

## Chapter 12: Other Artefactual Evidence from Tower Hill

### OTHER METALWORK

#### Roman coins

by Paul Booth

Six Roman coins were recovered from the topsoil using a metal detector. All were in relatively poor condition. The coins were as follows:

- 1 Barbarous radiate, with standing figure on reverse, c AD 260–295, sf 91
- 2 AE3, GLORIA EXERCITUS, two standards, probably Constantius II, mint of Arles, cf LRBC I 354, AD 330–335, sf 38
- 3 AE3, ?imitation, URBS ROMA, wolf and twins, AD 330–335, sf 90
- 4 AE4, ?imitation, VICTORIAE DD AUGGQNN, two victories with wreaths, facing, AD 341–346, sf 88
- 5 AE3, imitation, FEL TEMP REPARATIO, phoenix on globe, ?c AD 350–365, sf 87
- 6 AE3, GLORIA ROMANORUM, emperor dragging captive, AD 364–378, sf 89

None of the obverse figures was identifiable with certainty, and only one coin (2) had a surviving mintmark, of Arles. All the coins are very common late Roman types and are typical finds on rural settlement sites of the period.

#### Anglo-Saxon brooch

by Greg Campbell and Anne Dodd

A brooch was recovered from the modern ploughsoil during the metal detector survey of this site. The brooch (sf 86) is 44 mm long and incomplete and 24 mm wide (Fig. 12.1). This brooch is of the small-long

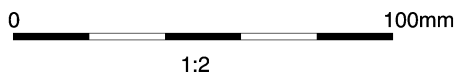
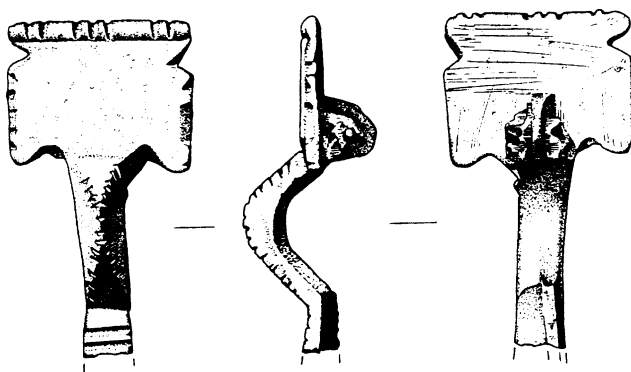


Figure 12.1 Anglo-Saxon brooch recovered at Tower Hill.

type of pagan Anglo-Saxon bow brooches. Its square-topped head with lateral upper notches and basal notches place it in Leeds' cross-potent derivative sub-group c (Leeds 1945, 22) which is the same as Dickinson's class II.3 (Dickinson 1976, 179). These brooches appear to be Anglian, rather than Saxon or Jutish. Similar brooches are known from Blewburton Hill, Blewbury (Grave 19; Oxon 1945, 93), Wally Corner, Berinsfield (Grave 83; Dickinson 1976, 86; Boyle *et al.* 1995, fig. 70), and Long Wittenham I (Grave 63; Akerman 1860, 340). The Tower Hill brooch is very similar to the pair found one on either shoulder of the woman in the rich Grave 96 at Long Wittenham (Dickinson 1976, 161 and pl. 51e).

#### Discussion

Individual finds of pagan Saxon metalwork in the area include a belt-strap end at Ashdown and a mount from Liddington Castle (MacGregor and Bolick 1993, 208 and 242). Pagan Saxon activity in this part of the Downs is shown chiefly by human remains. There are three large groups of these in the area: the mid 5th- to late 6th-century cemeteries at Manor Farm, East Shefford (Meaney 1964, 50; Dickinson 1976), and in the bank of the Iron Age hillfort at Blewburton Hill (Dickinson 1976, 45–8), and the 6th- to 7th-century cemetery at Lambourn (Richards 1978, 51). The Roman villa at Woolstone (SU 2904 8777: SMR 73 16) was used as a Saxon inhumation cemetery (*The Antiquary* 10, 1884, 36, 133, 181; Peake 1931, 119–249) which Dickinson suggests may be of the 7th century (Dickinson 1976, 234). The Saxons used other earlier monuments around Tower Hill as burial sites, such as the burial mound on White Horse Hill, Uffington, and the burial dug into one of the barrows at Seven Barrow Down above Lambourn (Meaney 1964, 53 and 48). The settlements for which these sites were burial grounds have not been located, but early Saxon stamp-decorated pottery was found on the north edge of Lambourn (Astill 1978, 37). A scatter of Anglo-Saxon finds was discovered in the 19th century at Ashdown (MacGregor and Bolick 1993, 15).

### POTTERY

#### Neolithic pottery

by Alistair Barclay

#### Introduction

Pit 1401 (fill 1404) contained a total of 34 sherds as well as many small crumbs (46) of late Neolithic pottery weighing a total of 231 g. From the featured sherds it is possible to suggest a minimum number

of two vessels. It is suggested from the rim forms and decoration that these vessels have their closest affinities with the Clacton sub-style of Grooved Ware pottery. Most of the pottery was hand retrieved, while many smaller fragments were recovered from environmental samples (4 and 16). In general, sherd size was quite small suggesting that the pottery was already in a very broken state prior to deposition in the pit.

**Methodology**

The assemblage was quantified by weight and sherd number (excluding refitting fresh breaks). The pottery is characterised by fabric, form, surface treatment, decoration and colour. The sherds were analysed using a binocular microscope (× 20) and were divided into fabric groups by principal inclusion type. OAU standard codes are used to denote inclusion types, and these are S = Shell, and size range for inclusions: 3 = 3 mm < medium-coarse.

**Fabric**

All of the pottery is made from a single shell-tempered fabric, designated S3, a soft laminated fabric with fine to coarse shell-platelets. Calcareous fabrics, especially those that are shell-tempered, were often used in the manufacture of certain of the Grooved Ware sub-styles such as Clacton and Woodlands (Barclay 1999, 12).

