

## THE ROMAN VILLA AT LUFTON, NEAR YEOVIL

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## SUMMARY

*During the years 1960 to 1963, the southern half of this Roman building (ST 516179 and fig. 1), only trenched in the earlier excavation<sup>1</sup> between 1946 and 1952, was more fully examined: the wing room and the adjoining corridor were completely uncovered, together with a large area of the two rooms at the southern end. Unfortunately, only a small part of the central rooms could be investigated. The results confirm the plan already worked out, and provide evidence for a piped water supply to the villa and for sub-Roman occupation of the site in the late fourth century. Fuller details of two tessellated floors and painted wall plaster were also obtained. The finds, including a small portion of one tessellated floor, together with all the records have been deposited in Yeovil Museum.*

*At least nine patterned mosaics can now be credited to the villa at Lufton. Six survived in a more or less fragmentary state, and these are not earlier than the fourth century. Although still probably attributable to the 'Durnovarian school' it seems possible that some if not all may have been produced by a workshop nearer to hand than Dorchester. Ilchester-Lindinis seems the obvious location for such a workshop, and this suggestion is supported by close parallels between a mosaic discovered there and the mosaic of Room 4 at Lufton.*

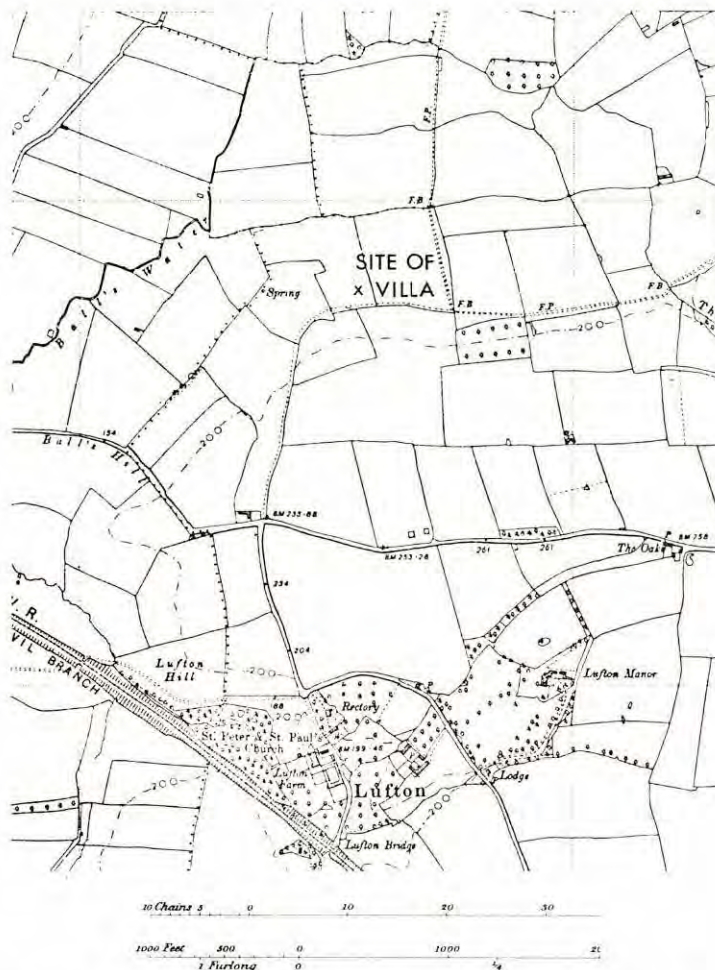


Fig. 1: O.S. map (6" to one mile) showing site of Lufton Roman Villa.  
