of flooring which included the remains of two phases of tessellated paving. The floor's flint foundation, 2362, lay beneath gravelly mortar, 2361, the layers 0.14 m thick altogether and both containing pottery from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (Fig. 7). Two lines of small *tesserae*, 2365, survived set into the mortar against the edge of the northern wall; later disturbance had removed all other *tesserae* from this level. This tessellated surface had been covered with another thin layer of mortar, 2352, 0.04 m deep, in which larger *tesserae*, 2354, were set (Fig. 7). Not all of the later *tesserae* were *in situ*, some being piled against the northern wall.

Structure 3

Structure 3 was on the same east to west alignment as Structure 2 but lay further to the north-east and may have been a replacement of that building. It extended to within 7 m of boundary wall 2334 and consisted of part of one room and a walled courtyard to the west (Fig. 4). The walls of the room, almost 7 m (east-west) and 5 m (north-

south) long respectively, had been cut through by the foundation trenches of late Roman Structure 4.

The northern wall, 2341, consisted of dressed limestone blocks and flint nodules over a 0.9 m wide foundation of flint nodules in a loose mortar matrix, the whole having a maximum surviving depth of 0.83 m (Figs. 6, 7). The wall was cut by a foundation trench of Structure 4 and was also crossed by a drain, 2413 (Fig. 4). The drain comprised a semi-circular depression across the wall leading to a 3.65 m long channel, 0.75 m wide by the wall but tapering to 0.2 m at its northern end (where it was cut by the northern foundation trench of Structure 4). The channel had a maximum depth of 0.35 m. Filling the drain were mixed deposits: dark greyish brown silty clay, mortar and olive green clayey silt (containing pottery dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD), dark greyish brown silty loam with limestone fragments and white or light grey clay. The final fill of the drain, dark grey silty loam, held later Roman pottery.

The western wall of Structure 3, 2313 (Fig.4), appeared to have been simply butted against the northern wall, although only a 0.7 m deep, 0.7 m wide foundation of mortared flint nodules survived (Fig.7) and the upper part of the walls may have been more effectively joined. This wall was also cut by a foundation trench of Structure 4.

An *opus signinum* floor, 2285, set on a foundation of flint nodules, butted the western wall of Structure 3 (2313) and apparently overlay the western wall of Structure 2 (2353), although the latter had been robbed leaving the relationship uncertain (Fig. 7). The floor at the eastern end of the room may be represented by *opus signinum* 2343, over a flint cobble and mortar base, 2345, although this floor is at a slightly higher level than 2285 (Fig. 6). A thin levelling layer of dark greyish brown sandy loam, 2344, lay beneath the eastern section of floor. Sherds of pottery dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD and a coin of Gallienus dated to between 260 and 268 AD (OR3366) were found in this deposit, although the latter was probably intrusive and may have been introduced through a post-Roman feature (posthole 2316; see below).

The courtyard wall, 2373, bounded an open area 9.5 m wide and with a maximum north–south length in the trench of 6.5 m (Fig. 4). The wall, which butted against the north-western corner of the building, was cut by two foundation trenches of Structure 4. It consisted for the most part of mortared limestone blocks over a single foundation course of flint nodules (Fig. 7), although two courses were recorded where the northern wall overlay pit 2519 (see above). The wall was 0.6 m wide and had a maximum surviving depth of 0.4 m.

A single possible posthole, 2491, (not on plan) was noted in the courtyard 1.2 m west of wall 2313. It was filled with reddish brown clay but was not excavated.

Wall 2375

Wall 2375 (Fig. 4) was initially considered to be part of the foundation of the western annex of late Roman Structure 4 (see below). It was noted during excavation, however, that the stones were not on the same alignment as the rest of the wall foundation, and analysis of the pottery associated with the wall suggests an early Roman date for the structure, the rest of which may have been destroyed by subsequent development. The wall consisted of a single course of flint nodules, partly mortared but otherwise in a matrix of dark brown loam.

Pits and postholes

Pit 2504 was recognised in section only (in the southern trench edge: Fig.7). It had a diameter of 1.2 m and a depth of 0.3 m and was filled with a dark brown silty clay loam, 2505. The pit lay beneath the floor of Structure 3 and was probably truncated by the construction of that building. No datable finds were recovered from the pit, but its stratigraphic position suggests an early Roman date for the feature.

Pit 2508 was at the eastern end of the trench, lying just to the north of Structure 3 (Fig. 4). Oval in plan, the pit was half-sectioned only; it had a maximum width of 1.5 m and was 0.4 m deep. It was filled with greyish brown silty loam from which some sherds of 1st and 2nd-century AD pottery were recovered.

A truncated pit, 2408 (not on plan), was cut by the northern wall of the annex to late Roman Structure 4. The pit survived to a maximum depth of 0.12 m and was filled with greyish brown loam containing 1st and 2nd-century AD pottery.

A number of postholes were also assigned to the early Roman period. Two of these, 2423 and 2425, were to the south of ditch 2472 (Fig. 4). Posthole 2423 was 0.88 m in diameter and 0.18 m deep, posthole 2425 was 0.32 m in diameter, 0.24 m deep; both may have been truncated. The postholes were filled with dark brown silty loam which contained sherds of pottery dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Postholes 2456, 2458 and 2460 lay north of ditch 2472 at the western end of the trench (Fig. 4). Posthole 2456, which was 0.4 m in diameter and 0.18 m deep, was filled with dark brown clay loam which yielded sherds of early Roman pottery. Posthole 2458 was 2 m north of 2456 and measured 0.3 m in diameter and 0.09 m deep, while the third, posthole 2460, had a diameter of 0.41 m and a depth of 0.34 m. Both of these postholes were filled with dark yellowish brown clay loam, 2460, containing 1st and 2nd-century AD pottery.

Five features uncovered by machine at the end of the excavation are also thought to belong to the early Roman period; none are shown on plan. Of these features, three were postholes and two were pits. Posthole 2513 was 3 m south-east of ditch 2217. It had a diameter of 0.75 m and was filled with yellowish brown silty clay with possible flint packing at its centre. Posthole 2517 was 10 m north-east of posthole 2513 and was 0.75 m in diameter and at least 0.55 m deep. It was filled with yellowish-brown silty clay with flints and had a deposit of chalk or lime around the edge. Posthole 2520 lay 13 m east of posthole 2517. This feature was also 0.75 m in diameter, but was not excavated. Pit 2515 was situated 2.5 m north of the southern edge of the trench, just west of the courtyard of Structure 3. The feature was apparently rectangular, 1.1 m wide and 0.9 m deep, and was filled with yellowish brown clayey loam with lenses of charcoal and slumped chalk rubble near the base. Pottery recovered from pit 2515 dates to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Pit 2519 was near the centre of the trench. It measured 4.1 m by 0.8 m in plan, was 0.6 m deep and was filled with grey clay loam. Soil settlement in this pit necessitated the construction of deeper foundations for courtyard wall 2373 of Structure 3 and the subsidence of the *opus signinum* floor in the western room of late Roman Structure 4 (see below).

Infant burials

Two infant burials were associated with ditch 2472. One, 2464 (Fig. 4) was recovered from the highest surviving fill of the ditch. Initially thought to be two inhumations, analysis of the bone shows it all to be from a single new-born child. Although

disturbed and fragmentary, the burial was still partially articulated and appears to have been orientated on a north-east–south-west axis.

Burial 2480, although only c. 1 m north-east of burial 2464, lay on the bottom of ditch 2472. This burial was more disturbed and less well-preserved but was also of a new-born child. The position and orientation of the burial is not known.

A few fragments of bone, apparently from a new-born child, were also recovered from an early Roman soil dump layer, 2236, (see below).

Soil accumulations

The final silting-up of ditch 2472 appears to be contemporary with the deposition of a layer of ‘clean’ yellowish-brown silty clay, 2428, north of the ditch (Fig. 4). This deposit occurred at the lowest part of the site and was probably water-borne, perhaps the result of overflows from ditch 2472 towards or at the end of its life. Inclusions of any sort were rare within the layer, but 67 sherds of pottery dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD were recovered.

Soil and building rubble (eg. layers 2004, 2139, 2148, 2200, 2236, 2300, 2412 and 2441) appear to have been deliberately dumped across much of the site, perhaps in an attempt to prevent the recurrence of drainage problems. A coin of Marcus Aurelius was recovered from layer 2412 (OR3391), provided a *terminus ante quem* of 154 AD for that particular deposit, although none of the pottery associated with any of the deposits dates beyond the 2nd century AD. In addition to pottery the layers contained brick and tile (both ceramic and stone; layer 2200 at the southern edge of the site consisted almost entirely of tile), mortar, flint, chalk and charcoal. Some soil also built up against the northern wall of Structure 3. and within its courtyard, the latter probably being in part garden soil.

Phase 5: Late Roman (c. AD 200–410)

In the late Roman period, further adaptation and replacement of existing structures took place. One major new building, Structure 4, occupied the greater part of the trench.

Western courtyard and associated pits

At the western end of the trench, timber Structure 1 appears to have decayed or been demolished and the area already delimited to the south and east by wall 2334 was again enclosed at the west by the construction of a new wall, 2164, rebuilt on the line of early Roman wall 2326 (Fig. 5). The courtyard thus enclosed was presumably ancillary to a building lying north of the trench. Wall 2164 was 0.8 m wide and consisted of a single foundation course of pitched limestone laid at an angle of 25°, with only a small section of the upper mortared limestone block walling 0.09 m high and 2 m long surviving at the northern side of the trench. Sherds of 2nd and 3rd century AD pottery were associated with the wall.

Two domestic rubbish pits were dug within the courtyard. Pit 2411 was at the northern side of the trench, approximately two-thirds of the feature lying within the excavation area (Fig. 5). The pit was 1.5 m wide and 1.43 m deep; the base of the pit was excavated by machine. The lowest manually excavated deposit was dark yellowish brown clay loam intermixed with reddish brown clay; this layer contained

sherds of pottery dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Above the clay loam was redeposited chalk, possibly an early capping for the pit which had slumped into it after settlement within the feature. Overlying the chalk were very dark greyish brown clay loam containing pottery of the 1st–3rd centuries AD and pale brown silty loam with tile and mortar fragments.

Pit 2174 was 2.5 m south-east of pit 2411 (Fig. 5). Initially excavated by hand and subsequently by machine, the pit had a total depth of 2.45 m. It was filled for the most part with dark greyish brown loam and but also with dark brown clay loam with limestone, flint and mortar inclusions, the former containing pottery dated to the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries AD, the latter pottery of the 1st–3rd centuries AD.

Structure 4

In the early 4th century AD, a new building, Structure 4, was built over the north-western corners of early Roman Structures 2 and 3 (Fig. 5). Most of the building was on the same east–west alignment as the earlier ones but much more of it lay within the trench; the excavated section was 24 m long (including an extension or annex at the west end) and 7 m wide. Part of the building, at 90° to the larger section, extended beyond the southern edge of the trench. The walls had been almost wholly robbed of stone, with only the flint foundations surviving in many places. The main part of the building was divided into three rooms, the easternmost one extending beyond the trench edge. A fourth room extended beyond the trench to the south.

A few sections of limestone wall had survived above foundation level: part of the perimeter wall, 2226, 0.5 m long and 0.3 m high, remained at the north-eastern corner of the western room and another section, also 0.5 m long but only 0.2 m high, was in the south-eastern corner of the trench; this latter section may have been a reused wall of Structure 2. The largest surviving sections of wall, however, were part of 2050, dividing the western and central rooms, 5 m long and up to 0.4 m high, and 2422, between the central and eastern rooms, 1.2 m long and 0.3 m high. The limestone was mortar-bonded, the mortar containing fragments of tile and early Roman pottery.

The wall foundations consisted of flint nodules and chalk rubble, sometimes roughly coursed, in very mixed clay, chalk or clay loam, from which sherds of pottery dated to the 1st–3rd centuries AD were recovered. Although the foundation trenches were of a consistent width, 0.9 m, their depth varied considerably (Fig. 6). Along the northern side of the western room the trench had an average depth of 1.5 m, but some sections were up to 1.8 m deep; by the central room the average depth of the trench was 1.2 m, but at the eastern end of the building it was only 0.27 m. The western section of the trench had an average depth of 1.4 m, decreasing along the southern side of the building to 1 m at the eastern end of the western room. The trench was 0.8 m deep by the central room, at the south-eastern corner of which the foundation abutted and thereafter reused the northern wall of Structure 2; sherds of 1st and 2nd-century AD pottery were recovered from this last section.

The cross-wall dividing the western and central rooms, 2050, had a foundation trench 0.88 m deep, the foundation material being similar to that in the perimeter trench. Sherds of 1st and 2nd-century AD pottery were also recovered from this trench. The wall dividing the central and eastern rooms, 2422, was 1.2 m deep and similarly filled; sherds of Roman pottery (not closely datable) were found in this section.

The western wall of the partially exposed southern room, 2440, was similar to those described above. The foundation trench was 0.51 m deep (Fig. 5), the fill containing sherds of pottery dated to the 1st century AD and later.

The western room, measuring 9 x 5.5 m, had an almost complete *opus signinum* floor, 2063, 0.07 m to 0.12 m thick, laid on 0.2 m deep mortar and flint foundations, 2061 (Figs. 5, 6). Pottery of the 1st–3rd centuries AD was recovered from the floor foundations and a single coin of Constans dating to AD 335–337 (OR3360) was recovered from the *opus signinum*. Where it survived at the edge of the room, the *opus signinum* sloped upwards at an angle of 30° for a short distance. The floor in the eastern part of the room had dropped as a result of soil settlement in underlying early Roman pit 2519 (see above) and had been patched with chalk, 2255. The chalk overlay a deposit of dark brown silty loam which covered the sunken *opus signinum*.

The central room was 5.50 x 6 m in area. The original floor was of *opus signinum*, a small area only, 2081, surviving in the northern part of the room and a larger one, 2083, remaining to the south (Fig. 5); the floor was better preserved where it overlay the foundations and floors of early Roman Structure 3. In the western and northern part of the room the *opus signinum* was set on a 0.15 m thick layer of flint in dark yellowish brown silty clay loam, which yielded sherds of 1st and 2nd-century AD pottery. To the south, the foundation consisted of a similar depth of limestone and flint fragments, probably from the demolition of Structure 3, in dark brown silty clay loam. An oven, 2209 (see below), had been built into this room early in the life of the building, but was subsequently demolished and also incorporated into the floor foundation. The floor had been much repaired and patched and a coin of Valens, dated to AD 364–378 (OR3350), was recovered from a widespread but discontinuous layer of chalk repair, 2084, suggesting that this particular repair was effected 30–40 years after the construction of the building. Other repairs and patches of occupation debris overlay 2084, the latest of these containing pottery of 4th and 5th-century AD date.

Opus signinum, 2027, also patched with chalk, was recorded in the southern part of the eastern room (Figs. 5, 6). Part of the foundation only, 2031, a 0.04 m thick layer of mortar, was preserved in the northern part of the room, the rest of the floor apparently having been robbed. The surviving *opus signinum* was 0.06 m deep and had been laid directly over the *opus signinum* floor (2343) and northern wall (2341) of early Roman Structure 3.

The southern room had a maximum width from east–west of 7 m but only 1.5 m north–south was within the trench. Most of the room overlay Structure 3, with some of the floor of the latter possibly being reused. Over and to the west of the earlier wall line (western wall 2313 of Structure 3) some new flooring had been laid, however, represented by thin layers of mortar, 2074 and 2265, abutting western wall 2440 and overlying the earlier one, 2313 (Fig. 7). Layer 2265 contained pottery sherds dating to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. The mortar formed the base for the badly worn remains of a tessellated floor, 2284, which had survived only against the western wall (Fig. 7). The tessellated floor had been repaired with chalk, 2252, which also directly overlay part of the possibly reused *opus signinum* floor, 2285, of Structure 3.

The only internal feature of Structure 4 was an oven, 2209, which was set down into the *opus signinum* floor at the western side of the central room (Figs. 5, 6). After a short period of use, the upstanding part of the oven had been demolished and incorporated into the floor of the room, with only the flue, 1.61 m long and 0.62 m wide, and the lower part of the side walls remaining *in situ*. The base of the feature was filled with a number of layers, including grey ash which contained sherds of 2nd-

century AD pottery and brownish red ash which yielded a bronze coin dated to AD 348–378 (OR3393).

A stone-walled annex, 2105 (Figs. 5, 6) was added to the western wall of Structure 4, filling the space between the main part of the building and courtyard wall 2334 to the west. The annex was 4 m wide and 9 m long, abutting the north-western corner of Structure 4 and continuing the line of the northern wall but extending some 3 m south beyond its south-western corner. The flint wall foundations, much of which had been robbed, were set in a very shallow trench, 0.05 m deep and *c.*0.8 m wide. Only one short stretch of wall survived above foundation level, a 0.65 m length of dressed and mortared limestone blocks 0.09 m high, near the north-western corner of the main wall .

Late Roman features

To the north-east of Structure 4, two possible chalk paths (not on plan) were recorded, both overlying soil accumulation 2087. One of these, 2089, ran roughly parallel with the northern wall of Structure 4. The chalk was discontinuous and up to 0.05 m thick, meandering alongside the wall for 9 m before petering out. The second possible path, 2102, ran south-west from the north-eastern corner of the trench for 10 m before being cut by ditch 2097 (see below). Sherds of 1st and 2nd-century AD pottery were recovered from this second feature, which consisted of very thin (0.01 m), discontinuous patches of chalk.

Also crossing the north-eastern corner of the site were two shallow ditches, 2094 and 2097, both cut into layer 2087 (Fig. 5). Ditch 2094 was 12 m long, 0.4 m wide and 0.09 m deep. Extending westward from the eastern trench edge for 12.5 m, the ditch petered out 0.8 m from the northern wall of Structure 4. The ditch was filled with dark yellowish brown silty clay loam containing sherds of late Roman pottery. The second ditch, 2097, 20 m long, ran parallel with and 1 m north of ditch 2094 (Fig. 5). The ditch was 0.7 m wide, 0.25 m deep and was filled with dark grey silty loam which contained pottery dating from the 2nd century AD onwards.

A small pit, 2298, 0.28 m in diameter and 0.42 m deep, was located close to the southern wall of the western room of Structure 4 (Fig. 5). The pit had been dug to hold the bottom half of a North African amphora (2314). The amphora was filled with dark greyish brown loam containing domestic debris and a possible coprolite.

Late Roman soil accumulation

Much of the site was covered with often mixed, sometimes more generalised deposits of soil and building rubble after the construction of Structure 4. One substantial layer, 2087, extended across the whole of the area north of Structure 4 and east of the western courtyard (Figs.5, 6). The deposit had an average depth of 0.15 m and contained much pottery dated to the 1st–4th centuries AD. In contrast, below 2087 were many interlocking lenses of dumped material, excavated as single 0.2 m deep spit, 2382. Other soil deposits built up south of Structure 4, including a layer of stony greyish brown silty clay up to 0.4 m deep, 2300 (Fig. 7), which contained pottery dated to the 1st–3rd centuries AD. Above 2300, a 0.15 m deep layer of very dark grey silty loam, 2139, contained pottery of the 3rd–early 5th centuries AD. Similar soil accumulations were recorded in the south-west corner of the site, from which 2nd-century AD pottery sherds were recovered.

Phase 6: Post-Roman (c. AD 410–600)

As in the earlier season of excavation at Wessex Court, this phase was not securely dated. Evidence of three possible post-built structures was recorded, together with a number of other features and deposits.

Structure 5

This possible structure was represented by six postholes apparently forming the north-west corner of a rectangular structure. The western side consisted of three postholes; 2123, 2280 and 2113, the last at the corner; the northern side also comprised three postholes, 2278, 2282 and 2290 (Fig. 5). The western postholes averaged 0.51 m in diameter and 0.19 m deep. All were filled with brown to dark greyish brown loam with flint packing. The three postholes of the northern wall were cut through *opus signinum* floor 2063 of the western room Structure 4. All three were irregular in shape, perhaps as a result of having been recut: posthole 2278 was 0.62 m long, 0.43 m wide and 0.13 m deep; 2282 was much larger at 1.4 m long, 0.6 m wide and 0.2 m deep; 2290 was 0.5 m in diameter with a maximum depth of 0.15 m. Postholes 2113 and 2123 were cut by a post-medieval robber trench. Pottery recovered from the postholes dated to the 3rd–5th centuries AD.

Structure 6

The corner of another possible rectangular structure lay just to the north-east of Structure 5. Five postholes, 2266, 2262, 2256, 2296 and 2291, were cut through *opus signinum* floor 2063 of Structure 4 to form the northern and eastern sides of the structure (Fig. 5). The eastern side may have included a further three postholes, 2132, 2134 and 2136, although these were on a slightly different alignment to 2291 and 2296 further to the north. The three northern postholes had average dimensions of 0.34 m in diameter and 0.13 m in depth. Posthole 2296 was 0.2 m in diameter and 0.1 m deep; 2291 was 0.32 m in diameter and 0.08 m deep. All five were filled with dark grey sandy loam with flint packing and contained sherds of pottery dating from the 3rd–5th centuries AD. The remaining three postholes, 2132, 2134 and 2136, were much more closely spaced and had an average diameter of 0.56 m and average depth of 0.15 m. They also were filled with dark grey sandy loam which contained sherds of mainly late Roman pottery, although one sherd of possible 5th-century pottery was found in 2134.

Pits and postholes

Five postholes in the south-eastern corner of the trench may represent at least one other timber structure, part of which extends beyond the trench (Fig. 5). Postholes 2318 and 2017 averaged 0.25 m in diameter and 0.13 m in depth and were both filled with dark brown silty loam with flint packing; the dimensions and fill of a third posthole, 2316, were similar. Posthole 2028 was larger in diameter at 0.76 m, but may represent more than one posthole; it was 0.12 m deep and was filled with very dark grey silty loam with chalk packing. Posthole 2023, north-east of the others, was 0.51 m in diameter and 0.15 m deep; it was filled with black silty loam with limestone and flint packing and was the only feature of this cluster to contain pottery, which dated to the 3rd–4th centuries AD.

Two other postholes, 2274 and 2294 (not on plan), were noted but neither appeared to be associated with the structures or group described above. Both were filled with dark grey coarse sandy loam. Posthole 2274, was 0.2 m north of posthole 2282 of Structure 5. The feature was sub-rectangular in plan, measuring 0.5 m in length and 0.4 m wide. The second posthole was 0.6 m east of 2274. This was ovoid in shape, 0.2 m long, 0.18 m wide and 0.09 m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from either posthole.

Pit 2206 (not on plan) was located within the area of the annex to Structure 4. The pit was 0.78 m long, 0.6 m wide but had a surviving depth of only 0.1 m, suggesting that it had been truncated during machine clearance if not in antiquity. It was cut by posthole 2115 (see below). The feature was filled with very dark brown loam from which no dating evidence was recovered.

Pit 2260 (not on plan) had cut through the eastern end of *opus signinum* floor 2063 of Structure 4. The pit had a diameter of 0.7 m and a surviving depth of 0.05 m, suggesting that this feature also had been truncated. It was filled with dark grey silty loam from which no datable finds were recovered.

Soil accumulation

Direct evidence of any dereliction or demolition of late Roman buildings and subsequent soil accumulation in the immediately post-Roman period was scarce, much of the soil undoubtedly having been removed during stone robbing in the medieval period. Some small, localised pockets of soil above damaged or deeper sections of floor occasionally held pottery of the 4th–5th centuries AD, but more usually contained later material (post-medieval or, occasionally, medieval) or residual sherds of earlier Roman pottery and were not therefore closely datable.

Phases 7 and 8 Medieval and Post-medieval (c. AD 600–1850)

These phases are represented largely by the piecemeal robbing of the Roman structures, and by a small number of other features which were not apparently related to this activity. On the evidence of occasional sherds of pottery recovered from robber trenches, most of the robbing took place between the 12th and 15th centuries.

Robber trenches and pits

The walls of the courtyard at the western end of the site showed extensive evidence of stone robbing. Seven separate robber trenches or pits were recorded, all backfilled with very dark grey silty loam containing discarded limestone, flint and mortar rubble. Possible deposits of upcast material from the robbing activity were also noted alongside the robber trenches in the south-eastern corner of the trench. The pottery from the robber trenches consisted principally of redeposited Roman material, although a single sherd of 14th-century pottery was found near the northern end of the eastern wall of the courtyard.

At least nineteen separate robber trenches and pits along the walls of late Roman Structure 4 indicate the episodic nature and intensity of wall robbing; in the eastern room parts of the *opus signinum* floor had also been taken. Again the pits or trenches were backfilled with dark grey silty loam mixed with discarded pieces of limestone, flint, mortar and plaster rubble. As with the western robber trenches, most

of the pottery was redeposited Roman material, although a few sherds dating from the 12th–15th centuries and two of post-medieval date were recovered.

Four robber trenches and a pit in the area of Structure 4 were cut from a higher level and appear to date from the post-medieval period. All five features were filled with very dark grey silty loam and rubble. The pottery recovered was mostly late Roman in date but also included post-medieval and intrusive modern material.

Pits and postholes

Five features (not on plan) have been stratigraphically assigned to the medieval period although none contained any contemporary dating evidence.

