

Excavations at Scole, 1973

Jgg77b-Scole

by Andrew Rogerson

I. SUMMARY

Nine hundred sq. m. were excavated within the Romano-British settlement (possibly Villa Faustini of the Antonine Itinerary) in advance of housing development. The site, 1007, lay adjacent to the Roman road from Colchester to Caistor St. Edmund. Apart from a scatter of Mesolithic flints, the earliest occupation was Flavian, and the coin evidence suggests a reduction in the intensity of occupation after the late third century. Iron smelting was carried out, but otherwise activity was largely domestic. A minor east to west road and two lanes crossed the excavation. Structural evidence was meagre, but a surface of crushed chalk, measuring 12.50 m. x 6.50 m. may have been the floor of a building. Two second century timber-lined wells contained organic deposits.

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his thanks to the following: Harvey Builders (East Anglia) Ltd. for permission to excavate; all who assisted in the excavation, particularly Nick Adams, site supervisor, Bruce Induni, planner, Julie Manser, section drawer, Andrew Jones, environmentalist, Julia and Rose Rogerson and Rosemary Wood, finds assistants; Mr. and Mrs. Trevail for their constant supply of water; and Miss Brighton who washed so much pottery. Grateful thanks are due to all the specialists who have contributed and who are listed below at the start of their reports; to Chris Green for his expert advice on many aspects of the site and finds; Cathy Hudson who drew the coarse pottery; Patricia Walker who drew certain wood and leather objects; and to Nick Adams who drew all the remaining finds, as well as the plans and sections.

All the finds have been donated by Harvey Builders (East Anglia) Ltd. to the Norfolk Museums Service ¹.

III. INTRODUCTION

The excavation was carried out over nine weeks in July and August 1973. The site lies at 24.00 m. O.D. some 200 m. south of the crossing of two trunk roads, the A140 and A143, which form the nucleus of the present village of Scole ² and 200 m. north of the River Waveney. The subsoil is glacial sand (Bennett 1884, 7) lying over chalk which rises to the surface north of the excavation and forms a slight ridge parallel to the river ³. The Waveney valley in this region runs eastwards through a wide area covered by boulder clay, some of which is heavy. A tributary, the Dove, flows northwards into the Waveney 3 km. east of Scole Bridge. The source of the Waveney is 11 km. to the west.

