

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Material from Iron-Age Sites in the Northern Cotswolds

by A. J. Marshall
1978, Vol. 96, 17-26

© The Society and the Author(s)

Material from Iron-Age Sites in the Northern Cotswolds

By A. J. MARSHALL

IN ADDITION to new data, this paper contains a re-description of some of the mainly ceramic material from early excavation of several iron-age sites in the northern Cotswolds, as a supplement to the general outline of the non-Belgic Iron Age in the area, given in the preceding paper.

KINGS BEECHES, WOODMANCOTE, GLOS (SO 983267)

The site, which appears to be an open settlement, is situated high on the slope of the Cotswold escarpment, at 240 m O.D., overlooking the Severn valley (RCHM, 1976).

The pottery and stone objects were discovered during quarrying operations on the site, which revealed an occupation layer associated with pits, shallow depressions and post-holes (Gray and Brewer, 1906). No plan of excavated structures, nor details of stratification exists, but a re-appraisal of the report and examination of the site and finds suggests evidence for a small open settlement, containing post-built structures and associated storage, or rubbish pits. Large fragments of daub, with wattle impressions, suggests use of this technique in hut construction.

Most of the associated pottery (FIG. 1) has affinities with material from other sites in the Cotswolds occupied in the later phases of the Iron Age. The undecorated forms (FIG. 1, Nos. 1-9) are paralleled at Bredon, Salmonsbury and the Knolls, whilst the linear-tooled and stamped wares are similar to material from Danes Camp and Sutton Walls. The earlier phases of the Iron Age are represented only by the shouldered jar fragment (FIG. 1, No. 10). Possible pottery-making activity on the site is suggested by the range of stone implements (FIG. 1), and other domestic activity is suggested by the stone basin (FIG. 2).

Description of material

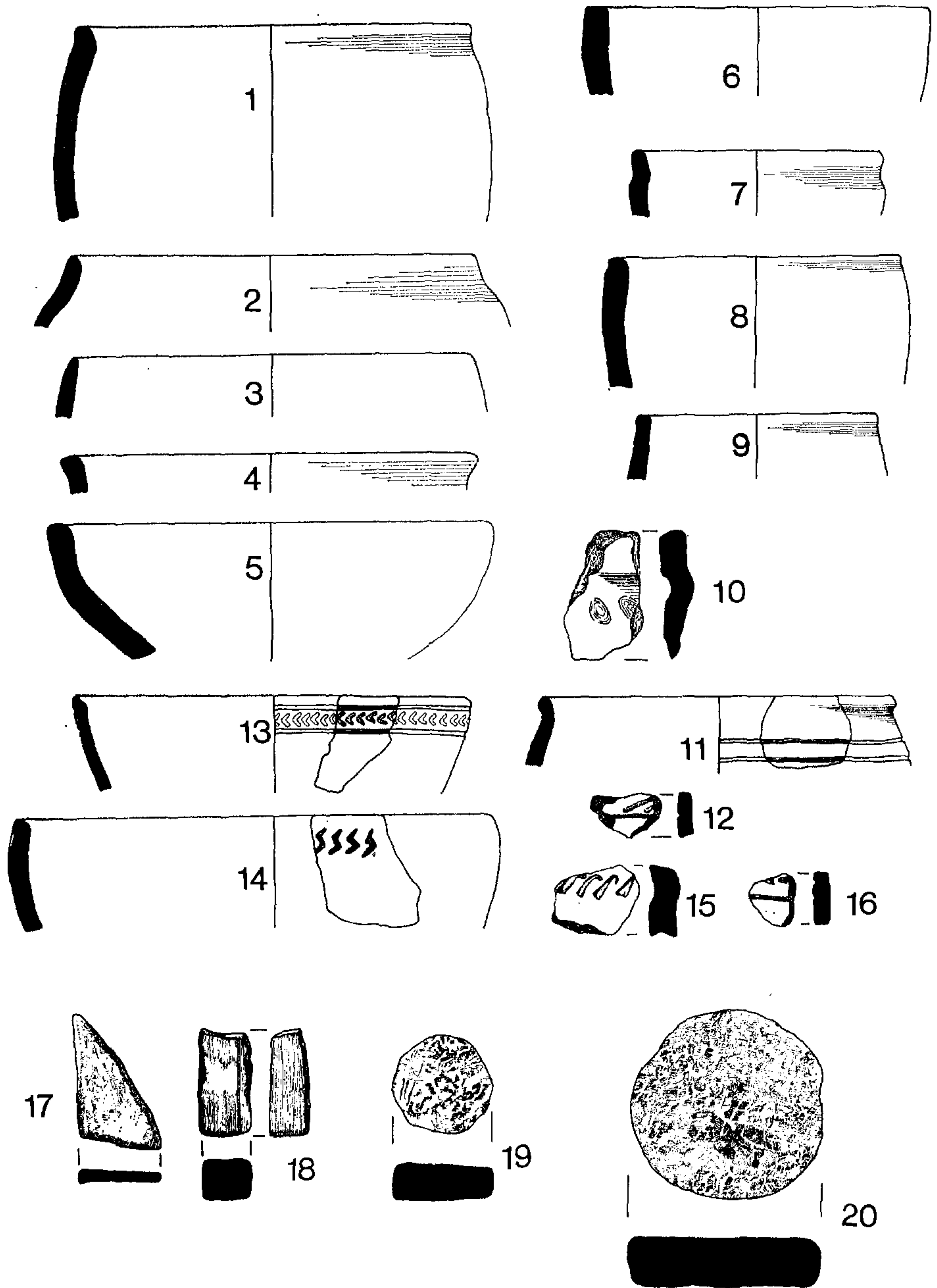
Location of material: FIGS. 1-2 Cheltenham Museum.