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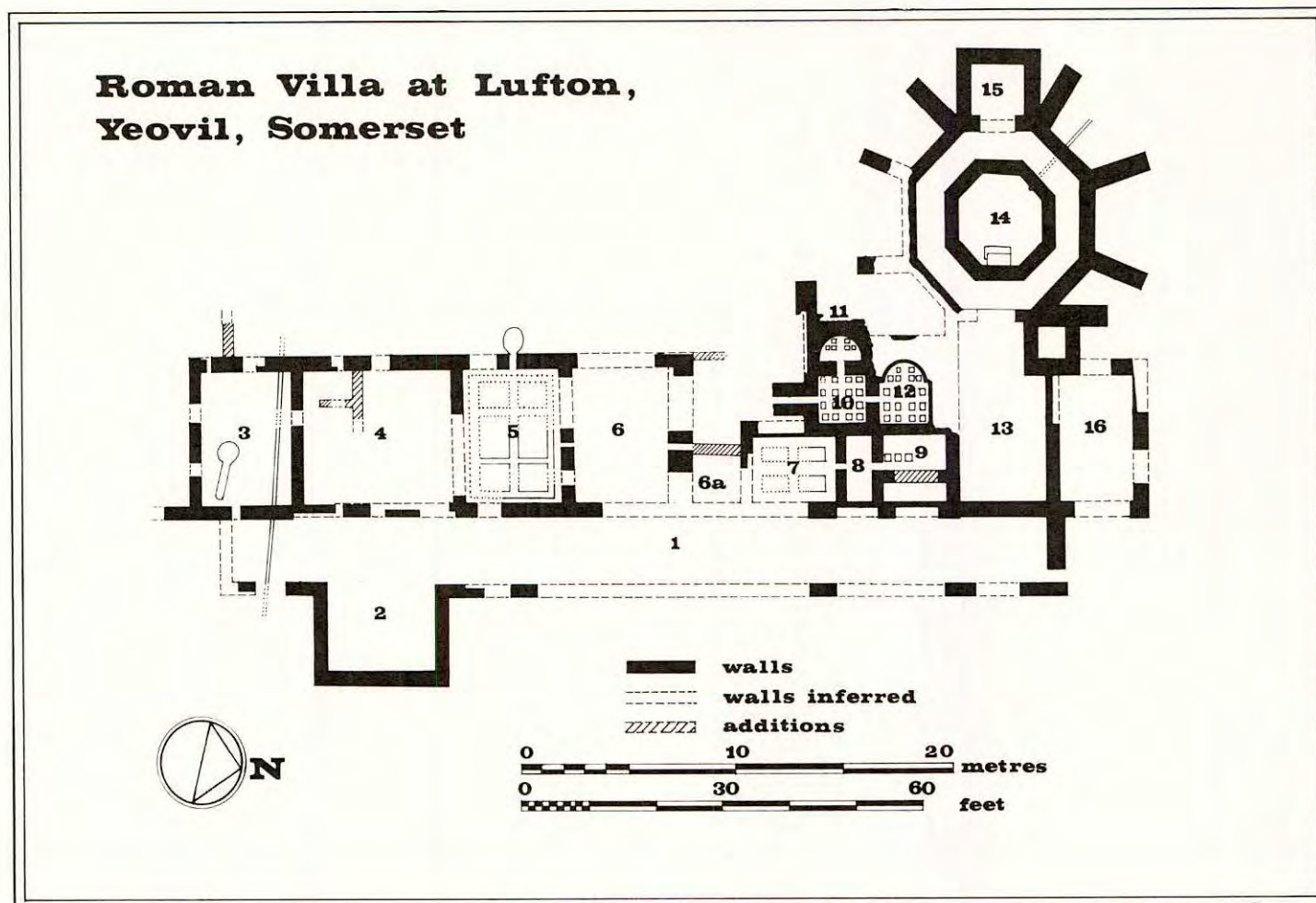


Fig. 2: Overall plan.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgements are gladly offered to Mr. S. Grant, owner of the land, for permission to undertake the work; Messrs. Unigate Ltd. (and their manager, Mr. W. Day) who subsequently purchased the land and allowed the work to go on; the members of Yeovil School Archaeological Society whose devoted labours sustained the project throughout; Miss D. M. Rogers and girls of Yeovil High School; Mr. P. J. Fry; Mr. L. Tavender for photographs and section drawings; Mr. A. Harvey, A.R.I.B.A. for the plans; Mr. D. J. Pearce for drawing the small finds; the members of Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society and especially Miss I. M. Rendell; Mrs. M. Guido, F.S.A. for commenting on the glass bead; Dr. David Smith, F.S.A. for the contribution on the mosaic pavements; Dr. R. F. Tylecote for the note on the smith's hearth; Mr. H. F. Adams, M.Sc., F.R.I.C., of the National Coal Board Laboratory, Cardiff, Mr. E. Bradburn, A.M.C.T., F.R.I.C., of the National Coal Board Laboratory, Doncaster, for reporting on the coal; Dr. A. S. Robertson, F.S.A. for identifying the coins; Miss Joan Liversidge, F.S.A. for her comments on the wall plaster; Dr. W. H. Manning, F.S.A. for examining the iron drill-bit; Miss Hasnip for help with the bones; Mrs. V. G. Swan for help with the New Forest pottery; and to my wife for invaluable help at all stages of the work.

