



Roman Military Occupation at Hembury (Devon)

By MALCOLM TODD

INTRODUCTION

The Iron Age hillfort at Hembury is one of the most imposing monuments of South-Western Britain. It occupies a southern spur of the Blackdown Hills, jutting into the low ground of the vale of the Otter and Tale rivers (FIGS 1–2). The site was chosen by the infant Devon Archaeological Society for investigation in 1929 and Miss Dorothy Liddell was invited to direct the excavation, with the invaluable assistance of W.E.V. Young, the foreman of Alexander Keiller at Avebury (Wilts.); Miss Liddell was Keiller's sister-in-law. Her untimely death in 1936 meant a full report on the excavations of 1930–35 did not ensue.¹ The finds, but no records, were presented to the Royal Albert Museum in Exeter. The excavation diary kept by W.E.V. Young is held at Devizes Museum.

THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1980–83

By the second season of excavation, in 1931, it was clear that the site was not simply an Iron Age hillfort.² A major Neolithic enclosure was identified in the southern area of the site and another Neolithic ditch was encountered beneath the north-east gate of the fort.³ Examination of the so-called cross-dykes which run from the west gate to the eastern defences led to the conclusion that these dated to the end of the pre-Roman Iron Age. In 1981 it was demonstrated that these earthworks are post-mediaeval, probably seventeenth-century, and possibly were connected with the mustering of local forces in the Civil War.⁴

Early Roman material, now in Exeter Museum, was found at several points within the fort, but not published. The corner of a rectilinear timber building was recorded close to the eastern Iron Age rampart and assigned to the late Iron Age, though no evidence of date was quoted.⁵ This building had long seemed anomalous in an Iron Age context and was one of the stimuli to further excavation at Hembury, undertaken by the writer with financial support from the University of Exeter, the Society of Antiquaries, and the Haverfield Bequest.

The prime purpose of the excavations of 1980–83 was to examine an area within the fort in order to clarify the relationship, if any, between the late Iron Age occupation and the succeeding Roman phase. It was also decided to section the Iron Age defences as the excavation of the 1930s had concentrated on the north-east and west gates.⁶ The area chosen for excavation extended

¹ Liddell 1930; 1931; 1932; 1935.

² Liddell 1931.

³ See Liddell 1935 for a summary.

⁴ Todd 2002b.

⁵ Liddell 1935; 152–3.

⁶ Todd 1984a.

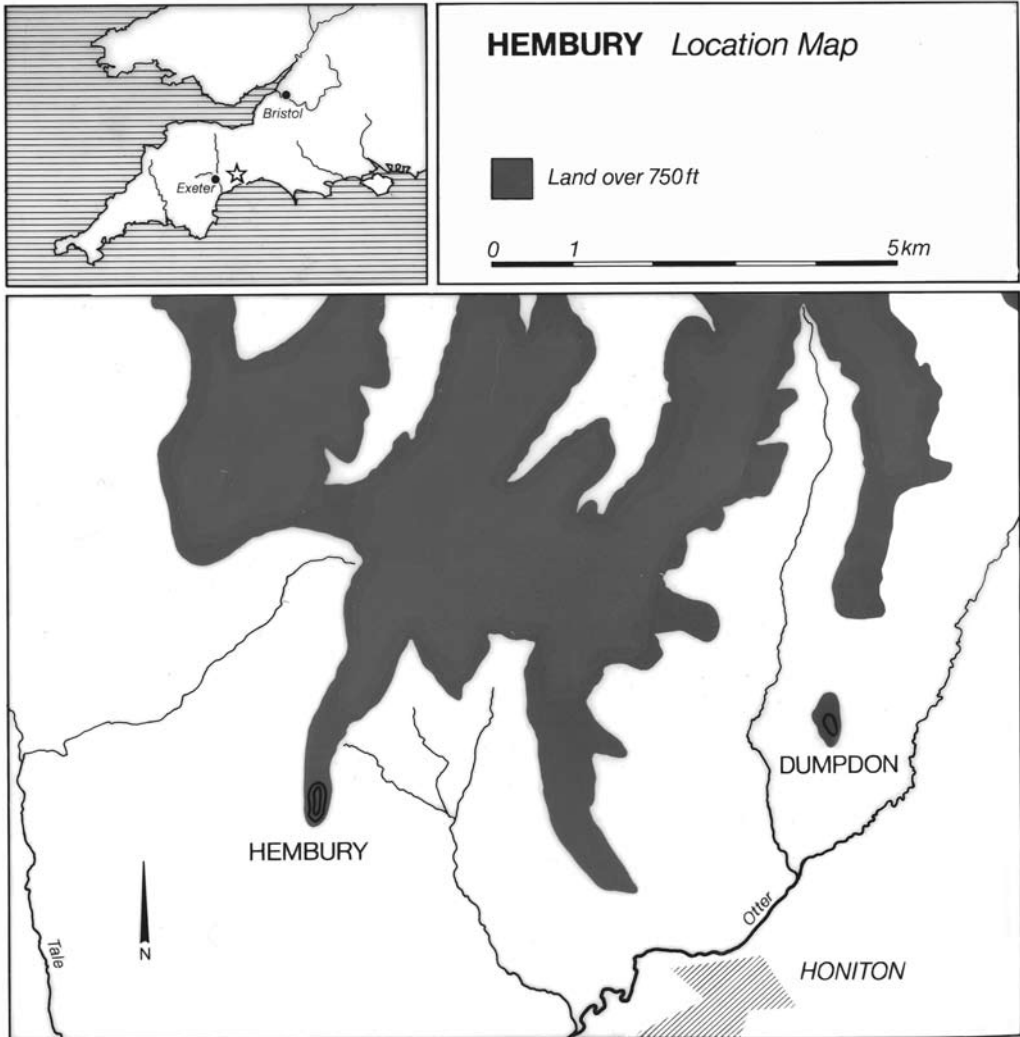


FIG. 1. Location map of Hembury and the south Blackdowns.

from the eastern rampart to the centre of the fort and included Liddell's trench of 1935 (C. XXXIV).⁷ The rectilinear structure was relocated and its details confirmed. Excavation up the gentle slope towards the centre of the fort revealed substantial traces of Roman timber buildings in the form of foundation-trenches and post-impressions.⁸

⁷ Liddell 1935, 153.

