

THE DISTRIBUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANO-BRITISH OCCUPATION IN THE CHESS VALLEY

KEITH BRANIGAN

THE purpose of this paper is two-fold: to publish new Romano-British material recently discovered in the Chess Valley, and to offer a re-interpretation of previously discovered material in the light of this new evidence. During the last five years two new occupation sites have been discovered, at Chesham and Chorleywood. The former has already been discussed in this journal¹ but the evidence for the latter is here discussed in detail for the first time.² Similarly a large collection of surface sherds found at Mount Wood is here published in its entirety. In addition to these two major items, previously unpublished Romano-British material from seven other localities in the Chess Valley is placed on record. Several of these discoveries are due to members of the Chess Valley Archaeological and Historical Society, who gave me access to the results of their work and permission to use the material they have discovered. In particular I must mention Mr. Howard Davies, Mr. A. Stratford, and Dr. L. Barfield who all placed their material and information at my disposal. Other information and much kindness has been shown me by the Curator of the County Museum, Aylesbury, Mr. C. N. Gowing. Finally I must thank the committee and members of the C.V.A.H.S. for inviting me to conduct their excavations at Latimer villa. These excavations have provided us with a great deal of information of a type not obtainable from surface surveys. It is hoped that a full report of the excavations at Latimer will appear in this journal in due course.³

SETTLEMENT SITES

There are now four sites in the Chess Valley where we can confidently postulate the existence of some form of rural settlement. Two of these sites, Latimer and Sarratt, have been known for many years and both have been excavated, although excavations at Sarratt were on a very small scale. The other two, Chesham and Chorleywood, have been discovered and recorded within the last five years.

1. CHESHAM. Little can be added to the description of finds published in the *Records* two years ago,⁴ except that a further 48 sherds have been found on the site of Wright's Mill (total now 107) and three more have been recovered from 23 Missenden Road (total now 4). The new sherds from Wright's Mill included three rims of late 2nd- 3rd century date. Nothing has come to light to revise the

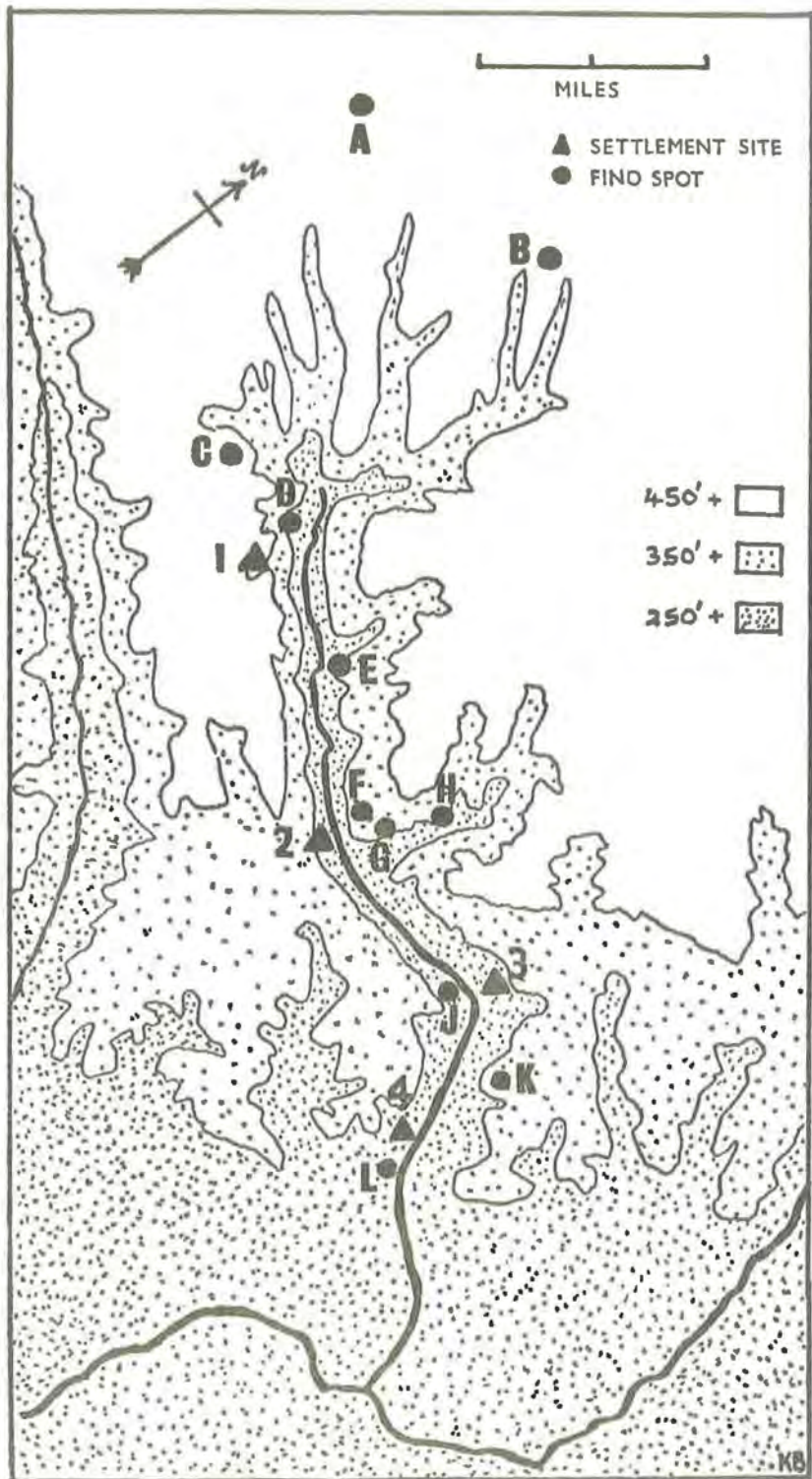


FIG. 1. Romano-British finds in the Chess Valley.

