

# A LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN SITE AT WALTON COURT, AYLESBURY

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*An extensive group of finds recovered from a housing development near Aylesbury shows the area to have been utilised from the Late Iron Age through to the late fourth century A.D. The settlement lay adjacent to a probable ford, and was apparently never very substantial; however, the presence of Roman military metalwork, a votive model scythe – described by Dr. M. Green – a number of weights and over two hundred Roman coins, suggests it may have had special functions which could not be determined by the limited rescue recording carried out.*

## *Introduction*

During 1975 Mr. L. Carter collected a dozen sherds of Belgic and Romano-British pottery from a development site at Walton Court, Aylesbury (SP 811118). Between 1977 and 1980 the area was searched regularly as development proceeded by Mr. Tom Clark who collected a considerable number of metal objects including coins and a certain amount of pottery. For a short period in the summer of 1977 Mr. J. Milln, then a student on secondment to the County Museum, was able to monitor these discoveries on site but subsequently no staff were available to continue visiting on a regular basis. Mr. Clark, however, continued to indicate the location of his finds on a map as he brought objects in and it is this information, combined with that gained by intermittent archaeological observation, which is recorded on Fig. 2.

Much of the metalwork recovered was undatable and a selection of the objects only is illustrated, either because they can be identified and dated or because of their intrinsic interest. All of the coins brought to the Museum have been listed. Of the Late Iron Age pottery present, only that which comes from features lacking 'Romanised' fabrics and which is fairly reliably pre-Conquest, has been illustrated. The Romano-British pottery selected for illustration is intended only to draw attention to the range of material from the site, much of it unstratified, and to assist in providing an

indication of the lifespan of the settlement. A few other finds are also illustrated.

The archaeological features observed were seen only in house footings and service pipe-trenches and it was frequently unclear whether they were pits or ditches and generally no attempt has been made to distinguish these on the plan. The material presented is in no sense the product of a controlled excavation, but certain aspects – in particular the Roman military finds – are of sufficient interest to deserve a wider audience than would be gained by consigning them to a museum store. All of the finds collected by Museum staff are deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum along with the majority of the metal finds kindly donated by Mr. T. Clark. Accession Number 20.1982, documentation at CAS 2160. Mr. Clark retains a few objects and all the coins.

## *Acknowledgements*

The unattributed sections of the report are by the first author, who wishes to thank his fellow contributors for their assistance. Thanks are due to Mr. T. Clark, who gave his full co-operation throughout, and to Trevor Pearson for producing the final drawings, apart from those of the small finds which were drawn to a common standard by the third author utilising work previously done by Barbara Elliott and Mélanie Steiner. Miranda Green kindly commented on the miniature scythe and

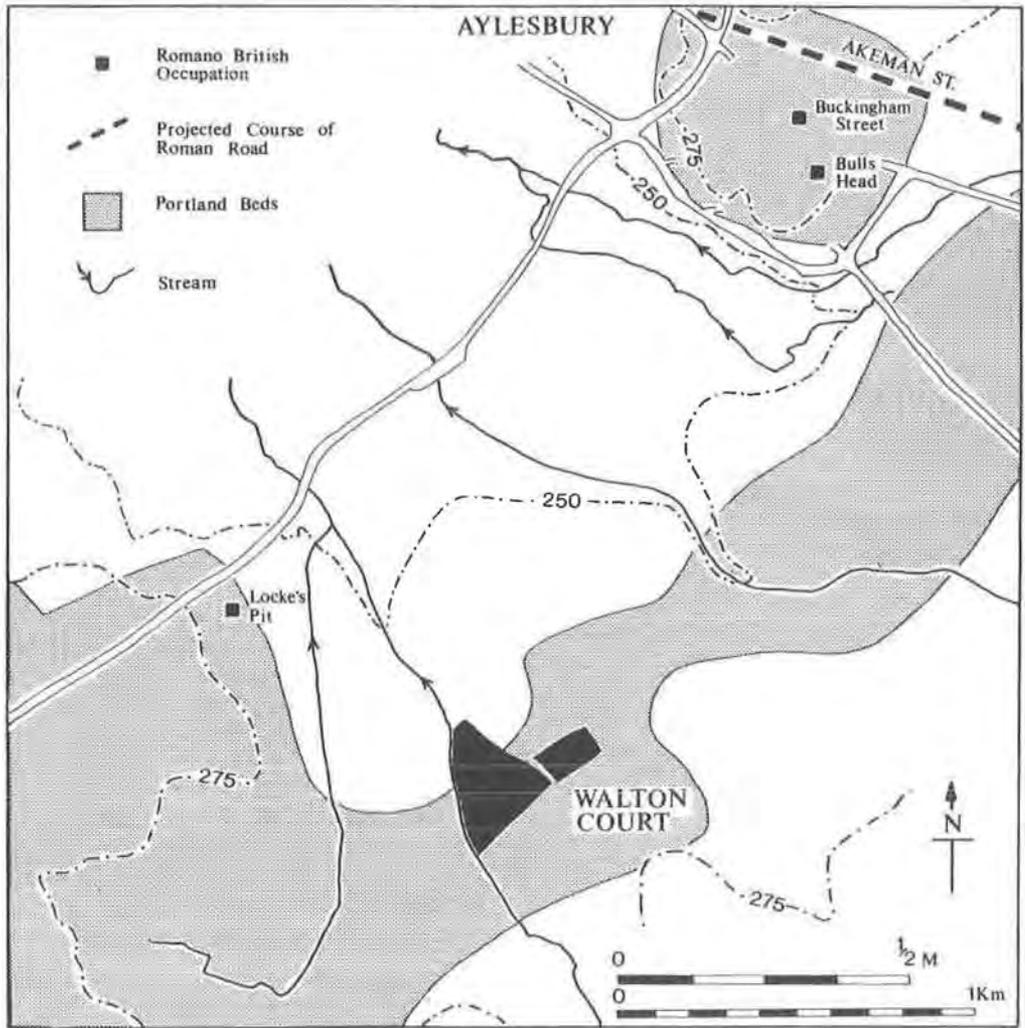


Fig. 1. Location of site and of other Romano-British occupation. Contours in feet.

Michael Oates on the quern. The County Museum Archaeological Group assisted with finds processing and pottery drawing. Brenda Dickinson kindly commented on the samian and Dr. Graham Webster on the Roman military material.

### *The Site's Setting*

The site lies in a slightly elevated position adjacent to a small stream and on a band of Portlandian material, which is largely sandy at this point (Fig. 1). Further east at Walton, the Portlandian gives way to limestone on which Aylesbury is also situated. Clay surrounds these formations on all sides so the relatively well-drained Portlandian was naturally attractive for settlement. The Romano-British settlement and cemetery discovered at Locke's Pit a short distance to the north-west of the site in about 1909, is in a similar location to the Walton Court site. Romano-British occupation in the area is known also at two sites within Aylesbury itself, not far from the presumed course of Akeman Street. The full extent of the occupation at Walton Court will now never be known but its location seems likely to have been determined by the topographical features noted. A trackway from Walton, which passes the site on the south, appears on the 1800 Walton Enclosure map, and an existing footbridge may continue the tradition of an earlier ford at the same spot.

### *The Periods Represented*

#### *Pre-Iron Age:*

A single flint flake, a hammerstone and part of a Late Bronze Age socketed axe (Fig. 4, 37) were the only indications of early use of the site.

#### *Late Iron Age*

Six features contained only 'Belgic' pottery with no Romanised fabrics, namely 3, 7, 12, 35, 36, 52, and further pottery of this phase was present in Romano-British features indicating a continuance of potting tradition perhaps along with an element of rubbish survival. Some of the brooches may belong to this phase and there were three coins. The only

other finds certainly attributable to the Late Iron Age were the pieces of 'brick' discussed further on. These fairly friable objects also occurred in Late Iron Age contexts at Bierton. The whole probably indicates a small settlement, smaller than Bierton, exploiting the natural advantages of its location.

#### *Romano-British:*

The settlement was certainly in existence at the time of the Roman conquest and the quantity of Roman military material – the first to be recorded from the County, indicates contact between the two groups, whether friendly or otherwise. In this context the presence of the presumed line of Akeman Street just over a mile away may be significant. (For a recent discussion of the progress of the Conquest, see Webster 1980).

Whatever the nature of the encounter, it did not cause the settlement's demise. The pottery illustrated in Fig. 9, in so far as it is datable, has a first to fourth century date range. The copper alloy objects indicate a reasonable standard of living and the unusually large quern stone, probably attributable to this period, may suggest cereal handling on a scale larger than necessary for domestic use. The number of steelyard weights may also hint at trading activity. No trace of a stone structure was at any stage reported and only a few scraps of tile are recorded, so the Romano-British settlement does not appear to have risen materially much above the level of its predecessor. From one feature (56) came a piece of iron 'slag' with a convex base suggesting some on-site smelting.

The presence of a piece of third century military equipment in addition to the early material is noteworthy (Fig. 4, 21) and it is interesting that Dr. Green finds that the best parallels for a model scythe (Fig. 4, 36) occur in military contexts of similar date on the Rhineland. Perhaps the whole may hint at the existence of a shrine at this period.