THE KNOLLS, OXENTON, GLOS (SO 973313)

This hillfort, which encloses about 3.3 hectares is situated on a limestone outlier, at approximately 213 m O.D., on the edge of the Severn valley. The site has been reclassified as a settlement with an associated dyke (RCHM, 1976).

Excavation in the interior of the hillfort (Powell, 1933) produced pottery and a bone needle from a mound of loose stone-work. No structures nor stratification was recorded.

Considered as a group, the pottery (FIG. 3) belongs to the later phases of the Iron Age, and shows strong affinities in form, and decoration with material from Bredon hillfort (Hencken, 1938), and Danes Camp (Thomas, 1959), and also from Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976). Stamped wares parallel those at Bredon and Danes Camp but the linear-tooled ware with cross-hatching on the body suggests affinities with traditions seen at Salmonsbury and Broadway (Smith, 1946) and in the



Kings Beeches FIG. 1

FIG. 1 Pottery

- Large barrel-shaped jars *Fabric*
 1-3 Red-brown fabric, shell grit filler, unburnished ext.
 Shallow bowls
 4-6 As 1-3.
 7 Black fabric, shell-grit filler, unburnished ext.
 8 Red-brown fabric, grit filler, unburnished ext.
 9 Black fabric, shell-grit filler, unburnished ext.
 Shouldered jars
 10 As 1-3.
 Linear-tooled ware
 11-12 Black fabric, grit filler, burnished ext.
 Stamped ware
 13-16 As 1-3.

Parallels

- 1 Form similar to types from Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 18, No. 9; Fig. 15, No. 13; Fig. 20, No. 3), Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976, Fig. 14, No. 2), and the Knolls (FIG. 3, Nos. 5, 8-10).
- 2 Similar to Bredon example (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 19, No. 11).
- 3 Form similar to Shenberrow example (Fell, 1961, Fig. 7, No. 14.)
- 5 Some similarity to types from Sutton Walls (Kenyon, 1953, Fig. 14, No. 23).
- 6-7 Danes Camp (unpublished material: Birmingham museum).
- 8-9 Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976, Fig. 14, No. 7).
- 10 No exact parallels amongst the material at Shenberrow (Fell, 1961), or Chastleton (Leeds, 1931), except a general similarity in form and fabric to other shouldered jars with finger-tip decoration. The 'collared' appearance of this fragment suggests the persistence of earlier, bronze-age traditions.
- 11 Meon Hill (FIG. 5, No. 2).
- 12 The decoration is a common linear-tooled motif, ie., Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 19, Nos. 14, 16; Fig. 17, No. 2).
- 13 Sutton Walls (Kenyon, 1953, Fig. 9, No. 2.)
- 14 Form similar to example at Sutton Walls (Kenyon, 1953, Fig. 11, No. 14), but the decoration differs.

FIG. 1 Stone objects

- 17 Flat, triangular stone implement of Stonesfield slate, with one slightly concave edge. The size and shape suggests a tool for shaping pottery.
- 18 Stone implement with one slightly dished end and a shallow groove on one side. The stone is a fine-grained, silty limestone and, because of its apparent unsuitability as a whetstone, an alternative function in shaping pottery is suggested. A similar object, described as a whetstone, has been found at Shenberrow (Fell, 1961).
- 19-20 Flat, circular discs of oolitic limestone. The surfaces show no sign of abrasion caused by pounding, or grinding activity. Since they are of suitable diameter and form, these discs could possibly be stands for the bases of pots during manufacture.

