



The *Praetorium* of Edmund Artis: A Summary of Excavations and Surveys of the Palatial Roman Structure at Castor, Cambridgeshire 1828–2010

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ABSTRACT

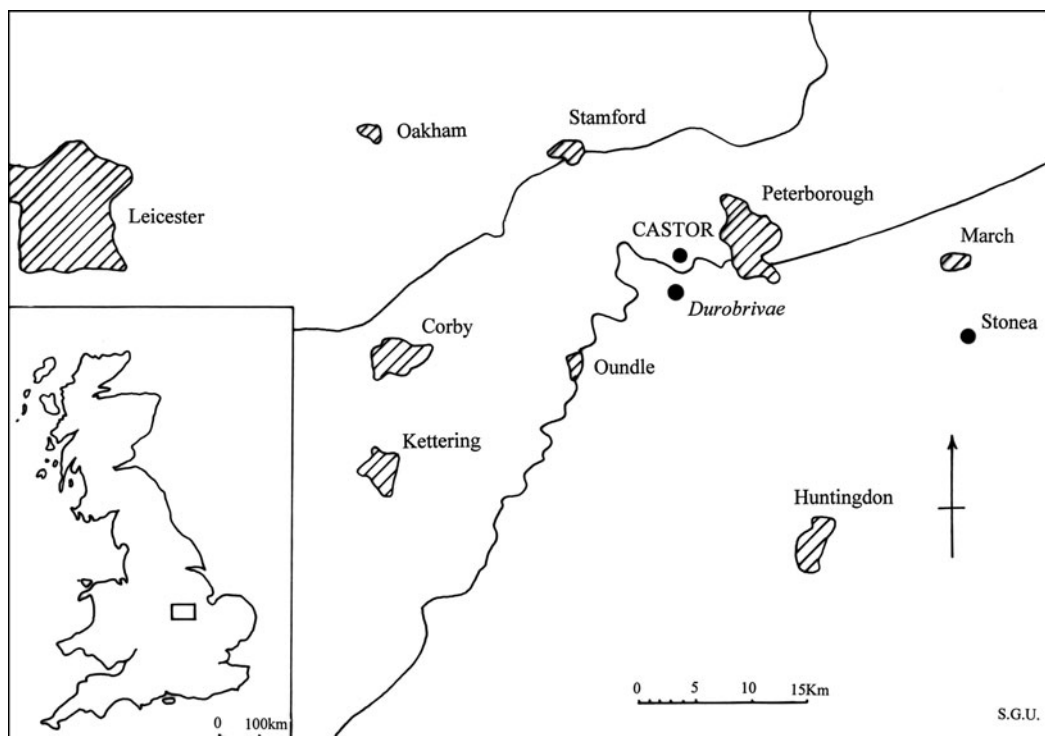
Antiquarian and modern excavations at Castor, Cambs., have been taking place since the seventeenth century. The site, which lies under the modern village, has been variously described as a Roman villa, a guild centre and a palace, while Edmund Artis working in the 1820s termed it the 'Praetorium'. The Roman buildings covered an area of 3.77 ha (9.4 acres) and appear to have had two main phases, the latter of which formed a single unified structure some 130 by 90 m. This article attempts to draw together all of the previous work at the site and provide a comprehensive plan, a set of suggested dates, and options on how the remains could be interpreted.

INTRODUCTION

This article provides a summary of various excavations and surveys of a large group of Roman buildings found beneath Castor village, Cambs. (centred on TL 124 984). The village of Castor lies 8 km to the west of Peterborough (FIG. 1) and rises on a slope above the first terrace gravel soils of the River Nene to the south. The underlying geology is mixed, with the lower part of the village (8 m AOD) sitting on both terrace gravel and Lower Lincolnshire limestone, while further up the valley side the Upper Estuarine Series and Blisworth Limestone are encountered, with a capping of Blisworth Clay at the top of the slope (23 m AOD).¹ The slope of the ground on which the Roman buildings have been arranged has not been emphasised enough or even mentioned in earlier accounts of the site.² The current evidence suggests that substantial Roman terracing and the construction of revetment or retaining walls was required to consolidate the underlying geology.

¹ See Hains and Horton 1969; Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheets TF 00, 10, 20 and TL 09, 19 and 29.

² See for example the block plan in Rivet 1968, fig. 8.

FIG. 1. Location of Castor and *Durobrivae*.

The site lies 1.5 km to the north of the Roman town of *Durobrivae* and 1 km from the junction of two major Roman roads, Ermine Street and King Street. Roman remains have been reported from the area of the village and the church since the seventeenth century and in 1733 comment was made that Castor 'as appears by ye ruins, (was) a City of large extent'.³ Large-scale antiquarian excavations were carried out by Edmund Artis in the early 1820s when substantial remains of Roman masonry were still visible. Artis recovered the plans of several buildings which he interpreted as one unified structure. He was so impressed by the scale of the building that he termed it the '*Praetorium*' on his map of 1828.⁴ Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries finds of Roman material were continually made in the area around the church. During the 1970s and early 1980s a series of small-scale excavations in gardens added to the understanding of the site and made considerable additions to Artis' plan. During recent years more information has been accumulated through archaeological watching-briefs, local building developments, and a three-day archaeological intervention by Time Team.

Our current knowledge shows that the Roman building(s) covered an area of 290 by 130 m (3.77 ha), and had at least 11 rooms with tessellated floors and mosaics,⁵ at least two bath-houses and several hypocausts. The masonry which survives points to monumental architecture and the evidence now indicates two major phases of building that may link with political and historical events in the province.

³ Peterborough Gentleman's Society Minute Book, 1730–42, 64–5.

⁴ Artis 1828.

⁵ It is estimated that this is about half of the original total.

In the post-Roman period the site appears to have had some element of continuity, for there is fifth-century pottery and later eighth-century occupation material from excavated contexts.⁶ A nunnery was supposedly founded at Castor in the mid-seventh century by Cyneburgh (Kyneburgha), daughter of Penda who was the king of Mercia.⁷ The medieval church contains several fragments of eighth- and ninth-century stone sculpture⁸ and there are chance finds of a coin of Offa (c. A.D. 757–796) and a Saxon pin and strap-end, all from close to the church.⁹

ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE SITE

The Roman remains at Castor must have attracted early antiquarian interest owing to the fact that several walls appear to have been standing to a good height even when Edmund Artis surveyed the site in the 1820s. Several sections of wall are still visible to the north-east and north-west of the church (see FIG. 2).



FIG. 2. Part of a Roman wall incorporated in the later wall of the Castor Rectory on Stocks Hill. Scale in units of 50 cm. (Photo: S.G. Upex)

⁶ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 144.

⁷ Dallas 1973, 16–17; Green *et al.* 1986–87, microfiche M22; see also Morris 2006, 175–6.

⁸ Kendrick 1938, pl. 70, 2.

⁹ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 144; also the SMR maintained at Peterborough Museum.

In 1612 William Camden wrote that ‘the little village of Castor which stands one mile from the river seems to have been part of it [Durobrivae] by the inlaid chequered pavements found here’,¹⁰ and in 1712 John Morton visited the site of the Roman town of *Durobrivae* (Chesterton parish, Cambs.) which he described as a ‘Roman station’, but was unsure how the remains he clearly saw at Castor linked with the Roman town. He described Castor as ‘... the Castle or principal Fort or whatever, the Place of Residence of the chief Officer was upon the Hill where the church at present stands’.¹¹

In 1724 William Stukeley recorded that ‘below the churchyard the ground is full of foundations and mosaics. I saw a bit of a pavement in the cellar of the alehouse ...’.¹² Stukeley was again at Castor on 10 September 1737 ‘to view the antiquities’,¹³ when he saw several Roman wells and Roman pavements being dug up in the churchyard. He also commented on the fact that the ‘Roman castrum went quite around the church’.¹⁴ Stukeley’s comment about pavements being dug up in the churchyard probably refers to events in early May 1733 when the Secretary of the Peterborough Gentlemen’s Society gave an account of ‘... a curious Tessellated Pavement discovered last week in Castor Church yard by ye sexton digging a grave for a poor woman. The squares were very small & of different colours, & so intermixt as to forme larger squares of than a foot w(hi)ch ran thro ye whole work. When washed and cleaned ye colour appeared exceeding bright, but ye whole pavement was so strong cemented together, yt the sexton could get up no one piece of it without defacing it & yt coffin was afterwards layd upon it.’¹⁵

However, the major period of antiquarian work and recording at the site was undertaken by Edmund Artis in the years preceding the publication of his book of plates, *The Durobrivae of Antoninus*, in 1828.¹⁶ Artis had been digging in and around Castor for several years and recorded buildings and mosaics from several parts of the *Praetorium* site.¹⁷ He was clearly aware of earlier excavations on the site and on the plan he made of the bath-house (marked ‘G’ on his general plan of 1828, and shown here as FIG. 3; also shown by Artis in detail in his pl. VI) he indicates the room containing what he thought was the cold bath with a comment ‘Part of the same [room] discovered in the 17th century’, a reference, presumably, to the excavations possibly seen by Morton and Stukeley.

¹⁰ This quote from Camden’s *Magnam Historiam* (1612) is given in full in Burke 2004a, 57.

¹¹ Morton 1712, 501. This description of the Castor site as being the ‘place of residence of the chief officer’ may have influenced Artis in calling the site the *Praetorium*.

¹² Stukeley 1724, 78–9.

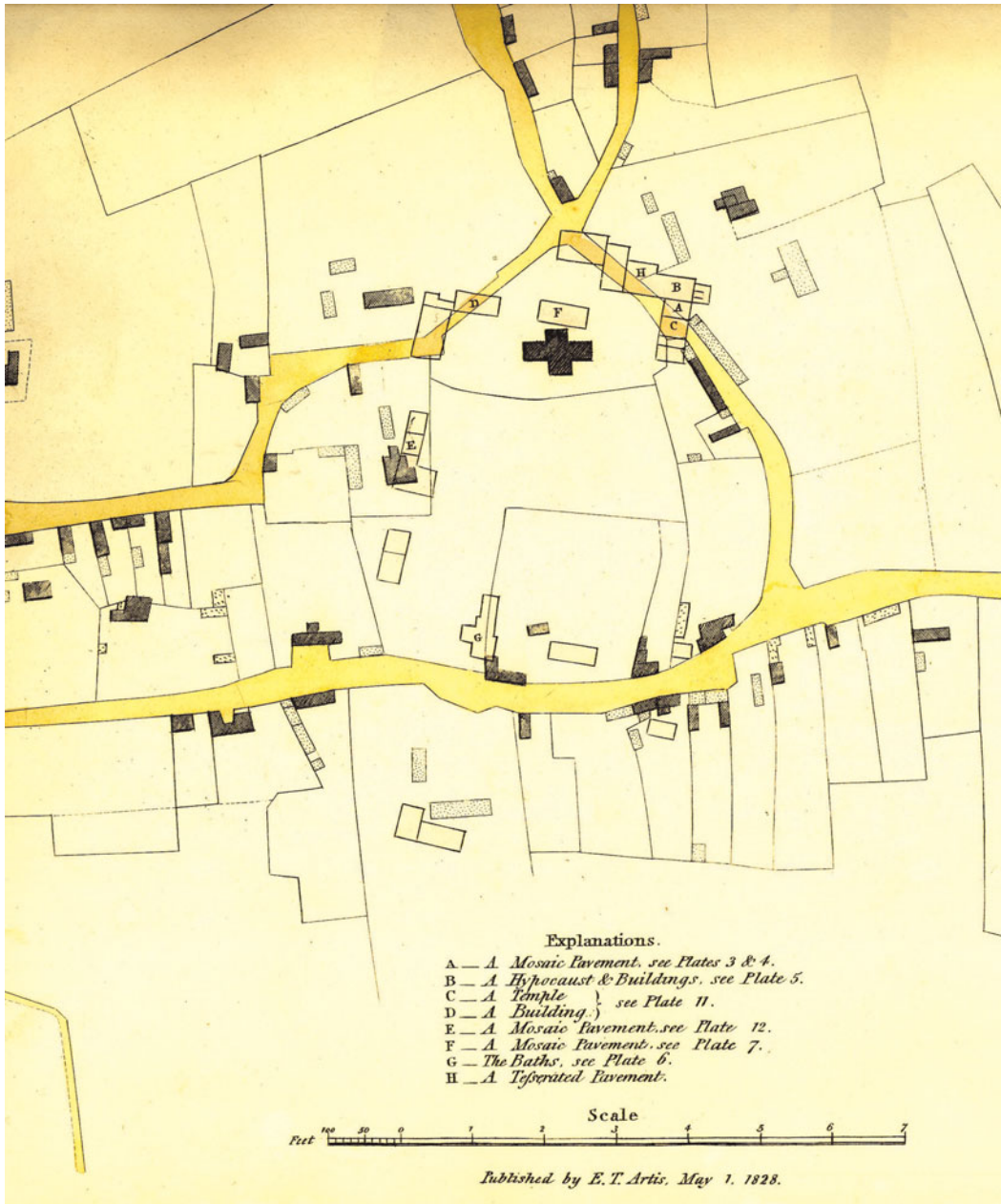
¹³ Stukeley 1882, 56.

¹⁴ This reference to a ‘castrum’ around the church appears to refer to the confusion which early antiquarians had over the exact position of the Roman town of *Durobrivae* and the large-scale surviving remains at Castor. There were long tracts written which argued where the Roman town actually was and these opinions seemed to vary between the remains under Castor village, the actual site of *Durobrivae* (in Chesterton parish, see FIG. 41) and a combination of both areas. For example, William Camden (1610) commented that ‘there be of opinion that the little village of Caster standing upon the other banke was parcel [of the Roman town] thereof’. Daniel Defoe, who was at Castor in the late summer of 1724, described Castor as ‘... a little village near Peterborough; but which was anciently a Roman station, or colony called Durobrevev ...’ (Defoe 1724, 16 and 423) and contemporary printed maps of the period by cartographers such as Herman Moll (1724) show the position of Castor rightly on the north bank of the Nene, but the symbol denoting the village is labelled ‘Castor or Durobrigo’ (Moll 1724, folio 25). Richard Gough (1819) also seems uncertain which of the two sets of remains was the real *Durobrivae* and this problem was even discussed by Haverfield (1902) who appears to have thought that *Durobrivae* was actually under Castor village.

¹⁵ Peterborough Gentleman’s Society Minute Book, 1730–42, 64–5.

¹⁶ Artis 1828, hereafter referred to as *The Durobrivae*. All ‘plates’ referred to within this article are those from *The Durobrivae*. The references to figure numbers indicate illustrations within this article.

¹⁷ For details regarding the work of Edmund Artis, see Cleal *et al.* 2009; Upex 2008, 12–15.

FIG. 3. Plate XIII from *The Durobrivae* by Edmund Artis, 1828.

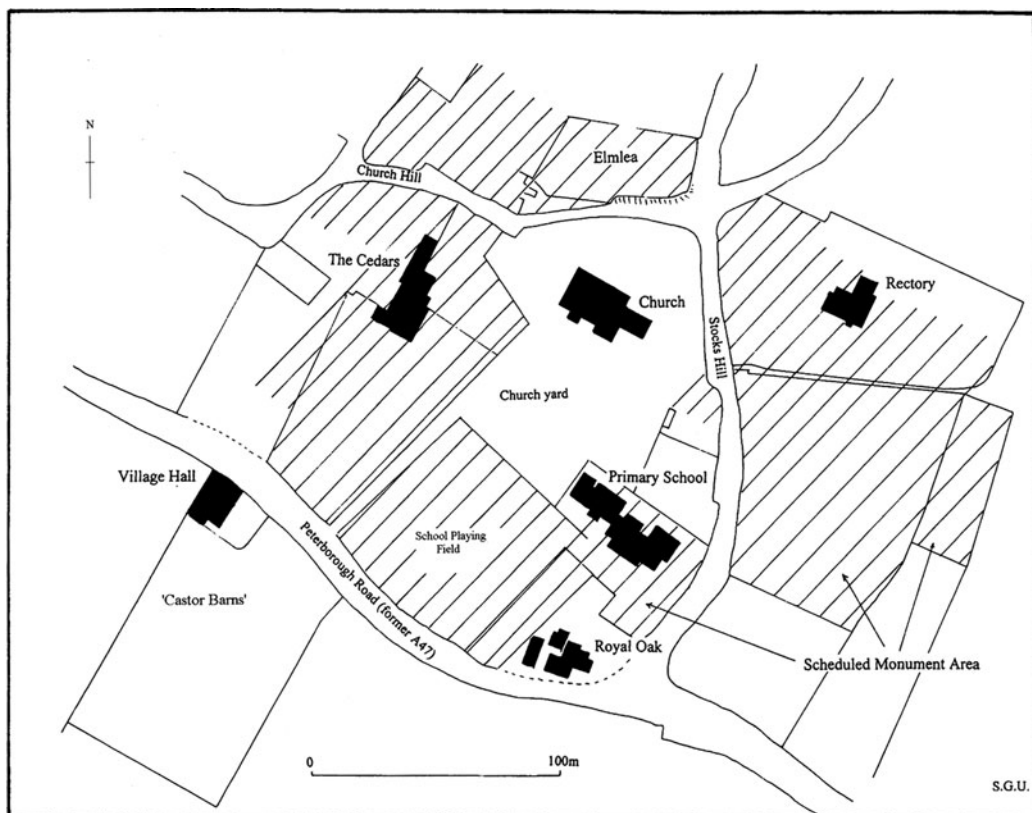


FIG. 4. Castor village showing buildings and areas referred to in the text.

At some time prior to 1823–24¹⁸ Artis had been digging in the Rectory garden (see FIG. 4) and the area of the modern school playing field (Artis pls III, IV, V, VI, VIII); and prior to 1826 in the area called 'The Cedars' (Artis pl. XII). In 1828 he produced a general plan of the whole village (Artis pl. XIII; see FIG. 3). In addition to the above mentioned plates he also published dated and undated plates of plans and views of his excavations (see FIGS 5–6).

Quite when his general plan of the village (FIG. 3) was surveyed remains uncertain, though it may have been some time between 1803 and 1817 if the dated cottages shown in his illustrations are used as a general guide.¹⁹ It is possible that the survey was originally prepared

¹⁸ These dates correspond to the dates on the plates within *The Durobrivae*.

¹⁹ Mackreth, undated Ms note in Peterborough Museum 2. The village remained substantially unchanged from the time of Artis' published plan (1828) through to the time of his death in 1847, when it is shown on the Tithe map (Northamptonshire Record Office, Map T236).

for use by the Milton estate owned by Earl Fitzwilliam. The estate owned considerable land and property within Castor and may not have required any greater accuracy than is shown in order to deal with property disputes and rents. Thus Artis may have taken such a survey as a basis for his plan and added his overlay of Roman buildings. Some of the Roman buildings he recorded apparently came from his own excavations (see FIG. 5), but it is clear that he also recorded some buildings which were revealed when the lanes called Stocks Hill and Church Hill were being lowered in order to produce a more even gradient. Again, it is unclear exactly when this work took place, but it was probably some time around 1810–20.²⁰ A considerable number of Roman rooms, which are shown on the Artis plan of 1828 (FIG. 3), appear to have been cut by these road works and Artis seems to have recorded what he saw and even seems to have been allowed to clear some of the rooms and make more detailed plans of structures to the north-west of the church along Church Hill (FIG. 6). It was probably somewhere in this area that Artis recorded seeing Roman rooms ‘...the walls of which are beautifully painted and from 10 to 11 feet high...’.²¹

The road grading almost certainly accounts for the poor state of preservation of the Roman remains in Stocks Hill, which were re-excavated by Charles Green in 1957–58.²² It is possible, however, that the medieval Stocks Hill lane had formed such a hollow way that it had severely cut into the archaeological levels even before the road grading took place, and this is the reason perhaps why Artis did not record the rooms in this area in such detail.²³

There are several problems and an enormous number of questions posed by the plans and views produced by Artis, which more recent research and excavations have aimed at answering. The scale and accuracy of his drawings are generally good, although some of his small-scale plans seem ‘interpretive’ rather than accurate. In general, his plans are more accurate than his various ‘views’ of the site. For example, his view of the buildings to the north of the church (FIG. 6) — which shows room arrangements in a style perhaps more attractive for the general reader of the 1820s — does not match what appears to be a more precise plan of the same rooms,²⁴ where size and the layout of wall angles seem more logical and wall lines correspond with those known from the 1970s excavations.²⁵ It should be noted that when one makes a comparison between the scale and size of structures on his plans with modern measurements based on recent excavations, there is a fair degree of agreement.²⁶

²⁰ A sketch map of this area survives from 1820 and appears to show the roads already in their graded state, see Burke 2004a, 66, fig. 5u.

²¹ Drakard’s Stamford News, 7 December 1821.

²² Green *et al.* 1986–87.

²³ The post-Roman and later medieval roads (Church Hill and Stocks Hill) may initially have been laid over the tops of the partly robbed out Roman rooms so as to provide a hard surface over which to take carts and cattle.

²⁴ Artis 1828, pl. XI, 1.

²⁵ There are also some glaring errors in aspects of Artis’ plates which may have developed not directly from Artis himself, but perhaps more through the way some of the plates were worked up by the lithographers for publication. For example, the outline of the church at Castor shown in his pl. XIII (FIG. 3) is cruciform, when in fact the actual plan of the church is entirely different (see FIGS 4 and 17). An accurate representation of the church is shown in the view Artis produced of his excavations of the bath-house below the church (Artis 1828, pl. V (FIG. 5)) and his view of Roman walls to the east of the church (Artis 1828, pl. X).

²⁶ See Table 1 for a comparison of room sizes for those which contained tessellated floors.



FIG. 5. Plate V from *The Durobrivae* by Edmund Artis, 1828, showing the Roman bath-house south of the later medieval church.

Artis' overall plan (FIG. 3) shows some numbered rooms and a series of unnumbered rooms which, in pl. I of the *The Durobrivae*, he seems to have interpreted as once forming two courtyards: a larger courtyard in the northern part of the site comprising rooms around the later medieval church and extending into the modern school playing field; and a smaller, southern courtyard including buildings he found to the south of the former A47 road. Much of our understanding of the buildings of the *Praetorium* is based on the work undertaken by Artis, who was operating at a period before the village became built-up. Excavation would have been easier then, and was not restricted to digging in the gardens of modern properties. His view of the bath-house excavations (Artis pl. V; FIG. 5), for example, shows the area as a field with the bath-house partly uncovered in the foreground and another small excavation trench (to the left foreground) containing an unnumbered Roman building, which Artis pl. XIII shows to the south of 'The Cedars' (see FIG. 3).

Artis' overall interpretation of the site was that of a large and possibly public building, hence his term '*Praetorium*'. His excavation techniques were fairly advanced for their day, being both large-scale and systematic.²⁷ He understood the size and importance of the arrangements of the separate building units, which he seemed to think were unified. He suggested that the rooms on either side of the church, which sit at the top of the slope, formed opposing 'wings' to a central range of rooms and that the eastern wing (Room 'C', shown in his pl. XIII; FIG. 3) was a temple.²⁸ What Artis thought the whole site was used for and how it related to the Roman town of *Durobrivae* will probably never be fully understood. He planned to publish a second

²⁷ Tomlinson 1974; see also Piggott 1976.

²⁸ Artis 1828, pl. XI, 2.



FIG. 6. Plate II from *The Durobrivae* by Edmund Artis, 1828, showing Roman buildings at Church Hill.

volume containing text, which would have explained both the plates within *The Durobrivae* and further discoveries he had made, but alas this volume was never printed.²⁹

After the death of Artis in 1847 there were other excavations on the site of the *Praetorium*, although little is known of what was found. A note written in 1904 refers to digging on the north side of the church in ‘Rookery Close’ and ‘no valuable finds of antiques, as the site had been well searched in 1851’.³⁰ However, little appears to have been recorded in detail during the late nineteenth century and it is not until the early years of the twentieth century that there are once again references to finds of Roman buildings and mosaics. The Annual Reports of the

²⁹ The notice of his second volume contains an extensive subscription list including a note stating that, ‘The absence of text, so much regretted by the subscribers to the Series of Plates on the “*Durobrivae of Antoninus identified*” will be herein supplied’.

³⁰ Peterborough Natural History, Scientific and Archaeological Society, 33rd Annual Report (1904), 43. This excavation must have been somewhere in the area of the gardens of ‘Elmlea’ (see FIG. 4) or the next property along Church Hill. The report talks of a room being found that was 17 feet 6 inches long (5.33 m) which may equate with Room 1, shown in the reconstructed plan of the *Praetorium* site (see FIG. 33).

archaeological section of the Peterborough Historical, Scientific and Archaeological Society, founded in 1871, contain notes on discoveries at Castor with a Mr William Le Queux and Captain S. Walker leading the digging teams. In 1902, for example, they were digging in the south-east corner of the lawn at 'The Cedars' (see FIG. 4), which was owned by Le Queux, and discovered 'a bath floor in excellent preservation, paved with square red tiles and probably the atrium to the more extensive Roman Baths, discovered by E.T. Artis, about 1825, north of the site'.³¹ Some of the stonework from these excavations may have been left exposed, along with other fragments of Roman walling in the garden, as indicated in a 1976 magazine article which states that 'there are still pieces of masonry in other parts of the garden which give evidence of Roman building'.³²

Again in 1902 it was reported that, 'In pulling down Colonel White's cottage, south of the church a piece of Roman tessellated pavement, set in red concrete, was discovered ...'.³³ The records that survive do not allow a precise location for this cottage or pavement, but it may have been the site of the 'L'-shaped cottage partly overlying the bath-house excavated by Artis and shown by him on the map which forms his pl. XIII (FIG. 3),³⁴ or it could have been the unnumbered Roman building he indicated on the corner of Stocks Hill and the Peterborough Road (the former A47), under part of the present site of the 'Royal Oak' public house.

Work during 1957–58, undertaken by Charles and Ida Green, concentrated on two specific areas relating to extensions to the churchyard on the south and east sides.³⁵ This work, financed by the then Ministry of Works, saw the excavation of a previously unknown building which may have been a bath-house (see FIG. 36) and the re-excavation of the so-called 'Temple' site first recognised by Artis (Room C in FIG. 3). The bath-house comprised four rooms, some with hypocausts and one with a cement-lined 'tank' that may have been a plunge bath. The re-excavation of the 'Temple' site fixed the positions of the walls shown by Artis in his drawings and seemed to confirm that the structure indeed had the architectural form of a classical temple, with steps at the front (south side). It was not possible, however, to produce any evidence that supported the view taken by Lewis that the temple originally had a 'row of prostyle columns'.³⁶ Artis' plan shows that he thought the temple-like structure had been linked to the buildings which he saw to the north, but the work by the Greens cast doubts on this, for there were no linking walls found behind the temple-like structure in the area of Stocks Hill Road.³⁷

The first systematic survey of the whole of the *Praetorium* site, since the time of Artis, was published by the Royal Commission in 1969.³⁸ This volume listed the known buildings, largely those found by Artis, but with additions made since the 1820s. However, nothing new was added to the overall debate about the range of structures underneath Castor village and no plan was published to show the positions of all the Roman buildings.

Interest in the *Praetorium* and the problems regarding the full extent of the Roman buildings, their dates and what the overall structure was used for was resurrected in the early 1970s through the work of J.P. Wild and G.B. Dannell. They directed a series of small-scale research excavations during 1970–73 and again in 1980 in the gardens of 'Elmlea House' on the north side of the church; cut two trenches in

³¹ *ibid.*, 43. Quite where this room is remains uncertain. It may be part of the bath-house shown by Artis in his engraved view (FIG. 5), but the reference to Artis' bath lying 'north of the site' being excavated implies that there is indeed another room(s) to the south (more likely the south-west?). This site may be that referred to in RCHM 1969 as being a 'villa' found in Peterborough Road, Castor (RCHM 1969, 24–5, nos 27 and 41).

³² Hurford 1976, 14. None of this 'masonry' is recorded in any other place and none can be seen today.

³³ Peterborough Natural History, Scientific and Archaeological Society, 33rd Annual Report (1904).

³⁴ This cottage is not shown on the view of the baths Artis published as pl. V (FIG. 5).

³⁵ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 112–28.

³⁶ Lewis 1966, 61.

³⁷ This debate is now impossible to prove one way or another owing to the grading of the road level, which appears to have removed all archaeological layers. On balance it would seem likely that the temple-like structure was an integral part of the building range across the top of the ridge.

³⁸ RCHM 1969.

the Rectory garden in 1971 and observed a trench, being dug for drainage, immediately north of the church wall in 1977. In addition, they dug three trenches in 1971 on the site of the bath-house (School Playing Field) that had been identified by Artis in 1828. All this work added considerably to the knowledge of, in particular, the North Range of Roman rooms which lies to the north of the church.³⁹ For the first time an architectural balance and cohesion of rooms could be proved and an updated version of Artis' plan produced.⁴⁰ In 1973, Caroline Dallas carried out a further season of work in the gardens of 'Elmlea' and explored a Saxon pit and later medieval features, though she also encountered residual Roman material and identified possible Roman surfaces.⁴¹ Further work was carried out in the gardens of 'Elmlea' in 1980 in advance of building development.⁴² This work, directed by Callum Rollo, added details to our knowledge of the north side of the North Range and to the plan already produced by Wild and Dannell. The results of the 1970–80 excavations were used to provide a brief overview of the site at Castor published in 1984, with a reconstruction drawing of what the Roman North Range may have looked like.⁴³

From 1980 until the present there have been several 'developer led' surveys and excavations based on watching-briefs prior to developments in the area of the *Praetorium*. These have added some detail to the overall plan of Roman structures within the area of the school buildings and the school playing field,⁴⁴ to the east of 'The Cedars',⁴⁵ and to the south of the former A47 in a development based on the conversion of farm barns.⁴⁶ During June 2010 Time Team carried out a three-day investigation and cut five trenches on the site.

Various parts of the site are scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Areas Act 1979 (shown in FIG. 4).

THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1970–80

The aim of the excavations carried out between 1970 and 1980 was to check the position of buildings shown on Artis' plan of 1828 (FIG. 3), and also to search for additional rooms or buildings, especially in the area north of the present church where Artis failed to show structures. The village had changed considerably since the time of Artis and the modern excavation trenches were restricted to small, discrete areas of modern gardens. The trench layout was directed not just by archaeological enquiry but by practical horticultural considerations to reduce damage. The trenched areas were consequently small, with the complications that inevitably brings to the interpretation of archaeological features.

ELMLEA HOUSE

The work in the gardens of 'Elmlea House' during 1970–71 was directed by G.B. Dannell and J.P. Wild; in 1973 by Caroline Dallas and in 1980 by Callum Rollo.⁴⁷ The trench plan for all these is

³⁹ This work was summarised in a series of typescript reports which are lodged within Peterborough Museum ('The Praetorium at Castor, Easter 1970'; 'The Praetorium at Castor, June–July 1970'; 'The Praetorium at Castor 1971') and published notes: *Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies* 5 (1971), 15; 7 (1972), 13–19.

⁴⁰ See Wild 1974, fig. 4.

⁴¹ This work forms the second part of the paper published in 1986 (Green *et al.* 1986–87) and comments almost exclusively on the Saxon material recovered from the 1970–73 excavations.

⁴² Rollo 1981.

⁴³ Mackreth 1984, 22–5; further reconstructions of the North Range have been published by de la Bédoyère 1991, 74 and Upex 2008, pl. 21.

⁴⁴ Hatton and Spoerry 2000; Hatton 2001; Robinson 1999.

⁴⁵ Lucas 1998.

⁴⁶ Archaeological Project Services 2006; also Dr Ben Robinson pers. comm.

⁴⁷ The work within the gardens at 'Elmlea' was carried out at the kind invitation of the then owners Mr and Mrs F. E. Sismey.