#### *Saxon:*

Early – Middle Saxon occupation is elusive

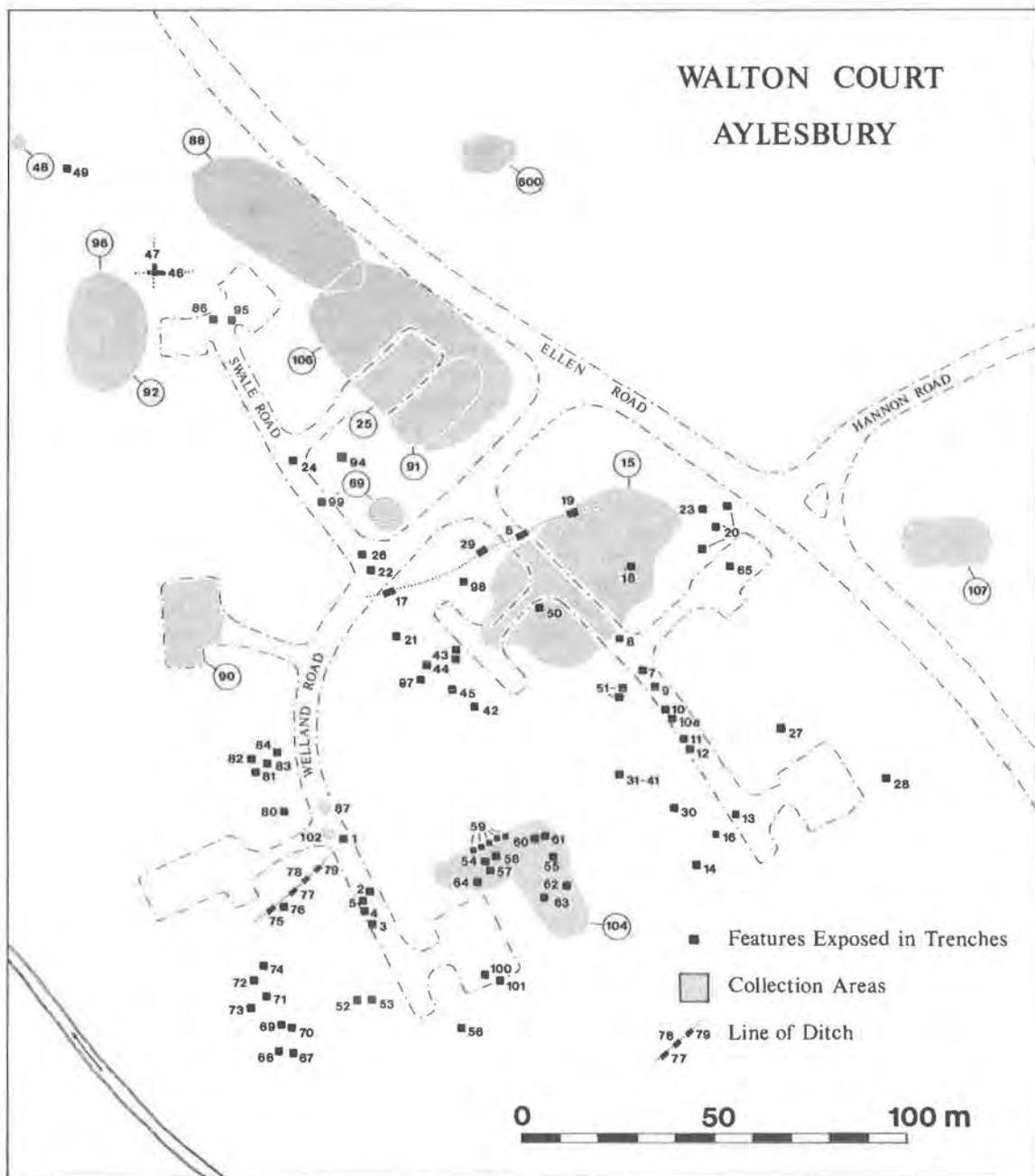


Fig. 2. Walton Court development and findspots.

in Buckinghamshire so the presence of a probable piece of annular loomweight (Fig. 10, 7) is of interest. The nearest settlement of this date is at Walton, a little over a mile to the north-east (Farley 1976). A few scraps of copper alloy may also be attributable to this period.

#### *Mediaeval and Later:*

Although a number of later objects are present, the lack of pottery suggests only the continuation of the routeway through the area.

#### *The Metal Finds*

By R. F. White, with a contribution by Dr. M. Green.

#### *Introduction*

The collection of metal objects other than coins from Walton Court includes 160 items of copper alloy, 30 of lead, 27 of iron and one of silver. Pieces of copper alloy sheet or plate, including some fragments with perforations and rivets but in various stages of decay, form a large part of the collection. The preponderance of copper and lead items reflects an electronic bias in the retrieval process but the inclusion of obviously modern material such as a machine-made crimped nail (91d) indicates that little, if any, selection occurred prior to the objects being brought to the Museum.

A complete catalogue with sketches and drawings of all the metal objects is filed with the site's documentation. Items not illustrated below (Figs. 3 & 4) are referred to by the number given in that catalogue and are of copper alloy unless otherwise stated. Descriptions and material identifications are based on visual examination of the objects only; none has been professionally cleaned or analysed. The bracketed number following each description refers to the item's catalogue/context number.

None of the metal objects can be provenanced to any of the archaeological features subsequently recorded; some items can be located to specific parts of the site but a large proportion can only be provenanced to the 15 acre (6 hectare) area of development. The lack

of stratigraphic information means that items can be dated only by comparison with similar published examples from elsewhere.

#### *Discussion*

The copper alloy objects and the coins provide the main dating evidence for the site. The spatial distribution of the datable objects has been examined, but perhaps because of the poor provenance of many of these items, gives little information concerning site use.

The socketed axe fragment (Fig. 4:37) is the only indicator of Bronze Age activity recorded from Walton Court. It may represent a chance breakage and loss, but it could also be scrap for smithing, either in the Late Bronze Age or at a subsequent period. Six small pieces of bronze cake or waste provide slight evidence for bronze working, but could equally represent chance melting, particularly as no structural evidence for a metal working industry of any period was discovered.

The copper alloy objects, particularly the brooches, suggest that Roman activity at Walton Court was concentrated in the first century with relatively few objects being dated to the second, third and fourth centuries. This impression is not paralleled by the coin evidence which suggests a peak level of activity during the late third/early fourth centuries. Pre-Conquest occupation is suggested by the large Colchester type brooch (Fig. 3, 2); other brooches such as Fig. 3, 1 and 3, may also be pre-Conquest, but the types continued in use to the Flavian period. Brooches of the Hod Hill type (Fig. 3, 5, 6, 7 and perhaps 10) arrived fully developed in Britain at the Conquest but become rare after A.D. 70.

The collection also includes first century, possibly Claudian-Neronian, items of military equipment, notably the harness junction clip (Fig. 3, 20) which is best paralleled with finds from Germany, and the apron or belt mounts (Fig. 3, 17-19) and also a spearhead (Fig. 4, 47). The reason for a military presence at Walton Court is unclear: the site is 1.4 miles

(2.3 km.) south of Akeman Street, but is situated on slightly rising ground overlooking a former ford. No other evidence is available for the existence of a fort or garrison. A further item of Roman military equipment is the turning pin (Fig. 4:21) which is likely to be of third century or later date. It is not easily explained: the lack of other evidence argues against a continued military use for the site.

The rest of the Roman objects cannot be accurately dated. The cockerel brooch, the scalloped brooches and the pin (Fig. 3:13, 14; Fig. 4:27) may be first century but are perhaps second century, while the oval brooch (Fig. 3:15) and the rings (Fig. 3:31 and 33) are more likely to be late Roman.

Twelve lead weights were found. These do not fit into distinct sets and represent an unusually large number for a site. Six have good Roman parallels; the date of the others is less certain. Three, of tapering cylindrical shape, could perhaps have functioned as plumb bobs rather than weights. The larger weights from Walton Court were for use with a steelyard, while the cheese-like weight (Fig. 4:42) would have been used with a balance. Two other items of weighing equipment were found: a pear-shaped copper alloy scale pan, probably post-mediaeval (92e) and an arm of a folding balance (Fig. 4:25) which may be of late Saxon or early mediaeval date.

No item can be definitely assigned to the Saxon period although the punched decoration on the binding (Fig. 4:40) and on a copper alloy sheet (106c) suggests that they may be of this period, as may the disc brooch (Fig. 3:16). Mediaeval items, all unillustrated, include two circular buckles or brooches (105hh/pp) and a double-sided rectangular buckle (90b), while three incomplete lead seals may be mediaeval or early post-mediaeval (90f, 102g, 105ii). The collection also includes four post-mediaeval buckles and seven undated buckle fragments, a ladle bowl (105d), a seventeenth century iron rowel spur (103f) and a handle from a pair of eighteenth century nutcrackers (601a).