⁸ Todd 1984a; 1986.



FIG. 2. Air photograph of Hembury looking west. (Photo: Derek Birch)

THE IRON AGE FORT

The situation of Hembury and the strong defences of the Iron Age fort offered obvious advantages for strategic control of east Devon between the rivers Axe and Exe. The Iron Age defences dominate the southward jutting spur of the Blackdowns as no other site can (FIGS 2–3).⁹ The defences on the east and west sides took full advantage of the steep natural slopes. The north defences, cutting across the promontory, comprise higher ramparts and deeper ditches. The known gates lie close to the north-east angle and midway in the western side. There are few surface indications of internal features, apart from the so-called cross-dykes, now shown to be post-mediaeval. A low mound some 4 m in diameter lies in the southern third of the fort and was examined by Liddell in 1930.¹⁰ This was provisionally identified as a ‘hut’, but no decisive evidence of structure or date was obtained. A more likely possibility is that this earthwork is a barrow, sited in a prominent position near the end of the promontory.

The Iron Age defences, features, and finds from the excavations of 1980–83 are to be published separately.¹¹ The main point to be considered in relation to the beginning of Roman occupation is the fact that no material which can be attributed to the latest phase of the Iron Age was recorded

⁹ The plan published by Liddell, based on the O.S. map is inaccurate in detail. The plan published here was produced by R.C.H.M. (England) surveyors and appears by kind permission of English Heritage.

¹⁰ Liddell 1930, 10.

¹¹ For a summary, Todd 1984a.

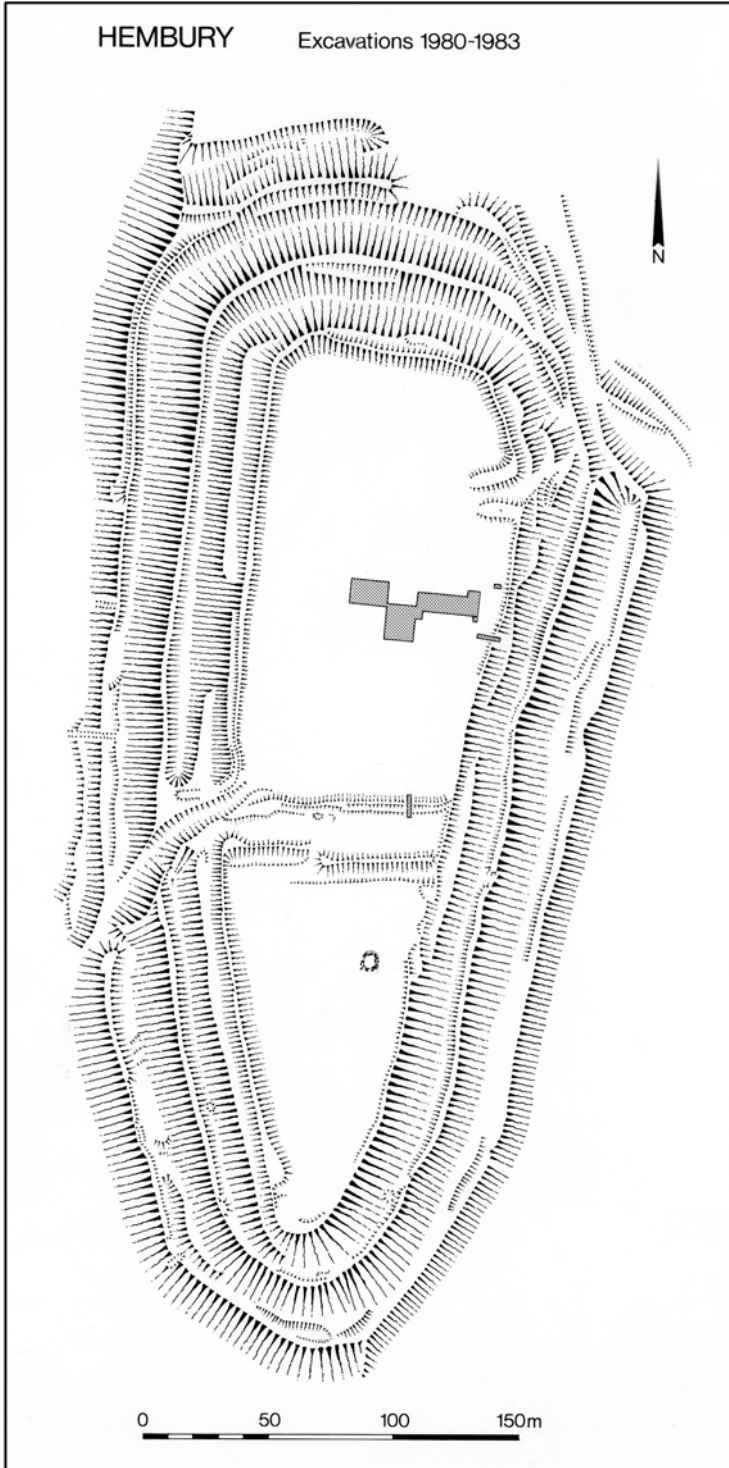


FIG. 3. General plan of Hembury. (By permission of English Heritage)

in Liddell's reports or in the excavations of 1980–83. In its sum, the evidence indicates that the fort had been abandoned well before the arrival of Roman troops, probably a century or more before, so that an extensive open space was available for buildings. The Iron Age stratigraphy was thin, consisting mainly of old land surfaces which had accumulated over Neolithic and early Bronze Age deposits. Iron Age pottery was represented by only a small number of vessels, most of them in simple forms without decoration. This is a common picture in Devon west of the Axe. Liddell published several vessels which she assigned to the late ('Belgic') Iron Age, but these are early Roman in date.¹²

THE ROMAN BUILDINGS

Excavation by Miss Liddell immediately to the rear of the eastern rampart revealed the corner of a rectilinear building, represented by a neatly-cut foundation-trench 25 cm wide and 40 cm deep (FIG. 4).¹³ At the time this was interpreted as part of a late Iron Age structure, though no evidence of date was adduced. This was a far from convincing conclusion, though doubts do not appear to have been expressed in print. Partly to clarify the character and date of this structure, the area selected for examination in 1981 included this part of the site and the building located by Miss Liddell was re-excavated. The area excavated in 1981–83 revealed parts of two, possibly three, substantial timber buildings on an east–west alignment. The most substantial structure (Building 2) consisted of at least two ranges set around an open courtyard some 9 m square (FIG. 5). The east range, 6 m to the rear of the Iron Age rampart, measured at least 8.5 m in length and 4.5 m wide; it was subdivided into three chambers but extended southward into an area not available for excavation. The north range was partially excavated. It measured 14 m by 4.5 m and contained at least one subdividing wall. The courtyard surface was framed by substantial posts, 12 cm square, set in individual pits up to 85 cm across and 80 cm deep. The open space had been cut down to the natural clay and chert. The west range was not closed off by a range of rooms; instead, a narrow shed flanked the courtyard on this side. To the west, another court was framed by three timber uprights set 3 m apart. This space was floored by a gravel surface laid over the natural Greensand clay.