opinion that this may be the site of a small village rather than a villa. The greatest concentration of sherds (Dawes Close) is large enough to suggest that the centre of activity was here, but the spread is so wide that it seems difficult to relate all the find spots to a single villa complex. During levelling and building operations at Dawes Close no traces of stone foundations were found and the only "architectural" material recovered was a quantity of trampled clay floor. Thus, the greatest concentration of sherds was probably associated with one or more timber buildings which lacked substantial floors—no tesserae or opus signinum have yet been found in this area. Hence it becomes even more difficult to relate all the find spots, particularly those across the river and in the gardens of Germains School, to this one farm whose centre of activity was, apparently, of insignificant size and style. The difficulty in recognising the Chesham site as that of a village is the absence of parallels for this situation elsewhere in the civil zone of the province. Only in the Fens and on the Dorset and Wiltshire Downs are village settlements common, and here special circumstances were involved.⁵ In areas where the "villa system" was the basis of the rural economy, villages are conspicuous by their absence. The Chilterns were certainly farmed on the "villa system" and a village would therefore seem out of place. However the Iron-Age settlements at Cholesbury (find spot A)⁶ and Lodge Hill (in the valley of the Wye)⁷ may well have been occupied through most if not all of the first century AD. In the inner Chilterns at least, the village may still have had a part to play in rural life.

2. LATIMER. Apart from the detailed interim reports issued annually (1964–67) by the C.V.A.H.S., short interim notes on the excavations here can be found in the *Records*, 1965 p. 416 and 1966 p. 94, and in *J.R.S.* 1965, p. 211, 1966, p. 208, and 1967, p. 186. The excavations of 1864 are reported in the *Records* for 1865, p. 181 ff, and the excavations of 1910–1912 are summarised in *V.C.H. Bucks.* Vol. II, p. 8.

Latimer villa stands just to the south-west of the river Chess on a level platform at the foot of the western slopes of the valley. A pre-villa phase of occupation is represented by a rectangular hut erected on a timber frame, probably to be dated to the first century AD, but associated with non-Romanised occupants. It was abandoned before the end of the century and the villa was erected c. 130–140 AD. Originally perhaps bi-partite, Latimer was expanded early in the third century by the addition of a second corridor and a sizeable bath-suite attached to the rear of the building. The height of the villa's prosperity was reached perhaps in the mid third century, but the villa may have suffered a temporary abandonment in the last decade of that century. Following its re-occupation at the start of the fourth century AD, there was a period of perhaps fifty or sixty years of renewed prosperity. About the time of the invasions of 367 however, the accommodation in the villa was considerably reduced and some rooms blocked off and presumably left to fall into decay. Final abandonment of the villa building probably occurred in the period 370–400 AD. It was followed however by three further phases of occupation just beyond the courtyard wall. Three successive timber buildings take the occupation well into the first half of the fifth century.

3. SARRATT. Small scale excavations in October 1907 are briefly reported in *V.C.H. Herts* II. p. 438 and IV. p. 163. The writer has also been fortunate enough to see correspondence between the excavator and various friends.

The site is situated on sloping ground some three hundred yards north of the river and between 270' and 300' O.D. The only building excavated was a rectangular structure 48' x 33' with an apsidal annexe, almost certainly a "barn dwelling" of the same broad category as the two examples found at Hambleton.⁸ Like those, it was no doubt accompanied by a proper dwelling house. Some evidence for this is found in the *V.C.H.* reports and in the correspondence. There are said to be "more buildings up the hill" and the east wall of the building excavated is said to continue beyond its corner with the north wall. We may therefore postulate an enclosed courtyard containing a dwelling house and a "barn dwelling" and possibly other outbuildings. Bricks and flue tiles were found on the surface, the latter suggesting a hypocaust or bath-house. Unfortunately we know little about the pottery and coins found in 1907. Three coins (not two as stated in the *V.C.H.*) were found but all were illegible.⁹ The only description of the pottery appears to be in a newspaper report¹⁰ which mentions "orange Samian" and "buff fabrics". The Samian is presumably Antonine, and certainly not first century. Our only other clue as to the date of this villa is to be gained from material found across the river at Mount Wood (find spot J) and discussed below.

