

A ROMANO-BRITISH KILN AT FULMER

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The kiln was excavated by the first writer, and the pottery report and drawings are by the second writer and based on a B.A. thesis submitted to the University of Wales. Other drawings are by Miss M. May.

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The finds are in the Buckinghamshire County Museum, Aylesbury, accession number 200.67.

SITE

The site of the kiln described here lies on the clay of the Reading Beds on a slope overlooking the Alderbourne valley just above the 200ft. contour, off the main road to Slough, about 2 miles from Gerrards Cross and in the parish of Fulmer (Fig. 1) (NGR. SU 992867). The kiln was found in a paddock attached to "Fulmere", the last house in a private road, the name of which, Duke's Kiln Road, commemorates the brick kilns which supplied the Duke of Portland's house at Bulstrode in the 18th century. It was thought that there was a probable kiln somewhere in the vicinity as in 1941 sherds of pottery and wasters were found in allotments.¹ The ware was Romano-British coarseware of 2nd-century date² with certain similarities to the products of kiln found at Hedgerley.³ The line of the new M.40 motorway threatened the site, and in the summer of 1967 the Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, Oxford, did a proton-magnetometer survey at the request of the Buckinghamshire County Museum to see if the site of a kiln could be located. As the garden of "Fulmere" was not suitable for a survey the top of the field in front offered the best area and eight 50 metre squares were laid out. A strong anomaly and one smaller one were found and it was decided to excavate these over a period of ten days in July 1967. A further ten 50 metre squares were surveyed over the rest of the field after the excavation was finished, but they revealed no further anomalies.

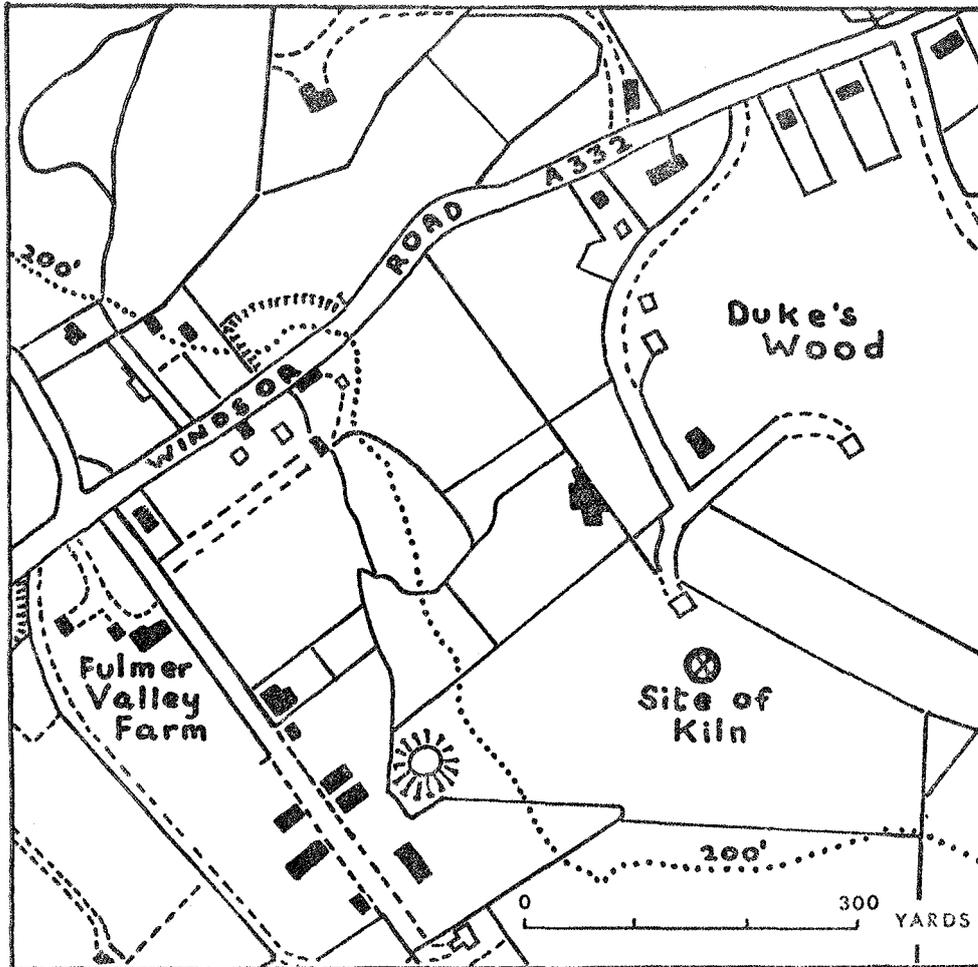


Fig. 1. Location map.

THE KILN STRUCTURE

The strong anomaly proved to be a small kiln orientated roughly North-South with the stokehole at the north end (Figs. 2 and 3). It did not survive above the level of the centre support. In the centre of the kiln was a roughly round mass of baked clay which when sectioned revealed that it had originally been only a circle of clay open in the centre which had subsequently been filled in. The walls of the kiln were hard grey clay 3 to 4 ins thick and survived to a height level with the top of the centre support. The floor of the kiln was a thick layer of burnt flaky clay, grey or dark brown in colour with a charcoal layer underneath. On top of the soft natural clay which was red from the heat of the kiln a fire bar (Fig. 9) was found with one end resting on a slight projection from the outer wall, but the other end, which must originally have rested on the centre support, was found displaced. There were signs that the projection was in a section of wall that had been replaced. Similar fire bars were found in the pit in trench 2, and some very much thinner ones (Fig. 9)