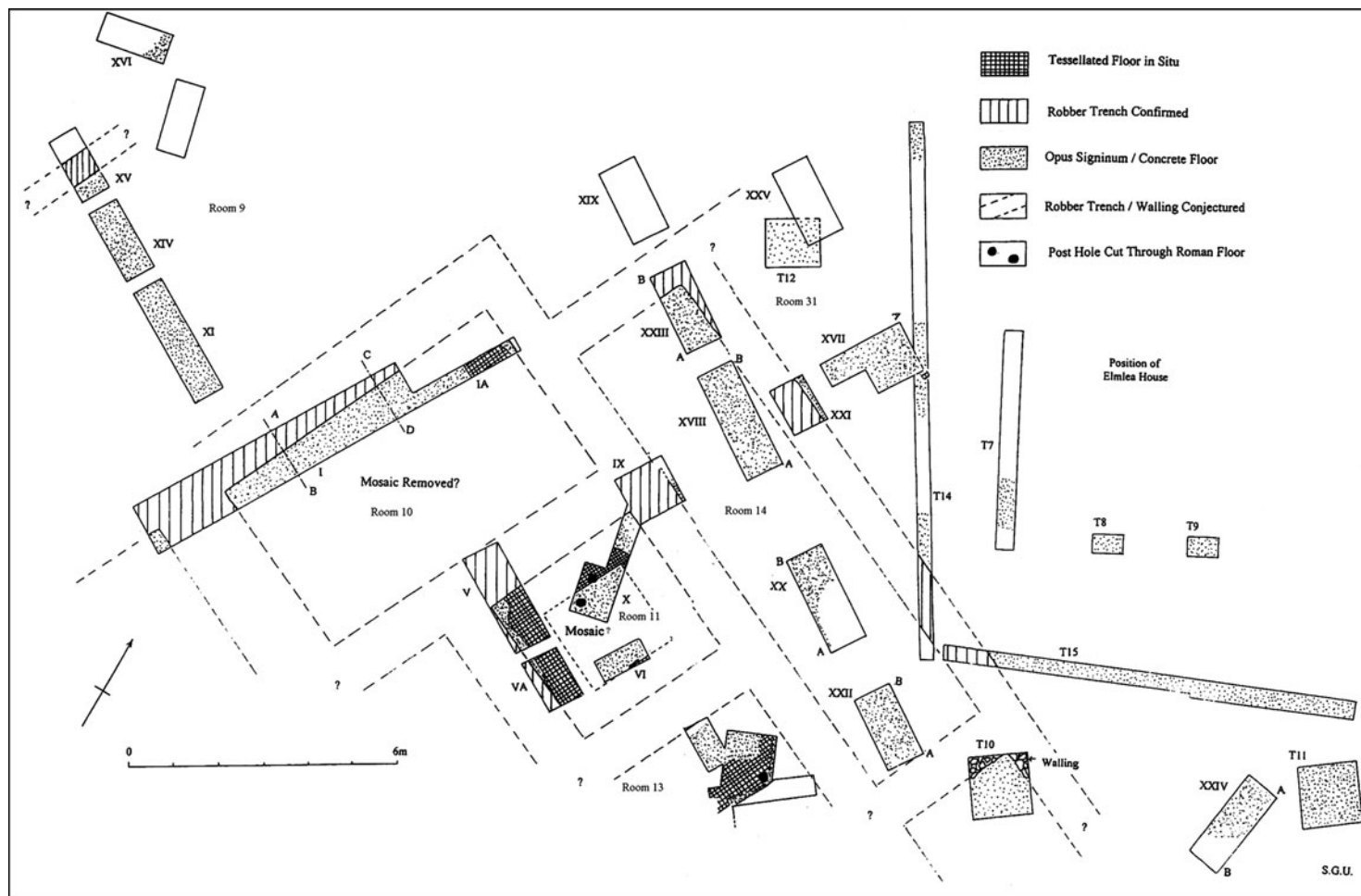


FIG. 8. Elmlea House: details of excavation trenches in the north-eastern part of the gardens.

shown in FIG. 7.⁴⁸ These excavations brought to light the plan of Roman rooms immediately to the west of 'Elmlea House' (FIG. 7).⁴⁹ Most of the Roman walls here had been robbed (see FIG. 9), apart from one small section of rubble wall found in Trench T10. All the rooms had a sub-floor make-up of either mixed clay, mortar and sand, or limestone rubble, on to which *opus signinum* floors had been laid. The most recent floors in Rooms 10 and 11 (FIG. 8) had originally contained central mosaic panels, which had been removed, surrounded by a surviving border of coarser tesserae. It is unclear when these mosaics were removed, but it could have been the work of Artis who may have been digging here at some point after 1828 and, therefore, not recorded in *The Durobrivae* of that date.⁵⁰ The neatness with which the finer tesserae of the central panel in Room 10 had been removed strongly suggests that the intention was for these floors to be re-laid. A less careful job was done when the floor in Room 11 was removed and some of the smaller, finer tesserae were left *in situ* (see FIG. 10). Enough survived to show that it originally comprised a small polychrome mosaic panel, measuring 2.1 m². Room 13, to the east of Room 11, contained a coarse tessellated floor. Some of the tessellated floors were laid over earlier floors, as clearly seen in sections cut in Trenches I, XVII and XXIV (see FIGS 9 and 11). These earlier floors may also have been tessellated, since tesserae were found underneath the later floor levels.⁵¹

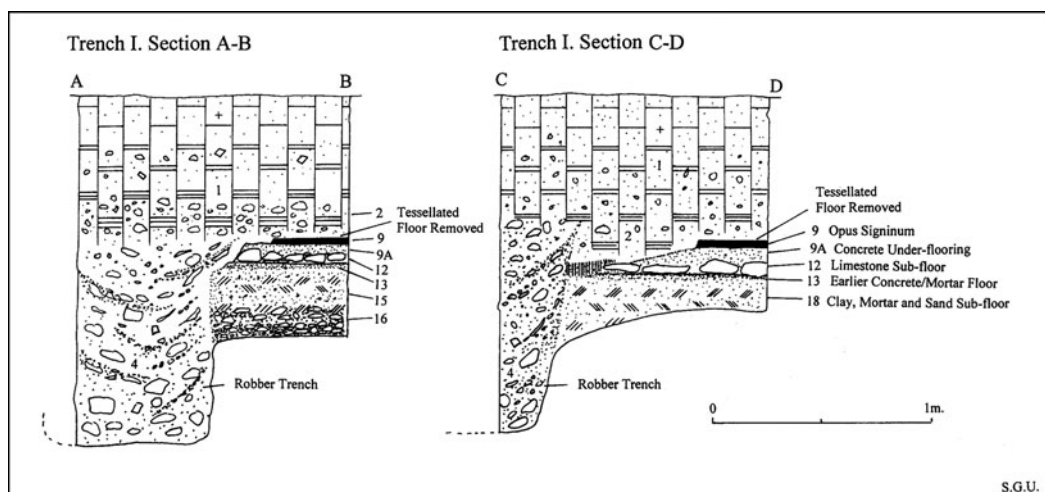


FIG. 9. Elmlea House: sections through Trench I.

⁴⁸ The 1970 season consisted of work carried out at Easter, which was finished during a short season in June. Further work took place during May 1971, followed by a longer season which ran from April to July 1972. All of these excavations were funded by the Nene Valley Research Committee and The Carnegie UK Trust. The 1980 excavations were carried out at intervals between February and December at the request of the Nene Valley Research Committee and the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, who funded this work. The labour for the excavations came from various students who volunteered to work on the site, from local interested people and from members of the Middle Nene Archaeological Group.

⁴⁹ For the room numbering system see FIG. 33.

⁵⁰ Artis had already removed a mosaic from a room under 'The Cedars' (see FIG. 4) by 1826 and had it relaid in the dairy of Milton Hall.

⁵¹ It is possible that the craftsmen laying the later mosaic panels had mixed some of their tesserae into the sub-floors of the later work. However, most of the tesserae sandwiched between the two floors in Room 10 were worn and showed signs of having once been set in concrete. Thus the overall impression is that these tesserae relate to an earlier phase of flooring, but none of the earlier floor levels contained tesserae *in situ*.



FIG. 10. Elmlea House: part of Trench VI (Room 11), showing the remains of the tessellated floor with part of the original central mosaic still *in situ*, the rest having been removed. Scale in units of inches and centimetres. (Photo: J.P. Wild and G.B. Dannell)

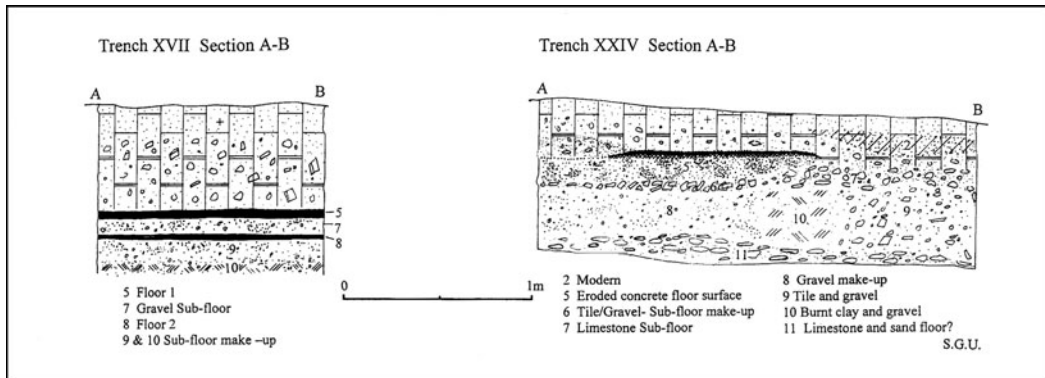


FIG. 11. Elmlea House: sections through Trenches XVII and XXIV.

West of Room 10, another larger room (9) was only partially explored (see FIG. 8), but appeared to have had an *opus signinum* floor which was exposed in Trenches XI, XIV and XV. A series of small excavation trenches to the north of Rooms 10–13 suggested the position of a corridor (Room 14), 2.75 m wide and 11.60 m long. Room 14 poses some problems of interpretation owing to the

slope of the original Roman ground surface and the small scale of the excavation boxes. It is possible that the area was subdivided into smaller rooms by walls which lay outside the excavation boxes. Alternatively the area may have been one space, but the slope of the ground here would have necessitated at least two steps, possibly represented by the different levels of *opus signinum* flooring found along the sectional transect (of Trenches XXII, XX, XVIII and XXIII) (see FIG. 12).⁵²

Beyond Room 14, another large area of *opus signinum* flooring (see FIG. 8) was seen in trenches dug in 1970 and 1980; this has been marked as Room 31. Again, as above, there are problems of interpretation and any possible subdivisions of Room 31 remain a matter of conjecture.⁵³

The excavation trenches located at the extreme west end of the 'Elmlea' garden (shown in FIGS 7 and 13) indicate that a further series of rooms lay here. Artis does show some rooms in this part of the *Praetorium*, where the Roman structures had been cut by the grading of Church Hill at some point in the early 1820s. His view of these rooms, which he illustrated in pl. II (FIG. 6) and in his plan (pl. XI, 1), shows walls of typical herringbone masonry with surviving doorways.⁵⁴ These rooms lay immediately south of the rooms described above and appear to have been linked with them to form one large suite.

The walls in this part of the building had not been robbed as thoroughly as those to the north-east and the lower courses of limestone masonry survived to indicate the width of the walls and to give some idea of their character. In several cases it was evident that massive stone quoins had been robbed,⁵⁵ leaving the smaller rubble cores of the wall (FIG. 13). On average the walls were 1.00–1.30 m wide and were made up of pitched herringbone courses of undressed limestone set in mortar (FIG. 14). Trench XXVII produced a well-preserved section of walling (FIGS 13 and 15), which survived to a height of 1.10 m and was 1.30 m wide; it had been pierced by a hypocaust flue linking the rooms on either side. The width of the walls in this and other parts of the North Range implies a structure that originally could have had several storeys.⁵⁶

None of these rooms had surviving evidence for tessellated floors, although considerable quantities of tesserae of various sizes were recovered and the likelihood is that at least some rooms were tessellated. Several had evidence for *opus signinum* floors and in some instances (Rooms 1, 2 and 3; FIG. 13) these formed the base of a hypocaust, on which the *pilae* had stood. Many of the walls appear to have been painted, the thick plaster carrying a considerable repertoire of colours. Only one small section of plaster was found *in situ* in Trench XXXVI, but the rest of the excavation boxes produced large quantities of plaster which had been stripped from the walls during stone robbing.⁵⁷ The quantities of plaster with a coarser white coating may have come from an outside rendering of the structure. Massive quantities of terracotta roofing tiles and the total absence of local Collyweston slates suggest that the roof was tiled.

One problem which the builders of the North Range of rooms faced was that of the slope of the ground. The possible corridor (Room 14; see FIG. 8) at the top of the slope could well have had

⁵² This problem highlights the whole issue of the subdivision of rooms at the *Praetorium* owing to the restricted nature of the trench layout and the problem of identifying internal stud or wooden partitions forming the Roman rooms.

⁵³ The interpretation of this room is even more problematic, for the positions of other walls on the north-west and north-east have not been found as yet.

⁵⁴ It is worth noting that the view produced by Artis in his pl. II (FIG. 6) is less accurate than his plan (pl. XI, 1). This can be seen by comparing the 'view' of the rooms at the far end of the scene (FIG. 6) which equate, in reality, to Rooms 4 and 5 in FIG. 33.

⁵⁵ The size of some of these stones must have been of the order of 120 by 80 by 40 cm.

⁵⁶ Potter (1996, 679) points out that a surviving Roman building at Anguillara, to the north of Rome, has walls 1.2 m thick which rise to over 17 m in height. The implication for the North Range is, therefore, that the height of the planned structure was a serious consideration for the builders.

⁵⁷ See wall-plaster report below.

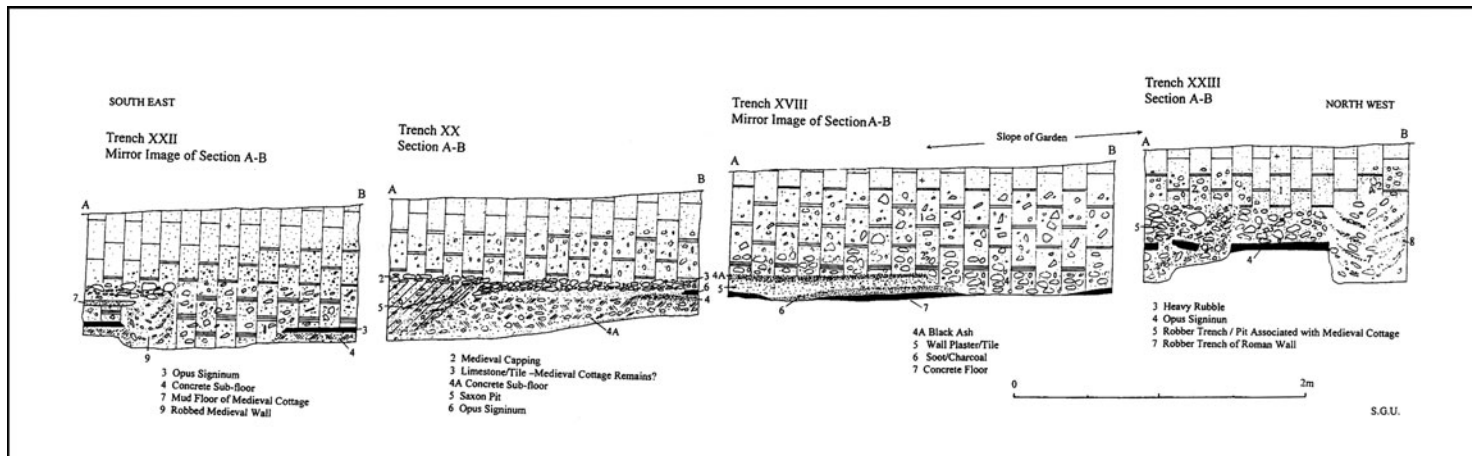


FIG. 12. Elmlea House: sections through Trenches XXII, XX, XVIII and XXIII (Room 14; a corridor with steps?).

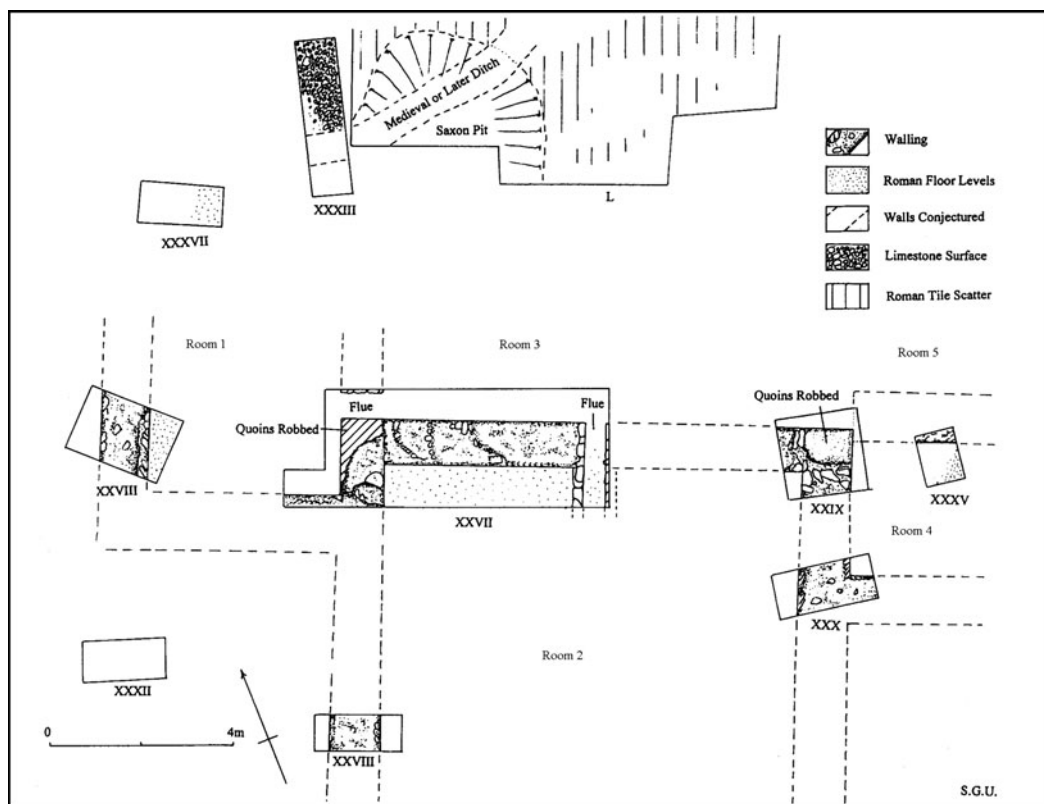


FIG. 13. Elmlea House: excavation trench details in the south-western part of the gardens.

steps along its length, but the builders encountered an even greater slope as they built further to the south. To overcome this problem they appear not only to have provided steps between rooms, which Artis recognised between Rooms 24 and 26 on the eastern side of the North Range (see FIGS 16 and 33), but also to have terraced into the hillside and retained the earth and rock on the upslope side of rooms. This terracing may account for the huge size (up to 1.43 m wide) of some of the walls (such as that in Trench XXVII; see FIG. 15) which acted not only as structural elements of the building, but also as retaining or revetment walls.⁵⁸ Thus each successive room in the western part of the North Range lay at a slightly lower level than its northern neighbour. The basement floor of the hypocaust in Room 2, for example, is 3.40 m lower than the floor of Room 10 at the northern part of the site. Allowing for the hypocaust's

⁵⁸ A massive wall 2 m wide, which formed the southern short axis wall to the unnumbered room shown by Artis in the western part of the churchyard (see Room 2, FIG. 33), was part-uncovered during the Time Team excavations in June 2010. The upper part of the masonry was 1.50 m wide, but with an additional 0.5 m wide offset lower down, which gave the appearance of a step. This 'stepped arrangement' appears to be the same type of construction seen by Green (Green *et al.* 1986–87, pl. 2) on the eastern side of the North Range, which both he and Artis interpreted as 'temple steps'. It now seems more likely that the so-called 'steps' are in fact foundation walls with an added offset which acted as revetting. This wall seems to match another massive wall at the base of the slope, which was found by Lucas in 1998 and could have acted as a lower revetment (see FIGS 34 and 36, and Lucas 1998).



FIG. 14. Elmlea House: section of herringbone walling forming the northern wall of Room 2 in Trench XXVII; see FIG. 13. Both scales in units of 12 inches. (Photo: J.P. Wild and G.B. Dannell)

suspended floor, the actual living surface in Room 2 would have been about 2.0 m lower than in Room 10.

THE RECTORY GARDEN

During 1971 two small trenches were dug in the garden of the Rectory (see FIG. 4), with a further trench excavated by Time Team in 2010, in order to locate the buildings first shown by Artis in his plans of 1828 (pls VIII and XIII; see FIG. 3) and in a view of his excavations shown in pl. X. The position of these trenches is shown in FIG. 16. Trench LI cut into the north-western corner of the room that Artis showed as Room '3' in his pl. VIII and Room 'A' in his pl. XIII (FIG. 3; Room 26 in FIG. 33). It revealed both walls (1.10 m wide) and a poorly preserved tessellated floor made up of limestone tesserae (20 × 20 × 20 mm) which was laid on an *opus signinum* sub-floor. This floor had been extensively exposed by Artis, and he produced two plates (III and IV) which show that it had a central panel with a polychrome geometric design surrounded by a coarse border, which was partly revealed in the 1971 trench.

Trench LII was opened 8 m to the north of Trench LI and located a previously unknown wall which formed a division between rooms in this area. Artis, in his 'view' of the site, shows part of a wall which formed the western side of his Room 'B',⁵⁹ but he gave no indication of other room

⁵⁹ Although this division is not shown in his general plan of the site, pl. XIII (FIG. 3).



FIG. 15. Elmlea House: the north-western wall of Room 2 in Trench XXVII, looking east and showing the break in the wall line caused by the opening for the hypocaust flue; see FIG. 13 for plan. Scale in units of 12 inches.
(Photo: J.P. Wild and G.B. Dannell)

divisions beyond that point which would have formed the eastern side of Room 'H' (Room 22; see FIG. 33). The wall found in Trench LII must have formed this missing wall, and thus acted as the division between two rooms, the one indicated by Artis as 'H' and another now labelled as Room 23 (see FIG. 33). The recent excavation confirmed that Room 26 had a tessellated floor, while in Room 'H' another badly preserved *opus signinum* floor survived, which may originally have had a tessellated surface (there were large amounts of coarse tesserae in the upper fills), but any trace of this had been obliterated.

These two trenches proved the general accuracy of Artis' plans, which when transcribed onto modern surveys, were shown to be only fractionally out. The excavations by Time Team to the north of Trench LI confirmed a junction between Room 23 and the upper part of Room 24 and also cut into areas which had clearly been excavated by either Artis or other nineteenth-century investigators.

CASTOR CHURCHYARD 1977

During 1977 a drainage trench was dug in the churchyard 2 m away from the north wall of the church (see FIG. 17). There was little chance for excavation, but within the narrow trench a

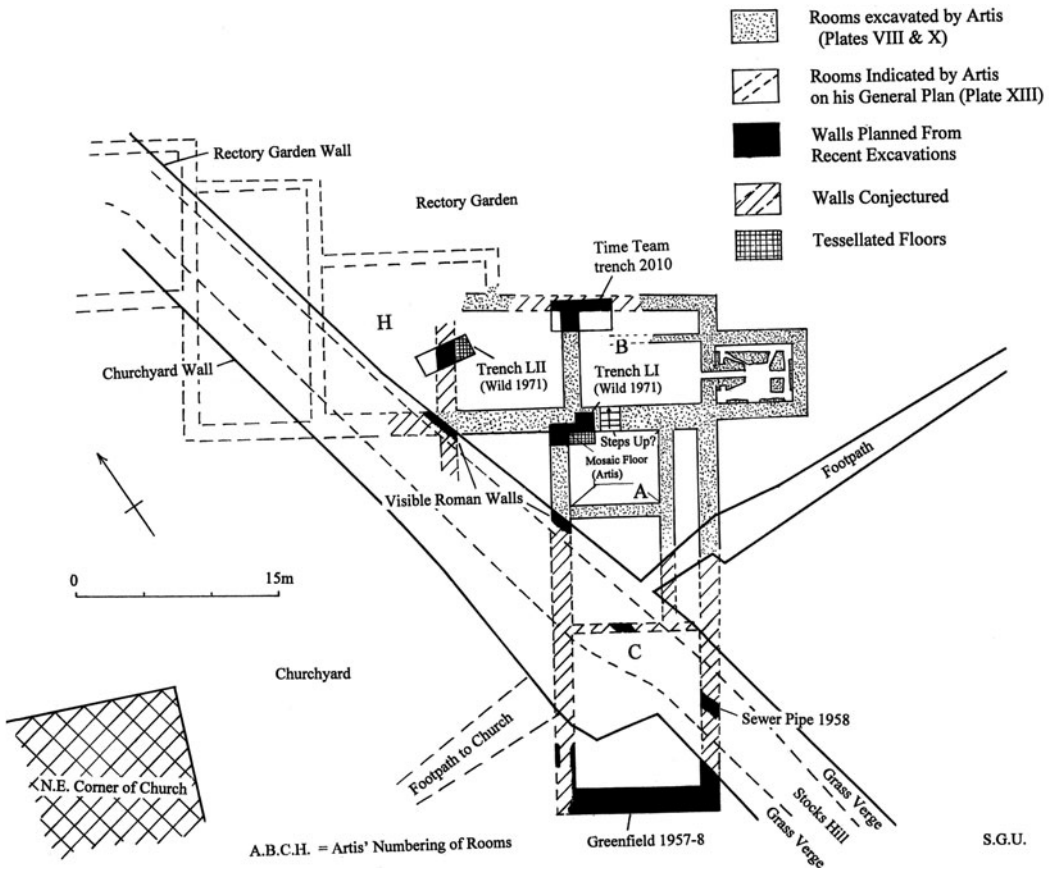


FIG. 16. Plan showing excavation trenches and the wall layout of the east wing of the North Range.

0.90 m-wide wall of herringbone masonry was recorded, with typical Roman mortar forming the bonding. This wall appeared to be running in a roughly north-north-east to south-south-west direction, although its exact alignment was difficult to confirm. Another spread of limestone was also observed some 4 m to the east of this wall which may have formed a second wall line, but this was very badly damaged. How these walls fit into the overall plan of rooms in the North Range is unclear.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Artis shows a room (his Room 'F', see FIG. 3; Room 18 in FIG. 33) just to the north of the church, which would be only some 16 m away. The narrowness of the 1977 drainage trench may also allow for some skewing of the alignment to correspond with this room. However, it could also imply either further contemporary rooms in this area of the site (perhaps an earlier phase of building which was not linked to the construction of the North Range), or the narrowness of the wall observed in 1977 could indicate some form of garden boundary in front of the main façade of the North Range. At present none of these ideas can be tested by excavation.

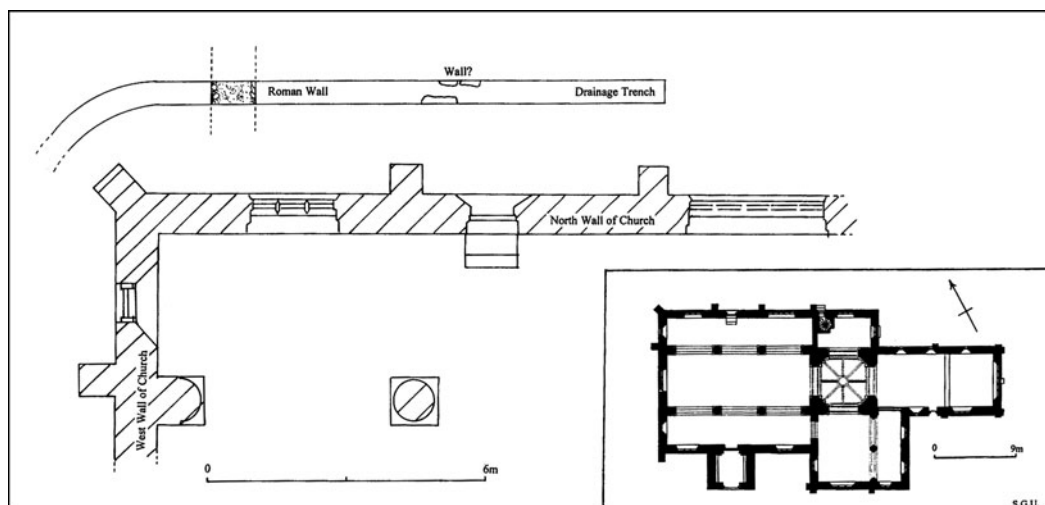


FIG. 17. Plan of Roman walls to the north-west of Castor church.

If all the details of the North Range derived from the work of Artis, Green and Wild and Dannell are assembled onto a single plan (FIG. 18), it is possible to see how the sketchy overview presented by Artis (pl. XIII; FIG. 3) has been extended, especially with the addition of rooms under the gardens of 'Elmlea House'. An overall plan begins to appear suggesting a single, balanced architectural design for the whole of the North Range, which contrasts with the rather disjointed set of isolated buildings at the bottom of the slope, below the North Range.

There are major problems with the interpretation of the buildings — the North Range — at the top of the slope. This is partly a result of the lack of detail from modern investigation, but also stems from the fact that some of the plans provided by Artis do not seem to have been surveyed accurately. For example, his Room 'F' (shown in pl. XIII (FIG. 3); Room 18 in FIG. 33) appears to be separated from, and at a slightly different alignment to, adjoining rooms to the north-east. This may be owing to the way that Artis discovered the various sets of rooms at different periods of time — or just simple surveying errors.⁶¹ The other obvious concern is his lack of detail regarding internal divisions in some of the rooms. The interpretation of the North Range will be returned to later.

EXCAVATIONS ON THE BATH-HOUSE IN THE SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD

At the foot of the hill, below the North Range, Artis exposed and recorded a bath-house measuring 28.5 by 19.0 m that he knew had been partly uncovered during the seventeenth century.⁶² It is sited

⁶¹ His plans, by contrast, for the rooms within the Rectory garden appear to be fairly accurate.

⁶² Artis says on this point when referring to Room 9 (see FIG. 19) 'Part of the same discovered in the 17th century'. There is no clear indication as to whom carried out this excavation and it may, indeed, be a reference to discoveries made when the foundations for early cottages were being dug. Cottages are shown by Artis in this area of the baths on his plan of 1828 (see pl. XIII; FIG. 3). They survived until at least 1847, when they are shown on a Tithe map of that date (Northamptonshire Record Office, Map T236). It may be that these cottages were originally built in the seventeenth century and their foundations cut into the baths.

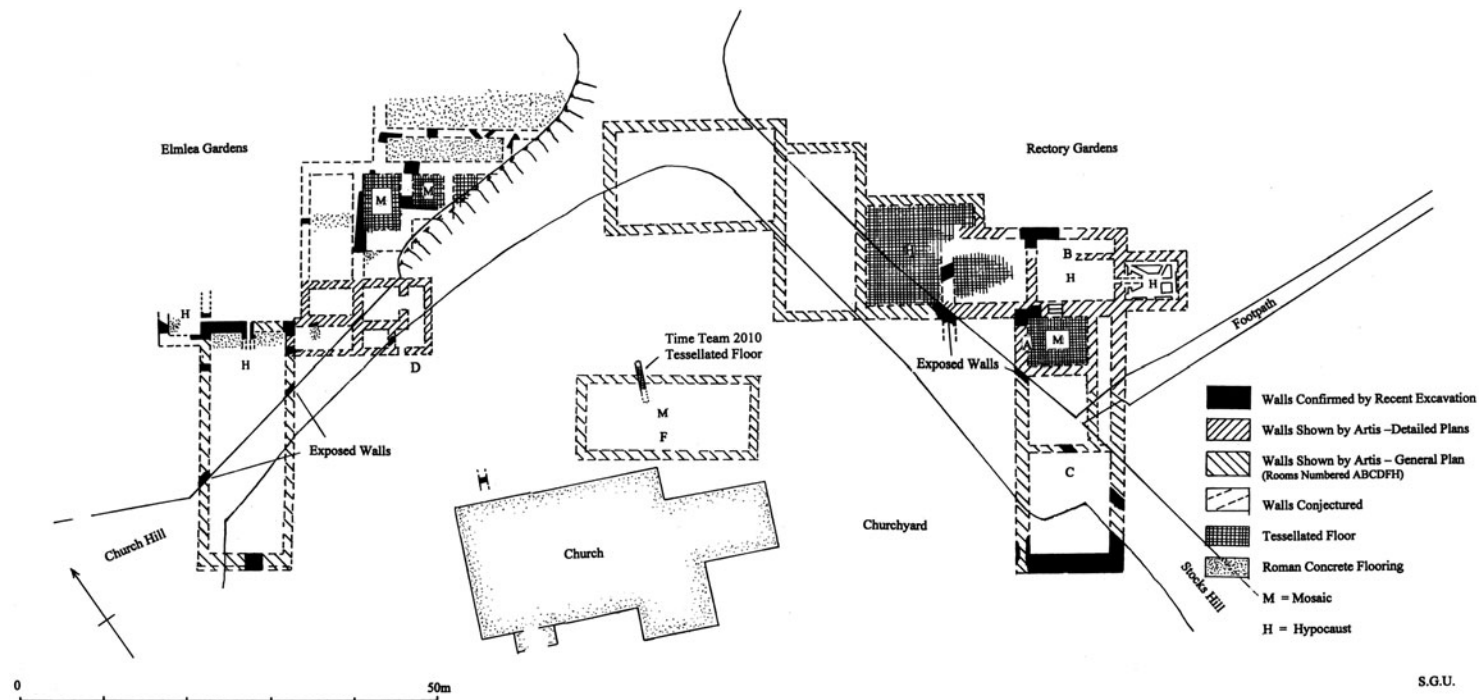


FIG. 18. Plan showing the known details of the North Range.

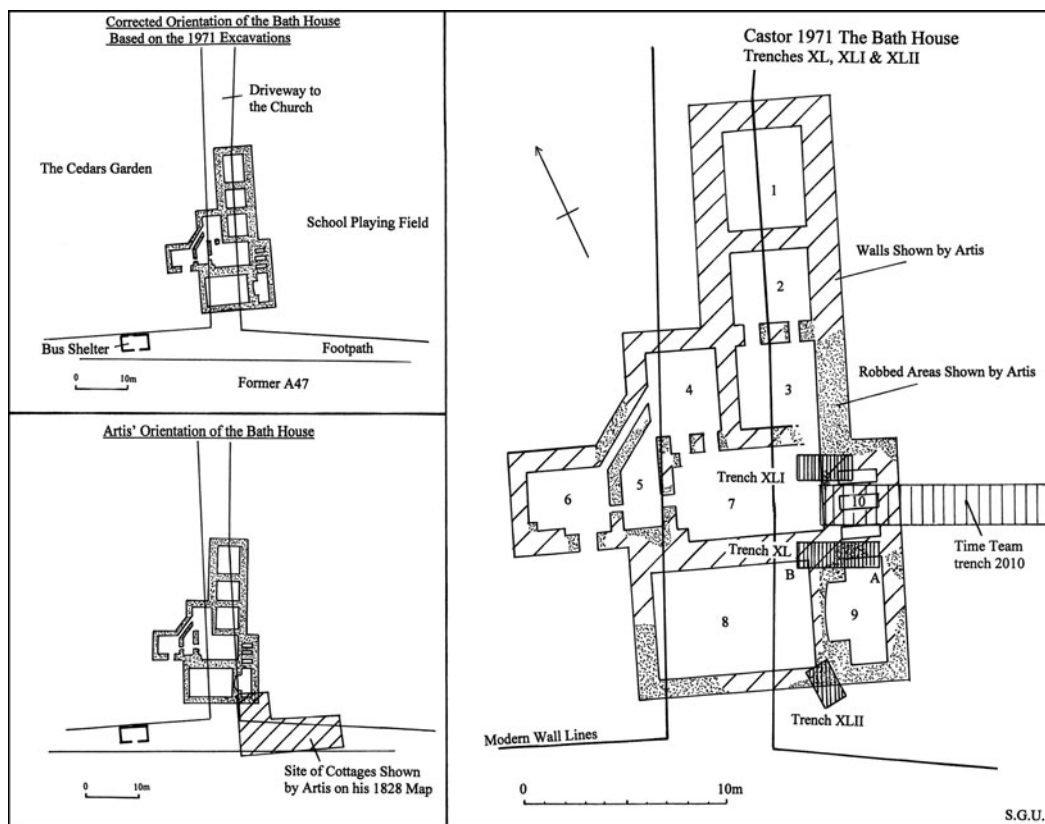


FIG. 19. The bath-house first excavated by Edmund Artis and then later in 1971.

