

A Prehistoric and Roman Site on Mount Farm, Dorchester

By J. N. L. MYRES

THE excavations here described were conducted by the Oxford University Archaeological Society during the last week of June and nearly the whole of July, 1933.¹ The thanks of the Society are particularly due to Mr. H. O. King, the owner and occupier of the site, not only for permission to dig, but for much practical encouragement, including the loan of a shepherd's hut. Almost all the work was carried out by undergraduate members of the Society, whose names cannot be mentioned individually here, except for that of Mr. H. N. Savory of St. Edmund Hall, who was present throughout and made himself responsible for much of the planning and measuring of the site and for keeping the detailed records and notes on which this report is largely based. The Society is also indebted for much practical assistance to Mr. R. T. Lattey, to Major G. W. G. Allen, F.S.A., for taking the air-photographs (PLATE III), to Mr. D. B. Harden, who has also drawn some of the pottery here illustrated, to Mr. D. W. Bartington, who undertook the difficult task of surveying both the excavations and a wide area of the surrounding crop-markings, and to the Principal of St. Edmund Hall, who spent most of a particularly sweltering afternoon in the laborious if profitable excavation of Pit μ .

The site lies on an extensive spread of gravel between the valleys of the Thames and the Thame which meet at Dorchester, and is about one and a half miles north of the latter village.² Over a very wide area crop-markings indicating the pits and ditches of prehistoric settlements have been noticed from the ground and from the air: they occur at intervals from Drayton St. Leonard on the east to Burcote on the west, and from Dorchester itself northwards to our site and beyond. Two sections of them have already received archaeological investigation: the large Bronze Age circle, perhaps a minor Woodhenge,

¹ Preliminary references to the excavation have appeared in *Antiquity*, VII (1933), 486, and *Antiquaries Journal*, XV (1935), 31.

² O.S. 6-in. Oxon. XLVI SW. The site is marked on the sketch-map published in *Oxoniensia*, I, fig. 13, p. 82.

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immediately north of Dorchester,¹ and the very prolific area less than half a mile west of our site in Allen's gravel pit on the Dorchester-Oxford road, which has during the last few years constantly produced fresh and remarkable evidence of Iron Age and Roman occupation.² Surface finds of worked flints (including arrowheads of both leaf-shaped and barbed-and-tanged forms) and of Iron Age and Roman pottery have been made by the owner, Mr. H. O. King, all over his land, and southwards to the outskirts of Dorchester, which in the Roman period was the centre and focus of the whole region. It is clear that this elaborate complex of settlements must have carried a very considerable population in prehistoric times.

The area chosen for the excavations of 1933 lies almost at the highest point of the gravel spread, and though no more than 190 feet over O.D. commands extensive views, east and south-east across the Thame valley to the Chilterns; south to Wittenham Clumps with its great Iron Age stronghold which doubtless played the same part to the earlier inhabitants as the little town of Dorchester played to their descendants in Roman times; and west and south-west across the Vale of White Horse to the Berkshire Downs, where the view ends with the distant ramparts of Uffington Castle: even on the north the ground falls slightly before the wooded ridge between the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay blocks more distant prospects in that direction. Though the site itself is well drained and now becomes very arid in a hot summer, a strong spring in the copse a hundred yards to the north must always have provided an abundant water supply.

The site has long been under the plough and is superficially quite flat. Under corn or grass however it becomes covered with very distinct crop-markings, as can be seen from the air-photographs (PLATE III), and these include a pronounced circle of Bronze Age type, whose position had been deliberately marked by the owner with a large haystack, as well as several groups of pits, likely to be of the Iron Age, and a conspicuous complex of ditches which might belong to any period but were clearly part of several different systems. All this encouraged the hope that we might obtain a cross-section of the whole prehistoric occupation from quite a limited excavation of selected points.

The crop-markings were so distinct that the more prominent of them showed up on ground level even in the rather exiguous crop of coarse hay which covered the site when operations began, and the general plan (FIG. 3) is based chiefly on a ground survey of the main markings carried out by Mr. D. W. Bartington, checked here and there by the help of the air-photographs. As

¹ Illustrated from the air and partially excavated, *Antiquity*, 1 (1927), 469 ff., and pl. 1 facing p. 469.

² *Antiquaries Journal*, xv (1935), 39-41: *Oxoniensia*, 1 (1936), 83 ff.

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the excavations proceeded, however, the very hot weather slowly obliterated the markings, and by the end of July nothing was visible on the ground but a uniform expanse of sun-baked brown. It may be said that wherever dark marks on the grass were tested by excavation artificial pits or ditches were encountered except

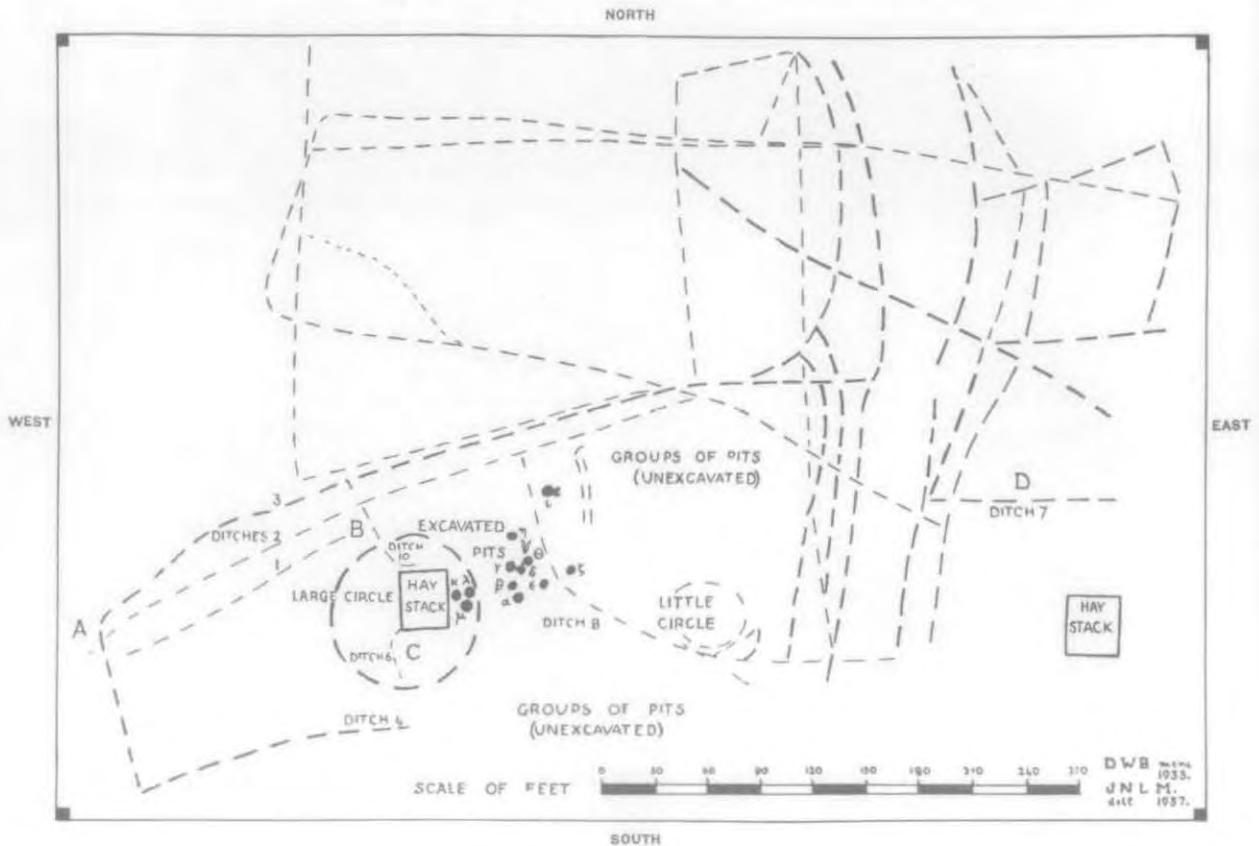


FIG. 3

GENERAL PLAN OF THE PREHISTORIC SITE ON MOUNT FARM,
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in certain places where deposits of brick earth overlay the gravel and produced the same effect : thus the dark mark on the air-photographs adjoining the large circle on the west and suggesting a pit is a natural geological feature : so are the marks inside the Little Circle, and on the east of the site the fading out

PLATE III



A. The Site from the South.



B. The Site from the West.

A PREHISTORIC SITE ON MOUNT FARM, DORCHESTER, OXON.

Phh. Major G. W. G. Allen.

PLATE IV



1 (see FIG. 8)

2 (see FIG. 9)

A.

Scale, $\frac{1}{2}$.

1



2

B.

3

1. Bone Weaving-comb (see p. 39).
2. Pottery Spindle-whorl (see FIG. 9 and p. 36).
3. Bronze Penannular Brooch (see p. 39).

Scale, $\frac{2}{3}$.

IRON AGE POTTERY AND SMALL OBJECTS FROM MOUNT FARM,
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of the whole series of markings is probably due to a more extensive spread of brick earth in that area. In general however the main archaeological features of the site were very well shown by the crop-markings and the plan of the excavation was directly determined by them.

Not enough work could be done in one season to unravel the whole complex history of the area, and the purpose of many of the ditches would of course remain obscure even if the dates of all could be determined. Most of the longer ones are no doubt the boundary ditches of garden enclosures or agricultural plots, and some light might be thrown on the development of agricultural technique by a systematic reconstruction of a series of period plans for the whole site. So far as our work went, however, it did not appear that the enclosures were of any standard shape at any one period, or that their shape or size altered radically at any point in a story which extends from the beginning of the Iron Age to the middle of the Roman period. There is a suggestion here and there of a large, roughly rectangular plot varying from 100 to 150 feet wide and of much greater length, but the impression of long narrow strips created by some parts of the plan, is probably due simply to the slow evolution in the outlay of the site, ditches being dug and redug to replace or reinforce one another on approximately, if not exactly, the same line as occasion arose from time to time. This was almost certainly the explanation of the three roughly parallel ditches which are so prominent a feature of the plan, running from SW. to NE. immediately north of the large circle, for two of these belonged to the Iron Age, perhaps to different dates in it, while the third was not dug in its present form until the Roman period. In the same way, it may be suggested that the two groups of parallel north and south ditches in the eastern part of the site represent successive delimitations of a trackway from its adjacent fields. To this it might be objected that four ditches cross the line of the supposed track: but of these four at least three are almost certainly earlier than the main outlay of this part of the site, which seems to be of Roman date, and they may thus have been obsolete before the trackway came into existence. But the settlement of these and other problems must be left to future excavation.