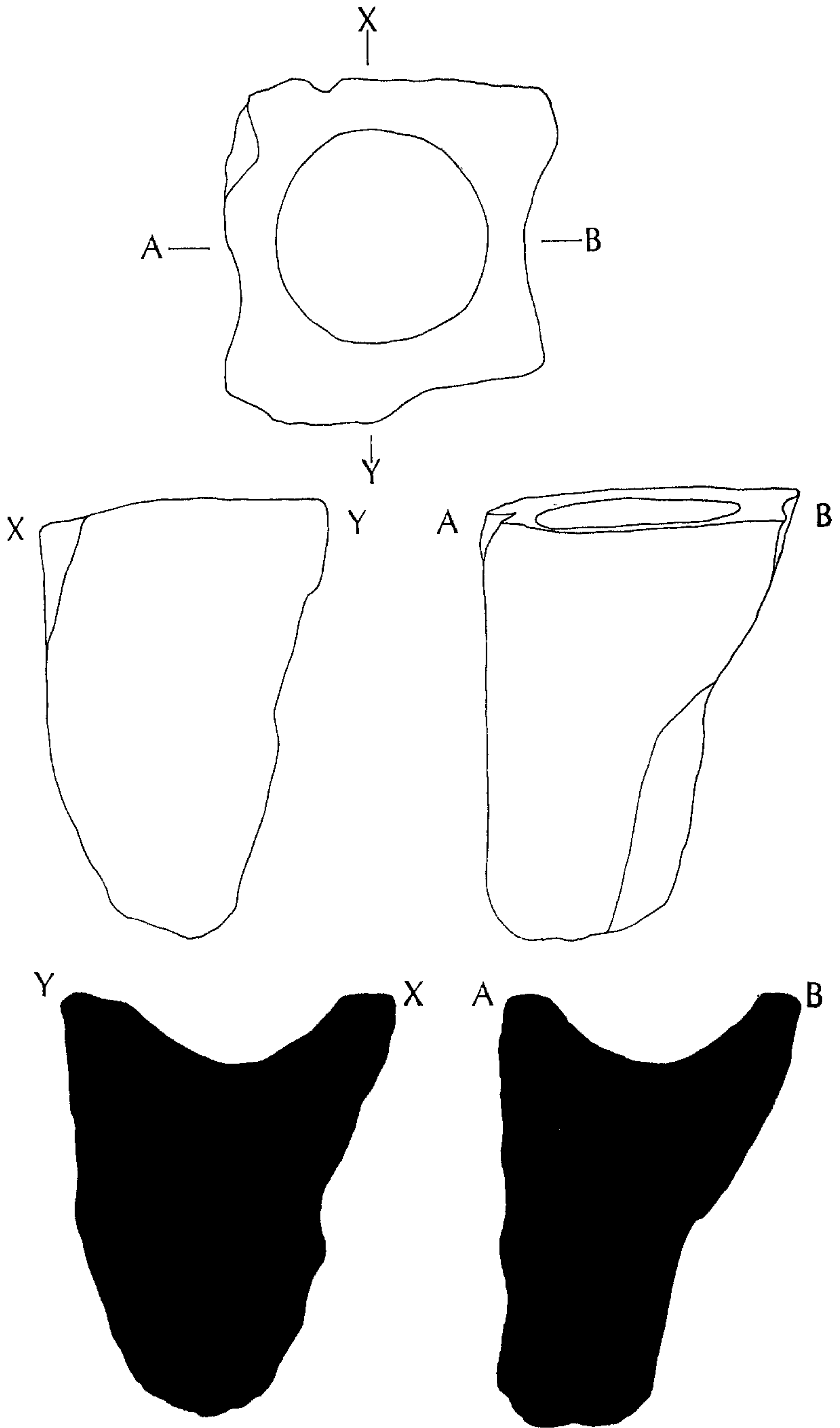
FIG. 2

This roughly-tapered block of oolitic limestone has a circular, dished depression in the flattened upper face. The surfaces are very roughly shaped and the circular depression, which has a slightly smoother finish, shows signs of abrasion and wear. The shape of the block suggests that it was not free-standing in use but was supported. A function is difficult to suggest, but the dished end appears to have been a receptacle, probably used for a grinding, or pounding process. The block was found in a pit which was 3 m long, 1.5 m wide and 1.2 m deep, which contained animal bones, pottery and several quartzite pebbles which showed abrasion. A similar example (exact provenance unknown) is in the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester.