35 m east of other buildings excavated by Artis, in the garden of 'The Cedars' and 27 m west of another Roman building, also shown by him (pl. XIII; FIG. 3). He published a splendid general view of the site during excavation (pl. V; FIG. 5) and a detailed plan of the bath-house in his pl. VI. Much of the site is now inaccessible beneath the school playing field and the path that leads up to the church from the former A47 Peterborough Road. However, during 1971 permission was given to cut three small trenches at the edge of the playing field to establish the exact position and orientation of the bath-house. Artis' plan of 1828 was shown to be largely accurate. However, the exact orientation of the baths on his general plan (pl. XIII; FIG. 3) appeared to be slightly out and the new orientation is shown corrected in FIG. 19.

The three trenches revealed the positions of four elements in the structure. Room 7 (see FIG. 19), as seen in Trench XLI, appeared to have had a hypocaust which is exactly as Artis showed it in his view of the site.⁶³ His plan of the baths showed that there had been much earlier stone robbing of the site. However, part of the hypocaust basement floor was found for Room 7 and amongst the debris from this room was a large fragment of coarse tessellated pavement, which may have formed its original upper floor. In addition, a trench dug by Time Team in 2010 produced a

⁶³ Room 7 appears in pl. V (FIG. 5) and is the first complete room with a hypocaust to the right of the view. The room which runs into the side of the excavation on the extreme right is part of Room 8.

small block of white tesserae ($5 \times 5 \times 5$ mm) which appears to have come from a figured panel, suggesting that some of the floors in the baths were of a more elaborate design. The eastern end of Trench XLI appeared to cut across one of three small slots (c. 1.0×1.80 m) which Artis termed 'cells' on his plan; these must have been related to the hypocaust system, although precisely how the 'cells' functioned is unclear. These were further explored by the Time Team excavation, but no further light was thrown on their function.

Trench XL, to the south, revealed two other rooms of the baths, and although both had been badly robbed for stone they can be related to Artis' Room 8, which he thought was 'the dressing room to [for] the cold room', and Room 9, which he described as a 'cold bath'. Room 8 originally had a tessellated floor laid on various layers of material which formed a solid sub-floor 0.85 m thick. None of the tesserae for this floor remained *in situ*, but their impressions were left in the concrete (FIGS 20–21; Layer 6 in Section A–B). Part of the function of this massive accumulation of floor make-up was to raise the level of the floor to match those of the adjoining rooms which contained hypocausts.



FIG. 20. Artis' bath-house: looking west, showing the detail of Roman walling and floor make-up in Trench XL. Scale in units of 12 inches. (Photo: J.P. Wild and G.B. Dannell)

Room 9 had a much lower *opus signinum* floor level (FIG. 21, Section A–B, Layer 13), which may have formed the lining to the cold plunge bath. The difference in levels between the floors of Rooms 8 and 9 was approximately 0.60 m. Heavy stone robbing, perhaps during the building of the cottages which are recorded on Artis' plan, had removed almost all trace of the wall or sill

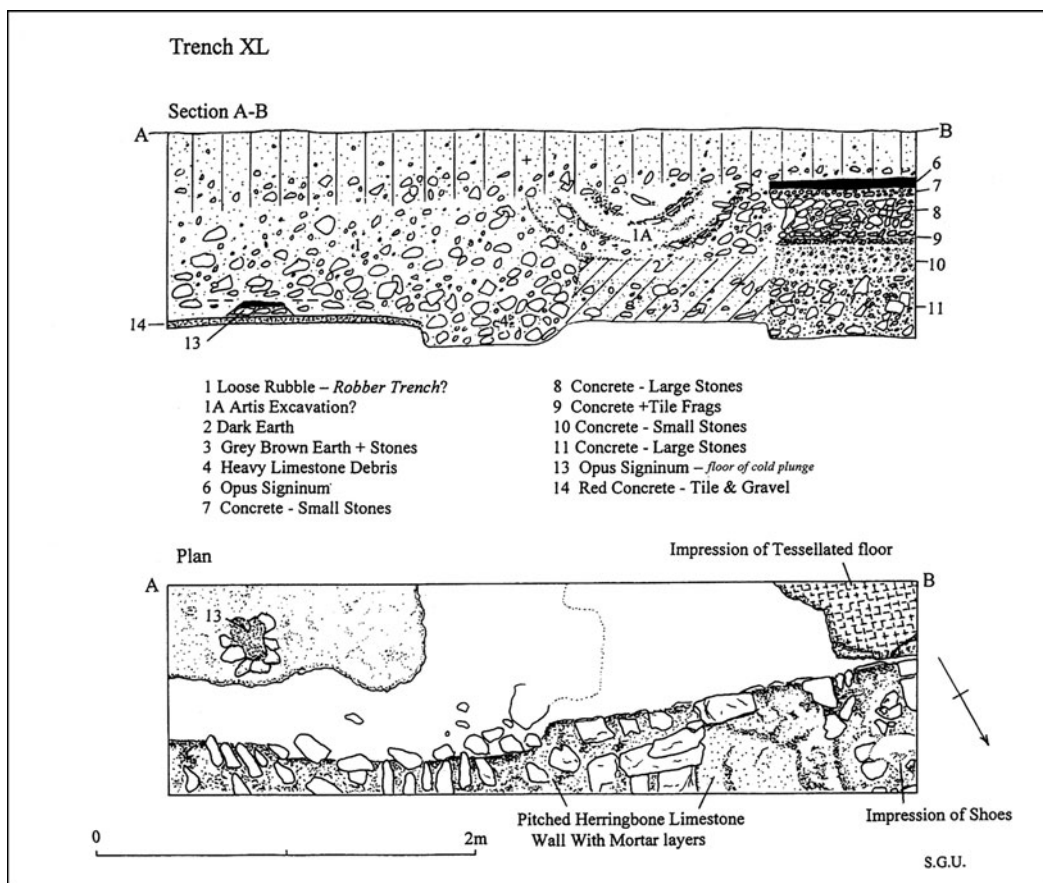


FIG. 21. Artis' bath-house: plan and section of Trench XL, 1971.

dividing the cold bath from the cold room. Nineteenth-century pottery in the fill of this robber trench may represent the excavations of Artis, who was attempting to follow wall lines (see Layer 1A in FIG. 21).

The wall which formed the division between Rooms 7, 8, 9 and 10 had been damaged and partly robbed, but sufficient remained to show its constructional detail. Courses of pitched herringbone masonry were laid on liberal quantities of a pale yellow mortar with large gravel inclusions (FIG. 20). After two or more courses of pitching had been laid, mortar was poured into the construction trench and allowed to partly set before the next course was laid on a new skim of mortar.⁶⁴ This sequence may represent building work on successive days, or perhaps

⁶⁴ This type of herringbone walling is shown in all of the plates which are published by Artis (see FIGS 5 and 6) and he gives no indication whether he observed any change in stonework style between what are clearly the foundations of buildings, which he shows in his view of the baths, and their superstructures. Elsewhere in the Nene Valley it is common to find pitched herringbone foundations supporting coursed limestone blocks, see, for example, Upex 2008, pls 23 and 45. In only one instance in recent excavations at the *Praetorium* have any courses of masonry been found which could indicate that the upper levels of walls were constructed in a different fashion to the foundations. This occurs in Trench XL and is shown in FIG. 20 where two courses of stone remain *in situ*. It may

longer intervals of time. There is evidence that the builders had walked on the still-wet mortar surface leaving clear imprints of their hobnailed sandals.⁶⁵

The third trench cut into the baths (Trench XLII) appears to have been placed over the southern edge of the heavily robbed wall line which formed the southern wall of Rooms 8 and 9. This robbing may also have taken place prior to the construction of the cottages which Artis records in this area, or during their subsequent demolition.⁶⁶

How the baths functioned, the source of water and its supply are a matter of conjecture. Green describes a tiled aqueduct that he found in 1957–58, which led to the bath-house.⁶⁷ However, the comparative size of this structure (72.15 m²) and the bath-house recorded by Artis (337.1 m²) would indicate the need for a much greater quantity of water and a more substantial means of conveying it to the bath-house.⁶⁸ During 2002 residents of Castor surveyed the line of a ‘possible’ aqueduct running from Old Field Pond (TL 132 003) — which is also fed by springs — to the *Praetorium* site. It was calculated that an aqueduct with a section of 30 by 30 cm could carry a volume of water that was equivalent to a massive 219,229 gallons (997,491 litres) per day.⁶⁹

Artis indicated on his plan (pl. VI) that Room 1 was an ‘ash pit’. Rooms 2, 3, 4 and 7 clearly contained hypocausts, and the ‘cells’ (10) may be linked with the hypocaust system in Room 7. Room 12 (FIG. 19, Room 8) is described by Artis as a ‘dressing room to the cold bath’ and Room 9 he describes as the ‘cold bath’. He gives no indication of what he thought Rooms 5 and 6 were, but it seems likely that Room 6 was the *praefurnium* with a flue leading into Room 4, while another serviced Room 5.

It is not clear how bathers would have used the baths and progressed from cold to warm to hot rooms with this arrangement, especially since the heating source was central to the building. An alternative to the Artis view would be to see Room 1 as a changing-room, with progressively, Room 2 being the cold room, 3 the warm room, and 7 the hot room. This still leaves Room 4 to account for, though this could conceivably have been a *sudatorium* (hot dry room), while Room 5 could have housed a boiler to provide hot water.⁷⁰ If this were the arrangement, then there still remains the problem of how to interpret Rooms 8 and 9; Artis’ changing-room and cold plunge bath. Part of the problem of interpretation is the lack of understanding of any chronological development of the bath-house; Artis’ plan suggests alterations in Rooms 1–3 where the thickness of the walls (1.50 m) is much greater than elsewhere in the building, where the walls are 1.0 m thick.⁷¹

be that much of the building at the *Praetorium* was meant to be plastered on the inside and rendered on the exterior, and thus the need for neatly coursed stonework was not considered necessary.

⁶⁵ Three footprints were identified, representing perhaps two sets of sandals, one with a rounded toe and the other with a slightly pointed toe. One of the rounded toe imprints appears to show hobnails around just part of the heel and the toe area and it may be that the rest of the sole lacked nails. This type of hobnail arrangement contrasts with the shoe from Stonea which has five rows of nails set along the sole from front to back (Rhodes 1996, 541–4). See also Waterer (1976, 182) for iron hobnail arrangements on the shoes from Newstead and Valkenburg.

⁶⁶ These cottages are also shown on a map dated 1820 which is reproduced by Burke 2004a, 66, fig. 5v.

⁶⁷ Green *et al.* 1986–87, fig. 8.

⁶⁸ Two ‘spring’ sources are located on the higher ground to the north and east of the *Praetorium* and these may have provided water to the site in the Roman period, see FIG. 41.

⁶⁹ Castor Village Database: ref D/R 1002. It has also been pointed out that drains below (south) the church, always run with water, which may come from this aqueduct.

⁷⁰ The view of the baths produced by Artis shows that the walls which he found in the area of Rooms 4, 5, 6 and 7 were very low and probably heavily robbed, which may indicate that his interpretation of the arrangements was very speculative.

⁷¹ I am indebted to Dr Tony Rook for long discussions on the functioning of these baths.

The other question which remains is whether the bath-house was actually an isolated structure or joined to other buildings. Roman buildings exist in the garden of 'The Cedars', with others to the east under the school playing field, all of which Artis shows as isolated structures. His 'view' of the excavations (pl. V; FIG. 5) clearly shows that the southern end of the baths was not fully exposed and it does not illustrate the full extent of Rooms 8 and 9, which his plan, by contrast, does indicate. Pl. V (FIG. 5) appears to show another excavation trench — behind the resting workman on the left — which may have held Roman features, although this may be related to the work he did in 'The Cedars' garden. The Time Team excavation trench of 2010 (FIG. 19) indicated that there were no immediately adjacent rooms or connected structures on the eastern side of the baths, although a geophysical survey carried out to the east of the baths did suggest possible building outlines (see FIG. 36).

THE COARSE POTTERY

The coarse pottery from the 1970–73, 1977 and 1980 excavations is of little significance because of the very disturbed nature of almost all the deposits which were encountered. The occupation and stone robbing of Saxon, medieval, post-medieval and more recent date have left few sealed Roman deposits in any of the excavated trenches and consequently this hampers the close dating of the buildings. Four sealed deposits were revealed and datable material from these is described below. Two additional sherds are described from Trench L (1973). (Abbreviations: Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware (LNVCC); Lower Nene Valley grey ware (LNVGW).)

CAS.P. 1970 Trench I, Layer 18 (see FIGS 7, 8 and 9 and FIG. 22 for pottery)

A clay mortar and sand sub-floor which acted as a foundation for the first floor within Room 10, North Range (see FIGS 8 and 33 for room layout).

1. Beaker with beaded rim and rouletting in LNVCC ware. Greyish brown outer colour-coated surface with lighter brown inner surface; fabric fired to a brown-pink colour. Beakers of this form are fairly common on Lower Nene Valley sites. The kilns from Stanground Park Farm appear to have been producing vessels of this form in the first quarter of the third century.⁷² Similar vessels come from Chesterton⁷³ and Normangate Field, Castor.⁷⁴ Howe illustrates two similar vessels, dated to the late second/early third century.⁷⁵
2. Beaker (LNVCC) similar to No. 1 above in colour-coated range and fabric. Slightly heavier rouletting.
3. Beaker with plain rim in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces light brownish grey. Fabric fired to a light pinkish grey colour. Vessels of this simple form are difficult to date closely unless they are decorated. There are vessels of this type from a kiln group at Stanground (Kiln A)⁷⁶ and they are also known from Chesterton,⁷⁷ Werrington,⁷⁸ and Stonea.⁷⁹ All are dated to the late second century and the first quarter of the third century.

⁷² Dannell *et al.* 1993, fig. 16, nos 48–51.

⁷³ Perrin 1999, fig. 67, nos 151, 152 and 361.

⁷⁴ Perrin and Webster 1990, fig. 10, no. 162.

⁷⁵ Howe *et al.* 1980, 16, nos 32 and 33.

⁷⁶ Dannell *et al.* 1993, fig. 14, no. 8.

⁷⁷ Perrin 1999, fig. 60, nos 115–21.

⁷⁸ Perrin and Cameron 1988, fig. 32, no. 6.

⁷⁹ Cameron 1996, fig. 151, no. 1.

4. Beaker with slightly beaded rim in LNVCC ware. Outer surface light brown, fired to a slightly metallic lustre; inner surface light brown. The rim on this vessel appears to be a variation of the plain rim of No. 3 above; however, this rim type is also found on funnel-necked beakers, which have a slightly later date range.⁸⁰

5. Dish with triangular rim in LNVGW with a light grey fabric. Such vessels are difficult to date since the basic forms appear to last for considerable periods of time. A group of vessels from Chesterton with triangular, rounded and flattened rims have all been dated to the late second to early third centuries,⁸¹ while similar vessels from Orton Longueville are dated to the end of the second century.⁸² The grey finish on this vessel is not dissimilar to that achieved by the potters working at Sulehay, near Yarwell, who were operating c. A.D. 150.⁸³

6. Wide-mouth jar in LNVGW with a light grey fabric. It is difficult to determine the form of this vessel for only a limited amount of the profile can be recovered and what survives does not appear to fit the standard categories of jars found within the Nene Valley. However, the fabric and surface finish are very similar to No. 5 above and this may indicate its date range.

7. Possibly part of a folded or indented beaker in LNVCC ware with vertical impressed lines to mark the divisions between the sections/folds around the girth of the vessel and with a single band of rouletting running above the folds. The outer surface is dark brown fired to a metallic lustre; the inner surface is dark brown and the fabric is an orange-brown. This is not a standard vessel of indented form where the indentations are oval depressions into the wall of the vessel. The wall of this vessel is indented in vertical, straight lines with rounded swellings between. The vessel is at present unparalleled within the LNVCC range of products. The fabric and surface finish of the vessel are similar to that achieved on colour-coated rouletted beakers and indented beakers from Chesterton which are dated to the late second to early third centuries.⁸⁴

8. Fragment of a beaker in LNVCC ware with very dark brown outer surface and dark grey inner surface. The fabric has fired light grey on the inner and grey-pink on the outer wall of the vessel. The outer surface has been decorated with cream painted barbotine lines. Barbotined beakers of this type occur fairly commonly on Nene Valley sites with a date range in the second and third centuries.⁸⁵

9. Small body sherd from a scaled beaker in LNVCC ware. The outer and inner surfaces are dark brown with the fabric fired to a light grey-pink colour. Scaled beakers have a closely dated range within the late second to first half of the third century.⁸⁶

A date range during the late first or early second quarter of the third century would seem appropriate for this deposit.

⁸⁰ See Perrin 1999, fig. 61, no. 173; Howe *et al.* 1980, nos 42–9.

⁸¹ Perrin 1999, fig. 58, nos 68–82.

⁸² Rollo and Wild 2001, fig. 42, nos 84–5.

⁸³ Hadman and Upex 1975.

⁸⁴ Perrin 1999, fig. 60.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 5, nos 47–50; Perrin 1999, fig. 61, nos 179–80.

⁸⁶ Perrin 1999, fig. 60, nos 141–2; Dakin 1961, fig. 7, no. 43.

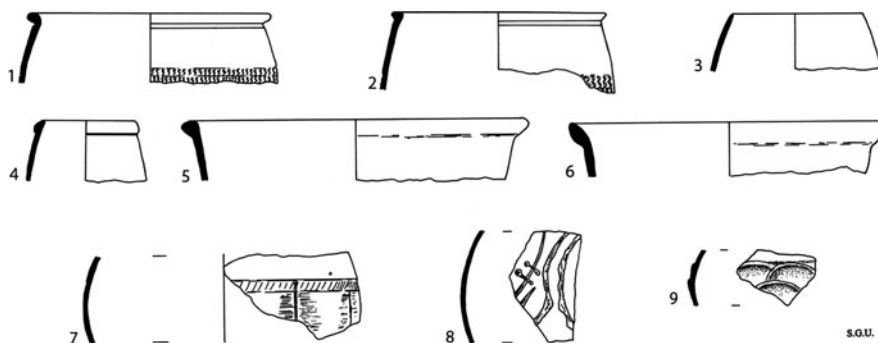


FIG. 22. Pottery from CAS.P. 1970. Trench I, Layer 18. Scale 1:4.

CAS.P. 1970. Trench I, Layer 12 (see FIG. 9 and FIG. 23 for pottery)

A limestone and mortar sub-floor which formed a second floor surface within Room 10, North Range (see FIG. 33 for room layout).

1. Wide-mouthed jar in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces are reddish brown; the outer surface with a slight metallic lustre. The fabric has fired to a pink-orange. Vessels of this form and finish typically fall within the date range of the late third to early fourth centuries.⁸⁷

2. Flanged bowl in LNVCC ware. Outer surface dark brown, with the inner surface fired slightly darker still; cream-pink fabric. Late third to early fourth centuries.⁸⁸

3. Shallow bowl or dish in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces are fired a red-brown; pink fabric. Similar date to Nos 1 and 2 above.⁸⁹

4. Pie dish with light brown, slightly burnished finish. Fabric fired dark grey with red-pink outer colour and very small shell inclusions. Similar date range to Nos 1–3 above.⁹⁰

5. Mortarium in pale cream fabric, with pale pink-orange areas on outer surface. Black grit. Similar to the range produced at the kiln site at Stibbington, dated to the late third to fourth century.⁹¹ The domestic site at Orton Longueville produced two vessels of similar date.⁹²

6. Base of a possible imitation samian form (perhaps a 24/5 or a 38?) in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces are light brown, with a grey-cream fabric. Imitation samian forms seem to be fairly commonly found on Nene Valley sites and usually date to the late third and early fourth centuries.⁹³

7. Base of a large wide-mouthed jar in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces are orange-brown, with a cream fabric. Jars of this size with heavy bases are known from Ashton⁹⁴ and from Orton Hall Farm,⁹⁵ which are dated to the late third and fourth centuries.

This deposit has material in the general date range of the late third to early fourth century and the latest pieces appear to form a possible closing date of *c.* A.D. 325–335.

⁸⁷ See Perrin 1999, 118–20, figs 69–72.

⁸⁸ Perrin 1999, fig. 64, nos 255–60; Perrin *et al.* 1996, fig. 102, no. 543.

⁸⁹ See Dakin 1961, fig. 6, nos 28–9; Perrin *et al.* 1996, fig. 103, no. 554.

⁹⁰ See Perrin 1999, fig. 63, nos 229 and 231–5.

⁹¹ See Perrin 2008, fig. 24, nos 115–23.

⁹² Dakin 1961, fig. 7, no. 63 and fig. 8, no. 86.

⁹³ See, for example, that from Orton Hall Farm, in Perrin *et al.* 1996, fig. 96, nos 385 and 401; Dakin 1961, fig. 7, no. 65 and fig. 8, no. 92; Perrin 1999, 102 and fig. 63, nos 245–7.

⁹⁴ Unpublished, but see Howe *et al.* 1980, nos 75–7.

⁹⁵ Perrin *et al.* 1996, fig. 104, no. 592.

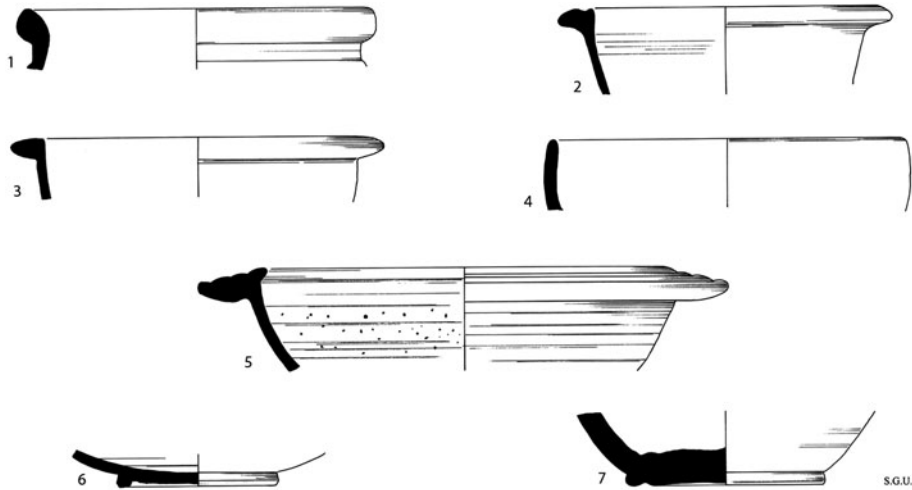


FIG. 23. Pottery from CAS.P. 1970. Trench I, Layer 12. Scale 1:4.

CAS.P 1970. Trench XX, Layer 4A (see FIG. 8)

From under the floor within Room 14, North Range (see FIGS 12 and 33).

Sherd (not illus.) identified by the excavators⁹⁶ as coming from a bowl from the Stanground kilns and dated to c. A.D. 240–250.⁹⁷

CELM. 1980. Trench 15, Layer 92 (see FIG. 8 for plan, and FIG. 24 for pottery)

Yellow-grey mortar, *opus signinum*, gravel and limestone, forming a floor within Room 31 (see FIG. 33 for room layout).

1. Decorated beaker with a bead rim in LNVCC ware. Outer surface dark brown fired to a slight lustre, with slightly lighter inner surface. The fabric is light pink-brown. The shoulder of the vessel is decorated with rouletting and over-painted in a white-cream colour. Decorated funnel-necked beakers of this type are known from several local sites⁹⁸ and date from the third and into the fourth centuries. The nearest parallels for this vessel are probably those in the collection at Peterborough Museum, which are third-century in date.⁹⁹

2. Beaded rim of beaker in LNVCC ware. Outer and inner surfaces dark brown, with both fired to a metallic lustre. Brown-grey fabric. A similar but smaller vessel to No. 1 above; possibly a similar date range.

3. Plain rim beaker in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces dark brown, with a light brown fabric. Decorated with a groove and white over-painted lines. Similar plain rim beakers are found within sealed deposits at Orton Longueville,¹⁰⁰ Chesterton¹⁰¹ and, with slight variation, Stonea;¹⁰² all date to the middle of the third century.

⁹⁶ *Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies* 7 (1972), 17.

⁹⁷ Dannell *et al.* 1993.

⁹⁸ Perrin 1999, fig. 61, nos 172–3; Perrin *et al.* 1996, fig. 156, no. 395.

⁹⁹ Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 5, nos 49–50.

¹⁰⁰ Dakin 1961, fig. 6, no. 13.

¹⁰¹ Perrin 1999, fig. 60, no. 121.

¹⁰² Cameron 1996, fig. 151, no. 5.

4. Lower part of a Castor ware box in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces light orange, with a light orange-grey fabric. Decorated with rouletting applied in two bands, each using a different rouletting wheel. Castor boxes seem to develop typologically in size, angularity of profile and decoration through time. This vessel has a very angular lid-seat and can be paralleled by vessels from Chesterton which date to the early to mid-third century.¹⁰³
5. Plain rimmed beaker in LNVCC ware. Outer surface fired purple-brown with a slight lustre; the inner surface is red-brown and the fabric is pink-orange. A rim sherd without any sign of decoration. It is uncertain whether this vessel was a funnel-necked indented beaker or some form of pedestal beaker.¹⁰⁴ Whichever, a date within the mid- to late third century is likely and the surface finish and fabric would corroborate this.
6. Body sherd of a small jar or beaker in LNVCC ware. Inner and outer surfaces grey-brown with a slight lustre; fabric light brown. Two external bands of rouletted decoration have in turn been over-painted with a light brown-grey paint. It is difficult to know precisely what form of vessel this sherd comes from. The bulbous profile is similar to beakers of the fourth century, but they normally have thicker walls and are much heavier vessels. It may have taken the form of a small bottle-type vessel, but with no exterior decoration, as illustrated by Perrin,¹⁰⁵ which is dated to the late second to early third centuries. The decoration, fabric and surface finish of this vessel may point to a date in the mid-third century.
7. Base of a LNVCC beaker. Outer and inner surfaces in light brown-orange, with a grey fabric. Some mottling on the coating was caused by finger impressions on the base of the vessel. The precise form of this vessel is unknown, but it is presumably from some form of beaker and probably dates to the third century.
8. Small body sherd in self-coloured cream ware, probably from a narrow-mouthed jar. The inner surface is cream; the outer surface slightly yellow on a cream fabric. Over-painted in dark brown, which in part has thinned to an orange colour. Painted jars of the late second to third century are well represented within the Lower Nene Valley and this sherd may come from a similar vessel.¹⁰⁶
9. Small body sherd from a beaker or jar in LNVCC ware. The outer surface is light brown and has been fired to a glassy lustre, which then appears to have been over-painted with lines of pink paint. The inner surface is dark brown on a pink-grey fabric. A very well fired vessel of a type not commonly found within the Lower Nene Valley; probably third century.
10. Jar in LNVGW. Inner and outer surfaces fired to a light grey on a cream-grey fabric. This jar has a fabric and finish similar to the mid-second-century vessels which come from the kiln at Sulehay,¹⁰⁷ though the form of the jar is more akin to vessels from Stanground dating to the early third century¹⁰⁸ and a vessel from Sibson dating to the late second or early third century.¹⁰⁹
11. Dish in LNVCC ware. Outer and inner surfaces fired to a dark grey on a light grey fabric. Large dishes or bowls with flattened or rounded rims are common in the third century and this vessel matches examples from Chesterton, which are dated to the early part of that century.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Perrin 1999, fig. 62, nos 198–9.

¹⁰⁴ Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 3, no. 31 and fig. 4, nos 42–3; see also Perrin 1999, fig. 61, nos 165–7, Perrin and Cameron 1988, fig. 34, no. 44.

¹⁰⁵ Perrin 1999, fig. 67, no. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Perrin 1999, fig. 66, no. 328; Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 8, no. 95.

¹⁰⁷ Hadman and Upex 1975.

¹⁰⁸ Dannell *et al.* 1993, fig. 25, no. 215 and fig. 26, no. 243.

¹⁰⁹ Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 1, no. 4.

¹¹⁰ Perrin 1999, fig. 59, nos 103–6.

12. Wide-mouthed jar in shell-gritted ware. The outer and inner surfaces are a light pink-grey with some darkening towards the rim. The fabric is fired pink on the inner and grey on the outer surfaces. The flattened outer part of the rim of this vessel is matched on similar vessels from Chesterton, which date to the third century.¹¹¹

13. Small body sherd with slightly burnished orange outer surface and orange inner surface (not illus.). Fabric fired to orange with a grey inner core. A mid-third-century fabric and surface finish.

There is a certain amount of residual material within this deposit, but the latest pieces point to a closing date in the latter part of the third century, *c.* A.D. 260–280.

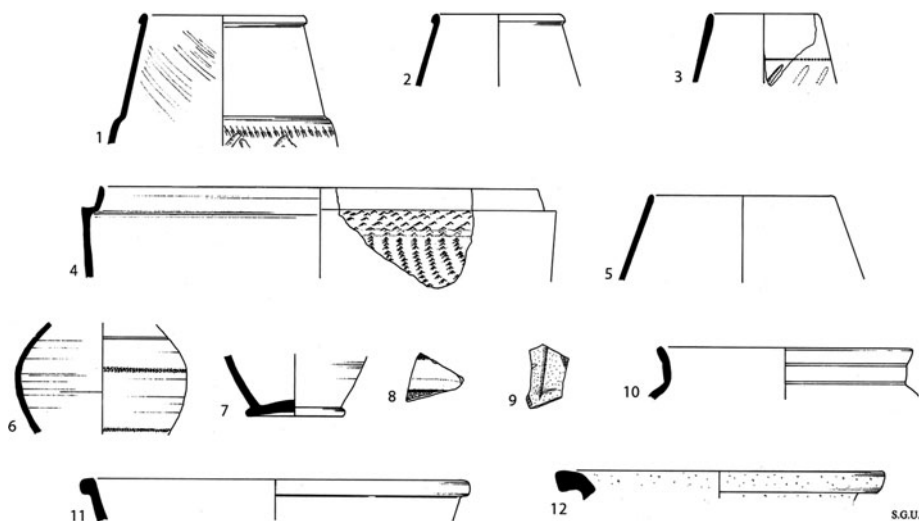


FIG. 24. Pottery from CELM. 1980. Trench 15, Layer 92. Scale 1:4.

CAS.P. 1971. Trench XXVII, Layer 48 (see FIGS 7 and 13 and FIG. 25 for pottery)

From a soot and ash deposit within the flue between Rooms 2 and 3 of the North Range (see FIG. 33 for room layout).

1. Small bowl in LNVCC ware. Red-orange surface on which has been trailed a cream painted arched decoration. The fabric is fired pink with a slightly grey inner core. Bowls of this form and decoration are now reliably dated from their context at the kiln site at Stibbington to the mid- to late fourth century.¹¹²

2. Wide-mouthed jar in LNVCC ware. Outer surface grey-brown, with a brown inner surface. Fabric cream-grey. Jars of this form and finish are well represented from the Stibbington kiln site and date to the mid- to late fourth century.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Perrin 1999, fig. 71, nos 452–3.

¹¹² Perrin 2008, fig. 21, nos 68–9; see also Perrin *et al.* 1996, fig. 106, no. 620.

¹¹³ Perrin 2008, figs 12 and 22.

3. Wide-mouthed jar in LNVCC ware. Outer surface dark brown, with a slightly lighter brown inner surface. Cream fabric. Date and details as No. 2 above.
4. Shallow bowl or dish with triangular rim in LNVCC ware. Outer and inner surfaces are brown-orange, with a cream fabric. Grey ware forms of these types of vessel with triangular rims are known from the Stibbington kilns and dated to the mid- to late fourth century,¹¹⁴ although earlier colour-coated examples have been found in contexts of the late second to third centuries.¹¹⁵ In general the fabric and finish of this vessel would fit with a late third- to early fourth-century date range.
5. Imitation samian bowl of form 36 in LNVCC ware. Orange-brown inner and outer surfaces, with a fabric fired pink. This type of vessel appears to have been made from the beginning of the third century¹¹⁶ to well into the fourth century.¹¹⁷ Those with heavy rims, of which this vessel is an example, are later within this date range.
6. Body sherd of a dish, possibly from a vessel of an imitation samian form 36. Self-coloured cream ware with orange painted decoration on the inner surface. Vessels of this type have been found at the Stibbington kiln site¹¹⁸ and Orton Hall Farm.¹¹⁹ A date in the mid- to late fourth century seems to be appropriate.
7. Fragment of a flagon neck or narrow-mouthed jar. It has an outer and inner surface fired brown, with dark grey paint added to the shoulder of the vessel which has taken on a slightly metallic lustre. The fabric is fired to the same colour as the surfaces of the vessel. Narrow-mouthed jars of this form and decoration appear in the second century,¹²⁰ but the fabric and finish of this vessel closely match others with different forms, which date to the late third and early fourth centuries.
8. Body sherd of a vessel in self-coloured cream ware, with the outer surface painted with lines in both wide, dark brown and narrow light orange paint. Similar in date to No. 6 above, though perhaps not an imitation samian form 36.
9. Small body fragment in LNVCC ware with brown outer and inner surfaces; the outer surface is fired to a metallic lustre. The outer surface has been decorated with cream-brown barbotine dots. Typical sherd fabric and decoration of late third- and early fourth-century date.
10. Base of a beaker in LNVCC ware. Reddish-brown outer and inner surfaces, with a fabric fired light brown. This base could come from any number of forms of vessel, but the fabric and finish are typically late third- to early fourth-century in date.
11. Body sherd of an Oxford ware bowl (not illus.).