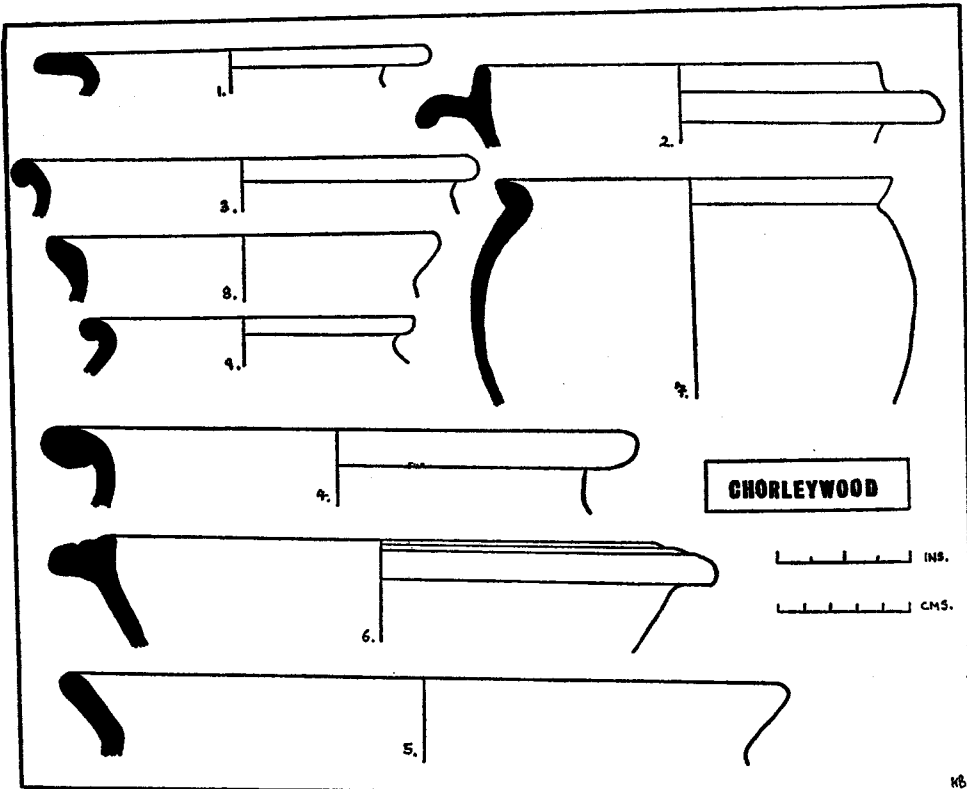


FIG. 2. Romano-British pottery from Chorleywood.

4. CHORLEYWOOD. The finds made by the late Sir Thomas Lewis and by Mr. Howard Davies have been briefly treated by the present writer in *Archaeological Journal*, CXXIV, "Romano-British Rural Settlements in the Western Chilterns", Catalogue of Sites. Section C.5.f. The material found by Lewis is discussed below (Find spot L), but that found by Howard Davies about three hundred yards upstream seems to represent the actual villa site and is therefore discussed here.

The villa seems to have stood at a point on the west bank, where the river bends sharply towards the west. The existence of a building at this point is confirmed by about twenty fragments of roofing tile amongst the material collected by Mr. Davies. Unfortunately lily tanks now stand on the river bank at this point, but I am told that when the tanks are empty (a rare occurrence) stone foundations can be seen running beneath them. The date and duration of occupation can be estimated by a single coin—an $\text{Æ} 3$ of Valens—and the rim sherds (Fig. 2) amongst the two hundred pieces of pottery found on this site. As these rims are unpublished and in the hands of Mr. Davies they are here published in full.

Fig. 2. 1. Jar with everted rim. White, fine fabric; well fired.

2. Flanged bowl, imitating Samian form. White fabric, red slipped; fired poorly to soft.

3. Jar with rolled rim. Pale buff, medium fine fabric; well fired.

4. Jar with rolled rim. Pale grey, medium fine fabric; black slipped and burnished; well fired.

5. Large jar with slightly everted rim. Grey, gritty fabric; medium fired.

6. Flanged bowl with reeded rim. Pale grey, medium fine fabric; pale cream slip; well fired to hard.

7. Jar with everted rim. Pale brown, shell gritted fabric; poorly fired to soft.

8. Jar with everted rim. Pale orange, medium fine fabric; well fired.

9. Jar with rolled rim. Red, medium fine fabric; black slipped; poorly fired.

Not illustrated. 10. Mortarium. Pale grey, medium fine fabric; well fired.

Many of these forms appear from the mid-2nd century (or earlier!) through to the mid-4th century. The earliest rims that can be dated with confidence are number 6, which should be mid 2nd century, and number 10 which is certainly not later than mid 2nd century AD and may well date within the first two or three decades of the century.¹¹ We might tentatively suggest for the Chorleywood villa a foundation date more or less contemporary with Latimer (c. 130–140). The latest sherds from the group are number 2, late 3rd-late 4th AD, and number 7, made of a distinctive fabric which becomes common in the late 3rd and 4th centuries. At Latimer only one sherd of this material has been found in the villa, in an abandonment deposit, but two or three dozen sherds of this fabric have been found in the "garden area" occupied by the three post-villa phases of occupation. Eventually it may prove that this pottery continued in production into the fifth century, but it is impossible to date the fabric closely at present. The coin of Valens however indicates quite clearly that occupation continued up until c. 370–380 if not beyond.

THE FIND SPOTS.

Apart from the four sites where we can confidently postulate the existence of settlements there are eleven other locations in the valley where Romano-British material has been found.