Pit 2129 was outside the south-western corner of the annex to Structure 4. It was 1.25 m long, 1.2 m wide and 0.15 m deep, and was filled with very dark brown silty loam containing mortar, flint, tile, bone, shell and sherds of late Roman pottery. The feature may have been an unsuccessful attempt at wall robbing.

Pit 2197 was 1 m west of pit 2129. It was 0.5 m in both length and width and 0.15 m deep. The pit was filled with very dark brown silty loam which contained limestone, tile and redeposited Roman pottery.

Slot 2232 was cut through a trench robbing the western wall of the annex to Structure 4. The slot was 1.05 m long, 0.32 m wide and 0.14 m deep and was filled with very dark grey coarse sandy loam with limestone, flint, tile and Roman pottery.

A posthole, 2337, was 10 m north-east of slot 2232. It was 0.45 m long, 0.4 m wide and 0.1 m deep. The posthole was cut into the foundation of Structure 4's western wall but appeared to post-date the robbing of the wall. It was filled with very dark grey silty loam with limestone packing.

A pit or posthole, 2115, was located 0.75 m west of post-Roman structure 5 (see above). This feature measured 0.6 m in diameter and was 0.8 m deep; it contained sherds of Roman pottery of the 3rd–4th centuries AD.

A further two features (not on plan) contained pottery of the 17th century or later.

Pit 2172 appeared to have cut the upper fill of late Roman pit 2174 at the western end of Trench 6. The pit was 2.4 m long, 1.04 m wide and 0.08 m deep and contained Roman pottery dating from the 2nd century AD onwards, one sherd of a glazed jug of the 13th–14th centuries AD and one sherd of post-medieval Verwood pottery.

Pit 2042 cut a robber trench at the north side of Structure 4. It was 1.4 m long, 1.1 m wide and 0.3 m deep. Ten sherds of undated Roman pottery, three sherds dating from the 13th–15th centuries and a one piece of post-medieval glazed tile were found in the pit, together with fragments of human skull. No other human bone was found in the feature.

Soil accumulation

Most of the medieval and post-medieval soil above the robber trenches and the surviving parts of the Roman buildings was removed by machine at the beginning of the excavation. Recorded in section, however, was up to 1.6 m of generally well-sorted dark greyish brown silty loam, 2000 and 2001 (Figs.6, 7). The manual

excavation of remnants of this soil retrieved a considerable number of sherds of Roman pottery, with only a small minority of sherds of the 13th–15th centuries and later.

Phase 9: Modern (1850 +)

No evidence of 19th-century disturbance was recorded in Trench 6 and that of more recent activity was confined to the upper levels at the eastern end of the trench. This area had been the site of 5–7 Acland Road, the concrete foundations of which were noted in the upper part of the northern trench section. The houses were built in the 1920s and stood until their demolition in the spring of 1990. A garden 25 m long and 15 metres wide had occupied the remainder of the site.

3. THE FINDS

Coins

John A. Davies

The small group of coins from the 1990 excavation at Wessex Court spans a wide chronological range, from the pre-Roman Iron Age to the final years of Roman Britain (Table 1), in common with other sites in and around the Roman town. Two of the 23 coins are Celtic issues, both of which are billon staters of the Durotriges, dating from the years between 40 and 35 BC. These types are very distinctive and more crude in appearance than most other tribal issues, with their designs characteristically disjointed and abstract. These coins rarely travelled beyond the Durotrigan tribal boundaries.

Table 1: Chronological breakdown of coins. Issue Periods are those defined by Reece (1972, 271)

Issue	Period	1989 Excavation		1990 Excavation	
		No.	%	No.	%
I	to AD 41	-	-	-	-
IIa	41-54	-	-	-	-
IIb	54-68	2	4.3	2	10.0
III	69-96	2	4.3	1	5.0
IV	96-117	1	2.1	1	5.0
V	117-138	3	6.4	-	-
VI	138-161	2	4.3	1	5.0
VIIa	161-180	2	4.3	-	-
VIIb	180-192	-	-	-	-
VIII	193-222	1	2.1	-	-
IXa	222-238	-	-	-	-
IXb	238-259	-	-	-	-
X	259-275	8	17.0	1	5.0
XI	275-296	17	36.2	-	-
XII	296-317	-	-	-	-
XIIIa	317-330	2	4.3	-	-
XIIIb	330-348	3	6.4	6	30.0
XIV	348-364	1	2.1	-	-
XVa	364-378	-	-	7	35.0
XVb	378-388	-	-	-	-
XVI	388-402	3	6.4	1	5.0
3rd-4th century		3		1	
Iron Age		2		2	
Total		52		23	

The earliest Roman types are two irregular Claudian *asses*. One depicts Minerva standing to the right, in the correct attitude represented on the official coinage of Rome, while the other shows the same figure reversed, which is rare within this imitative coinage. These particular issues comprised much of the coin in circulation in Britain after the Roman conquest until the reintroduction of *aes* from the mint of *Lugdunum*, in AD 64. The Wessex Court coin list continues through the 1st century AD, with *dupondii* of Vespasian (AD 77–78) and Nerva (AD 96–97).

From the end of the 1st century AD coin loss drops away, with just two coins representing the next 230 years. These are an *as* of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, struck during the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 153–4), and an *antoninianus* of Gallienus (AD 260–8). The later 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD are usually lightly represented on Romano-British sites but the late 3rd century is normally well-represented in coin lists.

The bulk of this collection belongs to the later 4th century AD. All examples are bronze issues and are common types, all belonging to the years after 330. There are six Constantinian *folles* (AD 333–48) but the largest chronological group comprises seven Valentinianic issues (AD 364–78). The latest coin was struck under Theodosius (AD 388–95).

One third of the coins were metal detector finds. It is interesting to note that these, as a group, are fully representative of the stratified coins from the site and include no types not found by excavation.

This small Dorchester assemblage does bear similarities to the previous, larger, collection of 52 coins from the first season of excavation at Wessex Court. A comparative chronological breakdown of the coins from both excavations is shown in Table 1. The earlier excavation similarly recovered two Durotrigan staters (both Durotrigan H, in common with the finds discussed above). The Roman coins began marginally later in the 1989 collection, with *aes* of Nero (AD 64–68), but the overall proportion of 1st and 2nd-century AD issues was similar and considerable. The earliest coins represent exactly one quarter of the assemblage in both cases. Thereafter, the two groups do exhibit differences. Over half of the coins from the first season of excavation belong to the late 3rd century AD, which is represented by just a single coin within the 1990 group. Also from the 1989 excavation 4th-century AD loss was light, with the number of coins recovered numbering less than that from the second, smaller, group. However, both assemblages continue into the final years of the 4th century AD, ending with bronzes of the House of Theodosius.

Copper Alloy Objects and Residues

A. P. Fitzpatrick

Forty-one copper alloy objects were found in the course of the excavation (one by metal detector). All the objects were radiographed and selected ones submitted for investigative cleaning and conservation by A. J. Sutherland whose observations are incorporated in the following report. No other analyses were undertaken.

Most of the objects are of well known Romano-British types and 26 (62%) were found in contexts certainly of Roman date. Over half the objects (23: 56%), are certainly or possibly items of dress and the great majority of these, (19: 82%), are from Roman contexts. Many are already well known from in and around Roman Dorchester. Consequently, no attempt has been made to cite exhaustive comparanda for these pieces and reference is generally made only to those reports or recent assessments and standard works. The number of objects by phase is shown in Table 2. A full catalogue description of all the objects is in archive.

Table 2: Copper alloy objects by Phase

Phase	Brooches	Finger	Toilet	Pins	Bracelets	Studs	Spoons	Sheet/	Misc.
-------	----------	--------	--------	------	-----------	-------	--------	--------	-------

		rings	items					building	
3	-	-	.-	-	-	1	-	-	-
4	5	-	6	-	-	1	1	2	4
5	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1
6	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	1
8	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unstratified	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	3
Totals	7	2	7	2	1	4	1	7	10

Brooches

Fragments of seven brooches were found. Of the four which are identifiable, three are early Roman types. One is a strip brooch of a distinctive south-western type, finely decorated with grooves infilled with rocker traced zig zags. Another is a tinned or silvered Hod Hill type with two pairs of projecting knobs on the bow and the third a Dolphin type with mouldings on the wings and bow. All three could be of Claudio-Neronian date. The fragmentary brooch pins could also be from bow brooches of this date. An elaborate wire brooch, the wire twisted into loops (Fig. 8, 1) is a rare medieval type. An example from London was found in a later 13th century context (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 256, fig. 164, 1341). A circular brooch or buckle (Fig. 8, 2) was found in an Early Roman context. It would be unusual for a Roman brooch in being annular rather than pennisular but it does not fall within the range of early Roman buckles.

Finger Rings

Two finger rings were found. Of these one, which originally had a round setting but is now broken at the bezel (not illustrated), while unstratified, might be of Roman date. The other (Fig. 8, 3) has a circular central bezel flanked by two smaller ones. The central bezel is decorated with what now appears as a yellow setting with a finely executed sun-like motif. The two flanking inlays are missing. On general grounds the type is likely to be later Roman and this is compatible with the date of the context in which it was found.

Toilet Items

Four of the five parts of tweezers were found in the same layer (2376) and could derive from two pairs of tweezers from a single set. Only two parts are decorated, both with bordering grooves. Sets of tweezers, nail cleaners and 'ear scoops' could be suspended from a belt. The perforated head of nail cleaner might also have been associated. An ear scoop or ligula with a flat 'bowl' and broken handle might also be from a set.

Hair Pin

One Roman hair pin, a Crummy (1983) Class 2 pin with a moulding below a spherical head was found. Another Crummy Class 2 pin with a spiral wound head is of medieval date and may be a hair or costume pin (Crummy 1988).

Bracelet

Part of a twisted single strand bracelet with a terminal loop of later Roman type was found.

Studs

The four domed studs might have decorated leather clothing or have adorned horse harnesses. In view of the early date of the context (2442; Phase 3) in which it was found, the similarities of one of these objects, a repoussé, foliate stud which has been broken and folded, to some on *lorica segmentata* (eg. Goodburn 1974) is worth noting.

Other Objects

The other objects of copper alloy are a varied collection, including a spoon handle, and a number of enigmatic pieces including a splendid sphinx-shaped foot from the base of an unknown object, perhaps a lamp (Fig. 8, 4: Plate 1). The object has outstretched wings, probably to hold the flanged base of the item to which it was attached; traces of solder appear to be attached to the reverse, although this may be a result of differential erosion. The details of the face and foot are cast but that of the wings has been incised.

An openwork looped handle (Fig. 8, 5), unfortunately unstratified, resembles those on Roman mirrors but the rivetted attachment at one end is likely to have split the thin metal of a mirror. It is possible that it is a vessel handle, perhaps for a patera, which are known from continental Europe, but the piece could also be of recent date.

There is one certain needle and part of a similar object which may be a baling needle or possibly a medical instrument (Fig. 8, 6). The elaborate decoration of the head and shank of this object with incised conical upper and rounded lower parts of the head above a rectangular moulded and impressed section and spherical mouldings, the whole either tinned or silvered, is paralleled by examples from Castleford *vicus* and The Walbrook, London, which have needle eyes at the end of the shank. The turned down head and the tinning or silvering are reminiscent of, but not directly paralleled by, medical instruments.

A small semi-circular object (not illustrated) may be a lid and the presence of crystalline corrosion products on it hints that it is the lid from a seal box and was originally decorated with 'enamel' settings.

A small cruciform stud (not illustrated) is decorated with either enamel or perhaps niello inlays and was tinned or silvered but the shape of the piece is not a common Roman one and may be more appropriate to a medieval or later context.

A cast handle perhaps from a tool and a cast ring, perhaps a curtain ring, are also of medieval or modern date.

The remaining material includes a small patch perhaps for a piece of leather and a repoussé decorated piece of binding, which may be from a casket. The remainder are scraps of sheet or lengths of strip, one of which appears to be an offcut. A small quantity of droplets and lumps which may be metalworking residues were also discovered (see below).

Conclusion

The assemblage is dominated by items of costume or portable objects of a kind whose discovery in a Roman town is unsurprising. Even allowing for the skewing of a small sample by the presence of a number of items which may be from a single toilet set, the majority of objects were found in earlier Roman contexts. However, the sample is too small for the absence of brooches certainly of Flavian or later date to be held significant, or for the possible military parallels of a repoussé stud to be taken further.

Illustrated Copper Alloy Objects: Figure 8, 1–6

1. Annular wire brooch, the wire twisted into loops; undated, possibly medieval. OR3311; layer 2001; Phase 8.
2. Small annular brooch or buckle; the form is unusual for a brooch but also atypical of early Roman buckles OR3396; layer 2391; Phase 4.
3. Finger ring with circular central bezel with ‘sun’ relief and two empty flanking bezels; probably later Roman. OR3358; layer 2087; Phase 5.
4. Cast object in the form of a sphinx, probably a foot for an object of unidentified type (? lamp). OR3365; layer 2300; Phase 5.
5. Part of an openwork handle, the rivet at one end suggesting that it was attached to a flat object; ? Roman or later. OR5107; layer 2522; Phase 9.
6. Broken shaft/handle with bent over highly decorated head, the whole either tinned or silvered; possibly a medical instrument; ? Roman. OR3429; layer 2490; Phase 4.

Copper Alloy Residues

Tenuous evidence for metalworking was found in the form of droplets and lumps of copper alloy casting waste, occasionally associated with charcoal, scrap and offcut pieces of lead. A small quantity of very heavily fired clay was also recovered. They do not provide conclusive evidence for non-ferrous metalworking on the site but in view of the fact that nearly all the pieces were found in early Roman contexts, it is possible that it took place in the vicinity.

Lead Objects

A. P. Fitzpatrick

Only eight pieces of lead were found, of which six were in Roman contexts. These comprised a small clamp or tie, a piece which may be from a repair rivet for a pot to accompany those found in pot sherds. The other four pieces were a torn and twisted piece with, in one place, two raised mouldings, lengths of strip or offcuts, and what appears to be a casting waste. Of these objects, three were found in layer 2463 and a fourth also comes from the same phase (Phase 4), which may suggest that lead working took place in the vicinity.

Although a further 22 pieces were retrieved from the spoil heaps using a metal detector, none were certainly of Roman date or indeed identifiable and/or attributable to any period. It is likely that many are scrap and offcuts associated with the roofing of the modern town. A full descriptive catalogue of all the objects is held in archive.

Iron Objects

A. P. Fitzpatrick

A total of 313 iron objects was recovered, all of which were examined by radiography. By far the greater part of the iron assemblage, 288 objects (92%), consisted of nails; 15 of the remaining 25 objects (67%) were of Roman date. Full catalogue descriptions of objects other than nails are in archive. None of the objects are illustrated.

The Roman pieces include two knife blades, one of them hooked, which may be of Manning types 6a and 18 respectively (1985, 117, fig. 28–9), two blade fragments which may be from cleavers (*ibid.*, 120–3, fig. 30), and an ox-goad, which, while perhaps surprising in an urban context, might be associated with the possible cleavers or simply a casual loss.

There is one fragment which may be from the shaft junction of an unidentified tool and one piece may be from a horseshoe, which would be a comparatively rare Roman site find (*ibid.*, 62). The remaining pieces of Roman date were miscellaneous lengths of sheet, rod, bar or badly corroded and unidentifiable lumps.

The nails and tacks were classified following the typology created for the nails found at Poundbury (Mills 1993a) (Table 3). The majority of identifiable Roman nails were the all-purpose clout nail, Type 1a. In Phase 7, a number of nails which appeared to be wire-made and of modern date were noted; these are omitted from the table. The presence of timber nails or brads, which may be medieval, as well as one, possibly two, medieval fiddle-headed horseshoe nails from Phase 7 accord with a medieval date. Again the clout nail is the most common type.

Table 3: Iron nails and tack types by phase (nails likely to be modern in Phase 7 are not included)

Phase	Nail type												
	1a	1b	1c	1d	1e	1f	1l	Tack	Hobnail	Brad	Fiddle-head	Shank	?
???			1		1			1		1	1		2
3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
4	34	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	35	24
5	14	-	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	8	11
6	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4
7	29	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	7	-	-	35	32
8	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Unstratified	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2
Totals	87	5	6	1	4	1	1	1	7	3	1	94	77

Single timber dogs or staples were also found in contexts of Phases 4, 5 and 6 and, along with the single large nail of Mills Type II from Phase 4, suggest that timber buildings stood nearby. Additionally, two objects from Phases 4 and 5 might be from dogs. No certain masonry ties or other pieces of structural ironwork for masonry were observed.

Worked Flint

P. A. Harding

Totals of worked flint are shown by phase in Table 4. Only one context (2499) of prehistoric date produced stratified flint. The remainder occurred as derived material in Roman (33 contexts) or medieval/post-medieval (17 contexts) features. The totals on Table 4 include no cores and only one end scraper made on a flake.

Stratified Flint

The stratified flakes, which are mainly in mint condition, were produced from raw material which is similar to that described by Healy for Wessex Court 1989 (Healy 1992). At least three pieces show repeating patterns in the structure of the flint and it is likely that they all came from the same nodule. Four flakes are patinated and are undoubtedly residual, as is a core rejuvenation tablet with slightly damaged flake facets.

Table 4: Worked flint: overall composition summarised by Phase

Phase	Type						Totals	Burnt	Broken
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
2	no. 1	-	2	38	-	-	41	-	13
	% 2.43		4.87	92.68					31.70
3	no. -	-	-	27	-	-	27	-	11
	%			100.0					40.74
4	no. -	-	1	45	3	1	50	-	24
	%		2.0	90.0	6.0	2.0			48
5	no. 1	-	-	17	1	-	18	-	7
	% 5.26			89.47	5.26				36.84
6	no. -	-	1	4	-	-	7	-	-
	%		14.28	57.14	28.57				42.85
7	no. 5	-	1	42	-	-	48	2	25
	% 10.41		2.08	87.50				4.16	52.08
8	no. -	-	-	24	-	-	24	-	17
	%			100.0					
Unstratified	no. 1	.	-	7	-	-	8	-	1
	% 12.50			81.50					12.50
Totals	no. 8	-	5	204	6	1	224	2	101
	% 3.57		2.23	91.07		0.44		0.89	45.08

Key: 1 = Miscellaneous debitage; 2 = cores; 3 = core rejuvenation flakes; 4 = flakes; 5 = blades; 6 = retouched

The flakes are undiagnostic. None have prepared butts and points of percussion are normally placed well back on the striking platform. There is no consistent predominance of hard or soft hammer mode. Small flakes are almost entirely absent and it seems likely that the pieces were removed during basic core shaping for flake production. Such an interpretation would accord for stratified material discarded at Greyhound Yard (Bellamy 1993) or Wessex Court 1989 (Healy 1992).

Unstratified Flint

The bulk of the flint occurs as material redeposited in later features. Most of this collection is similar to the stratified assemblage, although an unspecified quantity

from Phases 6–8 is characterised by cortical flakes, many of which are shattered or identified by narrow, cortical butts. These pieces contrast with those from earlier phases which usually have the point of percussion set well back onto a plain striking platform. Cortical flakes with poorly defined points of percussion are often associated with natural forms of flake production such as plough damage or metalling. It is conceivable that these pieces relate to the use of the site as agricultural land or during its subsequent redevelopment.

Discussion

The stratified flakes from Wessex Court in 1990 conform to the pattern established at Greyhound Yard (Bellamy 1993) and the Wessex Court 1989 excavation (Healy 1992). Both of these excavations contained groups of large cortical and semi-cortical flakes in mint condition which were regarded as core preparation waste. This interpretation seems valid for the present collection, which is, however, poorly dated, contains no tools or cores and is of small quantity. Flake core preparation is unlikely to produce diagnostic waste which is capable of being dated accurately. Although similar groups of waste were incorporated into the post-pits of the Late Neolithic monument to the north it cannot be assumed that the material from Wessex Court 1990 is of the same date. The emphasis on flake production rather than on blades suggests that it may belong to any date in the Late Neolithic/Bronze Age periods.

Portable Stone Objects

N. J. Adam with stone identifications by Kathryn Knowles

Three portable stone objects were recovered, a fragment of mortar rim and two whetstones, the former and one of the whetstones from early Roman contexts, the second from a late Roman deposit. Full catalogue descriptions of these are in archive.

Mortar

The mortar fragment, consisting of part of the rim with a protruding rectangular lug, is of porous shelly limestone of unknown provenance and is a common Romano-British type. Similar examples have been found at Greyhound Yard (Mills 1993b, fig. 48, 10), and during the 1989 season of excavation at Wessex Court.

Whetstones

Both whetstones are broken; one is of Pennant sandstone, the other, heavily worn, is made from a fine-grained micaceous sandstone of unidentified source.

Shale Objects

N. J. Adam

A total of 66 pieces of shale was recovered, including 29 identifiable objects. These consisted of twelve tray fragments, five finished armlets, four lathe-turned vessels,

three platters and five miscellaneous items. Twenty-four objects were recovered from early and late Roman contexts and all of the objects date to the Roman period. A full description of all the shale objects is available in archive. All of the object categories and most of the sub-categories (called ‘types’) are taken from those established for the shale recovered from Wytch Farm (Cox and Mills 1991). The distribution of shale objects and of unworked (category 1) and undiagnostic (category 2) shale is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Shale objects and unworked/undiagnostic shale by phase

Phase	Objects by no.					Unworked/undiag. by wt.	
	Armlets	Vessels	Trays	Platters	Misc.	Cat. 1	Cat. 2
3	-	-	1	-	-	-	68 g
4	4	2	9	1	2	91 g	23 g
5	-	-	1	1	2	22 g	146 g
6	-	1	.	-	-	152r g	-
7	1	-	1	-	1	461 g	-
Unstratified	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	5	4	12	2	5	726 g	237 g

Armlets

All of the armlets belong to category 9 (finished armlets): three are of type 2 (oval upright cross-section) and two are of type 8 (D-shaped cross-section): type 8 was added to the Mills type series in the report on the shale objects found during the 1989 excavation at Wessex Court (Adam 1992b). Armlets occurred mainly in the early Roman phase, with four of the five objects in this category recovered from layers of that period. The fifth armlet was found in the backfill of a medieval robber trench.

Vessels

All of the four vessel fragments recovered were assigned to category 20 (lathe-turned vessels). Two were recovered from early Roman contexts and one was found in a post-Roman layer; the fourth was recovered from the spoil heap. The two fragments recovered from early Roman contexts were rims of large bowls, 700 mm and 460 mm in diameter respectively, while the other fragments were from finer, smaller, jug-like vessels. No fragments were found in late Roman contexts, in contrast to the 1989 season, when six of the nine fragments recovered were from late Roman deposits (Adam 1992b).

Trays

Trays formed the largest category of shale objects in the 1990 Wessex Court assemblage, as they did of the assemblages from County Hall, (Copson and Healy 1993), Greyhound Yard (Mills and Woodward 1993) and Silchester (Lawson 1976). The majority of fragments, ten of twelve, were recovered from early Roman contexts, with one from a late Roman context and one from a medieval deposit. Of the early Roman finds, four tray fragments were recovered from ditch 2472, while two were found in the backfill of another ditch, 2217. Many of the trays are decorated with combinations of straight lines and concentric circles and semi-circles cut by compasses (eg. Fig. 9, 3); the holes created by the points of the compasses are clearly

visible at the centre of the circular designs. Similar designs are known from Silchester (Lawson 1976 fig. 11) and Greyhound Yard (Mills and Woodward, 1993).

Platters

Two fragments of flanged rim and one complete small platter (Fig. 9, 2) were recovered, the latter from a late Roman boundary ditch. Although very similar in style to an example from Greyhound Yard (Mills and Woodward 1993), the Wessex Court platter is smaller than those previously discovered, with a diameter of only 82 mm. In appearance it is not unlike a modern coaster and may have been used for a similar purpose.

Miscellaneous objects

Five items could not be identified with any certainty. One of these objects, a large fragment of lathe-turned shale with one shallow and two deep grooves at one end (Fig. 9, 1), may be a rough-out for a shale bowl although no evidence for shale working was found during either season of excavation at Wessex Court. The piece is very similar in shape and size to an object from Silchester interpreted as a pedestal for a jug or small statue (Lawson 1976, fig. 14, 97). This interpretation may be supported by the fact that one face of the Wessex Court object has been smoothed but shows slight pitting suggestive of wear; it is unlikely that a discarded bowl rough-out would display signs of wear on a prepared face.

A second enigmatic object was found in a late Roman pit. Lathe-turned, hollow with curving walls and a hole drilled through a flat base (Fig. 9, 4), it is very similar to pulley-shaped objects found at Silchester (Lawson 1976, fig. 14, 99–101). The third object (not illustrated) is part of a large, thin disc with a drilled central hole and a very shallow rim; the object has no parallels in assemblages from neighbouring sites.

Two other objects (not illustrated), which, although from different layers were conjoining, may be part of the decoration of a piece of furniture. Both lathe-turned and worked by hand, the pieces have one edge curving and bevelled, the other carved in an irregular undulating form. Similar objects can be found on furniture legs in the Silchester collection (Lawson 1976, fig. 95a).

Discussion

The shale objects make up a typical urban assemblage. Finished products dominate the assemblage, as at Silchester and Colchester and elsewhere in Dorchester (County Hall, Greyhound Yard, Wessex Court 1989), with none of the recognisable waste products associated with a shale production site such as that at Rope Lake Hole on the south coast of Purbeck (Cox and Woodward 1987a).