**Forms and decoration**

The assemblage includes two rims, two base and 28 body sherds from at least two vessels. The sherds give the impression that the two vessels differ in size and wall-thickness, perhaps representing fine and coarse ware elements. Both rims carry internal decoration and have internal bevels. Figure 12.2.1 has an internal applied wavy cordon set between two horizontal grooves. Figure 12.2.2 is a flattened rim with what appears to be haphazard grooves. Of the 16 body sherds that are decorated one carries impressed ovals and the rest bands of grooves. Two relatively large sherds appear to fit together to form part of a large chevron motif (Fig. 12.2.5). It is possible that several

of the illustrated sherds (Figs 12.2.3 and 12.2.5) come from the same vessel. The two recorded base fragments could belong with each of the identified rims, although this is uncertain. The chevron and probable dot infilled panel decoration, the rim forms and fabric clearly place the two vessels in the Clacton sub-style as defined by Longworth (1971).

**Discussion**

The distribution of Grooved Ware in the Upper Thames region has been discussed by the author (Barclay 1999). Most of this material, like the assemblage from Tower Hill, has been recovered from pit deposits. It is noted that of the three sub-styles that occur in this region those belonging to the Clacton style are relatively rare. Grooved Ware is quite a rare find from the area of the Chalk Downs, with only a small number of find spots (ibid., illus. 2.1). Further afield Grooved Ware, including Clacton style sherds, has been recovered from the south around the Avebury monument complex (Hamilton and Whittle 1999) and to the north around the Lechlade cursus (Barclay 2003; Darvill 1993; Jones 1976). Garwood suggests that the overall date range for Grooved Ware from southern Britain falls within the period 2900–2100 cal BC with the Clacton sub-style developing during the earlier part of this date range (1999, 152). On this basis the finds from Tower Hill could have been deposited sometime within the earlier 3rd millennium BC.

**Catalogue of Neolithic Grooved Ware sherds**

Figure 12.2

- 1 Rim sherd probably from an open, tub-shaped vessel with internal chain-link cordon and external oblique grooving. Fabric S3. Colour: yellowish-brown throughout. Condition average. 1404, sf 16
- 2 Flat rim sherd from a thick-walled vessel with internal oblique grooving forming a rectangular pattern. Fabric S3. Colour: ext. and core yellowish-brown and int. grey. Condition average. 1404

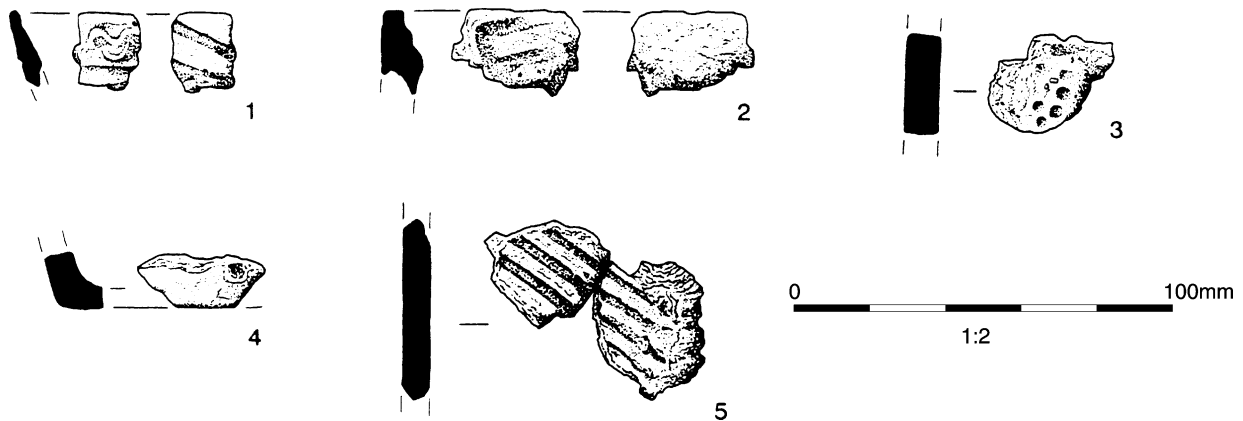


Figure 12.2 Neolithic Grooved Ware pottery from Tower Hill.

- 3 Body sherd with impressed dots. Fabric S3. Colour: ext. and core yellowish-brown and int. grey. Condition worn. 1404
- 4 Base sherd. Fabric S3. Colour: ext. and core yellowish-brown and int. grey. Condition worn. 1404
- 5 Two body sherds with diagonal grooved decoration. Fabric S3. Colour: ext. and core yellowish-brown and int. grey. Condition worn. 1404

### Later prehistoric pottery

by Lisa Brown

#### Introduction

A total of 180 sherds of later prehistoric pottery (596 g) were recovered from 18 individual contexts (including two ploughsoil deposits) within ten separate trenches (2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 21, 27). The majority of sherds were of very small size and generally in poor condition, as 72% of the sherds were highly abraded, and 5% of sherds, mostly from feature 79, had been refired. A carbonised residue was identified on the interior of two shell-tempered sherds. Twenty-four sherds, about 13% of the assemblage, were distinguishable by form or decorative features. The small size and poor condition of the sherds, and the absence of distinguishing characteristics in most cases, meant that it was difficult to assign a small proportion of the assemblage to the correct period with any accuracy.

#### Fabrics

In view of the proximity of the two sites, the chronological overlap, and the similarity between the two later prehistoric ceramic groups, the fabric typology devised for the White Horse Hill pottery has been adopted in the categorisation of the Tower Hill assemblage. The two fabric groups generally coincide, and the following types were common to both sites: A1, A2, A3, S2, S3, S4, S5, F1, F2 and G1. Fabric types S1, A4, A5 and A6 were found only on the Uffington site. The significant difference between the two assemblages is the presence at Tower Hill of fabric S6, a shell-tempered ware which is more sandy and micaceous than the other shelly fabrics and contains distinctive dark grains, either dark opaque sand or iron pellets. This type was not recovered at White Horse Hill and may be a local product. All the fabrics are described in detail in Chapter 9, and the fabric types from Tower Hill are quantified in Table 12.1.

Surface treatment, where observable, is confined to rough smoothing or wiping of the shell-tempered wares and smoothing or, less commonly, burnishing of the fine sandy wares.

#### Forms

There are very few sherds in the assemblage, which are diagnostic of vessel form. Most examples, however fragmentary, have been illustrated. The fill

of feature 79 produced two tiny body fragments of a furrowed bowl (Fig. 12.3.6). A bowl in fine sandy ware decorated with incised diagonal lines (Fig. 12.3.5) was recovered from the same feature. A sherd with impressed concentric circle decoration derives from the ploughsoil of trench 10 (Fig. 12.3.12) and a second, similar, sherd from the fill of pit 912. Some of these sherds correspond with the decorated wares of the All Cannings Cross tradition (Cunnington 1923). Similar types have been recovered from sites in closer proximity to Tower Hill such as White Horse Hill (Chapter 9), Rams Hill (Bradley and Ellison 1975, 94–118) and Knight's Farm, Berkshire (Bradley *et al.* 1980, 265–74). These vessel types are thought to date to the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age transitional period.