This deposit forms the latest sealed Roman assemblage of material from the site. Products from the Stibbington kilns (Nos 1–3, 6 and 8) indicate a date range at the end of the fourth and into the fifth centuries.

¹¹⁴ Perrin 2008, fig. 17, nos 23–5.

¹¹⁵ Perrin 1999, fig. 63, nos 216–20.

¹¹⁶ See Dannell 1973, fig. 1, nos 1a and 1b; Dannell *et al.* 1993, fig. 20, nos 138–42.

¹¹⁷ Perrin 1999, fig. 63, no. 244; Perrin 2008, fig. 14, nos 35–6.

¹¹⁸ Perrin 2008, fig. 27.

¹¹⁹ Perrin *et al.* 1996, fig. 104, no. 591; see also Perrin 1999, fig. 67, no. 356.

¹²⁰ Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 8, nos 94–5.

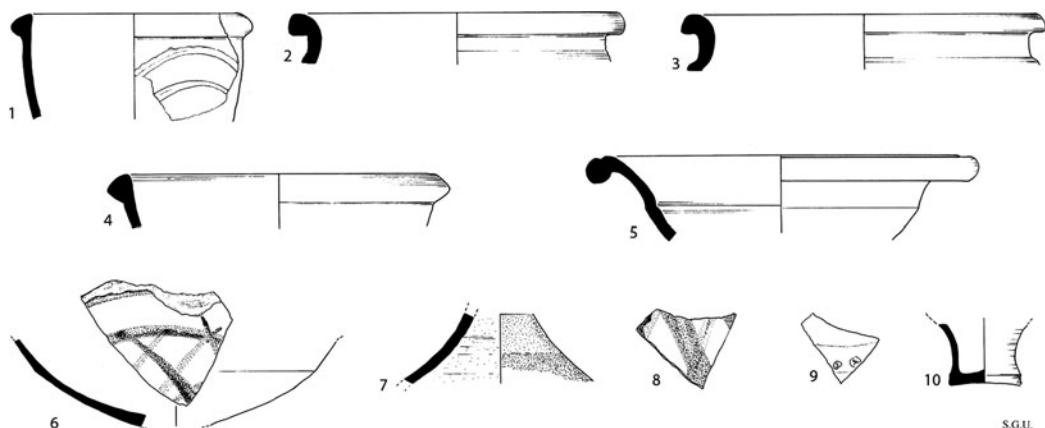


FIG. 25. Pottery from CAS.P. 1971. Trench XXVII, Layer 48. Scale 1:4.

Additional sherds from Trench L (1973)

1. A sherd of LNVCC ware (FIG. 26) from a beaker with barbotine decoration found in a medieval layer (41) within Trench L (see FIG. 7 for trench layout). The sherd has a dark brown-grey finish on the inner and outer surfaces and the fabric is fired a cream-grey. The sherd shows a female figure leaning slightly forward with her arms extended. She has small breasts and a rounded abdomen, which has an added barbotine line drawn on her right lower side. She has a well-defined hairstyle and may be wearing a necklace. Vessels with figures have been the subject of several recent studies and appear to have been special items, possibly made to order.¹²¹ The date range for this class of vessel, within the late second to third centuries, appears to be the same as that for other decorated barbotine beakers without figures.¹²² Who or what the figure represents is uncertain. It is possible that she is shown in a dancing posture, which may be similar to other dancing figures that have been linked with the cult of Bacchus.¹²³ A sherd from Baldock shows a dancing maenad, while two sherds from Ashton (Northants.) each show a maenad with her arms held aloft in a dancing pose.¹²⁴ Alternatively, the rounded abdomen of the figure on the Castor sherd may indicate that she is pregnant and if this is the case, the vessel may fall into the category of Lower Nene Valley beakers which show a repertoire of fertility and erotic scenes.¹²⁵ The stylised eye, pronounced nose and swept back hair of the female on the Castor sherd match the features shown on a figure from Horsey Toll¹²⁶ and it is possible that they were both made by the same potter.¹²⁷

¹²¹ Webster 1989; 1991.

¹²² Perrin 1999, 92.

¹²³ Webster 1989, 11.

¹²⁴ Stead and Rigby 1986, fig. 104, nos 22–3; Webster 1989, fig. 5, nos 45a and 45b.

¹²⁵ Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 3, no. 28; Perrin 1999, fig. 61, no. 171; Johns 1996, figs 174–5; Webster 1989, 9–10.

¹²⁶ Howe *et al.* 1980, fig. 3, no. 28.

¹²⁷ I am grateful to Professor Miranda Aldhouse-Green for her comments and ideas on this sherd.



FIG. 26. Sherd of LNVCC ware decorated with a female figure. Scale 3:2.

2. A sherd of self-coloured ware (FIG. 27) which has fired pink-light orange on the outer and orange on the inner surfaces, with an orange fabric. A brown-orange paint has been applied to the outer surface. The piece comes from a layer of medieval disturbance (46) within Trench L (1973). The sherd is part of the upper body of what appears to be a duck, a goose or even a swan with the added paint representing the plumage. The head and neck and most of the body are missing, but originally it may have been *c.* 150 mm long (breast to tail) and up to 50–70 mm deep. At the break near the tail there is a V-shaped cut, which was made whilst the clay was still plastic. There are indications around this cut that something may originally have been luted to the back of the bird. It is likely that the original object would have been hollow, with the potter having carefully smoothed out the clay into a thin, flat slab and then rolled it around and made a join along the top of the back of the bird, before modelling the rest of the body. Fingerprints from this modelling process can be seen on the inner and outer surfaces of the sherd. At present the item is without parallel. It may have been made as a child's toy¹²⁸ or possibly the figure may have had some religious connection. Ducks, geese and swans figure in both Celtic and Roman religious iconography¹²⁹ and the Castor bird may have been an effigy for a *lararium* or shrine.

¹²⁸ Liversidge 1973, 344–6.

¹²⁹ Ross 1992, 302–11 and 331–5.

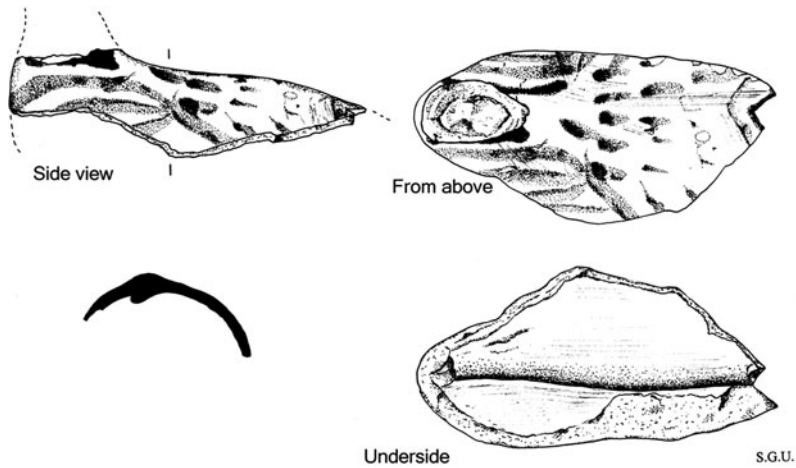


FIG. 27. Sherd of LNVCC ware showing a fragment of an aquatic bird. Scale 1:2.

The character of the excavations and the nature of the very disturbed deposits have resulted in very few significant and stratified finds. Finds of samian, amphorae, copper-alloy objects and coins were few but have been reported on as follows:

THE SAMIAN STAMPS *By* Felicity C. Wild

Trench L produced three stamped samian bases (FIG. 28), all datable to the late second century A.D. or after.

1. Form 31, Central Gaulish, burnt, with CAT[VSS].A.M stamped across the kick, which is abraded in the centre. The wall appears to have been removed, after breakage, to perhaps form a lid. The stamp is almost certainly die 1a of Catussa of Lezoux.¹³⁰ The stamp occurs on the late Antonine forms 31R, 79 and 79/80 and at sites in the Hadrian's Wall hinterland which were reoccupied c. A.D. 160. c. A.D. 155–190. (*CAS.P.* 1973. *Tr. L*, 62; *SF133*)

2. Form 32, East Gaulish, with the stamp NATALISF (or perhaps FE, the F written as E without the top bar). There were several samian potters with this name, but this is likely to be the work of the Natalis who worked at Rheinzabern. Ludowici illustrates a stamp with a similar reading on a bowl of the same form.¹³¹ Although not the same die, it is sufficiently close to be likely that it is the work of the same potter. A late second- or possibly third-century date seems likely. (*CAS.P.* 1973. *Tr. L*, 7; *SF61*)

3. Form 38, Central Gaulish, stamped VIC////RI[. This is probably a stamp of Victor iv of Lezoux, who produced the late Antonine forms 31R and 79 as well as 38.¹³² One of his stamps was found in a grave at Sompting, Sussex, with a little-worn coin of Geta as Caesar (A.D. 198–209).¹³³ c. A.D. 160–200. (*CAS.P.* 1973. *Tr. L*, 69; *SF111*)

¹³⁰ Hartley and Dickinson 2008.

¹³¹ Ludowici 1904, 57.

¹³² Dickinson 2001, 208.

¹³³ Ainsworth and Ratcliffe-Densham 1974, 310, 312.



FIG. 28. Samian stamps.

AMPHORAE *By David Peacock*

Three sherds of amphorae were recovered during the 1970–73 excavations (not illus.).

1. Handle of Dressel 20 from the Guadalquivir Valley (southern Spain); olive oil. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. XX, 5*)
2. Sherd of Gauloise 4 from the South of France; wine. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. XVII, +*)
3. Sherd, possibly Dressel 2-4; wine (Italy/Spain?). (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. XII, 1*)

SMALL FINDS OF COPPER-ALLOY

1. Probe, broken at one end (FIG. 29). (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. XXIV, 5; SF 19*)
2. Copper-alloy sheet folded over with punched holes in both leaves; five in one leaf and seven in the other (FIG. 29). Five of the punched holes correspond with the opposing leaf; the two remaining

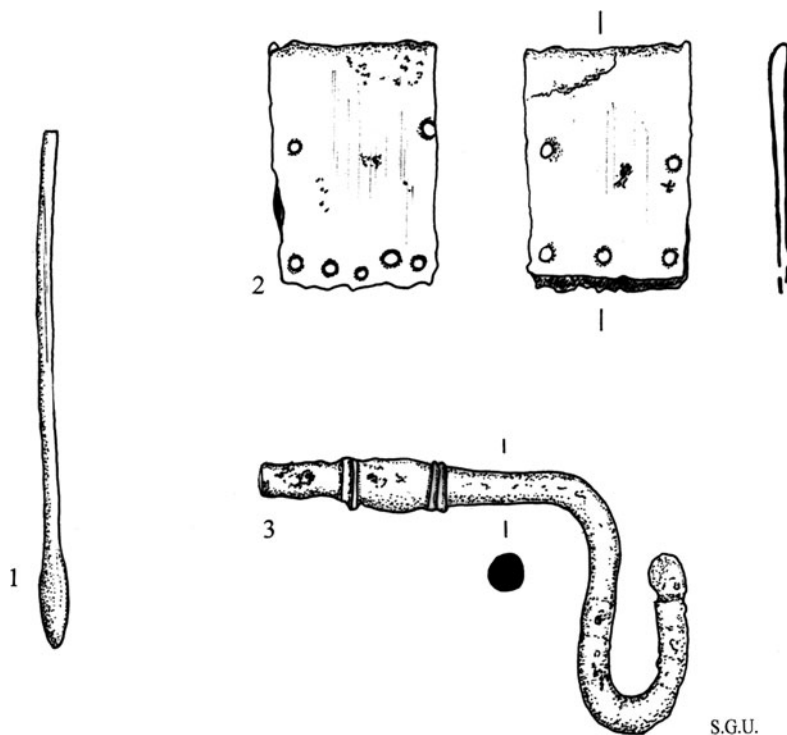


FIG. 29. Copper-alloy small finds. Scale 1:1.

holes may have been for attaching the sheet to a fabric or leather strap. (*Cas.P. 1971. Tr. XXVII, 13; SF 24*)

3. Part of a drop handle, with decoration formed by concentric rings (FIG. 29). (*Cas.P.1970. Tr. XXV, 2; SF 18*)

Scalpel handle (FIG. 30) *By Ralph Jackson*

Original length *c.* 80 mm. Grip width *c.* 0.9 mm. Grip thickness *c.* 0.7 mm. (*Cas.P. 1971, Tr. XXXII, 3; SF 25*)

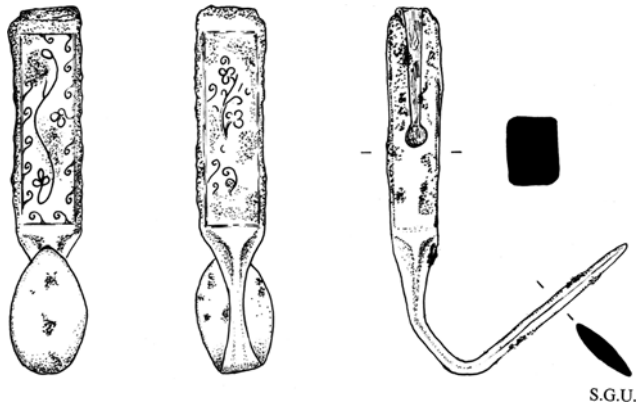


FIG. 30. Copper-alloy scalpel handle. Scale 1:1.

A copper-alloy scalpel handle of standard Roman form, with a rectangular-sectioned block-like grip and a heavily-distorted spatulate blunt dissector terminal. It is a Type I scalpel handle with stout grip which incorporates the normal and distinctive 'keyhole' socket to secure a blade of iron or steel.¹³⁴ Although the blade is lacking, its corroded tang remains in the socket. The two principal faces of the grip are ornamented with an incised design, which comprises a stylised vine scroll motif within a wave-crest border. The blunt dissector is of short and broad form, with a strong median ridge on both faces. Considerable force would have been required to bend it (at two points on its slender faceted stem) to its present position. In view of the acute angle it is unlikely that this distortion is an example of a practitioner's adaptation of an instrument, as sometimes occurs.

Unlike spatula probes, scoop probes, ligulae and tweezers which — as general purpose toilet and cosmetic implements sometimes used in medicine and surgery — can only be considered as quasi-medical implements when found on their own, scalpels — the surgical tool *par excellence* — were foremost among those Roman instruments designed and made specifically for the practice of surgery. Thus, although as a single instrument the medical implications for the Castor find are limited, it is, nevertheless, a diagnostic tool of surgery and may be taken to indicate medical activity in, or near, the locality.

Decoration on Roman surgical instruments, where there was scope for it at all, was principally confined to the non-functional parts — generally grips and handles — and these limited available fields dictated to a great extent the form of decoration and the choice of motif. Thus, mouldings and finials on slender-stemmed instruments are by far and away the commonest, but a few instruments provided the opportunity for more ambitious designs. The grip of scalpel handles,

¹³⁴ Jackson 1986, 133; 1990, fig. 1.

especially the broader block-like grip of the Type I variety, was a favoured field for inlaid motifs. One of these, a scalpel handle from Asia Minor, has a silver- and copper-inlaid image of a bird.¹³⁵ However, the great majority (about 30 examples scattered widely throughout the Empire, though with a concentration in the Rhineland and north-east Gaul)¹³⁶ show only slightly varying versions of a stock motif: a more or less stylised sinuous vine-spray or ivy leaf tendril often enclosed in a wave-crest border. In some examples the design was incised directly into the body metal and filled with niello inlay,¹³⁷ but in other examples an embossed copper panel was soldered into a recessed space and sometimes further ornamented with silver and copper.¹³⁸ Clearly the Castor handle belongs to the former category. The 'meaning' of the symbolic Dionysiac/Bacchic décor of these scalpel handles is open to question, but Künzl regards it as 'positive' imagery, aligning it with similar motifs found on early Imperial sword scabbards, which he interprets as symbolic of the prosperity of the Empire under the protection of the *virtus* of the Roman army.¹³⁹ Perhaps, therefore, it was the sort of image that would have instilled confidence in a prospective patient.

The British comparanda include an unpublished example from Colchester (unusually on a Type II handle in Colchester Museum) and a fragmentary example from Gadebridge Park (a Type I handle lacking both its blade and dissector),¹⁴⁰ as well as a slender version, without the wave-crest border, on a Type I handle in a group of eight instruments said to have been found at Cramond Roman fort.¹⁴¹

Künzl concluded that the number of these decorated scalpel handles was too small to permit speculation on common workshop products.¹⁴² Likewise, while the Gadebridge Park and Castor handles (neither known to Künzl or Büsing-Kolbe) are similar, they are not sufficiently close to imply manufacture in the same workshop.

Dating of the type, too, is imprecise, owing both to enduring imagery and the potential for re-use of scalpel handles. Thus, while it is clear that some examples were probably made as early as the first century A.D., and production seems to have ceased by the late second century,¹⁴³ the contextual dates imply continued usage well into the third century and beyond.

THE COINS *By* Adrian Challands

1. Æ 3 Constantius II as Caesar A.D. 324–337. Patinated, broken, slightly worn.
Obv. FLIVLCONSTANTIVSNO[BC] Laureate and cuirassed bust, right.
Rev. GLOR[IAE]X[ERCI]TVS Two soldiers one standard.
Mint Mark • TRP • Trier. Minted A.D. 335–337. (*Cas.P. Tr. VIII, +; SFN 5*)
2. Æ 3 Constantinian Commemorative. Patinated and slightly worn.
Obv. [VRB]S ROMA Helmeted and cuirassed bust of Roma, left.
Rev. No legend. Wolf and twins below two stars.
Mint Mark [?PL]G Lugdunum. Minted A.D. 330–337. (*Cas.P. Tr. XIV, 1; SFN 6*)
3. Unofficial issue of Constantinian Commemorative. Slightly worn.
Obv. Blundered legend should be CONSTANTINOPOLIS. Helmeted bust of Constantinopolis, left.
Rev. No legend. Victory on prow.

¹³⁵ Künzl 2002, 28–9, Taf. 17, B4.

¹³⁶ Künzl 1994, Abb. 133. Büsing-Kolbe 2001, Karte 1.

¹³⁷ Künzl 1994, Abb. 131.

¹³⁸ Künzl 1994, Abb. 130.

¹³⁹ Künzl 1994, 216.

¹⁴⁰ Neal 1974, fig. 63, no. 211.

¹⁴¹ In National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, FT 81. Gilson 1981.

¹⁴² Künzl 1994, 216.

¹⁴³ Büsing-Kolbe 2001, 107.

No mint mark. A reasonably good copy, and manufactured at a probably similar date to the official issue minting, A.D. 330–337. (*Cas.P. Tr. XIX, 4; SFN 9*)

4. Minim c. 11.0 mm diameter. Copy of a Fel Temp Reparatio Type. Slightly worn.

Obv. No legend. Pearl diademed bust, right.

Rev. Blundered legend should be FEL TEMP REPARATIO. Copy of soldier spearing fallen horseman.

No mint mark. Boon¹⁴⁴ suggests a minting date of A.D. 357–367 for the small size module. (*Cas.P. Tr. XXIII, 8; SFN 17*)

WALL-PLASTER FROM THE PRAETORIUM

Substantial quantities of painted wall-plaster and lime and mortar rendering were recovered from almost all parts of the site during the excavations of the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s. The excavations by Green in 1957–58 on a building 50 m south of the church (see FIG. 36) produced six fragments of painted plaster from Pit 1 and another 20 pieces from Rooms 1 and 2. These fragments were in white, red and brown, with some indicating a striped pattern of brown paint on a white background.¹⁴⁵ Green also discovered that some of the walls of the eastern wing of the North Range had in part been rendered, although there was no indication of any added colour here.¹⁴⁶ Similarly the excavations by Wild and Dannell during the 1970s produced large quantities of painted plaster and examples of uncoloured plaster still *in situ* on walls located within Trench XXXVI (see FIG. 7). *In-situ* plaster was also found on walls in the school playing field (see FIG. 36).¹⁴⁷ Both Rollo and Lucas reported quantities of painted plaster from their excavations in 1980 and 1998, while more recently trial-trenching in 2008, to the south-east of the village hall, produced Roman walls and more painted plaster.¹⁴⁸

All the painted plaster recovered in recent years has been fragmentary, none being recovered *in situ* or as undisturbed fallen sections. What plaster had not fallen from walls and ceilings after the buildings and rooms were abandoned or occupied during the post-Roman period, appears to have been hacked off when the site was quarried for building stone. Edmund Artis, who witnessed some of the destruction as roads were cut into the hillside to reduce the gradient of the slope, reported that ‘on the north side of the church [Roman] rooms have been discovered, the walls of which are beautifully painted and from 10 to 11 feet high’.¹⁴⁹ Strangely, when Artis came to illustrate the site in the series of plates published in 1828, he failed to show any of the excavated buildings with plastered walls; instead he showed the walls constructed in herringbone masonry without any plaster covering.

The painted plaster fragments shown in FIGS 31 and 32 come from rooms on the western side of the North Range and were found during the 1970–73 excavations. They represent just a small fraction of what was actually recovered, but indicate the range of colour and schemes used in the rooms of the North Range. There has been no attempt to quantify the amount of plaster, nor to try and assign decorative schemes to individual rooms. The general history of the site, and particularly the North Range, shows that post-Roman robbing and occupation has disturbed the archaeological deposits to such an extent that such data for individual rooms have been lost.

The painted plaster fragments which have been examined fall into three groups: (1) monochrome fragments (not illus.), forming the largest assemblage, in white, red-maroon

¹⁴⁴ Boon 1974.

¹⁴⁵ Green *et al.* 1986–87, microfiche M16.

¹⁴⁶ Green *et al.* 1986–87, fig. 4.

¹⁴⁷ Hatton and Spoerry 2000.

¹⁴⁸ Rollo 1981; Lucas 1998. I am grateful to Dr Ben Robinson for details of the finds from the site near the village hall at Castor.

¹⁴⁹ Drakard’s Stamford News, 7 December 1821.

(being most represented),¹⁵⁰ light blue and light green; (2) fragments which show some form of pattern or design (see FIG. 31); and (3) fragments which form parts of striped decorative patterns (see FIG. 32).¹⁵¹ Clearly all three categories may have originally formed part of an overall scheme in a room or rooms, but it is now impossible to reconstruct such schemes.

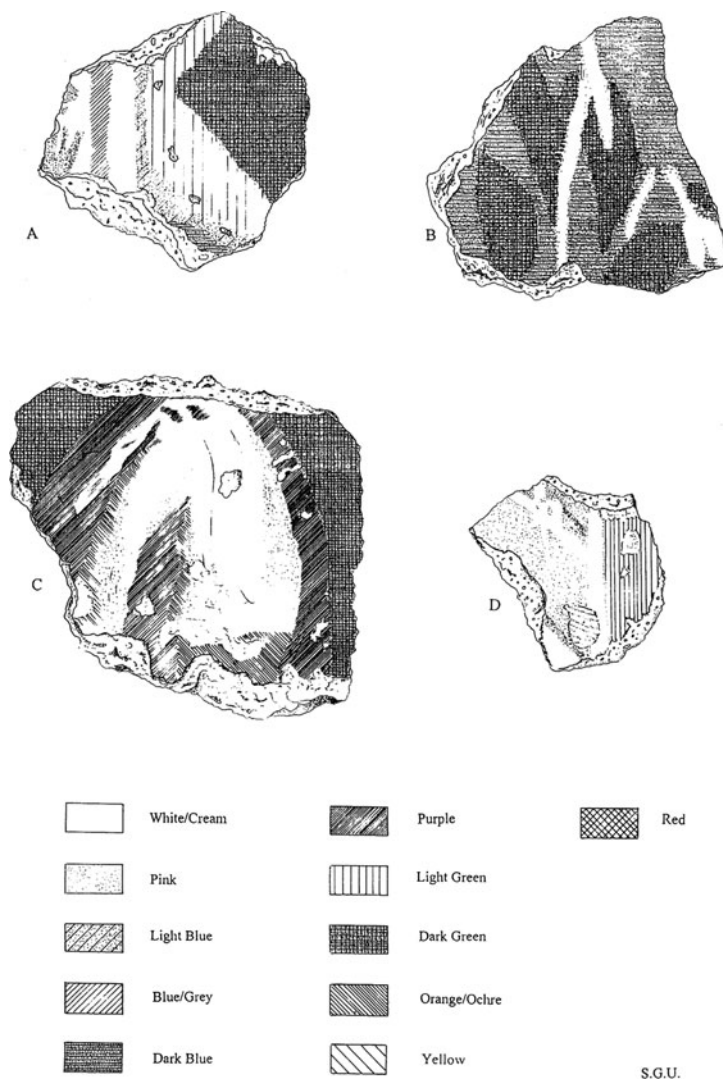


FIG. 31. Wall-plaster showing designs or patterns. Scale 1:2.

¹⁵⁰ Red-maroon painted plaster was also found during Green's excavations in 1957–58 on the site of the so-called 'Temple', which forms the eastern wing of the North Range of the *Praetorium*, see Green *et al.* 1986–87, Site II, 116.

¹⁵¹ The Time Team trench cut into Room 18 (see FIG. 33) in June 2010 also produced fragments of black painted plaster over-painted in white.

Wall-plaster fragments with designs or patterns (FIG. 31, A–D)

A. Fragment of a complicated pattern, with a dark green lozenge shape on the right over-painted on a light green background which is edged with light blue. To the left of this edging, a white background has been over-painted with a vertical (?) blue/grey line and on the extreme left of the fragment are brush strokes in pink of yet another element. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. I, 4*)

B. A dark blue background on which are painted dark green leaves, the stems of which are in cream. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. I, 2*)

C. Part of an unidentified feature painted on a dark green background. The feature is curved at the top and flattened at the bottom (as presented in the drawing) and is painted with a purple surround that merges with an orange/ochre paint. The central part of the feature is cream with pink tinges. It may represent some figurative element, with the curvature possibly representing an arm or perhaps a leg. Alternatively, it may have been part of a floral design with the central feature representing perhaps some large bell-shaped flower. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. IA, 1*)

D. Small fragment painted with a light green panel on the right, whilst the left of the piece is painted pink with a trellis-like pattern in cream. (*Cas.P. 1971. Tr. XXVII, 12*)

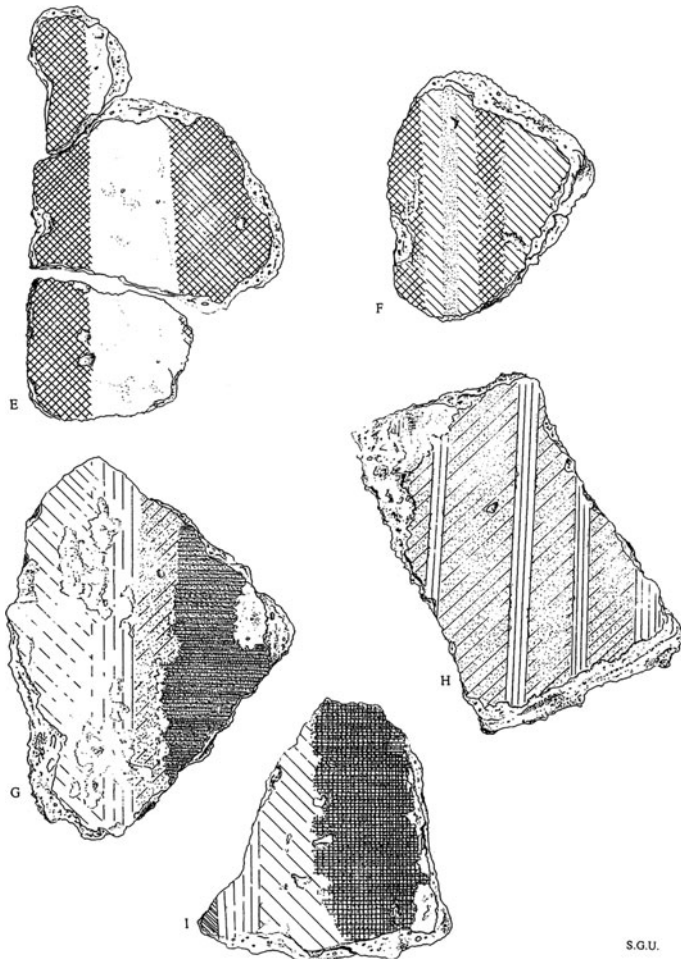


FIG. 32. Wall-plaster with stripes. Scale 1:2.

Wall-plaster fragments with stripes (FIG. 32, E–I)

E. Three joining fragments which form part of a vertical (?) striped pattern or border scheme. Two stripes are in red which has a slight brownish tinge, while the central pattern is in cream. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. XVIII, 2*)

F. Small fragment of a border scheme with vertical red lines interspaced with pale yellow lines. On one of the yellow bands is a thin pink line. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. IX, 3*)

G. Fragment painted with a dark colour on the right-hand side. To the left are lines of light blue, then light green, and finally pale yellow. (*Cas.P. 1971. Tr. XXIX, 4*)

H. Rectangular fragment, which is painted in light blue with thin vertical (?) lines of light green. (*Cas.P. 1971. Tr. XXX, 5*)

I. Fragment with a dark green edge on the right and then to the left vertical (?) lines painted in first yellow, followed by lines of light green, and finally orange/ochre. (*Cas.P. 1970. Tr. XVII, 7*)

The fragments indicate the technique of wall painting, with a coarse backing layer of plaster being first applied to the wall, followed by a coat of finer plaster onto which the paint was laid.¹⁵² Some fragments appear to display a degree of polishing to the final coat, prior to painting. This shows as a series of very fine curved or straight lines visible under the paint layer and was done, according to Vitruvius, in order to give the surface a much smoother and burnished finish.¹⁵³ There is evidence in some cases for redecoration over time, with several fragments showing one colour scheme which has then been over-painted with a different colour. For example, from Room 2 (see FIG. 33) a fragment of plaster was recovered which was originally painted red, but had later been over-painted in green.

The repertoire of twelve colours from Castor is relatively extensive when compared with the ten colours reported from Stonea and a similar range of colours found during the recent exploratory excavations at Bedford Purlieu.¹⁵⁴ Finds of painted wall-plaster in the Lower Nene Valley have generally been limited, with few published examples. Plaster does not survive well in the plough soil and has only rarely been recovered during field-walking,¹⁵⁵ and little wall-plaster has been found during recent excavations. The site at Barnwell produced some plaster that may have been associated with a late third- or early fourth-century bath suite, while red and black plaster was recovered from the excavation of Roman buildings at Fineshade.¹⁵⁶ Probably the best known local illustration of the extensive range of colours and a decorative scheme is provided by Artis, who shows the view of a wall of a Roman bath at Normangate Field, Castor.¹⁵⁷ His illustration shows a wall (one assumes partly reconstructed), with two panels divided by three painted architectural columns. Each panel has a central area painted red, with a border of light blue, white and green stripes. At top and bottom of these panels is a broad orange stripe with a further scheme of brown, white and purple lines above and below the panels. The painted schemes of some of the rooms in the Castor *Praetorium* may have been similar to that illustrated by Artis, but others may have been even more elaborate, involving intricate geometrical elements, or incorporating foliage or possibly figurative elements.

¹⁵² See Pratt 1976, 227.

¹⁵³ Vitruvius 7.3.7.

¹⁵⁴ Jackson 1996, 493–501; I am grateful to Dr Ben Robinson for details of the Bedford Purlieu excavations; also see Simmonds 2008.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, the site at Southwick reported in RCHM 1975, 86.

¹⁵⁶ RCHM 1975, 12–14; I am also grateful to John Hadman for details regarding the Barnwell plaster and Gill Johnston for discussing the plaster from Fineshade in advance of the publication of the site.

¹⁵⁷ Artis 1828, pl. XXXII.

MOSAIC AND TESSELLATED FLOORS AT THE PRAETORIUM

The existence of mosaic floors at the Castor *Praetorium* has been known for nearly 400 years.¹⁵⁸ Stukeley recorded seeing mosaics below the churchyard some time before 1724,¹⁵⁹ and just over one hundred years later in 1828, Artis published detailed drawings of three mosaics.¹⁶⁰ The positions of the three mosaics are shown in FIG. 3, marked 'A' 'E' and 'F' (the mosaic floor in the room marked 'A' by Artis equates to Room 26 in the reconstructed arrangement of the North Range shown in FIG. 33).¹⁶¹ Artis also indicated on his 1828 plans of the *Praetorium* the positions of other mosaic or tessellated floors which he does not illustrate because they were poorly preserved. Thus in the room marked as 'H' (Room 22 in FIG. 33), Artis refers to a 'tessellated floor', while in Rooms 25 and 29 he refers to 'pavements destroyed'. The chances are that these rooms (25 and 29) would have had plain tessellated floors. Room 29 appears to have been a corridor or even a stairway and as such may not have warranted a decorative mosaic. On the other hand, Room 22 is more central to the North Range and may have formed part of a formal suite of rooms and thus warranted a decorated floor. Artis indicated in total three mosaic and three (probable) tessellated floors (see Table 1). To these can now be added six other rooms in the *Praetorium* complex which had tessellated floors.

During the excavations carried out in 1970 by Wild and Dannell, three new tessellated floors were located in the North Range of the *Praetorium* in Rooms 10, 11 and 13 (FIGS 8, 18 and 33). It would appear that the floor in Room 13 was plain, using limestone tesserae (typically 20 × 20 × 10 mm in size). However, in Rooms 10 and 11 there may originally have been central mosaics, which had been removed with only the surrounding limestone borders in large tesserae surviving.¹⁶² In Trench VI (FIGS 8 and 10) the outer, surviving limestone border (laid in 20 × 20 × 10 mm tesserae) survives with several smaller white tesserae (5 × 5 × 5 mm) abutting it, forming a remnant of the original central mosaic panel.