Unlike the shale from the earlier season of excavation at Wessex Court, most of the shale from Trench 6 was located in early Roman phases, with the broadest range of items found in the layers of the early Roman soil dump (which also contained large amounts of demolition rubble). Tray fragments are mainly from early Roman contexts, although they occur in much larger numbers than in the earlier season. The volume of items declines during the later Roman period; no armlets and only one tray fragment were found in contexts of this phase, although platters and miscellaneous

items do occur. Vessel fragments were limited to phases of disturbance and were found in the early Roman dump and the post-Roman soil build-up.

Illustrated Shale Objects: Figure 9

1. Large lathe-turned fragment with grooves at one end, possibly part of a pedestal; Roman. OR3312; layer 2059; Phase 7.
2. Complete small platter; Roman. OR3336; layer 2095; Phase 5.
3. Decorated tray fragment; Roman. OR3353; layer 2324; Phase 4.
4. Unidentified incomplete object; Roman. OR3340; layer 2175; Phase 5.

Roman Vessel Glass

H. E. M. Cool

The second stage of the excavations at Wessex Court produced 116 fragments of Roman vessel glass from a minimum of 25 vessels. The majority of the vessels come from types that are already well represented in the assemblages recovered from the neighbouring site of Greyhound Yard and the 1989 excavation at Wessex Court. Vessels of all periods from the later 1st to 4th centuries AD were found but it is noticeable that the very distinctive Neronian and early Flavian forms are not present. In this Wessex Court 1990 differs from the other two sites, where such vessels formed a small but significant proportion of the assemblages.

The report is divided into three parts. The first part summarises the assemblage very briefly. Part two is concerned with the three vessels that merit more detailed discussion because of their rarity in either a local or national context. Part three considers the assemblage as a whole. A selection of the most important vessel fragments is illustrated in Figure 10.

The First to Mid Second–Century AD Tablewares

Falling into this category are fragments from a minimum of five vessels that would have been in use during the 1st century AD. These are a pillar moulded bowl, an indented beaker (Fig. 10, 7), an externally ground cup or bowl (Fig. 10, 1: see below), a conical jug or flask and at least one deep blue vessel. The vessels forms of the latter two cannot be identified but are securely dated to the 1st century AD on the grounds either of their colour (the blue vessel) or context. At least two early to mid 2nd-century AD colourless wheel-cut beakers are represented (including Fig. 10, 2). One tubular rimmed bowl and one collared jar are represented by rim fragments. These would have been in use during the later 1st or first half of the 2nd centuries AD, though they were found in post-Roman contexts.

The Later Second and Third-Century AD Tablewares

Four of the minimum of five vessels in this category are common forms. They include two trailed cylindrical cups (Fig. 10, 3) and a cylindrical bottle (Fig. 10, 5) which may be dated to the later 2nd to earlier 3rd centuries AD, and one hemispherical cup (Fig. 10, 4) which is most likely to be of 3rd-century AD date. The fifth vessels that is likely to have been in use during this period is not a form that has previously been found in this part of Dorchester (Fig. 10, 8) and is discussed below.

The First to Early Third-Century AD Containers

A quarter of the assemblage consists of fragments of blue/green prismatic bottles from a minimum of three different vessels. The main period of use for such vessels was between the late 1st and the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries AD. One square bottle is represented by a base fragment (Fig. 10, 11) and another may come from a second (Fig. 10, 10), although the circular moulding appears to be off centre for a square bottle, and it is possible that it came from a rectangular bottle. These were in use during the 2nd century AD and were much rarer than square bottles. The presence of at least one hexagonal bottle is indicated by one body fragment. The other blue/green containers in the assemblage are at least one conical unguent bottle of late 1st or early 2nd-century AD date (Fig. 10, 9) and a small 1st or 2nd-century AD jar.

Fourth-Century AD Tablewares

At least three vessels may be assigned to the 4th century AD. The most important of these is the remarkable mould blown polychrome bowl discussed below (Fig. 10, 12). The only other vessel whose form can be identified is a yellow/green hemispherical cup or conical beaker (Fig. 10, 13), though an abraded body fragment might have come from another. At least one other vessel is represented by body fragments, but there is no indication of what form this was.

Miscellaneous Pieces

None of the other fragments can be closely identified or independently dated within the Roman period. They include a colourless flask or small jar (Fig. 10, 6) and a light green vessel with abraded decoration.

Discussion of Particular Vessels

One very important find from these excavations was the fragments from a mould blown segmental bowl with polychrome decoration (Fig. 10, 12). This appears to be virtually without parallel either in Britain or in the other north-western provinces. This vessel is the subject of a separate detailed publication elsewhere (Cool and Henderson 1993).

Twelve relatively large fragments of this vessel were found. This, in itself, is unusual because large amounts of the same glass vessel are rarely found on domestic sites or in rubbish deposits during most of the Roman period in Britain. This is because broken vessel glass was normally collected as cullet— or recycling. The vessel is a very large shallow segmental bowl with an inturned rim and is made of light green bubbly glass. The shallow mould blown decoration consists of concentric rings of motifs. Parts of the two outer ones of these are preserved but the centre of the bowl is missing. The inner ring of decoration combines individual circular mould blown motifs with applied coloured insets. The circular motifs, each of which appear to have different decorative patterns, have a coloured inset centrally and are separated from each other by groups of insets. Two different types of insets are present. One set are translucent blue, the others are now much decayed but appear to have been made of millefiori glass, possibly of three concentric colours. Undecayed glass is visible in some pieces from the interior of the bowl; in these cases the majority of the glass

appears to be blue with a red centre. The two types of insets alternate around the bowl.

The majority of the fragments were found in the fill of a robber trench which contained material ranging in date from the late Roman to the modern period. One other fragment came from medieval soil accumulation. There is, therefore, no indication of the date of the vessel from the contexts in which it was found.

Typologically, the vessel clearly related to the mould blown segmental bowls of Isings Form 116. These, however, tend to be smaller than the Wessex Court example, have curved but not inturned rims and have much simpler moulded patterns than that present here, as may be seen from the examples found at Köln-Braunsfeld (Fremersdorf 1961, 65 taf. 132) and Steinfort, Luxemburg (Goethert Polaschek 1977, 30 no. 73, taf. 31). These vessels appear to have been used during the late 4th and 5th centuries AD and to have a distribution centred on north-east France and Belgium (Isings 1957, 146). Examples have not yet been recognised securely in assemblages from British sites, although an unusual mould blown body fragment found in a context dated to *c.*AD 340 at Frocester Court, Gloucester, may have belonged to such a bowl (Price 1979, 45, no. 46, fig. 18). None of these bowls combine mould blown and polychrome decoration as on this example.

The application of coloured blobs to 4th-century AD vessels is not uncommon. In Britain most of the vessels decorated in this way are hemispherical cups or conical beakers (Charlesworth 1959, 50 fig. 8.2; Price 1982, 175 no. 2, fig. 59), but elsewhere in the north-western provinces segmental bowls with coloured blobs are known (Fremersdorf 1962, 32–3, taf. 38–47). The coloured elements of the Wessex Court example differ from the blobs found on other 4th-century AD vessels not only because some appear to be made of millefiori glass, but also because there appears to be a sharp edge at the junction of the ground colour and each coloured element. It is almost as if cavities were formed in the surface of the bowl during the mould blowing and the coloured elements then inserted into these. Normally the junction between the ground colour and the coloured element is smooth.

This is an exceptional vessel for which a later 4th-century AD date seems probable. It seems very likely to have been inspired by the range of luxury glass that was available at that time. The use of concentric rings of decoration, for example, is very reminiscent of the arrangement of the decoration on some large facet-cut bowls such as that from Karthäuserhof, Köln (Fremersdorf 1967, 104 tafn. 102–3) and on the two possible hanging bowls from Köln (Fremersdorf 1967, 106 tafn. 106–7). Mould blown glass can be viewed as a cheap alternative to cut glass in some circumstances because it can be produced so much more rapidly. With respect to the relatively rare mould blown segmental bowls of Isings Form 117, however, there are some grounds for thinking that they might have been highly prized in their own right. The example from Köln-Braunsfeld noted above, for example, was found in a grave that formed part of a small cemetery. Neighbouring graves contained glass vessels of undoubted luxury quality such as a polychrome cage cup, a blue gold glass bowl with biblical scenes and the heads of four young men who may have been prices of the imperial house and the magnificent cut plate depicting a chariot race (Doppelfeld 1960/1, 13–17). In the case of the Wessex Court bowl, the complexity of the decoration and the unusually large size of the vessel, strongly suggests that it should be regarded as a high status object.

[HEMC 2016 – Subsequent to writing this and the publication of Cool and Henderson 1993, David Whitehouse reviewed this bowl and other vessels showing

similar combinations of mould blowing and the use of cane inserts (Whitehouse 1996). He extended the distribution to include examples from Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean. The Dorchester is thus an even more exotic import than it first appeared.]

Another interesting vessel in this assemblage is represented by three joining base fragments (Fig. 10, 1). These come from a cup or bowl with the exterior ground to shape. Vessels using this technique are not uncommon finds in Roman Britain and were in use during the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD. The vessel is unusual in that the base has been decorated with skilfully faceted daisy pattern in low relief, but the most noteworthy feature is that one fragment was found in the immediately pre-urban soil of Phase 3. This, therefore, is one of the earliest externally ground colourless vessels known both in Britain and elsewhere. Colourless glass is very rare prior to c.AD 65, but in the decade following it becomes the preferred medium for high quality glass tablewares (Harden & Price 1971, 330). The very early date of this vessel probably explains the slight green tinge that is visible in the section, as it would have been made very early in the period when the glass workers were experimenting with ways in which to successfully decolourise the glass.

The third vessel that calls for detailed comment is represented by a blue/green narrow rod handle with a large pinched projection on the lower attachment (Fig. 10, 8). This is an unusual handle form which has not previously been found from this part of Dorchester. Similar handles are known on small blue/green spouted jugs such as those found in Köln (Fremersdorf 1958, 34 tafn 56 & 62), though this form has not been recognised with certainty previously in Britain. A 2nd-century AD date has been suggested for the small spouted jugs and this date would be appropriate for this vessel as it was found in an early Roman context.

General Discussion

The assemblage is too small and, with 37% being found in post-Roman contexts, too disturbed for it to be possible to draw any major conclusions about the use of glass on the site. It is likely that the pattern seen in the date of the glass is a direct result of the way rubbish was being disposed of. As will be apparent from the discussions above, the majority of the forms identified belong to the later 1st and 2nd centuries AD; 52% of the minimum numbers of vessels identified belong to this period. For the majority of this time there were no structures on the site and the glass is likely to have derived from activities taking place elsewhere. This is certainly the case for the material found in contexts associated with the mid 2nd-century AD dumping on the site; this comprised 25% of the total assemblage. Far fewer vessels could be dated to the late 2nd century AD and later when there were structures on the site, presumably reflecting the fact that much of the rubbish from these was being disposed of outside the excavated area.

The discovery of the segmental bowl in this area of Dorchester is most intriguing. As already noted, it seems reasonable to conclude that this was a high status vessel. The excavations at Greyhound Yard produced fragments from two other large 4th-century AD bowls which undoubtedly belong within the tradition of 4th-century luxury glass and are also probably of high status. Such vessels are rare everywhere and no other site in Britain has produced such a concentration of these vessels as this small area of Dorchester has. This may be a coincidence, but it might also serve to alert us to the possibility that something rather unusual is occurring in the area during the 4th century.

Illustrated Roman Glass Vessels: Figure 10

1. Three joining lower fragments of bowl; slightly green-tinged colourless; exterior ground to shape and wheel-polished; slightly convex-curved side sloping into base; two ground-out ribs in low relief, inner forming base ring; slightly concave base; large disc in relief ground to form daisy pattern on underside, wide ring groove and raised dot centrally; 31 weakly S-shaped long facets radiating from central ring and dot. Layers 2300, 2441. Phases 3/5.
2. Body and base fragment of beaker; part of flat base; separately blown applied foot, edge cracked off and ground; side grozed; surfaces heavily clouded and weathered. Layer 2382. Phases 4/5.
3. Lower base and body fragment of ?cup; green-tinged colourless; carination to wide lower body; low trailed base ring; slightly concave base; horizontal trail at carination; circular pontil scar slightly off centre. Layer 2128. Phase 6.
4. Rim fragment of hemispherical cup; green-tinged colourless; out-turned rim, edge fire rounded; convex-curved side; small bubbles. Layer 2059. Phase 7.
5. Rim fragment of bottle; out-turned rim, edge folded out and down, up and in; surfaces cloudy and weathered. Layer 2382. Phases 4/5.
6. Rim fragment of jar or flask; out-turned rim, edge folded out, up, in and flattened; surfaces cloudy and weathered. Layer 2382. Phases 4/5.
7. Rim fragment of indented beaker; blue/green; curved rim, edge cracked off and ground; straight side sloping in; edge of indentation. Layer 2501. Phase 3.
8. Handle fragment of jug; blue/green; circular rod handle; expanded lower attachment with pinched projection retaining part of side. Layer 2435. Phase 4.
9. Lower body and base fragment of conical unguent bottle; blue/green straight side sloping out; concave base. Layers 2468, 3422. Phase 4.
10. Base fragment of square or rectangular bottle; blue/green; concave base retaining broken inner edge on three sides; circular moulding with central dot on base. Layer 2087. Phase 5.
11. Lower body and base fragment of square bottle; blue/green; concave base; at least two concentric mouldings on base. Layer 2250. Phase 4.
12. Three rim and nine body fragments of large segmental bowl; light green; incurved rim, edge cracked off but not ground; slightly convex-curved side sloping in shallowly. Mould blown decoration in shallow relief, zones from upper to lower body as follows: horizontal rib; band of vertical ribs; six ?circular motifs; horizontal rib; centre of bowl missing. One complete and parts of three other circular motifs extant; complete motif (1) infilled with slightly curving radiating ribs; first broken motif (2) has two (of four) diamond-shaped mouldings around centre; second (3) has one radiating petal shape; third (4) has one terminal of dumbbell-shaped moulding. Placed approximately centrally in motifs 1 and 4 are coloured settings, decayed brown with yellow centre on exterior but red surrounded by blue when viewed from interior; motifs 2 and 3 have cavities. Areas between circular motifs infilled with coloured settings, alternating groups of deep blue and red surrounded by blue. On interior bowl is raised and rounded behind settings, reciprocal cavities on exterior have vertical sides and rounded bases. Layers 2003, 2022, 2247. Phases 7/8.
13. Rim fragment of cup or beaker; yellow green; curved rim, edge cracked off smoothly but not ground; slightly convex-curved side; abraded band on upper body. Layer 2048. Phase 8.

Roman Glass Objects

H. E. M. Cool

The Roman beads found during the excavations are common forms widespread throughout Dorchester and the rest of Roman Britain and thus do not call for special comment. The three frit melon beads (including Fig. 11, 1) would have been in use during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The other two beads (Fig. 11, 2, 3) are late Roman forms.

Two fragments of blue/green bottles showing secondary use were also found. In one, a flat wall fragment has been grozed to form a counter (Fig. 11, 4), and in the

other a shoulder fragment has been flaked in the same manner as a flint to form a tool with a sharp edge (Fig. 11, 5). Both forms of reuse are relatively common, but the context of the latter makes this piece especially interesting as it is one of the earliest examples of the reuse of bottles to form tools known in Britain.

Illustrated Roman Glass Objects: Figure 11

1. Melon bead; turquoise frit; interior of perforation grooved. Layer 2509 Phase 4.
2. Short cylindrical bead; opaque green; heavily weathered. Layer 2074 Phase 5.
3. Long ovoid bead; translucent green. Layer 2002. Phase 7.
4. Counter; flat fragment of blue/green prismatic bottle grozed to disc. Layer 2495. Phase 4.
5. Tool; shoulder fragment of blue/green bottle, widest edge grozed to sharp edge. Layer 2441. Phase 3.

Roman Window Glass

H. E. M. Cool

Sixty-eight fragments of window glass weighing approximately 540 g were found during the excavations. All is of the cast matt/glossy variety which was in use mainly during the 1st to 3rd centuries AD. Very little of it, however, can be directly associated with the structures present on the site. One fragment (20 g) came from a Phase 3 context and, as there were no structures on the site at this period, must have been used elsewhere. Just under 200 g came from the material dumped on the site during the early Roman period and a further 165 g was either unstratified or found in medieval or later contexts.

Roman Pottery

R. H. Seager Smith, with a comment on the *Terra Nigra* stamp by Val Rigby

In total, 12,009 sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered during the 1990 excavation at Wessex Court. This material has been treated in a similar manner to that recovered in 1989; a rapid scan was made to assess the range and quality of the fabrics and vessel forms present, and to provide spot-dating on a context by context basis. This report is based on the results of the scan.

As before, the assemblage was divided into four major fabric groups: Romano-British coarse- and finewares, imported Roman finewares, samian and amphorae. Within each of these groups, the number of sherds was counted and more specific details of the fabrics and vessel forms present were also noted and classified according to previously established type series (ie. Fulford 1975; Young 1977; Seager Smith and Davies 1993). The total number of sherds, and the percentage of the assemblage represented by each of the four main fabric groups is summarised by phase in Table 6. Interestingly, in percentage terms, the quantities of Romano-British coarse- and finewares, imported finewares and samian recovered during 1990 are similar to those from the 1989 excavation, while the amphorae show an increase of only 0.6%. These figures also show a close correspondence with those from other sites in the Dorchester area.

Table 6: Quantification of the four major Roman pottery fabric groups by Phase

Phase	R-B coarse- & finewares		Imported Roman finewares		Samian		Amphora		Totals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2	11	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	0.1%
3	287	77%	19	5%	40	11%	27	7%	373	3%
4	5877	89%	44	0.7%	394	6%	270	4%	6585	55%
5	1720	92%	7	0.4%	69	4%	78	4%	1874	16%
6	258	93%	2	0.7%	11	4%	6	2%	277	2%
7	1776	06%	3	0.2%	39	2%	34	2%	1852	15%
8	334	95%	-	-	11	3%	6	2%	351	3%
Unstratified	647	94%	1	0.1%	27	4%	II	2%	686	6%
Totals	10910	91%	76	0.6%	591	5%	432	3.6%	12009	

The Romano-British Coarse- and Finewares

As might be expected, this group dominates the assemblage, forming 91% of the total number of sherds (Table 6). Although predominantly Black Burnished ware, a standard range of orange/buff and grey coarsewares, mortaria and Corfe Mullen ware, as well as products of the Oxfordshire and New Forest industries, is also included.

The Black Burnished Wares

These fabrics were recorded in greater detail than the rest of the assemblage as the chronology of the assemblage as a whole is largely based upon these well-known wares (Gillam 1976; Williams 1977; Seager Smith and Davies 1993; Seager Smith 1993; 1997; 2002). The Black Burnished wares were recorded using the regional type series established for the Dorchester area (Seager Smith and Davies 1993; Seager Smith 1993; 1997; 2002). Additions to the type series found at this site are described below and illustrated in Figure 12, while summary descriptions of the Black Burnished ware fabrics and vessel forms present can be found in the archive. All three of the Black Burnished ware fabric sub-types recognised amongst the material from the 1989 excavation (Fabric E101, Fabric E102 and Fabric E107) were also present in Trench 6.

Summary descriptions of the Black Burnished ware fabrics of the Dorchester type series present among the 1990 Wessex Court Romano-British pottery assemblage.

Fabric E101 – Black Burnished ware

Common-abundant rounded, translucent quartz grains <0.75 mm; very occasional, rounded fragments of shale <5 mm; occasional iron and flint; much variation within basic description.

Wareham/Poole Harbour region of Dorset; hand-made, although in some cases, especially among later forms, vessels may have been wheel-finished; full range of firing conditions can be found - oxidised, unoxidised and irregularly fired.

Dating evidence/parallels: 1st century BC–4th century AD+ (Gilliam 1976, 58; Williams 1977).

Fabric E102 – ‘Variant’ Black Burnished ware fabric

Soft, fine sandy fabric with very common-abundant small (<0.75 mm), translucent quartz grains; occasional iron oxides, particles of soft, white non-calcareous material and crushed flint may also be present. Generally very dark grey or black but frequently with light grey ‘skin’ beneath black surface or ‘sandwich’ firing with dark grey core and brown margins or brown core and red margins. Some varieties however, generally the more coarsely-grained fabrics, were much paler in colour, a freshly

broken fracture having a sugary, "Milky Way"-like texture. Fabric characterised by thick, black or grey slip on external surface, often dribbling over rim onto interior.

Produced at variety of centres, probably within Dorset/Devon/Somerset area but precise locations unknown; hand-made; examples of full range of firing conditions found, although irregular, 'sandwich' fired examples predominate.

Dating evidence/parallels: 1st century BC/1st century AD, continuing until late 2nd or early 3rd centuries AD. Although occasionally later examples of very unusual vessel forms also found (Bidwell 1977, 189; 1979, 193; Davies and Hawkes 1987, M3; Andrews forthcoming).

Fabric Q107 – Coarse Black Burnished ware with very visible clay pellets/shale fragments.

Iron-rich firing clay matrix containing common, subangular quartz grains <1 mm, sparse but highly visible rounded clay/shale pellets <5 mm with occasional red iron oxides and pockets of soft, white calcareous material <0.5 mm. Frequency of clay/shale pellets increases markedly towards bottom of vessel.

Sub-division of Fabric E101; Wareham/Poole Harbour region of Dorset; hand-made; in many cases coil joins are clearly visible; firing is generally irregular with whole range of oxidised to unoxidised occurring on single vessel. Vessels generally finished with rough, very smeared burnishing and/or wiping above and below decorated band; internal surface may be left very rough or occasionally slightly wiped.

Dating evidence/parallels: occurs in forms which date from 2nd century AD onwards but may represent very late fabric, possibly even decline of BB1 industry.

Forty-three Black Burnished ware vessel forms were recognised. Examples of each of the four main vessel categories are present:

- Jars – Types: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18, 47, 62, 67, 84
- Round-bodied open bowls – Types: 13, 15, 16, 33, 34, 36, 40, 72, 73, 75
- Straight-sided bowls/dishes – Types: 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 24C, 25, 25C, 78
- Miscellaneous forms – Types: 10, 26, 27, 29, 66

Summary descriptions of the Black Burnished Ware vessel forms of the Dorchester type series present among the 1990 Wessex Court Romano-British pottery assemblage.

- Type 1: Cooking pots/storage jars with upright or slightly everted rim; rim usually beaded on exterior edge; some examples with counter-sunk handles. Date range: 1st century BC–1st century AD.
- Type 2: Cooking pots/storage jars with everted rim, usually beaded; rim diameter less than maximum diameter of body. Date range: 2nd century AD onwards.
- Type 3: Cooking pots/storage jars with everted rim; rim diameter greater than or equivalent to maximum diameter of body. Date range: late 3rd century AD onwards.
- Type 2/3: Cooking pots/storage jars with everted rims; insufficient body preserved to specify whether Type 2 or 3. Date range: 2nd century AD onwards.
- Type 4: Cooking pot/storage jar with everted bead rim and pair of counter-sunk handles. Date range: 2nd century AD onwards.
- Type 5: Jar with plain, slightly flaring rim. Date range: 1st century AD onwards.
- Type 6: Large, round/barrel-shaped storage jars or bowls with flattened and tapering triangular rim, incurving at shoulder level. Date range: 1st century BC–1st century AD.
- Type 7: Jars with beaded rims; encompasses wide range of vessel profiles. Date range: 1st century BC–1st century AD but possibly continuing into 3rd century AD in Dorset.
- Type 8: Jars with developed or 'pulled' bead rim; wide range of vessel profiles. Date range: as Type 7.
- Type 9: Small jars or beakers with developed or 'pulled' bead rim and one or more applied 'ear-shaped' handles; variety of vessel profiles. Date range: in Dorset, form continues throughout Roman period.
- Type 10: Beakers with beaded or slightly everted rims; variety of profiles. Date range: as Type 9.
- Type 11: Jars with narrow, upright, flanged rim, and ovoid body; sometimes one or more small handles applied at shoulder level. Date range: mid/late 3rd century AD onwards.