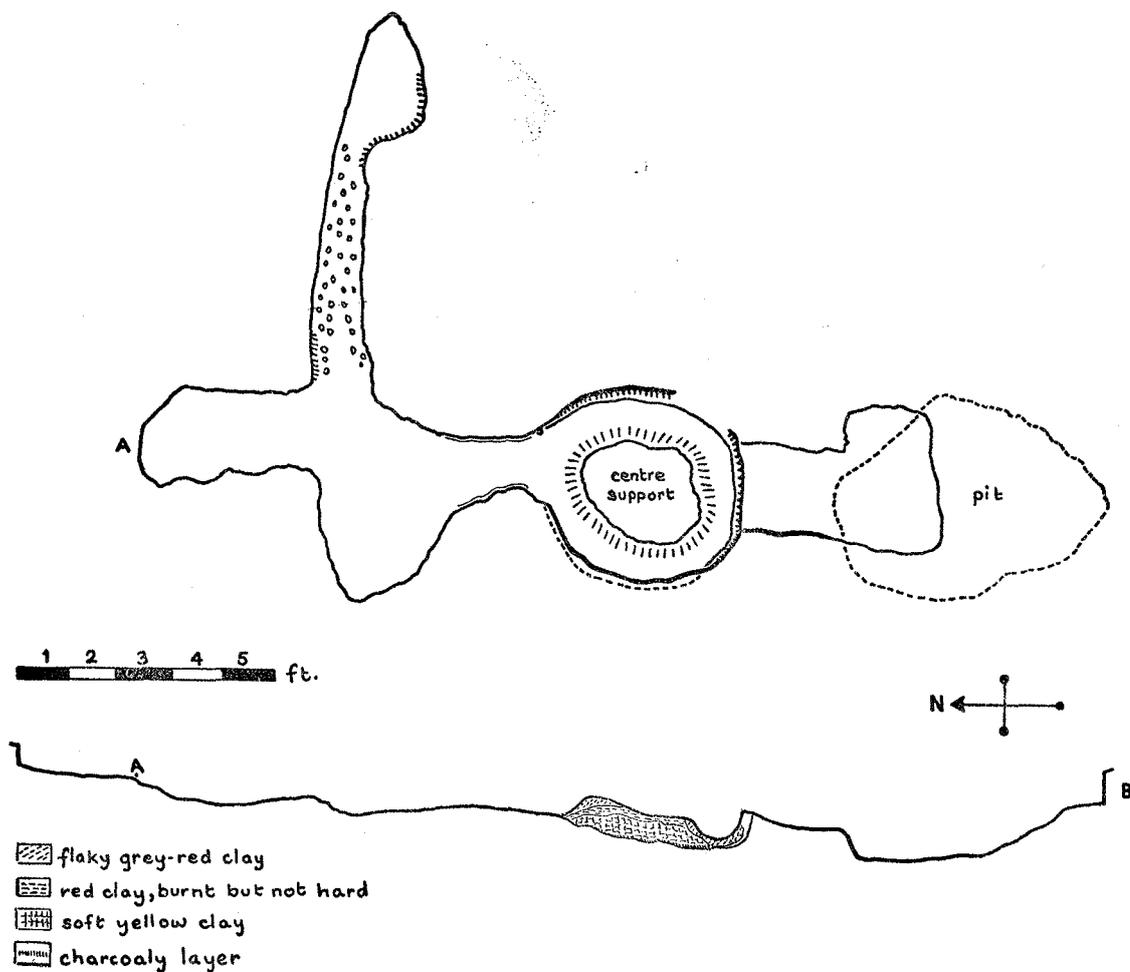


Fig. 2. Plan of kiln and east-west section of kiln.

probably belonging to another kiln in the area. The walls of the stokehole area were not as hard baked as the kiln walls but were similar in construction. The stokehole appeared to have two side channels, the east one being particularly long and deep and ending in a shallow pit (Pit N). The west and north parts of the stokehole were fairly shallow and full of charcoal. At the south end of the kiln was another area (Pit O) which appeared to have been a stokehole or vent as it had one side with the same hard, grey, clay walls. Below a slight spread of charcoal associated with this possible stokehole and a layer of clay and flints, which was at first thought to be natural, was found an earlier pit with charcoal and pottery in it. Similar natural looking clay and flints had filled the stokehole at the north end.

THE PIT (Pit 3)

The smaller anomaly was a fairly large pit of irregular size which was filled with disintegrating pottery, wasters, broken pots, fire bars, etc. A small bronze

brooch and half a melon bead (Fig. 8) were also found in this pit. It is not directly associated with the kiln but the same wares were found in both and it is reasonable to assume that they were contemporary.

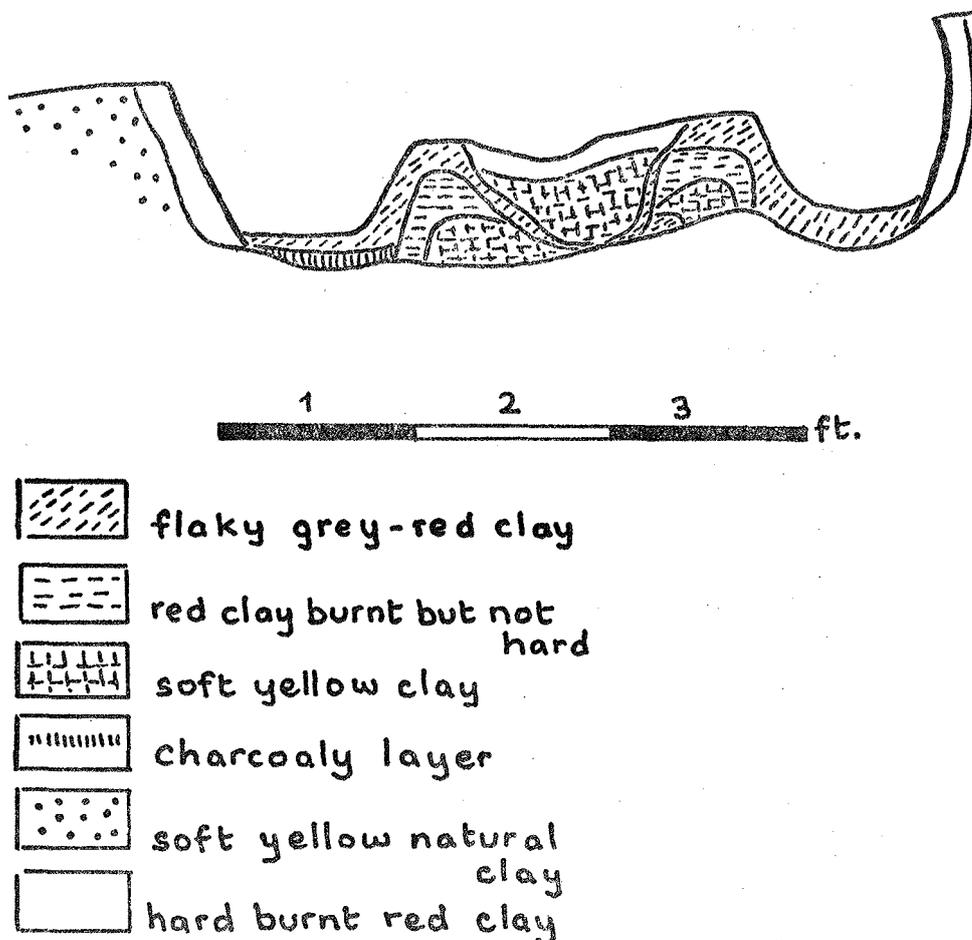


Fig. 3. North-south section of kiln.