## *The Catalogue*

### *Copper Alloy*

#### (a) Brooches (Fig. 3, 1-16 and 4,30)

1. Colchester. Length c. 52 mm. Pin missing. The spring has eight coils. The short wings and the D-section bow are plain. The catchplate and possibly the foot of the bow have been lost through corrosion. First to third quarter of the first century A.D. (25b)
2. Colchester. Length c. 78 mm. The spring and pin are missing. The head has short, plain wings and a short hook. The plain sharply kicked D-section bow tapers to a point and has been bent just above the beginning of the catchplate. Date range as example 1, but large Colchester brooches tend to be pre-Conquest (Mackreth, forthcoming). (66)
3. Nauheim derivative. A plain angular brooch. Spring broken and pin missing, cf. Brailsford 1962, Fig. 7.C18 for a slightly less angular example from Hod Hill. Mid-first century. (90e)
4. Polden Hill. Head and part of bow only. The spring has eight coils. The wings, closed at the ends to hold the axial bar, have traces of vertical mouldings, the innermost of which continue onto the bow. The line of the short hook is continued on the bow by a raised moulding with crosscuts. Late first century – early second century. (900a)
5. Hod Hill. Pin missing. A small central hole on the moulded circular plate may have held an enamel boss. There are triple cross mouldings above and below the plate and the lower bow tapers to a cross moulding above a small foot knob. Traces of tinning on lower bow. Closely paralleled at Chichester, Mackreth 1978, Fig. 10. 28,45 and Hod Hill, Brailsford 1968, Fig. 56, 3. Mid-first century. (15a)
6. Hod Hill. The parallel longitudinal

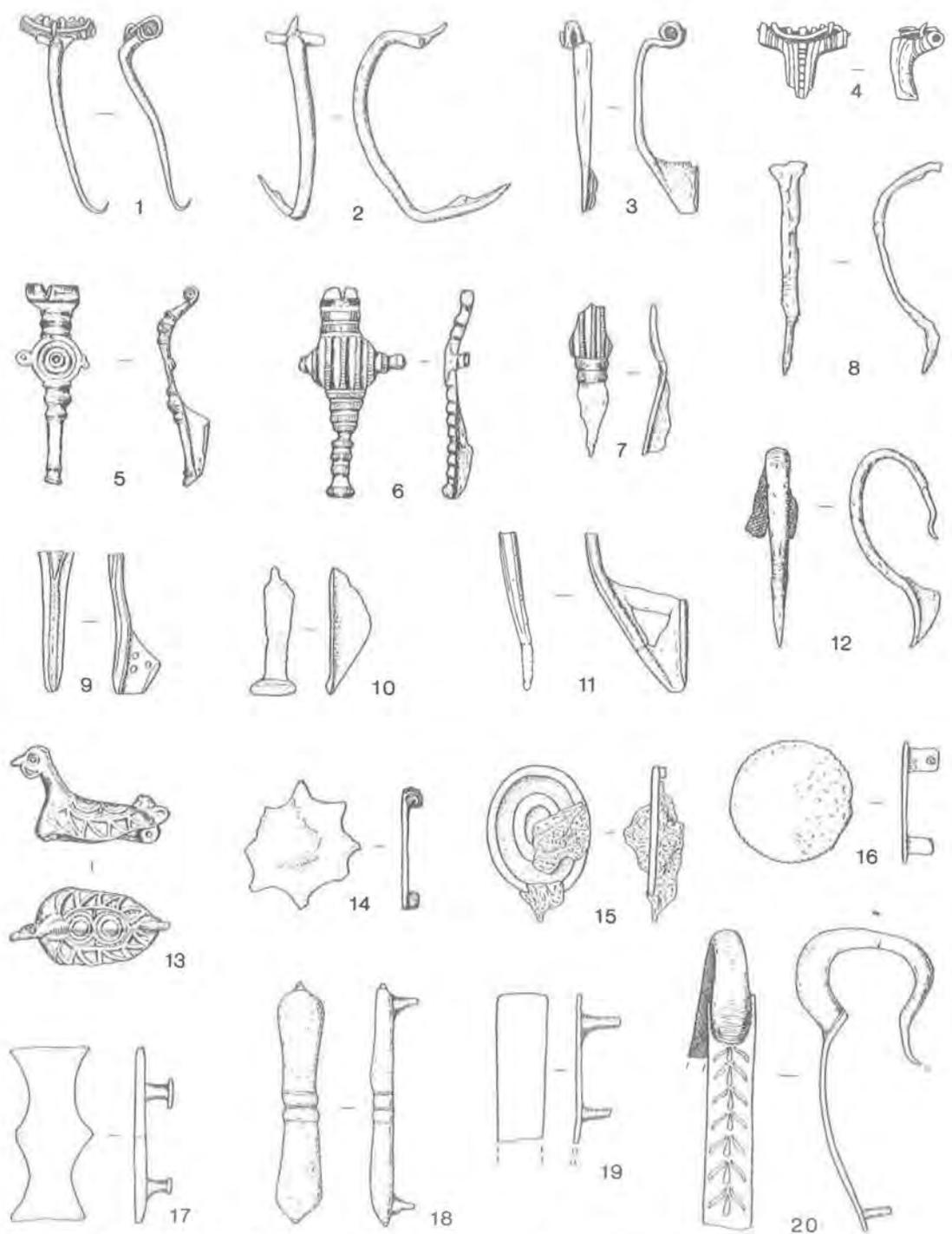


Fig. 3. Copper alloy objects: brooches 1-16, military equipment 17-20. (Scale 2/3).

- mouldings at the focus of this weakly curved brooch are continued into the side wings. There are two cross mouldings towards the head and seven cross mouldings on the tapering lower bow which terminates in a small transverse knob. Traces of tinning. Very corroded. Cf. a similar, but more curved example from Hod Hill, Brailsford 1962, Fig. 9. C76. Also see Skeleton Green (Mackreth 1981, Fig. 72, 55). Mid-first century. (900b)
7. Hod Hill. Badly corroded. The surviving part of the weakly curved bow is decorated with longitudinal ridges with two cross mouldings towards the foot. Traces of tinning below the cross mouldings. cf. similar examples from Hod Hill, Brailsford 1962, Fig. 8. C54, and Richborough, Henderson 1949, pl. XXVI.17. Mid-first century. (105g)
  8. Uncertain type. Colchester? Badly corroded bow only. No visible decoration. (106b)
  9. Uncertain type. Colchester or Colchester derivative? The head, pin and part of the bow are missing. Tapering bow with a raised central moulding beaded towards the foot. The catchplate has three neat circular piercings. (102c)
  10. Uncertain type. Aucissa/Hod Hill? The head, pin and part of the bow are missing. The bow tapers to a simple transverse foot knob. Traces of tinning. Corroded. (105nn)
  11. Uncertain type. Colchester? Catchplate and lower part of a large bow brooch only. The bow is D-shaped in section and decorated with faint longitudinal grooves. The catchplate has a large triangular opening. First century. (600c)
  12. Uncertain type. Aucissa? Corroded and fragmentary. A simple hinged brooch. Damage has accentuated the kick of the D-section bow. There is a slightly raised plain boss just above the flat squared head. Slight transverse lines on the head. The bow tapers to a point and the catchplate is damaged. Length c. 45 mm. First century. (600a)
  13. Zoomorphic. Hinged brooch in the form of a sitting cockerel or hen. Broken tail and pin. Recesses for enamel. Enamelled brooches in the form of cockerels, ducks or hens are of British manufacture. cf. a brooch from Lincoln, B.M. Cat. 1922, Fig. 74. Most examples are second century. (105a)
  14. Plate. Scalloped edge with eight points. Length 29 mm., width 26 mm. Pin missing. Traces of gilding and traces of solder at centre of face for attachment of a boss or stud. cf. Hull 1970, Fig. 13, 5, and Kenyon 1948, Fig. 82, 2 for a scalloped edge brooch with a central mounting from Leicester. Mid-first to second century. (105mm)
  - 102b, unillustrated. A similar scalloped-edge plate brooch with eight points. Length 28 mm., width 26 mm. Traces of tinning on face. The reverse is slightly thicker between the projections for the hinge and catchplate. File marks at base of catchplate and on the hinge.
  15. Plate. Oval brooch. Iron corrosion partly obscures the face. Traces of corroded iron pin on reverse. The outer recess was probably enamelled, the inner recess may have held a decorative boss. A fairly common type. cf. Henderson 1949, pl. XXIX 48, and Hunter and Kirk 1949, Fig. 26. 1 for an example with a boss, and parallels. Third century, possibly late second century. (25a)
  - 150/11, unillustrated. A disc fragment, radius 12.5 mm., with a central hollow, 5 mm. wide, concentric recesses of 3 mm.