A second group of vessels display the fingertip and fingernail or slashed rim style of decoration commonly associated with coarse vessels contemporary with the finer wares described above, but are sometimes, when occurring in the absence of fine wares, dated to the late Bronze Age. The best examples from Tower Hill are Figures 12.3.1–4 and 9. Parallels to these coarse wares are also found at Rams Hill, White Horse Hill, Knight's Farm, Aldermaston Farm and Weathercock Hill, Berks (Bowden *et al.* 1991–3b).

#### Distribution

The small Iron Age assemblage was recovered from ten of the 28 trenches opened on the Tower Hill site. The majority of sherds were recovered from trench 1/2 but none derived from the immediate area of the circular structure with which the bronze hoard was associated. Feature 79, an irregular hollow to the north-west of building A, produced 115 sherds (64% of the total later prehistoric assemblage). A range of other features, including pits, postholes and lynchetts produced far smaller quantities of pottery (Table 12.2).

The distribution of fabrics demonstrates a high correlation between the occurrences of the fine sandy wares (A1–A3) and the pits and structural features associated with circular and 4-post structures. About 89% of the total of these fabrics recovered were securely stratified within these features, leaving a small proportion deriving from lynchet fill and modern ploughsoil. This may suggest that the structures and pits are contemporary. It is particularly noteworthy that the postholes produced only a single sherd of shell-tempered ware. Twelve sherds of shell-tempered ware were recovered from the pits, representing 32% of the total pit assemblage. Clearly, considering that shell-tempered wares are far more common than the fine sandy wares, representing 73% by sherd count of the total later prehistoric assemblage, this relatively low incidence within the pits is significant.

A total of 101 of the shell-tempered sherds were recovered from a single feature, the irregular pit or hollow 79. This was by far the most prolific of the later prehistoric features, and 88% of the sherds are

shelly wares. It is possible that many of the sherds belong to a single vessel, but recognised joining sherds brings the total of shell-tempered sherds down to only 109 from the count total of 131. The abraded condition of much of the collection may have prevented the recognition of other possible joins.

Half of the featured sherds derived from pit 79, the other half from pit fills. Both sets of features contain a small but recognisable assortment of sherds bearing incised and impressed decoration resembling the All Cannings Cross style, suggesting contemporaneity between them, and feature 79 contains, in addition, several sherds of fingernail- and fingertip-decorated shelly wares. This, along with the fabric occurrences noted above, suggest a bias towards fine wares in the pit fills and, by extension, in the posthole fills, although the latter produced no featured sherds.

Three of the four flint-tempered sherds included in the assemblage derive from lynchet fills, but are unlikely to be of Roman date, and the fourth is from a pit fill. The low occurrence of flint-tempered wares, in contrast to the pattern at Rams Hill, may suggest that the Tower Hill assemblage is slightly later, with a preference for sand and calcareous fabrics emerging at the expense of flint-tempered ware at the end of the Bronze Age. Of the five small, highly abraded grog-tempered sherds identified, four are from lynchet fills, suggesting that all may be of early Roman date.

- 2 Flaring rim of bowl with fingertip decoration, S6, reddish-orange throughout, 80
- 3 Fragment of jar or bowl shoulder with fingertip decoration, possibly part of above vessel (2), S6, reddish-orange, 80
- 4 Fragment of bowl or small jar with upright, slashed-decoration rim, S6, grey brown, 80
- 5 Fragment of a bi-partite bowl, with a burnished surface with incised linear decoration in the form of opposing diagonal lines, relatively thin-walled and finely made, A2, grey brown, 80
- 6 Fragment of a furrowed bowl, very small and abraded, A3, mid-grey colour with reddish tint on ext, 81, fill of 79
- 7 Body fragment of unspecified vessel with linear incised decoration containing traces of white infill, A3, light grey, very fragmentary and highly abraded, 905, fill of pit 912
- 8 Rim fragment of bowl or small jar with possible fingernail decoration, may be excavation damage, S6, reddish-brown, 905
- 9 Body fragment of unspecified vessel with diagonal linear incised decoration, A3, dark grey to reddish-brown, 90
- 10 Fragment of bowl with horizontal incised linear and stabbed decoration, A2, smoothed surfaces, greyish-brown, 905
- 11 Fragment of unspecified vessel with impressed concentric circle with possible trace of white infill, A2, reddish-brown, 905
- 12 Fragment of unspecified vessel with impressed concentric circles, A3, dark grey surface, 1000, modern ploughsoil

### Catalogue of illustrated sherds

Figure 12.3

- 1 Rim fragment of bowl or small jar with fingertip decoration, S6, grey to greyish-brown, 80, fill of 79