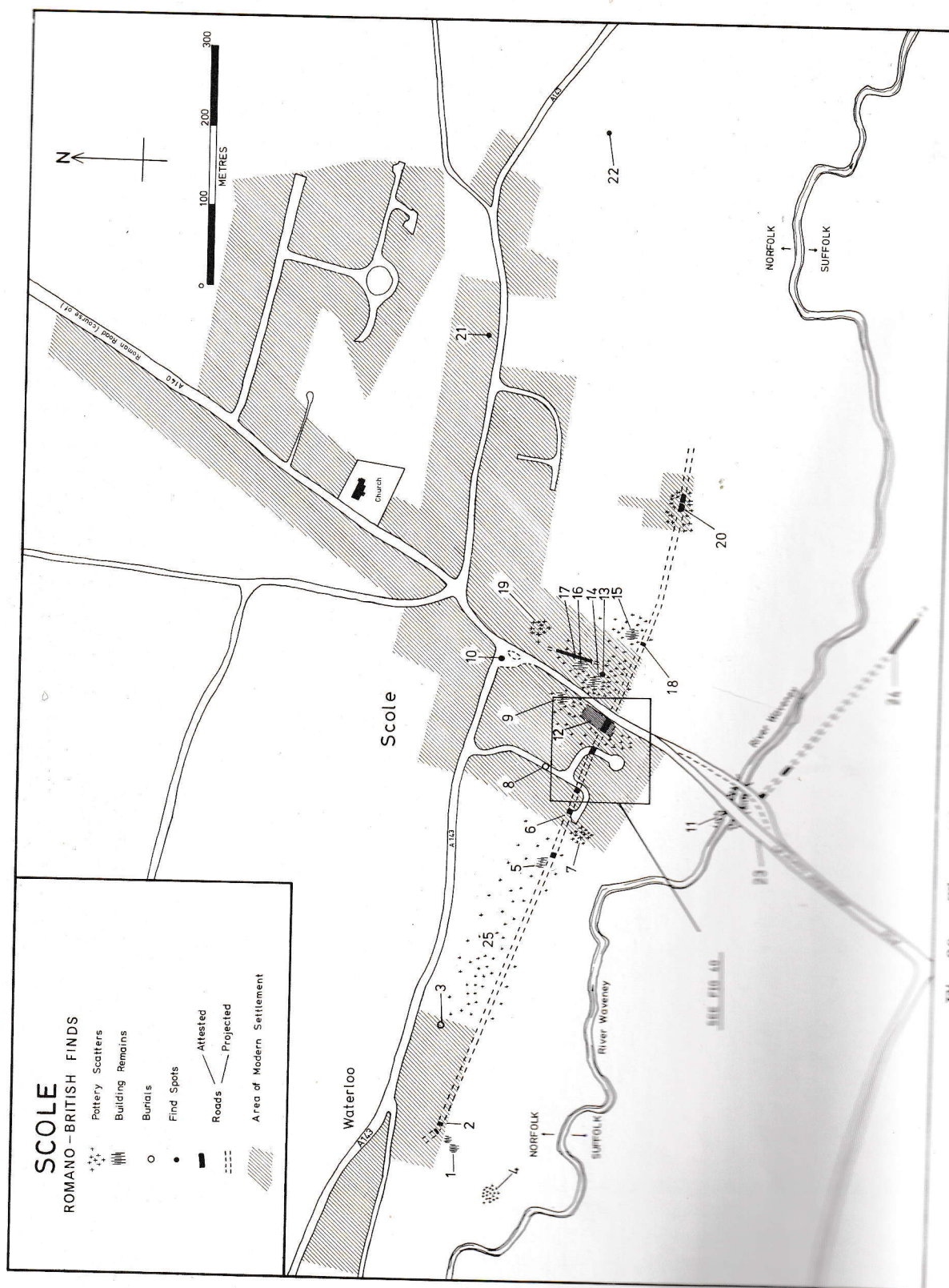


Fig. 39. The setting and previous finds of Romano-British material.

Fig. 59, No. 61 formed of upstanding metal. The thin area with curved edge between the hare and the broken end no longer contains enamel. A rectangular sheet of copper alloy has been soldered to the underside. This is broken across the same line as the handle itself. Although the hare and hound motif was widespread in the Roman west (Liversidge 1968, 364-5), it is certainly not common on vessel handles, although an example with two hounds, a hare, and two birds from Vidy-Lausanne, Switzerland, is in relief (Tassinari 1970, pl. VI, no. 23). Enamelled handles from Britain do not normally seem to carry zoomorphic motifs (Eggers 1966, abb. 48), nor do examples from Germany (Eggers 1951, Taf. 13, 156). The treatment of the hound is close to that on an enamelled third century brooch from Poundbury, Dorset (unpublished; inf. C.Green). Layer 26, Period III.

No. 62 Half a drop handle. Incised grooves on fins (Neal 1974, 132). Layer 33, Period III.

OBJECTS OF LEAD

Eight lead objects were recovered: one from Period I; two from Period III; four from Period IV; and one unstratified. Of these, seven are pieces of sheeting and one is a folded bar. None are illustrated.

OBJECTS OF IRON (Figs. 61 and 62)

The following thirty four objects of iron have been selected from a much larger total. The objects neither listed nor illustrated consist almost entirely of nails of various sizes of Manning's Types I and II (Frere 1972, 186), as well as unidentifiable lumps and fragments. All the illustrated pieces have been X-radiographed at the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, and some have been cleaned and treated in the Conservation Laboratory, Norwich Castle Museum.

Fig. 61, No. 1 Horse-bit consisting of two links of uneven lengths, with interlocking ring-heads set in different planes, and cylindrical heads within which circular rein-rings freely move. This is a type familiar in the pre-Roman Iron Age (Stead 1965, 39, fig. 20; Fox 1946, 29, 33, 83, pl. VIIIc, and pl. XXVI, no. 58). It also occurs in Roman contexts (Piggot 1953, 30-32, fig. 8, no. C4), but is apparently not normally a civilian type (Frere 1972, 170). Its size would be suitable for a pony of not more than ten hands (standing 1 m. at the withers)¹¹. Another example of this type of bit was found at Brampton (p. 51). Layer 433, Well II, Period III.