THE POTTERY

INTRODUCTION

The products of the 1967 kiln site at Fulmer consist mainly of wide and narrow-necked jars, potlids, and reeded-rim dishes and bowls. In addition to parallels from the earlier Fulmer² site, there are new types of bowl, fig. 5: 2(a) and 2(b); and fig. 5: 3, and pottery not manufactured on the site includes a Samian base: Dr. form 27, a moratorium, and a ring-necked flagon (see Appendix I).

The terms "Fulmer type" and "Hedgerley type"³ have become confusing, as the sites do not correlate perfectly in either pottery type or dating: no such series is presented here. Instead, the pottery is classified separately according to form, fabric, and evidence from thin sectioning.

The pottery reflects native tradition in keeping with the rural nature of the site. Much of the pottery is broken, mis-shaped and defective, probably "blown" or shattered during firing. It appears from the central support area of the kiln that the potter drew the kiln to save fuel and effort, the result being a group of underfired, broken pots which were discarded in convenient pits, Pit O and Pit 3.

The pottery indicates that at least once the kiln was allowed to cool too rapidly, or a draught was allowed to enter it, and the pottery 'stunted' or split, the evidence for this being roughly circular flakes. As the pottery is in most cases badly fired, the different colours of the fabric are very startling, ranging from very soft orange/red to hard grey and black/red pottery, fired in a reducing atmosphere. The amount of wasters is considerable, about 1,900 sherds, some 80% lying in the pit (Pit 3) to the west of the kiln.

THIN SECTIONS REPRESENTATIVE OF FABRIC TYPES

1. Fu I. kiln:
 - „ Jar: black fabric, grey core, well fired, flint and grit.
 - „ Body sherd: decorated burnished vertical grooves, well fired, fine clay slightly siliceous.
 - „ Flagon: very fine hard clay, slightly sandy orange core, cream exterior, and interior small traces of reddish grog in fabric. Probably not made on the site, similar fabric to the Verulamium kiln products.
 - „ Body sherd: porous grey clay, traces of ferruginous sandstone.
 - „ Body sherd: grey, very porous, contains particles of slag.
2. Fu I. Central Support:
 - Jar: black reduced surface, grey core, orange fabric and silica.
3. Fu I. Vent E:
 - Body sherd: porous grey fabric with fine grain sedimentary non-calcareous stone, basically sandstone, and traces of shell.
4. Fu I. Stokehole L:
 - Wide-necked jar: orange fabric, grey core, siliceous with particles of red grog.
5. Fu II. Pit 3:
 - „ Jar: orange fabric, grey exterior, well fired siliceous clay, contains grog and small particles of iron slag.
 - „ Base of small jar: grass impression badly fired, reduced surface, orange fabric, traces of cream slip on interior, particles of red grog.
 - „ Pie dish: grey hard fabric, calcite grit and small amount of grog.
 - „ Body sherd: well fired siliceous, flint particles and small amount of grog.

Abbreviations for the Provenance of the Pottery:

K:	Kiln
O:	Pit O
P3:	Pit 3
N:	Pit N
CS:	Central Support
L:	Stokehole L

THE POTTERY TYPES

Fig. 4. DECORATED POTTERY

1. *Narrow-necked Jar*: Orange fabric, gritted, well fired, traces of light grey slip, K. Diam: 13 cms. Rim similar to Gillam type 31.⁴ The jar is in native Belgic tradition. Its prototype occurs at Prae Wood.⁵ This roughly