Another sizeable building lay immediately to the west of Building 2. This, too, was arranged about a court framed by substantial timber uprights and floored by a gravel surface. Only part of this building was available for excavation, but it is clear from the associated finds of coins and glass (below, pp. 117–19) that this was a major component in the Roman layout. But the plan of this building could not be recovered as the area to the south and west was not available for excavation. It may tentatively be suggested that the open court was flanked by ranges to north and south and possibly to the west, but this is not proven. The court had seen appreciable wear; 25 hob-nails were trodden into its surface.

To the south-west of Building 2 lay another building of which only two foundation-trenches were recovered. This area of the site had been subject to heavy modern disturbance, possibly by those seeking scythe-stones, which were much prized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and which supported a thriving local industry.

Throughout Building 2 quantities of molten iron slag and lumps of iron ore were found. This material consisted mainly of small nodules, but included one substantial block of smelted iron. No furnaces or furnace debris were in evidence. The largest concentration of slag lay in the rooms close to the tail of the eastern rampart. These finds obviously bear on the function of the

¹² Liddell 1930, pl. XXVIII; 1935, 156.

¹³ Liddell 1935, fig. 14.

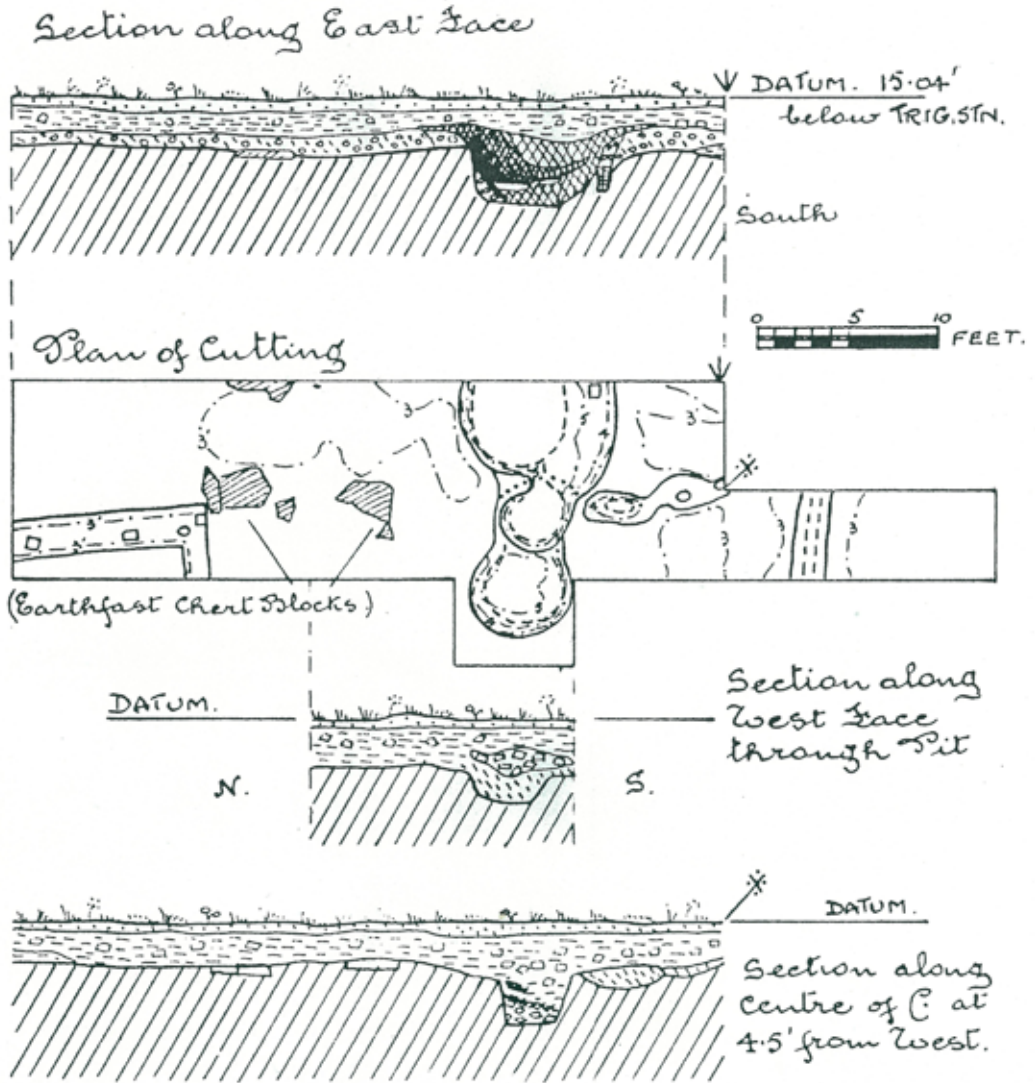


FIG. 4. Plan of D.M. Liddell's trench of 1935, showing a rectilinear structure.

building. A structure on this scale was clearly of importance and the evidence of iron-smelting points to its use as a *fabrica*. Among contemporary analogies, the *fabrica* at Claudian Oberstimm on the Upper Danube provides the most convincing example, though here a large water-tank was sited in the internal courtyard.¹⁴ Closer to Hembury, a courtyard building to the rear of the *principia* at Hod Hill may come into consideration.¹⁵ This was interpreted by Richmond as the residence for a putative legionary centurion, on very slender evidence.

¹⁴ Schönberger 1978.

¹⁵ Richmond 1968, 76–8.