No. 2 Linch-pin with spatulate head. Verulamium Type 2b (Frere 1972, 172). Pit 510, Period II.

No. 3 Knife. Found in uncorroded condition. Layer 412, Well II, Period III.

No. 4 Knife with bone handle. Layer 79, Period III.

No. 5 Knife. Surface 30, Period III.

No. 6 Knife, point and tang broken. Layer 19, Period IV.

No. 7 Stylus with five grooves above point, the lowest of which contains inlaid gold wire. (This was invisible on the X-radiograph and became visible only after cleaning). The eraser is damaged. Layer 26, Period III.

No. 8 Stylus with five grooves above point. Point and eraser damaged. Layer 36, Period III.

No. 9 Stylus. Eraser damaged. Layer 79, Period III.

No. 10 Barb-spring padlock bolt (Frere 1972, 181; British Museum 1958, fig. 41). Layer 19, Period IV.

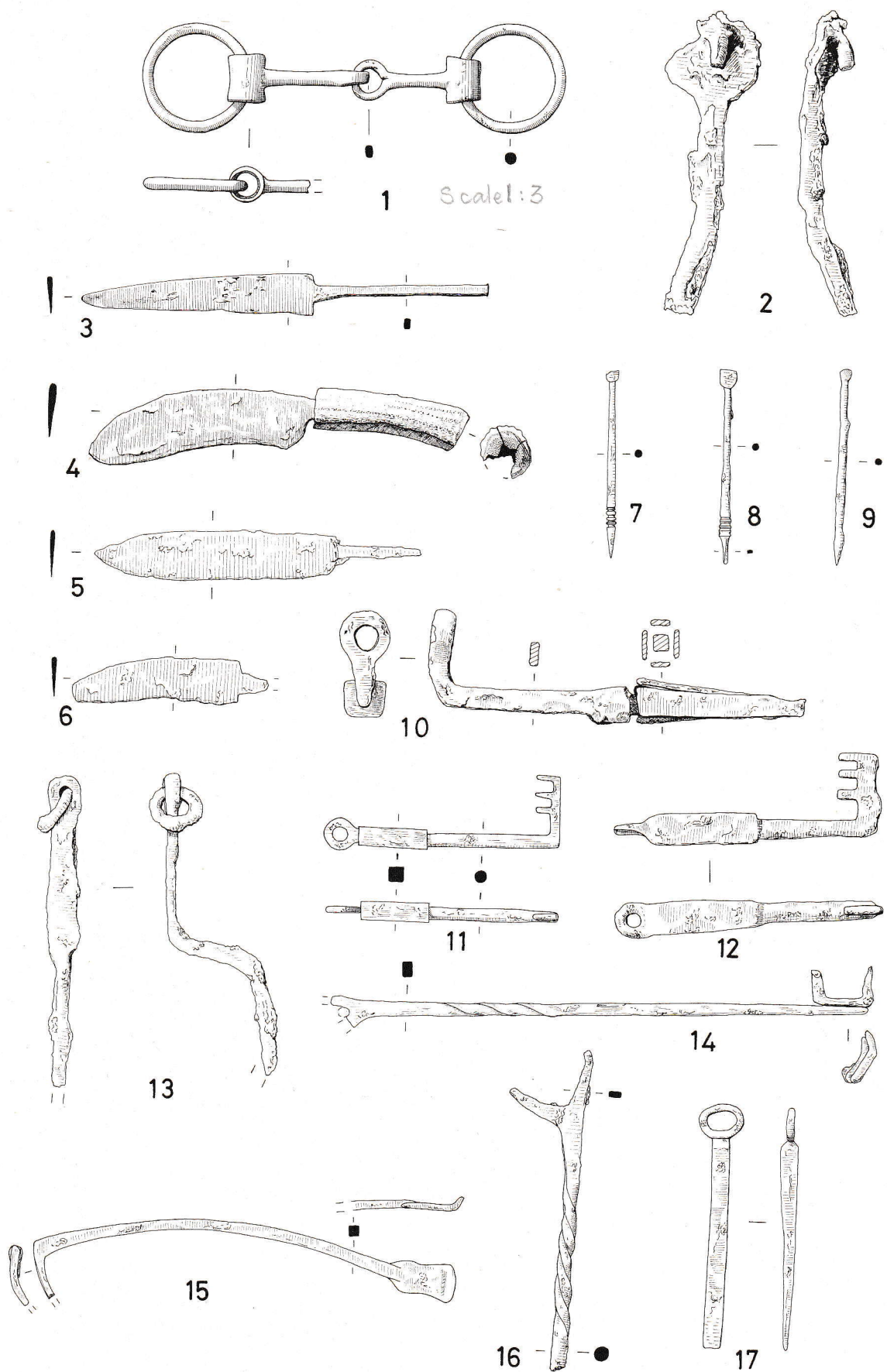


Fig. 61. Objects of iron 1-17. Scale 1:3.