Attention was concentrated in 1933 on the Large Circle, on a group of pits to the east and north-east of it, on the Little Circle further east again, and on sectioning a number of the adjacent ditches with a view to determining the dates of different parts of the system.

THE LARGE CIRCLE

The ditch of the Large Circle, which is by far the most conspicuous element in the crop-markings, and had long been known to the owner (who, as already mentioned, had marked its position with a haystack), was sectioned in five

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places. Four of these cuttings, on the north, south, east, and west, were designed to reveal its normal section, and the fifth was taken across the marked expansion visible from the air a little to the east of its most northerly point. The four normal sections (FIG. 4) need not be described in detail. They revealed a ditch of rather irregular profile varying from seven to ten feet across and from four to five feet in depth. The lower part of the filling was composed either of clean brown loam or of gravelly material, and contained no pottery of any kind: in fact nothing at all except an occasional food bone. In two sections, however, considerable quantities of charcoal and other evidences of burning occurred on or near the bottom of the ditch under the clean filling, which was probably inserted very soon after the ditch was dug. That the ditch was already filled and forgotten before the Iron Age occupation began is clear not only from the absence of Iron Age rubbish in the filling but from its relationship to the deposits of that period, which not only overlie it but seem to ignore its existence. Thus on the west an Iron Age occupation-level containing a little pottery overlay the clean filling of the ditch but had not sagged appreciably into it: while on the east it was found that the early Pit λ (p. 24) had been dug partly in the gravel lip of the ditch and partly in its filling (FIG. 4), thus proving that the existence of the ditch was not appreciated when the pit was dug. In the same way the later Iron Age Ditch 10 was found to cross the filling of the circle ditch on the north side.

The fifth section (FIG. 4), cut across the expanded circle ditch on this side showed that the swelling was apparently part of the original plan of the circle. Here the ditch was fully eighteen or nineteen feet wide and six feet deep. Apart from Iron Age occupation just below the top soil the filling was again almost entirely free from finds, one indeterminate fragment of pottery alone appearing at a depth of three feet six inches. On the bottom, however, there were once again marked traces of burning, and a mass of ash, in places over a foot thick, covered the southern slope of the ditch bottom. Although a small piece of unburnt human skull was found on this deposit, no evidence for cremation-burials in the ditch was found, and it would seem likely that the traces of burning merely indicate its use as a 'fire trench' in connection with the funeral rites. It is highly probable that the ditch was immediately filled in when these ceremonies were over: it seems difficult to account in any other way for the entire absence of any later deposits in it.

The presence of the haystack made a systematic clearance of the interior of the circle impossible in 1933 and it is probable that surface disturbances in the Iron Age have in any case obliterated most of the evidence, if such existed, for burials or timber structures in it. Thus at least two ditches of this period were found meandering across the interior, one, Ditch 6, from the south, the

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other, Ditch 10, from the north : while Pits κ , λ and μ all lay within its circumference on the east. When in 1934 the haystack was removed, Mr. H. N. Savory and Mr. R. T. Lattey investigated the estimated centre of the circle and an area round it, but found nothing at all, the ground having been considerably disturbed. It is quite possible that the disturbance was due to Ditch 6, which had been traced in the previous year up to the south-west corner of the haystack and was then pointing straight for the estimated centre of the circle. One trace only was found in 1933 to suggest that there had once been timber

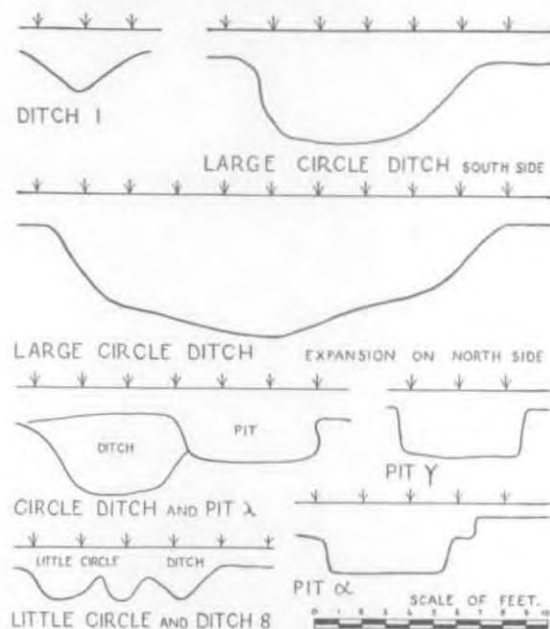


FIG. 4

PROFILES OF DITCHES AND PITS

structures inside the circle. At a point on the north side three feet east of the NW. angle of the haystack and some ten feet within the inner lip of the circle ditch, the later Ditch 10 was found to have overrun an earlier post-hole, two feet across, which had penetrated the gravel to a depth of fourteen inches. There was no direct proof that this post-hole was contemporary with the circle, but it certainly antedated Ditch 10 and its filling consisted of perfectly clean brown loam similar to that found in the filling of the circle ditch. It is possible that there was originally a row of posts running round the interior of the circle within

the ditch as in several similar monuments, but the evidence for this possibility is unfortunately inconclusive.

As can be seen from the foregoing account, we were unable to date the Large Circle on direct evidence. It was, however, possible to say that it was earlier than the earliest Iron Age occupation and that its existence had been forgotten when the Iron Age pits and ditches were dug. It belongs to a class of monument very common in the Oxford district, the excavated examples of which have generally produced evidence of Bronze Age date.¹ Sometimes they enclose a central burial, sometimes not. There need be little doubt that the present example also belongs to the Bronze Age.

THE DITCHES AND THE LITTLE CIRCLE

Ten ditches produced adequate evidence of date or were in other ways of sufficient interest to receive brief description here. In some the information came from a single section, in others from two or more, while in Ditches 1, 6, 8, 10 and the Little Circle stretches of several yards were completely cleared. It should be emphasised that the sequence of their numbering has no chronological significance: it is due simply to the order in which they were investigated on the ground.

Ditches 1, 2, 3 are the three more or less parallel ditches which cross the site from SW. to NE. north of the Large Circle. They were sectioned in a single trench NW. of the Large Circle near point B on FIG. 3.

Ditch 1 (FIG. 4) the most southerly, was here V-shaped, about five feet wide and two feet eight inches deep: it was becoming smaller eastwards and ends just east of the section, where a post-hole, one foot across and six inches deep, was found on its southern lip, perhaps from a fence continuing its line. The surface soil here had bits of Roman pottery in it, the upper fill of the ditch a group of sherds mostly of types influenced by Iron Age C, and the lower fill a good deal of pottery of A types, mostly A2, including AI 8, AI 9, AI 12 (FIG. 7), AI 13, AI 14 (FIG. 9), AI 17 (FIG. 8 and PLATE IVA, 1). A date fairly early in the Iron Age thus seems probable for this ditch and it seems to have been open for some time and to have filled up slowly.

Ditch 2 (FIG. 5) was composite: the main ditch was round-bottomed, six feet wide, and two feet four inches deep, and north of it was a shallow trench for a fence or palisade two feet wide and nineteen inches deep. It contained little pottery, and could not be closely dated.

Ditch 3 (FIG. 5) had originally been V-shaped with a flat-bottomed trench nine inches wide at the apex; it had been about fifteen feet wide. Subsequently

¹ E. T. Leeds, *Oxoniensia*, 1 (1936), 7 ff.

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it had been filled in with clean material and covered with a layer of six inches of gravel. Later still the ditch had been recut just north of its previous line so as to leave the southern part of the old filling in position. The new ditch was round-bottomed about eleven feet wide and three feet nine inches deep. It contained a great quantity of Roman pottery, mostly early grey ware jars but including part of a butt-beaker in fine buff ware with two zones of rouletting, and a bit of a buff amphora handle. The recutting of this ditch was probably done in the second half of the first century A.D. : it will be seen from FIG. 3 that it runs eastwards to merge in the complex of big ditches at that end of the site. There was evidently a considerable development here early in the Roman

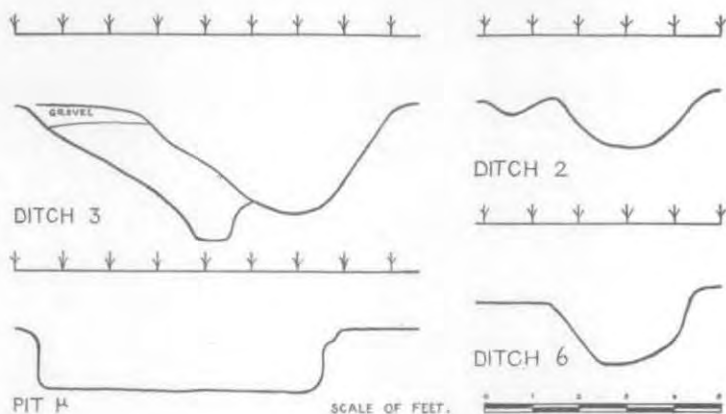


FIG. 5

PROFILES OF DITCHES AND PIT

occupation, but it is interesting to note that Ditch 3 at any rate was following the general course of a boundary marked by much earlier ditches.

Ditches 1, 2 and 3 were picked up again further west at point A on FIG. 3. Here Ditch 3, again apparent in two versions but of different section, bent south, and cut through Ditch 2, which again produced little evidence for its date and continued straight on. In Ditch 3 was a little Roman pottery and daub, part of the forehead bone of a male human skull, and, at a depth of three feet, a bronze penannular brooch (PLATE IVB, 1) with curled terminals, of Belgic type (see p. 39). Ditch 1 apparently ended immediately before reaching Ditch 3, a fact of some interest, for it suggests again that Ditch 3, though in its present form Roman, may be running on an older line. Ditch 1 here, as in the other section, produced Iron Age A wares from its lower levels, and is clearly the oldest

of these three associated ditches : it was probably out of use before the Roman period.

Ditch 4 lay south of the Large Circle and was either a continuation or a branch of Ditch 3, forming the southern boundary of the enclosure of which that ditch marks the north and west limits. It was sectioned south of the SW. corner of the haystack and was there apparently just coming to an end. It was steep-sided and round-bottomed, about three feet wide and three feet deep. Like Ditch 3 it was certainly of Roman date, producing, along with some earlier shards, a quantity of pieces of Roman grey wares.