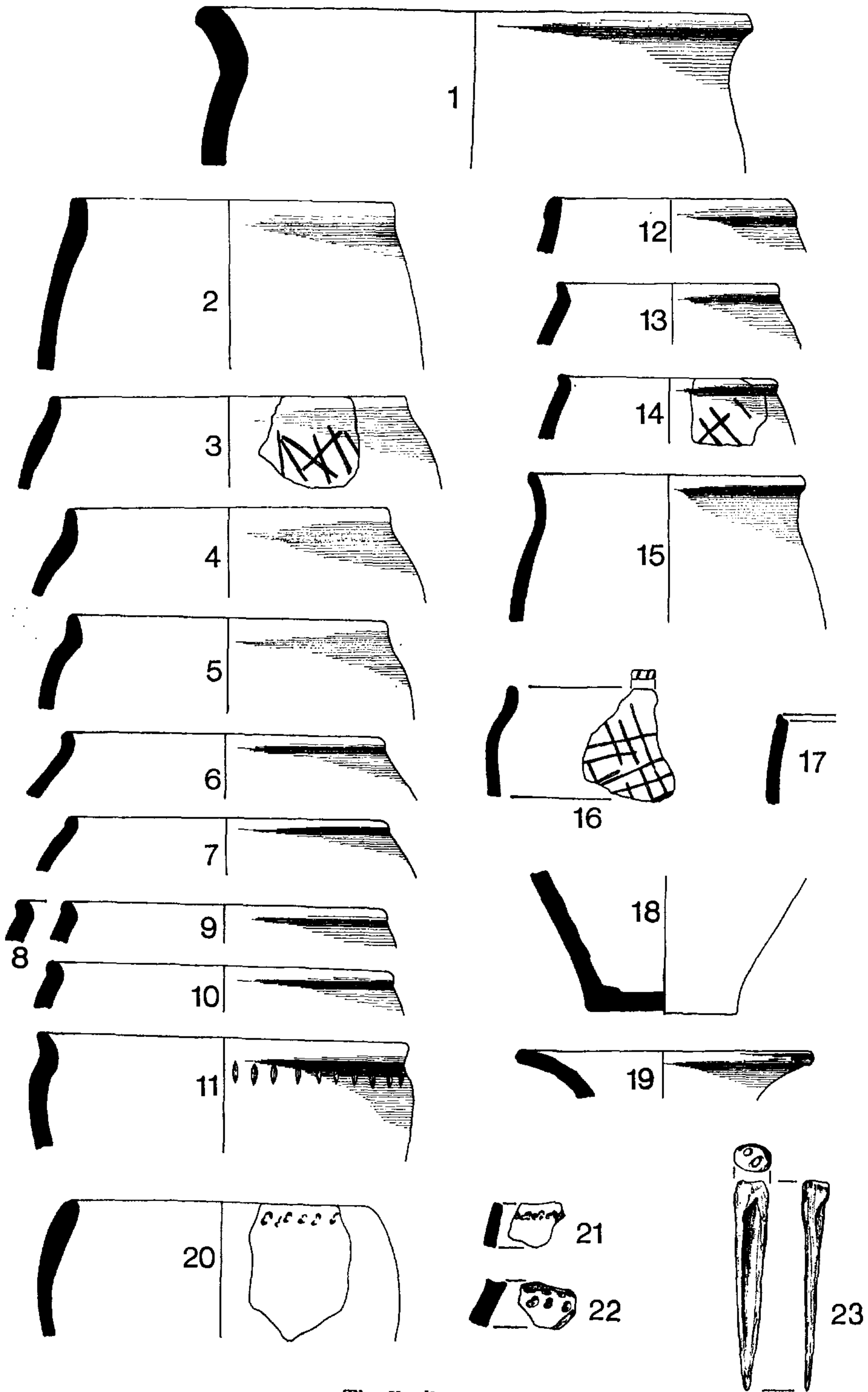
Bredon-Ancaster ceramic group (Cunliffe, 1974, Fig. A13) rather than at Bredon, where linear tooling is mainly restricted to a band near the rim. Undecorated ware consists mainly of barrel-shaped jars similar to those from later iron age contexts at Bredon, Danes Camp, Salmonsbury, Madmarston (Fowler, 1960) and Lydney (Wheeler, 1932).

Description of material

Location of material: FIG. 3 Cheltenham Museum



Kings Beeches FIG. 2 (Scale $\times \frac{1}{8}$)



The Knolls FIG. 3

FIG. 3 Pottery

Fabric

Large jars

- 1 Brown fabric, shell-grit filler, unburnished ext.

Large-barrel shaped jars

- 2 Red-brown fabric, shell-grit filler, unburnished ext.
 3-5 Buff-grey fabric, some grit filler, unburnished ext.
 6 Black fabric, grit filler, slightly burnished ext.
 7-10 Black fabric, some grit filler, burnished ext.
 11 Red-grey fabric, grit filler, unburnished ext.