- Type 12: Storage jars with rolled or everted 'pie-crust' rim. Date range: later 3rd century AD onwards.
- Type 13: Round-bodied open bowl with range of profiles; some examples may be lids. Date range: 1st century AD.
- Type 15: Carinated open bowl with plain or beaded rim, foot- ring or pedestal base. Date range: 1st century BC–1st century AD.
- Type 16: High-shouldered open bowl with beaded rim; taller examples have inverted pear-shaped profile. Date range: 1st century BC–1st century AD.
- Type 18: Globular jar with everted rim; burnished diagonal line decoration. Date range: very late Roman/sub-Roman.
- Type 20: Shallow, straight-sided dish, (or ?lid), with plain rim; 'dog-dish'. Date Range: from late 1st century AD until end of Roman period, with marked increase in numbers from late 2nd century AD onwards.
- Type 21: Oval, straight-walled dishes, with plain rim; most have opposed handles at each end of long axis; 'fish-dish'. Date range: late 3rd–late 4th centuries AD.
- Type 22: Flat-, or flanged, rimmed bowls/dishes. Date range: 2nd century AD.
- Type 23: Flat-, or flanged, rimmed bowls/dishes with chamfered base. Date range: early–mid 2nd century AD.
- Type 24: Flat-, or flanged, rimmed bowls/dishes with incised groove on top of rim; also called incipient flanged bowls/dishes. Date range: mid 2nd–3rd centuries AD.
- Type 24C: As above but with multiple grooves on flat rim. Date range: as Type 24.
- Type 25: Bowls/dishes with dropped flange; wide range of forms and positions of flange. Date range: late 3rd–early 5th centuries AD.
- Type 25C: Dropped flange dish with 'terraced' flange; burnished wavy line decoration on flange; only occurs in variant Black Burnished ware fabric (E102). Date range: late 1st–2nd centuries AD.
- Type 26: Lids; all forms. Date range: generally 1st–2nd centuries AD but later examples also known.
- Type 27: Cups or tankards; various profiles. Date range: late 1st/early 2nd centuries AD onwards.
- Type 29: Flagons; all forms. Date range: generally 1st–2nd centuries AD but later examples also known.
- Type 33: Carinated, open bowl; footring or low pedestal base and beaded rim; characteristic of this type are applied, vertical ribs of clay, surrounded by various arrangements of small, impressed dots at intervals around vessel walls; 'Maiden Castle War Cemetery Bowls'. Date range: 1st century BC–1st century AD possibly continuing to early 2nd century AD.
- Type 34: High-shouldered bowl with simple rim and small external flange. Date range: 1st century BC–1st century AD.
- Type 36: Open, carinated bowl with slightly flared wall, plain rim and footring base; variety of profiles; imitations of Gallo-Belgic and samian forms. Date range: 1st–2nd centuries AD.
- Type 40: Carinated or round-bodied, open bowls with straight sides, slightly beaded rims and pedestal or footring bases; copies of fineware imports. Date range: 1st century AD.
- Type 47: Small, sloping sided jar with vertical, unelaborated rim and very short neck. Date range: 1st century AD onwards.
- Type 62: Globular-bodied jars with narrow neck, everted rim and pronounced lid-seating groove on inner lip. Date range: 2nd century AD onwards.
- Type 66: Globular-bodied jug/flagon form with opposed vertical handles, upright neck and flat-topped, out-turned rim. Date range: 2nd century AD.
- Type 67: Small, straight-sided jar with everted rim; no neck. Date range: late 3rd century AD onwards.
- Type 72: Small bowl with flat-topped rim and very slightly curving sides. Date range: late 1st–early 3rd centuries AD.
- Type 73: Open bowl/dish with chamfer and short, slightly sloping walls; probably copy of imported Gallo-Belgic form. Date range: late 1st–late 2nd/early 3rd centuries AD.
- Type 75: Round-bodied dropped flange bowl; probably copy of Drag.38. Date range: 3rd–4th centuries AD.
- Type 78: Straight-sided, dropped flange bowl/dish, distinguished from Type 25 by presence of chamfered base. Date range: 2nd century AD onwards.

Type 84: Small, narrow-mouthed, high-shouldered jar with short upright neck and lid-seat. Date range: probably 2nd–3rd centuries AD.

In addition to these established types, three new vessel forms were also identified – Types 87, 88 and 89.

Type 87: Bowl (or just possibly jar) with straight, upright walls and a beaded rim; probably carinated; burnished on both surfaces. Fig.12, 2. Date range: uncertain; found in a medieval soil accumulation layer 2062 together with material mainly of late 3rd 4th century AD date.

Type 88: Carinated bowl or dish; upper surface of rim deeply grooved and, on exterior surface, carination is marked with raised cordon; burnished on both surfaces with traces of shallow, horizontal grooves below the cordon. Probably based on Gallo-Belgic forms and similar to Type 73. Fig.12, 3. Date range: probably late 1st–2nd century AD; found in the fill of Ditch 227.

Type 89: Small, shallow, lobed dish with a flat base; possibly part of an open lamp. Fig.12, 4. Date range: probably late 1st–2nd centuries AD; found in early Roman demolition rubble/soil deposition layer 2488, with material dated from late 1st–early 3rd centuries AD.

Jar forms are represented by the widest range of vessel types, and in terms of the number of examples present, account for 45% of the assemblage. The straight-sided bowl/dish forms make up 40% of the assemblage, while the round-bodied open bowls and the range of miscellaneous vessels (beaker, lid, cup and flagon forms) represent 4% and 11% respectively. A variety of vessels, some almost complete, was recovered from pit 2174 (Plate 2). A summary of the Black Burnished ware vessel forms present by phase is in archive. The size ranges and proportions of the vessels, as well as the techniques of surface treatment and decoration used, conform to the generalised rules described and discussed elsewhere (Farrar 1973, 76–8; Gillam 1976; Williams 1977). However, two bases, both from straight-sided bowl/dish forms, have unusual decoration. Both consist of burnished line motifs utilising common design elements, but these are combined in unusual ways resulting in a much ‘freer’ style than normally found on Black Burnished wares. The first of these occurs on the exterior surface of the base (Fig.12, 5) which is divided into ‘panels’ by a multiple line cross. The panels are filled in with zones of acute-angled lattice, curvilinear and short, straight, roughly parallel lines. The second example (Fig.12, 1) occurs on the interior surface and consists of ‘imitation Glastonbury ware’ type decoration, with acute-angled lattice and sprouting, curvilinear lines similar to those found on Durotrigian vessels, often in conjunction with tooled ‘eye-brow’ or other curvilinear motifs (eg. Seager Smith 1997). Both of these vessels are in the typical Wareham/Poole Harbour Black Burnished ware fabric (Fabric E101). Four sherds of Black Burnished ware, including one rim sherd, have incised graffiti (see below).

Orange/buff and grey wares

In total, 101 sherds of orange/buff wares and 67 greyware sherds were recovered. The majority of these sherds are wheel-made and the range of fabric and vessel form types present appears to be broadly comparable with that recovered from other sites in the Dorchester area (Seager Smith and Davies 1993; Seager Smith 1993; 1997; 2002), although these wares were not assigned to specific fabric or form types. Products of both British and Continental centres are probably present while the date range spans the entire Roman period.

Little is known about the provenance of the orange/buff wares but most are derived from flagon forms. These fabrics occur most frequently in the early Roman (1st–2nd-century AD) contexts. Predominant amongst the greywares are sherds of the

fine south-western micaceous fabric already known in Dorchester (Seager Smith and Davies 1993; Seager Smith 1993; 1997; 2002) and elsewhere (Cunliffe 1971, 188; Frere 1972, 314; Leach 1982, 142; Leech 1982, 156; Bidwell 1979, 193). Other fabrics include small quantities of possible Savernake ware and a wide range of sandy fabrics. Sherds from everted rim jar and lid forms in a fine, wheel-made, shell-tempered fabric not previously seen in Dorchester were noted. Unfortunately these were mostly from the medieval soil accumulation deposits although they are almost certainly of Roman date. The greyware vessel forms largely copy those of the Black Burnished wares although one unusual form, a footed-bowl with a bead rim (Fig.12, 6), in a very fine sandy fabric was found in the early Roman soil accumulation layers. This vessel form is not previously known in the Dorchester area and is probably of later 1st or 2nd-century AD date.

Mortaria

Eighty-seven sherds of mortaria (excluding the products of the Oxfordshire, New Forest and samian industries) were recovered, representing 0.7% of the assemblage. The assemblage mirrors that of the 1989 season at Wessex Court and other Dorchester sites (Seager Smith and Davies 1993; Seager Smith 1993; 1997; 2002). The most common sherds are of Bushe-Fox 26–30 (1913, fig. 19, 26–30) and Hartley's group 1 and 2 vessels (1977, 11), produced in north-west France, with smaller quantities of sherds probably from the various Rhineland centres. Inevitably, the provenance of a few sherds remains unassigned. These include wall-sided vessels, probably of 1st-century AD date, from the early Roman demolition rubble/soil deposition layers, wall 2396 of the south-eastern building and a residual example in the medieval soil accumulation deposits.

Corfe Mullen Ware

Thirty-four sherds of Corfe Mullen ware (Calkin 1935) were recognised. Appropriately, these were mostly found in the prehistoric/early Roman soil levels and early Roman contexts. The assemblage, like that recovered during the 1989 season, consists almost exclusively of flagon body sherds, the most frequently occurring vessel form in this fabric.

New Forest and Oxfordshire Wares

In contrast to 1989, the quantities of New Forest and Oxfordshire wares were approximately equal, although the range of fabrics and vessel forms recovered is broadly comparable.

Among the Oxfordshire wares (38 sherds), examples of red-slipped ware (Young 1977, 123) are most numerous. Vessel forms include flanged and necked bowls, Young's types C51 (1977, 160, fig.59) and C75 (1977, 164, fig.62) respectively. Brown-slipped wares were represented by body sherds from closed forms. Mortaria occur in red and brown-slipped ware (Young 1977, 123), white ware (Young 1977, 56) and white colour-coated ware (Young 1977, 117) while two forms were recognised, one copying samian form Drag. 45 (Young 1977, 173, fig.67, C97) in brown-slipped ware and another (Young 1977, 122, fig.38, WC7) in white colour-coated ware. All the forms recognised are comparatively common and, with the exception of Young type C75 produced *c.* AD 325–400 (1977, 166), span the life of the industry. Sherds from the base of a red-slipped ware carinated bowl with rouletted decoration were found in the floor foundation deposits of the central room of the eastern late Roman (3rd–4th century AD) building, but the remainder of the

assemblage was recovered from medieval and post-medieval soil accumulation and robbing activity deposits.

The New Forest wares (44 sherds) were represented by Fulford's fabric categories 1a–c and 2 (1975, 24–6), the fine colour-coated, red slipped wares and parchment ware respectively. The only recognisable vessel form in the fine the colour-coated fabric was the indented beaker (Fulford 1975, 50, fig.12, type 27), produced throughout the life of the industry. The red slipped wares were represented by another long-lived form, the dropped flange bowl (Fulford 1975, 64, fig.19, type 63) and the reversed S-shaped profile (Fulford 1975, 64, fig. 19, type 65) bowl, dated *c.* AD 300/320–370, as well as various body sherds with white painted and stamped decoration and sherds from mortaria forms. Other forms included an example of a Fulford type 105 (1975, 76, fig.25) mortaria, dated *c.* AD 270–350, and a lid (Fulford 1975, 70, fig.23, type 87), both of parchment ware. All the New Forest sherds occur in late Roman and later deposits.

Unassigned Finewares

Seven small body sherds of various, unassigned, wheel-thrown, colour-coated wares were noted. These are probably British rather than imported and all are apparently derived from closed forms. It is likely that these fabrics span a wide date range.

Imported Roman Finewares

The range and quantity of imported finewares is closely comparable to those recovered during the 1989 season of excavation at this site and at other sites in the Dorchester area, especially Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993). In total, 76 sherds were recovered, predominantly from the prehistoric/early Roman soil levels and early Roman contexts. These wares represent 0.6% of the assemblage.

The range of pre-Flavian imported finewares remains the same as that recovered during the 1989 season. Lyons rough-cast ware (Greene 1979, 18) is represented by sherds from beaker forms, including rims similar to Greene's types 20.1 and 20.2 (1979, 24, fig.8) and one sherd of Central Gaulish lead glazed ware (Greene 1979, 99) was also noted. A stamped base of *Terra Nigra* was also recovered from the immediately pre-Roman soil horizon with Roman trample. The die is of the potter COTO, date *c.* AD 50–75 and is another stamp from a site west of Southampton Water which is not represented in the *Camulodunum* List (Rigby, pers. comm.).

Other sherds of this ware include Cam. 16 platters (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 220, pl.XLIX) and a flanged cup not dissimilar to a vessel illustrated by Rigby (1973, fig.4, 42). Pompeian Red ware platter sherds of Peacock's fabric 2 probably from an unlocated Mediterranean source (Peacock 1977, 153), were noted, primarily among the immediately pre-urban soil deposits.

Pre-Flavian-mid/late 2nd century AD finewares include sherds of Central Gaulish colour-coated and roughcast ware (Greene 1979, 43), North Gaulish roughcast ware (Anderson 1980, 28, fabric 1) and sherds probably from poppy-head beakers in both oxidised and non-oxidised fabrics. These wares are present amongst the 1989 material and are also comparatively common at Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993).

Four sherds of a less familiar fabric are also present. Although found in various contexts across the site, these sherds probably belong to a single shouldered beaker of Arthur's south/central English group of British lead-glazed wares (1978, 312, fig.8.6, 1.1). Multiple, incised wavy lines beneath the glaze, decorate the shoulder of this

vessel (Fig.12, 7). The glaze is rough, crazed and dark olive green in colour and although these sherds lack the characteristic oxidised firing of this group, the fabric otherwise conforms to the description offered by Arthur (1978, 314). Few well-dated examples of this fabric exist, but production is at present dated to the late 1st–early 2nd centuries and a source in Wiltshire or northern Hampshire is considered most likely (Arthur 1978, 314). Sherds of other British lead-glazed wares also occurred at Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993).

The later imported finewares were poorly represented, only two sherds of Central Gaulish Rhenish ware being noted. However, the provenance of 23 fineware sherds remains unassigned although all are likely to be imported. These include sherds from a late Iron Age/early Roman cordoned jar, similar to Hengistbury type BD 2.2 vessels (Brown 1987, 211, ill. 167) in a wheel-thrown, micaceous fabric, possibly from north-west or central Gaul, sherds from two fine, buff ware butt/girth beakers, possibly from a similar source and a variety of colour-coated fabrics. The majority of these sherds occur in the prehistoric/early Roman soil levels and early Roman features and are thus likely to be mainly of 1st–2nd century AD date.

Samian

A total of 591 sherds of samian were recovered, representing 5% of the pottery assemblage (Table 6). No detailed examination was undertaken, this material being scanned to provide only a general assessment of the date and the range of material present.

The samian is broadly comparable with the 1989 assemblage. Many of the sherds retain a high gloss and comparatively few are severely abraded although some are fairly well-worn with scuff marks present, especially around the footings of vessels. Three examples of vessels repaired with lead rivets indicate the curation of these vessels in the contemporary assemblage. All three were decorated forms (Drag. 29 and 37), two from early Roman contexts and one from a medieval soil accumulation layer.

Nineteen stamped sherds were recovered and are reported upon by Brenda Dickinson (see below, 3.12). In comparison with the 1989 assemblage, where 23 stamps were identified (Dickinson 1992) from a total of 1125 samian sherds, this is a high figure although the implications of this are uncertain.

Like the 1989 assemblage, the samian ranges in date from the mid 1st century AD until the late 2nd or early 3rd centuries AD. No detailed fabric analysis was undertaken but products of all three major production regions are clearly present although east Gaulish material is again poorly represented. The most common plain forms continue to be the platters of the Drag. 18/31 series with less frequent Drag. 15/17 examples, and the Drag. 27 and 33 cup forms. Less common plain forms include Drag. types 22/23, 24/25, 35, 36, 38, 42, 46, 80 and possibly 45 or 81, Curle types 11 and 15 and Ritt. types 8 and 12. Small fragments from closed forms were also recognised, mostly from the early Roman contexts, but these could not be assigned to a specific form. Three Drag. 18/31 series platters and one Drag. 33 cup have a band of off-white or yellow paint on the rim. Two of the platters were associated with the early Roman structures, the third from the robbing activity above the western Roman structure, while the Drag. 33 cup was found in a late Roman demolition rubble/soil dump.

Approximately 20% (122 sherds) of the samian sherds were from decorated forms, the same proportion as that recovered during 1989. Once again no detailed analysis or description was undertaken. Forms consist mainly of Drag. types 29 and

37 with fewer examples of Drag. 30, while sherds tentatively identified as being from Drag. 64 and 67 were also recognised.

Amphorae

Amphorae represent 3.6% of the assemblage, a total of 432 sherds being recovered. The assemblage consists mainly of body sherds and although a few rims, handles, bases and spikes were noted, these were not assigned to specific form types. The amphorae are classified by fabric only and are quantified by phase in Table 7.

Table 7: Quantification of amphora sherds by Phase and type

Amphora	Date range	Phase							Total
		3	4	5	6	7	8	Unstrat.	
Carrot	late 1st BC–late 1st AD	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
Kingsholm 117	early–middle 1st AD	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Dressel 20	1st–late 3rd AD +	10	105	31	-	8	5	8	167
Pel. 47/Gaul 4	mid 1st–3rd/4th AD	7	89	2	-	2	-	-	100
North African	3rd–4th AD	-	-	18	3	5	-	-	26
Amphora/flagon		6	23	14	3	17	1	3	67
Unassigned		-	51	13	-	2	-	-	66
Totals		27	270	78	6	34	6	11	432

The range of types almost exactly mirrors those present in the 1989 assemblage. ‘Carrot’ amphorae, dated from the late 1st century BC to the late 1st century AD (Peacock and Williams 1986, 109) were represented in the immediately pre-urban soil layers and the early Roman soil accumulation and demolition rubble/soil deposition layers. An interesting additional feature of the 1990 assemblage is the presence of the Kingsholm 117 variant of this type (Timby 1985, 75, fig.28, 117; Sealy 1985, 89–90, fig.15), found in the immediately pre-urban soil layers.

The most common types continue to be the Dressel 20, from southern Spain (Peacock and Williams 1986, 136) and the Pélichet 47/Gauloise 4 amphorae from southern France (Peacock and Williams 1986, 142), which occur throughout the assemblage. Two groups of Dressel 20 sherds were repaired with lead, presumably indicating the reuse of these vessels for some secondary purpose, a feature also noted amongst the 1989 assemblage. The lower third of a North African amphora (2314) set in pit 2298 associated with the main late Roman building, may be another example of the secondary reuse of amphora at this site, in this case presumably for storage or water catchment. Conjoining sherds of this amphora were also found in postholes 2132 and 2136 of post-Roman Structure 6 and among the material from cleaning in this area although it is likely that the upper part of this vessel was broken away in antiquity, probably prior to its reuse. This is the first instance in the Dorchester area of an amphora used in this way although Black Burnished ware vessels set into the ground were found in Trench 3 of the 1989 excavation, at Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993), Maiden Castle Road (Seager Smith 1997) and at Ower (Woodward 1987b, 58, pl.20, fig.44, 62 and 64).

Many of the less common amphorae types present at Greyhound Yard (Williams 1993) are probably included amongst the 66 unassigned sherds while the ‘amphora/flagon’ group probably includes further examples of the flagon-like southern Gaulish amphora types as well as true flagon sherds.

Discussion

Based on previous classificatory work on Romano-British and imported ceramics from the Dorchester area, the discussion section of the 1989 pottery report outlines the characteristic features of the assemblage of three broad ceramic periods. These are not described again here, but are equally applicable to the 1990 assemblage and, as before, can be seen to correspond broadly with the main Roman stratigraphic groupings.

The material from the prehistoric/early Roman soil levels represents a smaller proportion of the assemblage than in 1989 (3% compared with 8% for 1989), probably due to the small area of these deposits sampled in detail during 1990. 'Durotrigian' forms (Types 1, 7, 8, 13), paralleled in Brailsford's type series (Brailsford 1958) predominate among the Black Burnished ware vessels (Table 02) although small numbers of later 1st and 2nd-century forms (eg. Types 2, 9, 20, 22, 24C, 25C, 26 and 62) also occur. The variant fabrics (Fabric E102) are well represented although not quantified in detail. Imported finewares consist of *Terra Nigra*, Lyons roughcast ware, Pompeian Red ware and sherds from a micaceous cordoned jar, probably from Gaul while the only British fineware fabric is Corfe Mullen ware. The samian is predominantly of mid-late 1st-century AD date. Orange/buff and grey coarsewares are represented by body sherds only while later 1st-mid 2nd century AD mortaria, including a Gillam 238 rim (1957, 204, fig.24, 238) were also noted. Carrot amphorae, and the Kingsholm 117 variant, as well as the very prevalent Dressel 20 and Pélisset 47/Gauloise 4 types also occur.

The material from the prehistoric/early Roman soil layers is clearly encompassed by the characteristic assemblage of ceramic phase 1 (mid 1st-early 2nd centuries AD) outlined for the 1989 assemblage. None of the groups recovered from these layers, however, show the consistent mid 1st-century AD date noted for this prehistoric/early Roman soil horizon in Trench 1 (1989) but rather the material present spans the entire date bracket. The presence of later, 2nd-century AD. material, notably amongst the Black Burnished wares, can be accounted for by the Roman trample incorporated into these deposits.

Material recovered from the early Roman deposits represents 55% of the assemblage from Trench 6. Over half of this material occurred in the demolition rubble/soil deposition layers, with comparatively small quantities being derived from the structural features of the buildings and other general features identified as belonging to this phase. The range of material corresponds with the late 1st/early 2nd-3rd century AD ceramic phase 2 assemblage, characterised by a very wide range of Black Burnished ware forms, a gradual decrease in the proportion of the variant, non-Wareham/Poole Harbour fabric and an increase in the frequency of other orange/buff and grey coarsewares. Samian and other imported fineware, mortaria and amphorae fabrics, and Corfe Mullen ware were also present.

Largely as a result of more extensive machine clearance, late Roman (3rd-4th centuries AD.) ceramics are poorly represented in the 1990 assemblage. Only 16% of the assemblage (1874 sherds) was derived from the late Roman contexts, in contrast to the 36% recovered from equivalent deposits in 1989. The characteristic features of ceramic phase 3 continue to be apparent, however, amongst the material from the building which makes up the major part of this phase. North African amphorae, Oxfordshire and New Forest products are introduced into the assemblage, while a more general decline in the importance of imported finewares, samian and other amphorae types is apparent. The range of Black Burnished ware vessel forms (Types 3, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21, 25 and 75) is far more restricted than that of earlier periods,

although earlier forms continue to be present in these deposits. The variant fabric group (Fabric E102) formed only a tiny proportion of the Black Burnished ware present and occurred only as residual sherds. Sherds of the rough, coarse, oxidised fabric (Fabric Q107) which may date from the very end of the Roman period, also occurred for the first time amongst the material from the eastern room of the eastern building and the walling of the western courtyard.

All the pottery recovered from the post-Roman deposits (277 sherds or 2% of the assemblage) is of Romano-British date. The date range of this material is comparatively wide, with sherds of samian, Pompeian Red ware, Corfe Mullen as well as Black Burnished ware types 1, 4, 20, 22, 26 and 34 all occurring while late Roman material is represented by New Forest products and sherds of the oxidised late Black Burnished ware fabric (E107). A subjective assessment of sherd size suggests that, with the exception of the Fabric E107 sherds, the majority are comparatively small and abraded indicating the largely residual nature of this material.

The assemblage from Trench 6 is broadly comparable with that from the 1989 excavations. This is primarily indicated by the direct comparison between the proportions of the main fabric groups from the two assemblages, unprecedented amongst Dorchester sites, while the range of fabrics and forms present within these are also very similar. However, probably largely as a result of the excavation strategy, the assemblage lacks the large, well-defined early (mid 1st century AD) and late (late 3rd–4th centuries+ AD) Roman groups noted in 1989. Some differences in the quality and/or functional status of the two assemblages may be hinted at by features like the high proportion of samian stamps in the 1990 assemblage as well as differences amongst other material types (the comparatively small quantity of animal bone, and the absence of querns, in the 1990 assemblage for example).

Illustrated Pottery: Figure 12

1. Base of straight-sided bowl/dish; Type 86; burnished line 'imitation Glastonbury Ware' decoration on interior; Wareham/Poole Harbour Black Burnished ware. Layer 2059; Phase 7.
2. Bowl or ? jar with straight, upright walls and beaded rim; probably carinated; Type 87; wavy line decoration; Wareham/Poole Harbour Black Burnished ware. Layer 2062; Phase 7.
3. Carinated bowl/dish with deep groove in upper rim surface and raised exterior cordon; Type 88; undecorated; variant Black Burnished ware. Layer 2218; Phase 4.
4. Small, shallow, lobed dish (or lamp); Type 89; undecorated but some interior sooting and exterior slightly blistered; Wareham/Poole Harbour Black Burnished ware. Layer 2488; Phase 4.
5. Base of straight-sided dish/bowl; Type 85; burnished line decoration on exterior; Wareham/Poole Harbour Black Burnished ware. Layer 2488; Phase 4.
6. Round-bodied, footed bowl; incised rilling near rim; sandy grey ware. Layer 2489; Phase 4.
7. Shouldered jar; incised wavy line decoration; Central or Southern British lead-glazed ware. Layers 2241, 2449; Phase 4: 2211; Phase 5: 2382; u/s.

Samian Potters' Stamps

Brenda Dickinson

Each entry gives: excavation number, potter (i, ii, iii etc., where homonyms are involved), die number, form, reading of the stamp (ligatures are underlined), pottery of origin, date. The letters a, b and c indicate: a – stamp attested at the pottery in question; b – potter, but not the particular stamp, attested at the pottery in question; c – assigned to the pottery on the evidence of fabric, distribution and/or form.

1. Acaperrus; 1a; 33; ACAPRRI; Lezoux; c. Of the eight recorded examples of this stamp, seven are from Britain. The forms and fabrics all agree with an Antonine date.

2. Advocisus; 2a; 33; ADVOCISIO; Lezoux; a. A stamp used on a range of mid-late Antonine samian forms, such as 31R, 79 and Ludowici forms Tg and Tz. *c.* AD 160–190.