Ditch 6 (FIG. 5) was a small shallow ditch two feet six inches wide and one foot eight inches deep. It pursued a north-westerly course from the inner lip of the Large Circle ditch on the south side, ran partly across the interior of the circle, then turned north-east at point C on FIG. 3 and disappeared under the south-west corner of the haystack, aiming straight for the centre of the circle. If it continued on this course it probably disturbed any Bronze Age interment that may once have been there. Ditch 6 produced a quantity of pottery mostly of A2 forms and of types showing C influence : see AII 2 and AII 4 (FIG. 8), AII 1 (FIG. 9 and PLATE IVA, 2), and AII 3 (FIG. 10) and also a curved cylindrical iron bar that might have been part of an Iron Age B or C fire-dog. A date late in the first century B.C. seems probable for it.

Ditch 7 was at the extreme east of the site (marked D on FIG. 3). An isolated section was cut here to test the character of the heavily marked ditch system in this part of the area. Ditch 7 had an irregular section with a sort of shelf on the north side : it was eight feet wide and three feet deep. It produced considerable quantities of Roman pottery, part of a glass bottle, an iron staple, and oyster shells. The pottery is mostly of early local grey ware jars with cordoned shoulders and girth grooves : of Iron Age types the only notable fragment is the rim of a handmade bead-rim bowl of C type. Ditch 7, seems to belong to the end of the first century A.D. ; and the same is probably true of the other strongly marked ditches nearby.

Ditch 8 ran south from Ditch 2, north-east of the Large Circle, traversed the group of Iron Age pits, and then swung south-eastwards to pass immediately south of the Little Circle. It was cut in several places and showed a variable section. East of the Little Circle it was about six feet wide and two feet three inches deep : south of the Little Circle it was only three feet wide, but two feet six inches deep, with a V-section (FIG. 4). A peculiarity of this ditch was that pottery fragments were invariably thickest in the top of its filling, and the lower levels were almost barren : in places the upper part of the filling appeared to be a regular occupation layer with a trodden surface. Although most of the pottery here was of A2 and later types it would seem possible that the ditch

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itself may be considerably earlier : it was at any rate filled up when the early Pit ϵ was still open, for a shard ϵ 17 (FIG. 6) from the bottom of this pit fitted another from the trodden surface over the filling of Ditch 8. Other shards illustrated from this ditch are D8 Bv 1 (FIG. 6) and, D8 Bv 3, D8 BII 6, and D8 BII 7 (FIG. 7).

The Little Circle Ditches immediately adjoin Ditch 8 and may be considered at this point. They consist of two ditches separated by only a foot of gravel, an outer ditch normally about two feet wide and from one foot ten inches to two feet ten inches deep, and a smaller inner ditch, less than two feet across and generally not more in depth, which was certainly the socket for the base of some kind of fencing or wattle-and-daub wall. On the south, where the two ditches run parallel to Ditch 8 for a space, their normal relationship is reversed, the outer ditch narrowing to eighteen inches, presumably to avoid encroaching on Ditch 8, while the inner ditch swells to something like a shallow elongated pit nearly three feet wide and two feet six inches deep (FIG. 4). Two post-holes fifteen inches across and a foot deep were found let into the southern edge of the inner ditch at this point : they belonged presumably either to the fence or more probably to some hut inside the circle which abutted on it at this point. Although the interior of the circle was examined with some care, no interment and no sign of hut floors or other occupation was found : the promising marks on the air-photograph being simply due to natural deposits of brick earth. It is, however, clear that the Little Circle was a special enclosure of some kind belonging to the Iron Age occupation and to a rather late date in it. Its great size—some 50 feet east to west by 40 feet north to south—makes it unlikely that it was roofed, but there was probably, as suggested above, a hut at the south side over the swollen inner ditch indicated by the two surviving post-holes and a quantity of A2 and later pottery which did not quite run down to the Roman period. Shards illustrated from this area are LCD BVI 1 (an A1 piece : FIG. 6) : LCD Bv 4 (FIG. 8), LCD BVIII 2 (FIG. 9) and LCD Bv 12, LCD Bv 6, LCD Bv 5 (FIG. 10). There was also an unusual quantity of pot-boilers and a number of pieces of slag, which on analysis proved to be the residuum left from the reduction of clay-ironstone in a charcoal furnace : the enclosure may therefore have been the dwelling and workshop of the village smith, always a person of consequence in the days when iron was still a rarity, and its working a 'mystery' of more than ordinary importance. The entrance to the enclosure was evidently on the west, where the circle ditches peter out.

Ditch 9 ran north from Pits δ and θ towards Pit η , but before reaching the latter it bifurcated and both branches ended. The ditch was only two feet deep and one foot nine inches across : its main interest lay in the fact that a line of fragments of daub from the base of a wattle-and-daub fence remained *in situ*

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down the centre of part of the western branch of it, thus indicating clearly the purpose which the ditch—and no doubt many others of the same small type—served. The upper levels of the ditch contained Iron Age C and early Roman pottery but no Flavian grey wares: amongst them were Biv 1, Biv 2, Biv 6 and Biv 3 (FIG. 10): there was also a small piece of a human skull. Ditch 9 was evidently part of the late occupation which included Pits δ and η (p. 23) and may be dated about the middle of the first century A.D.

Ditch 10 ran across the filling of the large circle ditch from the NW. near point B on Fig. 3. It then turned east and petered out a few feet south of the expanded section of the circle ditch. Its section was variable, but was normally three to four feet wide and two feet six inches to three feet deep: one section widened to six feet and had a flat bottom two feet six inches wide. Ditch 10 produced a great deal of pottery mostly of the last pre-Roman types: decadent A forms, and examples showing C influence: among those illustrated are AVII 2, AVII 9, AVII 16, AVII 27, 28, 29 (FIG. 10), AVII 38 (FIG. 8), AVII 24 (FIG. 6). There was also a pottery sling-bullet (AVII 8, FIG. 9), a bone weaving-comb (PLATE IVB, 3), some scraps of bronze, a polished bone rubber with perforated end, and some indeterminate pieces of red deer antler.

Ditch 10 provided the best group of material that was found to illustrate the cultural equipment of the site on the eve of the arrival of Roman commercial products.

THE PITS

The group of pits excavated all lay to the east or north-east of the Large Circle. They were of the type commonly found in the settlement sites of the Iron Age on gravel soil in the Oxford district; mostly round or oval in shape, not generally exceeding six feet in diameter or four feet in depth, and filled with soft grey occupation earth containing food bones, pottery and other débris. A few stake-holes from the wattle-and-daub huts which covered them were found in apparent association with one or two pits, but in no case was it possible to suggest from them a plausible reconstruction of the roof. To judge from their contents most of the pits excavated belong to the earlier part of the Iron Age occupation: it will be noticed that a considerably higher proportion of the A1 pieces illustrated come from the pits than from the ditches, and several of the former contained no post-A wares and were clearly filled and abandoned long before the Roman conquest. It would appear probable that as time went on the practice of digging pits in the gravel, which must always have been an unsatisfactory procedure, compared with their construction in the chalk country from which the earliest Iron Age people may have come, gave way to the use of flimsy huts on the surface of the ground, or in vaguely scraped hollows in it.

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The so-called Pit δ and the area enclosed by the ditches of the Little Circle may be the sites of such late dwellings.

Pit α (FIG. 4) was circular in shape, five feet six inches in diameter and three feet deep. There was an isolated post-hole a foot deep and a foot across on the edge on the SW. side. A few Romano-British shards were in the surface soil over the filling, which contained over a hundred fragments of Iron Age pottery among them α 6 (FIG. 7) α 7a (FIG. 6), α 8 (FIG. 8), α 9 (FIG. 9), α 16 (FIG. 8). There were also six roughly worked flint flakes, and on the floor the upper part of a triangular pierced loom-weight of baked clay. To judge from the absence of finger-tip wares and the presence of α 6 with its B associations, this was not one of the earliest pits.

Pit β was five feet N.-S., five feet nine inches E.-W. and two feet three inches deep. It contained eighty fragments of pottery and a few pot-boilers nearly all in the upper part of the filling. Among the pottery were β 2 and β 3 (FIG. 7), β 4 (FIG. 6) and β 12. The last joined a fragment from pit γ , and both pits seem early.

Pit γ (FIG. 4) was roughly circular in shape with a squared angle at the SE.; it was five feet six inches across and two feet ten inches deep. The southern part of the floor had been roughly paved with pebbles: on it lay a broken stone rubber, two pieces of daub with wattle marks and a polished bone. Part of the SE. wall had apparently been lined with brown clay which had disintegrated. The filling contained about a hundred fragments of Iron Age pottery and an oval flint scraper: among the pottery were γ 1 and γ 2 (FIG. 7) and γ 5, γ 9 and γ 10 (FIG. 8) suggesting an early date, but part of the filling had been disturbed by a later ditch which linked it with Pit δ and contained a few pieces of early Roman pottery.

Pit δ was not a true pit, but a slight hollow, some six feet across, with shelving sides reaching a maximum diameter in the centre of under two feet. In the NW. corner there had been a rough hearth, the gravel was burnt red, and burnt refuse and pot-boilers were scattered about. About thirty fragments of pottery occurred in the filling, about half of which were early Romano-British, the rest Iron Age. Pit δ was evidently a hut-site of the later part of the first century A.D.: connected with it was Ditch 9, which had cut away the west side of Pit δ ; the surface occupation over Pit α and north and west of it which produced BII 1 (FIG. 10) and a piece of imitation red Belgic butt beaker was also part of the same late complex.

Pit ϵ was oval in shape, five feet four inches N.-S., three feet ten inches E.-W. and three feet six inches deep with undercut sides. The filling contained about seventy-five pieces of Iron Age pottery, including ϵ 3 (FIG. 7), and had no sign of later disturbance. On the north side a small ditch led into a shallow annexe with shelving sides, about three feet across and two feet eight inches deep, and continued beyond it into Ditch 8.

Pit ζ was circular in shape, four feet nine inches in diameter and three feet deep. It contained only a very little indeterminate Iron Age pottery and food bones.

Pit η was roughly rectangular in shape, about five feet N.-S. by four feet E.-W. It had suffered much disturbance probably in Roman times from a ditch which entered it from the north, and contained nothing of interest.

Pit θ , as mentioned above, had been damaged on the west by the later Ditch 9 and had always been shallower than most of the early pits being only two feet deep. It had apparently been rectangular with rounded corners, five feet across N.-S., perhaps more E.-W. It had evidently been fenced with wattle-and-daub fencing carried

on light stakes, for three small stake-holes, averaging six inches across and four to six inches deep remained on the bank round its eastern side. The contents included parts of three early Romano-British vessels in the disturbed section, and more than a hundred pieces of Iron Age pottery in the untouched part, including δ 2 and δ 7 (FIG. 8) and δ 5 (FIG. 6) and a minute piece of hematite-coated ware, very unusual in the Oxfordshire Iron Age, and clearly indicating, like the rest of the contents, an A1 date.