A. **CHOLESBURY.** The so-called "hill-fort" at Cholesbury has yielded a small quantity of sherds which may perhaps fall within the period of the Roman occupation.¹² Continuity of occupation at Cholesbury from the first century BC into the middle or late first century AD should not surprise us. At Lodge Hill in the valley of the Wye, Belgic occupation apparently continues well into the second half of the first century AD.¹³

B. **HAWRIDGE.** Occupation into the Roman period at Cholesbury may perhaps be supported by the discovery of coins (of undetermined date) near Hawridge.¹⁴

C. **CHARTRIDGE LANE.** An As of Septimius Severus was recently discovered at 500' O.D. in Chartridge Lane,¹⁵ Chesham, (NGR. SP. 946029) more than a foot down in clean soil. This may well be a stray which could have reached its find spot in recent times, but it may just possibly have some connection with finds made in Blucher Street, of which Chartridge Lane is a continuation.

D. **BLUCHER STREET.** Mr. A. Stratford found a dozen body sherds of Romano-British type at NGR. SP. 958018 during the excavation of a hole to extract a petrol tank. The sherds were found at a depth of three to four feet. The writer has also seen a letter from Mr. Climpson who reports finding a Roman coin at the rear of his shop (959018) many years ago. The date of the coin is unknown, and the sherds were not distinctive enough to be dated.

E. **WEIRHOUSE MILL.** Building operations opposite the mill (NGR. SP.974005) during the summer of 1967 yielded fragmentary human bones including two or three scraps of skull, and a large portion of a small Romano-British flask.¹⁶ (Fig. 3) The flask cannot be dated from its surviving portion, and as both flask and bones were discovered on the spoil heap we cannot be absolutely certain

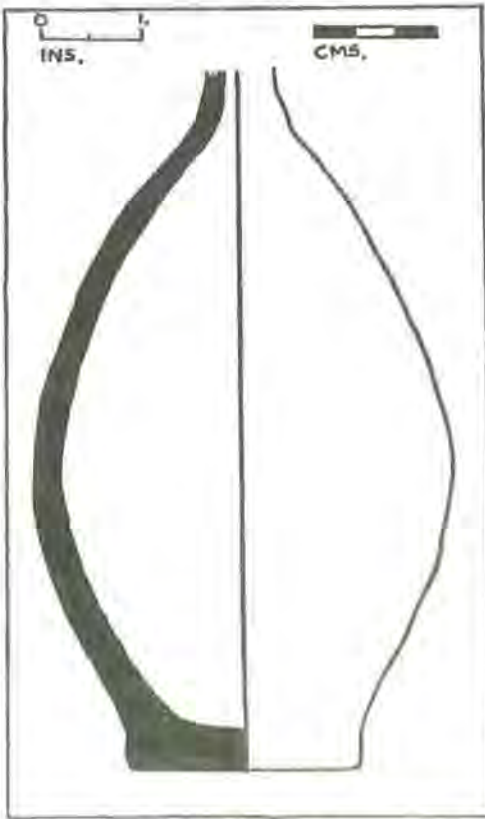


FIG. 3. Flask from Weirhouse Mill (find-spot E).

that they were originally associated. It seems likely however that they represent a Romano-British burial. One wonders whether there may be a small cemetery in the vicinity, attached to a fifth settlement site. A little further down the valley (about 350 yards) the site now occupied by Broadwater Farm would have been most suitable for a villa—almost flat ground, close to but elevated above the river, and facing south-east with rising ground protecting the buildings from the north and north-west winds. This site is about half way between the Chesham site and Latimer villa. At present however no Romano-British material has been found at the farm.

F. FRITH WOOD. In Frith Wood immediately above Latimer Villa (NGR. SP. 998989), Mr. H. Davies found the centre fragment from the upper stone of a rotary quern. It was made from pudding stone, and may well be a stray from the villa.

G. LATIMER VILLAGE. In their type-written (and unpublished) report of the 1910–1912 excavations¹⁷ Moray Williams and Calcott Stokes give a list of material found in the villa and elsewhere in the vicinity prior to 1910, including two coins found in Latimer village. One found in 1864 is said to be a Nuremberg token one side of which was inscribed “AVE MARIA GRATIA” and the other “A.V.E.M.” The second coin was found during 1878 when two old cottages were demolished. It is described as a large bronze coin; presumably it was a Sestertius. The obverse showed the head of Faustina and carried the inscription “DIVA AUGUSTA FAUSTINA”, whilst on the reverse was a draped female figure with her right arm extended over a pillar between the letters S.C. (senatus consultum). The coins are probably strays from the villa but might possibly be associated either with an outbuilding or with the roadway (163A) which the Viatores suggest ran down Flaunden Bottom.¹⁸

H. FLAUNDEN BOTTOM. In 1961 the County Museum obtained the lower stone of a Romano-British rotary quern from Mr. W. Miles.¹⁹ Although the locality is given as Latimer I understand it was actually found along Flaunden Bottom. In Flaunden village itself the Viatores observed and photographed an incomplete section of road 163A in a trench dug for pipe laying.²⁰

J. MOUNT WOOD. Across the river from the site of Sarratt villa a small muddy patch on the edge of Mount Wood has consistently yielded Romano-British sherds. Giles Cooper recorded material which he found here in *Records* Vol. XIV.²¹ The only items specifically mentioned are a coin of Hadrian, sherds of Antonine Samian ware, and sherds from reeded-rim bowls. These are all early-mid 2nd century AD in date. Recently the present writer collected nine small Romano-British sherds of indeterminate date from this spot. Dr. L. Barfield had previously collected several dozen sherds from the same site.²² Thirty-seven of these sherds are discussed and described here, this collection being previously unpublished and of some importance for its relationship to the Sarratt villa.