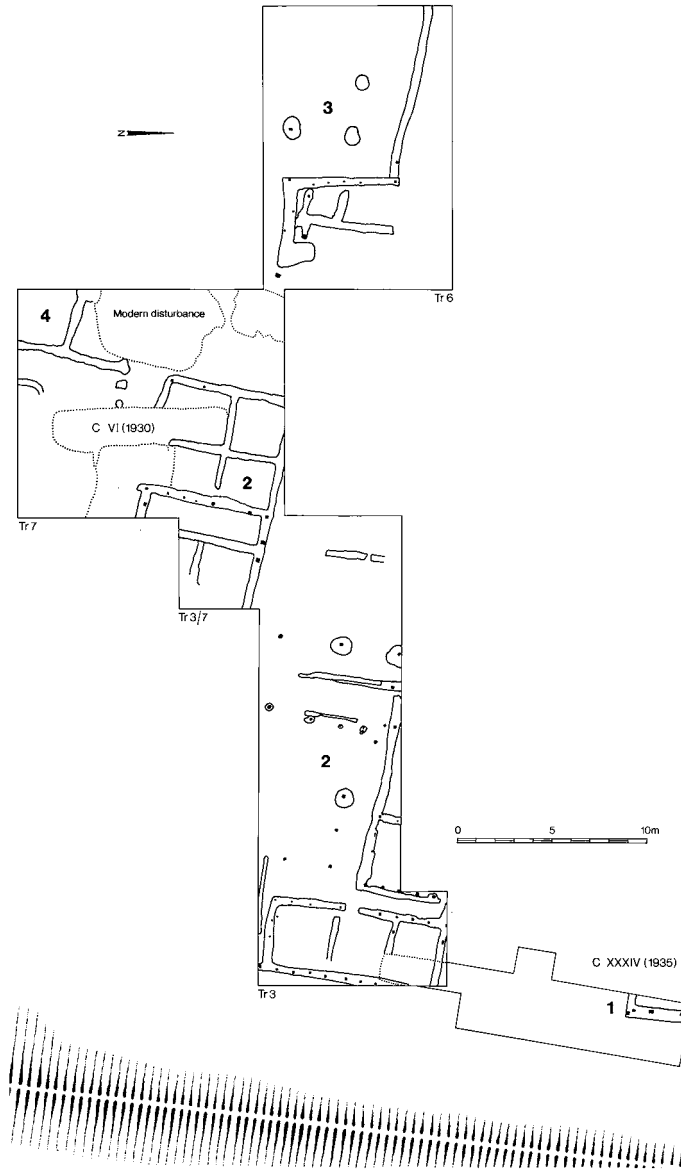


FIG. 5. Plan of early Roman military buildings.

The southern Blackdown hills contain substantial deposits of iron ore, particularly in the area of North Hill, 3 km north-west of Hembury, where extraction pits are still visible. Survey and excavation (unpublished) by Exeter Archaeology has confirmed early Roman exploitation of iron on the Blackdown plateau.

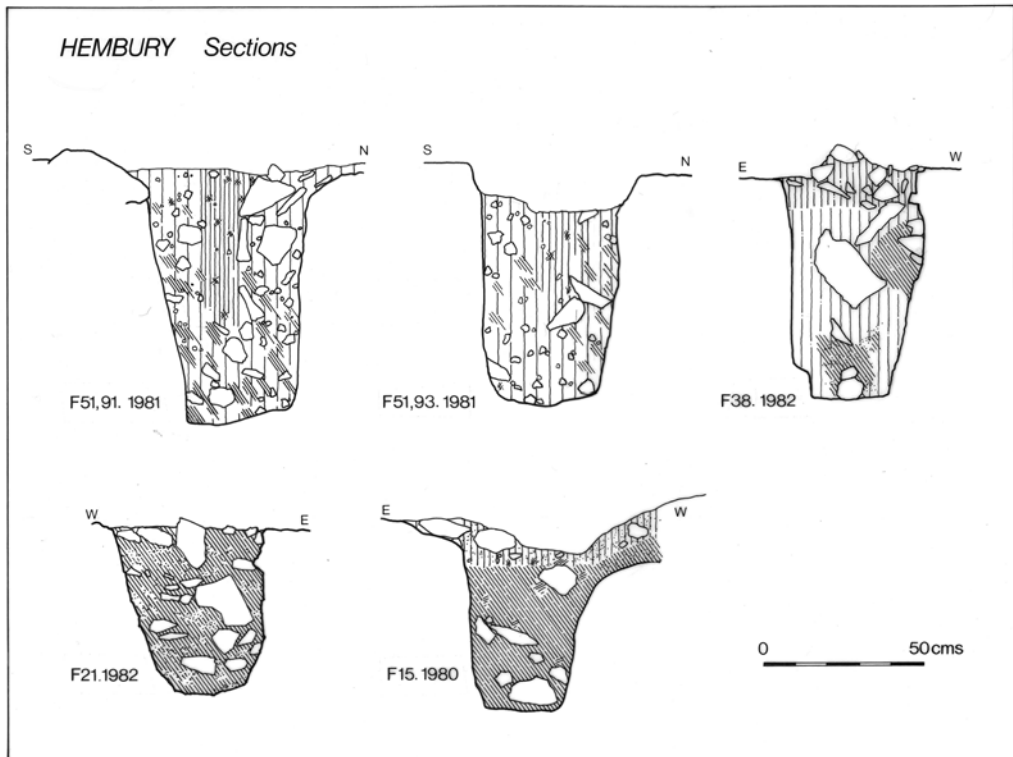


FIG. 6. Sections of Roman foundation-trenches.

At the west gate of the Iron Age fort there is clear evidence of a post-Iron Age rebuilding which escaped the excavators of 1930–35.¹⁶ The final phase of construction at this gate took the form of an entrance 3 m wide, flanked to either side by three square uprights, each post measuring 26 cm square (FIG. 7). No post-pits were observed or at least recorded. At the front of the gate passageway an additional post lay to either side of the entrance, perhaps to anchor the flanges of the doors. No finds were recorded which can be securely related to this phase. There is no doubt, however, that this structure is the latest phase of the gate.¹⁷ A close analogy for this gate has been identified in the north-west gate of the Roman fort at Hod Hill (Dorset).¹⁸ The plans and dimensions of these two gates are almost identical. The early Roman date of this rebuild of the west gate at Hembury seems assured and can only be confirmed by future, subtle excavation. The provision of a restored gate on the western side of the fort is easily understood. Access to and from the fort is easiest on this western side, especially to the valley of the rivers Tale and Otter.