The Artefacts

Fig. 84, No. 249 in -CO or -ICO, though none actually in -TICO are given in de Schaetzen, (cont.) 1956. Layer 65, Period III or IV.

TILES

Six hundred and fifty fragments of tile were recovered. 80% were found in Period III and IV deposits, and 17% in layers overlying the western part of surface 30. All were broken, usually into small pieces, with the exception of two found in association with oven 214, Period III (p. 119). Mortar was found adhering in only seven cases. Recognisable fragments were pieces of box flue-tile, imbrex, and tegula. They were many pieces of flat tile of varying thickness. The only certain primary function for a tile was as flooring in the stoke hole of oven 214. Fragments were used secondarily for packing post hole 57 (p. 118) and as flooring in association with hearth or oven 341, Period III.

BURNT CLAY

Pieces of burnt clay were found in deposits of each period. Only a few pieces from each major group had one or two finished faces. These sometimes showed signs of finger-ing, or the impression of a flat surface, perhaps wood. Those with two faces were usually 3.5 cm. thick, although there are examples up to 7.5 cm. Some pieces had two faces at right angles separated by a rounded square corner. Only one piece of daub with wattle impressions was found. This was in the topsoil, and of a clay different from the other pieces. Many fragments may not have come from walls but from ovens, hearths, and floors. One piece from layer 79, Period III carried the impression of part of a pot base on one side, and so presumably had formed part of a floor. The degree of burning varied considerably, although all were oxidised. The clay appeared to be of the same variety as that used for hearths, ovens and floor surfaces, coarse grained with varying amounts of chalk and flint inclusions.

OBJECTS OF BONE (Figs. 85 and 86)

Seventy five objects of bone were recovered, consisting of forty five fragments of the stems and/or points of pins or needles, three needles broken at the eye, and the twenty seven illustrated objects. Pins 1-13 have stems of rounded section.

Fig. 85, No. 1 Layer 26, Period III; No. 2 Layer 291, Well II, Period III or IV; No. 3 Layer 500, Period II; No. 4 Layer 36, Period III; No. 5 Layer 236, Period II; No. 6 Layer 281, Period II; No. 7 Surface 30, Period III; No. 8 Layer 541, Period I or II; No. 9 Layer 159, Period III or IV; No. 10 Surface 30, Period III; No. 11 Layer 19, Period IV; No. 12 Layer 27, Period III; No. 13 Layer 19, Period IV.

No. 14 Broken rough-out for a pin or needle, with knife trimmed facets. Layer 120, Period II.

Nos. 15 and 16 Pair of pins found together. Both have a rough notch near the head. They are not rough-outs. Both are polished. Pit 554, Period II.

No. 17 Needle with pointed head and double eye. Layer 101, Period II-III.

No. 18 ?Weaving tablet fragment. The hole is surrounded by radiating incisions on both sides. Layer 168, Period II.

No. 19 Spoon with broken handle and bowl. Layer 120, Period II.