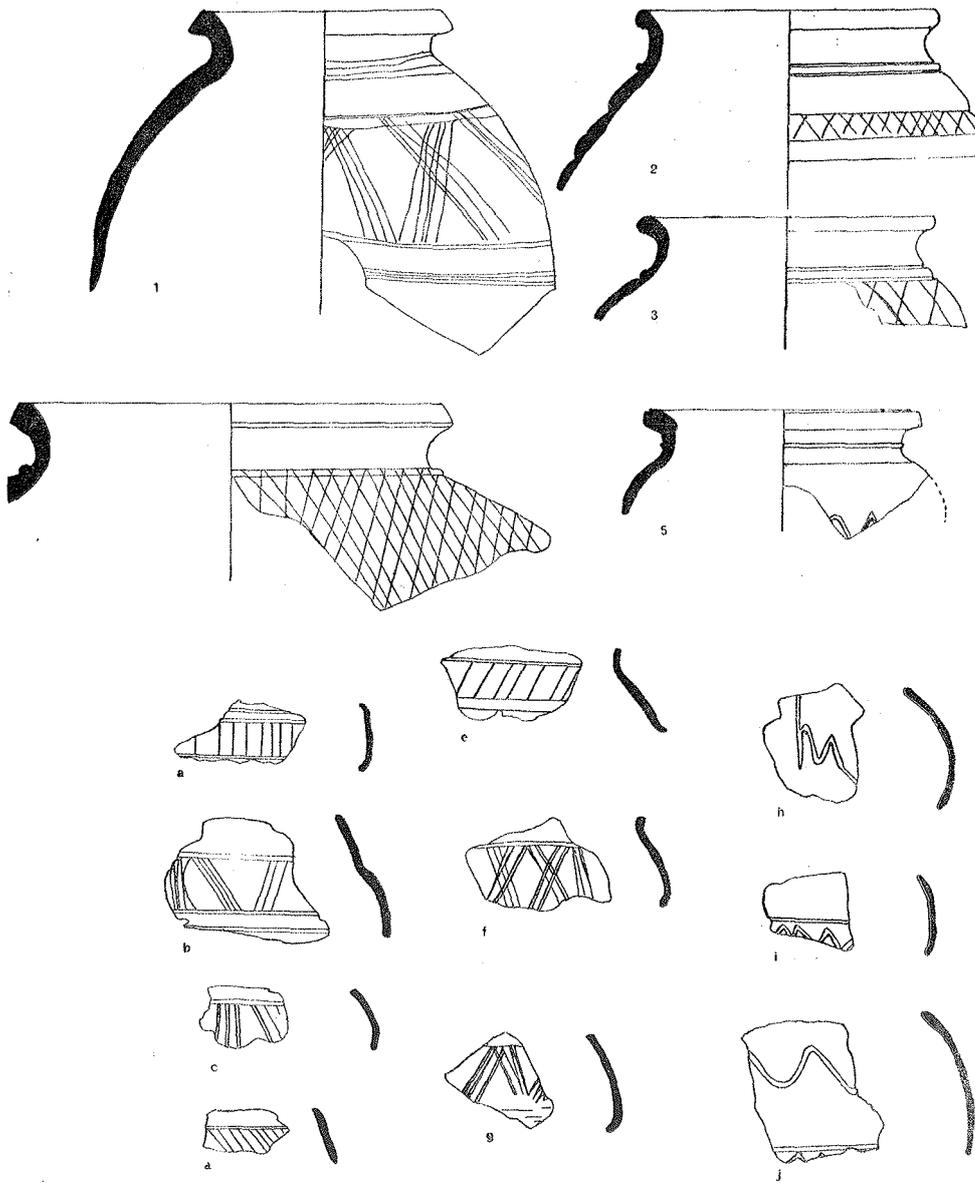


Fig. 4. Decorated pottery.

scratched chevron pattern was widely adopted by Provincial Roman potters, and variously modified. The type also appears similar to Hull type 280.⁶

2. *Narrow-necked Jar*: Reddish orange fabric, buff/grey core, gritted, hard, very well fired, the lattice decoration is lightly scratched. *K*. Diam: 15 cms. The Belgic neck of this type is paralleled by the soft brown native ware from Colchester.⁷ The kiln at Hedgerley,⁸ South Bucks, also produced similar jars in grey ware.
 3. *Narrow-necked Jar*: Grey fabric, orange core, poorly fired. *P3*. Diam. 15 cms. The lattice is painted on in a dark grey slip on the shoulder, immediately below the first cordon, this is paralleled by an example from the earlier Fulmer site.⁹
 4. *Narrow-necked Storage Jar*: Heavy angular rim, orange fabric grey surface, medium fired, traces of cream slip. *P3*. Diam: 22 cms. This rectangular rim is a Romanised derivation of the Belgic decorated storage jar, as seen at Verulamium.¹⁰
 5. *Narrow-necked Jar*: Slightly reeded rim, grey fabric, buff grey core, very gritted, well fired, with impressed wavy lines on the body. *CS*. Diam: 14.5 cms. This is the only example of this type of pot found here, with no exact parallel.
- a) Grey fabric, well fired, burnished parallel line decoration. *K*. The fabric is fine, probably derived from the fine hard grey Belgic ware, with bands of burnished vertical lines, as at Verulamium.¹¹ Dated to the early 2nd century A.D.
 - b) Grey fabric, buff grey core, badly fired. *K*. Lightly incised decoration.
 - c) Red fabric, gritty, well fired. *K*. Roughly incised lines and one lightly incised line.
 - d) Grey fabric, medium fired. *K*. Lightly burnished.
 - e) Dark grey fabric, gritted, badly fired. *P3*. Burnished lines as (a).
 - f) Red/orange fabric, dark grey slip, and traces of white slip on the lattice. *K*.
 - g) Grey fabric, grey buff core, light grey slip, traces of white on lattice as (f). *P3*.
 - h) Dark grey/black fabric (fired in reducing conditions), gritted, only example of this type of decoration. *K*.
 - i) Orange fabric, buff core, badly fired, dark brown slip, sharply incised, tight wavy line decoration. *P3*.
 - j) Grey fabric, gritted orange core, badly fired. *K*.

Fig. 5. BOWLS, DISHES AND FLAGON

1. *Fine Bowl*: (complete) possible Samian copy, Dr. Form 35, but without the barbotine decoration on the rim. The base is solid, however, and the very slight carination is reminiscent of Gillam type 217,¹² now dated to 120 A.D. Light grey fabric, gritted, traces of white slip. *P3*. Diam: 17 cms.