Pit ι , north of the main group, was circular in shape, five feet six inches in diameter and two feet nine inches deep: a small ditch which divided into two branches led into it from the east. The upper part of the filling contained parts of two triangular perforated loom-weights, a flint core trimmed for a scraper, two worked flint flakes and about a hundred pieces of Iron Age pottery, mostly of A2 (La Tène II) type: ι 1 (FIG. 9), ι 6 (FIG. 6), ι 7 and ι 9 (FIG. 7) are illustrated. In the lower part of the filling, which included pot-boilers and burnt stones from a disturbed hearth, part of another loom-weight, and two worked flint flakes, were about 120 fragments of pottery including ι 11 (FIG. 8), ι 19 (FIG. 7) and ι 17 (FIG. 6), which suggest a rather earlier date for this part of the filling. It should be noted that a piece fitting ι 17 came from the trodden occupation surface over Ditch 8, suggesting that this ditch was already filled up when *Pit* ι was in use.

Pit κ lay inside the Large Circle against the eastern face of the haystack. It was of circular shape, five feet in diameter and two feet ten inches deep and the sides were markedly undercut. Two stake-holes from the wattle-and-daub wall of the hut which covered it were noticed, one on the northern edge, one on the south-western: both were four inches across and four and seven inches deep respectively. The top of the filling contained a deposit of ox bones and a lump of daub. Below were about seventy-five fragments of pottery, including κ 1 and κ 4 (FIG. 6), κ 12 (FIG. 7), κ 2 and κ 3 (FIG. 8), and a small piece of a bowl in hematite-coated ware; there was also the top of a pottery loom-weight with the perforation broken. Most of the pottery was of A1 and A2 types without later admixture, and the pit was probably an early one.

Pit λ (FIG. 4) close to *Pit* κ on the east, was circular, six feet in diameter, and three feet three inches deep, the sides being undercut. This pit had a special interest for it was dug partly in the natural gravel and partly in the stiff brown filling of the Large Circle ditch, thus confirming the view derived from other sections that the circle ditch was completely filled and entirely forgotten at an early stage in the Iron Age. The occupants of the pit were, however, conscious that part of it was dug in unusual material for they had apparently made an attempt to line the walls, where they were cut in the ditch filling, with grey clay, perhaps in an effort to keep out moisture. There were more than 170 pieces of pottery in the filling, mostly near the bottom, including λ 5, λ 7 (FIG. 7) and λ 6 and λ 16 (FIG. 8): in character the pottery was closely parallel to that from *Pit* κ , but with a greater preponderance of A2 (La Tène II) forms over the rougher A1 and A2. That the contents of the pit were all inserted at once was suggested by the occurrence of one piece of λ 5 near the bottom while another piece fitting it was only a foot below the turf.

Pit μ (FIG. 5) lay close to the two preceding, and had suffered somewhat from the collapse of its probably overhanging sides. It was rectangular in shape with rounded corners six feet to six feet three inches across and two feet six inches deep. A pottery

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spindle-whorl (μ 13 FIG. 9 and PLATE IVB, 2) lay on the floor: higher up was a curved piece of bronze wire perhaps from a bangle, and a rib of ox which had been highly polished. There were about eighty fragments of pottery mostly near the bottom including μ 1 (FIG. 7), μ 7 (FIG. 6), μ 8, μ 11, μ 17 (FIG. 8). This pit was clearly contemporary with Pits α and λ , but unlike Pit λ it contained more of the rougher A1 and A2 wares than of the A2 (La Tène II) burnished fabrics.

THE POTTERY

The Iron Age pottery found begins with forms characteristic of Iron Age A1 and the series continues with no obvious break through Iron Age A2 to examples showing the influence of the south-western B culture, and the two main varieties of Belgic (Iron Age C) ceramics. It would appear, however, from the persistence of old forms, and the absence of pure examples of these later styles that there was no radical alteration of the basic Iron Age A population at any point in the sequence: that population was subject to the influence of new fashions, but it was never disturbed to any appreciable extent by the sudden arrival of new settlers with a new culture. Even in the Roman period the appearance on the site of mass-produced commercial grey wares is clearer evidence for economic than for political changes in the life of the settlement. The Romano-British pottery has not been published here, for the reason that little systematic work was done on the Roman ditches, and a truly representative selection of forms could not in consequence be given. Most of the Roman pottery actually found appeared to belong to the first and second centuries: Samian and other fine imported wares were absent, and forms characteristic of the latter part of the Roman occupation were on the whole lacking. This was however, probably accidental: that part at least of the whole village complex north of Dorchester was still occupied in the fourth century is shown by the discoveries in Allen's gravel-pit recorded in last year's *Oxoniensia*.¹

The pottery illustrated in FIGS 6-10 gives a representative series of the Iron Age forms intended to show the evolution of the basic types and the growing influence of later fashions. No attempt has been made to give exhaustive references to parallel types except in a few cases of special interest: local examples have been taken where possible.

In Iron Age A1 the characteristic forms of the situliform jar and the carinated bowl, which occur on all sites of the period, are well represented (FIG. 6) No situliform jars of the earliest, sharply angled type, as found at Long Wittenham, and discussed elsewhere in this number,² turned up, but such have been

¹ *Oxoniensia*, 1 (1936), 81 ff.

² Above pp. 4 ff., and FIG. 2, 1-3.

recorded from the neighbouring site in Allen's gravel-pit.¹ Finger-tip ornament was employed as usual on the Mount Farm examples, but it was used rather sparingly: generally rather widely spaced on the shoulder and hardly at all on the rim (FIG. 6). Fragments of carinated bowls, mostly in smooth grey and black wares and unornamented were fairly common: as usual in the Oxford district hematite-coated examples were almost entirely absent. A characteristic feature of the site was the occurrence of the large cauldron-shaped vessels with exaggeratedly expanded flat-topped rims (FIG. 7). No complete section of one of these vessels was obtained, but it would appear that, like the situliform jars, they were pottery copies of bronze originals. Widely expanded flat-topped rims have occurred on neighbouring sites, such as Radley and Hinksey Hill,² belonging to wide-mouthed vessels of this type, but these have been undecorated. The Mount Farm examples normally have cabling or finger-tipping on the outer edge of the rim (FIG. 7) and it was observed that this was nearly always continuous and not widely spaced as in the use of this ornament here on the shoulders of the situliform jars. It is not clear whether this rather striking contrast in technique has any chronological importance.

The Iron Age A2 wares also call for some remark. The situliform jar passes through the usual stages of degradation, and finger-tip ornament goes out of use. Dr. Wheeler has made this loss of ornament one of the standard criteria for differentiating A2 from A1³: but on a site like this, where ornament on these vessels seems at all times to have been sparing, its occasional omission altogether need have no great typological or chronological significance. Thus it would seem unlikely that an undecorated vessel like μ 8 (FIG. 8), which retains a sharp-shouldered outline and comes from a pit full of early wares, can well be later than an example like AVII 24 (FIG. 6) which, though finger-tipped, not only has a more sagging profile but was found in association with later pottery.

But along with these decadent situliform jars occur also the straight-sided or barrel-shaped pots and wide-mouthed bowls with rounded, swollen or 'incipient bead' rims generally made of smoothed or burnished ware. It is customary to regard these as directly descended from the A1 jars, though the 'incipient bead' rim may be allowed to indicate Iron Age B influence. It would seem desirable however to distinguish the direct but decadent A2 tradition (represented here by such vessels in rough fabric as A1 17, FIG. 8 and PLATE IVA, 1) from the bowl-forms with rounded rims in the smooth or burnished

¹ *Antiquaries Journal*, xv (1935), pl. VIII: several others have been found since and will be published later.

² *Antiquaries Journal*, xi (1931), LT 3, 8, 9: 25, 52, etc.: *Journal of British Archaeological Association*, xxxvi, fig. 5, 19 and p. 378. See also Long Wittenham, FIG. 2, nos. 17 and 18, above.

³ *Antiquaries Journal*, xv (1935), 274.

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ware which it was once customary to describe as La Tène II. That the two types were in use simultaneously in the Oxford district seems certain from their constant association on sites like Radley, Hinksey Hill and that which is the subject of this report, but it is precisely this constant association which makes it difficult to regard them as typologically in the same line of development. Even if many hybrid types occur, the existence of two traditions is clear from a glance at the two vessels illustrated on PLATE IVA.

In the case of the bowls and straight-sided pots, we seem to be in the presence of a different line of development from the direct A2 of Oxfordshire, and one which the new nomenclature of Iron Age A, B, and C, appropriate as it may be in Dorset, makes it difficult to distinguish satisfactorily in the Oxford district. We cannot use the term AB for these vessels so long as B is applied primarily to the purely immigrant culture of the south-west, as shown for example at Glastonbury and Meare. There is no reason to believe that the soapy, burnished wares which used to be called La Tène II in Hants. or Wilts. have anything directly to do with the exotic Glastonbury B culture; they may well be, as was claimed by Hawkes and the present writer in dealing with pottery from St. Catharine's Hill, Winchester,¹ a purely indigenous development in southern Wessex, but where, as in Oxfordshire, the old A traditions died harder, they appear alongside of the latter's representatives, and the relation between them needs further investigation. What is wanted meanwhile is some means of distinguishing the two traditions in nomenclature: to label as A2 both the pots on PLATE IVA, as on the present A-B-C scheme we are bound to do, is obviously quite inadequate,² for it is calling two different things by the same name. In the detailed descriptions of the pottery which follow the words 'La Tène II' have been added in brackets to those A2 pieces which do not appear to be simple and direct derivatives of the local Iron Age A1. Most of these are on FIG. 9.

Nothing need be said of the few pieces showing direct B or C influence. It may however be noticed that in the sites excavated there was a fairly clear break between the latter and the Roman wheel-made grey wares. These were hardly ever found in ditches containing the Belgicised fabrics of the last pre-Roman age, nor did the granulated and smooth brown wares predominant at

¹ *St. Catharine's Hill, Winchester* (1930), pp. 120-22, and for the special features of these wares the footnote to p. 92.