Small barrel-shaped jars

- 12 Black fabric, grit filler, unburnished ext.
 13-14 Black fabric, grit filler, burnished ext.
 15 Black fabric, some grit filler, highly burnished ext.
 16 Black fabric, some grit filler, unburnished ext.
 17 As 13. Diameter unknown.

Other types

- 18 Buff-brown fabric, shell-grit filler, unburnished ext.
 19 Black fabric, some grit filler, unburnished ext.

Stamped wares

- 20 Red-brown fabric, grit filler, slightly burnished ext.
 21-22 Brown-black fabric, very little grit filler, burnished ext.

Parallels

- 1 A larger variant of barrel-shaped jars occurring at Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 18, No. 9), but with a more pronounced, out-turned rim.
- 2-5 Paralleled at Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 15, No. 13; Fig. 20, No. 3), Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976, Fig. 14), Madmarston (Fowler, 1960, Fig. 14, No. 9) and Lydney (Wheeler, 1932, Fig. 24, No. 1). See also barrel-shaped jar at Kings Beeches (FIG. 1, No. 1). The cross-hatching on No. 3 is similar to that on the smaller barrel-shaped jars No. 14 and 16, and use of this decorative technique is paralleled at Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976, Fig. 15, 9-10) and Broadway (FIG. 6), but it occurs here on different forms.
- 6-10 Forms similar to examples at Broadway (FIG. 6, No. 10), Kings Beeches (FIG. 1, No. 2) and Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 15, No. 13; Fig. 18, Nos. 3, 9).
- 11 Form similar to example at Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 15, No. 13, but with added finger-nail decoration).
- 12 Similar to some forms from Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 18, Nos. 6, 8; Fig. 21, No. 3).
- 13 Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 18, No. 6).
- 14 Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 15, No. 6, but with added linear tooling).
- 15 Salmonsbury (unpublished); Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 21, No. 5).
- 16 The form, which is similar to No. 3, is reminiscent of some of the barrel-shaped jars and bowls at Bredon and elsewhere (see comments for Nos. 3-5), but the cross-hatching and the slash decoration on the rim is unusual and is paralleled at Bredon-on-the Hill, Leics., (Cunliffe, 1974, Fig. A13, No. 2; Kenyon, 1950).
- 17 The form is similar to examples at Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 15, No. 10; Fig. 14, No. 2), but with no decoration.
- 19 This type is either an everted rim from a jar with a constricted neck, a shallow dish, or a lid for a jar or bowl with a recessed rim (ie., FIG. 3, No. 17).
- 20 The form is similar to types at Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 16, Nos. 11, 14; Fig. 17, No. 10)
- 21-22 Fragments of forms similar to No. 20, decorated with irregular point-stamp motifs common at Danes Camp and Bredon (ie., Hencken, 1938, Fig. 16, No. 11).

FIG. 3 Bone items

- 23 Bone needle, perforated at the blunt-end by two holes to carry thread and probably used in weaving or netting.

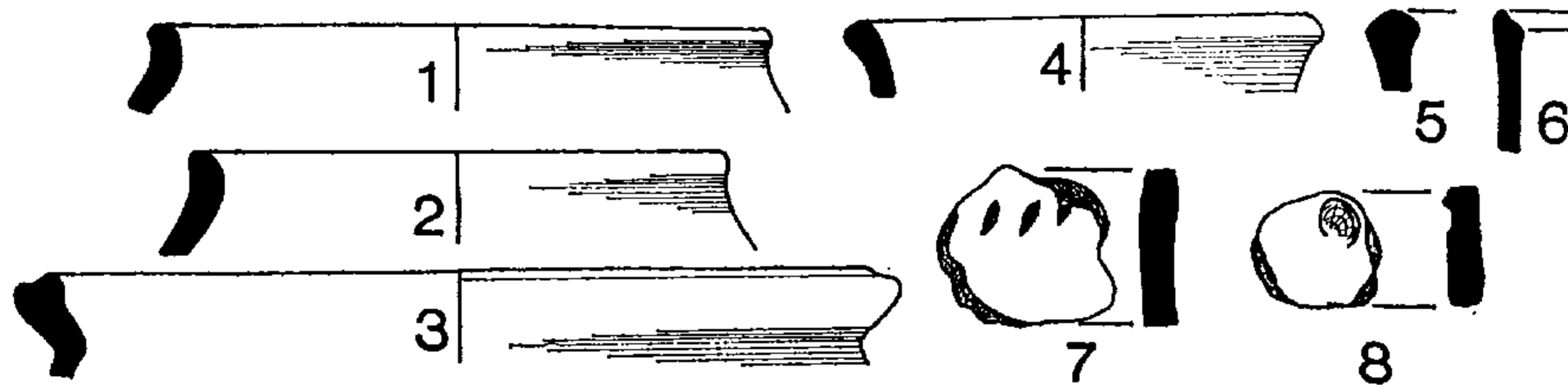
LECKHAMPTON HILL (SO 948183)