- and 4.5 mm., and a thickened outer edge. Traces of red enamel. Irregular surface on the reverse. Probably part of an enamelled plate brooch.
16. Plate disc brooch. Invested edge. Flat, smooth surface except where affected by corrosion. Hinged. Pin missing. Saxon? cf. Collins and Collins 1959, Fig. 5, 15. (88d)
  30. Pennanular. Straightened in antiquity. Moulded. Milled knob terminals. Fowler type A4 (Fowler 1960, 151, 175). cf. Kenyon 1948, Fig. 82, 10, Hull 1971, Fig. 40, 46. First – third century. (105i)
- (b) Military Equipment. (Fig. 3: 17-20, 4:21)
17. Belt mount of unusual form. cf. Down 1978, Fig. 10.34.65. First century, not necessarily military.
  18. Belt or apron mount of a common form. cf. Brailsford 1968, Fig. 56.17, Waugh and Goodburn 1972, Fig. 32.37, Goodburn 1974, Fig. 28.49. Mid-first century.
  19. Flat, slightly tapering belt mount of a type normally tinned and decorated with niello inlay. Broken. cf. Ulbert 1969, Taf. 27, 15-17, Hawkes and Hull 1947, pl. CIII.2. First century.
  20. Harness junction clip, decorated with niello. Length 68 mm. cf. Rittering 1913, Taf. XIII, 34, Webster 1949, pl. X.a. There is an almost identical, but slightly longer at 84 mm., example from Kastell Oberstimm (Schönberger 1978, B184). The decoration is similar, though inverted, to that of the silver inlay on a junction clip from South Cadbury (Alcock 1970, pl. VIIc) where the loop moulding is also decorated. Mid-first century.
  21. Rectangular plate with central perforation and T-shaped projection. Cast. Turning pin for securing breast plate of parade plate armour, *lorica squamata*. cf. Russell
- Robinson 1975, Fig. 170, von Schnurbein 1977, Fig. 117.3. Third century or later. (15e)
- (c) Miscellaneous. (Fig. 4:22-29, 31-40)
22. Pin with large rounded head. cf. Stead 1976, Fig. 106, 67. (92b)
  23. Bird-shaped mount with two faint horizontal grooves. Concave reverse with two pointed studs. Cast. (91g)
  24. Mount with two studs. Damaged. Cast. (102d)
  25. Folding balance arm. The arm is perforated at both ends and the rectangular boss has chamfered corners and traces of an incised dot on each of the main faces. An almost identical but complete balance in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna is described as Byzantine by Kisch 1965, Fig. 8. Folding balances are common in Viking contexts (Shetelig 1940, V, 155–166; MacGregor 1978, Fig. 28.4 illustrates a recent find from York) and have been found in late Saxon contexts in eastern England (cf. Oakley 1979, Fig. 111.89 for another example and parallels) while, more locally, a folding balance arm was found at Thornborough on the surface of a Roman road in association with items of first – fourth century A.D. date (Johnson 1975, Fig. 20.d.4). Late Saxon – early mediaeval? (105p)
  26. Part of a pair of tweezers. Plain. Common to Roman sites of all periods. (105k)
  27. Pin. Flattened knob head and groove at top of shank. Shank broken. Two similar pins from *Verulamium* came from early second century contexts, (Waugh and Goodburn 1972, Fig. 34, 59, 60). (105j)
  28. Baluster-shaped terminal on broken shaft, slightly off-circular in section. (15i)
  29. Fitting or box-mount. Domed head rising

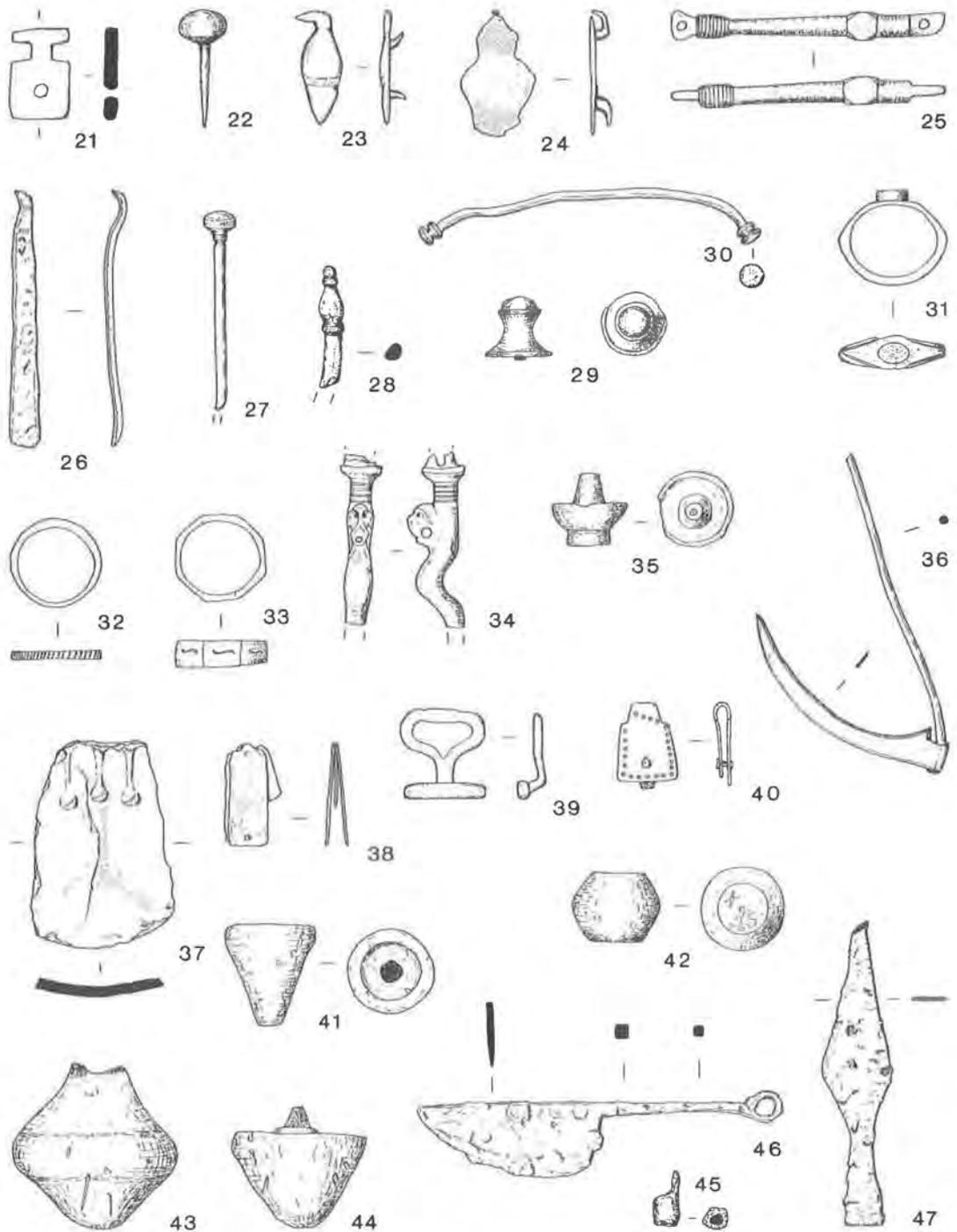


Fig. 4. Copper alloy objects 21-40, lead 41-44 and iron 45-47. (Scale 21-44, 2/3; 45-47, 1/3).

from concave shaft. Traces of central projection or stud at base. (105w)

31. Finger ring. The raised oval bezel has an incised but indistinct pattern. Linear grooves on the thinner upper part taper from beside the bezel towards the thicker V-section lower segment. Internal diameter 16 – 19 mm. Marshall type Exix (Marshall 1907). Third - fourth century. (600b)
32. Finger ring. A simple ring with transverse ribbing varying in width, depth and angle. cf. Wedlake 1958, Fig. 57, 12, Kenyon 1948, Fig. 83, 13. First – second century? (91k)
33. Finger ring. Octagonal. The facets have a central, incised decoration and vary in width from 4.5 mm. to 7.0 mm. An octagonal ring from Brettenham has faint incised diagonal lines on the facets (Ashmolean Museum 1927.525, ex. Sir John Evans collection). Similar shaped bronze rings without decoration are known from grave DX of the Roman cemetery at Ospringe (Whiting, Hawley and May 1931, pl. LVIII) and from the villa at Gatcombe (Branigan 1977, Fig. 26.517). Three octagonal bronze rings with inscriptions are discussed by Wright (Wright 1970). Several octagonal Roman silver and bronze rings from Germany are illustrated by Henkel (Henkel 1913). Marshall type Ex-xiii (Marshall 1907). Third – fourth century. (900d)
34. Cast bar with zoomorphic decoration. Flanged bar surmounted by a cylindrical top broken across a perforation. Faint circumferential grooves beneath the flange stop at the emergence of the cat-like head. The open-mouthed face is pierced through the cheeks by a horizontal perforation. The bar kicks forward in a sharp curve beneath the face and broadens, becoming hemispherical in section, reverting to a thinner circular section at the

break. The original form of the object is indeterminate, (900c)

35. Fitting. Knob with hollow shank. Similar items are common on Roman sites of all periods in Britain and are generally interpreted as box or door fittings. For a similar knob and references to other examples and interpretations, see Allason-Jones 1979, Fig. 21, 7. (105w)

150/19, unillustrated, is a similar but badly damaged example.

36. *The Miniature Bronze Scythe from Walton Court* by Dr. M. Green.

The model scythe is a cast bronze object comprising a circular-sectioned shank and a socketed, rectangular-sectioned blade with bevelled inner cutting edge. The overall length of the shank is 76 mm; the blade measures 56 mm. in length. The blade is long and deeply curved; the shank has (probably in burial) been distorted inwards towards the blade.

The Walton model scythe is, as far as I am aware, unique in Britain. Models of many different implements (Green 1975, 54-70; 1981) are common, especially in south-east Britain, the most frequent occurrence being that of axes. The nearest British parallels are the agricultural implements allegedly from a barrow in Sussex (Manning 1966, 50-59); this group included finds such as miniature ox-yokes and a model plough but no scythes.