² The difficulty is brought out by the publication of the Southcote site near Reading (*Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 1937, 43-57). The pottery here is, to judge from the pictures, almost wholly of what used to be called La Tène II types. Yet the authors are bound to claim it as 'late Iron Age A' even though it contains little or nothing to suggest a direct link with the high-shouldered urns or the fabrics typical of A in its earlier phases. If this is 'late Iron Age A,' it is so in quite a different sense from the vessels here illustrated in the top row of Fig. 8.

this time survive in use much after their arrival, for they do not occur in any quantity in ditches containing the Roman grey wares. This would seem to imply a rather sudden appearance of Roman commercial pottery on the site, but it would take a good deal more investigation than was possible in 1933 to determine at all accurately the date at which this change occurred. It was in all probability sometime in the early Flavian period.

FIG. 6. *Decorated situliform vessels: carinated bowl, etc.*

- ♂ 5 Upstanding rim and shoulder of roughly made situliform vessel in grey ware, with line of widely spaced finger-tipping on the shoulder. Diam. of rim 6.5 ins. Pit ♂. Typical of the local A1.
- × 1 Upstanding rim and shoulder of decadent situliform vessel in hard coarse ware, grey above, buff below: surface finished with rough combing, horizontal on the shoulder, vertical below: finger-tipping widely spaced on the sloping shoulder. Diam. of rim 4.6 ins. Pit ×, upper part of filling. Typical of the local A1.
- AVII 24 Upstanding rim and shoulder of situliform vessel in smoothish grey ware rather roughly made: spaced finger-tipping on the shoulder. Diam. of rim 4.7 ins. Ditch 10, near the bottom. Typical of the local A1.
- ♂ 17 Flat-topped, rounded rim and hollow neck of coarse reddish-grey ware: line of diagonal jabs on the outer edge of the rim. Diam. of rim 7.8 ins. Two pieces fitting, one from near the floor of Pit 1, the other from occupation surface over the filling of Ditch 8, about 50 feet away.
- β 4 Thickened and rounded rim and hollow neck in thick dark grey sandy ware: finger-tip on the decadent shoulder. Pit β, upper part of filling.
- LCD BVI 1 Flat-topped rim and shoulder of situliform vessel in hard smooth ware with dark brown surface: large finger-tip on the shoulder. Little Circle, upper part of filling of inner ditch. In this and the previous shard the shoulder is almost eliminated, as in the vessel from Chastleton Camp (*Antiq. Journ.*, XI (1931), 386, fig. 1).
- μ 7 Flat-topped rim and shoulder of situliform vessel in rough grey-brown smoky ware with spaced finger-tipping on the shoulder. Diam. of rim 6.5 ins. Pit μ, near the bottom. Typical of the local A1.
- × 4 Neck and shoulder of large situliform vessel in very coarse gritty ware, red above shoulder, brown below: surface erratically combed, line of large finger-tips widely spaced on the shoulder. Pit ×, upper part of filling. Typical of the local A1.
- D8 Bv 1 Upper part of carinated bowl in soft brown ware. Diam. of rim 5.6 ins. Ditch 8, filling. Not perhaps of the earliest type: see Long Wittenham, above, FIG. 2, nos. 7-9.
- α 7 a. Fragment of base angle in sandy ware, buff outside, grey inside: horizontal zone of herring-bone jabs. Pit α, upper part of filling. For the decoration cp. *St. Catharine's Hill, Winchester*, fig. 14, R17, and the parallel from Hollingbury Sussex, quoted *ibid.*, p. 119.

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- 6 Fragment of neck in smooth grey sandy ware, with applied band in hollow angle decorated with line of dots. Pit 1, upper part of filling. Finger printing on applied band on the neck is a Late Bronze Age or Iron Age A characteristic, see *St.*

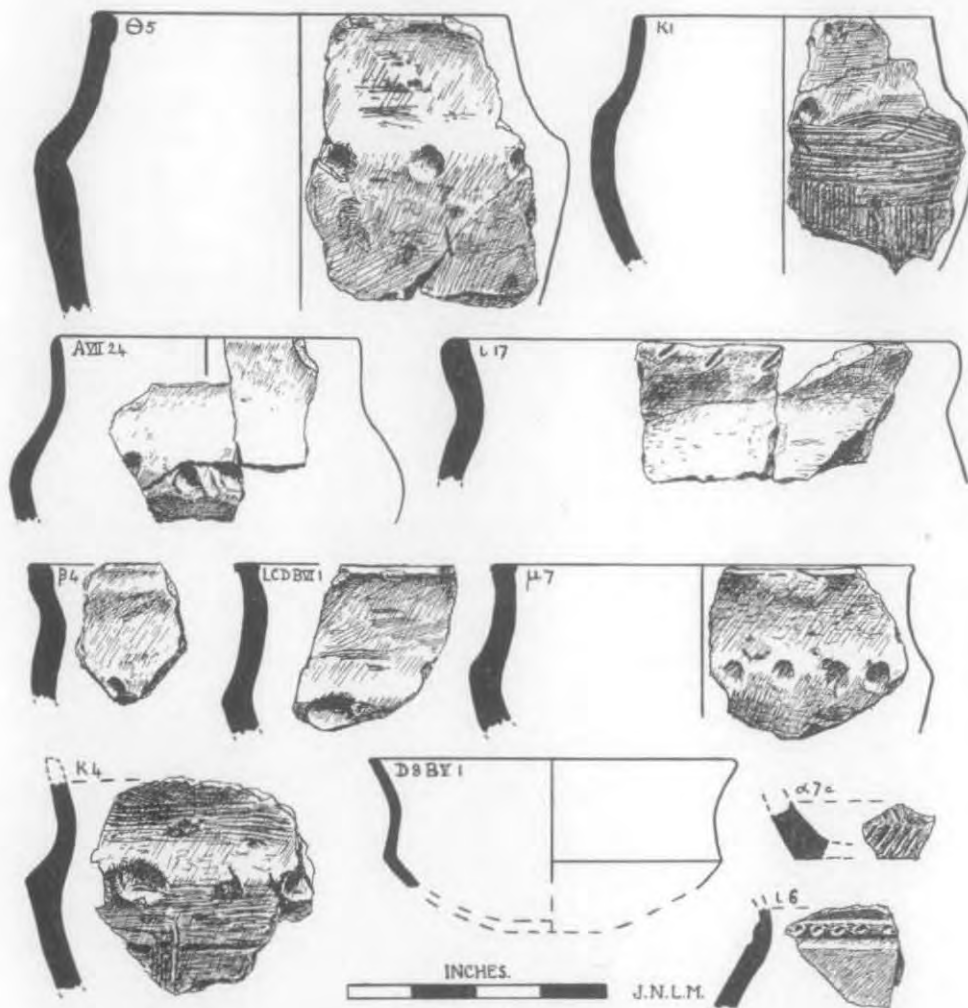


FIG. 6

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM MOUNT FARM, DORCHESTER, OXON.

Catharine's Hill, Winchester, p. 105, and seems to die out early. Here the technique is more like that of the soft tooling typical of A2 (La Tène II) wares, and the finger-tips have been replaced by dots.

FIG. 7. *Cauldrons and bowls with swollen rims : handles : decorated fragments.*

- γ 1 Wide flat-topped rim and side of large cauldron-shaped vessel in hard dark brown gritty ware : line of finger-tips on the outer edge of the rim. Diam. of rim 17 ins. Two pieces fitting, one from upper filling of Pit γ, the other from surface between Pits α and β. For the types of this and the next eight shards see the introductory remarks (p. 26) and parallels from Radley and Hinksey Hill there mentioned.
- λ 5 Wide flat-topped rim and side of large cauldron-shaped vessel in hard brown ware : the rim very much overhung internally and externally with cabling on outer edge. Diam. of rim just under 12 ins. Pit λ, near the bottom.
- A1 9 Flat-topped knob rim of straight-sided vessel in shelly brown ware : line of finger-tipping on outer edge of the rim. Ditch 1, near the bottom.
- μ 1 Flat-topped swollen rim of straight-sided vessel in red-grey smooth sandy ware : light cabling on outer edge of rim. Pit λ, upper part of filling.
- β 3 Flat-topped swollen rim of straight-sided vessel in coarse brown ware : the rim is much thickened internally and has a moulded outer edge. Pit β, upper part of filling.
- ε 3 Flat-topped swollen rim probably of cauldron-shaped vessel in hard coarse ware, buff inside, sooty grey-black outside : continuous finger-tipping on outer edge of rim. Pit ε, lower part of filling.
- × 12 Flat-topped swollen rim in hard buff-brown ware : the rim has considerable internal thickening, and is cabled on the outer edge. Pit ×, near the bottom.
- γ 2 Flat-topped swollen rim in hard dark brown gritty ware : the rim is much swollen internally and has cabling on the outer edge above a well defined ridge. Pit γ, upper part of filling.
- D8 Bv 3 Flat-topped swollen rim, cabled externally and with pronounced internal swelling. Ditch 8, filling.
- β 2 Wide flat-topped rim of cauldron-shaped vessel in coarse brown ware : the rim has marked internal overhang, and cabling on outer edge. Pit β, upper part of filling.
- D8 BII 6 Flat-topped rim with sharp internal overhang in coarse gritty brown-grey ware. Ditch 8, filling. Cp. Radley (*Antiq. Journ.*, xi (1931), 401, 54 and LT 3).
- A1 8 Well moulded swollen rim with smoothed and hollowed neck in coarse shelly brown ware. Ditch 1, near the bottom.
- λ 7 Part of the side of a large vessel of brown ware with highly burnished surface : decorated with two deeply impressed circular lines. Pit λ, on the bottom. For the form cp. Long Wittenham, above, FIG. 2, no. 2.
- A1 12 Part of rounded shoulder of a burnished red bowl, decorated with an all-over basketry pattern. Ditch 1, near the bottom. For the decoration cp. Long Wittenham, above, FIG. 2, no. 16.
- + Part of neck and shoulder of a vessel of hard smooth grey ware, brown surface, ornamented with two deep lines in the sharp angle of the neck above a pattern of dimples and diagonal lines on the sloping shoulder. Surface find. Large dimples associated with finger-nail ornament have occurred locally on the carinated shoulders of the earliest situliform vessels from Allen's gravel-pit (*Antiq. Journ.*, xv (1935), pl. viii : but this shard rather suggests Iron Age B decoration in a simplified form, e.g., *Glastonbury Lake Village*, II, pl. LXXI, P. 15a.