Re-interpretation of the dry-stone revetted rampart, ditch and bastioned passage-entrance of this 3.5 hectare hillfort, situated at approximately 275 m O.D., on the edge of the Cotswold scarp,

suggests a single period of occupation during the earlier phases of the Iron Age (Burrows *et al.*, 1925; Champion, 1971, 1976). Associated pottery from the 1925 excavation included shouldered jar fragments with finger-tip decoration from the ditch (FIG. 4, Nos. 7, 8) and the 1969-71 excavation (Champion, 1971) produced several similar fragments and pottery with incised decoration from the rampart. This period is related through the pottery, rampart and entrance construction to the earlier phases of the Iron Age as seen at Chastleton (Leeds, 1931), Shenberrow (Fell, 1961), Crickley Hill (Dixon, 1972, 1973, 1976) and Rainsborough (Avery *et al.*, 1967). Some of the 1925 pottery is related to later development of the site, not evidenced structurally at present, and includes a possible Glastonbury-type sherd, now lost (Burrows *et al.*, 1925, Pl. 6, G). The sherds illustrated (FIG. 4) and the unillustrated body-sherds (predominantly unburnished black, or red bowl/jar fragments with shell-grit filler) from the 1925 excavation are also best paralleled in form and fabric in later iron age contexts in the Cotswolds, at such sites as the Knolls (FIG 3), Danes Camp (Thomas, 1959) and Bredon Hill (Hencken, 1938).

Description of Material

Location of material: FIG. 4 Cheltenham Museum.



Leckhampton FIG. 4

FIG. 4

Fabric

Rounded bowls

- 1 Black fabric, shell-grit filler, burnished ext.
- 2 Brown-black fabric, some grit filler, burnished ext.

Flanged bowl/jar

- 3 Brown fabric, much granular filler, unburnished ext.

Small bowls/jars

- 4 As 3

Other forms (diameters unknown)

- 5 Fragment of (?) bowl with expanded, rounded rim. Brown fabric, grit filler, unburnished ext.
- 6 Fragment of straight-sided bowl/jar with grooved rim, possibly to fit a lid. Brown fabric, some grit filler, unburnished ext.

Large shouldered jars

- 7 Jar fragment with horizontal line of finger-nail impressions. Red-brown fabric, shell-grit filler, unburnished ext.
- 8 Jar fragment with finger-tip impressions. Fabric as 7.

Parallels

- 1-2 Knolls (FIG. 3, Nos. 6-10; Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 18, No. 10).
- 3 Rim form and fabric similar to later iron age pottery types at Millhampost, Glos. (SP043308). Note the occurrence of incipient flanges on types from Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 15, Nos. 5, 14).
- 4-6 No precise parallels exist for these types in local material, except for a similarity to some of the undecorated forms at Bredon (Hencken, 1938) and Millhampost.
- 7-8 Similar forms occur at Chastleton (Leeds, 1931) and Shenberrow (Fell, 1961).

MEON HILL (SP 177454)

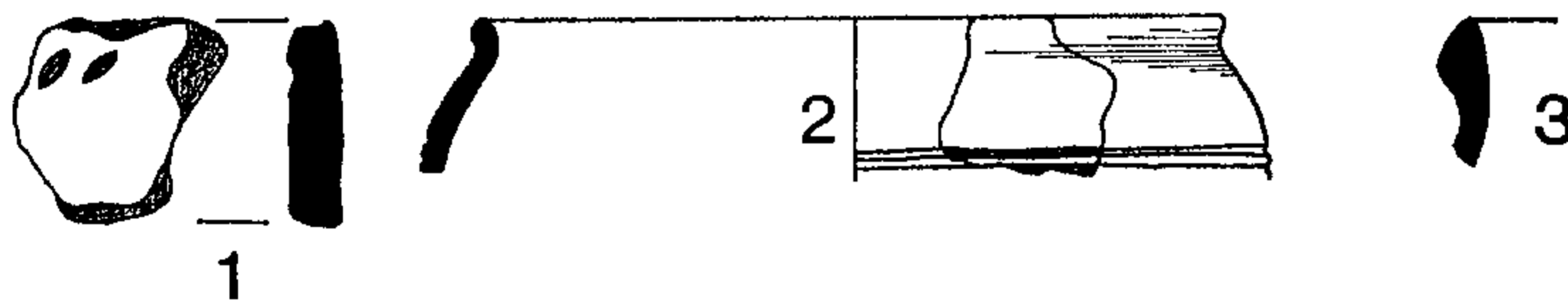
The multivallate hillfort on Meon Hill encloses 10.5 hectares of the summit of an outlier to the main Cotswold escarpment and is situated at about 180 m O.D., overlooking the Severn-Avon valley.