Military graves in the Rhineland between Cologne and Bonn have produced a number of hoards of model agricultural tools including rakes, threshers, corn-shovels and numerous scythes of a type identical to the Walton Court example (Rottländer 1973-4, 143-152). The German finds also included figurines of reptiles and batrachians. Coin-associations, where they occur, date these distinctive hoards to the third century A.D. (Behrens

1939, 56-49). It is generally considered that the Rhineland (and possibly also the Sussex) models were dedicated to the Thracian-Phrygian deity Sabazios whose cult was one of the Mystery religions. This divinity was associated with Jupiter (Pascal 1964, 59) and with Dionysus (*Diodorus Siculus* IV, 4, 1) and was considered to be a Lord of Heaven and a patron of agriculture. The reptilian and batrachian figurines from the Rhineland graves recur on bronze votive hands dedicated to Sabazios, for example that from Cologne (Ristow 1975, pl. 56).

It may be admissible to consider the Walton Court scythe as having links with the German grave-goods mentioned above. We have already noted that a possible outlier to the Rhineland groups is provenanced to Sussex. However, it is equally possible that the Walton Court model was never part of such a group but is an isolated miniature. A number of other types of tool or implement occur in non-sepulchral contexts in Britain. Such models almost certainly possess a religious significance. The scythe may have had a personal, talismanic function but, in the absence of a suspension-loop, it is unlikely to have been worn as an amulet, and it is perhaps best interpreted as a votive model made for deposition in a temple or grave. British models are frequent occurrences in both contexts (Green 1975, 54-70).

The choice of a scythe as a model offering may be due to a number of factors. First, it may be a dedication to a well-attested deity with definite agricultural associations, such as Sabazios. Second, the god honoured may have been a local spirit presiding over, among other areas, fields, crops and fertility. Third (and this is not inconsistent with factor two), the devotee or dedicant may himself have been a farmer or reaper and may have chosen an object relevant to his own occupation to offer to a certain divinity.

Space is too limited here to discuss the custom of dedicating models rather than full-sized items (Green 1981). Economy and convenience are both relevant factors, but I am of the opinion that miniaturisation itself may have a ritual significance – in the same way that ritual breakage of an object (Grinsell 1961, 475-91) defunctionalises it, thus rendering it appropriate for divine acceptance.

In summary, the Walton scythe-model is undoubtedly of religious significance. Its closest parallels lie with agricultural models including scythes in German grave-groups of third century A.D. date. If the scythe is not an isolated outlier from such a group, it was probably dedicated in a local shrine by a local devotee. (106a)

37. Fragment of socketed axe. Face decorated with three raised ribs terminating in pellets. Central crack. The size of this fragment means that it is not possible to identify close parallels, the three ribs and pellets may have been accompanied by edge ribs. Facets are indicated but not strongly developed. Later Bronze Age. (105F)
38. Two thin, silvered plates riveted at one end and with rivet holes at the opposite end. A shorter, slightly thicker plate with silvered edges is secured between the two plates by the surviving rivet. The internal plate and the faint projecting knob suggest that this object is not a strap end but its function is not clear. Uncertain date, possibly Roman (15b)
39. Fastener. Flat headed bar with offset open shank. cf. Bushe Fox 1926, pl. XV.28. Traces of wear on the thin shank. Wild lists bar-shank fasteners as his class IX and suggests that they are probably late Roman in date (Wild 1970, 143). The heart-shaped opening, however, is apparently not paralleled. (105h)

40. Clip or mount. Folded sheet joined by copper alloy rivet. Face of mount decorated with circular punch marks. The punched decoration is similar to that sometimes found on bucket and other bindings of Saxon date, e.g. a binding from Guilton (Ashmolean Museum Douglas Collection – no specific accession number) (15F).

A slightly larger diameter punch decoration also appears on 106c, unillustrated, a similarly patinated fragment of copper alloy sheet. Length 26 mm., width 14 mm.

*Lead.* (Fig. 4; 41-44).

41. Weight or plumb bob. A truncated cone. Central perforation surrounded by an incised groove on flat surface. Height 23 mm., diameter 19 mm., weight 34.28 g. (91a).

Three similar items are not illustrated:

105b/5, slightly less symmetrical. Weight 36.88 g. height 21 mm., diameter 22 mm. 15d has slightly raised mouldings on the upper part of the cone. Height 25 mm., diameter 21 mm., weight 51.12 g. 105v is similar in profile but less pointed and is roughly cut to an irregular septagonal shape. Height 26 mm., maximum width 25 mm., weight 71.78 g.

42. Weight. Barrel or cheese shaped. Slight central depressions indicate lathe turning. Inscribed X on one face, further inscription could be hidden by corrosion. Weight 26.68 g., fractionally less than a Roman *uncia* (= 27.288 g.). A similar weight from Rissstessen, part of a series of three, weighs 26.89 g. (Ulbert 1970, taf 27;453). (105oo).
43. Weight. Opposed conical steelyard weight with remnants of an iron staple at top. Height 35 mm., maximum diameter 34 mm., weight 161.58 g., i.e. slightly less than six Roman ounces (= 163.73g.). (105b/2.)

43. 105b/3, unillustrated, is similar but more compressed and has traces of an iron pin at the bottom as well as the top. Height 35 mm., maximum diameter 38 mm., weight 241.65 g., i.e. slightly less than a *dodrans* or nine Roman ounces (= 245.59 g.). Similar shaped weights have been found on a number of Roman sites, e.g. Chichester, England (Down 1974, Fig. 8, 18, 59) and Saalburg, West Germany (Jacobi 1897, taf XXXVI.29).

44. Weight. A slightly pointed, rounded weight with the remains of an iron pin. Damaged on one side. Weight 77.80 g. A similar shaped weight was found in the Roman fort at Templeborough (May 1922, pl. XVIII F). (90d).

Four other lead weights are not illustrated:–

105b/1, a small, near-spherical weight with traces of an iron pin at the top. Slightly corroded. Height 17 mm., diameter 18 mm., weight 26.50 g. Similar in shape to a slightly larger weight. 19 mm. in diameter, with a bronze pin, from *Segontium* (Wheeler 1924, Fig. 62.2) and a weight, 25 mm. in diameter, from *Novaesium* (Lehner 1904, taf. XXXIII B.25).

105b/5, a globular roughly conical weight with central holes at both ends. Height 38 mm., maximum diameter 29 mm., weight 166.20 g.

91b, tapering cylindrical steelyard weight with the remains of an iron loop. Corroded. Height 23 mm., maximum diameter 25 mm., weight 57.44 g.

102a, dumbbell-shaped or concave cylindrical weight. Complete but recently damaged on one face, otherwise symmetrical. Height 35 mm., maximum diameter 40 mm., minimum diameter 22 mm., weight 335.0 g. There are two similar, but

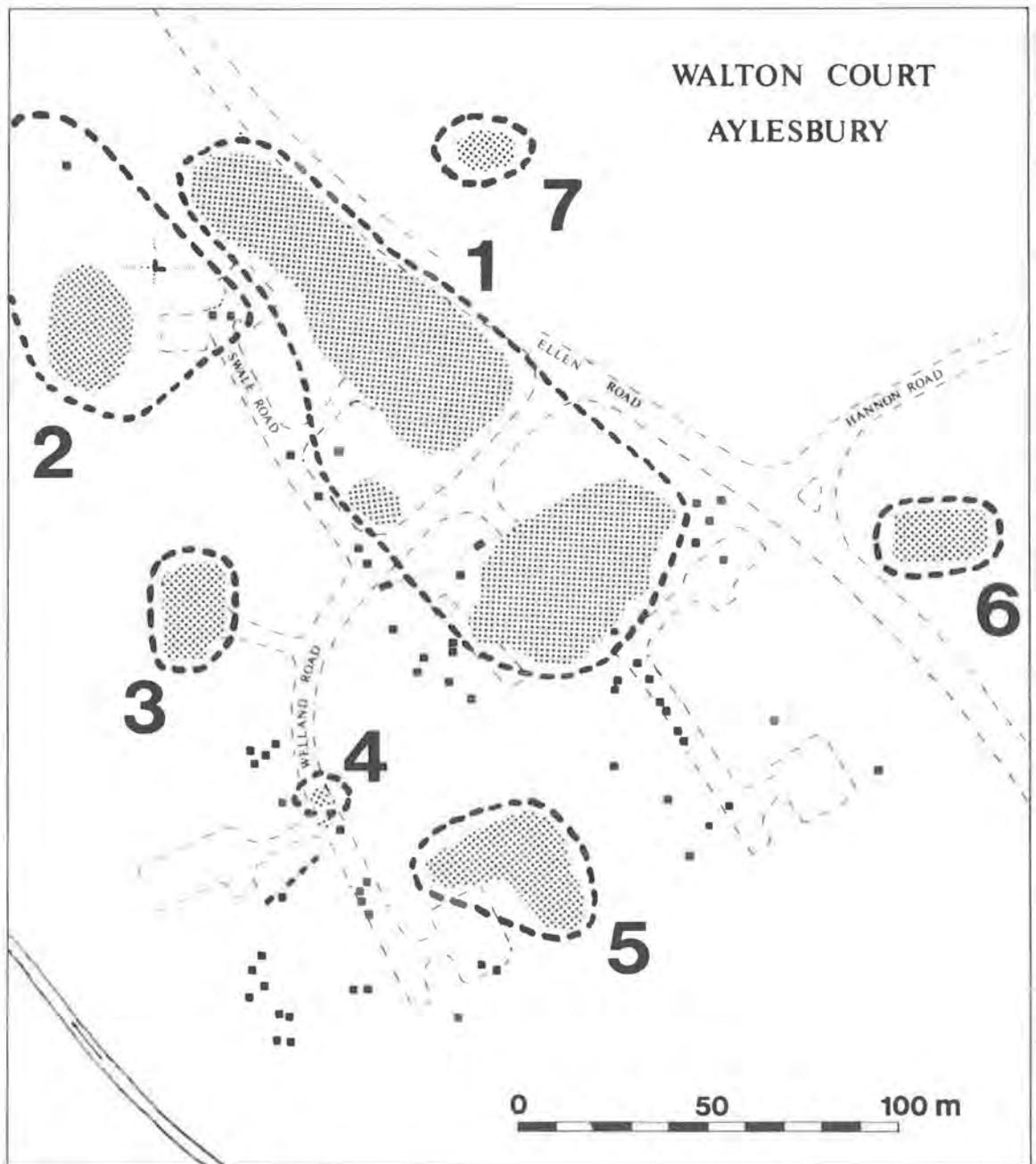


Fig. 5. Coin find groupings.