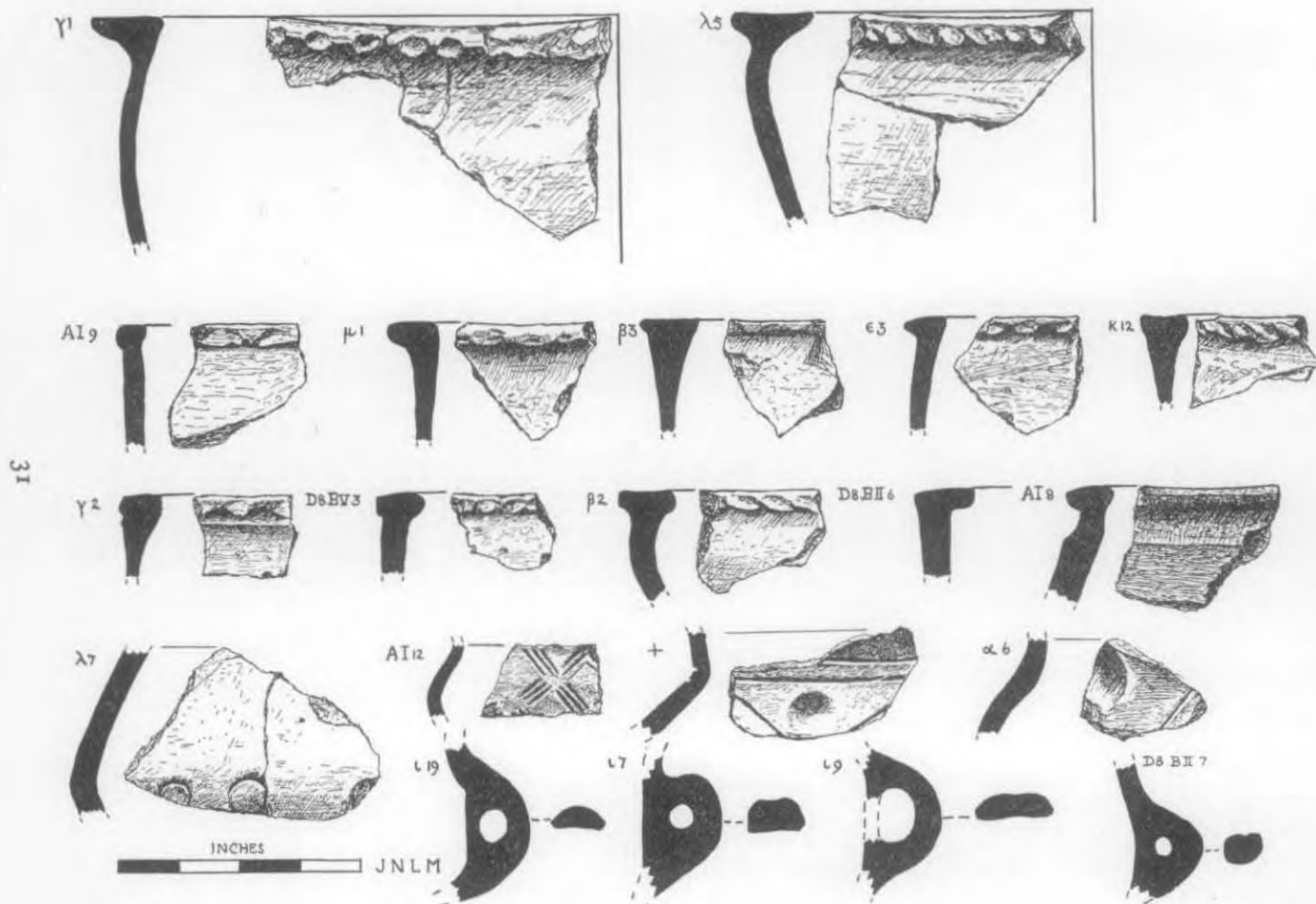


FIG. 7

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM MOUNT FARM, DORCHESTER, OXON.

- α 6 Part of the neck of a vessel of hard dark ware with smoothed surface: decorated like the previous shard with dimples and diagonal lines. Pit α, upper part of filling. See comment on the previous shard. Perhaps *Glastonbury Lake Village*, II, pl. LXXX, P. 264 is the closest parallel here.
- ι 19 Horizontally pierced lug-handle in heavy dark ware. Pit ι, near the bottom.
- ι 7 Horizontally pierced lug-handle, slightly ribbed, in heavy dark ware. Pit ι, upper part of filling.
- ι 9 Horizontally pierced handle in dark sandy ware with buff surfaces. Pit ι, upper part of filling.
- D8 BII 7 Horizontally pierced lug-handle, ribbed, in thick grey ware. Ditch 8, filling. None of these handles is of the true countersunk type regarded by Dr. Wheeler as characteristic of Iron Age B. The pots to which they belonged would have been something like the Hunsbury vessels, *Arch. Journ.*, xciii (1936), 81, fig. 8, L1, L2 and L3 (pl. xiv).

FIG. 8. *Undecorated situliform vessels: carinated bowls: bases.*

- μ 8 Rounded rim, shoulder and base of plain situliform vessel in soft buff ware. Height about 6 ins.: diam. of rim 5.5 ins. Pit μ, near the bottom. An unusually angular profile for an undecorated jar.
- AI 17 (PLATE IVA, 1) Decadent situliform vessel in rough brown ware. Height 5.5 ins.: diam. of rim 4.5 ins. The form of this pot is typical of the final degradation which the unbroken tradition of the Iron Age A situliform vessel achieved in the Oxford district before the Roman conquest. For the form cp. Radley (*Antiq. Journ.*, xv (1935), pl. VII, 3b).
- κ 2 High tapering rim of carinated bowl in smooth ware with black burnished surfaces. Diam. of rim, about 7.5 ins. Pit κ, upper part of filling.
- β 7 High tapering rim and shoulder of crisply finished round shouldered vessel in fine hard red ware with burnished surfaces. Diam. of rim about 7.5 ins. Pit β, filling. The round shouldered vessel with high flaring rim must be distinguished from the normal carinated bowl. Here as at Radley and other neighbouring sites it is not at all so common as the latter, but cp. Park Brow, Sussex (*Arch. LXXVI*, Fig. 5, p. 17).
- γ 10 High tapering rim and shoulder of sharply carinated bowl in hard smooth grey ware. Diam. of rim about 8½ ins. Two pieces fitting, one from Pit γ lower part of filling, the other from Pit β, lower part of filling. An unusually large example of its type: perhaps not a bowl but a jar.
- μ 11 Neck and sharply carinated shoulder of bowl in black burnished ware. Pit μ, lower part of filling. Cp. Long Wittenham, above, FIG. 2, no. 6.
- λ 6 Neck and carinated shoulder of bowl in black burnished ware. Diam. of carination about 6.5 ins. Pit λ, lower part of filling.
- λ 16 Neck and sharp shoulder of heavy vessel in black burnished ware. Diam. of shoulder about 11 ins. Pit λ, lower part of filling. The form and fabric are similar to those of the carinated bowls, but the vessel seems too large and heavy for the normal type. It was probably a sharp-shouldered, wide mouthed situliform jar, with a rim more like ι 17 (FIG. 6).

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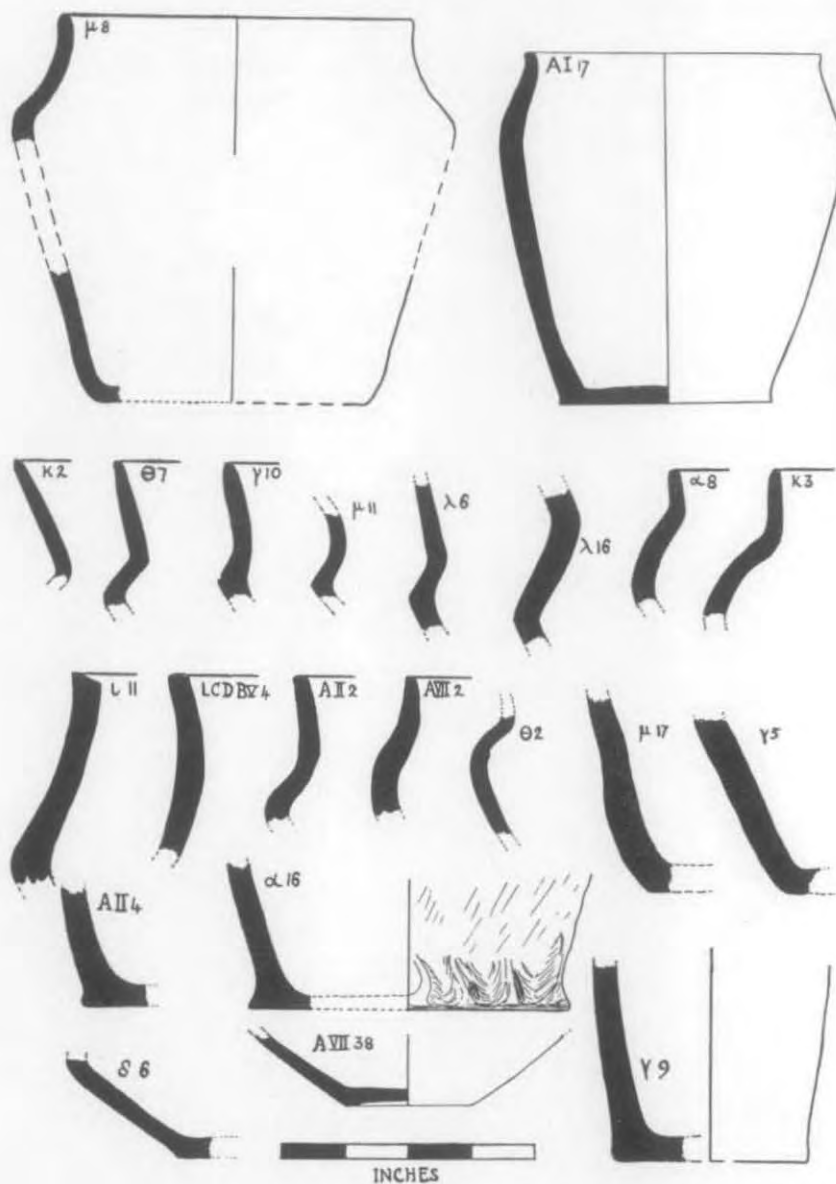


FIG. 8

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM MOUNT FARM, DORCHESTER, OXON.