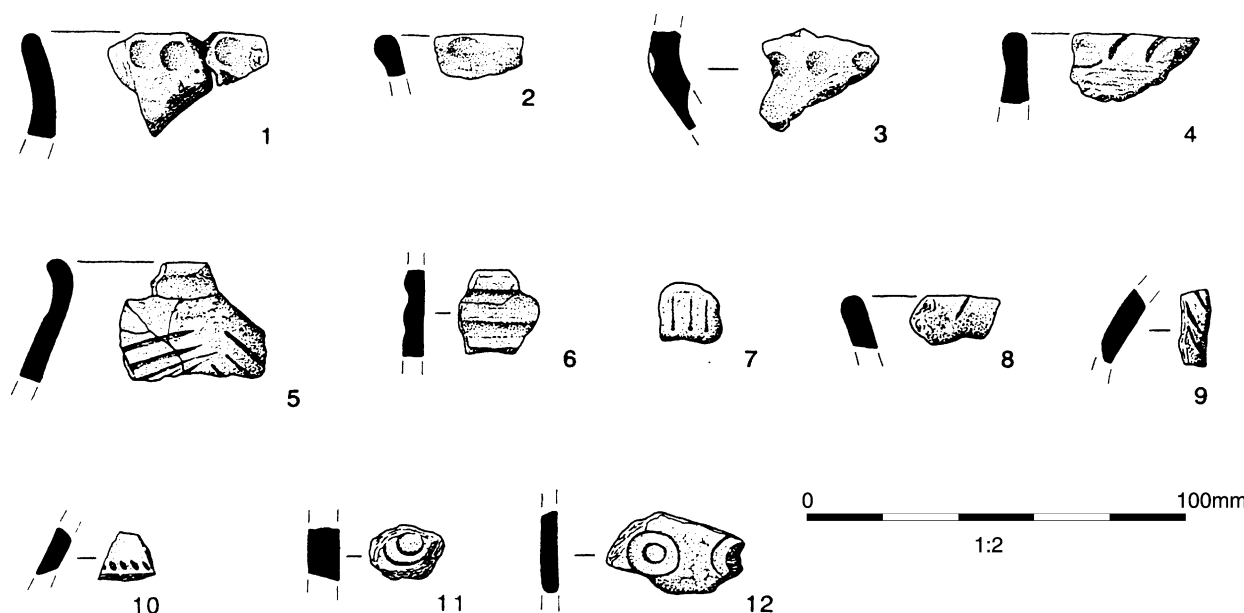


Figure 12.3 Late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery from Tower Hill.

### Discussion

Despite the small size and poor preservation of the later prehistoric assemblage, a number of observations can be made. The most common wares are shell-tempered, but it is possible that no more than two or three vessels (possibly a special deposit)

are represented by the sherds recovered from pit 79. Some of these were fingernail- and fingertip-decorated bowls and jars. Finer sand-tempered wares, some with incised and impressed decoration of All Cannings Cross style are likely, on the basis of some degree of co-occurrence, to be contemporary with the shelly wares, and there is no evidence to suggest that any of the pottery belongs to a phase later than the earliest Iron Age. A date in the 8th century could be suggested for the group as a whole. A clear bias towards the redeposition of fine sandy wares in what appear to be structured pit fills and features associated with 4-post and circular structures could be observed, although shell-tempered pottery resembling the group from feature 79 also occurs in these contexts. No later prehistoric pottery was directly associated with the specific site of the Bronze Age hoard or with building A, but it is likely that the structure is contemporaneous with the other circular structures.

### Late Iron Age and Roman pottery by Kayt Brown

#### *Pottery from fieldwalking*

A total of 217 sherds, weighing 1535 g was recovered from fieldwalking. The material is in a relatively poor condition, with an average sherd weight of 7 g, and poor preservation of surfaces. The material was assessed and quantified by sherd count and weight by period, with forms and main ware groups noted. The material appears to range from the late Bronze Age through to the late Roman period, with no later material recovered. Where sherds were too small (generally less than 2 g in weight) to be assigned to period, they were recorded as uncertain. A total of 43 sherds (55 g) were recorded as uncertain, with 22 sherds (105 g) as prehistoric and the majority of the material, 152 sherds (1375 g), assigned a Roman date. The prehistoric material, with an average sherd weight of 4.8 g, is very abraded, but appears to be similar in nature to the mid-late Iron Age material from the subsequent excavation, with the exception of a single, quite coarse flint-tempered sherd which may be late Bronze Age in date.

The Roman material was likewise similar to that produced by the excavation, with samian, Saver-nake, reduced and oxidised coarse wares observed, as well as a single sherd of an Oxford colour-coat jar rim. Rim sherds were restricted to the Roman material and comprised three jar rims, an everted jar rim and a single rim sherd of a bowl. Of the Roman material, 66 sherds were assigned to the late Iron Age and early Roman period, typically grog- or sand-tempered sherds, as defined in the report on the excavated pottery.

#### *Pottery from excavation*

A total of 208 sherds (1044 g) of pottery was recovered from the excavated trenches. Of this

material 15 sherds were dated to the mid to late Iron Age (M-LIA), 102 sherds to the late Iron Age/early Roman transition (LIR: up to the mid-late 1st century AD) and 91 sherds to the early-middle Roman period (RB: later 1st and 2nd centuries AD). Seventeen vessels were represented by rim sherd count. The majority of the material was recovered from the lynchets, with a substantial amount recovered from modern ploughsoils.

#### *Condition of assemblage*

The assemblage is in a poor condition with a very low average sherd weight of 5 g. The mid-late Iron Age fabrics have a particularly low average sherd weight of 2.7 g, compared to 4.9 g for the late Iron Age/early Roman material and 5.5 g for the Roman. Of the 17 vessels represented by rim sherds, the majority were too fragmentary for EVEs calculations (estimated vessel equivalent) with less than 5% of the rim surviving. Given the condition of the assemblage, none of the pottery has been illustrated.

#### *Fabrics*

Fabrics were identified microscopically ( $\times 20$ ), and assigned fabric codes in accordance with the system for recording late Iron Age and Roman pottery established by the OAU for sites within the Upper Thames Valley. Late Iron Age material was assigned fabric codes based on principal inclusions and a scale of decreasing fineness from 1 to 5. Within the OAU system LIR and Roman fabrics are grouped by alpha-numerical ware codes. Within this system LIR fabrics are assigned 'E' ware codes, indicating material which is recognisable as belonging to a distinct ceramic tradition, defined by vessel typology and decoration as well as inclusion types, showing 'Belgic' affinities. This material is distinct from the preceding Iron Age traditions, but does not fall into the subsequent, characteristically Roman, oxidised (O) and reduced (R) ware groups. Iron Age fabrics are listed below, followed by the LIR and Roman ware codes. Where appropriate the Roman ware codes are followed by their equivalents in the National Roman Fabric Reference collection (Tomber and Dore 1998):

#### *Mid-late Iron Age*

A4	moderate to common quartz sand
AB2	micaceous sandy fabric with moderate amounts of moderately sorted black sand (? glauconite)
AC2	moderate quartz sand (0.25–0.5 mm) and rare calcareous grits
AF2	moderate to common well-sorted sub-angular quartz sand and rare sub-angular flint
AM2	fine micaceous fabric with no visible inclusions
AS3	sandy fabric with sparse amounts of shell (<1.0 mm) and calcareous grits

#### *Late Iron Age/early Roman*

E20	fine sand-tempered fabrics, generally seen as a bridge between MIA and LIR sand tempering
E30	medium to coarse sand-tempered fabrics
E60	flint-tempered fabrics
E80	grog-tempered fabrics