smaller, concave shaped lead weights in the Silchester Collection (Reading Museum – no specific accession number).

*Iron (Fig. 4: 45-47)*

45. Goad end. cf. Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, Fig. 46, 61 for a slightly larger first century example. (15h)
46. Knife. The blade is curved and the line of the curve continues as far as the handle. The end of the handle forms a loop. Probably used as a small chopper, cf. Webster 1975, Fig. 125, 185. (90a)
47. Spearhead. Closed socket. Tip broken. A small, well-made spearhead. A similar spearhead from Hod Hill is shown in Brailsford 1962, pl. VI, B 25. Mid-first century. (105c)

*The Coins by Dr. D. Nash*

A total of 209 coins have been recorded from three principal collection areas in Walton Court. The earliest were three Celtic coins, all Catuvellaunian:

1. Tasciovanus (c. 20 B.C. – A.D. 10) AR 1.22 g. As Mack 185, but silver.
2. Cunobelinus (c. A.D. 10 – 40) AE 2.31 g. Mack 249.
3. Epaticcus (c. A.D. 25 – 35) AR 1.21 g. Mack 263a.

The latest finds were English: two broken lead tokens; a halfpenny of Henry III cut in half; a rose farthing of Charles I (c. 1625 – 1644); a half groat of Charles I (c. 1634); and a fragment of a half groat of Queen Anne.

The rest of the coins were Roman, and spanned the entire period of the Roman occupation of Britain, from Claudius I (regular and barbarous bronzes) to bronze coins of the house of Theodosius at the end of the fourth century. There were, however, significant differences in the range of coins found at different sites within the main collection areas. These differences may well be related to

underlying features: it might be inferred that a group of late Roman structures stood to the west of Ellen Road, the earlier of which (group 1) was immediately adjacent to the line of the present road, and the later of which (group 5) stood some two hundred metres further south.

The following account summarises the distribution of the Celtic and Roman coins divided into three principal areas which contain groups 1 – 7 (Fig. 5). Area 1 contains groups 1 – 5, Area 2 group 6 and Area 3 group 7. The location of the findspots contained within each group is shown on Fig. 2, and the distribution by period on Figs. 6 and 7.

*Area 1 (west of Ellen Road)*

As an ensemble, the coins from Area 1 are preponderantly Late Roman. Only seven coins may be dated before 260, while sites 88 and 104 have yielded coins later than 378.

*Group 1 (Fig. 6): sites 15, 25, 88, 89, 91, 94*

This is a very homogeneous group of late Roman coins, all but three of which date between 260 and 388. The exceptions are two barbarous *asses* of Claudius I and an illegible bronze coin of the first or second century. The relative scarcity of early material, when compared with Areas 2 and 3 (Figs. 6 – 7) might suggest the presence of substantial structures of late Roman date.

*Group 2 (Fig. 7): sites 48, 92, 95, 96*

This is almost certainly not a homogeneous group, but has been brought together here for convenience. It lies adjacent to group 1, straggling off to the west. In composition the coins of group 2 are broadly similar to group 1, except for the relatively greater number of early coins. Of a total of fourteen coins, one was a barbarous *as* of Claudius I, and another an *as* of Domitian. Around the periphery of the hypothetical structures with which group 1 is associated, earlier coinage seems to have survived in plenty.

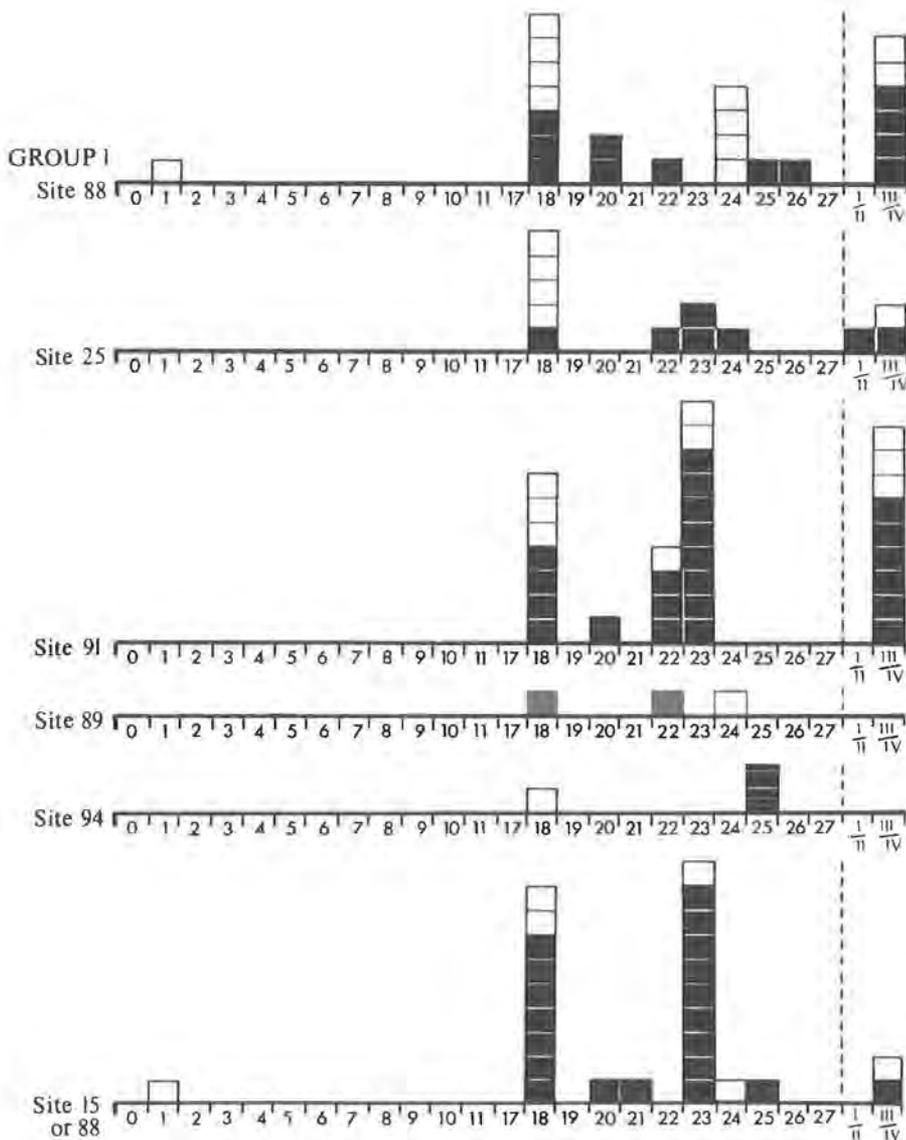


Fig. 6. Coins finds by period: each square represents one coin, black squares are official Roman coins, open squares barbarous imitations; C. indicates Celtic. Final columns are illegible coins by century. Periods as Casey (1980) 29, i.e.

1. Claudian	A.D. 43-54	8. Antonine II	A.D. 161-180	21. Diocletianic	A.D. 296-317
2. Neronian	54-68	9. Antonine III	180-192	22. Constantinian I	317-330
3. Flavian I	68-81	10. Severan I	192-217	23. Constantinian II	330-348
4. Flavian II	81-96	11-17. Severan II	217-260	24. Constantinian III	348-364
5. Trajanic	96-117	18. Gallic Empire	260-273	25. Valentinianic	364-378
6. Hadrianic	117-138	19. Aurelianic	273-286	26. Theodosian I	378-388
7. Antonine I	138-161	20. Carausian	286-296	27. Theodosian II	388-402

Group 3 (Fig. 7): site 90

This is an isolated site to the west of area 1, which yielded only two coins, both Constantinian.

Group 4 (Fig. 7): site 87

This is another distinct site, lying between groups 4 and 5. It yielded a single Celtic coin of Tasciovanus.