The 1971 excavations in the area of the Rectory garden (see FIGS 4 and 16) revealed an additional tessellated floor, located in Room 23 (see FIG. 33). Only the edge of the floor, where it abutted a wall, was exposed in Trench LII, so it is not possible to say if it had a patterned panel in the centre or not.

¹⁵⁸ See note 10.

¹⁵⁹ Stukeley 1724, 78–9.

¹⁶⁰ Artis, 1828: pls II, III, VII and XII. The position of these mosaics is shown in a series of plans in the same volume, pls VIII and XIII.

¹⁶¹ See Neal and Cosh 2002, 61–4, nos 12.2–4 for a description of these mosaics.

¹⁶² The removal of both central mosaic panels from these rooms is likely to have been the work of antiquarian excavations of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries and the finger of suspicion must fall on Artis. He had already removed a mosaic floor from a building ('The Cedars', Room 'E', shown in FIG. 3) at the *Praetorium* by 1826 and had part of the pavement restored and then 'relaid in the anti-room to the dairy at Milton' (Artis 1828, pl. XII). Milton Hall, to the west of Peterborough, was the country seat of the Earls Fitzwilliam, who had encouraged Artis to excavate on estate land and it seems that Artis had arranged for the Castor mosaic to be placed in the dairy to curry favour with the Earl. This mosaic still remains in the dairy building at Milton (see Upex 2008, fig. 34).

A similar picture possibly emerges in the case of a mosaic excavated by Artis in 1822 from a villa at Mill Hill in Castor (Artis 1828, pl. XXI). This may be the mosaic which was relaid, perhaps as a gift, in Orton Hall near Peterborough, but which has now been transferred to Peterborough Museum. The mosaic illustrated by Artis as coming from Mill Hill has a basic similar geometrical pattern to the Orton Hall pavement, but lacks an infill of detail and is the wrong shape. It is difficult to believe that Artis would have represented it so badly in pl. XXI if these were indeed one and the same.

It thus seems likely that the mosaics within Rooms 10 and 11 of the North Range could have been removed by Artis at some point after 1828, for he fails to indicate any structures within this area on his plan of Castor at this date (pl. XIII). Excavation trenches which follow the lines of the Roman walls (in typical Artis fashion) within the gardens of 'Elmlea' and containing nineteenth-century pottery may be the work of Artis and his workmen.

The 1971 excavations also indicated that at least two rooms of the bath-house, first excavated by Artis and shown by him in pls VI and XIII, had tessellated floors.¹⁶³ Room 7 (FIG. 19), which was shown by Artis to have a hypocaust, contained a broken fragment (35 by 25 cm) of tessellated floor, which was recovered from part of the robbed out area of the room (Trench XLI). This fragment clearly came from a hypocausted room for it still retained its sub-floor concrete layers. Room 8 also had a tessellated pavement. The actual floor surface of this room had been destroyed, but the impressions of large tesserae on the surviving concrete sub-floor (see FIG. 21) indicate that it had been tessellated.

To these accounts of tessellated flooring can be added the likelihood of similar floors in the bath-house excavated by Green in 1957–58. No intact floors were found, but tessellated floor fragments were recovered from the building.¹⁶⁴ The excavations by Green on the so-called ‘Temple’ site, which formed the east wing of the North Range of the *Praetorium* also produced quantities of large limestone tesserae, but were not reported in the 1986 publication.

Additional finds of tesserae also came from the 1988 excavation by Lucas to the south of the church; from an evaluation trench against the wall of Castor Primary School dug in 2001; and from archaeological watching-briefs and limited excavations in 2006 to the south of the former A47 road, close to where Artis indicated other Roman buildings.¹⁶⁵ In all cases it would seem likely that the finds come from floors yet to be located.

THE CASTOR TESSERAE *By Jackie Hall*

Loose tesserae were recovered from almost all excavation trenches dug during the last 40 years, as well as being observed *in situ* within surviving areas of flooring. A representative sample of tesserae has been examined in order to make some preliminary comments on the possible geological sources of the stone.

1. Black-grey (size 10 × 10 × 10 mm), jet from Yorkshire or the south coast area. (*Cas.P. Tr. XXI, 2*)
2. White (size 16 × 15 × 15 mm), fine grained limestone; chalk; nearest source from Norfolk or Lincolnshire Wolds. (*Cas.P. Tr. XXIX, 6*)
3. White (size 10 × 10 × 10 mm), fine grained limestone; chalk; nearest source from Norfolk or Lincolnshire Wolds. (*Cas.P. Tr. X, 2*)
4. Red-orange with cream inclusions (size 8 × 8 × 8 mm), very fine grained limestone; possibly an imported marble? (*Cas.P. Tr. I, 9*)
5. Cut down from ceramic red tile (size 12 × 11 × 10 mm). (*Cas.P. Tr. XVI, 3*)
6. Buff weathered to grey (size 20 × 20 × 20 mm), medium grained calcareous sandstone; source unknown but possibly from the Midlands. (*Cas.P. Tr. XXVII, 48*)
7. As No. 6 above (size 10 × 10 × 10 mm). (*Cas.P. Tr. XVI, 4*)
8. Pale pinkish grey (8 × 8 × 8 mm), fine grained limestone; source uncertain. (*Cas.P. Tr. XVI, 2*)

¹⁶³ Artis failed to indicate any pavements related to any of the rooms in this bath-house. His plate of ‘A view of the baths ...’ (FIG. 5) simply shows rooms with hypocaust *pilae* where no floor levels are indicated. Similarly no indication as to flooring is shown in his pl. VI, ‘A plan of the Roman Baths at Castor ...’. However, Artis does mark on the plan of his Room 12 (see FIG. 19; Room 8), which he describes as a ‘dressing room’, a rectangular shape which may have formed the edge or border to a tessellated floor. The impression of tesserae found on the *opus signinum* sub-floor in Trench XL is located within the north-western corner of this room. Small, white (5 × 5 × 5 mm) tesserae were recovered from the area of Room 10 (see FIG. 19) during the 2010 Time Team excavations on the bath-house and these could have formed part of a more elaborately designed floor.

¹⁶⁴ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 121, see also microfiche M17 for comments on the tesserae from this area.

¹⁶⁵ Lucas 1998; Hatton 2001; Archaeological Project Services 2006.

TABLE 1. DETAILS OF THE MOSAIC AND TESSELLATED PAVEMENTS KNOWN FROM THE *PRAETORIUM*

Excavation detail	Room details	Floor type	Artis measurement	Reconstructed measurements	Approximate size of floor
Artis 1828 North Range	Artis Room 'F'. Mosaic shown in pl. VII; room plan pl. XIII. (Reconstructed Room 18.) This may be the mosaic referred to in the Peterborough Gentleman's Society Minutes for 1733 where the design seems to be set out in squares.	Mosaic and tessellated border	60 × 25 feet (18.3 × 7.62 m)	22.0 × 7.5 m	165.0 m ²
As above	Artis Room 'A', pls III and IV; room plan pl. XIII. (Reconstructed Room 26.)	Mosaic and border	20.25 × 17.5 feet (6.17 × 5.33 m)	7.0 × 5.5 m	38.5 m ²
As above	Artis Room 'H'. Part of room shown in pl. VIII; room plan pl. XIII. This is an L-shaped room. (Reconstructed Room 22.)	Tessellated pavement; no mention of a mosaic		L-shaped room where overall size is 11 × 12 m	102.25 m ²
As above	Artis refers to this room as having a 'destroyed pavement' (Artis plan pl. VIII). (Reconstructed Room 25.)	Tessellated pavement	Room not completely shown by Artis	7.5 × 3.0 m	22.5 m ²
As above	Artis refers to this room as having a 'destroyed pavement' (Artis plan pl. VIII). Southern end of this room/corridor uncertain. (Reconstructed Room 29.)	Tessellated pavement	Room not completely shown by Artis	1.5 × 10.0 m	15.0 m ²
Artis 1828 'The Cedars'	Artis room 'E'. Mosaic shown in pl. XII, which is 8 × 8 feet, but this excludes the tessellated border. The room shown by Artis on his general plan is 30 × 32 feet (approx.).	Mosaic and tessellated border	Total room size 33 × 30 feet (9.76 × 9.15 m)	No modern data for this room	89.30 m ²
Wild 1970–73 North Range	Room 10	Mosaic removed; tessellated border	Unrecorded by Artis	4.5 × 7.1 m	31.95 m ²
As above	Room 11	Mosaic removed; tessellated border	Unrecorded by Artis	3.6 × 3.8 m	13.68 m ²
As above	Room 13	Tessellated pavement	Unrecorded by Artis	3.6 × 4.0 m	14.4 m ²
Wild 1970 Bath-house	Bath-house marked by Artis as 'G' on his general plan (pl. XIII) and shown in detailed plan pl. VI, also as a view in pl. V. This room referred to by Artis as containing a 'hypocaust'. See Trench XLI, Room 7 in FIG. 19.	Tessellated pavement	22.7 × 13.0 feet (6.92 × 3.96 m)	7.10 × 4.2 m	29.82 m ²
As above	Artis referred to this room as 'the dressing room to the cold bath'. See Trench XL, Room 8 in FIG. 19.	Tessellated pavement	24.0 × 16.0 feet (7.32 × 4.88 m)	7.75 × 5.0 m	38.75 m ²
					Total 561.15 m²

9. Dark greyish pink ($20 \times 20 \times 20$ mm), medium grained calcareous sandstone. Same as No. 6 above, but different colour. Perhaps part of a bed containing slightly more iron staining. (*Cas. P. Tr.I, 3*)

In general terms there appear to be four different sizes of tesserae, each with an average size range of: (1) $20 \times 20 \times 20$ mm;¹⁶⁶ (2) $15 \times 15 \times 15$ mm; (3) $10 \times 10 \times 10$ mm; (4) $8 \times 8 \times 8$ mm. The largest size range is exclusively of sandstone, which had been used to form either monochrome areas of coarse flooring or to create the borders of polychrome mosaics which utilise smaller tesserae.

The wide range of possible sources of stone used at Castor is interesting and indicates the distances from which mosaic workers drew their raw materials. Possible sources from the south coast and Yorkshire, as well as the tesserae from Norfolk, illustrate this point. Local sources of limestone seem to have been ignored for the large tesserae, which dominate numerically, and preference was given to calcareous sandstones, the nearest beds of which are located at Duston and Moulton in Northamptonshire, some 50 km away.¹⁶⁷

During the 1957–58 excavations twelve glass tesserae — three green and nine blue — were recovered.¹⁶⁸ Four more blue tesserae (each $4 \times 4 \times 4$ mm) were found in 1970 in disturbed deposits over the rooms of the North Range. Glass tesserae were rarely used in Britain, most notably at Aldborough, Cirencester and Verulamium, where they highlighted features within mosaic designs.¹⁶⁹ The implication of the glass tesserae from Castor is that some of the mosaics, either on the floors or as wall decoration, were particularly elaborate.

Considering the number of known rooms which had some form of tessellated flooring, and the likelihood of other tessellated floors yet to be discovered, the enormity of the flooring enterprise at the *Praetorium* becomes apparent. Artis was of the opinion that Room 18 (FIG. 33) was entirely tessellated and illustrates a fragment of the mosaic from this room.¹⁷⁰ If he is right in his assumption that this room was one single tessellated space, then the overall area equates to 165 m^2 ,¹⁷¹ and the sheer quantity of tesserae needed to cover such an area would have been enormous.¹⁷² The total tessellated area, from the known pavements at the *Praetorium*, is approximately 561.15 m^2 (Table 1) and it is possible that this represents only about half of what would have been tessellated in the complex. More tessellated floors and mosaics could certainly be expected in the North Range, especially in the central area which one would assume provided a more formal space and where a show of opulence may have been required. The general distribution of tesserae over the site would certainly support the idea that more floors await discovery, while others have already probably been destroyed.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁶ This size conforms to the quadruple tesserae size shown by Allen and Fulford 2004, fig. 2.

¹⁶⁷ See Davey 1976, 12 and 23.

¹⁶⁸ Green *et al.* 1986–87, microfiche M35. It is not made clear in the report where these came from within the excavated areas.

¹⁶⁹ Neal 1976, 243; Neal 1981, 20–1. Glass was also used in a Silchester mosaic to highlight detail on a basket of flowers, see Allen and Fulford 2004, 17.

¹⁷⁰ Artis 1828, pl. VII; this mosaic may be that referred to in 1733 in the Minutes of the Peterborough Gentleman's Society, see 'Archaeological History of the Site' above.

¹⁷¹ If this is the case, then the tessellated area of the floor is greater than that in Room 1 at Woodchester (see Clarke 1982, 219), although it needs to be conceded that the quality of the floor in Room 18 at Castor does not approach that exhibited by the Woodchester mosaic.

¹⁷² Allen and Fulford (2004, 33) calculated that a floor of 25 m^2 would require 200,000 tesserae amounting to half a metric tonne of prepared rock. The size of Room 18 at Castor (165 m^2) would thus require — using the same assumptions above — 1,408,000 tesserae weighing over 3.5 metric tonnes of stone. In addition, the amount of waste from such tesserae preparation may have been several times this weight.

¹⁷³ The area of Room 16, for example, which is central to the North Range was lowered in road works in the 1820s and all trace of floor surfaces here will have been lost.

All the known decorative mosaic floors at Castor have been dated to the late third or fourth century, based on their designs as shown by Artis.¹⁷⁴ No others have been found or dated in modern excavations and little can be added to refine this range. There are clear examples of concrete floors being re-laid in Rooms 10 (FIGS 8, 9 and 33) and 31 (FIGS 8, 11 (Trench XVII) and 33). Certainly in Room 10 the replacement floor had a border of large limestone tesserae and a decorative central mosaic, which had subsequently been removed. The pottery from between the two floors (FIG. 23) provided a date range from the late third to early fourth centuries and thus matched the suggested date range for the mosaics given by Neal and Cosh. It is uncertain if the earlier floors in both these rooms had any tessellation, but quantities of limestone tesserae (20 × 20 × 20 mm) were recovered from under the later floor level of Room 10 and may indicate that this earlier floor, which could date to the late first or early second quarter of the third century, was provided with some form of pavement.¹⁷⁵

MARBLE VENEER

During the 1980 excavations in the garden of 'Elmlea House', a single broken fragment of cut and polished veneer, possibly of 'Alwalton Marble'¹⁷⁶ was recovered from Trench 3 (see FIG. 7).¹⁷⁷ A similar piece of veneer was recovered during archaeological evaluation work in 2008 to the south of the former A47 road, near the village hall (see FIGS 4 and 36).¹⁷⁸ Both fragments are 10 mm thick and show no sign of wear. It is unclear if they were used either as part of floor tiling or, perhaps more likely because of the lack of any wear, as a wall covering (*opus sectile*).¹⁷⁹ Artis clearly found evidence of 'Alwalton Marble' veneers being used in some of the buildings of *Durobrivae* and he shows a schematic view of how they were applied to walls.¹⁸⁰

There is only limited evidence from Roman Britain for the use of marble veneers and they are best represented at Fishbourne.¹⁸¹ The closest known site to Castor that has produced stone veneer is Piddington Roman villa in Northamptonshire.¹⁸²

Both the Castor fragments come from unsealed deposits so cannot be securely dated. However, the opulence of the general building programme at Castor, especially the rooms which form the North Range, and the presence of tessellated flooring, would make the use of *opus sectile* very likely.

HEATING AND THE HYPOCAUSTS WITHIN THE PRAETORIUM BUILDINGS

There are several hypocaust systems which were found either by Artis or during more recent excavations. Artis shows three rooms in the eastern wing of the North Range which were

¹⁷⁴ Neal and Cosh 2002, 60–6.

¹⁷⁵ For the dating of this floor, see the pottery illustrated in FIG. 22.

¹⁷⁶ 'Alwalton Marble' is the name given to a highly fossiliferous limestone outcrop close to the village of Alwalton in northern Cambridgeshire. The quarries were certainly active during medieval times and growing evidence suggests their use during the Roman period (Lott and Smith 2001, 94; Ashurst and Dimes, 1990, 109; RCHM 1969, 19).

¹⁷⁷ Rollo 1981, 2.

¹⁷⁸ I am grateful to Dr Ben Robinson for bringing this piece of veneer to my notice.

¹⁷⁹ The pieces seem too large for them to have come from furniture inlay. I am grateful to Roy Friendship-Taylor for discussions about stone veneers recovered from Piddington Roman villa.

¹⁸⁰ Artis 1828, pl. XXVI, 1.

¹⁸¹ Ling 1997, 284–5; Cunliffe 1971b, 24–37. See also Clarke 1982, table 1 for a list of villa sites in Britain which have produced *opus sectile*.

¹⁸² Friendship-Taylor 2007, 10; and pers. comm.

heated.¹⁸³ One of these (Room 28; see FIGS 18 and 33) had a channelled hypocaust, but it is unclear from Artis' drawing where it was heated from, unless the hot air was drawn from the adjoining Room 24, which in turn may have been heated by a furnace on its north side. There is little indication as to the way Room 24 was heated. Artis simply shows two piers in the south-east corner and comments '... Some of the piers intended to support the floor above'. He provides even less information about Room 23, where he simply shows three *pilae* against the north wall. This provides a problem of interpretation since Wild's later excavations conducted in this room (Trench LII; FIG. 16) provided evidence for a tessellated floor, which seemed to be laid on a solid foundation and not on a raised hypocaust floor.

Three other rooms, (1, 2 and 3) in the west wing of the North Range were also heated by a hypocaust system. None of the *pilae* from these floors remained *in situ*, but the concrete sub-floors on which they would have been built and the linking openings which would have ducted the hot air through the walls and between the rooms were located (see FIG. 13). The opening between Rooms 2¹⁸⁴ and 3 is interesting in that in its first phase it was built out of tile as a simple aperture in the width of the wall. At some later point an additional tile extension, with a slight splay at its southern end, was constructed projecting some 0.9 m into Room 2. A similar extension to the flue arrangement between Rooms 24 and 28 can be seen in the Artis plan of these rooms (FIGS 16 and 33). The lengthening of the flues may have been undertaken to create a sufficient draft for the heating system, and to help with the ducting of the hot gasses up the walls through box-tiles.¹⁸⁵ No box-tiles were found *in situ*, but the seating for one tile was found set into the north wall of Room 2. If this explanation for the flue extension in Room 2 is correct, then it implies that Rooms 1, 2 and 3 were stoked from the north side. The exact position of the north wall of Room 3 has yet to be found, but beyond its probable line a large pit-like feature, containing quantities of early and middle Saxon material, was excavated in 1973 by Dallas (Trench L; see FIGS 7 and 13).¹⁸⁶ It seems very likely that this pit, which probably abutted the outside of the north wall of Room 3 could have been the original stoke-hole for the furnace to heat these rooms.¹⁸⁷

Since the façade of the *Praetorium* would have been designed to impress those viewing the site, it would make perfect sense for all the stoking areas of the heating systems to be located out of sight on the north side of the structure. However, the slope of the ground to the south and the prevailing wind direction from the south-west may have posed some problems in heating the rooms from the north and again this may in part at least provide an explanation for the channelled extensions in Rooms 2 and 28, which would have improved the draught and thus heat circulation. The slope of the ground may also have imposed some limitations on which rooms in the North Range could be heated, since hypocausts required raised floor levels. This could account for the need for a flight of steps, shown by Artis, leading up from Room 26 into 24, which had a hypocaust (shown in FIGS 16, 18 and 33). There are no other known hypocausts elsewhere in the North Range, and the remaining rooms must have used braziers or fireplaces during cold weather.

¹⁸³ Artis 1828, pls VIII (plan) and X (view).

¹⁸⁴ Room 2, as Artis showed it on his general plan, is very large (9 by 26 m) and was probably subdivided into smaller rooms in the same way that he illustrated Room 'D' (pl. XIII; FIG. 3) as being a single room, but in more detailed views and plans (pls II (FIG. 6) and XI, 1) it is shown divided up into smaller units.

¹⁸⁵ There are large quantities of box-tile from all the recent excavations carried out across the site, but especially the rooms within the North Range.

¹⁸⁶ See Green *et al.* 1986–87, figs 17 and 18.

¹⁸⁷ This pit is described (Green *et al.* 1986–87, 131–3) as being 2.8 by 2.6 m in area and cut to 'a depth of 1.85 m below the top Roman surface'. The bottom of the pit was filled with cess and contained Saxon material and large quantities of residual Roman material. This Saxon infilling of the pit is seen to be related to the occupation of the site in the post-Roman period by the nunnery founded by Kyneburgha.

Only two other heated rooms — beside those in the bath-house described by Artis — are known in the other buildings at the *Praetorium* away from the North Range. Green found a room with a hypocaust in his excavations in 1957–58 and more recently another hypocaust was found to the south of the former A47 road in the ‘Castor Barns’ area (see FIGS 4 and 36).¹⁸⁸ However, vast quantities of box-tile have been found across the whole site of the *Praetorium*, which suggests that more heated rooms await discovery.

INTERPRETATION OF THE NORTH RANGE

The plan of the North Range of rooms shown in FIG. 18 has incorporated all the known evidence from excavations and early accounts of the site, especially that recorded by Artis. The overall view is that of a balanced, architectural arrangement with a central range of rooms which ran across the crest of the slope and with wings to the east and west which extended to the south. Excavations over the last 40 years have determined the positions of the rooms shown by Artis and also exposed newly discovered walls. The biggest problem, however, remains in trying to fit all of the rooms of the North Range shown by Artis into a coherent plan that might make architectural sense. For example, in the case of Room ‘F’ (FIG. 3), which contained a mosaic floor, lying just to the north of the church, even Artis’ drawing shows that there is a problem, with the room appearing to be isolated and also slightly out of alignment with the other rooms which he shows to the north-east. This may just be a problem with the small scale of his drawings and the intervals between his recordings of the separate elements which make up the North Range. However, it poses problems for any modern interpretation of the site as a whole.¹⁸⁹ The best solution adopted here has been to shift the position of Room ‘F’ slightly to the north-east and twist its orientation so that it lines up with the other rooms, thereby forming a more cohesive central element to the whole of the North Range.¹⁹⁰ This arrangement can be seen in FIG. 33,¹⁹¹ where all of the spaces in the North Range have been numbered and where the confirmed walls are shown in solid black.¹⁹² The less precisely located walls indicated by Artis on his general plan of the whole village are also shown in FIG. 33,¹⁹³ along with walls which are conjectured.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Green *et al.* 1986–87; Cope-Faulkner 2009.

¹⁸⁹ Mackreth tried to overcome this problem by examining the dates of memorial stones within the graveyard to see if there was a correlation between when the graves were dug and the possible dates at which Artis could have made his observations relating to Room ‘F’. Mackreth suggested that Room ‘F’ should fit in with the alignment of the other Roman buildings in the north-east (Mackreth, unpublished typescript in Peterborough Museum).

¹⁹⁰ The practice of slightly moving the positions of rooms shown by Artis to link with the fixed wall positions from recent excavations has been used throughout the reconstructed plans for Castor.

¹⁹¹ This reconstructed plan is different to that suggested by Mackreth (1984, fig. 12A), who projected the front line of the North Range much further to the south, with rooms(?) extending across it between the eastern and western wings. Such a plan would have produced considerable problems for the Roman builders in trying to roof such a wide structure (Mackreth (1984, fig. 12B) shows a flat roof fronting the whole building in his reconstruction) and to introduce light and ventilation into the inner parts of the building.

¹⁹² These include the walls observed within modern excavations, which provide the positional element on which to fix those walls which Artis shows in varying degrees of detail in his pls II, VIII, X, XI, I and XIII.

¹⁹³ Especially his plan shown as pl. XIII (FIG. 3).

¹⁹⁴ These walls add a balanced or mirrored view of the possible architectural arrangement of the whole structure. For example, Room 15 is a mirror image of a room seen only by Artis (Room 19). Similarly Room 14 which has been proved by excavation is mirrored by the conjectured Room 20.

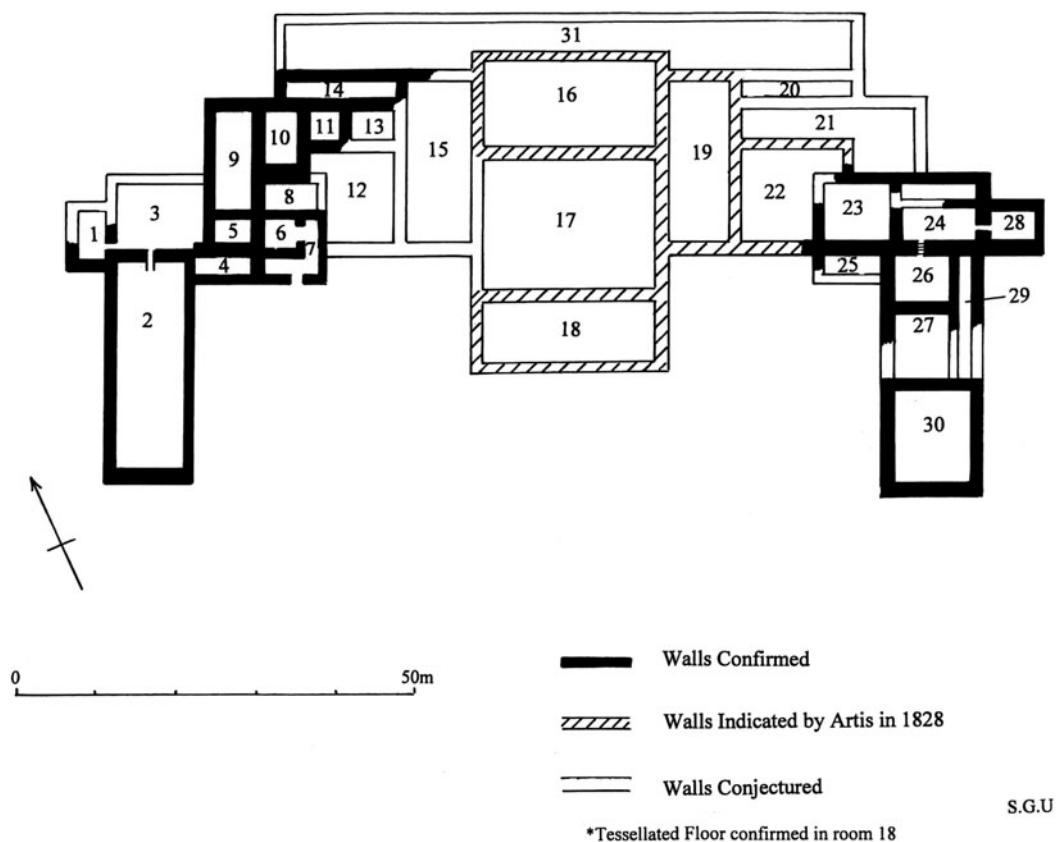


FIG. 33. Reconstruction of the North Range with room numbering.

This approach to reconstructing the plan from our present state of knowledge gives an overall architectural impression of the North Range; this appears to show a unified design with east and west wings and a central area containing what were most probably the principal reception rooms.¹⁹⁵

THE WEST WING OF THE NORTH RANGE

Rooms 4–7 are those shown by Artis in his pl. II (FIG. 6), as well as his pl. XI, 1. He shows doorways linking rooms and another leading to the outside frontage to the south of the North Range; one of these doorways even seems to exhibit a chamfered door jamb.¹⁹⁶ The walls in this illustrated view are typically of undressed limestone set in herringbone fashion, with larger quoin stones at the corners. Artis also shows a curious feature in the end wall of Room 7,

¹⁹⁵ The immediate problem here is the reliance on Artis' plan and the rudimentary way it appears to have been constructed and the difficulties he had with interpretation, as well as the survival of evidence in the 1820s. Thus the division of the central rooms (16, 17 and 18) into small units is a possibility that must be considered.

¹⁹⁶ This view is drawn looking west, down the line of Church Hill. The walls on either side of the lane can be seen in the distance.

which may be interpreted as a blocked-in window or the slots may perhaps once have held timber framing set into the wall line.

To the west of this area, Artis shows (FIG. 3) more rooms, but with less detail. The long room extending to the south which forms Room 2 (FIG. 33) is connected by hypocaust channels through its north wall to Room 3, which in turn is linked to Room 1 by yet another flue channel. The large pit found by Dallas in 1973 lies to the north of Room 3 and, although the north wall of this room is still to be located, the pit may have formed the stoking pit for the hypocausts in this part of the building (see above).¹⁹⁷ Room 2 in its present form, which is entirely based on Artis' drawing, is a very large space, measuring 4.5 by 26 m, but it may have been subdivided into smaller units. The southern, short axis wall of this room is shown in FIG. 34,¹⁹⁸ and is discussed below in connection with Room 30.

The remaining block of rooms on the western side of the North Range comprises those which have been found during the excavations in the 1970s (Rooms 9–13) and those which are conjectured (Rooms 8, 12 and 15) and which mirror Artis' room outline on the eastern side of the building.



FIG. 34. North Range: south wall of Room 2 showing offset. Scales in units of 10 and 50 cm. (Photo: S.G.Upex)

¹⁹⁷ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 131–3.

¹⁹⁸ The southern, short axis wall of Room 2 was revealed in a test pit (Dodwell 1999) and again in a watching-brief (Challands 1999). Further work by Time Team in 2010 revealed that the full width of this wall was 1.50 m, with an additional 0.5 m of masonry offset at a lower level. This wall offset would, therefore, have acted as the south wall for Room 2 and also have been part of the terracing and revetting of the whole of the North Range. See FIGS 39 and 40 for the contours of the site.

THE EAST WING OF THE NORTH RANGE

Artis shows a view of part of this eastern set of rooms in his pl. X, which includes Rooms 24, 26, 28 and 29, and they are also partly shown in plan in his pl. XIII. Room 28 is the only room in the whole of the North Range where he shows the detail of a channelled hypocaust, although he indicates that other rooms were heated (by pillared hypocausts), without showing any detail, which may be owing to their poor preservation when excavated.

Room 25, which Artis describes as originally having a pavement, appears to mirror Room 4 and part of Room 7 on the western side of the building. Rooms 26, 27, 29 and 30 all appear to form a wing extending to the south and match the west wing formed by Room 2. On the south side of Room 24, Artis shows a break in the wall line and indicates steps leading down into Room 26. Such steps between the two rooms would have been required first to allow for the fact that Room 24 possibly had a hypocaust and secondly to compensate for the general slope of the ground. Room 29 is a narrow tessellated passage which may have led from Room 24 and connected Rooms 26, 27 and 30.

To the north of these rooms, the arrangement shown by Artis (Rooms 19–22) mirrors the plan on the western side of the North Range.

ROOM 30: INTERPRETED BY ARTIS AS A 'CLASSICAL TEMPLE'

Room 30 is the only space within the entire North Range to which Artis assigned a function. He states on his plan and section of the room (pl. XI, 2; see FIG. 16), 'Plan of a Temple?'. He saw the room as having three elements to it; firstly steps on the south side leading up to a flat area representing perhaps the portico and entrance to a temple and then a large step down into a square area, which his plan indicates was '30 feet square' (9.15 m). Artis thought that the 'Temple' was connected by walls to Rooms 27 and 29 to the north, with 29 perhaps acting as some form of passage to link the areas together. He shows this integration of the rooms clearly in his overall plan of the Roman buildings around the church (pl. XIII; FIG. 3), where he labels part of the 'temple room' as 'C'. This view of the unified aspect of the 'Temple' with the rooms to the north was tested further during 1957–58 by Green, who re-excavated part of this area in advance of an extension to the graveyard.¹⁹⁹ Green located the 'front steps' and platform to the south of Room 30, but in trenching to the north of the room he found no evidence of linking walls to unify the temple with the remaining parts of the east wing.²⁰⁰ M.J.T. Lewis carried out a reappraisal of both the site and Green's excavation notes in the 1960s and came to the opinion that the site was indeed a temple with a 'row of prostyle columns' at the south front, but agreed with Green that it was separate from the other buildings of the North Range.²⁰¹

Several points emerge from a review of the evidence for the 'temple room'. The first is that Artis' dimensions appear to be slightly out.²⁰² In addition, although both Green and Lewis argue for the 'temple room' to be free-standing, the wall alignments of Rooms 27 and 29

¹⁹⁹ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 112–18.

²⁰⁰ Green's Trench 'A' shown in fig. 3 of his plan made in 1958 was clearly set out on the supposed line of the east wall of the so-called 'temple structure', but failed to find Roman masonry. This may have been owing to the fact that the area around Trench 'A' was much degraded by medieval buildings. It is also worth noting that at just the point where any junction between the 'Temple' (Room 30) and Room 29 might be expected, there was (and still is) a distinct break of slope which appears to mark the position of a Roman terrace and this may have masked the precise situation in this area.

²⁰¹ Lewis 1966, 61, fig. 58.

²⁰² Instead of the room being '30 feet square' it appears to be 39 feet (11.89 m) wide — including the flat area inside the structure, which was not measured by Artis — and 57 feet long (17.37 m).

match the alignments of the 'temple walls' exactly and there must be a strong case to argue for the rooms on this east side of the North Range being unified and linked together.²⁰³ In addition, Artis' plan shows a further problem if the main space of Room 30 is to be seen as the *cella* of a temple. He shows in the centre of his '30 feet square' room a small 3 foot square (0.914 m) raised area of masonry on the floor. In this position, it is unlikely to have been the base for an altar. Mackreth has suggested that the feature was the base of a stone support for a floor above the room,²⁰⁴ but how this interpretation fits with the notion of a temple *cella* is unclear.²⁰⁵

Excavations by Time Team in 2010 on the western wing of the North Range revealed that the south wall of Room 2 was a massive 1.50 m wide with an additional 0.5 m wide offset. This width of masonry was clearly part wall foundation, but also must have acted as a revetment to retain the natural slope on which the building sat.²⁰⁶ The offset in the masonry, shown in FIG. 34, is step-like and matches that found in the east wing of the North Range by both Artis and Green, who there thought that it was part of a flight of steps. Green published a photograph of his 'temple steps',²⁰⁷ which show a remarkably similar offset to that found in the west wing. Thus the 'temple steps' are now better seen as a structural offset for a revetment, a feature which occurs in both the west and east wings, adding further weight to the idea that there was an intended architectural unity to large parts of the North Range.