*Roman*

B11	(DOR BB1) Dorset black-burnished ware
C	general code for shelly/calcareous fabrics
O10	general code for fine oxidised fabrics
O20	general code for sandy oxidised fabrics
R10	general code for fine reduced fabrics
R30	general code for medium sand-tempered fabrics
R95	(SAV GT) Savernake ware
S20	(LGF SA) South Gaulish samian ware
S30	(LEZ SA 2) Central Gaulish samian ware

Quantification of the fabrics is presented in Table 12.3. As there were no featured sherds represented in the later prehistoric material, this material could only be assigned to the mid-late Iron Age on fabric criteria alone. These fabrics are all very fine and sandy, occasionally micaceous fabrics with sparse inclusions of sand, shell or flint and are generally considered characteristic of this period where there is shift away from the previous shell-tempered ceramic tradition. The use of grog as a temper is characteristic of the late Iron Age and early Roman period, and dominates this component of the assemblage. Sourcing of Romanised reduced and oxidised coarse wares is notoriously difficult and the poor condition of many of the later sherds exacerbated the problem of attribution to specific source, hence the extensive use of the generalised categories, O10, O20, R10 and R30. However, the Roman component of the assemblage probably contains material from the industries of both Oxfordshire and North Wiltshire and it is interesting to note the occurrence of Savernake ware amongst this material. The Dorset black-burnished ware is the furthest transported British product. There was no specialist material, such as mortaria or amphorae and very little in the way of finewares, these being restricted to the small amount of imported South and Central Gaulish samian ware.

*Forms*

General vessel class codes were used and more specific type codes were assigned where sufficient vessel profile survived, which was rare within the assemblage. Form codes are those used within the OAU system and listed below:

C	General code for jars
CH	Bead rim jar
CN	Storage jar
F	General code for cups
H	Bowls: open vessels with diameter: height ratio between <i>c</i> 1:1 and 1:3
I	Indeterminate bowl/dish category where unsure of rim diameter:height ratio

Most common were jar types, including a single storage jar, with a small number of bowls and dishes. A single samian footring base is probably from a small cup. One R30 base had a drilled hole in the base. All the featured sherds occurred in LIR or Roman fabrics (Table 12.4).

*Chronology*

There is a small amount of mid to late Iron Age material, but the majority of the pottery can be assigned to the late Iron Age/early Roman period. The 'E' wares are characteristic of the final stages of the Iron Age and are generally dated to either side of the Roman conquest broadly in the range of 50 BC–AD 50, although within this region they are unlikely to have appeared before the beginning of the 1st century AD. They can be paralleled at a number of other sites within the area, particularly in the Upper Thames Valley for example at Hatford (in the Vale of the White Horse). Although this tradition may have continued into the later 1st century AD it is unlikely to have extended into the 2nd century. Savernake ware would be expected in this area in the early Roman period, and it formed the dominant fabric within the early Roman assemblage at Maddle Farm (Gaffney and Tingle 1989, 213). Where diagnostic sherds are absent, the general Romanised reduced and oxidised categories can only be assigned a general Roman date. Given the small size of the assemblage, a terminal date no later than the late 2nd century AD for the assemblage can be suggested, however this is based largely on negative evidence. The latest material present within the assemblage comprises the Central Gaulish samian and the black-burnished ware, both of which would be expected in the 2nd century. However, the range of other Roman material is restricted, with a lack of hard-fired grey wares and later products, such as mortaria of all kinds and Oxford or New Forest colour-coat material. There is therefore little material which may be dated after the mid 2nd century, although there is always the possibility that low-level activity, poorly represented within the pottery, could have continued considerably later.

*Discussion*

A substantial amount of material was recovered from the modern ploughsoil (57 sherds, 382 g) but the majority of material, by sherd count, was recovered from the fills of the negative lynchets (106 sherds, 378 g). As these figures show the material within the lynchets displayed a considerably worse state of preservation with an average sherd weight of 3.6 g, compared to 6.7 g for material of the same date, retrieved from the modern ploughsoil. Two post-holes, 78 and 2707 produced single sherds of late Iron Age/early Roman and Roman pottery respectively, from their single fills. The only feature to produce solely mid-late Iron Age material was stakehole 2103, namely one sherd (2 g) fabric AB2 and two sherds (5 g) of fabric AS3. However given the poor condition of the sherds, the small amount of material, and the amount of disturbance on site through ploughing all these may well be intrusive.

The late Iron Age and early Roman pottery is suggestive of activity close to the site, perhaps from the early 1st century AD to the mid-late 2nd century.

This date is comparable to that for the lynchets at Rams Hill, dated from the 1st century AD with small components of earlier (MIA/LIA) and later Roman material also present (Bradley and Ellison 1975, 134). The survey at Maddie Farm produced a large assemblage of Roman pottery, and material from the lynchets can again be assigned a Roman date, although this is predominately late in date. The condition of the sherds is consistent with derivation manuring scatters, which have been recognised as the likely source for the low pottery densities associated with these lynchets across the Berkshire Downs (Gaffney and Tingle 1989, 210). Problems with dating lynchets have been highlighted (Ford *et al.* 1988), principally explaining the problems associated with residuality and the poor condition of the sherds.

The study of field systems near Lambourn has shown that of 13 elements trenched 9 were assigned a Roman *terminus post quem* based on the occurrence of Roman sherds in the primary fills of the lynchets (Ford *et al.* 1988, 403). It has also been suggested that there is a higher rate of pottery discard in the earlier Roman period (*ibid.*). Given the proximity of the site to Uffington Castle hillfort and Lowbury, it is of interest that the assemblage is much earlier at Tower Hill than the material at these other sites. The pottery from Uffington Castle hillfort in particular is late Roman in date with an absence of characteristically early material and a high number of mortaria present. This latter characteristic was also a feature of the Lowbury assemblage, contrasting with the complete absence of such vessels in the earlier Roman material from Tower Hill.

## FLINT

by Philippa Bradley

### Worked flint

#### Introduction

A total of 1934 pieces of worked flint and 98 pieces of burnt unworked flint was recovered from the fieldwalking, evaluation and subsequent excavation (Table 12.5). Selected pieces are illustrated (Fig. 12.4) and described in the catalogue. This report discusses the assemblage from the Grooved Ware pit in some detail and summarises the remaining material; further details of all the flintwork may be found in the project archive.

#### Raw materials

The raw material is dark brown to black in colour with grey cherty inclusions. The cortex is white with light brown staining. Cortication is mostly medium to heavy; the surface of the flint is further obscured by calcium carbonate deposits. The material is good quality chalk flint, and although none of the material resembled the flint nodules prized from the chalk during the excavation, it may have come from the

superficial deposits overlying the chalk on the site or in the immediate locality.