3. Advocisus; 2a'; 79 or Ludowici Tg; ADVOC[ISIC]; Lezoux; a. This represents die 2a in a devolved state, when the bar of the A had become blocked with clay, the C had almost closed up and the second half of the final O had disappeared. As yet there is no dating evidence to distinguish between the two versions of the die, but this one is clearly later. *c.*AD 175–190?

4. Buccula; 2a; 18/31R; BV·CCVLA· The fabrics associated with this stamp seem to belong to the Les Martres-de-Veyre range, though Buccula probably moved to Lezoux eventually. Its use on form 38 and of another die on form 80 suggests that he was one of the later Les Martres potters. *c.*AD 130–165.

5. Cerialis ii; 2a; 18/31R; [CER]IAL·MA (Habert 1893, no. 312); Lezoux; a. This stamp occurs in a group of samian from a pottery shop at Castleford destroyed by fire in the AD 140s (Dickinson 1992). It is also known from Hadrian's Wall and Newstead. It is used to stamp forms 18/31, 18/31R and 27. *c.*AD 135–160.

6. Divicatus, incomplete; 1; 27; DI[VICAT...; Lezoux; b. Divicatus' output includes many examples of forms 18/31, 18/31R and 27, all of which are likely to be before AD 160, though his use of form 79 extends his career beyond that date. His wares turn up in a group of burnt samian of *c.*AD 140–150 at Castleford. His range was *c.*AD 140–170, with 140–160 for this cup.

7. Felicio iii; 2 m; 33;· FEFICIO; Montans; b. No other examples of this stamp have been seen, but the form of the vessel, the fabric and glaze all point to the 2nd-century AD Montans potter. His plain ware occurs in a group of burnt samian from St. Katherine Coleman, London, which is likely to belong to the Second Fire groups. His decorated ware turns up in Scotland. *c.*AD 115–145.

8. Illiomarus ii; 1a; 33; [ILL]IOMARI; Lezoux; a. This is usually on form 33, but four examples have been noted on form 27. It occurs in a burial at Rougham (Suffolk), together with stamped vessels of early Antonine Lezoux potters. *c.*AD 140–160.

9. Lalianus; 2a; 33; [LAL]IANI; Lezoux; a. There is no site dating for Lalianus, but his use of another die on form 31R suggests that part, if not the whole of his career was after AD 160.

10. Malleo; 2a; 79 or Ludowici Tg; MALLEDO·F; Lezoux; a. Malleo's stamps have been recorded from forts in northern Britain founded, or reoccupied, *c.*AD 160. This evidence and that of the dish itself suggests a range *c.*AD 160–190. The sherd seems to have been very crudely shaped, perhaps for use as a counter.

11. Maturus ii; 1c; 38 or 44; M[ATVRIM], in an ansate panel; Lezoux; b. This occurs on an early variant of form 31R in a pit of *c.*AD 150–160 at Alcester. It has also been recorded on form 27. Maturus used other dies to stamp forms 79 and 80. Most of his output will have been after AD 160, but his use of form 27 probably means that he started work earlier. *c.*AD 150–180.

12. Mercator i; 7b; 18/31; MERCA[TO]; La Graufesenque; a. This stamp occurs in a burial at Eben Emael (Belgium), with stamped vessels of Domitian of AD 90–91 (*Arch. Belgica* 121 (1970), p.14). *c.*AD 85–110.

13. Patricius i; 5a; 18; [OFPAT]RC (Laubenheimer 1979, 165); La Graufesenque; a. A very common stamp, from one of Patricius' latest dies. He began work *c.*AD 65, but this stamp occurs repeatedly at Domitianic foundations, such as Butzbach, Saalburg and Wilderspool. *c.*AD 80–100.

14. Reburus ii; 4b; 33?; [REB]VRRRI OF (Vanderhoven 1989, no.11); Lezoux; a. One of Reburus; less common stamps, used on forms 31, 31R and 33. His output also includes forms 18/31, 18/31R, 27, and 79, with the balance in favour of the earlier forms. This will give him a range of *c.*AD 140–170.

15. Victor iv; 1b; 33; VICTO IM; Lezoux; a. There is no site dating for this particular stamp, but one of his others turns up in a late 2nd-century AD context at Sompting, Sussex (Dannell & Hartley 1974, 312). His forms include 31R and 79. *c.*AD 160–200.

16. XIVAA on form 27 g; South Gaulish; Pre-Flavian. 17. SILV... on form 27 g, burnt; South Gaulish; Neronian or early Flavian.

18. Form 27; Central Gaulish. No letters remain, but the edge of the frame is curved, as if for a circular stamp; this would not be usual on form 27, however. Hadrianic or early Antonine, on the fabric and glaze.

19. JM on form 31; Central Gaulish; Antonine.

Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery

L. N. Mephram

A total of 70 medieval and post-medieval sherds were recovered, spanning the period from the 12th/13th-early 20th centuries AD. No detailed analysis was undertaken and the quantity of sherds recovered is summarised by broad chronological period in Table 8. The periods are defined as follows:

Early medieval:	12th–13th centuries AD
Medieval:	13th–15th centuries AD
Late medieval:	14th–16th centuries AD
Post-medieval:	17th–19th centuries AD
Modern:	20th century AD.

The six sherds of early medieval date are all body fragments in locally produced coarseware fabrics. This concentration on local wares continues in the medieval assemblage, which includes six glazed jug fragments. One fragment of possible Tudor green ware occurs amongst the material of late medieval date, together with a sherd probably from a cistern in a local coarseware fabric. Red earthenwares dominate the post-medieval assemblage, one sherd of which is probably derived from a chaffing dish. Single sherds of Raeren stoneware, tin-glazed ware and a Verwood-type coarseware also occur, while the modern sherds consist of fine white-wares, 'china' and stoneware.

With the exception of two post-medieval red earthenware and one modern china sherd from late Roman features and soil dumps, all this material was derived from medieval and post-medieval contexts.

Table 8: Quantification of medieval and post-medieval pottery by Phase

Phase	Early med.	Medieval	Late med.	Post-med.	Modern	Totals
5	-	-	-	2	1	3
6	5	14	4	13	1	37
7	1	9	2	10	8	30
ItaR	6	23	6	25	10	70

Fired Clay Objects and Graffiti

A. P. Fitzpatrick

Five spindle whorls, an inscribed gaming counter, a single piece of briquetage, probably from Kimmeridge Bay and four examples of graffiti associated with Black Burnished Ware sherds were found. Parts of two poorly-shaped fired clay objects which may have been temporary wedges used during firing or burnt accidentally were also found in Roman contexts, as were three pieces of heavily fired clay, possibly pieces of hearth or furnace lining, and a single piece of what may be mortar. Full catalogue descriptions are available in archive.

Spindle Whorls

All of the spindle whorls were made from sherds of Black Burnished ware vessels with drilled holes. Four examples were complete, two being carefully trimmed and worked.

Counter

The circular counter has been carefully trimmed from what is apparently tile. Deeply incised on one side is what appears to be the letter D with a shallower incision alongside it which may not be a letter (Fig. 13, 1). On the reverse are four intersecting lines, like a noughts and crosses field, and over them are two triangular figures, both of which might be the letter A but this is uncertain (R. S. O. Tomlin pers. comm.). None of the lines on the reverse appear to be striations caused by wear, a feature noted on counters from Colchester (Crummy 1983, 93–4), but it seems likely that the Wessex Court piece is a gaming counter from a board game (MacGregor 1976, 2–4). The counter has already been published in *Britannia* (Tomalin 1991, 302).

Briquetage

A single piece of briquetage, the fabric of which is very close to that of Hobarrow Type from Kimmeridge Bay (E90: Farrar 1975) was found in an early Roman context. Briquetage of this type has also been found at Greyhound Yard (Woodward *et al.* 1993).

Graffiti

All four examples of graffiti were on sherds of Black Burnished Ware pottery. On one, marks interpreted as representing [...] MIV [...], probably [...] miu [s], survive (Fig. 13, 2: Tomalin pers. comm.). Another has incised marks representing part of an X within a square which are interpreted as a mark of identification (Fig. 13, 3:

Tomalin, pers. comm.). Both of the remaining two pieces have intersecting lines, in one case forming a star and in the other probably doing so (Tomalin, pers. comm.)

Illustrated Fired Clay and Graffiti: Figure 13

1. Counter; probably trimmed tile, incised with what appears to be a D and another indeterminate mark on one side and four intersecting lines and two triangular figures on the other. OR3327; layer 2139. Phase 5.
2. Graffiti on Black Burnished ware, probably [...] MIV [...], representing [...] miu [s]. Context 2087. Phase 5.
3. Graffiti on black Burnished ware; an X within a square. Context 2139. Phase 5.

Ceramic Building Material

N. J. Adam

Antefix Fragments

All of the fragments recovered appear to have come from decorative frames made in the same mould as the near complete example found in Trench 3 during the 1989 season, although all were considerably less complete. With one exception, the fragments were all from early Roman layers, probably from some form of public building which was sited near the Wessex Court development area in the 1st–2nd centuries AD.

Ceramic Building Material

A total of 13863 pieces of ceramic building material, weighing 1936314 g was recovered from the site. The vast majority of the material was discarded after having been counted and weighed by context; the data is held in archive. The retained material consisted of eight *tesserae* and 32 *imbrices* which had survived as either complete lengths or widths or which had makers' stamps, and 21 *tegulae*, three stamped, six with paw prints and the rest either complete lengths or widths. Five near complete bricks, two box tiles and nine wall tiles, one of which bore a stamp, were also retained, together with eight *tegula mammata* fragments. All of these objects are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Ceramic building material by Phase

Phase	Tesserae	Imbrex	Tegula	Brick	Box tile	Tegula mammata	Undiag.
3	-	13	13	8	3	1	74
4	-	834	803	310	26	8	4456
5	6	474	452	102	3	-	2201
6	-	48	45	-	-	-	576
7	2	301	270	16	10	-	1724
8	1	96	82	3	5	-	338
Unphased	-	73	57	29	-	-	400
Totals	9	1839	1722	468	47	9	9769

Tegula Mammata

The *tegula mammata* fragments from Trench 6 were the first to be recognised from Wessex Court. These tiles were used in cavity walling and have been found at bath-house sites across Britain and Europe, including that at Dorchester (Brodribb 1987, 65). The tiles from the Dorchester bath-house bore a distinctive ‘trough’ around the base of the conical *mammae*, a feature which was also noted on the Wessex Court examples. Indeed, it is possible that the Wessex Court tiles may have come from the bath-house, 50 m to the east, perhaps indicating that material originating from redevelopment of the baths was dumped on the Wessex Court site.

Other Objects

Fragments of box tile from Trench 6 suggest that some buildings in the vicinity were heated, although no evidence of heating was recorded in the buildings excavated. (These tiles may also have been ‘imported’ with rubble from the bath-house).

Six of the nine ceramic *tesserae* were found, with some stone *tesserae*, *in situ* in the southern room of late Roman Building 4. Several of the *imbrex* and *tegula* fragments were stamped with ‘*Nund*’, an abbreviation of Nundinus or Nundinarius – the tilemaker’s name, which also occurred on examples found during the 1989 season and at Greyhound Yard (Woodward *et al.* 1993).

Stone and Stone Building Material

Kathryn Knowles

The following were submitted for examination: 434 *tesserae* (Table 10); 17 worked stone objects (including broken objects); 147 pieces of unworked stone; 9 burnt bricks. A full catalogue of the descriptions and identifications is held in archive.

Table 10: Stone *tesserae* by phase

Phase	Portland Whitbed	Grey Flaggy Limestone	Hard Chalk	Sandstone
4	51	8	189	-
5	103	33	10	1
7	27	11	1	-
Totals	181	52	200	1

Rock Sources

The site yielded at least seventeen different rock types, both local and from more distant areas. The area from which the greatest variety of rocks derive is the Upper or Middle Purbeck Beds in the Isle of Purbeck. This included rocks such as Purbeck Marble, Lower Purbeck Building Stone, Upper Purbeck Building Stone, Purbeck Broken Shell Limestone, Purbeck Cinder Bed, Portland/Purbeck Cherty Series, Portland/Purbeck Freestone Series, Blue Rag, Kimmeridge Clay and Tertiary Heathstone (ferruginous sandstone). Such a diversity of rock types from one area emphasises its importance during the Roman period.

The Portland Beds, particularly the Whitbed comprises the largest number of samples. Its outcrop extends from the area south of Dorchester to the Isle of Portland. Grey flaggy limestone probably also came from the same area, since one *tessera* of

this rock showed gradation to Whitbed within the same piece. The hard white chalk could come from either of the above locations.

Rocks from further afield include Ham stone from the south of Somerset, Pennant sandstone from Avon, and sandstone resembling samples in the University of Southampton collection from the Wealden around Horsham.

Chronology

On the basis of the site phasing, it appears that Portland stone appears first on the site during the early Roman period before the Purbeck building stone, although by how much is not clear. The site also appears to provide some evidence for the introduction of specific rock types, as detailed below.

Purbeck Marble

Purbeck 'marble' is a shelly limestone containing a mass of freshwater snail shells called *Viviparus Cariniferus* (J. de C. Sowerby) that can be found in the upper strata of the Purbeck Beds, Isle of Purbeck. The outcrop extends from Peveril Point, Swanage, westwards to Worbarrow Bay but has been most extensively worked at the eastern end of the outcrop.

Five pieces of worked Purbeck Marble were found on the site in late Roman contexts, but these could be residual. The worked pieces are all sawn slabs which may comprise elements of *opus sectile*, or possibly cladding for walls.

The early use of Purbeck Marble as worked slabs is attested from other sites including Colchester (Dunning 1949), Richborough (Dunning 1968) and Exeter (Toynbee 1979). Late occurrences are rarer, for example at Ower in Purbeck (Woodward 1987b), and appear to be more localised in distribution.

Broken Shell Limestone

The Broken Shell Limestone is a hard massive limestone full of compressed shells which lies below the Purbeck Marble in the Upper Purbeck Beds. It occurs only as unworked stone on this site, twice in an early Roman context, three times in a late Roman context and seven times in two medieval/post medieval contexts where it is probably residual. It appears to have been quarried throughout the Roman period, but where it was quarried and for what purpose it was being used are uncertain. Sunter notes a mortarium made of Broken Shell Limestone from Norden, near Corfe Castle (1987, 39).

Upper Building Stone

The Upper Building Stone consists of fossiliferous limestone with shale partings found in the Middle Purbeck Beds. Again, only four unworked examples have been recovered on this site, two were found in early Roman contexts, one was discovered in a pit in a late Roman context and one in a post medieval robber pit: the latter two are probably residual. Thus, it appears that this stone began to be quarried in the early Roman period, but it is uncertain when production ceased.

The Cinder Beds

The Cinder Beds of the Middle Purbeck are made up of a mass of oyster shells giving rise to the distinctive texture from which the rock takes its name. All four unworked fragments are small and are found firstly in a pre-Roman context, twice in early Roman contexts and latterly in a late Roman context, possibly residual and suggesting

that quarrying of this rock could be restricted solely to the early Roman period. Furthermore, it may have been used for a decorative purpose since it was of little use as a building stone.

Lower Building Stone

The Lower Building Stone is a fossiliferous limestone with more varied beds than the Upper Building Stone. Both worked and unworked examples have been recovered on the site. There are ten unworked examples: one fragment from an early Roman context and nine from late Roman or medieval contexts.

Six worked fragments of Lower Building Stone comprise near complete, heavy, rough, oval roof tiles with peg holes; these are from a medieval context, but are certainly residual Roman material.

Blue Rag

One occurrence of unworked Blue Rag from the Purbeck Beds is to be found in a late Roman context.

The Purbeck Portland Cherty Beds

This is a cherty limestone to be found on the Isle of Purbeck. It occurs only once on the site, as an unworked piece in an early Roman context.

The Purbeck Portland Freestone Series

This again is a limestone from the Isle of Purbeck, with one occurrence in a medieval context where it is probably residual. It is interesting to note that this material does not seem to have been much utilised in Dorchester probably because similar stone was available nearer at hand on Portland.

Kimmeridge Clay

Two pieces of burnt clay (one containing fossils similar to the ammonite *Pavlovia* and bivalve *Protocardia*) probably originate in the Upper Kimmeridge Beds of the Isle of Purbeck. It is a soft red/orange rock often containing fossils such as bivalves, ammonites and oysters and its red colour may be due to natural ignition of the oil shale.

Although both pieces were found in the same late Roman context, they may be from different locations along the Kimmeridge Clay outcrop, since one contains an abundance of bivalves, and the other contains large ammonites and bivalves with occasional oysters.

Tertiary Heathstone (Ferruginous Sandstone)

Heathstone is the common name for a ferruginous sandstone from the Bagshot Beds. It can be found on the Isle of Purbeck and elsewhere. This stone occurs twice, in early Roman contexts. One piece is unworked, the other may be a worked stone (possibly a quernstone?) but only a fragment was available for examination. Evidence for alternative use of the stone can be seen at Ower, where it was employed in walling and socketed supports for structural uprights in buildings (Cox and Woodward 1987b).

Portland Stone

By far the majority of both unworked stone and *tesserae* can be ascribed to the Portland Beds. Portland Stone can be found from the area south of Dorchester to the

Isle of Portland. It varies in composition, but the majority of pieces found tend to be an attractive, hard, white, oolitic limestone, possibly the Whitbed.

Nineteen unworked pieces are from early Roman contexts, eleven are found in late Roman contexts (two of which are probably residual early Roman pieces) and ten are from medieval/post medieval contexts, (five of the latter possibly being residual). It seems that quarrying began in the early Roman period and continued without a decline into the late Roman period.

The worked stone objects include a Portland Stone roof tile of the same shape, colour and date as the Purbeck Lower Building Stone roof tiles. It was found in a medieval context but is probably residual; it is likely that it was a replacement for a tile in the latter stone.

The largest number of worked stone objects from the site are the Portland Stone *tesserae* (181 in total), resembling Portland Whitbed samples in the Southampton University collection. All are of approximately similar shape and size 30 x 30 x 20 mm – 20 x 20 x 20 mm. Fifty-one of the *tesserae* are from early Roman contexts (Table 10), one hundred and three are from late Roman contexts and 27 from medieval contexts; the latter are likely to be residual.

Grey Flaggy Limestone

This rock is common on the site as both worked and unworked stone. The unworked stone occurs three times in early Roman contexts, seven times in late Roman contexts (including one residual early Roman piece) and twelve times in medieval/post medieval contexts. This pattern of distribution may indicate increased production in the late Roman period.

The *tesserae* of this rock type have a similar range, eight occurring in early Roman contexts, 33 in late Roman contexts and eleven in medieval contexts (Table 10), suggesting a marked increase in number during the late Roman period. Unlike the Portland *tesserae*, size differs within this rock type, with both large (35 x 25 x 10 mm) and smaller sizes (15 x 10 x 10 mm) appearing throughout early and late contexts.

Two worked, rectangular, grey flaggy limestone roof tiles with peg holes were found, one in a late Roman context and one in a medieval context; the latter is almost certainly residual. Such roof tiles are also evident at Exeter (Scrivenor 1979), where they are said to be from the Lower Lias (Jurassic) or White Lias (Phaetic) formation.

Hard Chalk

The hard white chalk is a little more difficult to assign to a provenance, since the rock is found on both Portland and Purbeck. There are two occurrences of unworked chalk on the site, one early Roman, one late Roman.

One hundred and eighty-nine *tesserae* were found in an early Roman context (Table 10). These are of a smaller size, 11 x 11 x 12 mm. A further ten (of both large and small sizes) occur in later Roman contexts and only one residual piece appears in a medieval context, possibly indicating a decline in the later period.

Evidence from a mason's yard at Norden, Corfe Castle (Sunter 1987), which was manufacturing chalk *tesserae* from the local Upper Chalk formation during the 1st century AD, suggests that the Isle of Purbeck may be a possible source. Some of these *tesserae* may have been destined for the Flavian villa at Fishbourne, where second period mosaics were partly composed of a similar hard white chalk (Cunliffe 1971). Further examples of chalk *tesserae* were also found at Eccles (Detsicas 1963), Angmering (Scott 1938) and at Caerlon (Rainey 1973). The decline in this type of *tesserae* during the late Roman period (coupled with a similar decline in Purbeck

Marble production) may point to a drop in demand for the Purbeck material, if this is the source.

Sandstone

Worked sandstone resembling samples of Wealden Sandstone in the University of Southampton collection appear as a *tessera* in a late Roman context. Occurrences of the unworked stone are very infrequent, with only two in early Roman contexts, two in a late Roman context and two from medieval contexts.

Pennant Sandstone

Pennant sandstone is a red/brown micaceous sandstone occurring once on this site as a smooth yet broken whetstone in a late Roman context. It is likely to originate around Clevedon, Avon, and was probably imported due to the lack of this type of durable sandstone in the area around Dorchester.

Ham Stone

Ham stone is a yellow/gold coloured shelly limestone which appears as worked and unworked pieces on the site. Seven appear in early Roman contexts, and one in a late Roman context, perhaps indicating a decline in production or demand towards the late Roman period. The worked Ham stone was found in a medieval context but is almost certainly a residual Roman piece, possibly from a moulding. It is interesting to note the early Roman date, since there is a 1st-century AD Roman fort on Ham Hill, south Somerset (Dunning n.d.).

Miscellaneous

An early Roman context has been assigned to an unworked stone of the Upper Greensand although identification is very difficult since it is badly eroded. Gypsum from an early Roman context is an interesting find since it outcrops in the Lower Purbeck Beds of Durlston Bay and Worbarrow Tout.

No source can be currently suggested for the white fossiliferous limestone mortar of early Roman date and the smooth micaceous fine/medium grained sandstone whetstone found in an early Roman context.

Wall Plaster

N. J. Adam

A total of 172 fragments of wall plaster weighing 9742 g was recovered from the site. The majority of the plaster was monochrome, the most common colours being red, white and yellow. A small percentage was patterned with a 'tear drop' design. Plaster was recovered from early Roman to post-medieval contexts and is listed by phase against type in Table 11 and by colour in Table 12. Most of the plaster was recovered from the early and late Roman phases.

In contrast to the plaster recovered during the 1989 season, no significant concentrations of the material were found, nor was any plaster recorded *in situ*. A broad distribution of wall plaster throughout the Roman phases was noted, with smaller quantities of material being recovered from post-Roman and medieval phases

than was the case in 1989. The amount of plaster from any one phase did not exceed an estimated area of 0.20 m².

Wall Plaster Typology

The type series established in 1989 has been used to classify the plaster recovered in 1990:

Type 1	White stripe on a red background
Type 2	Red stripe on a yellow background
Type 3	Red stripe on a blue background
Type 4	White stripe dividing a red and blue background
Type 5	White stripe dividing a red and green background
Type 6	White and dark red stripes dividing a blue and green background
Type 7	White stripe on a green background
Type 8	Yellow and white stripes; imitates plaster mouldings
Type 9	Yellow stripe on a red background
Type 10	Monochrome red
Type 11	Monochrome yellow
Type 12	Monochrome green
Type 13	Monochrome blue
Type 14	Monochrome white
Type 15	Monochrome pink
Type 16	Geometric designs
Type 17	Naturalistic designs
Type 18	Green stripe on a red background
Type 19	White stripe on a blue background
Type 20	White stripe dividing a green and yellow background
Type 21	Pink and red stripes on a yellow background
Type 22	Red stripe on a green background
Type 23	Red and white stripes dividing a blue and green background
Type 24	Blue and white stripes dividing a red and green background
Type 25	Blue and white stripes on a red background
Type 26	Green stripe on a yellow background
Type 27	White stripe dividing a yellow and red background
Type 28	Blue stripe on a yellow background
Type 29	Red, pink, white and brown stripes on a yellow background
Type 30	Red and blue stripes on a green background
Type 31	Red stripe on a white background

Monochrome Plaster and Border Designs

As with the plaster recovered from Wessex Court in 1989, the most common type in this group were fragments of red dado and white and yellow pieces, the latter probably from plain wall panels. Two fragments of dado have a fake marbling effect; one was made by spraying speckles of pink and white paint on a red background, the other has red and white speckles on a pink background.

A number of fragments of different multi-coloured border designs were also recovered. These consist mainly of different combinations of reds and whites, but also include two examples with blues, greens and yellows. This variety suggests that the fragments are from a number of different rooms. Much of the plaster was recovered during excavation of the walls of early Roman structures, Structures 2 and 3, and late Roman Structure 4, suggesting that it had come from earlier, demolished, structures before being incorporated with the mortar matrix for the walls of the later buildings.

No plaster was found *in situ*, despite the survival of more up-standing walling in Trench 6 than in any of the trenches excavated in 1989.