Room 30 is, therefore, unlikely to represent a classical temple and is more probably part of a range of rooms which balance the intended visual appearance of the North Range.

THE CENTRAL ROOMS OF THE NORTH RANGE

The central area of the North Range remains the preserve of Artis, who is the only person to have made any record of it. A ground penetrating radar survey undertaken during the 2010 Time Team investigations failed to record any features that resembled walls, perhaps owing to the very disturbed nature of the ground,²⁰⁸ even though Roman rooms are known to exist in the area (for example, Room 18; see below). In FIG. 33, Room 18 has been moved to the north-east from the position where Artis appears to indicate it (see FIGS 3 and 18) and other rooms (16, 17, and 19) have also been adjusted to produce a 'best fit' plan and one that ties them in to the location of recently excavated and surveyed walls. The overall view of these central rooms is, therefore, one of a tripartite arrangement, with Room 18 leading into 17 and on into 16, with Rooms 15 and 19 flanking on either side. Again, caution is needed in visualising the rooms shown in FIG. 33, for some could well have been further subdivided into smaller units, in the same way as possibly Room 2 in the west wing. However, since our only knowledge of these rooms comes from Artis and their remains have either been quarried away by road works in the 1820s or are inaccessible in the churchyard, the prospect of further information regarding this part of the complex looks remote.

²⁰³ The downgrading of the road and grass verges of Stocks Hill, as well as the former medieval and later buildings in the area and Roman terracing may all have restricted the evidence which survives today. In such a case, we can do no more than to return to the interpretation made by Artis, who would have observed the destruction of any linking walls — the road level was reduced in the 1820s — and conclude that a coherent block of linked rooms is most likely.

²⁰⁴ This view is put forward by Mackreth in his unpublished typescript notes (p. 5) located in Peterborough Museum.

²⁰⁵ Such an arrangement would imply that the steps on the inside of Room 30 led into a lower room (basement?) below it, though the levels of the floors and the height of this lower room — if extrapolated from the current information for Rooms 27 and 29 — would suggest a very low ceiling height. This argument is rather circular and can no longer be tested archaeologically, for the present road has removed virtually all of the Roman levels in this area.

²⁰⁶ See note 263 for the 2.0 m-wide walls found by Lucas.

²⁰⁷ Green *et al.* 1986–87, pl. 2.

²⁰⁸ The disturbances will presumably have been caused by the demolition and robbing of Roman structures, and the continual use of the area for burials since the eleventh century, if not earlier.

Room 18 was explored during 2010 in a 0.5 m-wide trench cut to the north of the church within the churchyard as part of the Time Team investigation. No walls were encountered, but the mosaic floor recorded by Artis in 1827 was found with later burials set both on the pavement and cutting through it (FIGS 18 and 35).²⁰⁹



FIG. 35. North Range: burials laid on the tessellated floor of Room 18. (Photo: S.G.Uplex)

What little can be said with certainty, therefore, is that Room 18, which measures *c.* 22 by 7.5 m (165 m²)²¹⁰ is clearly central to the whole of the North Range and had a polychrome mosaic. Behind this, Room 17 measures *c.* 22 by 16.5 m (363 m²) and Room 16 approximately 22 by 12 m (264 m²). As with most of the detail from the North Range, apart from Rooms 6 and 7, there is no information available to suggest entrances or doorways, but one might assume that Room 18 had some form of formal entrance on its south side.

THE LAYOUT AND POSSIBLE FUNCTION OF ROOMS IN THE NORTH RANGE

The tripartite layout of rooms in the central area of the North Range is seemingly rare at villas in Britain.²¹¹ It might imply a highly formalised arrangement, where perhaps high-ranking visitors

²⁰⁹ For the mosaic floor, see Artis 1828, pl. VII. See also 'Archaeological History of the Site' above and note 15 for an account of a burial being laid on this mosaic in 1733.

²¹⁰ Room measurements are given as internal dimensions.

²¹¹ The layout is not dissimilar to arrangements one might expect in first-century houses in Pompeii or in Mediterranean Spain with an entrance hall, a peristyle garden and *tablinum* or *triclinum*. See, for example, the

would have entered the building through Room 18 and ultimately progressed to Room 16. The arrangements seen in some British villa plans also suggest a formal approach to the organisation of reception rooms.²¹² At Bignor (Sussex) an arrangement of rooms in the corner of the north range has been interpreted as a basilica/audience area and similar sets of corner rooms are known at North Leigh (Oxon.) and Box (Wilts.).²¹³ At Spoonley Wood (Glos.) the later phase of the courtyard villa had a central reception room behind which was a *triclinium*, while the formal central layout at Lullingstone (Kent) is also presumably meant to receive and entertain guests.²¹⁴ However, the scale of the rooms at these sites is small compared with that at Castor. Establishments with larger rooms, such as Woodchester and Fishbourne, are worth consideration in a search for parallels, both in room size and architectural layout. Woodchester, has a great room 15 m² (Room 1),²¹⁵ which appears to form the main reception room, preceded by an inner courtyard and before that a large block of rooms, two of which (Rooms 25 and 26) J.T. Smith considered to have been 'in the nature of an audience hall or antechamber ... (and) ... a justice room'.²¹⁶ At Fishbourne an even more formal arrangement seems to have operated with a large entrance hall, which contained side offices and a fountain, forming the first architectural element through which visitors were led into a peristyle courtyard garden, on the far side of which was an audience chamber.²¹⁷

The size and area of the various central rooms in the North Range at Castor and other villa sites are summarised in Table 2.²¹⁸ Clearly any direct comparison between sites is fraught with danger, including assigning an accurate function to each of the rooms under review (as well as the poor understanding which we currently have regarding any subdivision of the rooms at Castor). However, details of the six sites in Table 2 reveal one or two interesting points that are worthy of comment. The first is the comparison between the entrance areas at Castor and Woodchester. The three rooms at Woodchester (Rooms 25–27), which appear to provide an entrance from the central courtyard to the inner courtyard, are all exceptionally large and may all have been connected by doors. Smith concludes that they served some public function.²¹⁹ Individually these three rooms are similar in size to the possible entrance hall at Castor (Room 18). Turning to the central areas, the corresponding space at Woodchester is much larger than that at Castor (Room 17), while the garden at Fishbourne dwarfs both of them. However problematic the interpretation,²²⁰ the third room at Castor (Room 16, termed 'audience room' in Table 2) compares very favourably with Room 1 at Woodchester and is twice as large as the so-called 'audience hall' at Fishbourne. Comparison with other sites — e.g. the 'Venus Mosaic Room' at Bignor, the 'Dining Room' at Chedworth, and the 'Central Hall' at continental examples such as Nennig (Germany) — shows that the Castor rooms were much larger. What becomes clear from this brief comparison is that the Castor rooms in the central area of the North Range seem

arrangements at the 'House of Sallust' at Pompeii (Ward-Perkins and Claridge 1976, 47) or at House 2B in Emporiae, Spain (Keay 1988, 119).

²¹² Ellis 1995, 165.

²¹³ Smith 1997, fig. 48. Smith's argument for the functional use of the rooms at North Leigh has been questioned and an alternative view suggests Rooms 1–3 are part of a great dining suite, see Wilson 2004, 100.

²¹⁴ Rivet 1969, 57 and 70.

²¹⁵ Clark 1982, fig. 1; Smith 1997, fig. 47.

²¹⁶ Smith 1997, 182.

²¹⁷ Cunliffe 1971a, *passim*; Smith 1997, 176 and fig. 47.

²¹⁸ See Ellis 1995, table 1 for a comparison of the areas of apsidal *triclinia* in late Romano-British houses.

²¹⁹ Smith 1997, 182.

²²⁰ Wilson 2004, 100.

to be exceptional on current evidence and challenge the view that Room 1 at Woodchester is the largest room known in a Romano-British residential building.²²¹

TABLE 2. A COMPARISON OF SPECIFIC ROOM SIZES

(Castor *Praetorium*; Woodchester (Clarke 1982, fig. 1); Fishbourne (Cunliffe 1971a, figs 23, 32, 38 and 42); Bignor (Winbolt and Herbert 1963, plan; Frere 1982, fig. 2); Chedworth (Goodburn 1972, 28); Nennig (Wightman 1970, fig. 16))

Site	1. Entrance hall: size	Entrance hall: area in m ²	2. Central area: size	Central area: area in m ²	3. Audience room (?): size	Audience room (?): area in m ²
Castor	Room 18	165	Room 17	363	Room 16	264
<i>Praetorium</i>	22.0 × 7.5 m		22.0 × 16.5 m		22.0 × 12.0 m	
Woodchester	Room 25	176.25	(Inner Courtyard)	729	Room 1	207
	11.5 × 15.5 m		27.0 × 27.0 m		14.4 × 14.4 m	
	Room 26	167.9				
	11.5 × 14.6 m					
	Room 27	132.25				
	11.5 × 11.5 m					
Fishbourne	The entrance hall	402	(The formal garden)	7651	Room W14: audience chamber	100.5
	13.4 × 30.0 m		78.4 × 97.6 m		9.4 × 10.7 m	
	Other rooms	Areas in m²				
Bignor	Venus Mosaic room	59.17				
	9.7 × 6.1 m					
Chedworth	The dining room	51.04				
	8.8 × 5.8 m					
Nennig	The central hall	160				
(N. Germany)	16.0 × 10.0 m					

If Rooms 16 and 18 at Castor were indeed single areas without any divisions then the problem of roofing becomes relevant. Room 16, which is the wider of the two at 12 m is nearing the limit of what has, in the past, been assumed to be the lengths of readily available timber in the Roman Nene Valley. However, a bigger problem would have been the roofing arrangements for Room 17, which is 16.5 m wide. If this area were indeed roofed it may well have had an arrangement similar to that which has been suggested at Woodchester, with a vaulted or domed roof supported by columns.²²² The rectangular shape of Room 17 at Castor might, however, exclude the possibility of a dome. An alternative view would be to see the area as being partly open in the form of a true peristyle.²²³ The advantage of this arrangement, apart from solving the problem of how the area was roofed, would have been to let light into the central area of the North Range and give access to the rooms in the east and west wings of the range. It should be stressed, however, that much of the above is speculation.

The problems of roofing, light and access, highlighted above, also emerge when considering both the east and west wings of the North Range. The rooms on both sides of the central range seem to be mirror images, but it is difficult on present evidence to determine the means of

²²¹ Clarke 1982, 219; Smith 1973, 7.

²²² Clarke 1982, 199.

²²³ See Ellis 1995, 165–6.

access into these areas from the many options that are possible. It would make sense to see Rooms 12 and 22 as additional peristyle garden areas, which would have given access to what are clearly a number of small rooms (8, 10, 11 and 13) in the west wing. A similar arrangement may have existed on the eastern side, although our knowledge of the rooms here is poor. Both Rooms 12 and 22 are L-shaped in form and this arrangement could suggest a series of steps, set within the narrow recessed corners, which would have led up to the rooms in the rear of the building; the contours of the ground support the need for flights of steps from the front of the building to the rear.²²⁴ The large Rooms 15 and 19, which are sandwiched between the central rooms and the east and west wings, may have given a flexibility of access into and around Room 16 and to the rear of the structure.

Rooms 1–3 in the west wing were clearly heated and likewise Rooms 23, 24 and 28 in the east wing and this arrangement provides some element of an architectural balance across the whole building range, especially with the projecting heated Rooms 1 and 28 at either end. Room 31 is entirely conjectural and is based on the broad spread of concrete flooring which was found at the western end of this area (see FIGS 8 and 18). If it is assumed that Room 30 (Artis' 'Temple') was joined to the eastern range, then Room 29 could be seen as an access passage between this and the rooms to its north. The function of these rooms in both the east and west wings remains largely speculation. They may have served as domestic and living quarters and/or had some more specific, perhaps even official, functions which the overall character of the architecture of the North Range might suggest.

If the conjectured plan shown in FIG. 33 is accepted as a basic statement of the overall layout of the North Range, then it is possible to see architectural elements in the way the rooms are set out. For example, there appear to be opposing 'blocks' of rooms in the west and east wings — that in the west comprising Rooms 3–8 and that in the east Rooms 23–25 and part of 26 — and although the two 'blocks' are not exactly the same length (east = 27 m and west = 23 m), they are the same width (14 m).

One point of interest, to which we will return, is that the North Range seems, in our present understanding of its layout, to lack baths. The rooms with hypocausts in both the west and east wings do not appear to form any suitable bathing arrangement. Also, channelled hypocausts, such as that found in Room 28, are more often associated with heated living rooms than baths. If baths were located in the North Range, one might expect them to be in the north-east area of the building, which would have been down-wind of the main complex and, therefore, would have reduced any problems with smoke pollution, as well as being suitably placed to receive water via some form of channelling from springs which occur to the north.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ROMAN BUILDINGS TO THE SOUTH OF THE NORTH RANGE

Our main source of detail about the buildings to the south of the North Range (see FIG. 36) and at the foot of the slope comes again from the work of Artis and his published plan of 1828.²²⁵

²²⁴ In just the same way that steps seem to have been formed along the length of Room 14 (see FIGS 12 and 33).

²²⁵ Artis 1828, pl. XIII (FIG. 3).

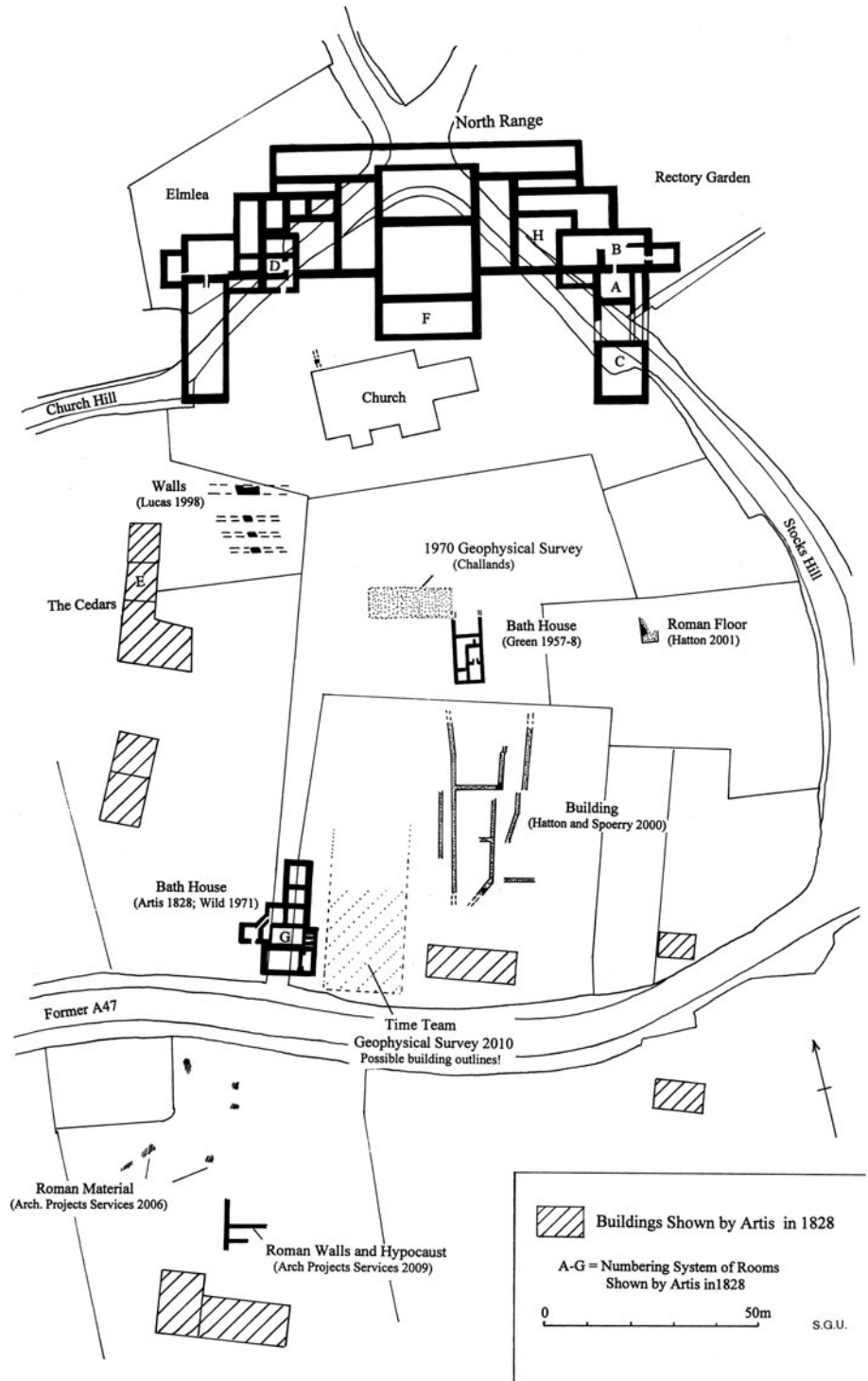


FIG. 36. A plan of the known Roman remains at Castor *Praetorium*.

'THE CEDARS'

In the garden of and partly underneath the house called 'The Cedars', Artis shows an L-shaped building, including a room marked as 'E' on his plan, which contained the mosaic he removed to the dairy at Milton;²²⁶ but little else is known of this set of rooms. Excavations in 1902 by William Le Queux who owned 'The Cedars'²²⁷ appear to have found 'a bath floor in excellent condition', though it is not clear exactly where this was.²²⁸

North-east of 'The Cedars', another series of walls was found in 1998 by Lucas,²²⁹ while to the south of the property Artis shows yet another unnumbered building, apparently divided into two rooms (see FIG. 36). Nothing is known of this structure, but it may be that mentioned by Le Queux in 1902. Artis may have shown part of his excavation of this building in his pl. V of *The Durobrivae* (see FIG. 5, behind the resting workman).

ROMAN BUILDINGS TO THE SOUTH OF THE FORMER A47 ROAD

Artis shows two buildings to the south of the former A47 road. One, an L-shaped structure which he shows divided into two rooms and the other, a smaller single-roomed structure (see FIG. 36).²³⁰ Again, little more is known of these structures other than what is represented on his plan.

However, a series of watching-briefs and an excavation prior to the conversion to housing of the early eighteenth-/nineteenth-century barns,²³¹ shown by Artis on his plan of this area (see FIG. 3), have revealed details of other, previously unknown Roman buildings. Work by Archaeological Project Services (APS) in 2006 revealed occupation material in a series of small trial pits some 30 m to the north of the L-shaped structure.²³² Further work in 2007 by APS immediately to the north of the same Roman structure uncovered details of a room with a hypocaust, wall lines and paved areas.²³³ It has been suggested by Dr Ben Robinson that some of the rooms in this complex had been exposed before, with the overall impression that such work could have been

²²⁶ This is shown in Artis 1828 as pl. XII. The mosaic is shown in its present position at Milton in Upex 2008, fig. 34.

²²⁷ RCHM 1969, 67, (10).

²²⁸ Peterborough Natural History, Scientific and Archaeological Society, 33rd Annual Report (1904), 43. Le Queux lived at 'The Cedars' between 1901 and 1905 and appears to have carried out several excavations within his garden and the village, without leaving any details or plans of what he found (Patrick and Baister 2007).

²²⁹ Lucas 1998, 15–16 and fig. 2. These walls ran at right angles to the general trend of those beneath 'The Cedars' and appear to represent the parallel walls of a building running across the bottom of the slope, below the Roman North Range and the medieval church. These walls are difficult to interpret owing to the narrowness of the evaluation trench in which they were recorded. Certainly the robbed out northernmost wall appeared to have been very substantial and may have acted as a retaining or revetment wall for the slope on its northern side. The finds from this excavation included tesserae, painted plaster and hypocaust tiles and suggest that the rooms could have been heated and have contained fairly elaborate interiors.

²³⁰ There are clearly problems with assuming that the divisions shown by Artis provide an accurate picture of how these structures were partitioned.

²³¹ RCHM 1969, 68, (40).

²³² Archaeological Project Services 2006.

²³³ Cope-Faulkner 2009, fig. 3. This new structure seems to be aligned on a slightly different axis to those shown by Artis, but, as has been seen before, this may be a problem with the orientation of the plan made by Artis or whoever surveyed for him. This is not to say that the structure exposed in 2007 was deliberately aligned with the other Roman buildings across the site, but there is a general trend for all of the structures in and associated with the *Praetorium* to be roughly orientated in the same direction. Only the tops of the walls of this new structure were revealed, but sufficient was explored to suggest that it may have been linked to Artis' Roman structure immediately to the south. There were also spreads of material, including *opus signinum*, which indicated other rooms in the immediate vicinity.

that of Artis. If he had been excavating here one might presume that it was after 1828, otherwise he would have recorded the detail on his plan of that date.²³⁴

Artis also shows another small structure (c. 14 by 8 m; see FIGS 3 and 36) some 100 m north-east of his L-shaped structure, and some 15 m south of the present line of the former A47 road. Nothing more is known of this structure.

ROMAN BUILDINGS IMMEDIATELY TO THE NORTH OF THE FORMER A47 ROAD

A structure c. 7 by 20 m was recorded by Artis to the east of the bath-house (see FIG. 36), but nothing is known of its details other than its outline which was located by a proton magnetometer survey in the school playing field in 1971.²³⁵ East of this building(s) another smaller structure (7 by 9 m) is again shown by Artis. This building lies partly underneath existing buildings, including 'The Royal Oak' public house, and apart from being recorded on Artis' plan nothing more is known.

ROMAN BUILDINGS UNDERNEATH THE SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD AND THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

During 2000 and again during 2010 resistivity surveys were carried out in the area of the school playing field, which revealed linear features.²³⁶ The features detected in the earlier survey were tested in 2000 by two small trenches and were shown to be wall lines.²³⁷ The indications are that readings from these surveys represent a Roman building, orientated roughly in the same direction as the other *Praetorium* buildings (see FIG. 36) and running between the building shown by Artis just to the north of the former A47 and that excavated by Green in 1957–58.²³⁸ If all these detected linear features are Roman walls then the building is substantial, being some 38 m long and 20 m wide. The parallel walls on the western side may form a corridor, but the rest of the room arrangements and the function of the structure remain uncertain and await further excavation.

North-east of this structure, other buildings or rooms were detected by resistivity survey in the area of the modern primary school. These remains have been recorded at various times,²³⁹ some during building work undertaken at the school, and the Roman material that came to light included concrete and mortar floors. Once again it is difficult to know what such material represents and since most of the area is sealed below the school building there is little chance of more details emerging.

²³⁴ It may be that the excavations which Artis himself records as continuing for many years after 1828 and which were meant to be published in a companion volume to *The Durobrivae* included work in this area of the *Praetorium* complex. It seems fairly certain that he continued working on excavations on the west side of the North Range after 1828. I am grateful to Dr Ben Robinson for his discussions of the 'Castor Barn' site and the suggestion that Artis also worked there.

²³⁵ *Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies* 7 (1972), 18. Geophysical surveys were also carried out in 2010 as part of the Time Team's work on the site, which indicated possible building outlines in this area, see FIG. 36.

²³⁶ Noel 2000. The 2010 work was undertaken by Time Team.

²³⁷ Hatton and Spoerry 2000.

²³⁸ See above and Green *et al.* 1986–87. However, there may be some complication here in seeing all of the linear resistivity readings as representing Roman walls. Within and adjoining the survey area, a twentieth-century glasshouse with brick foundations existed, which ran in a similar orientation to the suspected Roman features. This glasshouse is shown on maps of the 1940s and appears to have been taken down at some time in the late 1950s (see the map in RCHM 1969, fig. 40). I am grateful to Adrian Challands for drawing this problem to my attention.

²³⁹ Hatton 2001; Clements 2004; Parker 2005; Robinson 1999.

THE ROMAN BUILDINGS EXCAVATED IN 1957–58

The excavation of a building at the base of the slope below the church in 1957–58 by Charles and Ida Green was fully published in 1987.²⁴⁰ The Greens found a building orientated roughly on the same line as the North Range and the other buildings in the *Praetorium* complex. The building was 6.5 m wide and at least 11.5 m long, but the walls ran beyond the excavated area on the north side of the trench. There were at least five rooms, including one with a hypocaust and another provided with a concrete-lined tank. This gave the Greens the impression that at least part of the structure had functioned as a bath-house. This suggestion is reinforced by the existence of a small tile-lined aqueduct, which led down the slope on the north side of the building and which could have fed a bath-house.

In 1970 a limited geophysical survey was carried out by Adrian Challands in the area between where the walls ran beyond the excavation on the north side and where the ground started to rise slightly up to the level of the medieval church (see FIG. 36). This survey also extended to the west and fills in the gap between the building found by the Greens and that revealed by Lucas in 1998.²⁴¹ The results from this survey were limited by several factors, including the close proximity of wire fences, recent graves and also the spacing between the readings. However, enough data were gathered to suggest that there were yet more buildings or rooms in this area and that they appeared to fill the gap between the possible bath-house and the structure found by Lucas.²⁴² An additional indication of rooms within the survey area comes from a section observed during the digging of a grave in 2008. The grave clearly cut through an *opus signinum* floor sitting over a base layer of limestone fragments.²⁴³ A Time Team trench cut in 2010 to the south-east of this bath-house failed to locate any wall lines, indicating that there was no link between the baths and other buildings recorded by Hatton (2001) to the east.

THE BATH-HOUSE FOUND BY ARTIS

A summary of the layout of the baths found by Artis — later investigated by Wild and Dannell in 1971²⁴⁴ — has already been given above. Questions still remain regarding the association of these baths with other buildings or rooms on the lower part of the site and how the baths functioned within the *Praetorium* complex.

Isolated baths are known in villa complexes and the distance one had to walk to bathe may have been a reflection of the status of the owner.²⁴⁵ However, the evidence at Castor seems to indicate that the baths, although not necessarily joined to other rooms, were apparently surrounded by other buildings,²⁴⁶ and it is necessary, therefore, to keep an open mind on just how the baths relate to

²⁴⁰ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 118–28, figs 6–8 and pls 3–4.

²⁴¹ Lucas 1998.

²⁴² I am grateful to Adrian Challands for discussing this geophysical survey and its findings with me. This range of rooms is alluded to in Green *et al.* 1986–87, 121 (Period II).

²⁴³ I am grateful to Dr Ben Robinson for drawing this grave cutting to my attention. Photographs of this floor section are archived at Peterborough Museum.

²⁴⁴ Reported in Wilson 1972, 320.

²⁴⁵ Wightman, 1985, 110–12.

²⁴⁶ Artis pl. V (see FIG. 5) does suggest that the baths were not attached to other buildings on the western and northern sides, but the situation on the southern and eastern sides is far from clear, for the view of the excavations shows Rooms 8 and 10 extending beyond the sides of the trench. There were cottages shown by Artis on his general plan of the site and he clearly did not excavate or explore the area under and around them. Thus, it may be that Artis' view and plan showing an isolated set of baths is a rather idealistic picture of what he assumed the complete plan to have been, rather than reflecting what he actually found.

other structures.²⁴⁷ The baths as shown in the plan and drawing provided by Artis (see FIGS 19 and 36) would have provided a large and elaborate bathing establishment compared with other local villas.²⁴⁸ Their layout and the regularity of plan also seem out of character with other local baths, even allowing for various possible additions to an original set of rooms.²⁴⁹ The contrast in size is shown in FIG. 37, where the areas of local villa baths are shown (in square metres) in comparison with that at Castor.²⁵⁰ FIG. 37 also includes other villa bath suites in Southern Britain where the overall areas could be measured. This clearly shows that, apart from the baths in the south-eastern part of the courtyard at Bignor (Sussex), the Castor baths are considerably larger than those at Dicket Mead (Herts.), Gadebridge Park (Herts.), and North Leigh (period 1) (Oxon.).²⁵¹ In fact the size of the Castor bath-house is more in the range of those from military contexts; for comparison, see FIG. 37 which shows the areas of five military bath-houses from the North.²⁵²

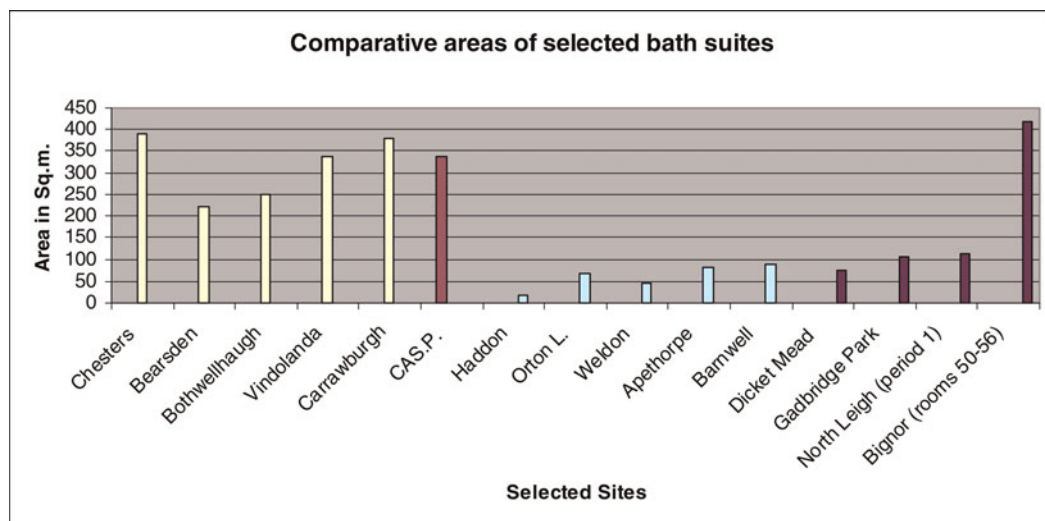


FIG. 37. Graph showing the comparative areas of selected bath-houses.

²⁴⁷ Little excavation has been carried out around the baths, although a trench dug in 2010 by Time Team (see FIG. 19) revealed the east wall of the baths and extended some 10 m further east without any other structures being encountered. Thus, what the relationship was between the baths and the other structure to the east in the school field is uncertain, but the evidence suggests they were isolated buildings.

²⁴⁸ See for example Upex 2008, fig. 52. Part of the problem of dealing with baths within the Lower Nene Valley is the lack of detailed modern excavation reports from villa sites.

²⁴⁹ Artis makes no mention of any different phases within the construction of the baths, but this needs to be recognised as a possibility; the differences in the widths of walls, for example, between Rooms 1–3 and Rooms 4, 6, 8 and 9 may be explained by differing dates of construction.

²⁵⁰ The calculations of these and other baths within FIG. 37 have been made by measuring the exterior dimensions of the structures. For the baths at Haddon, see Upex 1993; Orton Longueville, see Dakin 1961; Weldon, see Smith *et al.* 1988; Apethorpe, see RCHM 1975; and Barnwell, see Upex 2008, fig. 54 and Hadman and Upex 1974, fig. 14.

²⁵¹ For the baths at Dicket Mead, see Wilson, 1971, 270; Gadebridge Park, see Neal 1974, fig. 8; North Leigh (north-west baths, period 1: all structural phases), see Wilson 2004, figs 2–4; Bignor, see Frere 1982, fig. 2 and Tupper (nd), 18.

²⁵² For the baths from Chesters, see Revell 2007, fig. 3; for Bearsden, Bothwellhaugh and Carrawburgh, see Wilson 1980, fig. 74; for Vindolanda, see Birley 1977, fig. 5.

The plan and layout of the baths also seems to follow Roman measurements based on a modular system of design.²⁵³ FIG. 38 shows the Castor baths with circular modules of 7.4 m (which equate to circles of 25 Roman *pedes*, or 10 Roman *gradii*). This shows that the overall length of the building, through Rooms 1–3, 7 and 8, is close to 100 *pedes* (97 m), with a width through Rooms 1 and 2 of 25 *pedes*. Allowing for discrepancies in the modern reconstruction of the building, the western walls of Rooms 4 and 8 also conform fairly closely to this overall modular pattern, as does the east–west centre-line through Rooms 8 and 9. Although there are problems in providing an accurate plan of the baths at Castor,²⁵⁴ the likely modular layout of the whole building does suggest that it was carefully planned, in a way that contrasts with the rather haphazard planning of other local villa baths. Such planning of buildings on public and especially military sites is not uncommon,²⁵⁵ and it does beg the question as to whom was responsible for the planning at Castor. Was it simply a local architect, or do the size, design and the modular layout of the baths suggest an architect associated more with public or even military structures?

This leads to the problem of how the baths functioned within the whole complex and here the question of dating is significant. The 1971 and 2010 investigations of the baths produced no stratified pottery. However, the general assemblage of material comprised a predominance of second- and early third-century local wares, with surprisingly few pieces from the late third and early fourth centuries.²⁵⁶ This situation also appears to have been paralleled at the bath-house discovered by Green in 1957–58, who concluded that the structure had been demolished by the third century.²⁵⁷ What is indicated from the limited evidence is that Artis' bath-house may similarly not have operated from the late third century and may have been at least partly demolished at the same time as the bath-house uncovered by Green: the significance of the dating of this part of the site in relation to the rest of the *Praetorium* will be returned to below.²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Evans 1994, 153–64.

²⁵⁴ There are clear discrepancies between the plan provided by Artis (his pl. VI) and the plan based on Artis, but corrected in the light of the excavations by J.P. Wild in 1971, which is shown in FIG. 19. Evans is fully aware of the problems of applying exact measurements to Roman buildings, which she says often had an apparent disregard for exact right angles and had opposing sides of different length (Evans 1994, 154).

²⁵⁵ Evans 1994; Walthew 1987.

²⁵⁶ The late third- and early fourth-century pieces from the bath-house site were very abraded, small in size and appeared to be residual.

²⁵⁷ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 121.

²⁵⁸ Artis' baths also lay to the south-west of the North Range (see FIG. 36) and firing the hypocausts of the baths would have led to smoke drifting, on the prevailing winds, across the imposing façade of the North Range.