- α 8 Upright rounded rim and rounded shoulder of large decadent round-shouldered bowl in hard dark ware, with horizontal black burnish. Diam. of rim about 9 ins. Pit α, middle part of filling. In this late variety of the round-shouldered bowl the rim is short and vertical, and the shoulder much more sloping than in such vessels as β 7 on this fig.
- * 3 Tapering upright rim and rounded shoulder of large vessel in rather coarse ware, perhaps once burnished, black outside, buff-grey inside. Diam. of rim about 8.5 ins. Pit *, upper part of filling. Type perhaps similar to α 8, but it may be a variety of the situliform jar.
- ι 11 Flat-topped tilted rim and shoulder of large roughly made situliform vessel in coarse brown gritty ware. Pit ι, lower part of filling.
- LCD Bv 4 Plain rim of large situliform vessel in dark grey shelly ware. Diam. of rim about 12 ins. Little Circle, upper filling of inner ditch.
- AII 2 Rim and shoulder of situliform vessel, roughly made in reddish sandy ware. Ditch 6, filling. This and the two preceding shards are of types very common in the A2 villages of Wessex: see, e.g., Swallowcliffe Down (*Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, XLIII, pls. IV and V).
- AVII 2 Rim and rounded shoulder of decadent situliform vessel in grey corky ware. Ditch 10, upper part of filling. This shard illustrates the persistence of the decadent situliform shape to the end of Iron Age times in Oxfordshire. It occurs here in association with wares reminiscent of Iron Age C and in a fabric similar to them: Ditch 10, in which it was found, belongs probably to the first century A.D. (see p. 22). For the form cp. A1 17 on this fig.
- β 2 Rounded shoulder of small bowl in smooth dark grey ware. Diam. of shoulder 5 ins.: Pit β, filling.
- μ 17 Rounded base angle, with bulging wall above, in rough ware, red outside grey inside. Diam. of base about 6 ins. Pit μ, lower part of filling. For the form cp. μ 8 on this fig.
- γ 5 Rounded base angle of heavy vessel in grey brown sandy ware: outer surface has rough vertical tooling. Diam. of base about 5 ins. Pit γ, surface.
- AII 4 Well made base angle, with external spread, of heavy vessel in smooth brownish ware. Diam. of base about 7 ins. Ditch 6, filling.
- α 16 Base angle with external spread, roughly finger-printed above: rough red sandy ware. Diam. of base 5 ins. Pit α, near the bottom. Finger-printing on the base is commoner in the Middle Ages than in the Early Iron Age, but this is a certain instance of its use on an Iron Age A form.
- γ 9 Squarish base angle in dark grey corky ware. Diam. of base, 3 ins. Pit γ, upper part of filling.
- δ 8 Base of grey-black vessel, handmade, showing influence of Belgic or early Roman technique. Diam. of base, 1.25 ins. Pit δ, upper part of filling.
- AVII 38 Base angle of dark grey smooth ware, hand-made, showing attempt at a foot-ring: probably imitating Belgic or early Roman technique. Diam. of base 2 ins. Ditch 10, near the bottom.

FIG. 9. Iron Age A2 types: *spindle-whorl*: *sling-bullet*.

- α 9 Flat-topped rim bent over and projecting internally: hard sandy ware, brownish red. Diam. of rim about 8 ins. Pit α, middle part of filling. Cp. D8 BII 6 (FIG. 7).

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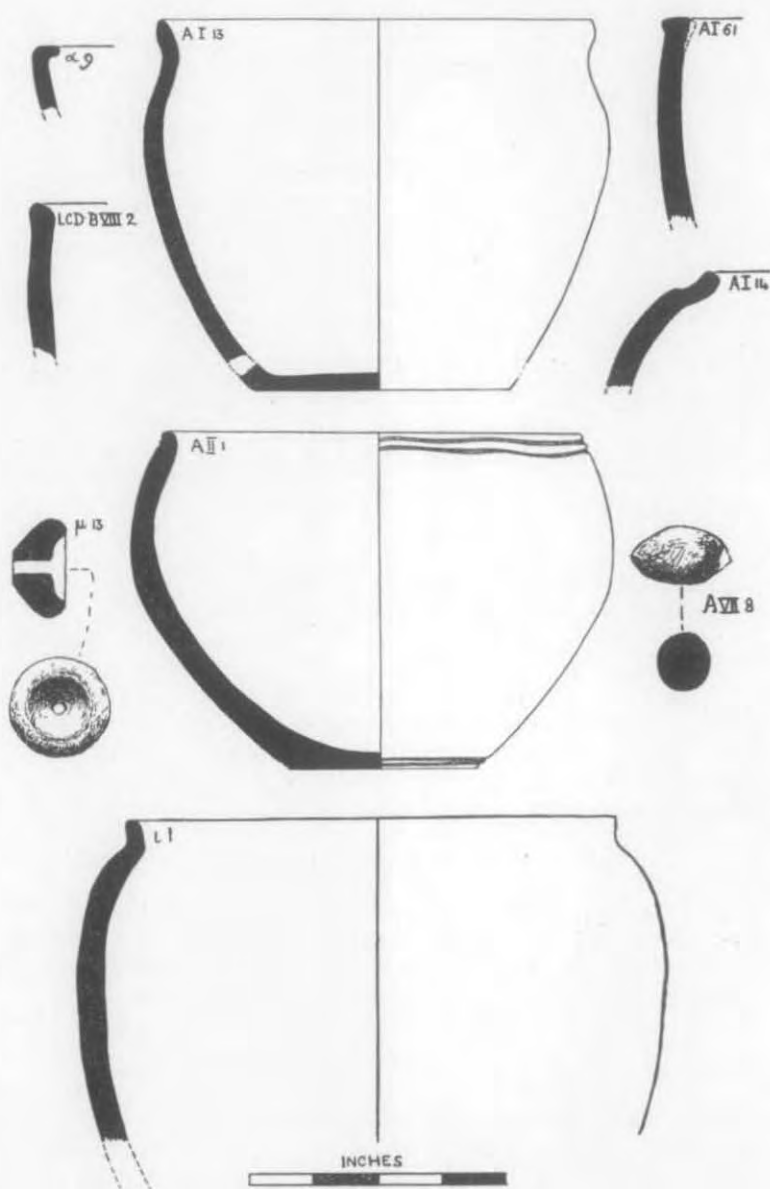


FIG. 9

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM MOUNT FARM, DORCHESTER, OXON.

- LCD BVIII 2 Slightly swollen rounded rim of straight-sided bucket-shaped vessel in red sandy ware (the colour may be due to the shard having been burnt after breakage). Diam. of rim about 10 ins. Post-hole outside Little Circle Ditch. The form is typical of the A2 (La Tène II) of Hants. and Berks. See *St. Catharine's Hill, Winchester*, figs. 13 and 14. Southcote, Reading, *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* (1937), figs. 4, 8.
- AI 13 Greater part of wide mouthed vessel with slightly everted rim in dark smooth ware with burnished surface. Height 5.75 ins. Diam. of rim 6.75 ins. Ditch 1 near the bottom. The form is typical of A2 in Oxfordshire and Berks. Hinksey Hill, fig. 5, 5. Southcote, Reading, fig. 6, H1.
- AI (b) 1 Rim and side of barrel-shaped vessel in dark corky ware: 'incipient bead rim' but flat-topped and has had a pronounced internal overhang which has flaked off. Diam. of rim about 10 ins.: gravelly upper filling of Large Circle Ditch about 2 feet down. The barrel form and rim are typical of the La Tène II (A2) of Hants. and Berks., see *St. Catharine's Hill, Winchester*, figs. 13 and 14: Southcote, Reading, fig. 4, 12.
- AI 14 Inturned rounded rim of globular vessel in rough black ware. Ditch 1 near the bottom. This looks as if it were a native imitation of Belgic bead rim types.
- AII 1 (PLATE IVA, 2) Wide mouthed bowl in smooth grey ware: two horizontal tooled lines under the rounded rim, and two more at the base. Height 5.25 ins. Diam. of rim 6.5 ins. Ditch 6, filling. The form is typical of the A2 (La Tène II) of Hants. and Berks. See *St. Catharine's Hill, Winchester*, fig. 14, R3: for tooled lines at the base on pots of this period, *ibid.*, fig. 13, Ar 19.
- 1 Upper part of wide mouthed jar with short rounded rim and globular body: black burnished ware. Diam. of rim 7.5 ins. Pit 1, upper part of filling. A2 form: cp. Hinksey Hill, fig. 5, 49: Southcote, Reading, fig. 6, 3.
- μ 13 (PLATE IVB, 2) Conical spindle-whorl with countersunk base in smooth brown grey ware. Pit μ, on the bottom. This type occurs in late Hallstatt and Early La Tène associations in Baden and Württemberg and persists to La Tène III in the Rhineland. In England it is definitely rare: the nearest parallel is from the Iron Age A settlement at Park Brow, Sussex (*Archaeologia*, LXXVI, 19, fig. H). The bulk of the numerous spindle-whorls from such prolific sites as All Cannings Cross and Glastonbury are quite unlike this form.¹
- AVII 8 Pointed oval sling-bullet in reddish ware. Length 1.5 ins. Width .9 ins. Ditch 10, upper part of filling. For the form, but in chalk, cp. Swallowcliffe Down (*Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, XLIII, pl. XIII, D3), in pottery, *Glastonbury Lake Village*, II, pl. XC, and pp. 562-7, where the subject is discussed at length.

FIG. 10. *Vessels influenced by Iron Age B, C and Roman types.*

- LCD BV 12 Slightly everted moulded rim, hollow neck and squarish shoulder of vessel in smooth grey-brown ware with soapy burnish: it has apparently been decorated with curvilinear rippling, and there are two faint horizontal lines under the rim. Diam. of rim 5 ins. Little Circle, filling of inner ditch. The curvilinear design seems to imply influence of the SW. Iron Age B culture: and the technique, though unusual, is somewhat like that on Hengistbury, pl. xv, 3 and xxviii, 46.

¹ I owe the substance of this note to the kindness of Mr. H. N. Savory.