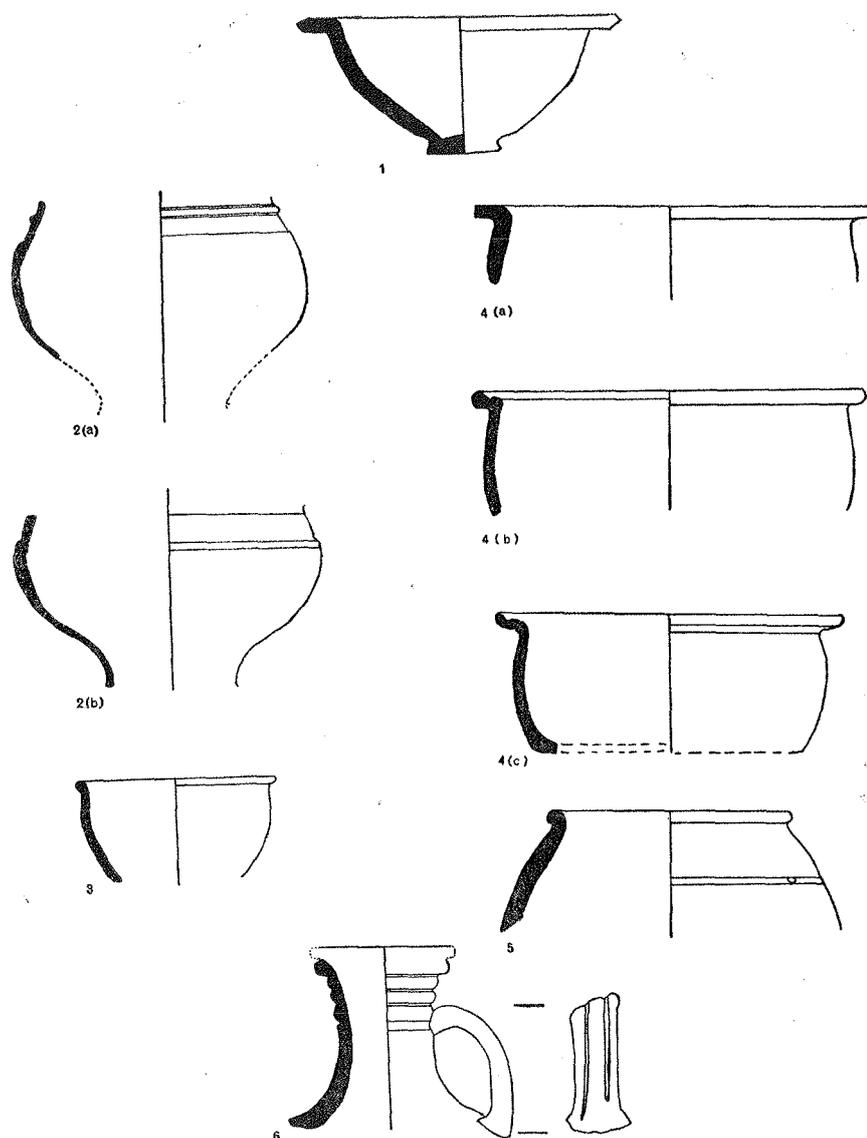


Fig. 5. Bowls, dishes and flagon.

- 2a) *Bowl*: Orange fabric, grey core, grey slip, gritted, badly fired. *K*. Diam : 13 cms. The bowl is unusual as there are no close parallels from the earlier Fulmer site, or the nearby Hedgerley Kiln sites. The type is of Belgic derivation, possibly even with a pedestal base, but no such bases were found.
- 2b) *Bowl*: Grey fabric, much abraded, badly fired in reducing conditions. *P3*. Diam : 15 cms. Although similar to 2a, the placing of the cordon is different, giving a wider more balanced bowl.

3. *Bowl*: Orange fabric, grey slip, exterior and interior, traces of slag in the section. *K*. Diam: 10.5 cms. Small bowl with a plain rim, local type, many examples. A similar form is to be found at Chorleywood.¹³
- 4a) *Dish with flat rim*: Grey fabric, orange interior, gritted. *P3*. Diam. 21 cms. There are many local parallels of this type which are probably products of the kiln. The closest parallel comes from Thorney Farm, Iver,¹⁴ and Chesham.¹⁵ A similar example comes from Colchester,¹⁶ dated to the Flavian period.
- 4b) *Carinated Bowl with reeded rim*: Orange gritted fabric, fired in reducing conditions. *P3*. Diam: 20.6 cms. There is a groove round the outer edge of rim, giving an upturned rounded lip. The earlier site at Fulmer¹⁷ possesses three examples of this type, but Hedgerley does not. A possible product of the kiln is found at Chesham.¹⁸
- 4c) *Hemispherical Bowl with slightly reeded rim*: Dark grey fabric, gritted, light grey slip, badly fired. *P3*. Diam: 18.2 cms. There is a similar bowl from Fishbourne.¹⁹ Like 4b there is a groove round the outer edge of the rim, forming an upturned rounded rim.
5. *Jar*: Grey fabric, gritted, light grey interior, circular flaking on the body, indicates 'stunting'—too rapid cooling. *O* Diam: 12.9 cms. There is a similar jar with a beaded rim from Thorney Farm, Iver,²⁰ possibly from the kiln. At Colchester,²¹ there is a parallel dated to late first, or early second century A.D.
6. *Flagon*: Buff fabric, pink core, traces of cream slip, very well fired. *P3*. Diam: 7.6 cms. This flagon neck is foreign to the site, and owing to its similarity to examples from Verulamium,²² in fabric and form, it is probable that it was manufactured there. This form is frequently dated to the late first to early second century A.D., as at Fishbourne.²³

Fig. 6. PLAIN WIDE-NECKED JARS, BEAKERS, ETC.

1. *Heavy Storage Jar with angular rim*: Red/orange fabric, gritted, well fired. *CS*. Diam: 24.4 cms. This is a common form, some 20 examples, with a double cord on the neck. A similar type of angular jar is found at Verulamium.²⁴
2. *Storage Jar with heavy rim*: Rim not so angular as 1, grey fabric, poorly fired, traces of a light slip. *P3*. Diam: 18 cms. Similar to Gillam type 113²⁵ dated 110-130 A.D.
3. *Jar with flat rim*: Light grey fabric, gritted, porous, traces of buff slip. *N*. Diam: 13 cms. Some 8-9 examples of this type, shattered in firing, all from Pit N. Belgic derived jar, coarse and heavy.
4. *Jar*: Orange fabric, grey slip, well fired. *L*. Diam: 12.5 cms. The shoulder is unusually thick. Eight examples of this type with a slightly undercut rim were found in the stokehole. A similar type with a short, somewhat concave neck comes from the kilns at Hedgerley²⁶ and from the earlier Fulmer²⁷ site. The jar is also similar to Gillam type 106,²⁸ dated 80-130 A.D. but not an exact parallel.



PLATE VIIIa. FULMER. General view of the kiln showing on the right the stokehole with its two side channels.