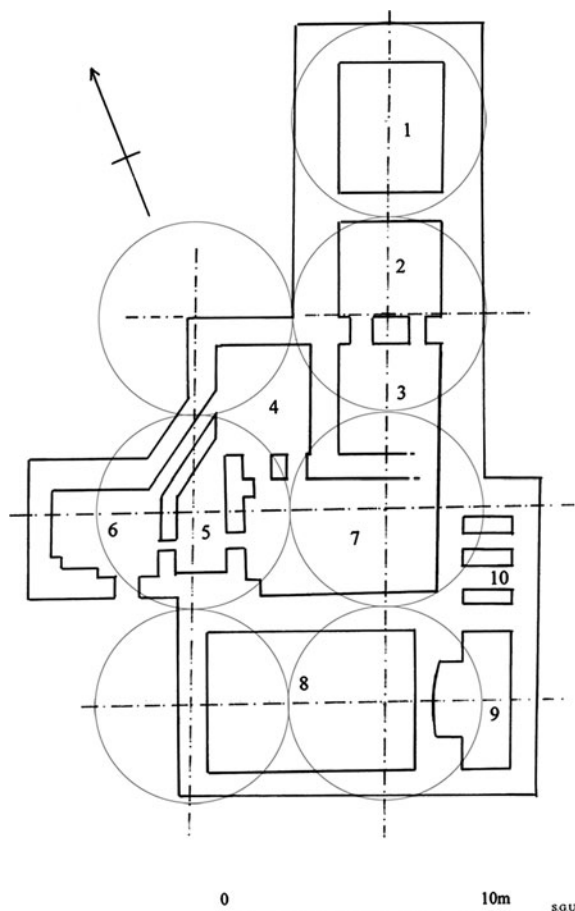


FIG. 38. *Castor Praetorium*: Artis' bath-house with modules of 25 *pedes* superimposed on the plan.

THE TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE SETTING OF THE *PRAETORIUM*

The whole site which Artis originally described as the *Praetorium* was built on two distinct levels, a lower, level area below the site of the medieval church and an upper area on which the Roman North Range and later the medieval church were sited. The difference in height from roughly north to south across the ranges of Roman rooms is 13.7 m; this can be seen in a contour survey carried out in 2007 (FIG. 39).²⁵⁹ This survey highlights the deep inroads into the site which the grading down of the road surfaces made in the nineteenth century, especially over the western and eastern wings of the North Range.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ This survey was carried out using two instruments, an 'ike 205 mobile GIS mapping instrument' (MSL Measurement Systems Ltd) and an 'L-730 precision levelling laser' (Hamar Laser Ltd) which give an accuracy of 0.013 mm over 100 m. I am grateful to the University of Brunei for the loan of these instruments and to Dr Mike Maroney for his help and time in downloading the data.

²⁶⁰ These road works were observed by Artis prior to 1828 and he recorded the Roman buildings they revealed on his plan, which is shown here as FIG. 3.

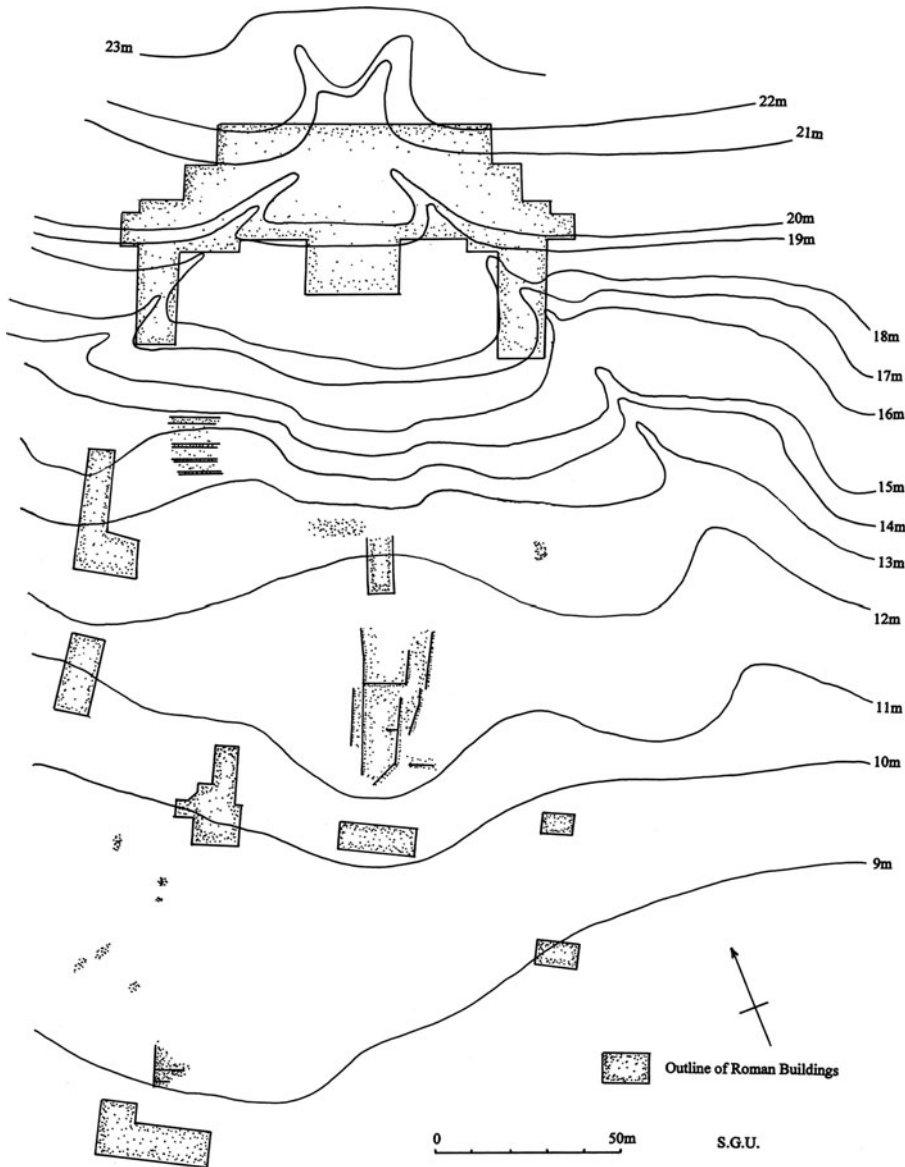


FIG. 39. Contour survey of the whole of the *Praetorium* area.

The Roman buildings of the *Praetorium* were arranged in two discrete groups — an arrangement which may be more apparent than real today, given our still limited knowledge of the site. The North Range is set out across the top of a slope, which is formed by a natural terrace of the River Nene. This building range, which appears to form one coherent block, perhaps of several different building phases, is set out so that the central area has a levelled surface in front of it (on which the medieval church was later built). The ground at the back of

the North Range is just above 22 m AOD, while that at the front of the central area of the range is at 18.5 m AOD. This drop of 3.5 m across the width of this building (which at this point is c. 48 m) would have posed problems for the builders in terms of rooms having different floor levels and also in roofing the structure. On either side of this central block the east and west wings extended southwards to the very edge of the sloping ground. The wing on the east side appears to have been built where the natural slope of the ground also swings round to the north, so that originally the ground would have sloped steeply on its south (front) and east sides.²⁶¹ To the south of the site, other Roman buildings are set out at the base of the natural slope, below the Roman North Range. Here the ground slopes (north to south) by c. 5 m over a distance of 200 m.

It is clear that the builders of the North Range either utilised a series of minor natural terraces in erecting the complex or created the terracing by forming artificial platforms.²⁶² Evidence from the lower part of the site, investigated by Lucas in 1998, reveals that the builders constructed a substantial retaining wall which acted as a revetment to hold back part of the slope.²⁶³ Similar walls were built at the points where distinct breaks of slope occurred at the top of the incline.²⁶⁴ Here there are clear terraces, which have been mapped (see FIG. 40). Whether these terraces were natural or artificial, the sloping nature of the ground probably explains why some of the walls, especially some of the east–west walls, are wider than others, since they were being used for both wall foundations and revetments. This can be seen in FIG. 33, where the south walls of some rooms (e.g. Room 10) are much wider than their northern counterparts. The same is true of the rooms marked by Artis as ‘H’ (Room 22) and ‘B’ (Room 24).²⁶⁵ The differences in floor levels between rooms show how the builders also used the walls to form a series of steps or terraces through the building.²⁶⁶ Even at the base of the slope, Lucas reported a difference in floor levels between adjoining rooms of 0.5 m.²⁶⁷

The site contours reveal two other aspects worthy of further investigation. One of these is a feature (marked as ‘A’ in FIG. 40) which exists immediately to the south of the medieval church. Here the contour survey shows a slight break of slope aligned to a linear feature running north–south down the face of the slope. It is tempting to suggest that this may represent a formal approach or flight of steps to the North Range. If this feature indeed represents a flight of steps, then it could imply that the area at the base of the slope was largely devoid of buildings, which would support the conclusion made by Green that the bath-house he excavated was demolished prior to the *Praetorium* being built.²⁶⁸ It is possible that the area in front of the North Range was ultimately planted as gardens, laid out to enhance the façade of the Roman complex.²⁶⁹ The other features of interest are the slight earthworks in the field (see FIG. 40) to the east of the main *Praetorium* site. These could be exclusively medieval or even modern and represent the remains of buildings partly shown in the views published by

²⁶¹ The slope at this part of the site may have been enhanced by the nineteenth-century road works.

²⁶² Roman terracing is not unknown within the Nene Valley and the villa at Cotterstock (Northants.) was built on an artificially created building platform, see Upex 2001, figs 4 and 5.

²⁶³ Lucas 1998. The northernmost Roman wall found in the archaeological trench cut to the north-east of ‘The Cedars’ was over 2 m wide. A continuation of this wall may have been built across the base of the slope to the east, but no excavation has been carried out here.

²⁶⁴ Masonry 2.0 m wide, encountered in 2010 (see FIG. 34), appears to have formed both wall foundation and revetment for Room 2 (see FIG. 33), and similarly the south wall of Room 30 explored by Green (1986–87) shows a massive build up of masonry, which must have served the same function.

²⁶⁵ This point has not been tested by modern excavation, but Artis clearly shows differences in the widths of these wall lines.

²⁶⁶ For example, in 1971 Wild calculated that the difference in floor levels between Room 2 and Room 31 was about 6 feet (1.83 m), see *Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies* 7 (1972), 17.

²⁶⁷ Lucas 1998, 16.

²⁶⁸ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 121.

²⁶⁹ Gardens are known at a number of sites in Britain, see, for example, those at Fishbourne (Cunliffe 1971a), Piddington (Friendship-Taylor 2007, fig. 8), and generally, Zeepvat 1991 and Farrar 2000.

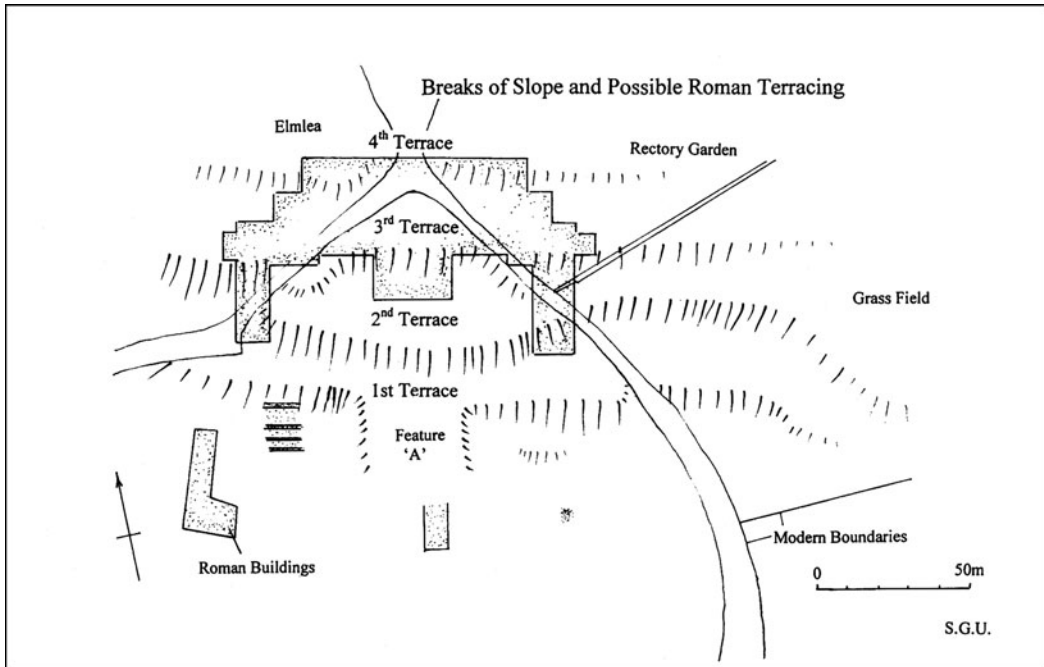


FIG. 40. Breaks of slope and possible Roman terracing at the *Praetorium*.

Artis,²⁷⁰ but equally these terraces appear to be continuations of those on the site of the *Praetorium* and may have Roman origins.

The setting of the *Praetorium* in the broader landscape of the Lower Nene Valley is worthy of discussion. FIG. 41 shows the relationship of the site to the Roman road system of the area and the Roman town of *Durobrivae*, which lay some 1.25 km to the south.²⁷¹ A route providing access from *Durobrivae* via Ermine Street to the *Praetorium* is still unclear. Air photographs show a Roman road leading from the industrial complex in Normangate Field to the north-east,²⁷² but this appears to be heading slightly away from the direction of the *Praetorium*.²⁷³ In the same area and running from what was possibly a road junction in Normangate Field, there appears to be a splayed pair of ditches which head precisely in the direction of the *Praetorium*. These ditches are shown on various air photographs,²⁷⁴ but none show any intervening parch marks to signify metalling, which would provide firmer evidence for a Roman road.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ See Artis pl. V (see FIG. 5), pl. X and his map of the village shown as pl. XIII (see FIG. 3).

²⁷¹ Early antiquarians could not decide which of the two sites was actually *Durobrivae* owing to the state of preservation of the visual remains at Castor, see below for a full discussion of this point.

²⁷² See RCHM 1969, pl. 3 and fig. 10; Upex 2008, col. pl. 11.

²⁷³ This is Margary's 'road 250' (Margary 1973, fig. 8), which joins his 'road 25' to the north-east of Castor village. This road system has recently been re-appraised by Upex (2008, fig. 13) and Margary's 'road 250' appears not to extend as far as he originally stated.

²⁷⁴ RCHM 1969, pl. 3; Upex 1976, fig. 24.

²⁷⁵ These ditches do not provide convincing evidence at present for a Roman road leading to the *Praetorium*. They could represent either prehistoric or Roman activity within the area and their slightly splayed nature is difficult to explain if they formed ditches on either side of a Roman road. However, their line seems to have convinced Green that they formed a road serving the *Praetorium*, for he curiously shows such a line on his general plan of Castor

The most plausible route for a service road to the *Praetorium* is Margary's 'road 250', which runs at least part of the way to the site and provides access to the south frontage of the North Range and to the rear of the site on the upper part of the slope. Access may have been achieved by using the slightly shallower gradient provided by the natural valley to the east (see FIG. 41). This road, if it is indeed connected to the *Praetorium*, emerges from the north side of the industrial suburbs of *Durobrivae*, rather than having a direct link with Ermine Street, a route which was possibly determined by the period at which the *Praetorium* rose to prominence. The suburbs may have expanded outward from *Durobrivae*, beyond the river crossing and along the line of Ermine Street by the Hadrianic and early Antonine period,²⁷⁶ and any route created after this period would have had to thread its way through the existing industrial sprawl until it could reach open ground where a more direct route could be established.

Another point worth considering is the visibility of the *Praetorium* in its immediate landscape. The width of some of the foundation walls (1.50–2.00 m) could imply that at least some walls were designed to support upper storeys.²⁷⁷ Visibility of the structure, especially the south façade of the North Range, would have been enhanced by a clear view of the site from a distance.²⁷⁸ The intention of the builders certainly seems to have been to impress, whether for personal reasons if ownership lay in the hands of a private individual or to give added weight to the importance of the structure if it were in public or state ownership.²⁷⁹ FIG. 42 attempts to show from how far the *Praetorium* would have been visible had its rooflines reached a similar height (20.43 m) to that of the medieval church tower (without the steeple).²⁸⁰ This plot shows that the Roman building would have been clearly visible from *Durobrivae* and the suburbs of the town; from a considerable distance in either direction along the valley of the Nene; to the north and south along Ermine Street; to the north along King Street and also from Margary's 'road 571', which ran west from the present village of Wansford. As such the complex would have been a most conspicuous feature of the Nene Valley landscape as travellers passed along Ermine Street on their way either north to Lincoln and York, or south to London.

THE DATING OF THE *PRAETORIUM*

The history of the site from the post-Roman period to the present day has had a serious impact on the contexts and material which could be used to date the Roman structures discussed here. Nearly all the areas which have been examined during the period 1970–2010 within the North Range were heavily disturbed by stone robbing, and by Saxon, medieval, post-medieval and modern features which had cut into the sealed Roman deposits. In addition, the early excavations by Artis and others also dug through the already mixed up nature of the archaeological layers making the recovery of stratified material a particularly unusual occurrence at this site. This situation can now be seen to apply to the whole site covered by the *Praetorium*, where Artis and others seem to have 'delved' into the deposits.

village without any explanation (Green *et al.* 1986–87, fig. 2). Geophysical survey by Time Team in 2010 immediately south of Castor village and on a projected line of the 'splayed' pair of ditches failed to locate these features.

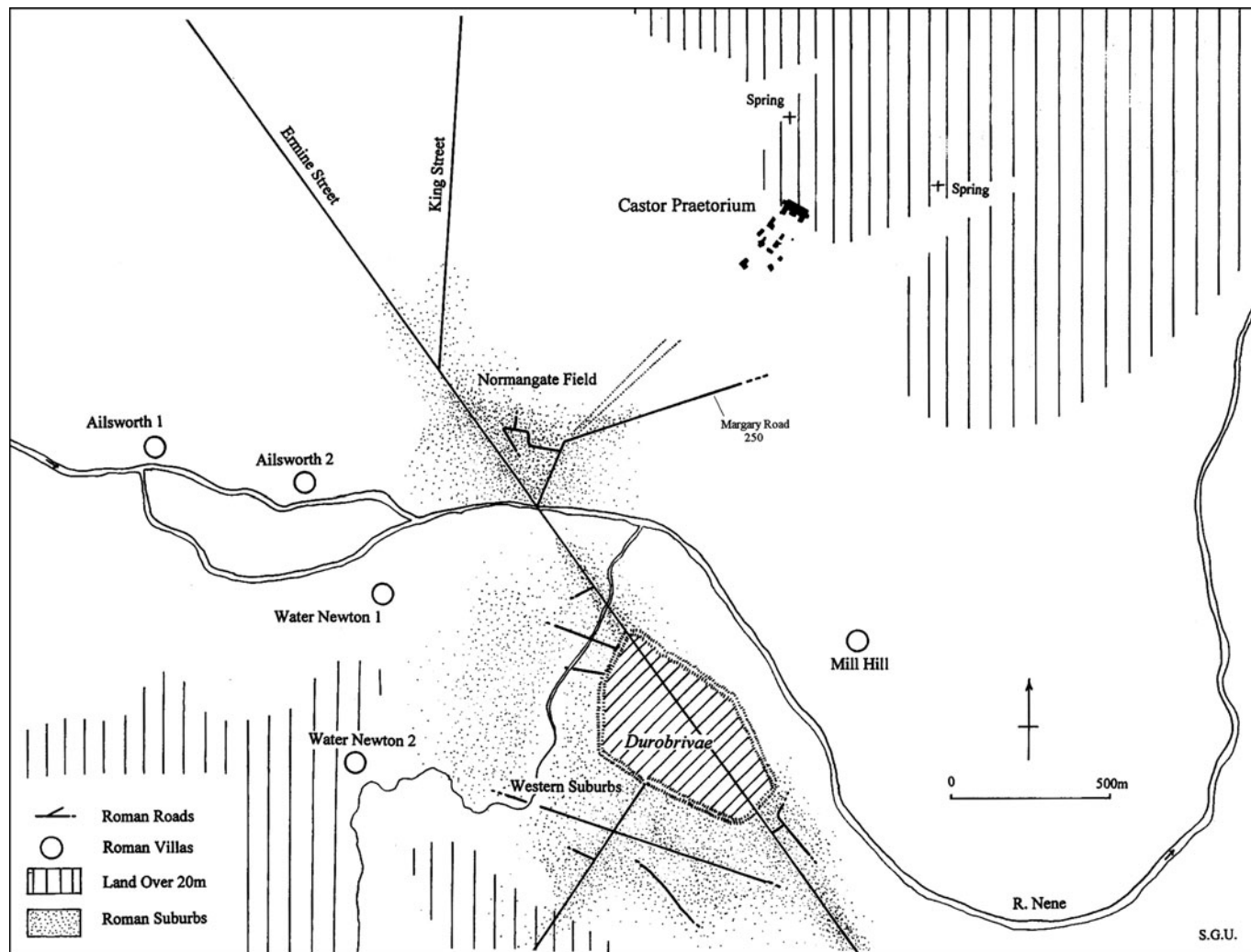
²⁷⁶ Dannell 1974, 7.

²⁷⁷ This is the view taken by de la Bédoyère (1991, fig. 73) and Mackreth (1984, fig. 12B) in their reconstructions of the site.

²⁷⁸ The walls of the North Range appear to have been whitewashed and the roofs made of terracotta fired clay tiles — it would have been an impressive building.

²⁷⁹ See Clarke (1991, 21) who identifies the late Republican 'mania' for a view, while Hales (2003, 43) emphasises how a person's profile and significance could be linked to the visibility of their property, which acted as an 'aspirative fantasy of power' (*ibid.*, 45).

²⁸⁰ Martins 2005, 75–84.

FIG. 41. Castor *Praetorium* and the landscape around *Durobrivae*.

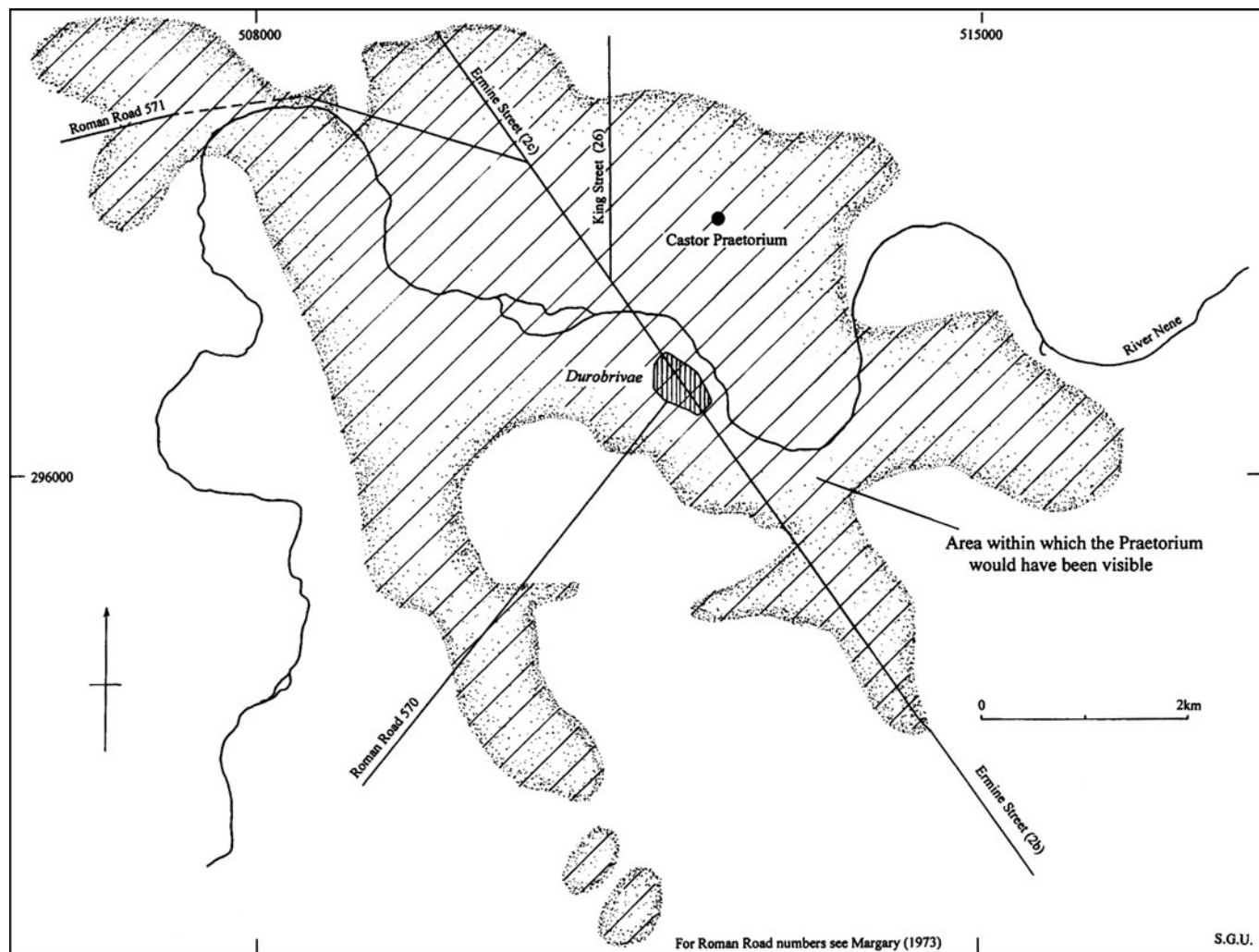


FIG. 42. *Castor Praetorium* and its visibility within the local area.

However, the general picture derived from secure deposits — recovered during work undertaken by Green in 1957–58, and from the 1970–80 excavations at ‘Elmlea’, as well as watching-briefs and rescue work²⁸¹ — begins to provide, for the first time, a set of dates for the overall development of the site and in some cases for individual buildings.

Two early, but undated, ditches cut the site of the *Praetorium*. One of these, located by Green in 1957–58, did produce Roman pottery, but was ‘un-datable’,²⁸² while the other, excavated by Rollo in 1980,²⁸³ appeared to run under part of the North Range (see FIG. 7), but again provided no datable finds.²⁸⁴

The first period that can be dated is when the buildings at the base of the slope were set out. Green suggested that the bath-house he excavated was a second- to third-century structure and although few secure stratified layers were found, he noted that the deposits ‘reflect considerable activity of an ill defined nature on and around Site III (the bath house) in the early years of the 2nd century’.²⁸⁵ He then went on to conclude that the structure was probably ‘demolished before the Praetorium was built’ and points out that there was ‘4th century pottery in the medieval layers over the building, but none apparently from the demolition layer’, suggesting a demolition date at some point prior to the fourth century.

Similar dates have now been suggested for the bath-house excavated by Artis (see above). A recent appraisal of the pottery from trenches dug on this site in 1970 by Wild and Dannell and during 2010 by Time Team — although all came from unstratified deposits — shows that there is a dominant second- to early third-century date range. Some later pieces from the later third and fourth centuries were also recovered, but these are small, abraded fragments and probably represent material unrelated to the working life of the structure.

The same sort of date range also comes from the recent work on Roman buildings in the area of ‘Castor Barns’, to the south of the former A47 road. The pottery report for this site shows that the material related to domestic activity with a ‘concentration of that activity between the 2nd and 3rd centuries [which] may continue, but in a more or less limited way into the 4th century’.²⁸⁶

Lucas’ excavations to the east of ‘The Cedars’ in 1998 found a similar date range with a late second-/early third-century vessel in the floor make-up (Feature 021) of a building and another group of pottery from ‘the lower layers abutting the robbed northern wall’, which he suggested were late second-century in date. Lucas goes on to say, quite rightly, that ‘these finds are potentially significant as they push the founding of the villa complex back into the late 2nd century’. Unfortunately there was little material to suggest a date for the end of the building.²⁸⁷ The date of the building examined by Lucas may have had some links with the structure explored by Artis underneath ‘The Cedars’. Artis found a mosaic floor here in the room marked ‘E’ on his 1828 plan. This mosaic probably dates to the late third or early fourth century,²⁸⁸ which implies that there was some late activity on the lower slopes of the *Praetorium* site, and that not all of the structures in this area had been abandoned by the end of the third century. In general terms, the buildings on the lower slope of the *Praetorium* site appear to have a date range within the second and third centuries, after which there is little

²⁸¹ Lucas 1998; Archaeological Project Services 2006 and Cope-Faulkner 2009.

²⁸² Green *et al.* 1986–87, 121, Period I.

²⁸³ Rollo 1981.

²⁸⁴ Trench 15, Feature 35 (not illustrated here).

²⁸⁵ Green also comments from his analysis of the pottery that ‘domestic occupation of the site had begun perhaps as early as A.D. 100’ (Green *et al.* 1986–87, 125).

²⁸⁶ Boyle and Precious 2008 (appendix 2). Dr Ben Robinson points out that the dates from ‘Castor Barns’ ought to be treated with some caution, since there was some truncation of the upper levels of the site before archaeologists started work.

²⁸⁷ Lucas 1998, 16.

²⁸⁸ Neal and Cosh 2002, 60–6.

activity, or in the case of the 'Castor Barns' structure(s) a much reduced form of occupation. Only one site, 'The Cedars', has produced evidence of occupation dating from the late third and early fourth centuries, with a building either being erected or refurbished (new mosaics) at this time.

In contrast, the dates provided from the work on the North Range, sitting on the upper part of the slope, indicate a later phase of activity. The earliest sealed deposit from this part of the site comes from the make-up for the first floor in Room 10 (see pottery report), which dates to the first quarter of the third century. Another sealed deposit from under the floor of Room 31 gave a date of *c.* A.D. 260–280, while a single sherd from under the floor of Room 14 was dated to *c.* A.D. 240–250. Building work and refurbishment was still taking place in some rooms of the North Range in the late third and early fourth centuries, with, for example, the relaying of a floor in Room 10 (see above for pottery recovered from the make-up of this floor). The latest sealed deposits, dating to the very end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries, come from the flue area of Room 3 (see FIGS 13 and 25) and seem to show that at least some parts of the North Range were still being used and occupied at this late date.

It is significant at this point to mention that none of the sealed deposits which come from the North Range area, nor indeed any of the residual material which has been so much mixed up by the later occupation phases, yields anything earlier than the late second century, indicating little or no occupation before this date in this part of the site.²⁸⁹ Thus in general terms and within the limits of the dating which is available from the North Range, it is likely that construction probably started *c.* A.D. 225–250 and that the building was still operating, in some form or other, at the very end of the fourth century and perhaps into the fifth century.²⁹⁰

The dating across the site, limited though it is, begins to suggest that there were two separate phases of construction. First, buildings on the lower part of the site, which were occupied in the second and early part of the third centuries, followed by the building of the North Range in the early part of the third century, which continued to be occupied until the early fifth century.²⁹¹ If Green's comments on the demolition of the bath-house prior to the building of the North Range are justified — as well as the apparent lack of evidence for late occupation found at the other buildings on the lower part of the site — then his view of occupation on this lower part of the slope being 'a comparatively modest predecessor to the *Praetorium* (North Range)', seems to be valid.²⁹²

This contrast in dating is also reflected in the differing construction methods between the North Range, with its massive foundations, and those buildings on the lower slope of the site which had coursed masonry foundations²⁹³ of a much more modest standard.²⁹⁴ Equally important would have been the visual impact of the façade of the North Range that the architect and builders may have desired. A seeming 'clutter' of buildings on the lower part of the site may have inhibited this visual impact to such an extent that they were demolished to open up both the view of the North Range and provide better access to it. If 'Feature A' (see above and FIG. 40) indeed marks the remains of a formal flight of steps leading to the façade of the North Range, then clearly Green's bath-house, and any other buildings in this area, would have been in the

²⁸⁹ This also includes the limited amount of samian examined by Felicity Wild, see above. The samian from Green's bath-house excavations of 1957–58 was examined by G.B. Dannell, who reported Antonine dates (see Green *et al.* 1986–87, microfiche M49).

²⁹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the dates of the Stibbington pottery, which match the finds from the latest deposits at Castor, see Perrin 2008.

²⁹¹ This dating contradicts that put forward by Mackreth, who suggested that a date of *c.* A.D. 300 was more appropriate for the building of the North Range (Mackreth 1984, 24).

²⁹² Green *et al.* 1986–87, 121 and 125.

²⁹³ See Green *et al.* 1986–87, pls 3 and 4.

²⁹⁴ These foundations are very similar to those of Hadrianic and early Antonine date seen at the unwalled settlement at Ashton, near Oundle (see Upex 2008, figs 23, 24 and 45) and within part of Normangate Field, Castor (J.P. Wild and G.B. Dannell, pers. comm.).

way. Green was probably correct, therefore, in his interpretation of the evidence from the 1957 bath-house that 'one may presume that the latter was demolished before the *Praetorium* (North Range) was built'.²⁹⁵

THE LATER HISTORY OF THE SITE

The latest Roman pottery from the *Praetorium* site dates to the late fourth and early fifth centuries (see above). After this point there appears to be only some residual fifth-century pottery,²⁹⁶ which probably indicates nearby occupation. Generally there seems to have been a hiatus in any settlement until the late seventh and eighth centuries, when finds from the area — including metalwork, worked bone, pottery and sculpture — suggest considerable, high-status activity. The sculpture in particular is interesting and has been reported in full by several writers.²⁹⁷ The widely accepted view is that during the seventh century the former Roman site became the focus of the nunnery of St Cyneburgh (Kyneburgha) and her sister who founded a religious house in A.D. 650–675.²⁹⁸ The archaeological details of any such nunnery at Castor or any form of Middle Saxon settlement on the site are very ill defined. No stone or wooden buildings have been identified as yet and there is, for example, a marked lack of daub from wooden structures on all of the upper part (the North Range) of the *Praetorium* site.²⁹⁹ It has been suggested that the Castor nunnery was of considerable importance and may be compared with the monastic site at *Medeshamstede* (later Peterborough). Certainly Cyneburgh and her sister Cyneswith appear to have been buried in their nunnery and although the early medieval scribe, Hugh Candidus, mentions that the Danes laid waste to much of the area in A.D. 870 (and this may have included the Castor nunnery), their remains (and possibly even their nunnery?) seem to have been kept intact and were later transferred to Peterborough.³⁰⁰ The later parish area of Castor — linked with the daughter settlements of Ailsworth, Milton, Sutton and Upton — has also been the basis of a debate about a pre-Conquest estate centred on Castor, potentially adding weight to Richard Morris' idea that some Roman estates survived until the early Middle Ages.³⁰¹

The interpretation of the layout of Anglo-Saxon monasteries is beset with problems.³⁰² However, it might be assumed that any such monastic site would have been encircled by some form of boundary which formed a limit to the precinct.³⁰³ The only certain feature to date from the Middle Saxon period in the area of the North Range was a large pit excavated in Trench L (FIG. 13) by Dallas in 1971–72.³⁰⁴ At the base of the slope, below the church, Green excavated two Saxon huts which lay immediately above Roman layers;³⁰⁵ Lucas also found good

²⁹⁵ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 121.