Fig. 4. 1. Neck and rim of a flagon. Reddish-buff fabric, small grits, medium firing.

2. Pie-dish. Grey fabric, sandy grit; black slipped and burnished. Lattice decorated below rim.

3. Pie-dish. As last, with traces of slag adhering.

4. Pie-dish. As last.

5. Pie-dish. As last, but no slip or burnish.
 6. Pie-dish. Buff-orange fabric, little grit; thick, uneven, grey slip; poorly fired to soft.
 7. Reeded-rim bowl. Buff-white fabric, small grits; medium fired.
 8. Jar with slightly everted rim. Grey fabric, fine with no grit, fired to soft.
 9. Lid. Fabric as No. 7, slightly deeper colour.
 10. Base—possibly from a flagon. Red-brown fabric, little grit, medium fired.
 11. Jar with rolled rim. Fabric as Nos. 2 and 4.
 12. Jar with rolled rim. Grey, fine fabric; whitish-grey slip; well fired.
 13. Jar with rolled rim. Fabric as No. 7.
 14. Jar with rolled rim. Fabric as No. 12.
 15. Jar with rolled rim. Fabric as Nos. 2-5.
 16. Mortarium. Buff fabric fired to pinkish-buff. Pale brown and pinkish grits.
 17. Mortarium. Medium brown, medium fine fabric; black and grey grits.
 18. Mortarium. Buff, medium fine fabric, fired to reddish; black and grey grits.
 19. Sherd of Antonine Samian from a Dragendorf 37 bowl. Two naked figures.
- Not illustrated:
- 20, 21. Two rims from Samian dishes. Dragendorf 18/31.
 - 22-25. Four body sherds from Samian dishes. Dragendorf 18/31.
 - 26-27. Two bases from Samian dishes. Dragendorf 18/31.
 28. One rim sherd from a Samian bowl. Dragendorf. 37.
 29. One body sherd from a Samian bowl. Dragendorf 27.
 30. One rim sherd from a Samian ? footed bowl. ? Dragendorf 11.
 31. One vase of a Samian ? bowl. ? Dragendorf 30.
 - 32-34. Three sherds colour-coated ware. White fabric with dull black wash. Roulletted decoration. One sherd is from an indented beaker.
 35. One sherd colour-coated ware. Orange-pink fabric, dull brown wash. From a beaker.
 36. One sherd of gritty, handmade fabric. A single groove around it.
 37. A counter made from the base of a small vase of gritty, black fabric.

This is a most interesting group, apparently having quite a limited time span. The earliest pieces which can be dated with some confidence are the mortaria Nos. 17 and 18 which may both be early 2nd century AD. Number 18 is unlikely to be later than c. 150, and No. 17 is a form of which few variants appear later than that date. The reeded rim bowl, No. 7, is also most probably early 2nd century AD. Most of the other sherds fit comfortably into a late 2nd century context, notably the Antonine Samian and the pie dishes. Notably absent are any of the flanged bowls and squared, outturned rims which are characteristic of mid 3rd-mid 4th century deposits at Latimer. The only sherds which might not fit into a second century date are mortarium No. 16, and colour-coated sherds Nos. 32-35. The mortarium is a Thames Valley product, and these are still difficult to date closely.²³ A close parallel to the Mount Wood example was