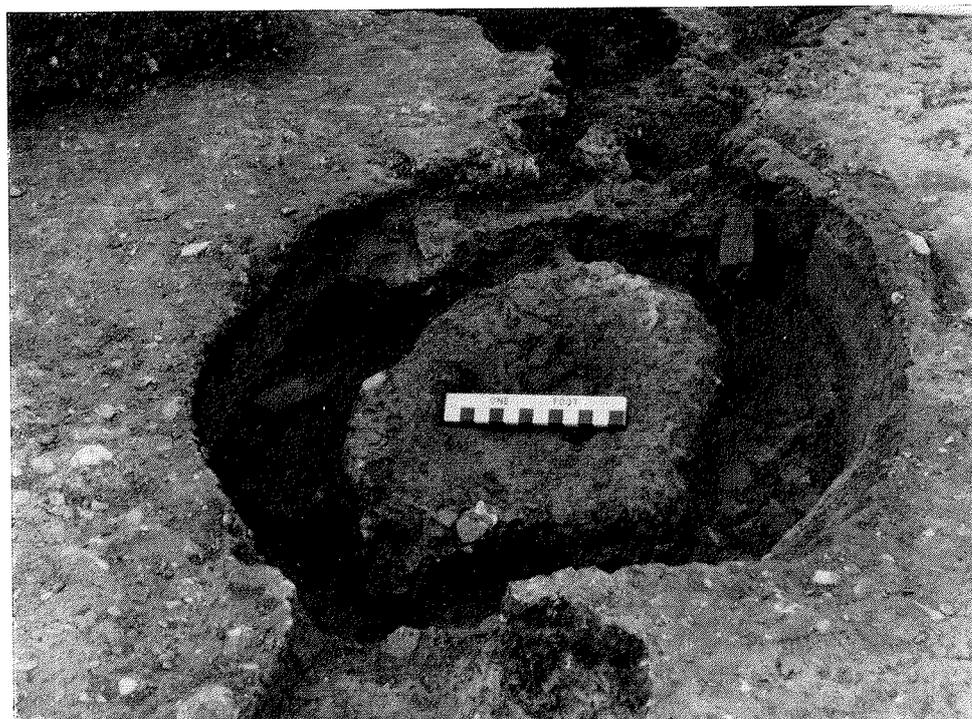


PLATE VIIIb. FULMER. The kiln showing the centre support with kiln debris and pottery in the fill. (The stokehole at the top, at the bottom the stokehole or vent at the south end.)

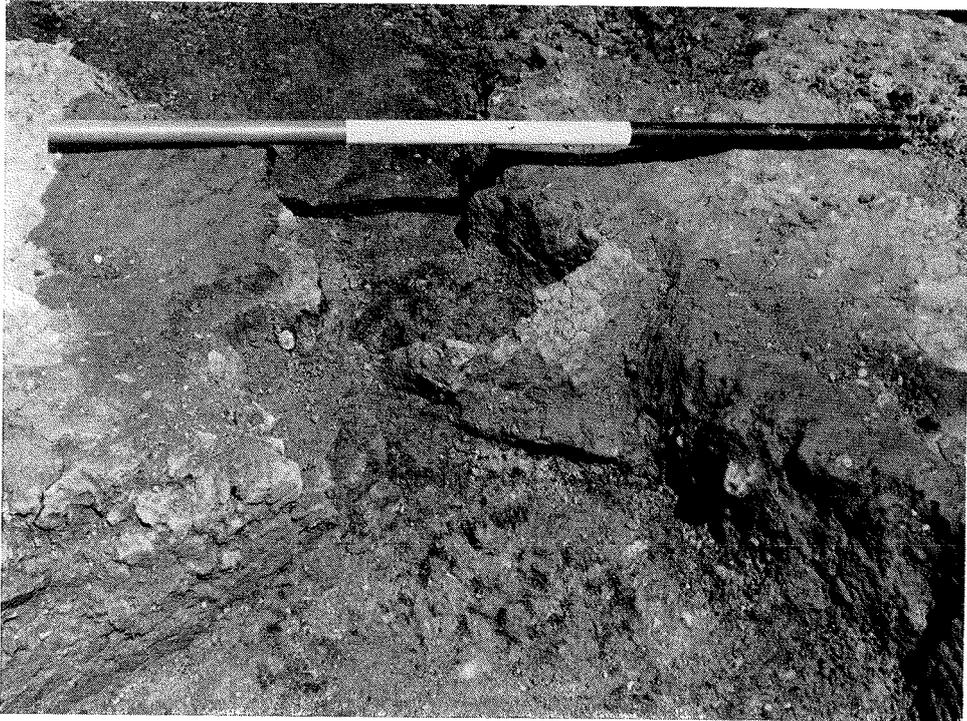


PLATE IX. FULMER. The blocked stokehole with on the right the projection from the side of the kiln on which a fire bar rested.

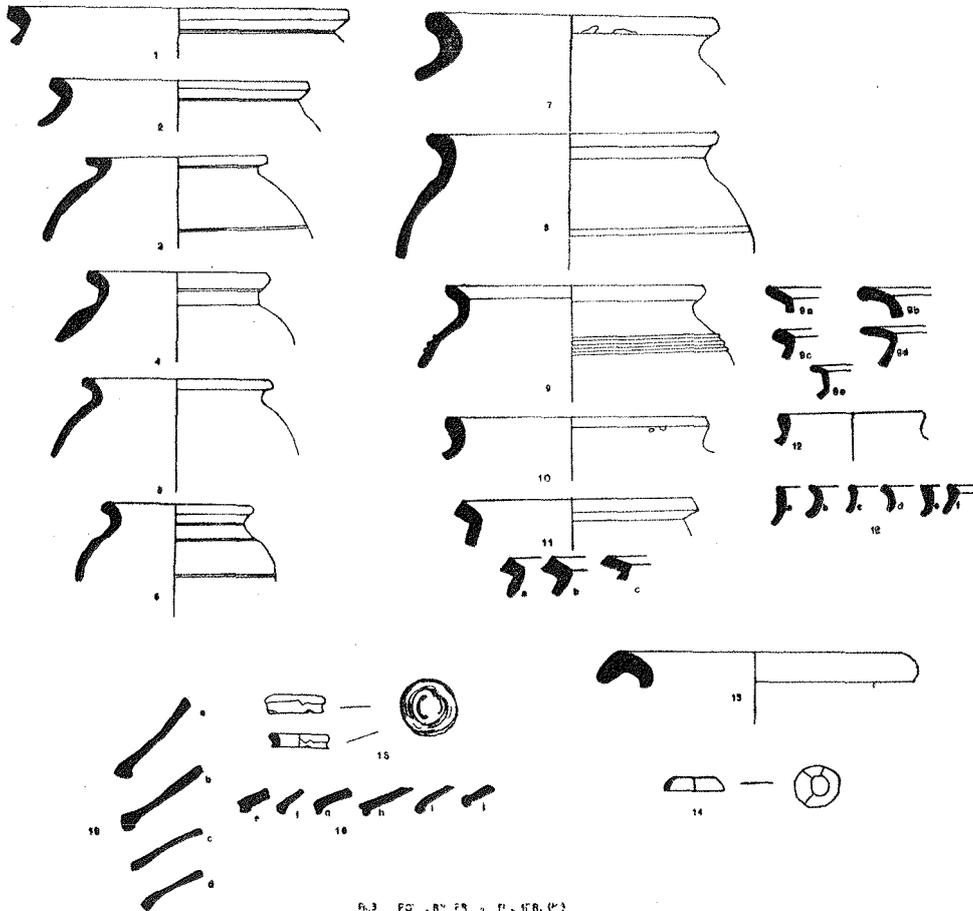


Fig. 6. Plain wide-necked jars, beakers, etc.