#### Flint from fieldwalking

The composition of the fieldwalking assemblage is very similar to that from the excavation (Table 12.5), although unsurprisingly no chips were recovered from the field collection. Some other differences include the much greater proportion of blades and blade-like flakes from the field survey, but fewer retouched pieces. No blade cores were recovered, but some blade scars were noted on the dorsal faces of flakes, and a quantity of blades and blade-like flakes was also recovered. Single platform cores and multi-platform cores dominate the assemblage (Table 12.6). The higher proportion of blades and blade-like flakes may suggest an earlier Neolithic element to the assemblage; the dominance of simple core types might also support this suggestion. However, without diagnostic retouched forms this suggestion cannot be proven. The presence of two keeled cores indicates later Neolithic activity, and ties in well with the large assemblage from feature 1403, a Grooved Ware pit (see below).

The few retouched forms recovered from the field survey (Table 12.7) are not particularly distinctive (a serrated blade, an end scraper, a side scraper, a backed knife and a miscellaneous retouched piece), but they would not be out of place in a Neolithic context. The forms are indicative of general processing tasks, for example food and hide preparation.

#### Flint from excavations

Just over half of the assemblage from the site came from the evaluation and subsequent excavations (Table 12.5), the vast majority of which came from a single feature, a Grooved Ware pit (1403). Flint was also recovered from the topsoil by dry sieving; this material amounted to 193 pieces of worked flint and three pieces of burnt unworked flint. The material was mostly unretouched flakes (181), a single blade-like flake was recovered and six pieces of irregular waste. In addition two cores and a core fragment were found. The cores were simple, single and multi-platform examples. Only two retouched pieces were found, a minimally retouched flake and an end and side scraper. The scraper is neatly retouched on a non-cortical blank, and although this type of artefact is not particularly datable, it is likely to be of later Neolithic date. In general terms this material is very similar to both the fieldwalked material and the excavated assemblage (see below). The topsoil from trench 14, where the Grooved Ware pit was located, produced six flakes and the minimally retouched flake.

#### Grooved ware assemblage

The composition of the assemblage is summarised in Table 12.8. No chips, that is pieces with a maximum dimension of 10 mm or less, were recovered,

reflecting the fact that the finer fractions of the soil samples were not fully sorted. However, a brief scan of this material revealed a quantity of struck flint in the fine fractions of samples from layers 1402 and 1404.

Both hard and soft hammers were used. The flint seems to have been fairly carefully flaked, although there is some evidence for mis-hits in the form of hinge fractures and plunging flakes. There appears to have been little platform preparation, this is borne out by the dominance of cortical and plain butt types, although occasional linear and punctiform ones were noted. The recovery of two rejuvenation flakes indicates that some care was being taken to maintain platform edges and faces, but only when flaking faces became unworkable. Many of the flakes are cortical, and apart from the very small elements; the various stages of reduction are represented. Preparation flakes, side trimming and distal trimming flakes are all present (*cf* Harding 1990). It is possible that some of this material may refit, particularly as much of the raw material is of quite similar character, however no refits were identified in the analysis, although further study may prove fruitful. Some of the flakes had used edges. Very little of the worked assemblage was burnt (6.2%), but a relatively high proportion (38.4%) was broken; this pattern can be paralleled at Barrow Hills, Radley (Bradley 1999a, 94).

One multi-platform and one keeled core were recovered (Fig. 12.4.1), and the remaining examples are fragmentary (Table 12.8). Only six retouched pieces were recovered from pit 1403 (Table 12.8), and they consist of scraping, cutting and piercing tools (Fig. 12.4.2–4). The two miscellaneous retouched pieces are flakes with areas of steep retouch along one edge.

The dating of this pit deposit is provided by the small assemblage of Grooved Ware pottery (Barclay, this chapter), rather than diagnostic retouched flint artefacts. Technologically the flintwork is entirely consistent with a later Neolithic date. The few retouched forms recovered can also be paralleled at numerous sites and they are all included in an analysis of artefacts associated with Grooved Ware (Wainwright and Longworth 1971, 256, table 28).

#### *Remaining excavated assemblage*

The remaining flint assemblage was recovered from a variety of contexts (undated, possibly prehistoric features, Romano-British lynchets and later plough-soils). No particular concentrations were noted and this material would seem to represent a general spread of Neolithic to early Bronze Age activity across the landscape. The composition of the assemblage is very similar to that from the fieldwalking, apart from the differences noted above. The retouched forms are generally well worked, neatly retouched and consist of cutting, scraping and boring tools (Table 12.7), indicative of general domestic

processing tasks. The debitage is also consistent with a Neolithic to early Bronze Age date; the core types are mostly the same as those recovered from the fieldwalking. The notable exception being five very roughly worked nodules (Table 12.6), each of which has had one or two flakes removed.

The general absence of late Bronze Age flint from the field collection is notable. In order to see if late Bronze Age flintworking existed on the site, flint from the late Bronze Age features was looked at in some detail. However, these features produced well-struck, generally soft hammer flakes, and there was no appreciable difference from the rest of the flint from the site, including the material from the Grooved Ware pit. An end and side scraper, probably made on a flake from a Levallois core, was recovered from one of the postholes (context 1333, posthole 1334) of a possible 4-post structure.

#### *Discussion*

The lithics from Tower Hill indicate Neolithic to early Bronze Age activity, spread relatively thinly across the hilltop. This largely mirrors the situation identified at Uffington and elsewhere in the immediate environs (see for example Gaffney and Tingle 1989; Tingle 1991). Earlier flintwork has been identified amongst collections of later Bronze Age material at both Weathercock Hill and Rams Hill (Bowden *et al.* 1991–3b; Bradley 1975b). Neolithic monumental activity is well represented in the locality by Wayland's Smithy (Whittle 1991), the Lambourn long barrow (Case 1956–7; Wymer 1965–6), and a possible long mound at Uffington itself.

The assemblage from the Grooved Ware pit is of some interest, being the second such pit deposit to be identified in this part of the Downs. At Sparsholt a pit containing Grooved Ware pottery, flint and environmental remains was excavated (Howell and Durden 1996). Here flakes dominated the flint assemblage, but a small retouched component consisted of an oblique arrowhead, two serrated flakes and a scraper (Durden 1996, 22). This assemblage is very similar to the one from Tower Hill, although the quantity of flint recovered from Sparsholt was much smaller.