Reference is made to an excavation conducted in the early part of this century in letters associated with pottery from the site, now in the Cheltenham Museum collection. During this excavation, several dry-stone built huts, one approximately 5 m in diameter, were investigated, but no details of stratification nor plans of structures exist.

The fragment of shouldered jar (FIG. 5, No. 1) suggests an occupation in the early phases of the Iron Age, comparable with similar phases at Shenberrow (Fell, 1961), Chastleton (Leeds, 1931), Leckhampton (Burrow *et al.*, 1925; Champion, 1971) and Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976). The fragment of Salmonsbury-Broadway type linear-tooled ware (FIG. 5, No. 2) could represent later periods on the site, to which the hoard of currency bars (Allen, 1967), bivallate rampart, and circular huts probably belong, in a similar association to that seen at Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976).

Description of material

Location of material: FIG 5 Cheltenham Museum.



Meon Hill FIG. 5

FIG. 5

Fabric

Shouldered jars

- 1 Shouldered jar fragment with line of finger-nail impressions.
Red-brown fabric, shell-grit filler, unburnished ext.

Linear-tooled ware (Salmonsbury-Broadway type)

- 2 Rounded bowl decorated with two horizontal, closely-spaced burnished lines on the shoulder. Dark grey-black fabric, very little grit filler, slightly burnished ext.

Other types

- 3 Fabric as 1. Diameter unknown.

Parallels

- 1 Leckhampton (FIG. 4, No. 7); Shenberrow (Fell, 1961); Chastleton (Leeds, 1931).
2 Kings Beeches (FIG. 1, No. 11).
3 Form similar to Knolls (FIG. 3, No. 12).

BROADWAY (SP 090378)

The site is located at the foot of the Cotswold escarpment at about 90 m O.D., on an area of fluvio-glacial gravel at the edge of the Severn-Avon valley.

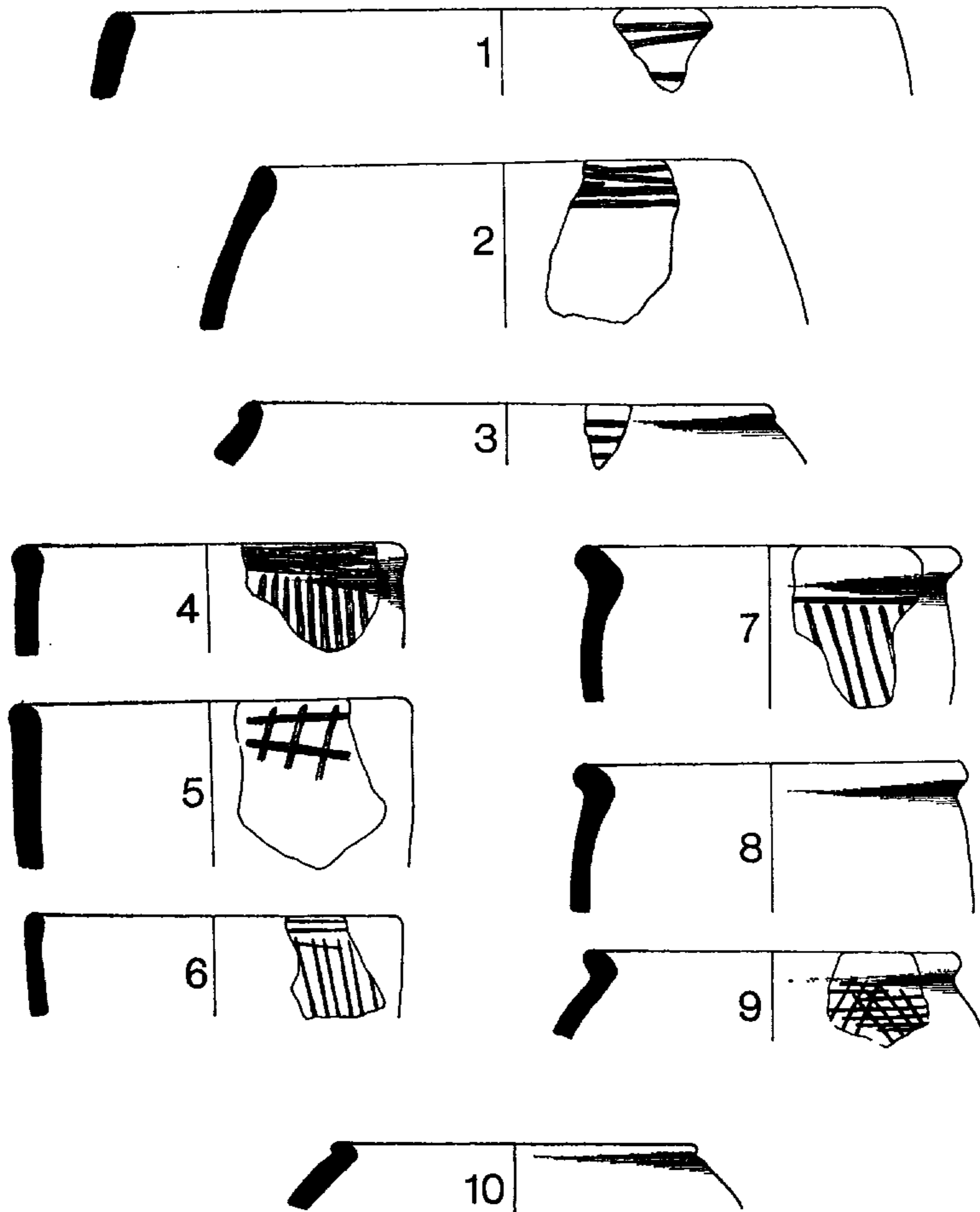
Excavation in 1945 (Smith, 1946) revealed part of a V-sectioned ditch cut into the gravel, from which iron age pottery was recovered. Subsequent aerial photography (Webster and Hobley, 1964) has revealed a square, ditched enclosure with a single entrance.