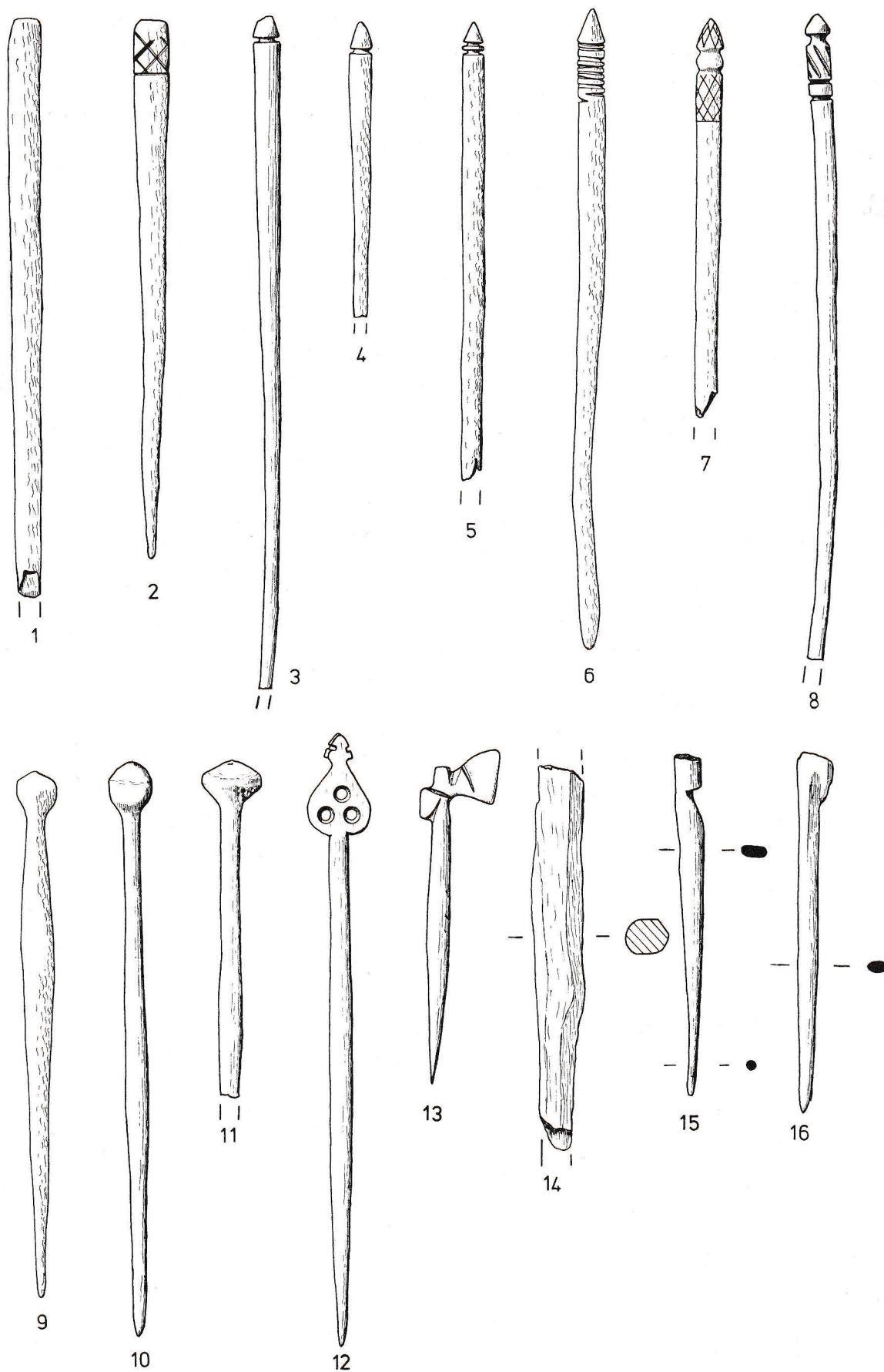


Fig. 85. Objects of bone 1-16. Scale 1:1.