5. *Plain Jar*: Orange fabric, grey slip, small iron slag particles in the section, well fired. L. Diam: 13.2 cms. Very common type. 35-50 rims of this type.
6. *Jar with cordon*: Slight roll rim, red fabric, grey core, grey slip, badly fired. K. Diam: 10.4 cms. There is no exact parallel from Hedgerley or

the earlier Fulmer pottery, but rims of similar fabric and type have been found at Mount Wood²⁹ and at Chesham.³⁰

7. *Heavy Storage Jar*: Grey fabric, much abraded, porous. *O*. Diam: 20 cms. Traces of flaking or 'stunting' on the interior. This wide-mouthed jar is a common type, similar to Fulmer type 13³¹ but thicker in section.
 8. *Wide-mouthed Jar with centre cordon*: Orange fabric, gritted, fired in reducing conditions. *K*. Diam: 18.3 cms. 25 examples, amongst the wasters. Common type.
 9. *Jar with everted rim and cordon on shoulder*: Orange fabric and core, gritted, traces of cream slip. *K*. Diam: 18 cms. Internal bevel for lid seating. No similar examples from Hedgerley or the earlier Fulmer site. There were only two other examples of this type from the kiln site. Gillam type 103³² has a parallel rim with lid seating, but no cordoned shoulder.
Rims with internal lid-seating:
 - a) Grey fabric, orange core, gritted, fired in reducing conditions. *P3*.
 - b) Grey/buff fabric, well fired. *P3*.
 - c) Grey fabric, gritted, well fired. *P3*.
 - d) Grey fabric, abraded, porous. *P3*.
 - e) Orange fabric, grey slip, abraded. *P3*.
 10. *Jar with slack rim*: Grey fabric and core, badly fired, evidence of 'stunting'. *CS*. Diam: 18.5 cms. Heavy jar of Belgic derivation.
 11. *Jar with wide rim*: Unusually wide rim in relation to the body of the pot. *K*. Two examples of this type, 11 and 11a, similar to type 7c Fulmer.³³
 - a) Grey fabric, gritted, well fired. *P3*.
 - b) Orange fabric, gritted (including flint in section), well fired. *P3* as 11a only with internal lid seating.
 - c) Orange fabric, well fired. *L*. as 11b.
- Beakers:
12. Dark grey fabric, slightly gritted, well fired. *CS*. Diam: 10 cms. There are many examples of beaker forms from this site as opposed to the one example in pale gritted ware from the earlier Fulmer site.³⁴ Beakers in similar fabric have been found at Mount Wood,³⁵ and are probably of Fulmer manufacture.
 - a) Grey fabric, buff core, light grey exterior. *P3*.
 - b) Buff fabric, light grey slip on exterior, well fired. *P3*.
 - c) Dark grey fabric, gritted. *P3*.
 - d) Grey fabric and core, abraded. *P3*.
 - e) Light grey fabric, buff core, slightly gritted. *P3*.
 - f) Grey fabric, orange exterior, grey interior gritted. *K*. Similar to Gillam Form 167.³⁶ An example from Brough on Humber.³⁷
 13. *Rim of Mortarium*: Orange fabric, buff/cream exterior, not well fired. *P3*. Diam: 20.8 cms. Ill-defined squat flange similar to an example from Fishbourne,³⁸ in buff sandy fabric. This is the only example of a mortarium found on the site, it is probable that it is completely foreign to the site, like the flagon (fig. 5, type 6) and both share manufacture at the Verulamium kilns.

14. *Samian base: P3.* Dr. Form 27, much abraded.
15. *Top of potlid:* Orange fabric, traces of cream slip, badly fired. *K.* Diam: 4.4 cms. Very roughly made, found in the kiln (see 16g).
16. *Potlids:* Great variety of types and fabric, some 20 different types of form.
 - a) Dark orange fabric, grey exterior, buff core, gritted, well fired. *P3.*
 - b) Orange fabric, grey slip, gritted. *K.*
 - c) Orange fabric, traces of light grey slip abraded, large particles of grog in section. *P3.*
 - d) Grey fabric, fired in reducing conditions, gritted. *P3.*
 - e) Reddish fabric, grey slip, gritted, grog in section. *P3.*
 - f) Reddish/buff fabric, grey slip, badly fired, evidence of 'stunting', circular flaking of the surface. *P3.*
 - j) Orange fabric, slightly gritted (shell), very badly fired. *CS.*

Fig. 7

1. *Jar with reeded rim:* Grey fabric, and core gritted. *K.* Diam: 15 cms. A type not found at Hedgerley, or the earlier Fulmer site. The jar has a distinct ridge at the top of the rim, which is accentuated in the two other examples of this type:
 - (a) has an internal groove which is much slacker than
 - (b) the rim also being more relaxed. There are several parallels for this type from Chesham.³⁹
 - a) Grey fabric, traces of orange slip. *K.*
 - b) As (a).
2. *Carinated Bowl*
 - a) Light grey fabric, traces of dark grey slip. *P3.* Diam: 13 cms. Slightly abraded. Only two examples from the site. This is a native Belgic form very similar to an example from Wheathampstead.⁴⁰ An example of probable Fulmer manufacture has been found at Thorney Farm, Iver,⁴¹ in identical fabric to 1(b).
 - b) Grey fabric, hard gritted, slightly abraded. *P3.* Diam: 12 cms.

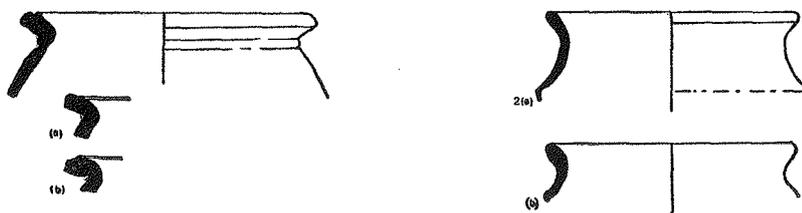


Fig. 7. Jars and bowls.