The assemblage from the Tower Hill Grooved Ware pit may also be compared to the much more extensive pit deposits excavated at Barrow Hills, Radley. A detailed analysis of large Grooved Ware associated assemblages here revealed a complex pattern of selection and structured deposition. Both used and obviously unused items were present, pieces had been deliberately broken (*eg* snapped scrapers, Bradley 1999b, 81, fig. 4.34, F35, 217) and selected for deposition. The burning and breakage rates were compared with other contemporary, but probably rubbish deposits on the site and the emerging patterns emphasise the non-domestic nature of the deposition within the Grooved Ware pits, although some of the activities represented by the flintwork may have been domestic (Bradley 1999a, 94).



Cores were less well reduced in these pits than from other contexts on the site (Bradley 1999c, 85–6); suggesting that raw material conservation was not important and Bullhead flint was concentrated within these pits indicating that it had been especially selected, probably for its attractive appearance (Bradley 1999c, 85–6, 218). This pattern of used and unused items, and the incidence of burnt and broken pieces can be paralleled at Upper Ninepence, Walton (Bradley 1999d, 76), and elements of these patterns may also be seen in the much smaller assemblage from Tower Hill.

The absence of late Bronze Age lithics is somewhat surprising as other sites in the vicinity have produced such material, for example Weathercock Hill and Rams Hill (Bowden *et al.* 1991–3b; Bradley 1975b). White Horse Hill also lacks later Bronze Age flintwork. This absence may be explained in functional terms or may relate to site status or location. It is perhaps more likely that the reason is more complicated and may be a combination of factors. At Whitecross Farm, Wallingford, a high status riverine site produced a large assemblage of late Bronze Age flint associated with pottery, worked stone and environmental remains (Cromarty *et al.* forthcoming). At that site the flint had been used for a variety of processing tasks (Brown and Bradley forthcoming), retouch was reserved for specific artefacts and was mostly to provide backing for the piece rather than to shape the tool itself.

### Catalogue of illustrated flint

Figure 12.4

- 1 Keeled core, made on small nodule, very heavily corticated, 76 g, 1404
- 2 End scraper, made on a very large, partly cortical flake, medium to heavy cortication, with some platform preparation, minimal retouch to distal end, scraping angle 55–65°, some rounding to the scraping edge, 1404, sf 174
- 3 Denticulate, made on a side trimming flake, with worked edge consisting of semi-circular notches to the left hand side, medium to heavy cortication, 1404
- 4 Awl, small areas of cortex surviving, with worn point, and heavily corticated, 1404

### STONE ARTEFACTS

by Fiona Roe

#### Introduction

Two deep oval pits in trench 9, contexts 912 and 924, contained large quantities of burnt stone in their upper fills, amounting to 116.3 kg. The stone is both worked and unworked, and with the exception of one piece of probable Old Red Sandstone, is all sarsen. The pieces include fragments from three incomplete saddle querns, which have been labelled Q1–3 in the catalogue (Table 12.9). There is also a sarsen block, which appears to have been used as an

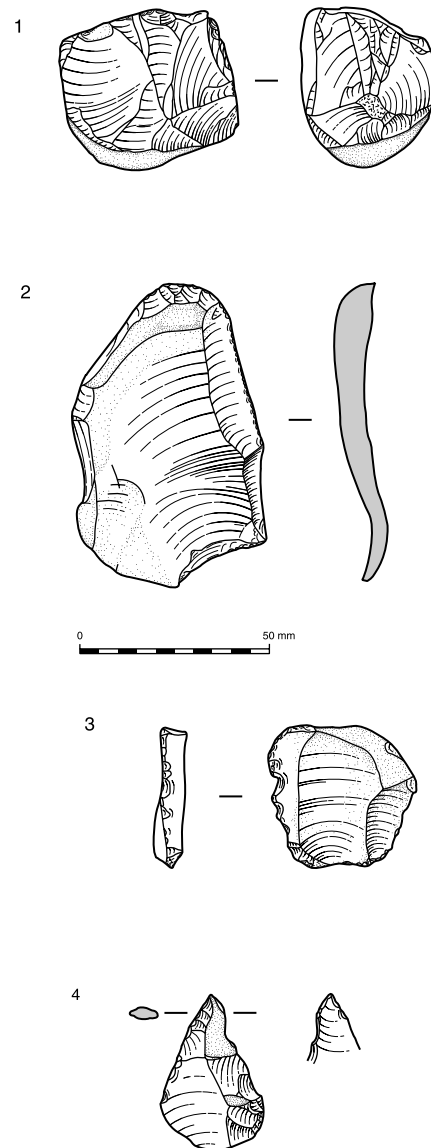


Figure 12.4 Flint: 1) core, 2) scraper, 3) denticulate, 4) awl from Tower Hill.

anvil. A fifth object, a quartzite hammerstone, was found in the modern ploughsoil. Small amounts of burnt stone, consisting mainly of sarsen, were scattered over the site, and there is also unworked, burnt stone from context 1404, a Grooved Ware pit.

#### Materials

One of the quern fragments (Q1) from pit 912 (911, sf 209) is probably made from Upper Old Red Sandstone. It is more heavily burnt than the sarsen fragments from this pit, obscuring some of the geological detail, but scattered grains of pink quartz can be seen, and the quartz grains in general are more rounded than those seen in the sarsen. Traces of a burnt out clast of probable mudstone are also visible, and small clasts of igneous rock, both typical

characteristics of the Upper Old Red Sandstone. These features all suggest a source in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley area (Saunders 1998, 48), and a comparison can be made with a hand specimen from Old Quarry, Trelech, some 78.8 km (49 miles) from Tower Hill. The Mendips would have been an alternative source area, at a distance of about 75.6 km (47 miles), but samples of Old Red Sandstone from this area do not compare well.

The sarsen from Tower Hill consists of two varieties. One is finer-grained, hard and cherty, and this seems to have been found less suitable for artefacts. A total of 36.68 kg of this variety of sarsen was retrieved, all burnt, but only one piece, an anvil from pit 924 weighing 13.6 kg (sf 220) appears to have been utilised. A much larger quantity of coarser-grained, saccharoidal sarsen was found, reflecting the fact that it could be more easily worked and was better suited for grinding. It was much used for querns generally. A total of 75.13 kg of this variety of sarsen was recovered, all of it again burnt. It consists almost entirely of pure, angular quartz grains, with a texture similar to granulated sugar. Worked pieces from Tower Hill amounted to 46.5 kg, consisting of quern fragments from pits 912 and 924, which have been designated Q2 and Q3 in the catalogue. Sarsen was once common to the north west of Lambourn (Jones 1887, 149), being plentiful enough to be used as a building stone in the area (Osborne White 1907, 120).