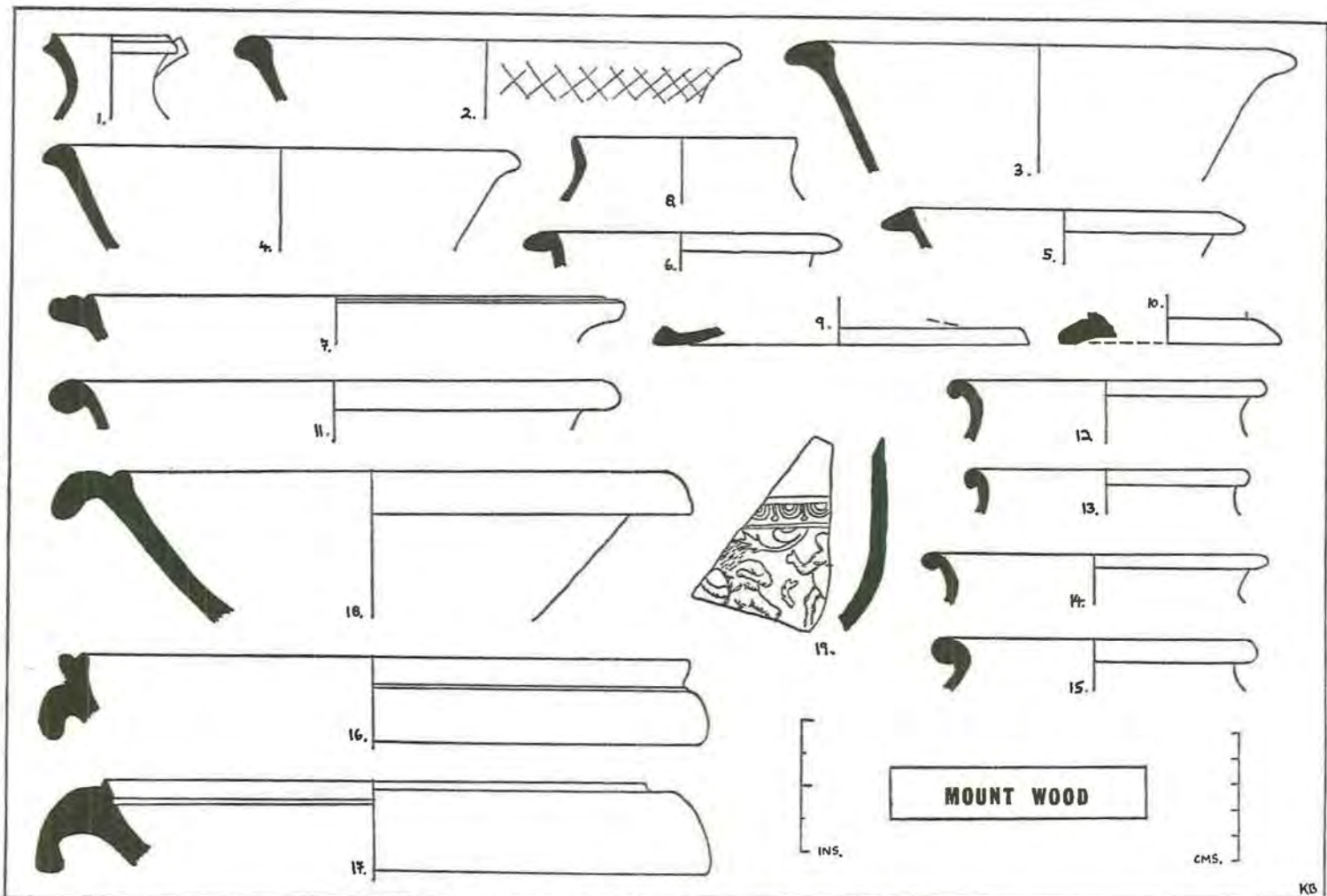


FIG. 4. Romano-British pottery from Mount Wood.

found at High Wycombe but not in a stratified deposit,²⁴ whilst a Thames Valley mortarium found at Latimer in a mid-late 3rd century deposit is of similar fabric but notably different form.²⁵ At present we cannot date mortarium No. 16 more closely than late 2nd–mid 4th century, and it may thus fit comfortably enough with the rest of the group. As for the colour coated sherds, No. 35 may be compared to the fabric found in a late 2nd-early 3rd deposit at High Wycombe²⁶ and in a mid-late 2nd century deposit at Latimer.²⁷ Nos. 32–34 are perhaps the latest material in the group. They could be as late as mid-4th century but in view of the limited chronological range of the rest of the group it seems best to consider them as early examples of their class. A beaker in somewhat similar fabric was found in a deposit which Hartley dated to the end of the 2nd century AD, at High Wycombe.²⁸ The Mount Wood sherds are hardly likely to be earlier, and may perhaps date to the early third century AD.

Thus the Mount Wood material represents the period from Hadrian to Severus or Caracalla—that is early 2nd to early 3rd century AD. This is in accord with the material recorded by Cooper. How we should interpret this deposit in relation to the Sarratt villa is difficult to decide. It is only some six hundred yards away, on the opposite side of the river, and must surely be associated with it. A large rubbish pit, opened when the villa was erected and closed in the early third century might be conjectured, but it seems a long way to carry domestic rubbish. Alternatively the deposit might represent an outbuilding abandoned in the early third century. No human bones have been found to suggest a cemetery. There are no traces of architectural remains, nor is the land here suitable for the erection of either a dwelling house or a shrine. The deposit is a mystery; at present the nature of the material suggests a rubbish deposit or an outbuilding.²⁹ If it is related to the Sarratt villa, however, it has a value, for it suggests that the villa was probably erected in the early 2nd century AD, a conclusion which could not be reached from the scant records of the discoveries on the villa site itself.

K. SARRATT CHURCH. There is a persistent story that Romano-British burial urns and fibulae have been found in the churchyard of Sarratt Church during the digging of more recent graves,³⁰ but attempts to obtain more information about these discoveries have been unsuccessful. The Roman tiles built into the church were almost certainly brought from the villa however, and it is possible that we have here the site of its cemetery.

L. CHORLEYWOOD BOTTOM. Three hundred yards downstream from the Chorleywood villa Sir Thomas Lewis found about one hundred sherds of Romano-British pottery.³¹ Three-quarters of this pottery was grey coarse ware including some jars which might perhaps be of early–mid 2nd century date. Two flasks of similar fabric were represented by their necks, and the one which preserved its rim is probably of mid-2nd century date. The remaining pottery of interest is a small group of Antonine Samian sherds, twelve in number. As with the Mount Wood material, we must relate this deposit to the adjacent villa, in this case Chorleywood, either as a rubbish dump or an outbuilding. Again it is of some value as evidence for a mid-second century date for the erection of the villa.