## THE EXCAVATION

The wing room, the southern end of the corridor, room 3 and much of room 4 (fig. 2) were all excavated on a grid plan; because of agricultural development and the wet summer of 1963, there was only time for a 4 ft. trench across rooms 5, 6 and 6a, with an extension to the west in room 5 to locate the furnace. Further work is, therefore, needed in these rooms and in room 7, and in the corridor adjoining them.

## THE CORRIDOR

The southern part of the corridor (fig. 3, 1) had a tessellated pavement which survived only in patches except at one point opposite the southern end of room 4. A full description of this pavement, together with all the other mosaics, is included in Dr. D. J. Smith's contribution on pp. 71-76. In one or two places, Ham stone had been inserted to repair the floor. The *tesserae*, 1 in. square, were of grey lias and red brick, set in a thin mortar bedding, laid on coarse sandy mortar incorporating fine gravel and lias chips (fig. 4e, 22). This in turn lay on disturbed clay with a little builders' debris. Towards the north, opposite room 5, the underbedding overlay a layer of deposited clay (fig. 4c, 24 and 25), beneath which the old field surface (fig. 4e, 26) was found with a small worked flint resting on it (fig. 5, 6). This clay make-up was necessitated by the slope of the ground, which falls away to the north-east at this point. The same feature will be noticed in room 2 (fig. 4a, 3).

The corridor floor here was completely stripped down to natural clay, revealing between the coarse mortar bedding and the clay a bronze *folles* of Licinius minted in London A.D. 308-323. Though not sealed by *tesserae in situ*, the coin was probably dropped at the time when the original floor was laid, and would confirm the early 4th century dating for the building already suggested by other evidence.

The corridor was bounded on its E. side by a limestone wall of slighter dimensions than those of the main walls (fig. 4e, 28); it survived only as a relatively shallow foundation trench, except at one point near its S. end where one straight course remained above the level of the tessellated floor. Here an entrance 4 ft. 6 in. wide had existed, shown by a worn Ham stone door sill *in situ* and by the absence of any foundation trench beneath (plate III d). In the corridor opposite room 5, the debris near the outer wall included several carefully-dressed lias slabs, weathered but not worn, with mortar adhering to the under side: they may have formed the capping to a low wall on which stone columns rested to support a pent roof<sup>2</sup>. A sandy mortar build-up noticed at several points against the line of the outer face of this corridor wall may represent a disintegrated plaster or stucco finish (fig. 4e, 33). The clearly defined "slate fall" at these points shows that the corridor had a lias stone roof (fig. 4e, 29).

As the doorway just described provided a way into the corridor from the outside opposite room 3, it was expected that the S. wall of the range would be continued on the same line to close the corridor at this end. This, however, was not so: instead, at this corner of the building the E. wall continued to the end of the trench, with portions of worn lias paving to the east (fig. 3). Two trial trenches produced more fragments of weathered lias paving lying on the natural clay, but no wall closing the corridor. Circumstances did not permit further excavation, and it is possible that the corridor terminated slightly further to the north as shown by conjectural lines on the plan (fig. 3).