The foundation trenches had been cut into the natural Greensand clay to depths varying from 28 cm to 38 cm and in widths of 30 cm to 40 cm. The recorded post-impressions which had held

¹⁶ Todd 1986.

¹⁷ Todd 1986, 65–6.

¹⁸ Richmond 1968, 71–2, fig. 42a.

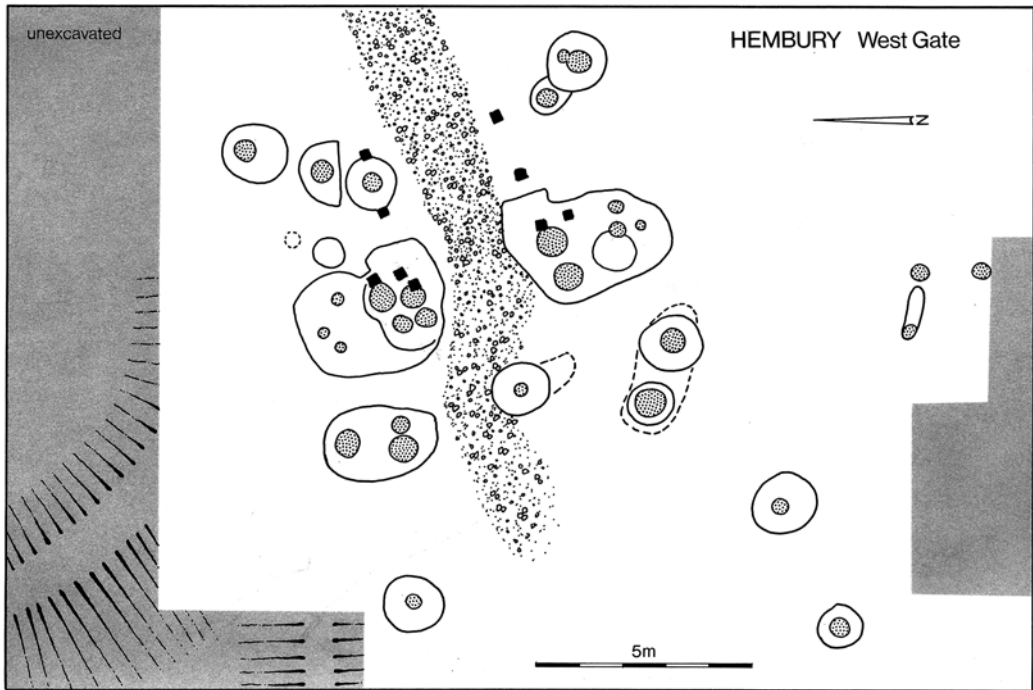


FIG. 7. Plan of west gate with Roman posts highlighted.

uprights lay at intervals ranging from 70 cm to 90 cm. Few posts had been chocked into position by stones. On abandonment, the stumps of at least some posts had been left *in situ* so that their positions were marked by voids, most of these square in form. Demolition of at least part of the buildings is attested by several iron nails bent by a claw hammer. No Roman material was in evidence on the site after abandonment in the early Flavian period at the latest.

Hembury is added to the lengthening list of pre-Roman hillforts which were reused by Roman forces for a variety of purposes in the early years of the occupation. The well-planned fort inserted into the north-west corner of the hillfort on Hod Hill (Dorset), which for long seemed to stand alone, is no longer exceptional. Roman military occupation within earlier hillforts is attested or strongly suggested at Maiden Castle (Dorset),¹⁹ Bilbury Rings (Wilts.),²⁰ Ham Hill (Somerset),²¹ Brandon Camp (Herefords.),²² and South Cadbury (Somerset).²³ A general survey of the British evidence is contained in Todd 1985. Over the past twenty-five years Roman military occupation of hillforts has been demonstrated at several sites in Gaul and the Rhine valley, e.g. at the Titelberg (Luxemburg)²⁴ and the Limberg near Sasbach.²⁵ There is no doubt that others will

¹⁹ Todd 1984b and 1985.

²⁰ Unpublished material in Devizes Museum.

²¹ Webster 1958.

²² Frere 1987.

²³ Barrett 2000.

²⁴ Metzler 1984.

²⁵ Fingerlin 1981.

be added to the list. All invading armies exploit sites which offer advantage or resources to them and the Roman army was certainly no exception.

The occupation of Hembury by Roman forces in the mid-first century must be considered within the overall framework of the military occupation of the territory of the Dumnonii. The legionary base at Exeter was founded by A.D. 55 and possibly between A.D. 50 and 55.²⁶ It is well established that Roman control over the mineral deposits of the Mendip hills in Somerset began by A.D. 49 or even a few years earlier and was well developed in the fifties.²⁷ Other sites in Devon and west Dorset are not closely dated as to their foundation. Inevitably, little or no datable pottery is normally recovered from the phase of construction, while the bulk of datable finds occurs in the final phase of occupation, often in demolition and clearance deposits. It follows that construction dates may well be earlier, or relatively much earlier, than the dates of the earliest pottery. Sites in Devon have produced little that certainly dates before *c.* A.D. 55, but caution must be exercised. A hoard of nine sestertii (one of Gaius and eight of Claudius), all in fresh condition, found at Roborough in west Devon indicates a military presence in this area by A.D. 50 at the latest.²⁸ This hoard may be a relic of early reconnaissance, but a connection with a more permanent occupation may reasonably be entertained. Hoards consisting solely of sestertii, of any size, are unusual and are most plausibly to be associated with Roman forces. This hoard offers a modicum of testimony to military occupation up to the Tamar valley by *c.* A.D. 50.