Group 5 (Fig. 7): site 104

This site lies to the south of the collection area, and yielded a significant very late Roman collection. The earliest coins represented were barbarous radiates of the 370s and the earliest regular issues were one Constantinian bronze, and four of the house of Valentinian (364-378). The latest coins were late-Theodosian (388-402). This collection, therefore, is consistently late and probably reflects the presence of an associated late fourth century structure.

Area 2 (south of Hannon Road)

Group 6 (Fig. 7): site 107

In overall range the coins from Area 2 represent a longer period of occupation than those from Area 1. The most striking characteristic of this collection is the large proportion of early issues, from Celtic to Antonine. Although coins as late as Theodosius are present in respectable numbers, they are a much smaller proportion of the whole collection than was the case in Area 1.\* Notable among the Roman coins was a cluster of four Constantinian folles stuck firmly to one another. All four were issues of Constantine I: two *Virtus Exercit* from Trier (A.D. 320), one *Victoriae Laetae Princ. Perp.* from London (A.D. 319-320) and one *Beata Tranquillitas*, also from London (A.D. 321). The circumstances of the find, and the narrow date range of the coins, suggest that this little group was in a container such as a purse when it was lost.

Area 3 (north of Ellen Road)

Group 7 (Fig. 7): site 600

This site, on the eastern margin of the Walton Court area, has yielded a modest

collection of coins whose overall profile is more akin to that of Area 2 than that of Area 1.

*The Ceramic*

*'Belgic' (Fig. 8)*

All of the pottery is in a reduced fabric and hand-made; some shows signs of being coil built. The inclusion of limestone in the fabric of some sherds may indicate a local clay source. The whole is probably datable to the last few decades before the conquest, and much of it is similar to that excavated from the settlement at Bierton which will be fully discussed in D. Allen's forthcoming report. The pottery illustrated here is from contexts without Romanised fabrics.

1. Burnished below neck ext., scored horizontally ext. and scored vertically int.. Fine grits <0.1 mm. diam. (12)
2. Burnished ext. and int., well sorted rounded quartz, c. 0.25 - 0.5 mm. diam., largely clear-white. (9)
3. Partially burnished, probably from a jar; fabric as above but clear-pink grains. (9)
4. Burnished ext. and int., fine quartz with occasional pieces of limestone up to 2 mm. (56)
5. Horizontally scored ext. with line of indents below rim, hints of vertical int. scoring/wiping marks. Fine quartz with irregular limestone up to 2 mm. (36)

\* Thirty-four coins found in 1979 on sites 106 (Area 1) and 107 (Area 2) can unfortunately now no longer be reliably assigned to their precise site of origin. The overall profile of this collection (Fig. 6) is much more like that of Area 2 than Area 1, where site 106 is in the midst of several other sites whose coin finds were resolutely Late Roman in composition (sites 88, 25, 91: Fig. 1). The earlier coins of this group of thirty-four may therefore provisionally be ascribed to site 107.



6. Scored ext., fabric as 2. (35)

*Romano-British (Fig. 9)*

Since so little of the pottery is reliably stratified a few examples have been selected to give an idea of chronological range. All are wheel thrown. First – second century forms include nos. 2, 12, 14, and 11 which may be residual ‘Belgic’. Third – fourth century wares include 7, an Oxfordshire colour-coat bowl no. 5, and probable Nene Valley bowl no. 6. Not illustrated is a stamp (107) on a red colour-coat base similar to those used by Oxfordshire potters (Young 1977, Fig. 68, 24-31) and three ‘parchment’ ware sherds.

The illustrations are grouped into bowls (1-7), mortaria (8-10), beakers (11-12) and jars (13-17).

1. Grey ext., pale grey core, few quartz grits <.1 mm. with sparse frags. of iron rich sst. (97)
2. White ext. and core, rounded quartz grains <.3 mm. (85)
3. Black ext., grey core, plentiful rounded quartz <.4 mm. (44)
4. Grey ext. and core, plentiful angular clear-white quartz <.2 mm. (25)
5. Imitation Dr. 38 in red colour-coat, grey core, very sparse quartz grains <.3 mm., c.f. Oxfordshire, Young (1977) type C51. (104)
6. Brownish-red colour-coat on white fabric, fine sparse grog inclusions. (104)
7. Grey ext. and core, plentiful quartz grits <.3 mm. (14)
8. White with traces of red slip, sparse white trituration grits; fabric with plentiful white/clear sub-angular quartz grits with sparse ironstone. (53)
9. White, well rounded clear-milky quartz trituration grits, fine fabric with sparse red grits <.3 mm. (17)
10. Yellowish-white, very sparse grits – quartz flint and ironstone >.5 mm. (105) Three flint trituration grits survive on spout.
11. Reddy-orange ext., grey core, burnished ext., sparse quartz and rock frags. not identified. (32)
12. Poppy-head beaker, almost complete, panels consisting of three vertical lines with pellets between, dark-grey ext. and grey core, sparse quartz grits <.3 mm., prominent black fleck, ?iron <.1 mm. (105)
13. Dark grey, faint cross-hatching, burnished on shoulder, plentiful rounded quartz with sparse ironstone or grog. (44)
14. Black ext. and core, partly burnished on rim, sparse quartz <.3 mm. and dark inclusions not identified. (105)
15. Grey ext. and core, partly burnished on rim, sparse quartz <.3 mm. and dark inclusions not identified. (97)
16. Pink-buff ext. and core, but reduced, fine quartz ground <.1 mm. (26)
17. Reddy-orange ext. and core, plentiful quartz <.3mm. also grog and sst. (85)

*Samian Ware* by Brenda M. Dickinson

66: Form 15/17 or 18, stamped with a broken die giving [ ]F►M]VR·I (Mur.–Ter.. 1a). The original die, giving OF►MVR·TER.F, presumably represents an association of two potters. The first of these is almost certainly Murranus, of La Graufesenque, since two of his less-common motifs appear on a decorated bowl stamped by Mur.–Ter.. The other potter could well be Tertius ii, whose career overlapped that of Murranus, though he probably began work slightly earlier. A range c. A.D. 45-65 is likely. (66)

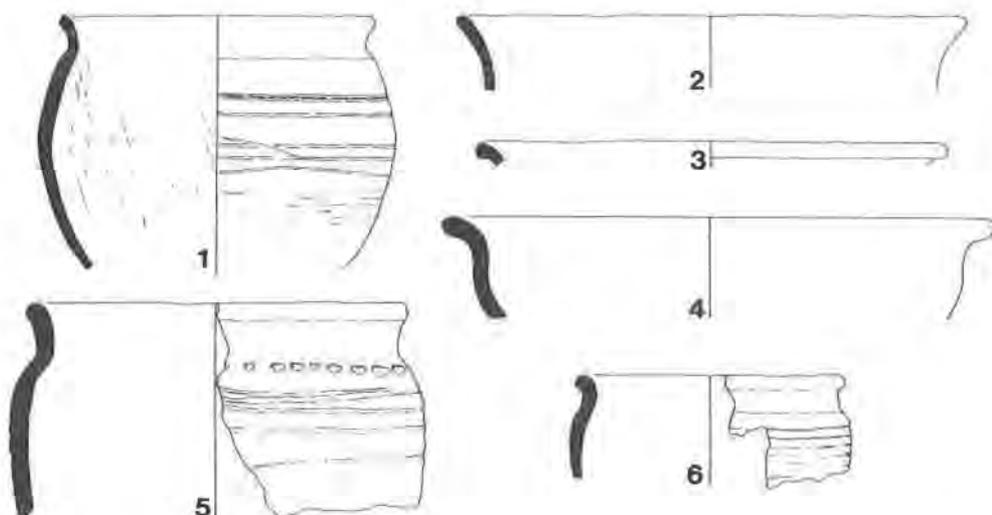


Fig. 8. Late Iron Age pottery. (Scale 1/4)

91: Form 37, in the fabric of Les Martres-de-Veyre. The border of fine beads and naked figure (as on S. & S. 1958, pl. 38, 438) were used by mould-makers who supplied Ioenalis i. The figure in a tunic is not illustrated by Déchelette or Oswald and no parallels have been found for the ovolo. c. A.D. 110-125.

105: A rim sherd from a dish in orange fabric with a grey core and a brownish-orange colour-coat. This is an imitation of the samian form Curle 23, which was not commonly copied in other fabrics. Not datable, in the absence of any evidence of origin.

150: Form 37, Central Gaulish. A small fragment from a panelled bowl, with a lozenge (S & S 1958, fig. 47, 15; London 1958) and, perhaps, a bear (D.820?). Both details were used at Lezoux by Cinnamus ii, and the beaded border would fit his style. c. A.D. 150-180. (150)

Unstratified:

- (i) Form 30 or 37 rim, Central Gaulish.  
Part of the ovolo survives, but there is

no complete impression of the tongue. The fabric and glaze suggest Hadrianic or early-Antonine date.

- (ii) Form 37, Central Gaulish. The single-bordered ovolo (Rogers B12) was used by Cinnamus ii and members of the Sacer i group. The piece is not closely datable. Hadrianic or early- to mid-Antonine.

- (iii) Form 37, Central Gaulish, stamped [PA] ZNI (i.e. P▲TERNFE) retrograde (Paternus v of Lezoux, Die 7a). The freestyle scene includes a stag (D.860), dog (0.2007A), leopard (D.789) and two bears (D.807 and one for which there is no exact equivalent in Déchelette or Oswald). The leaf is Rogers J119. All the details have been previously recorded on stamped bowls of Paternus. For the striated spindles and all the animals except for the leopard, see S. & S. 1958, pl. 106, 22, for the leopard *ibid.*, pl. 106, 21 and for the leaf *ibid.*, pl. 107, 28. c. A.D. 160-195.