The pottery belongs to the later phases of the Iron Age, and is well-paralleled at Bredon (Hencken, 1938), Danes Camp (Thomas, 1959), Beckford (Oswald, 1972) and Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976). The linear-tooled ware from this site shows affinities both with the large barrel-shaped jars with decoration confined to a band near the rim (FIG. 6, Nos. 1-3), as seen at Bredon, Danes Camp and

Beckford (Croft Ambrey-Bredon Hill style), and also with bowl and jar forms decorated with different motifs, which cover larger areas of the body (Salmonsbury-Broadway type), as seen at Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976). The former type of linear-tooled ware has a distribution centered on the Severn-Avon valley and occurs in marginal areas of the Cotswolds, but the latter ware is distributed in the northern Cotswolds, typically at Salmonsbury, where the Croft Ambrey-Bredon type is not found. Broadway, in an area marginal to both distributions, has produced both types on a single site.

Description of material

Location of material: FIG 6 Worcester Museum.



Broadway FIG. 6

FIG. 6

Fabric

Large barrel-shaped jars with linear-tooled decoration (Croft Ambrey-Bredon type)

- 1 Decoration consists of two horizontal, burnished lines below the rim, outlining a narrow band containing diagonal burnished lines.
Black fabric, some grit filler, burnished ext.
- 2 Decoration as for No. 1, but band contains cross-hatched lines.
Fabric as No. 1.

- 3 Decoration consists of three parallel, horizontal, burnished lines just below the rim.
Fabric as No. 1.

Bowls/jars with linear-tooled decoration (Salmonsbury-Broadway type)

- 4 Decoration consists of three horizontal, burnished lines immediately below the rim, with a series of vertical burnished lines covering the body.
Black fabric, grit filler, slightly burnished ext.
- 5 Decoration consists of very lightly burnished cross-hatching on the upper vessel.
Black fabric, grit filler, slightly burnished ext.
- 6 Decoration similar to No. 4.
Fabric as No. 5.
- 7 Decoration consists of a single horizontal, burnished line below the rim, and a series of parallel burnished lines covering the body.
Black fabric, some grit filler, unburnished ext.
- 9 Decoration consists of burnished cross-hatching on the shoulder.
Fabric as No. 7.

Undecorated bowls

- 8 Fabric as No. 7.
10 Fabric as No. 4.

Parallels

- 1 Form similar to large barrel-shaped jars at Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 19, No. 14), and at Danes Camp.
- 2 Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 20, No. 1).
- 3 Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 19, No. 14; Fig. 20, No. 1)
- 4-9 Decoration of burnished parallel lines, or cross-hatching paralleled at Salmonsbury (Dunning, 1976, Fig. 15, Nos. 9-10), and similar cross-hatching occurs at the Knolls (FIG. 3, Nos. 3, 14, 16).
- 10 Bredon (Hencken, 1938, Fig. 18, No. 9); Knolls (FIG. 3, Nos. 8-10); Llanmelin (Nash-Williams, 1933, Fig. 43, No. 19).

Acknowledgment. The writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Mr Ken Browne and Mr David Addison of Cheltenham Museum, Dr H. N. Savory of the National Museum of Wales, Mr N. Thomas of Birmingham Museum, and staff at Worcester Museum for allowing access to museum collections and for permission to publish the material reproduced in this paper.

April 1977