Other sites in Devon have produced dates which centre on the period A.D. 55–85, though substantial evidence is not abundant. Aside from Exeter and the complex of sites at North Tawton,²⁹ which includes a large base, as well as temporary works and a later auxiliary fort, the known sites are small in area, suggesting garrisons of small scale, extending over the peninsula and charged with police duties rather than active campaigning. Characteristic are the forts at Cullompton and Okehampton, both on major routes still followed by main roads.³⁰ Pomeroy Wood³¹ and Bury Barton³² also fall into this category. The fort at Bolham Farm, north of Tiverton, lay on an important route through mid-Devon.³³ The small site on the east side of the Exe estuary at Topsham is clearly military and is presumably linked with the legionary base at Exeter, 3 km to the north, probably as a port or supply base.³⁴ More enigmatic is the small site of Woodbury near Axminster;³⁵ this lies on the route from Dorchester to Exeter, near the crossing of the Axe. Finds of early Roman material hint at a fort, but this is not confirmed. Later, this was a small town or posting-station. Close dating for all of these sites is elusive, as few have been extensively excavated. North Tawton, Cullompton, and Okehampton have not been subjected to extensive excavation. Bury Barton was a Neronian foundation, probably occupied to the early seventies. Bolham Farm, Tiverton, has produced nothing earlier than A.D. 60 and may have been occupied until *c.* A.D. 80/5, a decade after the abandonment of the Exeter fortress and into the final years of the conquest of Northern Britain. By then, the South-Western peninsula was irrelevant in military terms and its administration could be left in the hands of other authorities.

All in all, the evidence from military sites in Devon points to a phase of campaigning around A.D. 50, followed by consolidation from A.D. 55 to 60. Withdrawal, perhaps phased, took place

²⁶ Bidwell 1979.

²⁷ *RIB* 2404.1; 2404.2 and Todd forthcoming.

²⁸ Holbrook and Shiel 2002.

²⁹ Griffith 1984.

³⁰ Griffith 1984.

³¹ Fitzpatrick 1999.

³² Todd 2002a.

³³ Maxfield 1991.

³⁴ Sage and Allan 2004.

³⁵ Silvester and Bidwell 1984.

from the late sixties and early seventies. The fortress at Exeter was given up by A.D. 75, perhaps in 74 when the Second Legion moved to Caerleon.³⁶ On present evidence the latest occupation of a fort has come from Bolham Farm, Tiverton. The other bases appear to have been abandoned between A.D. 70 and 75, if not earlier. As yet, Cornwall adds little to the picture apart from the small fort at Nanstallon, founded about A.D. 60 and given up by A.D. 75 or shortly afterwards.³⁷ The unpublished fort at Clayhanger, roughly midway between Bolham Farm and Wiveliscombe, and the possible fort at Rainsbury on the south-eastern flank of Exmoor have produced no evidence of date as yet.³⁸

CONCLUSION

The dating evidence at Hembury points to military occupation from *c.* A.D. 55 or slightly earlier to the late sixties, and certainly no later than A.D. 70 (below, p. 118). The samian pottery, substantially Neronian, was mostly found in occupation and demolition deposits; nothing was recovered from the phases of construction which throws light on the opening date. The copies of Claudian aes coins are no guide to date, but it must be noted that the two Claudian denarii in fresh condition are unlikely to have reached South-Western Britain after A.D. 55 and could well be earlier. On the evidence at present available, an opening date of *c.* A.D. 55 or slightly earlier is plausible, with an end to occupation a decade later, and not as late as A.D. 70.

The character of the military occupation at Hembury remains to be assessed. It is unlikely that this was within a regularly-planned fort like that at Hod Hill. It is now clear that Roman re-use of earlier sites did not always include regularly-planned forts. At Brandon Camp substantial buildings, including a large granary, were set out on a far from regular plan.³⁹ At South Cadbury, and probably Maiden Castle and Ham Hill, all in Somerset, there is no clear evidence of a formal fort layout within Iron Age strongholds.⁴⁰ This is understandable, as the powerful defences of these sites provided a well-protected space within which any manner of buildings could be constructed. In the case of Hembury, the rectangular area between the north defences and the centre of the fort, including the north-east and west gates, offered some 3.31 hectares (8 acres). The southern area of the fort, as it tapers, offered a less amenable space for occupation; Liddell's excavation at the southern extremity and elsewhere in the southern third seems to have produced no evidence of Roman activity.

THE COINS

- 1–2. Denarii of Claudius (*RIC* I, 18 (OB CIVES SERVATOS); 21 (IMPER RECEPT)), both in fresh condition. Found together beneath a flat stone in Trench 7.
3. Copy of an as of Claudius (*RIC* I, 66). Worn and unstratified.
4. Copy of an as of Claudius (probably *RIC* I, 66). Corroded. Occupation layer in *fabrica*, Trench 3.
5. Copy of an as of Claudius (*RIC* I, 66). Slightly worn. Demolition layer in *fabrica*, Trench 3.

³⁶ Bidwell 1979, 16–17.

³⁷ Fox and Ravenhill 1972. No other certain Roman forts have been identified west of the Tamar.

³⁸ Riley and Wilson-North 2001, 79, fig. 3.31.

³⁹ Frere 1987.

⁴⁰ Todd 1985.

An as of Nero (*RIC* I, 159) was found in a stone wall at Hembury in 1962, but is now lost. An as of Claudius was found in 'the surface layer' of Liddell's trench XXXIV in 1935⁴¹ (*RIC* I, 67 (CERES AVGVSTA)); this reverse type was struck throughout the reign of Claudius, A.D. 41–54). There are no details of condition.

SAMIAN WARE *By* Geoffrey Dannell

No decorated pieces were recorded and all the samian has been affected by the highly acidic soil conditions. In consequence, the dates offered here are cautious.

1. Cup in micaceous fabric with a slip assignable to Central Gaul, though the mica is white rather than the more usual yellow. Perhaps a Lezoux product and pre-Flavian. This is not commonly found on military sites and might indicate that importation was from the Loire rather than the Lower Rhine, which seems to have been more usual. There are hints of this at Fishbourne and Selsey. Occupation layer in Trench 3.
2. Body sherd. South Gaulish, probably Neronian. Demolition layer in Trench 3.
3. Form 18. South Gaulish, probably Neronian. Demolition layer in Trench 7.
4. Form 15/17 or 18. South Gaulish, probably Neronian. Over foundation trench in Trench 7.
5. Form 24/25. South Gaulish, possibly Neronian. Unstratified.

This small sample suggests a date between A.D. 55 and 70, though the Form 24/25 may be earlier. It must be noted that four of the five vessels were found in deposits which post-dated construction and the fifth (No. 5) was unstratified. An Arretine vessel has already been published;⁴² this rim sherd was found in a primary deposit in Building 3. Vessels of this form were current from *c.* A.D. 10 to 30. The possibility of continued use of such a fine vessel after A.D. 30 is to be considered, but a date later than A.D. 50/55 is unlikely. Such a vessel might, of course, be residual, having been brought to the site in a soldier's pack. Suggestive as it is, it cannot be relied on to provide a start-date for Roman military occupation at Hembury.