The Distribution of Villas and Find-Spots. This is best understood by reference

to Fig. 1. It will be seen that the four settlement sites are separated one from the next by the following distances: Chesham to Latimer—3.1 miles; Latimer to Sarratt—1.7 miles; Sarratt to Chorleywood—1.8 miles. The similarity of the distances between Latimer and Sarratt and Sarratt and Chorleywood is so close that it inevitably draws attention to the much greater distance between Chesham and Latimer. It would be reasonable to conjecture that a fifth site awaits discovery half way between them. The flask and bones found at Weirhouse Mill are evidence of this, and suggest a cemetery attached to a villa half way between Chesham and Latimer. It appears that villas are situated approximately every 1.8 English miles (or 2 Roman miles) upstream from the junction of the Chess with the Colne at Rickmansworth. With the exception of Sarratt all the sites are on flat ground within fifty yards of the river. Sarratt is three hundred yards from the river on sloping ground.

The significance of the find spots not already involved with the distribution of the villas is difficult to assess. Cholesbury, if occupation was indeed continuous until the late first century AD, may have been vacated when the villas were erected. In this connection it would be invaluable if we could ascertain whether Chesham was a village rather than a villa; if so we might postulate that it replaced Cholesbury. Find spots C and D may perhaps be situated on or near a trackway leading from Chesham into the Misbourne valley, but this is pure conjecture.

The Development of Settlement. The only evidence we have for occupation of the Chess Valley during the first century AD is from Cholesbury and Latimer. The inhabitants were probably non-Romanised people of Iron Age stock. The rectangular hut at Latimer is similar in size to the Belgic huts found beneath the villas at Park Street and Lockleys and may well represent a similar economic unit to those operating there. At Latimer however there is clear evidence of abandonment before the villa was erected. Thus in the Chess valley, it seems unlikely that there was a gradual Romanisation of the existing inhabitants. The evidence from all four settlements sites points clearly to a foundation date in the first half of the second century AD. At Latimer the villa was almost certainly founded between AD, 130–140 and the absence of any very early second century pottery on the other three sites suggests a similar date for them. Without excavation this is not to be pressed, and the later history of the villas is impossible to assess without their excavation. If Latimer proves to be typical of the valley, then we may see the mid 3rd century as a time of great prosperity, and the the last decade or so of the same century as a time of economic hardship. This is the period of Carausius's and Allectus's usurpations and follows several Gallic usurpations, which must have directly affected the prosperity of the towns and, indirectly, that of the countryside. In the fourth century there was a recovery only halted by the events of the 360's. The evidence from Latimer suggests that the villas then went into a slow decline. Chorleywood at least seems to have survived into the last quarter of the fourth century AD, and in view of the scarcity of coins and closely dateable pottery of this period from Latimer after a total of eight years excavation we should not be misled by the absence of late fourth century material amongst the collections of surface material from the other sites. Although the economic basis of the villa system

may have been destroyed about 400—and Professor Frere's fifth century occupation at Verulamium throws doubt on this view in relation to our area³² there was no reason why the inhabitants of the Chess valley, or the other Chiltern valleys, should have abandoned their rich farming land. The Anglo-Saxons penetrated the Chilterns at a relatively late date and it seems reasonable to think that at least until their arrival the farms would have continued to operate though on a drastically reduced scale, providing food only for those living and working on the farm.

The Social and Economic Implications of the Distribution of Sites. It would perhaps be worthwhile to conclude with some speculations on the very regular distribution of villa sites in the Chess valley. I have argued elsewhere that traces of a similar distribution can be discerned in the other Chiltern valleys, at least in those west of Verulamium.³³ Such regularity calls for some explanation. It looks as if the valley was divided up into estates of approximately equal size, and the evidence from Latimer and other excavated sites in other nearby valleys suggests that amenities such as bath-suites and heated living rooms came to the villas of the Chilterns rather earlier than to most other areas in the civilian zone.³⁴ Thus we might follow Rivet in seeing their owners as *decuriones*.³⁵ This would explain the regular distribution of their villas and their relatively early adoption of Roman fashions for we know that the tribal capital (Verulamium) became Romanised very early.³⁶

The agricultural and economic implications of the distribution of villas in the Chess valley are, in the writer's opinion, most important. It is very rare in Roman Britain that one can arrive at an accurate estimate of the acreage farmed by any single villa. In the Chess valley however we can now make such an estimate, and this based not on indirect evidence which is difficult to interpret—the size of barns, stock accommodation, etc—but on the actual length of river within the farm boundaries of each villa. We may make such an estimate provided that we accept (1) that the villas are separated from each other by approximately 1.7–1.9 miles and (2) that this being so, each villa owned or farmed approximately the same length of river and the land on either side of it. The width of the Chess valley is relatively uniform for most of its length. If we may take the surviving woodland as a guide to the lower limit of woodland during the Roman period, and this is not as unreliable a guide as might at first appear, we can say that the width of arable and grass land available to the farmers was rarely more than 0.4 of a mile. This means that the total acreage of arable and/or grass land available to each villa was approximately 1.8×0.4 sq miles, or about 450–500 acres. That is about half of the area estimated for the villa at Ditchley,³⁷ but the same as the estimated area of *arable* land for the great villa at Bignor.³⁸ In addition to the arable and grass land however the Chess valley farmers no doubt utilised the woodland for their pigs as well as for hunting and timber. It is unlikely that much of the high ground on either side of the valleys was used for agriculture during ancient times. Certainly the clay-with-flints on the hill tops would not have been workable until the arrival of the Belgæ, and one suspects that the lower slopes and flat valley bottoms were cultivated first.³⁹ As to the way in which the farmers utilised their 450–500 acres we have only the evidence from Latimer at present. The bones from Latimer have not yet been