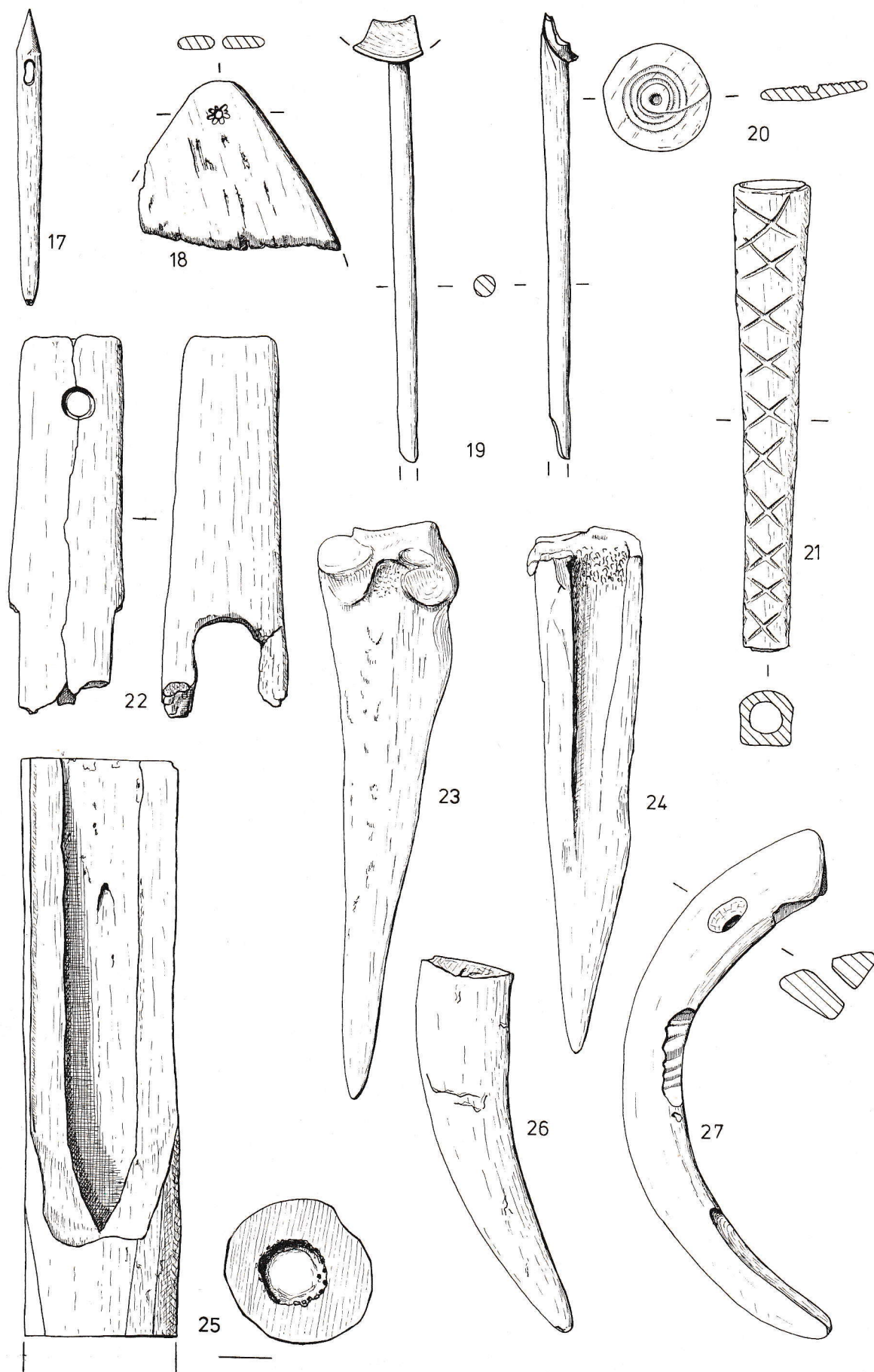


Fig. 86. Objects of bone 17-27. Scale 1:1.

Fig. 85, No. 20 Counter with roughly incised circles, central depression, and polished underside. Layer 79, Period III.

- No. 21 Handle with incised trellis decoration on all four sides. Central hole throughout length. Ditch 462, Period I.
- No. 22 Possible handle of roughly square section, cut from a red deer antler. Drilled hole near knife-finished end. Iron staining at broken end on either side of cut recess. Layer 470, Period II.
- No. 23 Point or awl made from the abaxial metapodial of a horse. The distal end has been sharpened. Points of this type are found in Neolithic and later contexts (Wheeler 1943, 308, pl. XXXVI A). Layer 557, Period I.
- No. 24 Point or awl, with polished and partially knife-trimmed surface, made from the left metatarsal of a sheep. Layer 236, Period II.
- No. 25 Worked object, possibly a rough-out for a handle, part of a large mammal long bone. Both ends are sawn, and the surface seems to have been worked with a gauge. The inside has been hollowed out, and probably as a result of this, a partial segment has split off. Layer 58, Period IV.
- No. 26 Point of red deer antler with broad ends knife-cut and surface polished. Unstratified on western edge of field.
- No. 27 Right sided boar tusk, polished, and with knifed notches on side and near point. Pierced by drilled hole. Perhaps part of a necklace (cf. Brodribb, *et. al.* 1968, fig. 32, no. 2). Layer 19, Period IV.