OTHER POTTERY

Four fortress wares have been identified at Exeter and in other military contexts in the South-West. They comprise:

- A. Sandy mid-grey fabric;
- B. Hard mid-dark grey fabric;
- C. Oxidised buff to light orange fabric;
- D. Hard to light red/pink fabric; often slightly micaceous, with cream slip.

In addition, a soft sandy grey ware with micaceous surfaces is represented throughout the occupation of the fortress and onward into the early second century.⁴³

These vessels add little or nothing to the dating evidence of the site, as they extend from A.D. 50/55 to the Flavian period and in some cases beyond. The overall date offered by the pottery is A.D. 50–75, with a bias towards A.D. 50–70.

⁴¹ Liddell 1935, 157.

⁴² Todd 1993.

⁴³ Holbrook and Bidwell 1991.

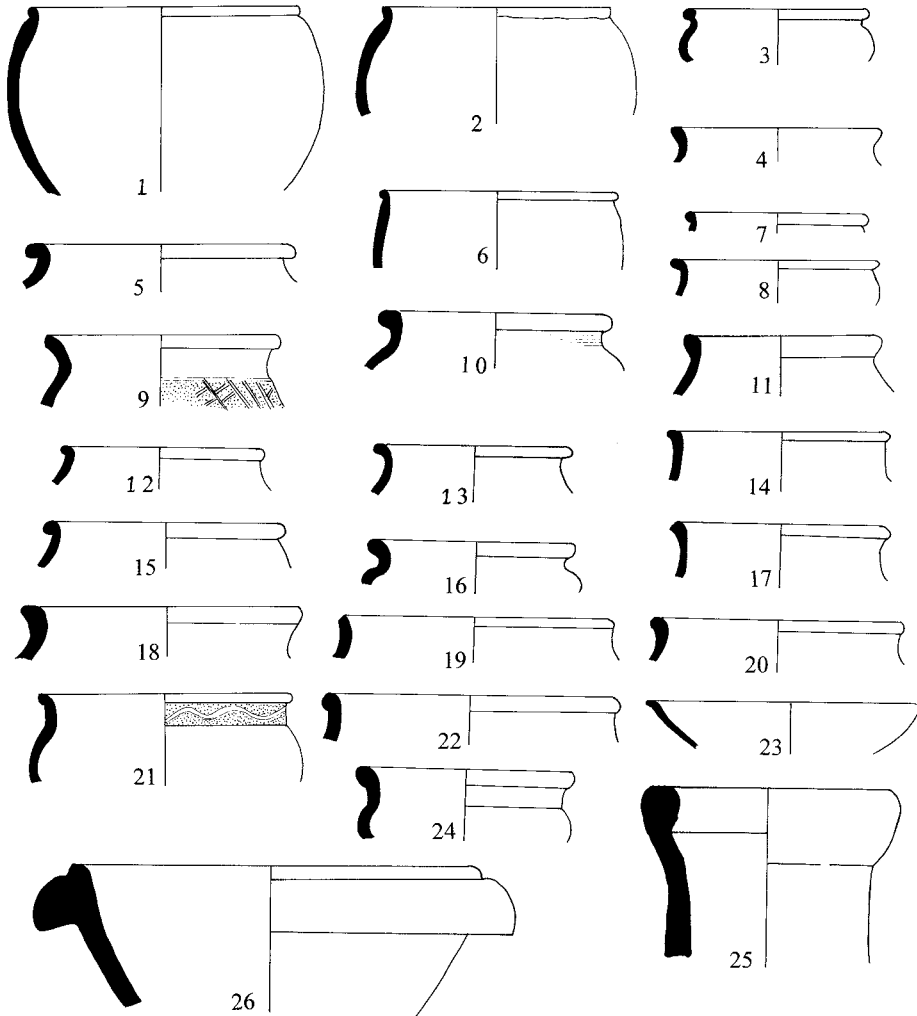


FIG. 8. Roman pottery from Hembury.

1. Dark brown fabric with dull red-brown slip on exterior. 'Pompeian red'. Occupation layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (Not illus.).
2. Dark grey fabric with sand inclusions. A hand-made vessel, in a late Iron Age tradition. Top filling of foundation trench in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 1).
3. Hard mid-grey fabric. Fortress ware B. Occupation layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 2).
4. Hard mid-grey fabric, as No. 3. Fortress ware B. Humus below topsoil (FIG. 8, No. 3).
5. Dark grey sandy fabric. Fortress ware A. Demolition layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 4).
6. Dark buff fabric with sand inclusions. Fortress ware A? Occupation layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 5).
7. Buff fabric with sand inclusions. Fortress ware C. Humus below topsoil (FIG. 8, No. 6).

8. Hard dark grey fabric. Fortress ware B. Upper filling of foundation trench in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 7).
9. Grey-brown fabric, lightly burnished. Occupation layer in Trench 5 (FIG. 8, No. 8).
10. Dark grey fabric; burnished zone below rim. Occupation layer in Trench 5 (FIG. 8, No. 9).
11. Dark grey sandy fabric. Occupation layer in Trench 5 (FIG. 8, No. 10).
12. Dark buff fabric. Fortress ware C. Unstratified (FIG. 8, No. 11).
13. Dark grey fabric. Unstratified (FIG. 8, No. 12).
14. Dark grey fabric. Demolition layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 13).
15. Hard mid-grey fabric. Fortress ware B. Over foundation trench in *fabrica* (Trench 3), possibly in demolition layer (FIG. 8, No. 14).
16. Dark grey fabric. Unstratified (FIG. 8, No. 15).
17. Hard-fired grey fabric. Fortress ware B. Over gravel surface in Trench 6 (FIG. 8, No. 16).
18. Mid-grey fabric. Unstratified (FIG. 8, No. 17).
19. Dark grey fabric. Fortress ware A. Over gravel surface in Trench 6 (cf. No. 17) (FIG. 8, No. 18).
20. Dark grey sandy fabric. Fortress ware A. Old land surface over natural clay (FIG. 8, No. 19).
21. Dark grey sandy fabric. Fortress ware A. Occupation layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 20).
22. Smooth grey-brown fabric. Burnished zone below rim. Occupation layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 21).
23. Dark grey fabric. Unstratified (FIG. 8, No. 22).
24. Buff/light brown fabric with orange/red internal slip. 'Pompeian red'. Old land surface over natural clay in Trench 3 (FIG. 8, No. 23).
25. Dark brown/grey fabric. Occupation layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3) (FIG. 8, No. 24).
26. Dark orange fabric with micaceous inclusions. In downwash to the rear of the rampart in Trench 3 (FIG. 8, No. 25).
27. Cream/light buff fabric with coarse grits. Fortress ware C. Demolition layer in Trench 3 (FIG. 8, No. 26).