APPENDIX

FULMER TYPES

Corder

1. Dishes with reeded rim.
2. Carinated bowls with flat-reeded rim.

1967 EXCAVATION FORMS

Dishes with reeded rim.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>3. Pie dish with roll rim.</p> <p>4. Straight-sided dishes.</p> <p>5. Carinated bowl, imitation Samian 19/30.</p> <p>6. Colander.</p> <p>7. Wide-mouthed jars, with short necks.</p> <p>8. Wide-mouthed, round-bodied jars, cordons at junction of neck and body (roll rims).</p> <p>9. Miscellaneous jars — wide-mouthed and little neck.</p> <p>10. Beaker.</p> <p>11. Heavy storage jar, angular rim.</p> <p>12. Large narrow-necked jars with cordon at junction of neck and body, band (often decorated) on shoulder.</p> <p>13. Large jar.</p> <p>14. Lids.</p> | <p>Pie dish with roll rim. Pie dish with reeded rim.</p> <p>Straight-sided dish. One example.</p> <p>Wide-mouthed jars with short necks.</p> <p>Wide-mouthed, round-bodied jars, cordons at junction of neck and body (roll rims).</p> <p>Miscellaneous jars — wide-mouthed and little neck.</p> <p>Beaker.</p> <p>Heavy storage jar, angular rim.</p> <p>Large narrow-necked jars with cordon at junction of neck and body, band (often decorated) on shoulder.</p> <p>Large jar (almost whole example).</p> <p>Many examples, all different.</p> <p>Part of mortarium, abraded.</p> <p>1 flagon neck.</p> <p>2 bowls—new type.</p> |
|--|--|

OTHER FINDS

Bronze Brooch—found in the pit (Fig. 8).

Report by M. R. Hull.

Upper half of an enamelled brooch, preserving at the lower end traces of a vestigial button, and at the upper end traces of a spring, now missing. In between, the bow forms an oblong panel in which are two triangular recesses for enamel.

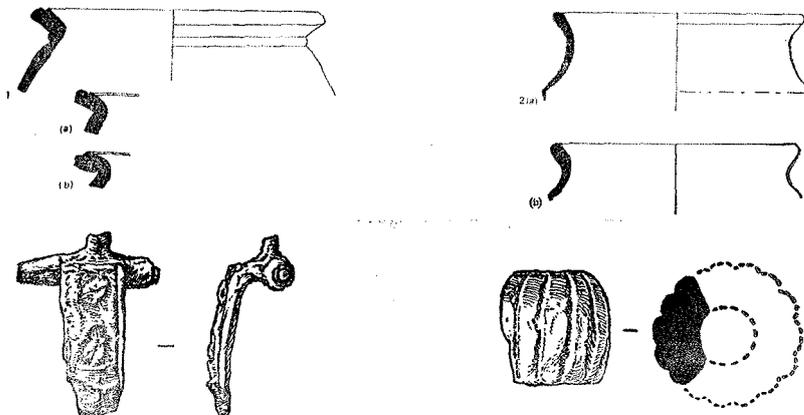


Fig. 8. Bronze brooch and melon bead.

The type is one which belongs to the south-western area and is there comparatively common. Usually the panel is divided into two long troughs, each inlaid with patches of enamel in two colours. A few have this pattern of two triangles, opposed point to point. Apart from the pattern in the panel there is little variation between all examples. The main characteristics are the right-angle bend at the head and the two leaves—perhaps imitating the acanthus of the Backworth brooches—which are the only indication of the button.

The brooches decorated as this are as follows:

Cirencester. Corinium Mus.

Wroxeter, Shrewsbury Mus. B.230. In a deposit of 1st half 2nd century.

Brixton Deveril, Cold Kitchen Hill. Devizes Mus. 985, W.A.M. xliii, pl. IB.

Caerleon. Nat. Mus. Wales. *Arch.* lxxviii, 162, fig. 13, 9. Enamel green. In a deposit not later than c. A.D. 125.

Rushmore, Farnham Mus. Pitt-Rivers, Cranbourne Chase, i, pl. 13, 6.

Caerleon. Nat. Mus. Wales. *Arch. Camb.* 1932, 79, fig. 31, 4. Dated late 1st to early 2nd century.

All the above (with possible exception of that from Rushmore) are sprung, the following is hinged:

Nor'nour, Isles of Scilly, enamel white.

Melon Bead

A half melon bead in blue faience was found in the pit (fig. 8), similar to one from Jewry Wall, Leicester.⁴²

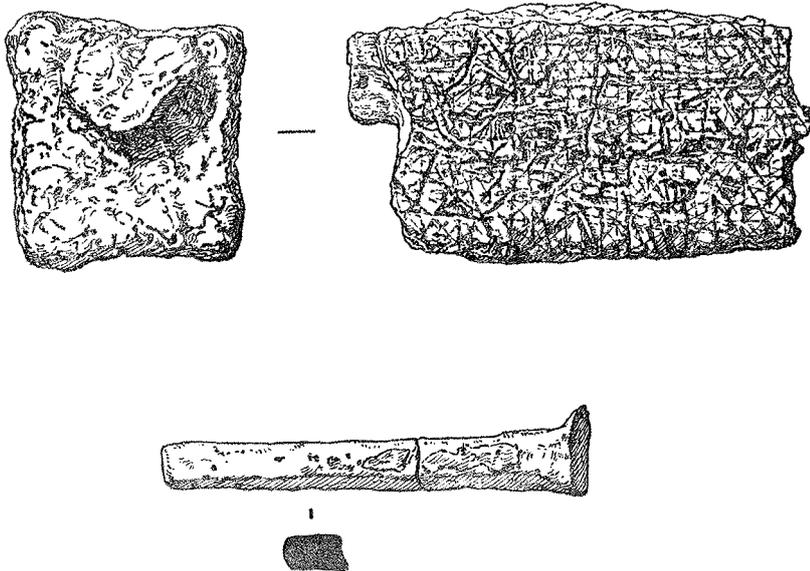


Fig. 9. Kiln debris.

Kiln Debris

The bar (fig. 9) is from the kiln itself and was found virtually *in situ*, the small projection at the end of the bar resting on a small round projection in the kiln wall. Several parts of similar bars were also found in the pit.

The thin bar (fig. 9) was found in the pit and does not appear to be related to the kiln structure found.

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- ⁸ Cottrill, F. (1938), *op. cit.*, type 12.
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