Table 11: Wall plaster types by Phase

Plaster type	Phase				
	4	5	6	7	8
1	-	*	-	*	-
2	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-
4	-	*	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	-
7	-	*	-	-	-
8	-	-	*	-	-
9	-	-	*	*	-
10	*	*	-	*	*
11	-	-	-	*	-
12	-	*	-	-	-
13	*	-	-	-	-
14	*	*	-	-	-
15	*	*	-	*	-
16	-	-	-	-	-
17	*	*	-	-	-
18	-	-	-	-	-
19	-	-	-	-	-
20	-	-	-	-	-
21	-	-	-	-	-
22	-	-	-	-	-
23	-	-	-	-	-
24	-	-	-	-	-
25	*	-	-	-	-
26	-	-	-	-	-
27	*	-	-	*	-
28	-	-	-	-	-
29	-	-	-	-	-
30	-	-	-	-	-
31	*	-	-	*	-

Table 12: Wall plaster colours by Phase

Colour	Phase				
	4	5	6	7	8
Red	*	*	*	*	*
Yellow	*	-	*	*	-
Green	-	*	*	-	-
Blue	*	*	-	-	*
White	*	*	*	*	*
Pink	*	*	-	*	-
Brown	*	-	-	-	-

Naturalistic Designs

Two types of naturalistic design were found. The more common of the two was a random ‘tear-drop’ pattern of blue, yellow and white on a pink background. This pattern appears to have been achieved by flicking paint from the brush onto a plain background, with no apparent contact between brush and plaster. Seven fragments decorated with this design were recovered, five of which had been incorporated in early Roman Structure 3 and one in a wall of the other early Roman building, Structure 2; the seventh fragment was found in the backfill of early Roman ditch 2472. The plaster presumably derived from a building which was demolished by the mid 2nd century AD, before the silting of the ditch and the construction of Structures 2 and 3.

The other design occurred on two small fragments found in the southern room of late Roman building, Structure 4. This consists of what appear to be dark blue petals painted onto a green background. Very little of the pattern can be seen, but the style appears very similar to a floral pattern reconstructed from fragments of plaster found in a house under the east defences at Lincoln (Davey and Ling 1982, ill. no. 25). The dark blue shapes found on the Wessex Court fragments are similar to those noted in the bottom right-hand corner of the Lincoln example.

Interior-angled Fragments

A single fragment of angled plaster, similar to example D from Shakenoak (Brodrigg *et al.* 1973, 96), was recovered from the medieval soil build-up. The fragment had an internal angle of 92° and had lost all of its painted surface with only the rougher aggregate plaster below surviving.

Resurfaced Fragments

Two fragments of plain red dado exhibit evidence of resurfacing. In both cases the secondary surface had been all but worn away, with few traces of plaster left on the face of one and a small fragment 4 mm thick just covering one edge of the other. The latter piece was found in the post-Roman soil accumulation, while the former was recovered from a post-medieval robber trench.

Rendering

Impressions of both reeds and straw were noted on some fragments in the assemblage, indicating that the plaster was rendered onto a timber framework with reeds and straw used in the plaster aggregate, a method described by Vitruvius (*De Architecturarii*, 3, 3–6). No herring-bone patterns or ‘pecking’ were noted on the back of the plaster, suggesting that none was affixed to stone or clay walls.

Objects of Bone and Antler

A. P. Fitzpatrick

Six objects of bone and one of antler were found in Roman contexts or are likely to be of that date. Two, possibly four, are bone pins (including Fig. 8, 7), perhaps hair pins

of types already known from Dorchester, and complement that in copper alloy. In addition, there is also what appears to be a bone ligula or ear spoon (not illustrated) which also repeats an example in copper alloy. The remaining bone object certainly or probably of Roman date is a hinge (Fig. 8, 8) which may have been for a casket and echoes what may be fragments of casket binding amongst the copper alloy objects. In contrast to other sites in Dorchester, no bone counters were found. The single antler object is a handle (Fig. 8, 9), probably for an iron tool.

Illustrated Worked Bone and Antler Objects: Figure 8, 7–9

7. Bone pin with flat head above a single groove; the head may be complete or may have been broken and subsequently smoothed down; if the head is complete the pin falls between Crummy's types 1 and 2 (Crummy 1983). OR5219; layer 2410; Phase 5.
8. Bone hinge with drilled central hole and another at 90° for protruding peg; ? from casket; Roman. OR3381; layer 2203; Phase 7.
9. Antler tool handle; Roman. OR5360; layer 2488; Phase 4.

4. HUMAN BONE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Human Bone

A. V. C. Jenkins

The collection of bone from the 1990 season at Wessex Court comprised four infants, and in addition, there were a few fragments of adult bone.

The condition of the infant material varied from good to poor and the degree of survival of the skeletons ranged from almost complete down to a few fragments. Because of the youth of the subjects no non-metrical observations were made and measurements were limited to the maximum lengths of the diaphyseal shafts of the long bones, the clavicles and the ilia, in order that the gestational age of the skeletons could be calculated using the logarithmic regression equations published by Scheuer, Musgrave and Evans (1980).

No trauma, pathology or abnormality was observed on any of the bones, making individual descriptions of the burials superfluous.

Skeletons 2464 and 2466 are without any doubt parts of the same child since the distal portion of the left tibia found in one context fitted exactly with the proximal portion of left tibia found in the other. Neither was there any duplication of the bones.

Among the other three infant skeletons, although there is duplication of only part of a humerus, differences in size make it unlikely, though not impossible, that only two babies are represented.

Context 2043 contained a little more than the right half of a mandible in a fragmentary condition. The first and second molars were also recovered, the attrition of which is typical of an individual of 25–35 years old. A peculiarity noted is that the second molar is more worn than the first, which suggests that the first upper molar had been lost. Context 2041 contained a right maxilla of about the same size and condition as the mandible, but which had the wear of a person aged 17–25 and all of the molars were in place. It is not impossible that these two jaws belong to the same individual but it is unlikely.

An Assessment of the Animal Bones

M. Maltby

Animal bones from the excavations were scanned at Bournemouth University in December 1992, using the Conservation Sciences reference skeleton collection. The analysis aimed to assess whether the sample could add significantly to the information gained about animal exploitation in Dorchester from earlier excavations at Greyhound Yard (Maltby 1993) and the 1989 excavations at Wessex Court.

Methods

The procedure of analysis followed that carried out for the evaluation of bones from the 1989 excavations on the site. Bones from each context were identified to species where possible but unidentified fragments were not sorted into size categories. The number of fragments of each species was recorded onto forms. Bones were not

recorded in detail individually but fragments possessing articular surfaces, teeth or horn cores were noted in the archive. The number of measurable bones and mandibles with cheek teeth were also counted for each species in every context. Lists of measurements and mandibular ageing data were compiled. Brief notes were made of the state of preservation of the bones and any observed pathological conditions. Butchery marks were noted but no detailed descriptions were undertaken.

Previous analysis of post-Roman faunal assemblages from recent excavations in Dorchester indicated that a lot of the bones may have been residual from the Roman period. Because of the difficulty in dating such assemblages, bones from Medieval, Post-Medieval and Modern phases (7, 8 and 9) were not examined in this assessment. The results of the scan of the samples from the earlier phases are summarised below. The numbers of fragments for each species recorded by phase are shown on Table 13. Detailed quantification tables of species by context and phase units are held in the archive.

Table 13: Animal bone fragment numbers by Phase

Phase	No. of contexts	Cattle	Sheep /goat	Pig	Horse	Dog	Fowl	Duck	Other mammal	Other bird	Fish	Unid.	Total
2	2	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	8
3	7	16	18	8	4	-	4	-	2	2	-	36	90
4	83	281	434	227	5	26	55	7	8	6	22	761	1832
5	41	120	108	71	5	12	11	2	5	3	-	199	536
6	15	28	23	7	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	59	118
Total		449	584	313	14	38	70	10	15	11	22	1058	2584

Phase 2: Prehistoric Ditch Deposits

Eight fragments were recovered from ditches 2500 and 2502 (Fig. 3). Only cattle fragments and a skull fragment from a horned sheep were identified. Early Roman pottery was found in ditch 2500 and it is therefore uncertain whether the bones are of prehistoric origin. Preservation of the bones was moderate to quite good.

Phase 3: Prehistoric – Early Roman Soil Levels

Seven contexts produced 90 animal bone fragments. Preservation was generally only moderate with high numbers of slightly eroded fragments. Six contexts with bones also produced early Roman pottery and it is likely that most, if not all, of the bones are also of Roman origin. This is supported by the presence of several domestic fowl bones (rarely found in Iron Age deposits in the area) and of a cattle radius split longitudinally in a style commonly encountered in Roman samples in Dorchester (Maltby 1993).

Sheep/goat, cattle and pig fragments were the most commonly identified, although there was a comparatively wide range of species represented for such a small sample (see Table 13). The bird bones comprised a single fragment from an immature raven and one from a rook or crow.

Phase 4: Early Roman (c. AD 75–200)

Deposits of this date produced the largest sample. Approximately 1,832 fragments were recovered from 83 contexts. The notes below present an overview of each main group. Full quantifications are held in the archive.

Soil accumulation layers produced 421 fragments. Preservation in most layers was quite good, although eroded fragments were more common in some layers. Sheep/goat fragments dominated the assemblage, followed by cattle, pig and domestic fowl. Ten fish bones were recovered but none could be identified to species. Dog, horse, red deer, domestic duck/mallard and a smaller species of duck were represented in small numbers.

Structure 1 at the western end of the trench produced small collections of bone. Only about 54% of the fragments, were identified to species indicating the fragmentary nature of the material. Surface preservation of the bones, however, was quite good. Large accumulations of bones are unlikely in such contexts. Sheep/goat, cattle, pig, horse, domestic fowl, a medium-sized species of duck and raven bones were identified. Fish bones were quite well represented in this sample, although none could be identified to species.

Structures 2 and 3, in the south-eastern end of the trench (Fig. 4) produced small assemblages. Bones were generally only moderately preserved and these deposits contained high percentages of gnawed and slightly eroded fragments. Representation of the major domestic mammals was similar to the Phase 4 soil accumulations but no horse or duck bones were found. Domestic fowl, cat, roe deer and rook/crow bones were also recorded in small numbers.

Demolition rubble and soil deposition layers produced 954 fragments – the largest group in Phase 4. Preservation varied but generally the bones were quite well preserved, although gnawing damage was common. Sheep/goat fragments were the most commonly counted and included the only positive identification of goat from the excavations – a mandible of a juvenile animal. Cattle and pig were also well represented. Nine of the 14 dog bones were recovered from the same context and several of these may have belonged to the same adult skeleton (a minimum of two dogs were represented in this context). The species list was completed by domestic fowl, horse, roe and red deer, two species of duck, rook/crow, frog and indeterminate species of fish. Of these, only domestic fowl bones were found relatively commonly.

Other early Roman features, mainly postholes, produced 32 fragments. Only cattle, sheep/goat, pig and domestic fowl bones were identified. A small collection (14 fragments) was recovered from features exposed by machine although it may be noted that preservation was generally good.

Phase 5: Late Roman (c. AD 200–400)

Later Roman deposits produced a relatively small assemblage of 536 fragments from 41 of its contexts (Table 13).

Soil accumulations provided 115 fragments. Preservation was generally quite good, although some residual early Roman bones are likely to be included in the sample. The most productive layer (context 2300) produced 61 fragments (53% of the assemblage) and contained several longitudinally-split cattle limb bones. Sheep/goat bones, however, were the most commonly identified followed by cattle and pig. Horse, domestic fowl and a medium-sized species of duck were also found in small numbers.

Structure 4 produced 61 fragments from seven contexts, mainly wall foundation trenches. Preservation was generally only moderate and the bones were probably

redeposited and of mixed origin. Sheep/goat, cattle, pig and red deer were identified. Floor levels associated with this building produced 72 fragments. Preservation was mixed. Cattle and sheep/goat, as usual, provided the bulk of the identified material. The floor foundation of the western room produced the stem of a red deer antler. The section was about 210 mm long and showed clear evidence of smoothing and trimming towards its tip. It had also been sawn off from the crown prior to working. Birds were represented by domestic fowl and raven.

Western courtyard and associated pits – one wall foundation alignment produced a small number of bones (11 fragments). The internal pits 2411 and 2174 produced a larger assemblage, 178 fragments in all. Cattle fragments were comparatively well represented with bones from the lower limbs prominent. The sample was too small, however, to interpret this as evidence for discrete disposal of cattle primary butchery waste. The other species identified in these pits were mainly sheep/goat and pig. Pit 2523 produced nine dog bones. Other species represented in small numbers were domestic fowl, horse, a medium sized species of duck, roe deer, woodcock and rook or crow. Preservation was quite good in all the pits.

Other features / deposits produced just 26 fragments from four contexts, of which only ten were identified. They included bones from a frog and an unidentified species of small rodent from (2315) – a fill associated with an imported amphora fragment.

Late Roman soil dump and demolition rubble produced 73 fragments. Preservation was variable, indicating a mixed origin for the bones. Only bones of domestic mammals and fowl were identified. One of the dog bones consisted of a fragment of a tibia of a slender, miniature animal (context 2087), representing a type of small lap dog which have been found elsewhere in Dorchester and in Roman Britain generally.

Phase 6: Post-Roman

Fifteen contexts, mainly fills of post holes (see Fig. 5), produced 118 fragments. Species identification was limited to cattle, sheep/goat, pig and a medium sized species of duck. Preservation was generally quite good but the sample is likely to contain residual material.

Discussion

The sample from the 1990 excavations has provided further evidence of the exploitation of animals in Roman Dorchester and has supplemented information obtained from Greyhound Yard and earlier excavations in Charles Street. Preservation of bones from the town of Dorchester generally has been quite good and this site is no exception. However, no deep subsurface features (pits, wells) were fully excavated, which precluded the recovery of extremely well preserved assemblages. Carnivore gnawing was a common and major destructive agent of bones on this site. Many of the contexts excavated are likely to be those in which bones were redeposited from other dumps, where the bones had been subjected to scavenging. Preservation in these circumstances is likely to have favoured the bones of adult and larger mammals.

There was little evidence for large-scale dumping of particular types of butchery or bone-working waste or complete animal carcasses. The deposits excavated are not likely to have been the receptacles for the disposal of large-scale processing waste. Such activities are represented in several pits and wells at Greyhound Yard (Maltby

1993) and are a common feature of Romano-British faunal assemblages on urban sites (Maltby 1984; 2007).

The relative abundance of fragments of the major domestic species in the largest groups from the site may be commented on (full details in archive). Samples from Phases 2, 3 and 6 are too small to merit further discussion. The three largest early Roman samples all contained relatively high percentages of sheep/goat fragments, followed by cattle and pig. The dominance of sheep/goat was, however, not as marked as in several of the 1989 early Roman samples, although higher than a number of the Greyhound Yard samples. Throughout the deposits, only one bone was identified as goat, whereas 110 definitely belonged to sheep.

Cattle fragments formed a higher percentage of the fragments recovered from the later Roman sample, although the results were largely based on the contents of a small number of features. The percentage of cattle fragments also increased overall in the assemblages from Greyhound Yard and the 1989 Wessex Court excavations. This may imply an increased emphasis on beef consumption in the 3rd–4th centuries AD but variations of feature types and bone deposition between and within each of these sites makes this assertion a tentative one.

The proportion of pig fragments was generally higher than in the assemblages from the 1989 excavations but lower than the very high percentages encountered at Greyhound Yard. There may well have been variations in consumption and deposition of pig remains in different parts of the town, possibly reflecting localised dietary preferences or areas of pig keeping and slaughter within the town.

The very low percentage of horse fragments from the 1990 excavations lends support to the results from the previous excavated assemblages. Horse meat was not an important commodity in Dorchester. The low percentage of dog bones reflects the absence of excavated pits and wells, which were apparently often depositories for many of their carcasses. The two small groups of associated bones probably represent the fragmentary remains of complete dog carcasses which have subsequently been much disturbed and largely destroyed.

The bird assemblage has probably suffered from the combined biases of poor retrieval rates of small bones and preservation factors. The species represented are typical of other Roman assemblages in the town with domestic fowl dominant and mallard/domestic duck and one or more species of medium sized duck (e.g. wigeon, pochard, garganey) also being exploited on occasions. Woodcock, raven and rook/crow were the only other avian species represented.

Bones of wild species of mammal were rare, although bones of both roe and red deer were found. No bones of hare were recovered, although they were quite commonly encountered at Greyhound Yard. Fish bones were recorded in small numbers in several early Roman deposits, although none could be identified to species. Only extensive sieving programmes would indicate the importance of fish in the diet of the inhabitants of Roman Dorchester.

No attempt has been made in this assessment to analyse in detail the metrical or ageing data. Table 14 shows the number of bones of each species or species group that could provide such information in each phase. The number of sheep/goat mandibles in the later Roman deposits is disappointingly low but the early Roman sample provides a useful supplement to earlier samples.

Table 14: Numbers of measurable bones and mandibles with ageing evidence (excluding bones from post-Roman deposits)

Phase	Measurable							Mandibles		
	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	Horse	Dog	Roe deer	Bird	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig
2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	1	2	-	1	-	2	1	1	4	-
4	30	67	16	1	8	3	19	8	42	13
5	15	17	10	-	2	-	7	5	4	7
6	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-

Few very young or very old sheep were represented and 20 of the 42 early Roman mandibles which could be aged had all three molars in wear but none in heavy wear (Stage 5 of the tooth eruption sequence defined for the Greyhound Yard site; Maltby 1993). This represents a peak of slaughter of animals aged between two and four years. This was a more pronounced peak than encountered in any of the Greyhound Yard samples. There, deposits dated 75–120 AD had larger numbers of mandibles at Stage 4 (third molar not in wear 18–24 months) than at Stage 5. Only in later Roman deposits did mandibles at Stage 5 become the most common category (*ibid.*). In the sample from the current excavations only eight mandibles were at Stage 4 and only eight were from older animals (Stages 6–7). It is possible that there was a change in the slaughter pattern of sheep in the town during the early Roman period and a more detailed study of the mandibles in relation to dating evidence is required.

A number of porous bones of cattle, sheep and pig were recorded in the Roman deposits, signifying the presence of neonatal or juvenile stock.

Metrical data for the site are stored in the full archive report. Analysis of these data and those from the 1989 excavations could add useful information to the results from Greyhound Yard.

Marine Mollusca

Sarah F. Wyles

The assemblage of 942 marine molluscs was retrieved by hand collection from 156 contexts over the whole site. Nine species were represented and have been recorded as minimum bivalve numbers by phase (Table 15). The information for each context is available in archive.

The predominant species was oyster (*Ostrea edulis*), 889 bivalves, which represented 94% of the total assemblage. The cockle (*Cardium edule*) is the only other significant species present. However, the 22 bivalves retrieved only accounted for 2% of the assemblage. The other seven species are negligible since collectively they formed only 3.5% of the marine molluscs retrieved.

The distribution of the marine molluscs throughout the history of the site reflects the trend shown by the oysters, which are always predominant. Half of the assemblage was retrieved from Phase 4, this declined to 18% from Phase 5 and dropped further to 5% in Phase 6. There was a sharp increase to 18% in phase 7. This is a predictable pattern with the peaks occurring in the Roman and medieval periods.

Table 15: Marine mollusca: minimum numbers of individuals by Phase

Marine mollusca	Phase
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	3	4	5	6	7	8	Unphased	Total
<i>Ostrea edulis</i> (oyster)	20	445	161	42	164	22	35	889
<i>Anomia ephippium</i> (saddle oyster)	-	2	1	-	1	-	-	4
<i>Cerastoderma edule</i> (cockle)	-	10	3	1	5	-	1	20
<i>Patella vulgata</i> (limpet)	-	-	6	-	1	-	-	7
<i>Mytilus edulis</i> (mussel)	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	5
<i>Venerupis</i> spp. (carpet shell)	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	4
<i>Buccinum undatum</i> (whelk)	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	3
<i>Cardium aculeatum</i> (spiny cockle)	1	5	1	-	1	1	-	9
<i>Littorina littorea</i> (periwinkle)	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Totals	23	469	174	43	173	23	37	942

The oyster shell varied in condition; 30% of the shells were deemed unmeasurable and were worn and flaky, probably as a result of depositional factors, such as being left lying around on the surface for a time. The remainder of the shells were in good condition. The majority of the shells appeared to be large (>70 mm) possibly indicating some controlled management of the retrieval methods from the oyster beds. There was evidence of infestation on the shells varying from slight traces to rotten backs. It was not statistically viable to analyse this assemblage further.

The small assemblage retrieved indicates that the marine molluscs never formed a significant part of the diet but were only ever a dietary supplement. It is similar to other assemblages recovered in the Dorchester area.

5. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The Prehistoric Period (Fig. 3)

Evidence of prehistoric activity from the 1990 season of excavation at Wessex Court is scarce and cannot be closely dated. Three of the four ditches assigned to the broad prehistoric period represented by Phase 2, ditches 2443, 2521 and 2502, are on similar south-west to north-east alignments; the fourth, 2500, much disturbed by later activity, appears to run from west to east. It is unlikely that the features were contemporaneous, but it is possible that the three similarly aligned ditches may represent a progressive series of field boundaries from the Bronze Age, a period of increasing agricultural activity. The presence of the two Durotrigian coins, together with those found during the 1990 excavations, indicates activity in the area the Late Iron Age, but no associated features were recognised.

The Early Roman Period (Fig. 4)

The earliest evidence of Roman activity consisted of artefacts, including a Claudian *as* of AD 41–64, recovered from soil predating the first Roman structures. This material may reflect a period of military occupation between the initial Roman invasion in AD 43 and the establishment of *Durnovaria* as a *civitas* capital later in the 1st century.

No Roman structures from the earliest period of activity were located but two ditches did predate the subsequent buildings. One ditch, 2217, terminated abruptly in the south-western corner of the trench; its function is not known. The other ditch, 2472, was apparently intended to act as a drain, following the natural slope of the coombe from west to east. Despite being recut at least once, however, the ditch became increasingly silted-up and was eventually abandoned. The drainage problem meant that this area was not initially considered suitable for buildings and remained empty rather later than other sites nearby. Eventually, and almost certainly as a preliminary to the construction of buildings, an attempt was made to ‘improve’ the site by dumping soil and building rubble across the area; this appears to have been successful since, from the 2nd century onwards, a succession of structures occupied the site.

The nature of the structural evidence for the early Roman phase in Trench 6 contrasts with that from other Dorchester sites, where most structures of the period were at least partly timber-built. This is probably a reflection of the later start of development in the area of Trench 6.

Structure 1, rectangular and post-built, lay at the western side of the trench; its nature and function are not known, but the structure was not especially substantial, perhaps comprising a partly covered yard. A succession of changing boundary walls, the earliest to the west but others subsequently enclosing Structure 1 to the south and east, suggest a period of complex property redistribution in this part of the site. Unfortunately the certainty and significance of this are not known since the greater part of the associated properties lay outside the excavation area.

The central and northern part of the site appears to have been devoid of substantial buildings. The survival of wall fragment 2375 beyond the area disturbed

by later buildings indicates some light constructional activity in this area, but the nature of this activity remains unknown.

The constructional sequence in the eastern part of the trench in the early Roman period is not clear but the area was probably occupied by two successive buildings extending north-eastwards, represented by Structures 2 and 3. The earliest of these buildings appears to have been Structure 2 but it is possible that the structural elements thus designated are simply internal sections of a single building represented by the larger plan of Structure 3. It is probable that the buildings fronted onto the Roman precursor of Acland Road, although the road running between the south and east gates lay not far to the south and the properties may have had frontages on both roads.

Taken as a separate building, Structure 2 consisted of a short, right-angled section of wall enclosing the remnants of two phases of tessellated floor in the extreme south-east corner of the trench.

Structure 3, although extending further into the trench than Structure 2, also comprised part of a single room only. The northern wall was crossed by a drain leading out and away from the building. A less substantial wall enclosed a courtyard or open area immediately to the west. Sections of *opus signinum* floor survived in the narrow area between the walls of Structures 2 and 3; if taken as one building, the elements of Structure 3 could be construed as a perimeter corridor, those of Structure 2 as part of an inner room. No internal structures were recorded and there was no evidence to indicate the use of the buildings.

The majority of finds of all types derive from the early Roman period, but this is to some extent misleading since much material of the period was incorporated with the soil and rubble imported to the site and was not directly associated with the early Roman buildings. Proportions and types of imported and more local material were similar to those recovered during the 1990 excavations.

The Late Roman Period (Fig. 5)

Structures 2 and 3 appear to have remained in use throughout the 3rd century AD and possibly later. Timber Structure 1 certainly did not survive that long, but the walled courtyard continued in use in the late Roman period, with two domestic rubbish pits being dug within its confines.

During the 4th century AD a substantial new building, Structure 4 was built over and on the same alignment as earlier Structures 2 and 3, extending much further north-eastwards to fill most of the area between the earlier buildings and the western courtyard. The building comprised four adjoining rooms, two complete, two extending beyond the trench. Some parts of the earlier buildings, principally foundations but perhaps also floors, were incorporated into the new one rather than being buried beneath it. Part of the building lay beyond the trench to the south and its complete plan is not known.

The floors and wall foundations of Structure 4 were well-preserved, the foundations, particularly at the western end, being extremely substantial and probably indicative of a building of more than one storey. Three of the four rooms investigated had *opus signinum* floors, although at least two of these had been patched and repaired with any material that was to hand. The southern room may originally have made use of surviving floor from one the earlier buildings, but at some stage it was given a new tessellated floor; subsequently this floor was also patched, inelegantly,

with chalk rubble. An oven was recorded in the central northern room but this was partially demolished and incorporated into the floor early in the life of the building. The use of the building is not known, although the scarcity of internal structures and the plain *opus signinum* floors of the northern rooms may be of some significance, perhaps indicating a domestic rather than commercial or even industrial purpose.