WOODEN FURNITURE FRAGMENTS (Fig. 87, Nos. 1-4 and Plate XVIII)
by Joan Liversidge

Four pieces of wood were recovered from layer 433, Well II. All were turned on the lathe and they are probably fragments of furniture, stool or couch legs. No. 1 has two grooves surviving at the top. Below comes a moulded disc also with two grooves, which has been damaged after completion, and then a baluster shaped moulding. Whether No. 2 is a true continuation of No. 1 is a problem. It appears slightly narrower but at the point where the join might have existed, part of No. 1 is hacked away. The fact that the wood has cracked in similar fashion on both Nos. 1 and 2 may indicate that at least they belong to the same leg although possibly with another piece in between, decorated perhaps, like No. 2 with a grooved moulding.

No. 3 probably comes from a different object with a thick disc-shaped moulding edged with a single groove next to a tenon. No. 4 has traces of a square tenon but part of it has been so hacked about that it seems not unlikely that it was thrown into the well unfinished after a mis-directed blow.

Furniture with turned legs is known from Greece as early as Minoan times, and couches and stools showing such decoration are frequently depicted in Roman art. The survival of actual wooden fragments, however, is of rare occurrence and I can find no others in the western provinces. The best comparative illustration is a complete leg, probably from a stool, found at Rifeh, Egypt, with bits of several others by Petrie (Richter 1966, fig. 514). This (Fig. 87) has the disc and baluster shaped mouldings. While the legs seem to taper downwards in a rather impractical fashion with most Roman furniture, the Rifeh leg ends in a slightly expanded moulding rather like No. 3, but without the square tenon. Material from the Bosphorus does include wooden feet with

Fig. 87, No. 7 One fragment with recessed areas on both faces. One face is scored with diagonal lines. Two other fragments with no surviving edges are probably from the same tablet but are not illustrated. Layer 412, Well II.

All have been identified by Andrew Jones as lime (tilia sp.).

LEATHER SHOES (Figs. 88 and 89) ¹⁶ by Nicholas Adams

The following descriptions follow those of the leather finds from Hardknott (Charlesworth and Thornton 1973) and Bar Hill (Robertson, *et. al.* 1975, 59-83). All eight shoes are published in detail, despite their fragmentary condition, because of their obvious intrinsic interest, as well as the lack of similar published material from East Anglia. Both children's and adult's are represented. The degree of wear in most examples is worthy of note.

Carbatinae

Fig. 88, Nos. 1a and b Left shoe; single thickness of leather; stitch holes at heel; four elongated loops surviving on the left side and the stub of another; three elongated loops surviving on the right side and the stubs of two more; broken loop centrally placed at the toe. Sole and heel are patched with single thicknesses of leather. The sole patch is missing and the sole is worn through, though the thonging and slight traces of the patch survive. Heel patch survives though this too is worn through at the point of heel pressure. Incised lines in the true sole indicate that patches were shaped in position. Layer 433, Well II.

No. 2 Left shoe; double thickness of leather; stitch holes at heel; stubs of four loops each side; four small loops in gathered position surviving at toe. The heel and ball are worn through, and much of the outer skin of the sole is worn. Layer 433, Well II.

No. 3 Right shoe; double thickness of leather; stitch holes at heel; four elongated loops surviving on right side; remains of two surviving on left side with the stubs of another. The heel is worn through, and toe and heel are both damaged. Layer 319, Well I.

No. 4 Two joining fragments of heel with sole missing; double thickness of leather; stitch holes at join; one elongated loop, and the stubs of another, surviving on each side. Traces of holes and thongs on the underside suggest that a strengthening patch may have been added to the sole. Layer 412, Well II.

No. 5 Left shoe; single thickness of leather; stitch holes at heel; three elongated loops on right side; two elongated loops with the stub of another on the left; centrally placed loop at the toe. The heel is worn through. Layer 433, Well II.

Solea

Fig. 88, Nos. 6a and b Right shoe. Main sole comprised of two thicknesses of leather; thick rectangular patch thonged to the heel; toe missing and heel damaged. A transverse ankle strap is visible on the left side. Layer 433, Well II.

Calceus or Caliga

Fig. 88, Nos. 7a and b Left shoe; hobnailed outer sole consisting of three laminae with a