²⁹⁶ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 144.

²⁹⁷ See Kendrick 1938, pl. LXX, 2 and 169–70; Cramp, 1977, 210–11. One fragment of sculpture has been described as a re-worked Roman altar, see Burke 2004b, 73.

²⁹⁸ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 144–5 and microfiche M22; Morris 2004. The earliest reliable citation that links Castor with Cyneburgh is a twelfth-century copy of a charter dated A.D. 948. This document makes no mention of a nunnery, only that Cyneburgh held land in the area (Dallas 1973 17; Morris 2006, 175).

²⁹⁹ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 144.

³⁰⁰ Morris 2006, 134.

³⁰¹ Morris 1989, 239. This estate is also shown in Morris 2006, map 22; for a general discussion of the Castor estate, see Courtney 1979. See also Upex (2002) for recent work on a nearby Roman/Saxon estate at Haddon.

³⁰² Cramp 1976; see also Everson 1977, 68–77; Daniels 1988.

³⁰³ See Stukeley's comments in 1737 regarding an encircling 'castrum' around the site near the church at Castor in note 14 above.

³⁰⁴ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 131–3.

³⁰⁵ Green *et al.* 1986–87, 127 and figs 6 and 12.

evidence of Early Saxon structures and Middle Saxon robbing and the reuse of Roman wall lines at the base of the slope and just to the north of 'The Cedars' (see FIG. 36).³⁰⁶

It is possible that the existing road layout, which survives in this part of Castor village, actually represents some fossilised arrangement of perhaps the Roman, but more likely the Saxon occupation of the site. The oddly shaped area formed by the Peterborough Road (former A47) to the south, the line of Stocks Hill to the east, and the curving line of Church Hill to the north and west (shown in FIG. 4; see also FIG. 3 for Artis' map of 1828) may represent ancient lanes,³⁰⁷ encircling not only some of the principal Roman buildings, but also the extent of the known Saxon finds.³⁰⁸ The original church founded by Cyneburgh might be presumed to be under the later medieval church, with the associated monastic buildings either reusing Roman structures or in Saxon structures which have yet to be identified. The huts found by Green may be part of this monastic settlement, while the area inside the encircling boundary, mentioned above, could have formed a convenient precinct.

It is possible that the lack of identifiable Saxon structures could imply that the post-Roman occupation continued inside still upstanding Roman rooms and buildings. Roman refurbishment within the North Range was taking place in various parts of the structure with new floors being laid, for example, in the fourth century and it may be that the walls and roofs were still sound in the Saxon period and were being used by the post-Roman population.³⁰⁹ Such a view may account for the sets of post-holes cut through the mosaic floors in Rooms 11 and 13 of the North Range (see FIG. 8),³¹⁰ which could have held either supports for the roof or for some other form of room fittings.

Almost all the excavated trenches across the *Praetorium* site which have uncovered Roman rooms, have shown some degree of post-Roman stone robbing. When this robbing occurred is in most cases difficult to determine, but the general impression is that robbing was continuous on the site from the fifth century onwards. Post-Roman pottery from the robber trenches certainly shows this activity took place throughout the medieval period.³¹¹ Some of the very late trenching is almost certainly the work of Artis in the 1820s and 1830s, and was concerned with archaeological recording rather than stone robbing.³¹² In some areas it appears that the stone robbers were looking specifically for large quoin stones and an examination of the walls of the medieval church at Castor shows massive stones, some with Roman tooling still clearly visible, re-used as quoins; these are particularly noticeable where they have been built into an early part of the west wall of the church. The fabric of this wall appears to be thirteenth-century if not earlier and so too does the north chancel wall, which contains not only large quoin stones and quantities of Roman tile but also fragments of column (c. 25 cm diameter), that appear to have been laid in parallel rows across the width of the medieval wall, so only their circular cross-sections show. Whether the robbed stone from the *Praetorium* was taken further afield — to the site of the Saxon and later medieval monastery at Peterborough, for example³¹³ — is

³⁰⁶ Lucas 1998.

³⁰⁷ These lanes may originally have been laid out over the tops of Roman rooms, see note 23.

³⁰⁸ Taken from details listed on the SMR at Peterborough Museum.

³⁰⁹ The survival of Roman walls was such that Artis saw buildings standing in the 1820s which were still 11 feet high, see note 21.

³¹⁰ See Upex 2008, col. pl. 23.

³¹¹ See FIG. 9, Layer 4 which produced thirteenth-century pottery and FIG. 12, Trench XXIII, Layer 7, which produced thirteenth- to sixteenth-century pottery.

³¹² Artis' trenching was encountered in several places, particularly in Trench XXVII (FIG. 13); in the 2010 Time Team excavations in the Old Rectory garden (see FIG. 16); and in the 1970 and 2010 trenches dug on the bath-house site (see FIG. 21, Layer 1A).

³¹³ This suggestion was first made by J.T. Irvine who worked at the cathedral in Peterborough during the restoration work in the 1880s (Peterborough Cathedral Library, Irvine Papers, Vol. 1, folio 31). See also Irvine 1894.

debatable. In the seventh to eighth centuries both the nunnery site at Castor and the monastic site at Peterborough seem to have been of fairly equal status³¹⁴ and the removal of stone from one precinct to aid building at another may have been censured. Besides, there is considerable evidence for a substantial Roman building(s) underneath Peterborough Cathedral, which could have provided stone for the Saxon builders there.³¹⁵

Stone robbed from Roman sites to build churches is a common occurrence and there are several local and regional cases where this has been noted.³¹⁶ At Brixworth, Saxon stone robbers made good use of material from the nearby villa,³¹⁷ while more locally the cathedral at Peterborough has quantities of Roman material built into its fabric, including a column fragment and part of an inscription.³¹⁸ The reuse of Roman material in early medieval churches, especially churches built over or close to Roman buildings, has contributed to the considerable debate with regard to the continuity of Christianity from the late Roman period and the period of re-introduction of Christianity in the seventh century.³¹⁹

VILLA OR STATE RESIDENCE?: THE POSSIBLE FUNCTIONS OF THE *PRAETORIUM*

There has been considerable speculation about the function of the *Praetorium* and who resided there. Since a substantial part of our knowledge still comes from the work of Artis and because some parts of the site have been subsequently destroyed — or indeed were being destroyed as he recorded them — it is necessary to rely on his observational and recording skills. In the last 40 years the excavations of J.P. Wild and G.B. Dannell have added considerable detail to the western side of the North Range and other parts of the site and have stimulated interest in and an awareness of the complex as a whole, including the reconstructions of the *Praetorium* by Mackreth and de la Bédoyère.³²⁰ The analysis of their work and others in this article allows us not only to understand the plan of the buildings in greater detail, but also to begin to make more sense of the overall site plan, its phasing and dating.

Some scholars have considered the site to be that of a large villa,³²¹ which perhaps matches other large villas situated close to the Roman town of *Durobrivae*.³²² Five such sites, all within 2 km of the *Praetorium* (see FIG. 41), are known to the south and south-west, four of which were first identified by Artis in the 1820s.³²³ Little is known in detail about these, though plans based on aerial photographs of the villas at Ailsworth (1 and 2) and Mill Hill have been published,³²⁴ and all three sites had courtyard arrangements. These villas, situated just outside of the urban area of *Durobrivae*, are in many ways curious and it has been suggested that as ‘suburban villas’ they had little or no agricultural function.³²⁵ Fieldwalking surveys suggest that

³¹⁴ Morris 2006.

³¹⁵ See RCHM 1969, 3; Upex 2008, 221.

³¹⁶ See, for example, Rose 1994.

³¹⁷ Woods 1970.

³¹⁸ Peterborough Cathedral Library, Irvine Papers, Vol. 1, folios 26, 27 and 75; for the inscription see Collingwood and Wright 1965, no. 231. I am grateful to Dr Jackie Hall (Cathedral Archaeologist) and Sarah Botfield for allowing me access to this material at the Cathedral.

³¹⁹ See, for example, Bell 2005; Faulkner 2000, 116–20 and 127–8; Thomas 1993, 143–201 and 240–74. For an outline of the history of Christianity within the area of *Durobrivae*, see Thomas 1993, 113–22.

³²⁰ Mackreth 1984, fig. 12B; de la Bédoyère 1991, fig. 73.

³²¹ See Percival 1981, 13–15.

³²² See Rivet 1968, 114, fig. 8; Salway 1981, 720.

³²³ Artis 1828, pl. I.

³²⁴ RCHM 1969, figs 5, 6 and 11; Wild 1978; Upex 2008, figs 39 and 40.

³²⁵ Wild 1974, 151.

they may all be of post-Hadrianic date, at least for their phases of major expansion.³²⁶ The villa at Mill Hill in Castor parish is sited somewhat similarly to the *Praetorium*, being built on the edge of a terrace of the River Nene, at c. 12 m AOD, and would have commanded fine views over the river valley and the Roman town, some 400 m to its south-west. Certainly, the central rooms at the *Praetorium*, assuming they were for the reception of guests or to provide a suitable setting for the morning *salutatio* or greeting of clients, would have provided an excellent view over the Nene Valley.³²⁷ Further away from *Durobrivae* other villas, such as those at Fotheringhay, Yarwell, Apethorpe and Cotterstock, seem to be regularly spaced along the west bank of the River Nene towards Oundle. Whereas other villa sites at Helpston, Upton and Bedford Purlieus are set back from the river on heavier clay soils formed on the interfluvies between the River Nene and the River Welland.³²⁸

Our understanding of almost all the villas within the Lower Nene Valley is still limited, mainly because of the lack of recent scientific excavation. Even an understanding of the plans of some sites is poor. However, there are several comparative aspects which suggest that the *Praetorium* may have been something much more than a large villa lying close to *Durobrivae*.³²⁹ If it can be seen as a single entity, then its plan suggests that it is the largest structure in the valley. The villa at Cotterstock,³³⁰ which is to date the largest of the known villas, is set around possibly four courtyards and has buildings which range over a total area of 240 by 80 m (19,200 m²); this compares with the Castor *Praetorium* which has an area of 280 by 130 m (36,400 m²).³³¹ Thus, the area covered by the ranges of buildings at the *Praetorium* is considerable and would make it the largest known villa structure in the province.³³²

Any villa estate lands that belonged to the *Praetorium* would have extended to the north of the site, although here there are other villas at Sacrewell, Upton, Helpston, and a possible site at Longthorpe,³³³ which would have been in competition for available land. However, a note of caution is required in any discussion relating to the notion of lands of a particular villa estate being concentrated in a single block around a core of buildings. Percival rightly points out that villa lands could be composed of many disparate and sometimes small units of land which made up the whole estate.³³⁴

If the Castor site is indeed that of a villa, then the best parallels are to be found on the Continent where large, axially-planned, palatial villas are known, in many cases much bigger than the area covered by the Castor complex.³³⁵ If all the buildings at the *Praetorium* are plotted, irrespective of their dating, then this produces an approximately rectangular layout divided into two separate courtyards, with the North Range at the head of the larger of the two

³²⁶ Upex 2008, 138. This point seems to match the dating evidence from the *Praetorium*. The author (Upex 2008, 138) also suggests that the villas close to *Durobrivae*, without apparent estate land associated with them, could have been owned by fenland aristocratic families, who had moved from their fenland homelands to settle around *Durobrivae*. Such a move may have coincided with the changes to fenland organisation which appear to have taken place, including the decline in the site at Stonea, after c. A.D. 200 (Potter and Johns 1992, 95).

³²⁷ Ellis 1995, 166–8.

³²⁸ Upex 2008, ch. 5 and figs 48 and 49.

³²⁹ See, for example, Mattingly 2007, 385 who describes the site as ‘an atypically large villa complex’.

³³⁰ Upex 2001, fig. 17.

³³¹ For a comparison with other large courtyard villas within the province: North Leigh has an approximate total area of 11,370 m²; Chedworth 10,033 m²; Woodchester 14,566 m²; and Bignor 16,647 m². These figures are taken from the plans in Rivet 1969, figs 2.3–2.5.

³³² Martins (2005, 19–20) quotes the potential building costs at Cotterstock, excluding mosaics and heating systems, as reaching £2.2 million in 2005 terms. The figures for building costs at the *Praetorium*, based on Martin’s calculations, could, one might assume, be roughly doubled at £4.4 million (but these figures seem perhaps extraordinarily low!).

³³³ See Upex 2008, fig. 48.

³³⁴ Percival 1989, 11. Pliny possessed land in many parts of Italy (White 1970, 406), while Todd (1989, 17) points out that lands comprising a single estate were comparatively rare.

³³⁵ Percival 1981, 51–105.

spaces (see FIG. 36).³³⁶ Such a layout, with apparently separate buildings arranged to form the courtyards, is similar to the plans of several continental villas, such as those at Warfusée-Abancourt, Malapart and Grivesnes (France), all of which have enclosed areas up to 100 m across and over 400 m long.³³⁷ The villa at Anthée, Namur (Belgium), which is 175 m wide and over 500 m long, is even more impressive and like the Castor *Praetorium* has a main block of rooms at the head of an inner courtyard, with separate blocks of buildings arranged around an outer courtyard.³³⁸ On a more modest scale, but again similar to the overall design of the *Praetorium*, the site at Odrang, Fließem (Germany) has an inner courtyard where the main residence is situated, while separate blocks of buildings are arranged around the outer perimeter of a second courtyard.³³⁹ Apart from their large axial plans with blocks of buildings arranged around courtyards, all of these continental examples have formalised large reception rooms within their main block, which is also a characteristic of the layout of the Castor complex.³⁴⁰ However, the pursuit of ever more parallels for the Castor *Praetorium* is probably fruitless, for the growing corpus of dating evidence suggests that not all of the buildings at Castor were contemporary and that at least some of those on the lower, southern part of the site may have been demolished as a prelude to the North Range being built.

If the *Praetorium* site were a villa in the conventional sense, then it would be easy to see the owner having not only an agricultural estate, but also accruing additional wealth from one of the many industries which operated in the suburbs of *Durobrivae*, especially those linked with pottery production or iron- and metalworking.³⁴¹ The control of industrial units of production and land that yielded resources, such as pottery clay and iron ore, would have been highly lucrative.³⁴² Such aspects of industrial ownership might also be linked to the control of transport systems, especially pack animals, and the organisation of fuel supplies in the form of coppiced woodland which would have fed the industrial areas. The suburbs of *Durobrivae* would have created considerable wealth, and how and to whom this was apportioned is an interesting question; but it is easy to see how a substantial proportion of this wealth could have been in the control of a few families, who would have had the resources to build lavish villas.³⁴³ Thus the prosperity generated by the potteries and ironworks in the region could well have contributed to the growth of a villa-based economy — a development which may have owed nothing to an involvement of the provincial administration (see below).

However, there are aspects of the layout and construction of the *Praetorium* which question its function as a villa. Certainly the scale of the complex, the substantial walling of the North Range and with it the implication of a structure that reached several storeys,³⁴⁴ as well as the overall formality of the plan of both the North Range and the site generally, are unparalleled at other local villa sites. If the current evidence — which suggests that the later North Range phase

³³⁶ This idea of a large area divided into two courtyards on an axial continental scale was originally suggested by Mackreth (unpublished typescript and plans held in Peterborough Museum).

³³⁷ Smith 1997, 149, fig. 43; Agache 1978, 112–34; Percival 1981, 77; Smith is also very aware that large villas vary in their overall layout to a considerable extent, see Smith 1997, 292–3.

³³⁸ Percival 1981, 81 and fig. 21.

³³⁹ Percival 1981, 82–3 and fig. 23; Smith 1997, fig. 43.

³⁴⁰ See, for example, the formal layout at Haccourt, Liège, Belgium (Smith 1997, fig. 52; Percival 1981, 39).

³⁴¹ See Wild (nd), 8, who suggests that there might be a link with the pottery trade.

³⁴² The military may also have played a part in the organisation of iron production in the East Midlands throughout the Roman occupation of the area. More research is needed to explore questions relating to the relationship of the military, iron production and land ownership here. See Condron 1997; Schröfer-Kolb 1999; 2004; Upex 2008, 99–105.

³⁴³ A useful compendium on the question of how villas and industrial activities could have been linked can be found in the collection of conference papers edited by Polfer 1999. I am grateful to Dr J.P. Wild for drawing this reference to my attention.

³⁴⁴ The walls both at Stonea and in the North Range at Castor have walls of a similar thickness to those of a Roman building still standing 17 m high (see note 56), with some up to 2 m wide; the implication being that at both these sites, the buildings were possibly of several storeys.

seemingly involved demolition, or at least the partial demolition, of the earlier phase of buildings on the lower slopes of the site — is also considered, then a further ‘unusual’ aspect of the site emerges. However, none of these aspects point unequivocally away from a villa function for the *Praetorium* and towards an official status for the site. Indeed, without epigraphic evidence the status of the site will likely remain unresolved. The options here are worth reviewing briefly, since the sheer scale of the site is enough to suggest that it could have been meant for some important government official rather than a private individual.³⁴⁵

It has been speculated that the site could have been associated with a guild of *negotiatores cretarii*, pottery salesmen and their associates, and that the complex was built for their own use and also as a guest house.³⁴⁶ Guilds or *collegia* are known on the Continent and in Britain, where they functioned to further the commercial interests of and to provide social support for their members.³⁴⁷ Certainly the guild of smiths at Chichester appears to have been wealthy enough to erect a temple to their patron deities.³⁴⁸ Whether a local Castor guild, linked to one of the dominant industries, was capable of funding such a large structure remains speculation. However, the complex clearly had costly floor and wall decorations and the general size of the structure may have put such a building enterprise well beyond the purse of a local guild.

Another possible function for the Castor site is to see it as a residence for a high-ranking official involved in the administration of the province.³⁴⁹ The geographical location of *Durobrivae* and the *Praetorium*, at the periphery of any of the third- and fourth-century provinces of Roman Britain, may however rule out any idea of a provincial governor residing at Castor.³⁵⁰ Even more unlikely is the idea that the overall authority for these provinces, which would have been given to a high-ranking civil governor (*vicarius*),³⁵¹ would have been based at Castor and not in London. The possibility that the site may have been the base from which a junior procurator operated is worth exploring.³⁵² Such a post may have been linked with the exploitation and control of iron production to the west of the Nene in areas around Bedford Purlieu, Waverley, Fineshade, Southwick and Bulwark.³⁵³ Additionally the state control over salt and its production from the fenland may also have been significant,³⁵⁴ although neither iron nor salt on their own could perhaps have warranted such an opulent centre as the *Praetorium*.

It has also been suggested that military personnel — of a rank which would have required accommodation of the standard offered by the *Praetorium* — may have resided at Castor.³⁵⁵ The possibilities include either the commander of the mobile field army, or the commander of the British Saxon Shore. The commander of the mobile field army may have had some form of base or residence as far south as *Durobrivae*, but a more logical position from which this official may have worked would have been at York, or possibly Lincoln. As for the commander of the Saxon Shore, similar problems of geography may apply.³⁵⁶

³⁴⁵ Similar problems arise with the interpretation of sites such as Woodchester, which has a formal plan, rooms of great size for large gatherings and marble sculptural and architectural fragments, see Clarke 1982, 220–2.

³⁴⁶ Suggested by the directors of the 1970–71 excavations. Typescript report on the 1970 season is lodged in Peterborough Museum.

³⁴⁷ Frere 1967, 260.

³⁴⁸ Wachter 1986, 172; Collingwood and Wright 1965, no. 91.

³⁴⁹ See Jones and Mattingly 1990, 141–78, for an outline of the bureaucracy of Roman Britain.

³⁵⁰ See Jones and Mattingly 1990, maps 5:5 and 5:7.

³⁵¹ Wachter 1986, 55; Jones and Mattingly 1990, 148; Salway 1981, 316–17.

³⁵² See, for example, the *procurator gynaecii in Britannis Ventensis* mentioned by Salway 1981, 656; Wild 2002, 29.

³⁵³ RCHM 1975, 24; Johnston 1987; Jackson and Ambrose 1978; Jackson and Tylecote 1988; Condron 1997; Schrüfer-Kolb 1999 and 2004. See also Wachter 1986, 170.

³⁵⁴ Shotter 2005, 43; Garner 2005; Dodds 2005; Gurney 1986, 138; Potter 1989, 170; Lane 2005, 54.

³⁵⁵ Jones and Mattingly 1990, table 5:2; Mackreth 1984, 24.

³⁵⁶ One might expect his residence or base to be in the southern zone of the province with an emphasis on access to the coastal margins of the whole of Southern Britain, from the Wash around to the Welsh coast. London may be a better candidate for such an official base. It is worth making the point that the area around *Durobrivae* did have excellent

Any direct relationship between the *Praetorium* and *Durobrivae* is also difficult to explain. The plan of the town is known only from aerial photographs, which show a densely packed set of structures within the walled area, including at least two major buildings which may have had public functions.³⁵⁷ These structures may be associated with the actual status of *Durobrivae*, which was known to be that of a *vicus*, but later may have been elevated to a *civitas*-capital.³⁵⁸ It is hard to see how the *Praetorium*, with its grandiose design which may give an impression of a more public than private building, could have been linked with local urban or regional municipal officialdom. However, there may be an additional aspect to *Durobrivae*'s political and economic base, which could have provided a link between the two sites, and that lies in the fenland to the east and the role that the town had to play in the regional organisation of eastern England.

The fenland during the Roman period has for long been thought of as being part of a state-controlled area:³⁵⁹ land that was confiscated or appropriated — whether after the revolt of the Iceni in A.D. 47,³⁶⁰ or the Boudiccan revolt of A.D. 60³⁶¹ — and land taken back against loans by Nero after A.D. 65.³⁶² The major stone building identified at Stonea (4 km to the south-west of March in Cambridgeshire and some 34 km to the east of *Durobrivae*, see FIG. 1) within a planned settlement was seen by its excavators as fulfilling an administrative role for the surrounding state-owned territory, with the extraordinary stone structure acting as the official centre.³⁶³ There has been some dispute regarding the interpretation of this stone structure, which the excavators have interpreted as a tower-like building with a piazza serving as a public square in front.³⁶⁴ An alternative interpretation argues that it is a temple, resembling the surviving temple at Autun (France).³⁶⁵ However one views this Stonea 'tower' complex, the best indications are that the whole foundation of the settlement at Stonea was related to an official mechanism of fenland organisation, which Potter argued convincingly was related to state control and the provisioning of the army.³⁶⁶

In addition to the Stonea site, other sub-centres for the collection of state revenues and the *annona*³⁶⁷ may have been established at places such as Grandford and Spalding,³⁶⁸ and the list could be extended to include Godmanchester,³⁶⁹ as well as *Durobrivae*. It is at this point that *Durobrivae* and the *Praetorium* could have had a role in the management of the fenland, especially if *Durobrivae* had become a conduit for wealth, produce and administrative personnel³⁷⁰ moving in and out of the fenland. *Durobrivae*, with its good communication links

communications — by land (north–south and east–west) and the River Nene gave easy coastal access to the Wash and the east coast (Mackreth 1984, 24). However, again the problem of dating may provide part of the answer in seeing a link with Saxon Shore organisation. If the system of coastal military installations is dated to the period c. A.D. 270–300, then this is already too late to account for the main building phases at Castor (Johnson 1979, 102; Pearson 2002; 2003; 2006).

³⁵⁷ St Joseph 1966, 21–30; Wilson 1975, 9; Mackreth 1995; 1979, 19–20.

³⁵⁸ See Stevens 1937; Rivet 1968, 135; Wilson 1975, 9–10; Upex 2008, 60–77.

³⁵⁹ Frere 1967, 275–7. For an alternative view of the fenland, see Fincham (2002; 2004) who argues for native farmers continuing to farm the fenlands without Roman state controls.

³⁶⁰ Tacitus, *Annals* 12.31.

³⁶¹ Dudley and Webster 1962.

³⁶² Salway 1981, 116. A summary of the possible creation of the fenland estate is found in Upex 2008, 176–202.

³⁶³ Jackson and Potter 1996; Potter and Johns 1992, 95; Potter 1989; Potter 1981; Malim 2005, 97–132.

³⁶⁴ Jackson and Potter 1996, figs 64–6.

³⁶⁵ See Green, 2005.

³⁶⁶ See, for example, Potter 1996, 677–92.

³⁶⁷ Green 2005, 131.

³⁶⁸ Fincham 2002, 45–6.

³⁶⁹ Green 1975; Burnham and Wachter 1990, 127.

³⁷⁰ This could have included the role of a junior procurator, *conductor* or *vilicus* who were often influential citizens or soldiers (Crawford 1976; Jones 1973, 417).

both by water and by road, may in fact have quickly been recognised as the easiest and best route to gain access into the fens.

As an unplanned town, *Durobrivae* straddled the line of Ermine Street and was bounded to the north and east by the River Nene (see FIG. 41); by the Hadrianic period, it appears to have been encircled by densely-packed suburbs. This suburban growth could well have restricted major developments within the core part of the town and so any new public building, especially one which may have acted as a sub-centre to Stonea, would need to have been located outside the town and Castor would have offered both space and a prominent site. Thus the question must be asked: does the *Praetorium* fit this argument and did it offer a useful and imposing site which could have acted as a state centre for fenland management?³⁷¹

Any discussion of links between the two sites is clearly hypothetical and there are obviously problems which arise from the idea of both Stonea's role in any state control of the fenland and the likelihood of sub-centres. However, it is worth recalling the formality of the design and the impressive appearance of the Castor structure, which is exceptional. Dates are also perhaps significant here, and the revisions to the dating at Castor³⁷² may now provide a possible intriguing link between Stonea and the *Praetorium*. Potter makes the point that the site at Stonea was laid out between A.D. 130 and 150,³⁷³ and that this may have involved a military presence;³⁷⁴ the explicit evidence from the excavations is that the stone complex and other buildings were 'thoroughly demolished' c. A.D. 220.³⁷⁵ If these dates are compared with those for the Castor *Praetorium* suggested in this article — with an early phase of occupation on the lower part of the site dating from the early second century,³⁷⁶ followed by demolition as a prelude to the building of the North Range, now considered to have taken place c. A.D. 240–260 — then a link between the two sites is possible.

These events could allow a line of argument which sees the *Praetorium* at Castor forming, in its first phase, a sub-centre for fenland administration which was under the central control of the major centre at Stonea. The clear indications of a military presence at Stonea are lacking at Castor, but slight evidence from the bath-house excavated by Artis, which was laid out using precise Roman measurements, may hint at a military connection. The demolition at Stonea in c. A.D. 220 might then have seen the switching of central fenland administration to Castor with the construction of the North Range c. A.D. 240–260.³⁷⁷

It is perhaps also worth noting that these dates coincide broadly with the visits of the emperors Hadrian (A.D. 122) and later Septimius Severus (A.D. 208) to the province. Potter again points out that intervention by Hadrian in the formal state organisation of the fenland during, and in the aftermath of, his visit to the province would have been 'entirely consistent' with the evidence from elsewhere in the Empire, where similar schemes were undertaken.³⁷⁸ As far as the decline of Stonea and the rise of the North Range of the *Praetorium* can be linked to the Severan period, the dates are a little less certain. The Severan period was, however, a time of significant

³⁷¹ Potter and Johns are guarded over this point, but state that the 'enormous and palatial complex of third-century date at Castor, the so-called *Praetorium*, also hints at a public role' (Potter and Johns 1992, 95).

³⁷² Mackreth suggests a date for the *Praetorium* of c. A.D. 300 (Mackreth 1984, 24).

³⁷³ Potter 1996, 676.

³⁷⁴ Potter 1996, 685–7.

³⁷⁵ Potter 1996, 689.

³⁷⁶ Green also makes the point that at the site of the bath-house excavated in 1957, the evidence pointed to '... considerable activity of an ill defined nature on and around Site III [the bath-house] in the early years of the 2nd century' and that activity appeared to start as early as A.D. 100 (Green *et al.* 1986–87, 125).

³⁷⁷ The similar size, character and monumentality of masonry at both sites (especially the North Range at Castor) is particularly striking.

³⁷⁸ Potter 1996, 678. Potter also points out that Hadrian probably saw the fenland for himself as he journeyed north on his way to view the line of the northern frontier, and must, therefore, have passed through *Durobrivae*.

organisational change,³⁷⁹ and this seems to have been especially so with regard to Imperial estates.³⁸⁰ The failings at Stonea, reported by Potter,³⁸¹ may have provided a pretext to officially close the site down. Whatever functions had been performed at Stonea could, therefore, have been transferred to the *Durobrivae* region and a flourishing fen-edge town, and away from what was a failed fenland settlement.

Perhaps a final point worthy of consideration is the possibility of a link between any late Roman state ownership of the site at Castor — which may or may not have involved the fenland — and the site being used in the Saxon period as an early Christian centre. There are several finds within the immediate area of *Durobrivae* which indicate its association with the development of the early Christian church.³⁸² In addition, it has been noted that there are several instances elsewhere in Britain where Christianity seems to have flourished at sites where there had been some aspect of state or military control.³⁸³ The survival of the North Range of the *Praetorium* in some form until at least the late fourth century, if not into the early years of the fifth century, in a region open to Christian influence might well be connected to the early foundation of Cyneburgh's nunnery, but fuller discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this article.

However one views the site at Castor, it is exceptional and without close parallel in Britain. This point may be in fact part of the key to the overall interpretation of the site. Potter is clear in his assessment of the buildings at Stonea when he says, 'It is nevertheless already clear that it [Stonea] corresponds with no very obvious model, either in Britain, or elsewhere'.³⁸⁴ The same could perhaps be echoed for the Castor *Praetorium* and one is tempted to think that the two sites, only 35 km apart, may have had a common link.

The archives for the excavations undertaken in 1970–73 and 1980 are lodged in Peterborough Museum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Numerous people have given valuable help and advice during the preparation of this article. Particular thanks must be extended to Dr John Peter Wild and Geoffrey Dannell who have provided extensive comments regarding their excavations in the 1970s and have always been very willing to discuss various aspects of the site's complexity.

I am also grateful to Adrian Challands, Dr Jackie Hall, Dr Ralph Jackson, Professor David Peacock and Felicity Wild for their specialist contributions. Dr Ben Robinson has helped locate pottery and other finds in Peterborough Museum and offered useful comment and details regarding the *Praetorium* and without this help and support this report would have been impossible to write. Dr Rebecca Casa-Hatton also allowed generous access to the SMR at Peterborough Museum. Dr Jackie Hall (Cathedral Archaeologist) provided willing access to the Roman stonework in Peterborough Cathedral and Sarah Botfield helped with work on the Irvine papers held by the Cathedral Library. Professor Miranda Aldhouse-Green, Dr Tony Rook and Dr Louise Revell commented on aspects of small finds and the bath-houses; Jill Johnston and John Hadman both willingly discussed the wall-plaster from Fineshade and Barnwell respectively, whilst Richard Hillier generously helped with early references to the Castor site held by Peterborough City Library. The University of Brunei allowed the use of their surveying equipment during various surveys of

³⁷⁹ Salway 1970, 16.

³⁸⁰ Crawford 1976, 53.

³⁸¹ Potter 1996, 688–92.

³⁸² Thomas 1993, 113–21; Painter 1976; 1977; 1999.

³⁸³ See, for example, the situation at Lincoln (Jones 1986, 24–5), Bradwell (Cherry 1976, 164; Johnson 1979, 43–5), Burgh Castle (Cramp 1976, 212–17), Reculver (Cherry 1976; Johnson 1979, 45–8), and Richborough (Brown 1971; Thomas 1993, 178).

³⁸⁴ Potter 1996, 681.

the site and Dr Mike Maroney helped with data processing. Considerable thanks are owing to the Reverend Canon William Burke for his support and enthusiasm over archaeological work within the churchyard area; to Mr and Mrs Frank Sismey for access to the garden at 'Elmlea House'; Jonathan and Jackie Cook for access to their garden at The Old Rectory and to the Governors, Head, staff and children at Castor C of E Primary School. Various members of Time Team's archaeological and production staff, including Jim Mower, Michael Douglas, James Millar and Jane Hammond, have been supportive in helping with work on the site and members of Wessex Archaeology, especially Lorraine Mephram and Steve Thompson, have been helpful in supplying details and the results of the findings. I am also grateful to John Gator and Emma Wood of GSB prospecting for their discussions of the geophysical work undertaken during the Time Team surveys. Excavation at the site was generously funded by the Carnegie Trust (UK) and the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments. The Nene Valley Archaeological Trust have developed a policy to publish the results of all significant excavations within the Lower Nene Valley and have been instrumental in providing the impetus and funding to make the writing of this article possible and all thanks are owing to them for their support. Sylvia Upex corrected various drafts of this paper; in addition I am also grateful to the two anonymous reviewers who have improved the article considerably — all remaining errors are of my own creation.

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