studied in detail, but cows and sheep seem to have predominated with smaller but significant numbers of pigs and horses. Evidence for grain growing is limited to the two fragments of rotary querns found near Latimer, and not in themselves particularly strong evidence for grain production. It seems very likely however that if cattle and sheep were kept in quite large numbers then some grain would be grown for winter feeding, as well as for consumption by the farmer, his family, and his labourers. Bones of domestic and water fowl from Latimer may represent fowl kept on the farm or those bought in the market at Verulamium or from a neighbour. The evidence from Latimer would suggest that the villas in the Chess valley probably operated a mixed economy. Traces of bedding trenches and the absence of any outbuilding within the courtyard may also imply that fruit and vegetables were grown for consumption by the occupants of the villa.

Clearly there is great need for further excavations in the Chess valley to obtain a broader based body of evidence, but even the present state of our knowledge about Romano-British settlement is better than for any other valley in the Chilterns, and until the much needed survey and excavation work in these valleys is undertaken the results so far obtained in the Chess valley may give us some insight into the nature and scale of Romano-British rural settlement in south Bucks.

¹ *Records of Bucks.*, XVII (1965) K. Branigan and M. Kirton, "A New Roman Site in Chesham",

² A short discussion of this material, without illustrations, appeared in the *Archaeological Journal*, CXXIV, 157, Cat. No. C.5.f.

³ Interim reports in *Records of Bucks* (1965) XVII and (1966) XVIII.

⁴ *supra* 1.

⁵ For the latest discussion of these areas see C. Thomas (Ed.) *Rural Settlements in Roman Britain* (1966) pp. 43-67, and pp. 26-27.

⁶ *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, XXXIX (1933) p. 187.

⁷ J. F. Head, *Early Man in South Buckinghamshire* (1955) pp. 67-71, 86.

⁸ A. H. Cocks, *Archaeologia*, LXXI. (1920-21) pp. 141 ff.

⁹ Private correspondence of the excavator clearly refers to three coins.

¹⁰ *The Watford Observer*, January 1910. No date within the month survived on the clipping seen by the writer.

¹¹ Mortarium rim No. 10 is not illustrated as it was passed on to me too late to be included in the figure.

¹² *supra* 6.

¹³ *supra* 7.

¹⁴ G. Lipscomb, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham* (1847) Vol. III, p. 372.

¹⁵ *Record of Bucks*, XVII (1964) p. 203.

¹⁶ I am indebted to Mr. C. N. Gowing for details of this find. Figure 3 is taken from a drawing supplied by Mr. Gowing.

¹⁷ I am much indebted to Mr P. F. Cansdale for allowing me the full use of this important document.

¹⁸ The Viatores, *Roman Roads in the South East Midlands*, (1964) pp. 210-214.

¹⁹ Report of the County Museum. 1963. p. 8.

²⁰ *supra* 18.

²¹ G. Cooper, "Roman Vestigia from Mount Wood, Chenies", *Records of Bucks* XIV, p. 240.

²² I am indebted to Dr. Barfield for placing these sherds at my disposal. They are now in the county museum.

²³ B. Hartley, "A Romano-British Villa at High Wycombe", *Records of Bucks* XVI. (1959) p. 246.

²⁴ Hartley, *op. cit.* Fig. 9, No. 49.

²⁵ *4th Interim Report on Excavations at Latimer*, (1967) K. Branigan, Fig. 9, No. 6 (issued by C.V.A.H.S.).

²⁶ Hartley, *op. cit.* p. 246, Group A. 9.

²⁷ *1st Interim Report on Excavations at Latimer* (1964) K. Branigan, p. 7, No. 6. (issued by C.V.A.H.S.).

²⁸ *supra* 26.

²⁹ Against the interpretation favouring an outbuilding is the quantity of Samian pottery; against that favouring a rubbish pit the absence of bones.

³⁰ *V.C.H. Herts.* II. (1908) p. 438.

³¹ These are briefly mentioned in K. Branigan, "Romano-British Rural Settlements in the Western Chilterns", *Archaeological Journal*, CXXIV, 157, and in a short duplicated note issued by Mr. E. V. Parrot in 1966.

³² S. S. Frere. *Antiquaries Journal*. XXXIX. (1959).

³³ K. Branigan. "Romano-British Rural Settlements in the Western Chilterns", *Archaeological Journal*, CXXIV, 129-159

³⁴ for a summary of the evidence see the article referred to in footnote 33.

³⁵ A. L. F. Rivet *Town and Country in Roman Britain* (1958) p. 113.

³⁶ See the reports of Prof. Frere in the *Antiquaries Journal* XXXVI (1956)-XLII (1962).

³⁷ C. A. R. Radford. *Oxoniensia I.* (1936) p. 24 ff.

³⁸ C. Thomas *op. cit.* p. 101.

³⁹ This is an unorthodox view perhaps, but it is worth noting that a Beaker, a tanged arrowhead, and a bone pin have all been found within a short distance of one another in Chesham at a distance of only 150 yards from the Chess and a height of less than 250' O.D.—in other words on the floor of the valley.