A quartzite pebble was used for the hammerstone (1300). Such pebbles could have been collected locally from Pleistocene deposits, such as the Clay-with-Flints or local gravels (Jukes-Brown and Osborne White 1908).

### **Objects**

All three querns were of the saddle variety. The fragment of quern made from Old Red Sandstone (911, sf 209) has a slightly concave grinding surface now somewhat distorted by burning (not illustrated), but if the piece is not a particularly good example, the stone is an undoubted quern material. One of the sarsen saddle querns came from pit 912 (Q2), and had been made from a particularly large block of stone, with a maximum thickness of some 250 mm. It is not complete, but even so the total weight of the recovered pieces amounts to almost 43 kg. Such a substantial quern would have lasted a good while before wearing thin and breaking. A good grinding surface had been prepared by pecking, and it would have been a valuable piece of equipment. However before it was ever used it appears to have shattered into pieces when burnt. A second incomplete sarsen quern was found in pit 924, and now consists of two large fragments (Q3). It was a good deal smaller, and has a worn grinding surface.

The block of fine-grained sarsen thought to have been used as an anvil (932 sf 220) has one flat battered side which is also darkened by burning, as

if it had been used for hammering hot metal. This harder variety of sarsen would probably have been ideal for the purpose.

The hammerstone (1300) has one well-used end and a battered corner. It is typical of hammerstones from earlier prehistoric sites in the area, and a link with the Grooved Ware pit (1403) seems rather more likely than a late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date.

### **Burnt stone**

The burnt stone is detailed on Table 12.10. All the worked stone from pits 912 and 924 had been burnt. There was also a large amount of unworked burnt stone from both the pits, consisting of both fine-grained sarsen (21.8 kg) and the saccharoidal variety (28.4 kg). There is little burnt stone from elsewhere on the site, amounting only to 1.5 kg of sarsen and 206 g of greensand and Tertiary sandstone. The Grooved Ware pit (1403) contained another 4.58 kg of burnt stone, mainly sarsen, with 335 g of Tertiary sandstone.

### **Discussion**

The large quantity of sarsen from Tower Hill contrasts with the paucity of finds from the hillfort on White Horse Hill (Roe, Chapter 9). Elsewhere, sarsen has frequently been recorded in use at prehistoric sites on or near the Chalk, a tradition starting in the Neolithic period. At Windmill Hill, where sarsen was also available in abundant quantities, thick saddle querns similar to Q2 were found, one weighing 9.8 kg (Smith 1965, 123). There were also sarsen saddle querns at Wayland's Smithy (Whittle 1991, 87). On the Berkshire Downs, the Maddle Farm survey produced good evidence at Post Down Farm, where a complete sarsen quern and two rubbers were found in a pit with flints of late Neolithic or Bronze Age date (Gaffney and Tingle 1989, 82). By the Bronze Age the use of sarsen querns must have been universal in the area, although they have not always been recorded from excavated sites. There were no quern finds from Rams Hill, but sarsen fragments were found in a number of postholes, where they had probably been used as packing material (Bradley and Ellison 1975). Similarly, no querns were recorded from Weathercock Hill (Bowden *et al.* 1991–3b). Sites on the Marlborough Downs have produced worked sarsen from different phases of the Bronze Age. At Dean Bottom the evidence consisted of sarsen flakes, which it was suggested, were the trimmings from the production of querns; similar debris is known from other sites of the Ogbourne type (Gingell 1992, 30). Sarsen saddle querns were found both at Rockley Down and Burderop Down (Gingell 1992, 37 and 120). Sarsen was also used for querns on sites away from the Chalk, as for instance Corporation Farm, Abingdon

(Bradley 1986, 42) and Roughground Farm, Lechlade (Allen *et al.* 1993, 34).

Burnt sarsen also seems to have been of frequent occurrence on Bronze Age sites in the area. At Rams Hill it was found in two pits near the door of building B (Bradley and Ellison 1975, 54), and it also occurred at Beedon Manor Farm (Richards 1984, 65), though here again querns were not recorded. There was a large spread of burnt sarsen at Burderop Down, and also burnt blocks on all the hearths on this site (Gingell 1992, 41 and 47). Worn and broken querns were often reused as hearthstones, but the burnt sarsen may have also been utilised for further purposes now difficult to discern.

With abundant sarsen available for making querns, it is surprising to find imported Old Red Sandstone also in use at Tower Hill, and yet long distance trade was a feature in particular of the late Bronze Age (Champion 1999, 105). Upper Old Red Sandstone was also used, along with sarsen, for a quern from a late Bronze Age context at Gassons Road, Lechlade (Roe 1998). A more notable case of long distance transport is the mould from Burderop Down made of igneous rock from the keratophyre suite, with a source either in the South West or north Wales (Needham 1981, 10), both important areas for the acquisition either of tin or copper ores. The Old Red Sandstone however came from the Forest of

Dean, an area that was to become notable for the production of iron ore.

There may be a case for regarding the quern fragments from pits 912 and 924 as part of a 'structured deposition'. However, deposits containing querns are quite varied in character. The saddle quern and two rubbers found in a pit at Post Down Farm (Gaffney and Tingle 1989, 82) were complete and apparently unburnt. There is clearly a difference between the occurrence at Tower Hill of burnt and incomplete querns, and the special deposit at Flag Fen of four whole and unused querns (Pryor 1998, 134). Broken querns are known however from a find of later date at Wanlip, Leicestershire, where they occurred in a pit with burnt animal bones and a large amount of pottery (Beamish 1998, 40). It cannot be certain whether the querns from Tower Hill were deliberately burnt and smashed. Bronze Age houses and their contents must at times have been burnt either accidentally, or as the result of a hostile attack. The resulting rubbish may well have been cleared away into a pit, partly perhaps for reasons of basic hygiene, but also no doubt to make way for a new structure. There may even have been a slight element of ritual cleansing involved. If such circumstances could explain the contents of pits 912 and 924 at Tower Hill, the deposition may have been deliberate, but was not perhaps in any way special.