Some time after the completion of the main part of the building, an annex was added to its western end, respecting the eastern wall of the western courtyard but completely filling the narrowest part of the remaining space between that wall and the western wall of Structure 4. The foundations for the annex were much shallower than those for the rest of the building, suggesting that it was little more than a lean-to or similar simple structure. No associated floor levels were recognised.

The finds from the late Roman period were less numerous than those of both the preceding phase and also, proportionately, than those of the same period recovered during the 1989 excavations. This discrepancy is probably, however, in part explained by the greater depth of soil removed by machine at the start of the excavation. In quality the finds are similar to those from the earlier excavation. Some of the more 'exotic' objects, such as the rare and unusual glass bowl and the sphinx-shaped copper alloy foot, although from disturbed contexts, reinforce the view of *Durnovaria* already indicated by previous excavations as a wealthy and thriving town in the late Roman period.

The Post-Roman Period (Fig. 5)

The period following the cessation of Roman administration is nowhere very clearly delineated in the archaeological record and the Wessex Court site is no exception to this. Deposits from the post-Roman period were, as before, scarce. One activity not directly dated by stratigraphic or artefactual evidence to the post-Roman period but which was undoubtedly taking place was the dismantling and robbing of the Roman buildings. As in the 1989 excavations, no evidence was found for the reuse or adaptation of buildings.

Structural evidence may be represented by a number of postholes cut through the *opus signinum* floor of the western room of Structure 4 and elsewhere. The better-preserved postholes cutting the *opus signinum* suggest the presence of two rectangular structures, 5 and 6. It is unlikely that the two structures would have been contemporary, however, since buildings represented by the postholes would have occupied much of the same space if standing at the same time. A cluster of postholes at the eastern end of the trench may indicate a third structure. Unfortunately no securely datable finds were associated with any of the features thought to belong to this period, almost all of the finds recovered being redeposited Roman material.

The Medieval and Post-Medieval Periods

Documentary evidence shows that the whole of the Wessex Court development site was part of a large area of open field, *Estwalles*, before it was enclosed in 1596, although it is not known when this reversion to agricultural use took place. The contraction of the town which had begun with the departure of the Romans appears to have stabilised and probably been reversed by the 10th century, when the town

became a mint and a *port*. By the time of Domesday, the town had become a royal borough (Penn 1980, 60–1).

Stone robbing continued until almost all of the usable material from the from the Roman buildings was salvaged; pottery found in the robber trenches, although rare, dates from the 12th through to the 17th centuries. The excavated wall foundations and floors survived probably because they were buried in the unsystematic search for stone or because they were simply not worth taking.

As in the 1989 Wessex Court trenches, a deep build-up of agriculturally-derived soil overlay the Roman foundations and, despite the enclosure of the open field in the 16th century, no buildings were erected on the site until the earlier part of the 20th century.

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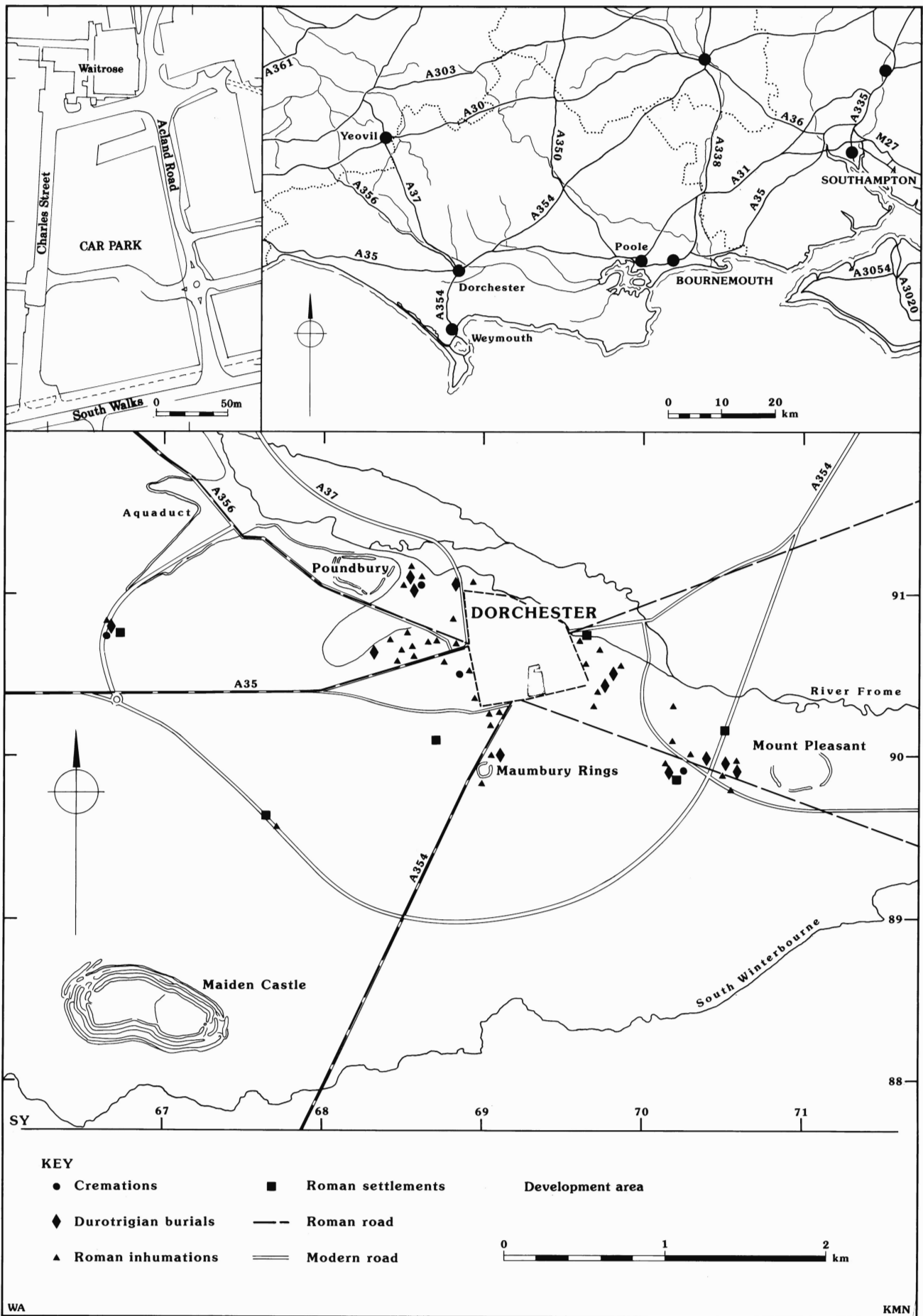


Figure 1: General location and local archaeological landscape (Iron Age and Roman)

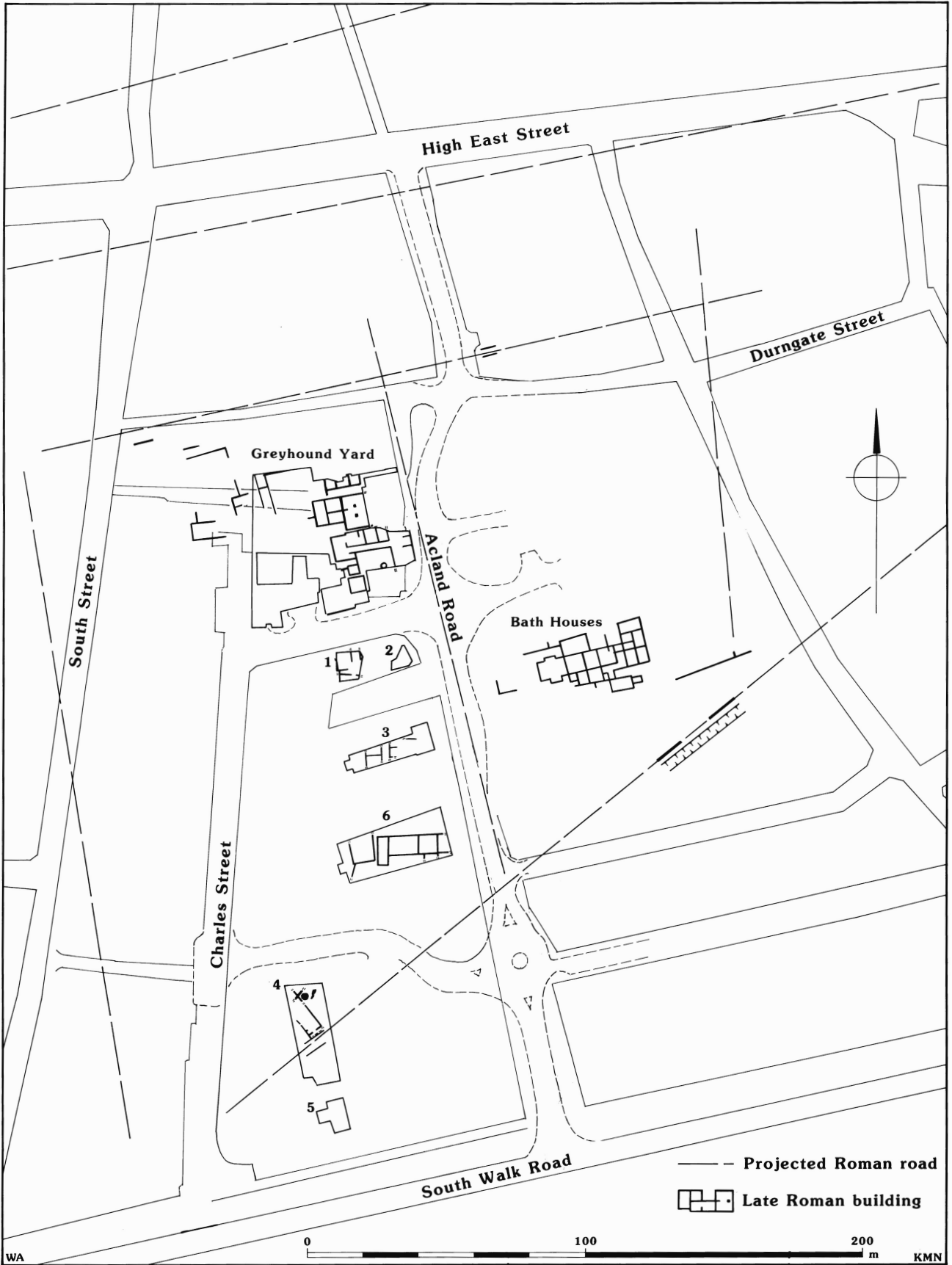
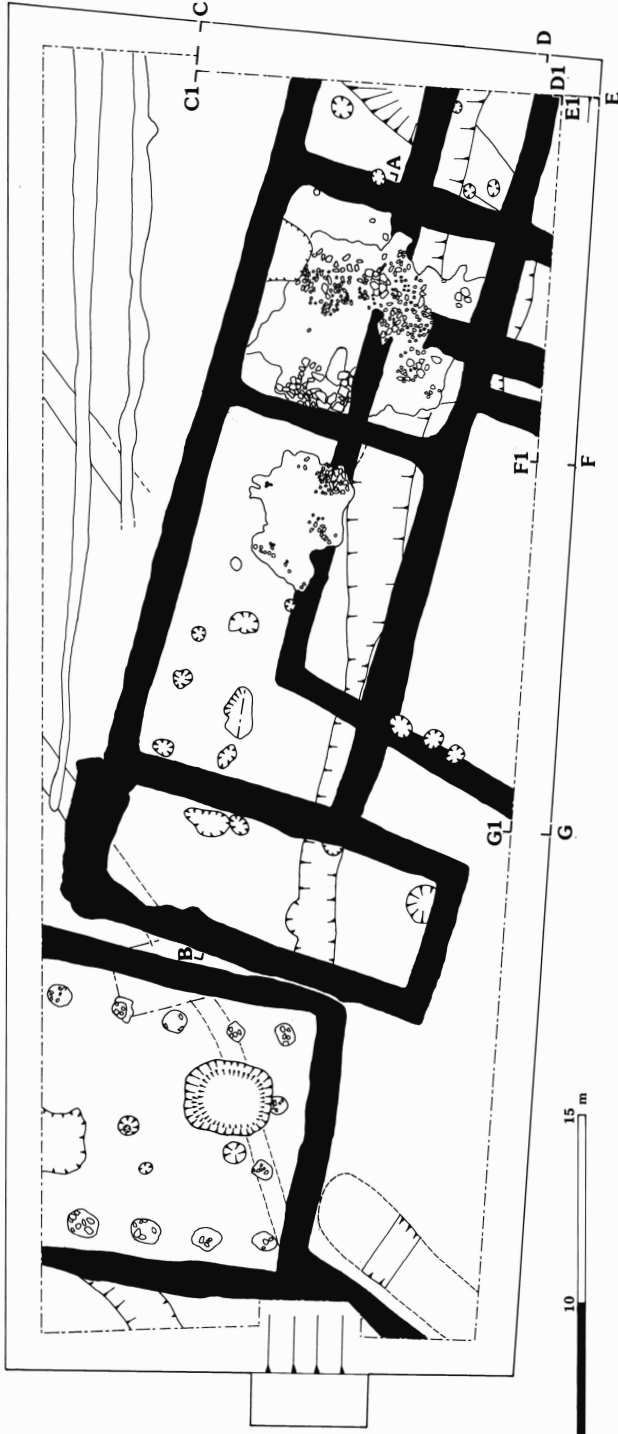


Figure 2: Location of Trenches 1-6 and nearby sites: Roman

Trench 6
All Features



Prehistoric
(c. 2000 BC-AD 43)

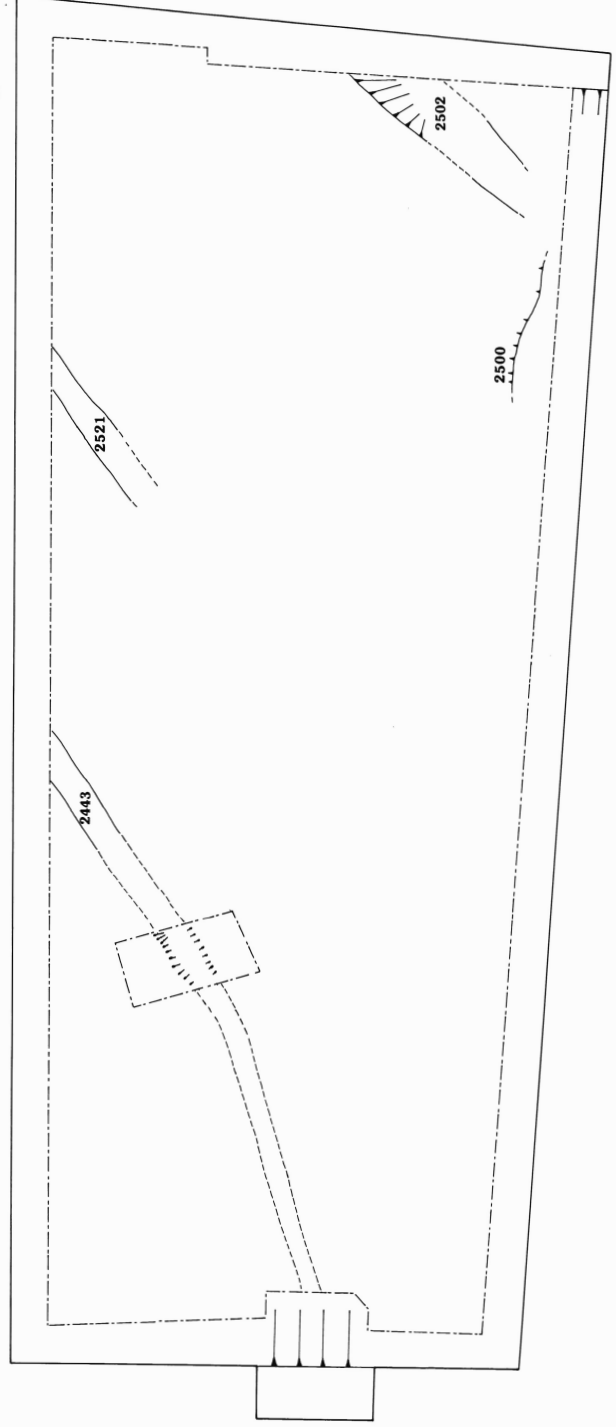
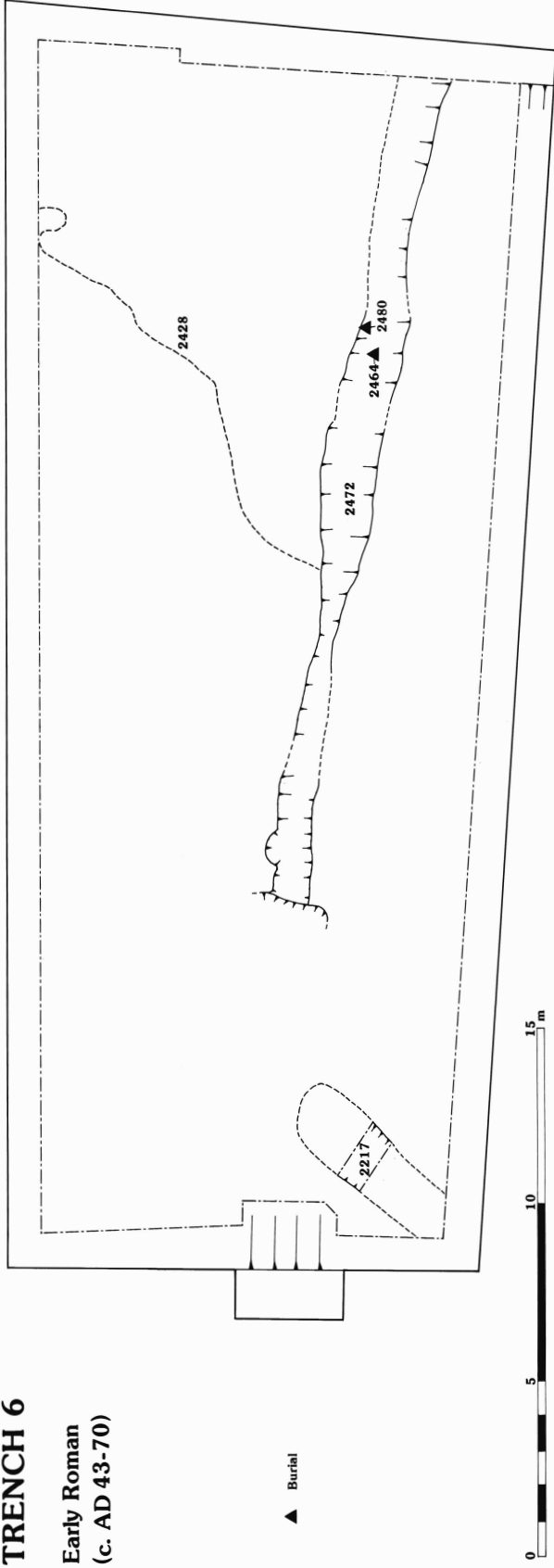


Figure 3: Plans of all features and prehistoric phase

TRENCH 6

Early Roman
(c. AD 43-70)



▲ Burial



Early Roman (c. AD 100-200)

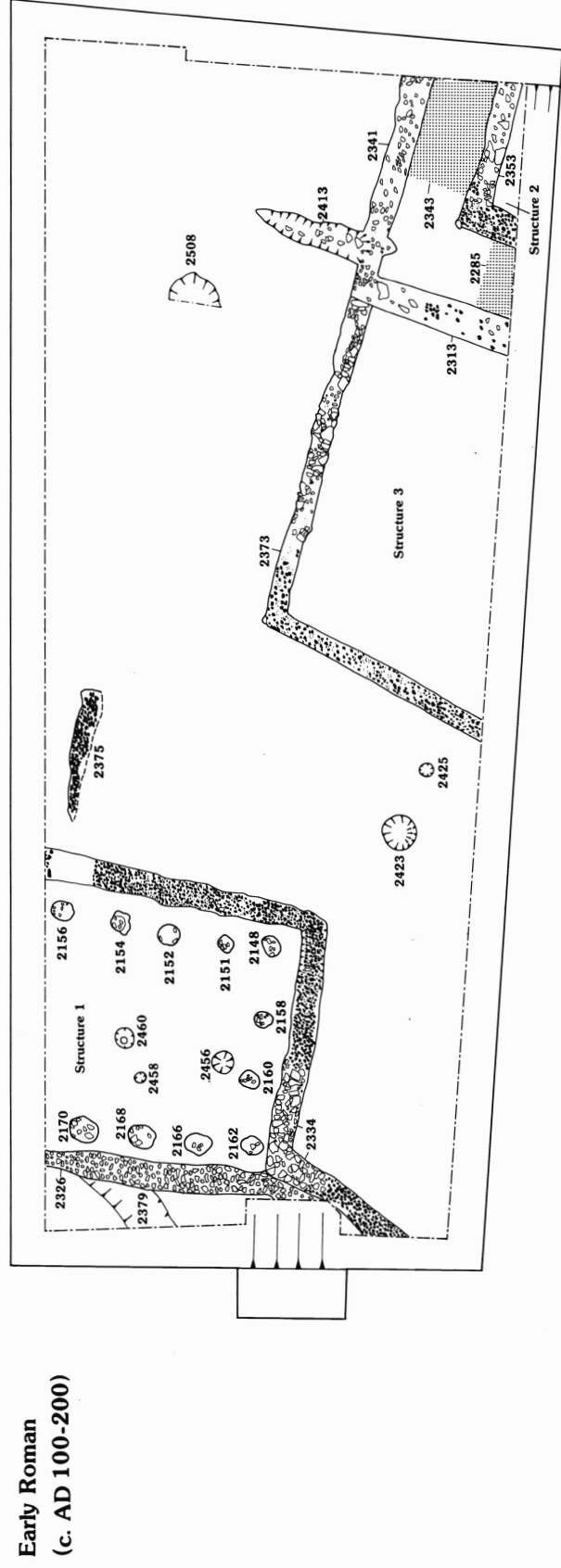
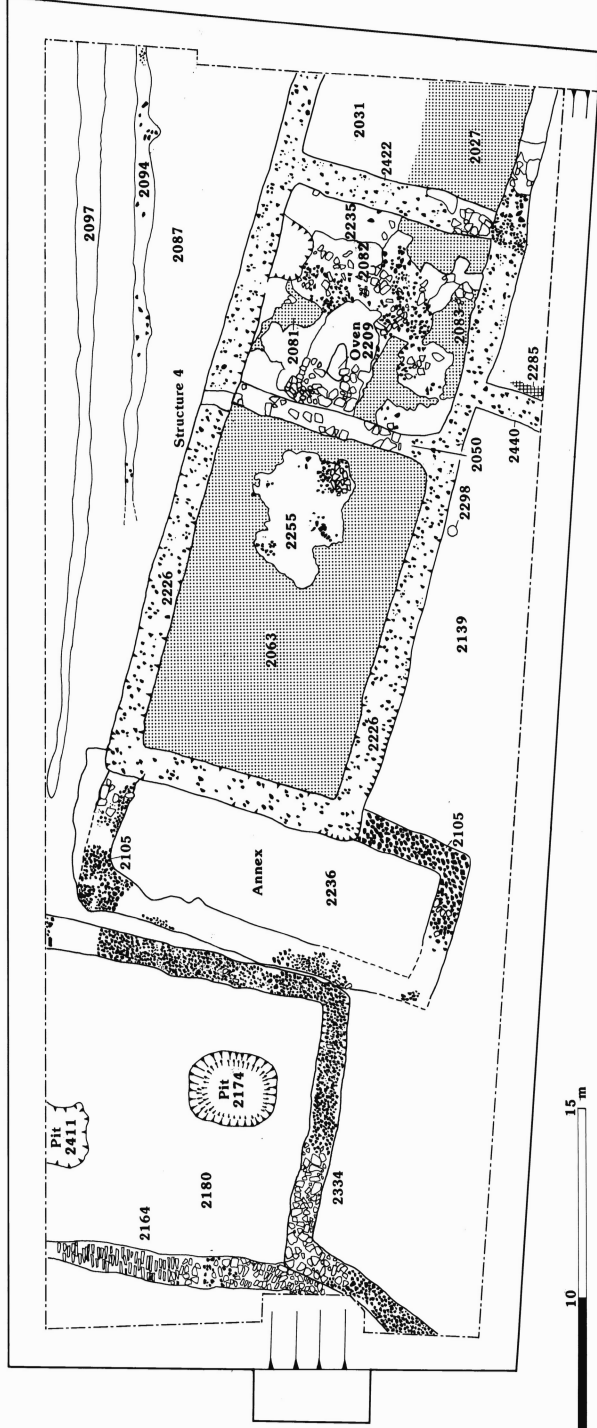


Figure 4: Plans of early Roman phases

TRENCH 6

Late Roman
(c. AD 200-410)



Post - Roman
(c. AD 410-600)