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This suggests a link with the 'eyebrow' decoration common in Iron Age B at Maiden Castle (*Antiquaries Journal*, xvi (1936), 269, fig. 2, 5), but this normally

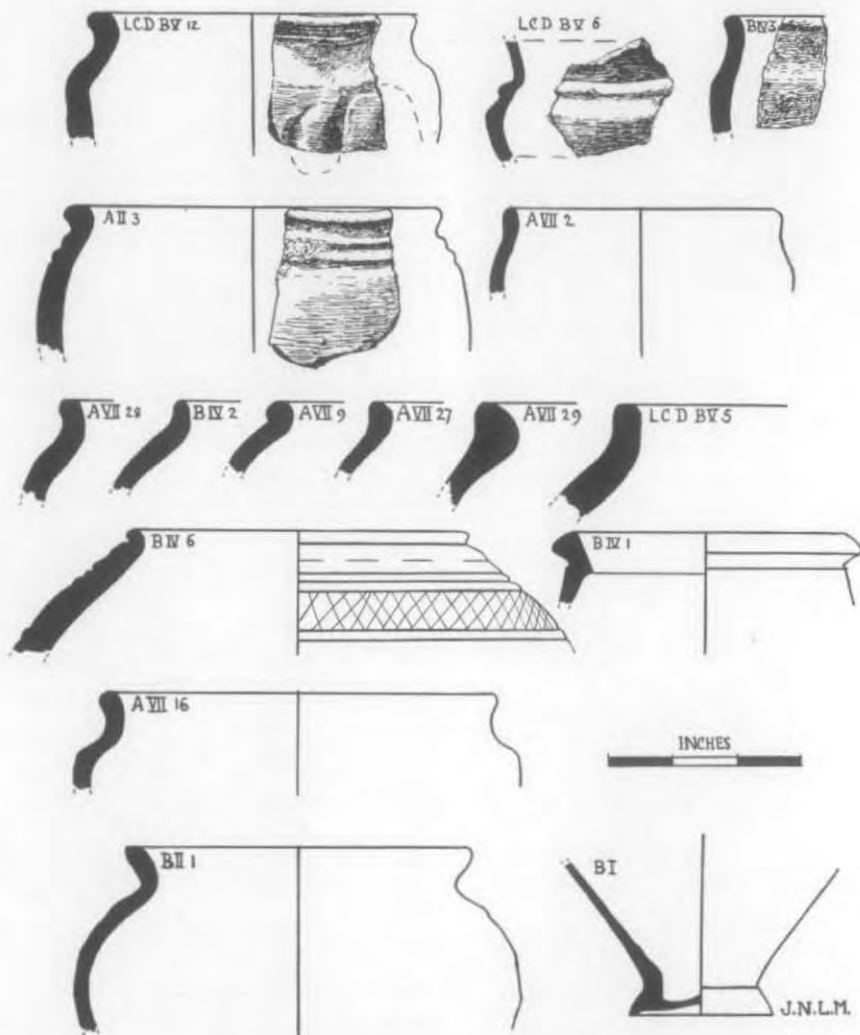


FIG. 10

IRON AGE AND ROMAN POTTERY FROM MOUNT FARM,
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occurs on pots of bead rim type. For the form of our vessel Sussex parallels are closer, e.g., Kingston Buci, Class D.32 (*Suss. Arch. Coll.*, LXXII, 202), and the

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- pencilled festoon decoration on such pots may have influenced the ornament, though its technique is entirely different. At any rate the shard shows Iron Age B influence from whatever point of the compass it came.
- LCD Bv 6 Neck and rather sharp shoulder of hand-made vessel in grey ware with burnished buff-brown surface: on the shoulder a rather indifferent cordon. Little Circle, surface of inner ditch. A very similar sherd in a closely parallel fabric occurred in the pre-Roman level at Hinksey Hill (*Journal of the Brit. Arch. Ass.*, xxxvi, fig. 5, 13 and p. 380). Both the cordon and the fabric (many of the Swarling vessels have their surfaces smoothed or washed in a different colour from the interior) suggest Iron Age C (Belgic) influence, and it may belong to the early first century A.D. Cp. Southcote, Reading, fig. 7, 5W, 1.
- BIV 3 Hand-made rim in rough brown ware, perhaps imitating a Belgic or early Roman jar rim. Ditch 9, north of Pit 5. Cp. Southcote, Reading, fig. 4, 7.
- API 3 Beaded rim and rippled shoulder of hand-made vessel in black smooth ware. Diam. of rim 5.75 ins. Ditch 6, filling. This form with rippled shoulder is typical of the earlier Iron Age C (Belgic) wares occurring, e.g., at Wheathampstead but not at Verulamium (Wheeler, *Verulamium*, pl. XLIX, 8 and p. 149). The rippled shoulder is sometimes locally associated with curvilinear ornament of B type. Cp. Southcote, Reading, fig. 7, 3W, 4.
- AVII 2 Hand-made rounded rim, slightly swollen, in grey corky ware. Diam. of rim 4.2 ins. Surface of Ditch 10. Cp. Hinksey Hill, fig. 5, 49.
- AVII 28 Slightly everted moulded rim in grey ware with black polish. Ditch 10, filling. Cp. Cassington (*Antiq. Journ.*, xv (1935), fig. 2, g and h).
- BIV 2 Short bevelled rim of large globular vessel in black burnished ware. Ditch 9, north of Pit 5. Approaching the Belgic bead rim type: and cp. 1 on FIG. 9.
- AVII 9 Bead rim of wheel-made vessel of soft dark ware with soapy finish outside. Ditch 10, surface. This fabric seems to have been common here immediately before the appearance of Romano-British wheel-made grey wares: it was mostly used for hand-made vessels showing Belgic influence: see also note below on AVII 16.
- AVII 27 Slightly swollen rounded rim in smooth grey ware, hand-made. Ditch 10, filling. See note on next shard.
- AVII 29 Rounded rim with considerable internal swelling in rough granulated ware, black outside, buff inside. Ditch 10, filling. Rims with pronounced internal swelling are characteristic of the La Tène II (Wheeler's A2) in Wessex: cp. *St. Catharine's Hill, Winchester*, fig. 14, R3 and remarks thereon, *ibid.*, p. 118: Southcote, Reading, fig. 4, 2 and 12.
- LCD Bv 5 Short rounded rim of heavy vessel in hard sandy grey ware with brown outer surface. Little Circle, surface of inner ditch. The fabric is approaching Romano-British, but the vessel is of native form and hand-made.
- BIV 6 Rim and side of large globular vessel in grey ware with smoked brown outer surface: it is apparently wheel-made with bead rim and two zones of low cordons separated by a zone of roughly scratched trellis-pattern. Diam. of rim, 5.2 ins. Ditch 9, filling. This type of bead rim bowl is apparently Claudian-Flavian in date.
- BIV 1 Rim of an imitation red Belgic butt beaker. Diam. of rim 4 ins. Ditch 9, north of Pit 5. This type of butt beaker may be rather after the Roman conquest.

MOUNT FARM, DORCHESTER, OXON.

- AVII 16 Slightly everted rim, hollow neck, and squarish shoulder of a roughly wheel-made jar in grey granulated ware, smoked outside, with a soapy burnish on the outer edge of the rim. Diam. of rim 6 ins. Ditch 10, surface. For the form cp. Selsey Bill (*Antiq. Journ.*, xiv (1934), fig. 6, 2). Probably early Romano-British in date: this granulated fabric occurs freely on this site in the period immediately preceding the appearance of Romano-British wheel-made grey wares.
- BII 1 Everted rim and shoulder of roughly wheel-made jar in smoky grey granulated ware. Diam. of rim 5.2 ins. Early Romano-British occupation surface between Pits α and ϵ . See note on AVII, 16, above.
- BI Romano-British wheel-made pedestal base in grey ware. Ditch 7. Apparently reminiscent of the Belgic tradition.

SMALL OBJECTS¹

Bronze Penannular Brooch (PLATE IVB, 3). Ditch 3, filling.

The general type, with rolled-over terminals, is characteristic of La Tène III in Britain; several occur at Glastonbury (*Glastonbury Lake Village*, I, pls. XLII and XLIV), but all have the terminals curled over on the same plane as the ring, and sometimes more than once.

The Mount Farm type, with the terminals curled over at right angles to the plane of the ring, seems to be characteristic of the Iron Age C cultures as defined by Hawkes, for it occurs at Rotherley (Pitt Rivers, *Excavations*, II, pl. CII, 15), Prae Wood, St. Albans (*Antiquity*, VI, 141, fig. 4, 1) and Richborough (*First Report*, p. 45, pl. xv, 26).

The post-Claudian examples, e.g., Wroxeter (1914 *Report*, pl. xvi, 14), and various ones from Scotland (*Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, LXX, 124) develop peculiarities of decoration which distinguish them from the simple Iron Age C and Claudian types cited above.

Bone Weaving-comb. (PLATE IVB, 1). Ditch 10, filling.

As the classification of the British Iron Age weaving combs depends (1) upon the form of the handle; (2) upon the decoration, if any, little can be said about the affinities of this example, which is undecorated and has lost its handle: the gently curving blade is quite characteristic. Glastonbury and All Cannings Cross are the sites which have produced most examples; the nearest site to Mount Farm to produce several is Hunsbury (*Arch. Journ.*, xciii, pl. viii).

¹ The notes on the penannular brooch and the weaving-comb have been kindly supplied by Mr. H. N. Savory.

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ANIMAL BONES

Mr. J. A. Moy Thomas was good enough to supply a report on a quantity of animal bones recovered from the pits and ditches, most of which were in very fragmentary condition. From the Iron Age levels he was able to identify bones of Ox, Pig, Sheep or Goat, Dog, Horse, Red Deer and Rabbit (the latter possibly intrusive). The Roman levels produced mainly Ox and Sheep or Goat, but less material was available for this period. The bones were too fragmentary for any conclusions to be drawn as to the breeds of the domestic animals represented.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The result of the excavations was to show an occupation beginning in the Bronze Age and continuing to the Roman period. The evidence for a sharp break in continuity between the Bronze Age, to which the Large Circle must belong, and the earliest phase of the Iron Age was as clear as that for the unbroken occupation throughout the Iron Age and early Roman times. In Iron Age A the digging of pits was more usual than later on, and this may be taken to support the view that the A settlers were familiar with conditions on the chalk downs of southern England. Considerable changes in the detailed arrangements of the site took place in the later Iron Age and again after the Roman conquest, but its basic plan seems to have remained very stable throughout. The population and manners of agricultural life seem to have altered little for perhaps five hundred years, though the inhabitants responded to new fashions in pottery in A2 times, caught distant echoes of the B style later on, and were more impressed by Belgic (C) types in the century before the Roman conquest. Essentially however they remained the A1 population and retained to the Roman conquest the capacity to produce decadent survivals of A1 ceramic forms.

There is every reason to believe that the Mount Farm site is thoroughly typical of Iron Age village life in the Oxford district: its testimony coheres in all essentials with that from the other excavated examples, Radley, Cassington, Hinksey Hill, and so on, although not all of these have produced such clear evidence for the earliest phase of A1 as is available here, in Allen's gravel-pit near by, and at Long Wittenham. If, as is probable, the first Iron Age settlers came from the south or up the Thames valley, we should naturally expect to find the signs of their earliest settlement in the Dorchester area, for this was always so easily accessible under primitive conditions to penetration both by the river route and by tracks over the downs.