GLASS VESSELS⁴⁴

Fragments of four blown glass vessels were found, along with 14 small fragments of colourless glass, probably drinking-cups. The small fragments all lay in the gravel surface within Building 3. No non-blown vessels were found.

- 1–2. Two bluish-green convex cups with wheel-cut lines. Occupation layer in *fabrica* (Trench 3).
3. Dark green convex cup. Occupation in Building 3 (Trench 5).
4. Dark green, thin-walled vessel of uncertain form, with abraded lines. Unstratified.

Professor Jennifer Price comments that these vessels, where identifiable, are comparable with material from Italy and adjacent areas, and were probably imported from there.

⁴⁴ Based on a note by Professor Jennifer Price.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavations of 1980–83 were funded by the British Academy, the Society of Antiquaries, and the University of Exeter. In the field Mike and Sue Rouillard and Sean Goddard shared in directing the force of, mainly Exeter, students. Mike Rouillard was also responsible for survey and production of most of the final drawings. The overall survey of the fort was conducted by Norman Quinnell and Martin Fletcher on behalf of R.C.H.M. (England). Geoffrey Dannell has reported on the samian ware and invaluable practical help in preparing this report for publication has been provided by Dr Colin Shepherd.

APPENDIX: EARLY ROMAN MILITARY OBJECTS FROM CHALBURY, DORSET

The hillfort of Chalbury, Dorset, lies near Weymouth, some 5 km south of Maiden Castle and Dorchester. Excavation here in 1939, supervised by Margaret Whitley, and probably instigated by Mortimer Wheeler, revealed two late Bronze Age barrows and other indications of Bronze Age activity. The Iron Age hillfort was subjected to limited examination of its defences on the northern and south-eastern sides and of two circular houses in the interior. The material recovered pointed to occupation in the earlier Iron Age, provisionally from the fifth century B.C.⁴⁵ There has been no subsequent excavation. It was planned to conduct a further season of work in 1940, but this was aborted because of the onset of war.

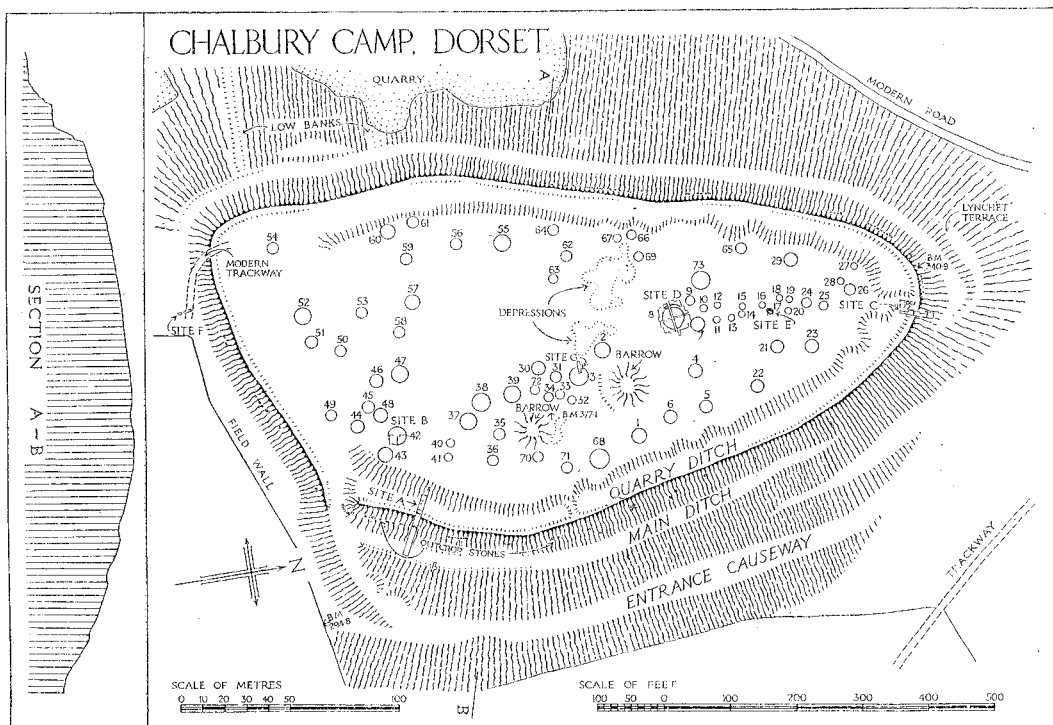


FIG. 9. Chalbury Camp, Dorset.

⁴⁵ Whitley 1943.

This note records three finds which were not included in the 1943 report and which suggest use of the hillfort by Roman troops in the early years of occupation. These objects are in the British Museum collections and I am grateful to Ralph Jackson for information on them. They comprise:

1. A rectangular bronze belt mount with niello ornament, an object commonly found on early military sites; 4 cm by 3.2 cm.⁴⁶
2. A worn bronze pendant with possible traces of niello.⁴⁷
3. Tinned bronze scabbard mount; 10 cm by 2 cm.⁴⁸

No stratigraphic evidence for these pieces was recorded. All three are probably Claudio-Neronian in date. They add Chalbury to the list of hillforts in South-Western Britain which have produced evidence for the presence of Roman troops between A.D. 43 and c. 70 (see above). There is little doubt that the list will be enlarged in due course.

Exeter

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⁴⁶ Hawkes and Hull 1947, CII, 17; Richmond 1968, fig. 4, A 109.

⁴⁷ Hawkes and Hull 1947, CIII, 11.

⁴⁸ Bushe-Fox 1949, pl. XXXIII, 72.

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