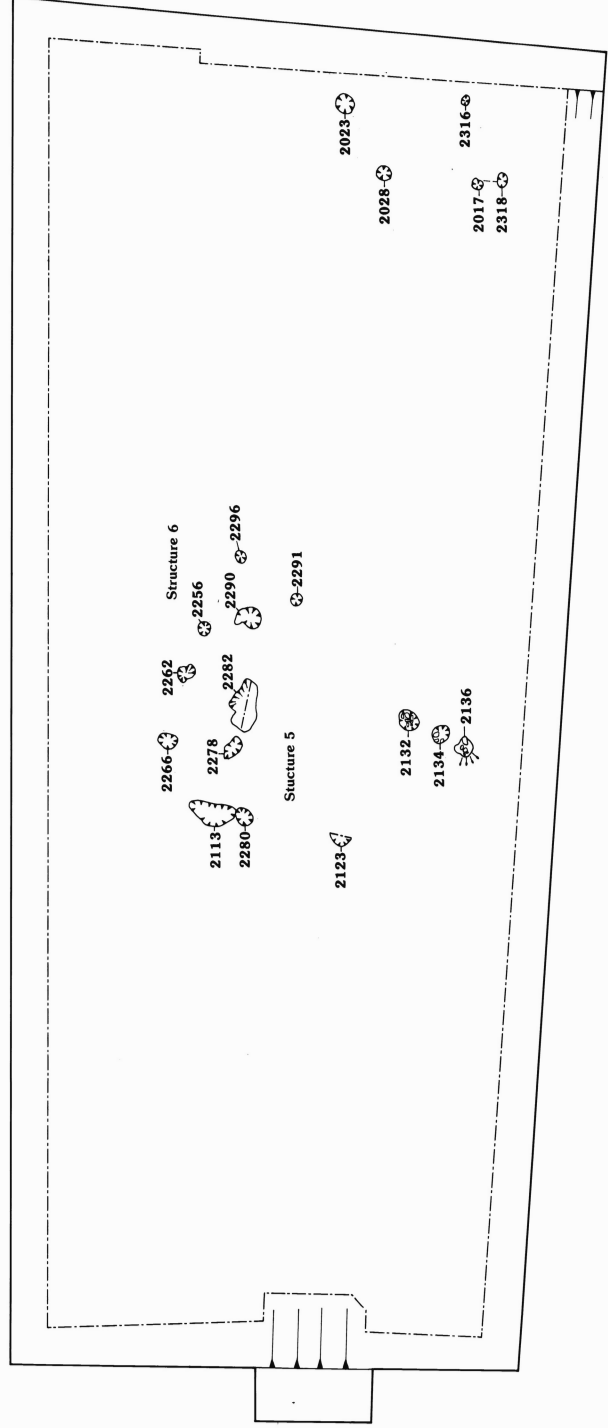


Figure 5: Plans of late Roman and post-Roman phases

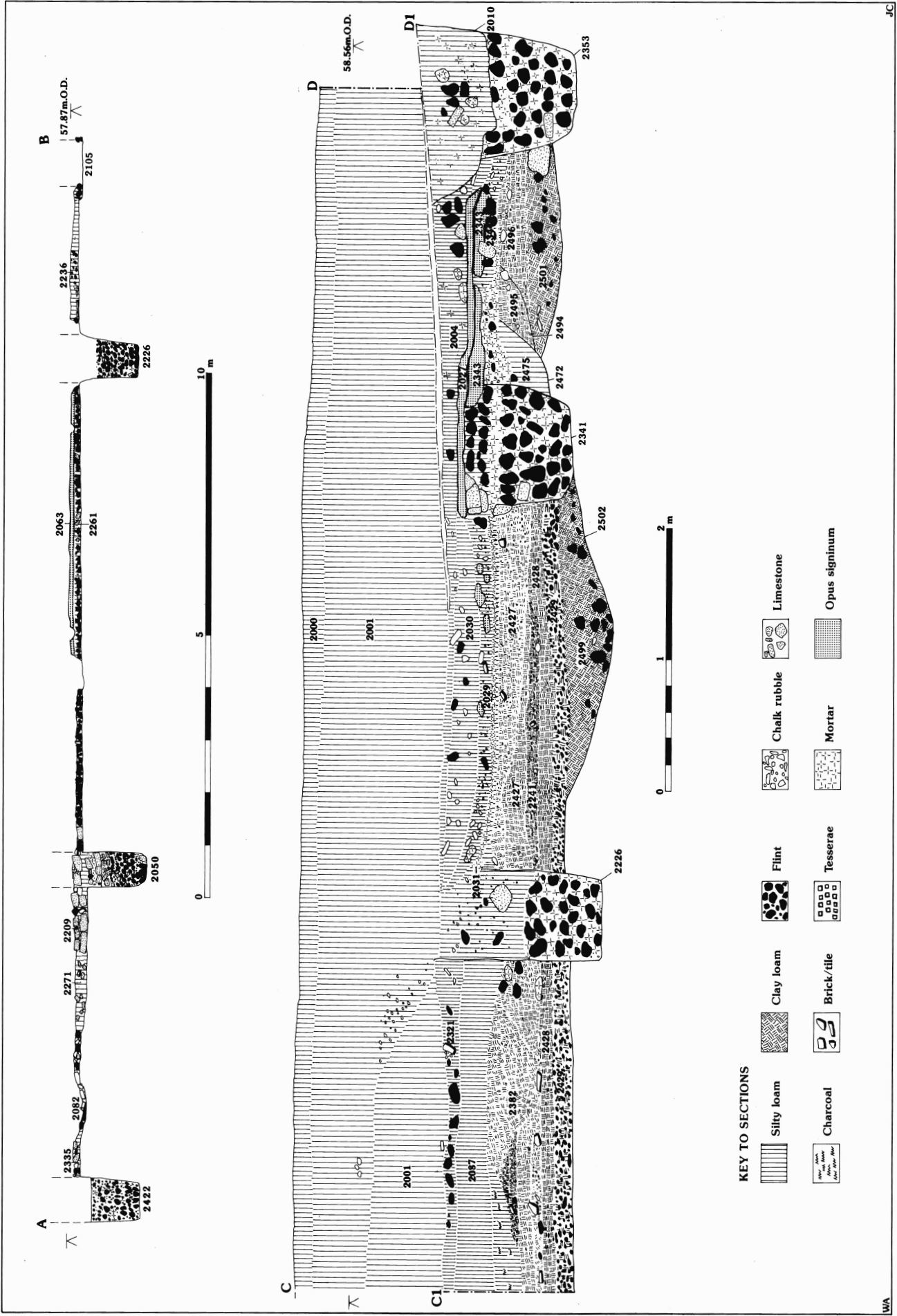


Figure 6: North facing section through Structure 4: southern part of east site section

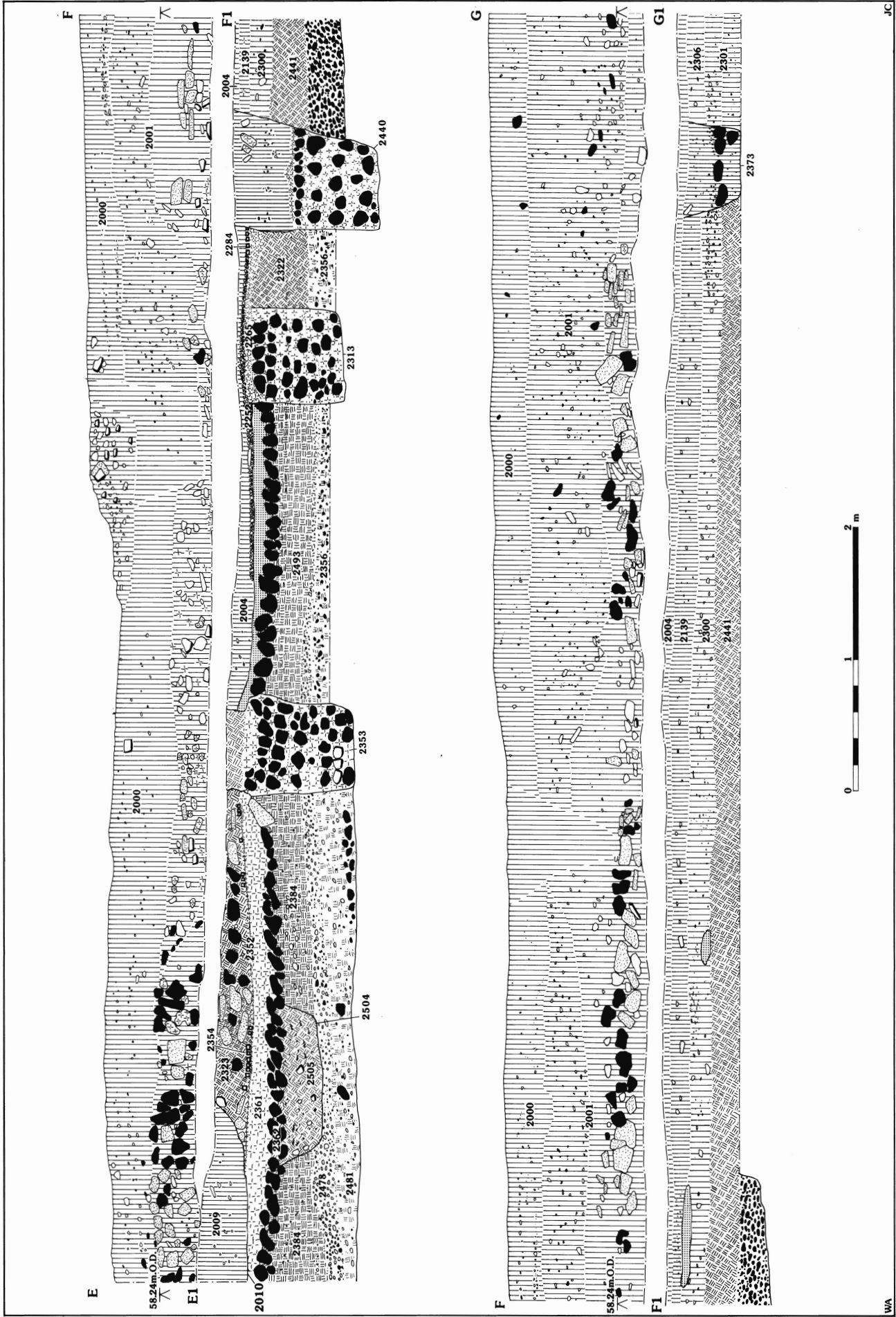


Figure 7: South site section

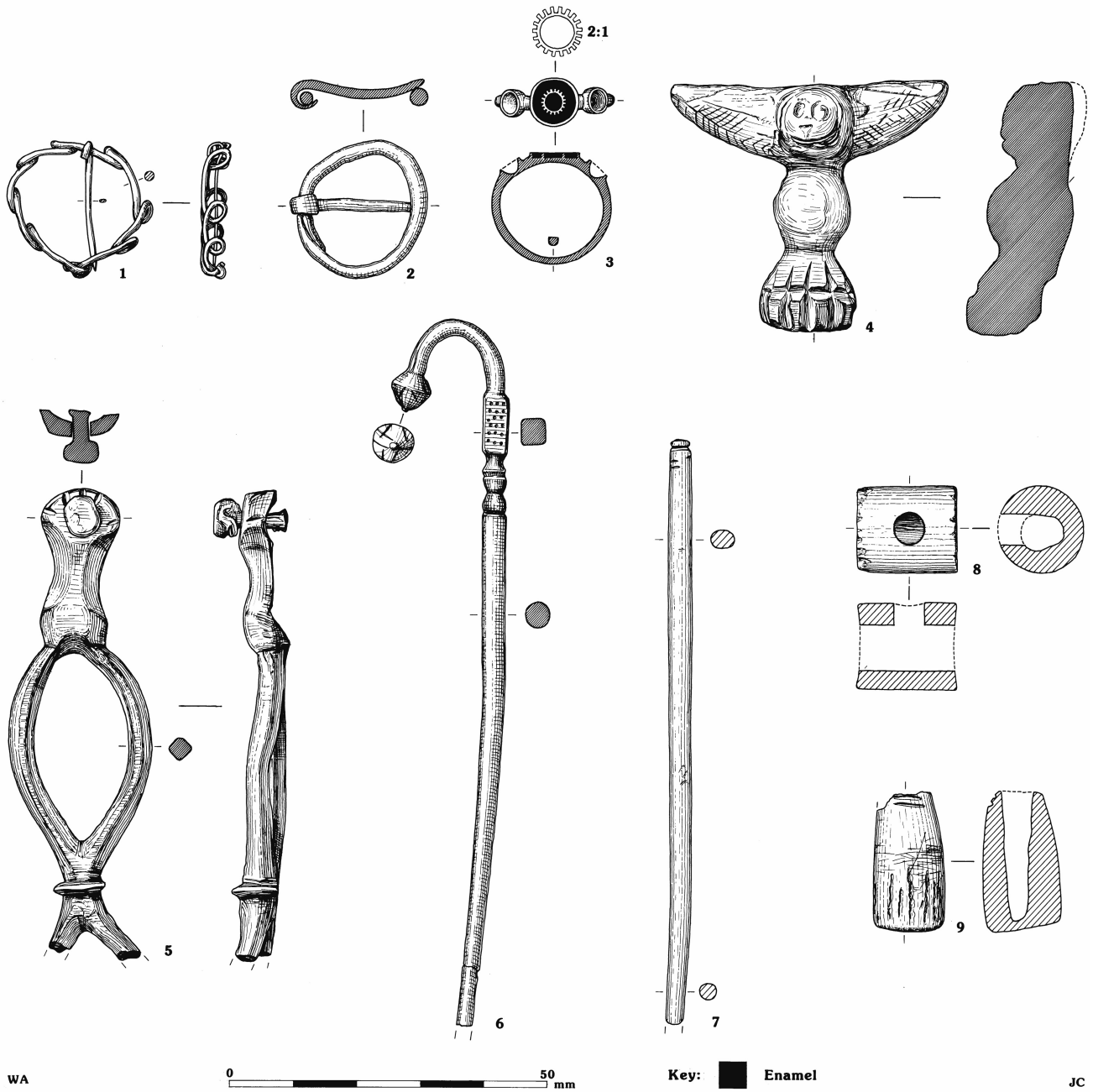
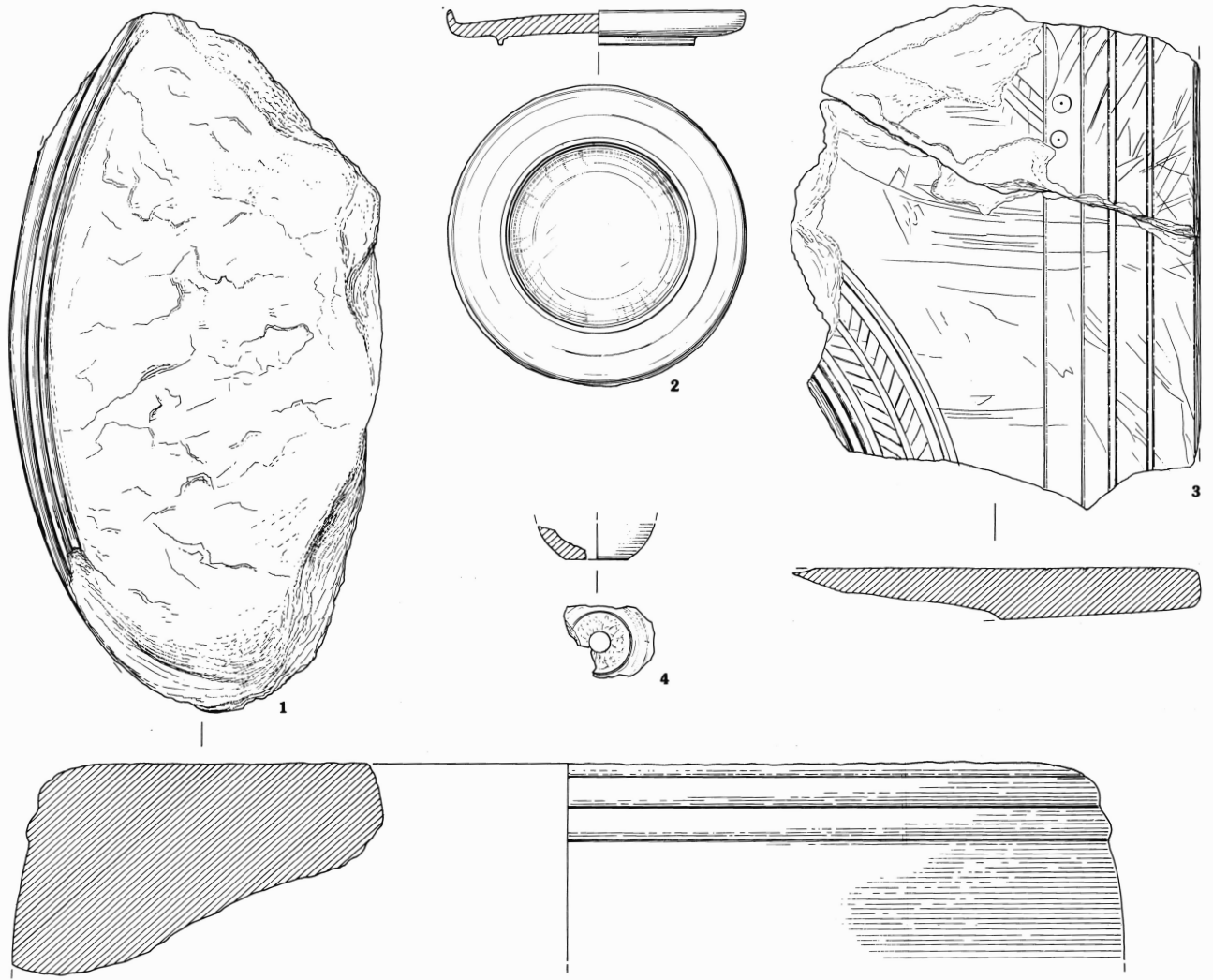


Figure 8: Copper alloy objects 1-6: worked bone antler objects 1-7



WA

0 50 100 mm

JC

Figure 9: Shale objects 1-4

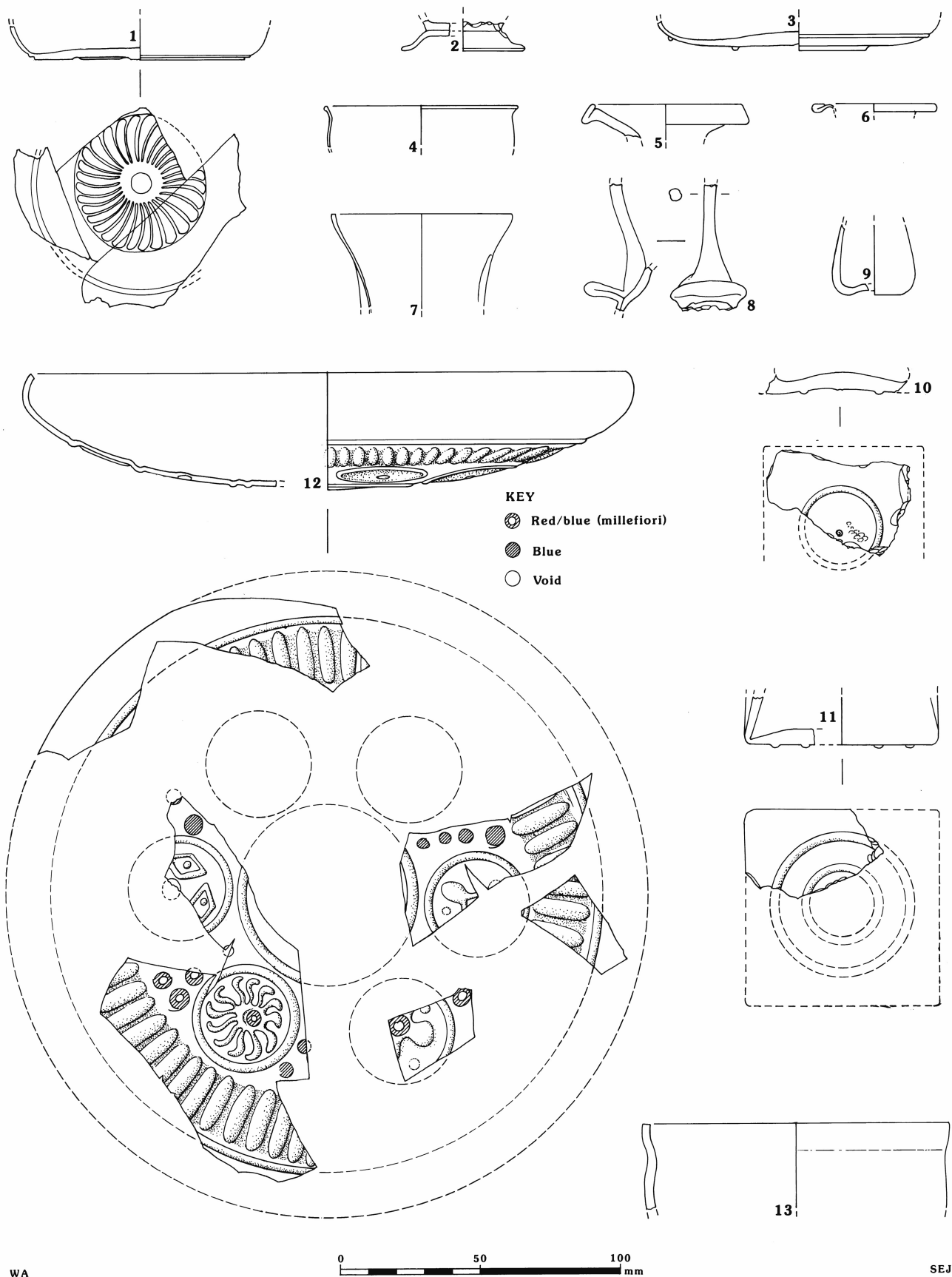


Figure 10: Glass vessels 1-13

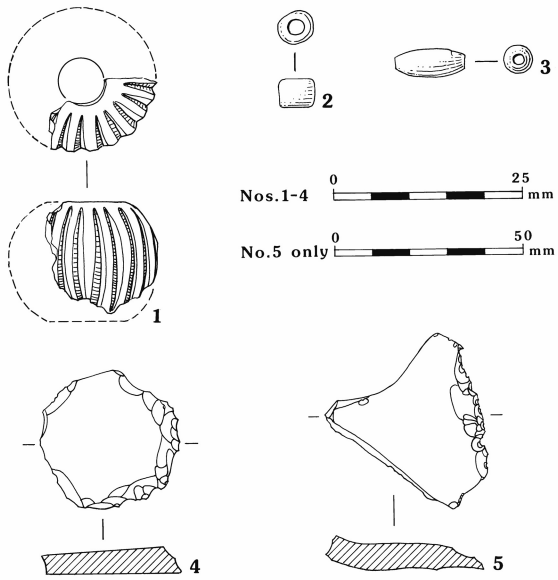


Figure 11: Glass objects 1-5

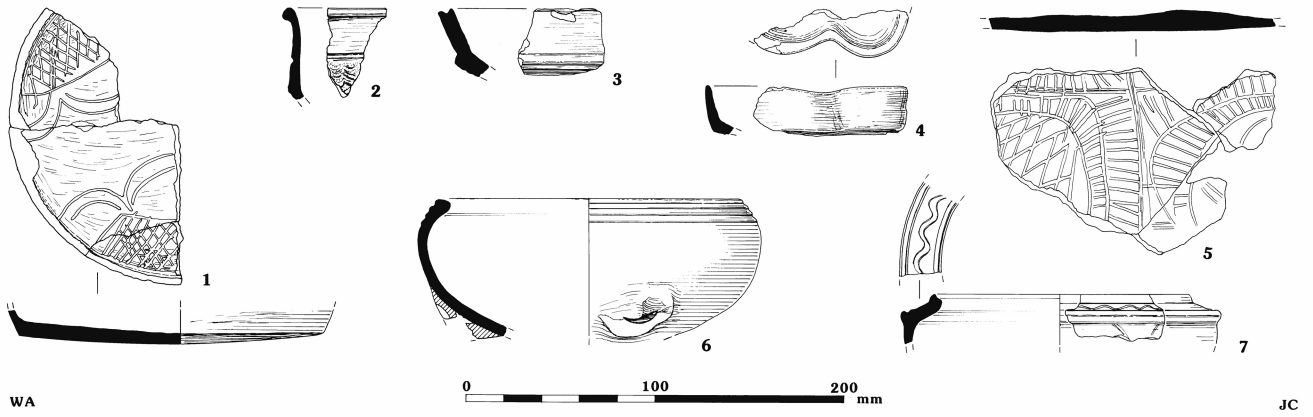


Figure 12: Roman pottery: 1-5 Black Burnished ware; 6 grey ware; 7 imported fine ware

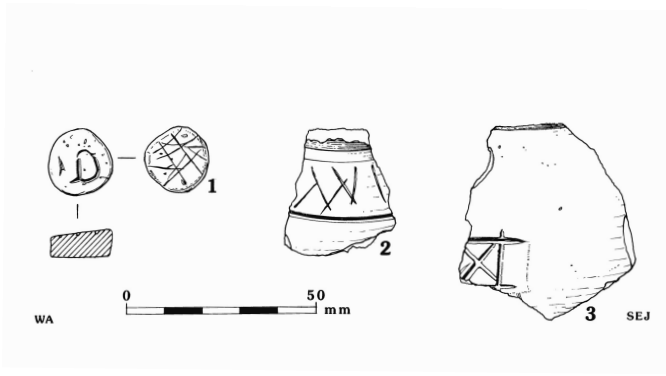


Figure 13: Fired clay counter and graffiti 1-3



Plate 1: Roman-British copper alloy object, possibly part of a foot of a lamp, candelabrum or vessel (height: 40mm)



Plate 2: Roman-British Black Burnished ware vessels from pit 2174 (scale: 50mm)



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