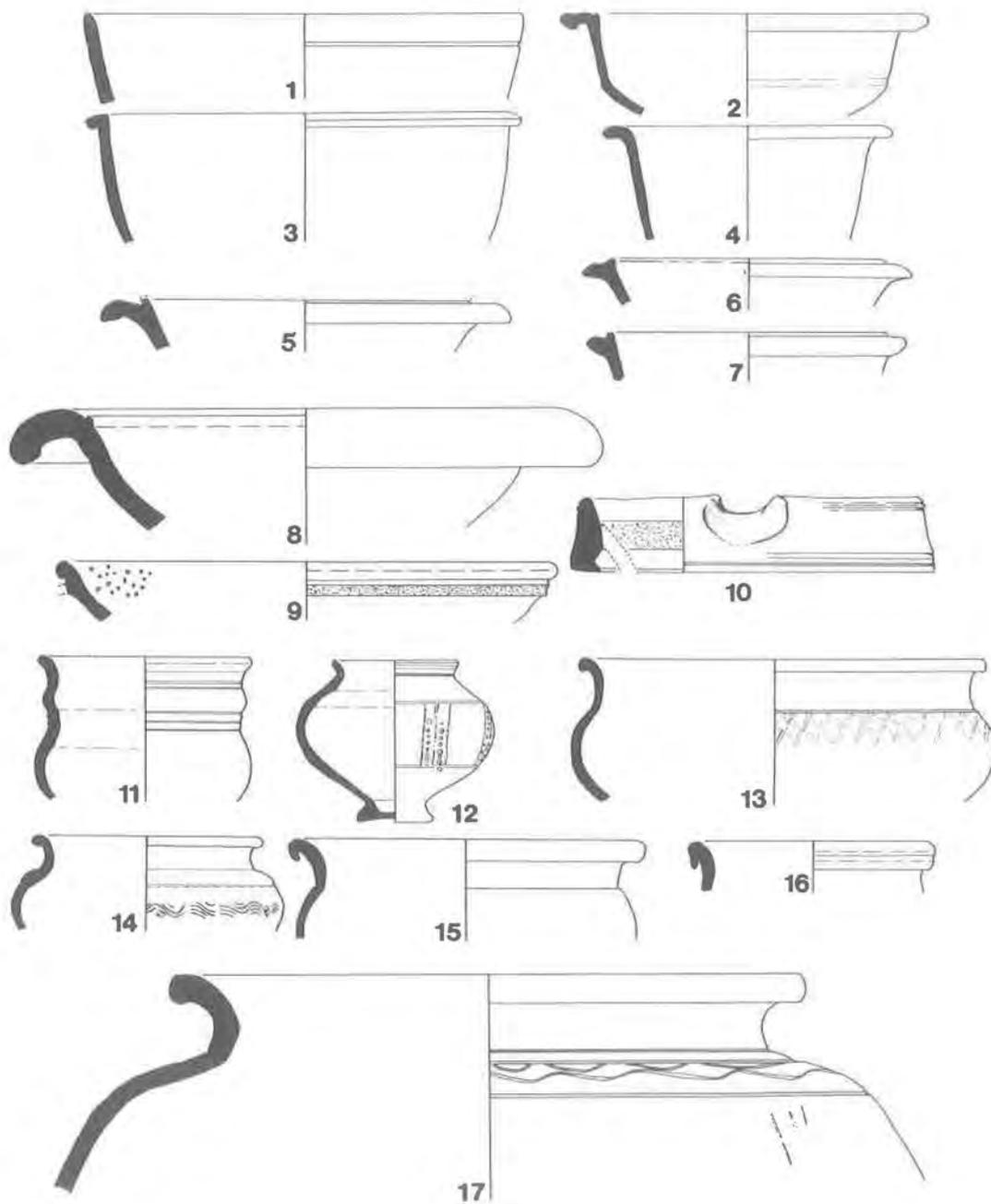


Fig. 9. Romano-British pottery. (Scale 1/4)

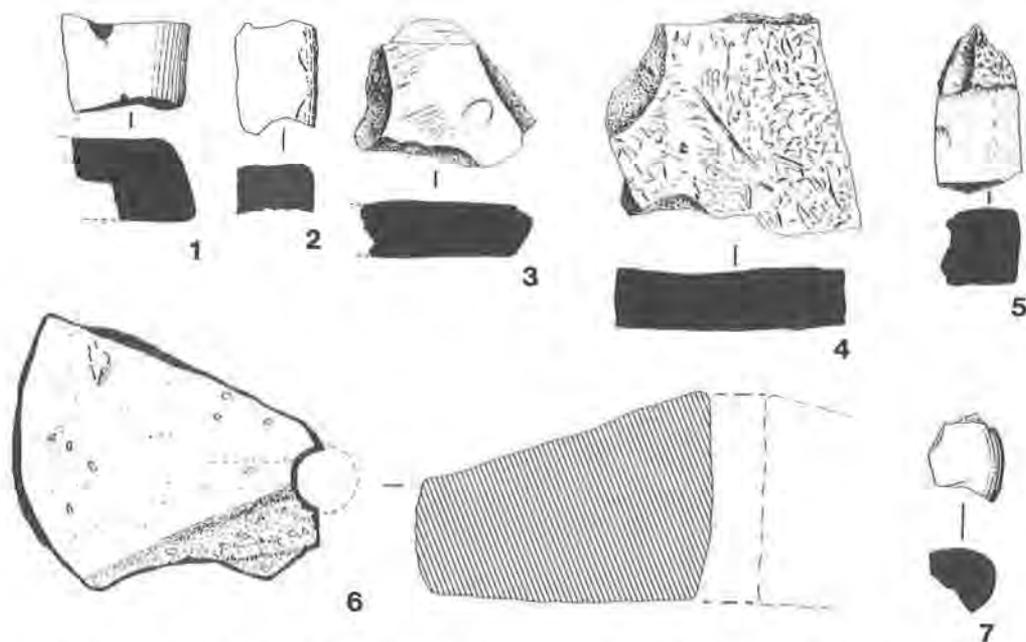


Fig. 10. 'Belgic brick' 1-5 ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ), Quern 6 ( $\frac{1}{8}$ ), Anglo-Saxon loomweight 7 ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ).

*'Belgic' Brick and Other Ceramic (Fig. 10)*

Crudely made fragments of clay 'brick' came from fourteen contexts, four of which were certainly pre-Roman in date and the remainder Romano-British. The brick often contained quantities of vegetable matter both on the surface and in the fabric. The thickest piece was 45 mm. Edges were either angular suggesting the use of a simple mould or rounded indicating hand-forming and although no large pieces survived they were probably rectangular. In colour they were generally brown - dark brown indicating a reducing environment. The pieces illustrated in Fig. 10 occurred in the following contexts: 1, 14; 2, 52; 3, 54; 4, 105; 5, 54.

Three types of formed clay brick are characteristically associated with Late Iron Age sites: (i) pierced, flat plates, some of which are round, (ii) unpierced, flat slabs, (iii) bars of

rectangular section. All three types were encountered by Wheeler at Prae Wood and *Verulamium*, the first type being here associated with small clay ovens (Wheeler 1936, 44, 177-180, Fig. 26, Pl. 56), as at Maiden Castle. This type was found in hearths at Grubs Barn near Welwyn (Rook 1970) and Knowl Hill, Berks (Over 1974). The second type, unpierced slabs such as those from Walton Court, are less commonly reported, presumably since they are often fragmentary. However, at Knowl Hill, Berks they again seem to be associated with hearth debris. It may be that such 'bricks' were utilised to contain hearths when no suitable local stone was available or to provide level surfaces on which things could be stood during cooking. They seem never to occur in sufficient quantity or in a situation which suggests any structural function. The third type contains a range of forms, some of which are similar to those later utilised in pottery kilns.

Three pieces only of Roman tile were recovered from the site, one of which had been trimmed into a 90 mm. diameter disc.

Number 7 on Fig. 10, although of similar fabric to the 'bricks' noted above may be an Anglo-Saxon loomweight fragment although it comes from a context containing Romano-British sherds (66).

#### Other Finds

##### Bone

The single box of animal bone recovered from various contexts is insufficient to warrant a faunal report.

##### Stone

Three pieces of quern stone were recovered. The first (Fig. 10, 6) a rotary quern from an undated pit (49) is large for normal

Romano-British hand-mills. However in the absence of any historically known mills in the vicinity it seems likely that it is Romano-British in date. Dr. M. Oates comments that it is probably of New Red Sandstone – perhaps a Bunter Pebble Beds conglomerate,

Two other pieces of quern stone are not illustrated. (a) A large piece of ferruginous sandstone with one surface only surviving, perhaps Upper Greensand, 13+ cm thick (54). (b) A piece from a millstone grit quern with no finished surfaces (49).

##### Slag

A single large piece of iron slag, roughly plano-convex, 172 x 123 x 60 mm. deep. Weight 1759. 1 g. (56). From a pit containing Romano-British pottery.

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