The southern part of the corridor produced evidence of sub-Roman occupation: heavily burnt patches and rough cooking hearths were associated with animal bones and sherds of cooking vessels in a layer of black soil, above which occurred the debris from the demolition of the



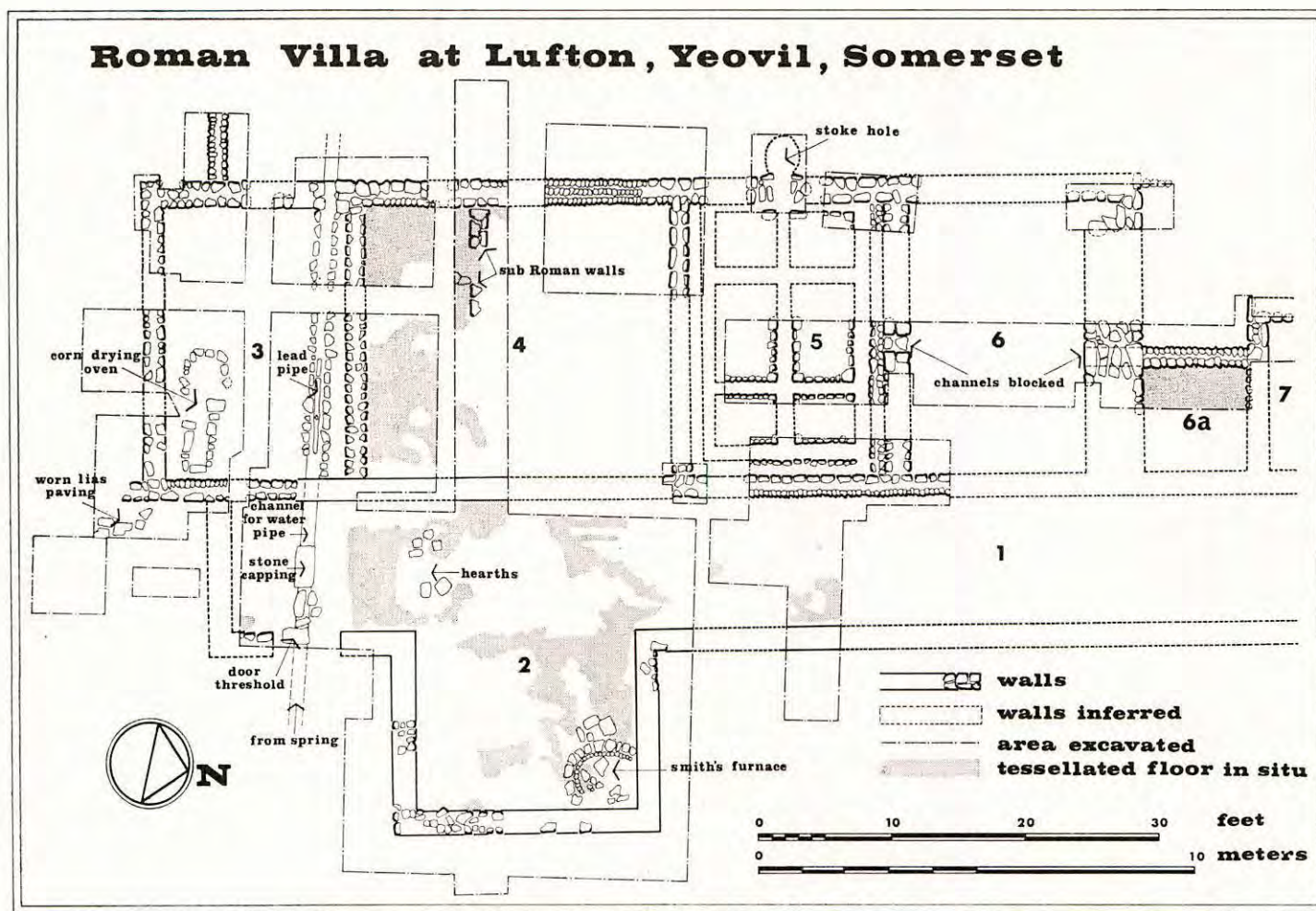


Fig. 3: Detailed plan of Southern half of villa.



building. One hearth was built over a patch of splintered lias roof tiles beneath which lay undisturbed but much worn *tesserae in situ*: this would suggest occupation while the building was ruinous, possibly during actual demolition.

#### Room 2.

This wing room was shown in the earlier excavation<sup>3</sup> to have been a later addition. This was fully confirmed when, after drawing and photographing, the much damaged tessellated floor was removed and the natural clay subsoil revealed over the whole area of the room. The pitched foundations of the outer corridor wall (taken down for the building of the wing) were found beneath the mortar bedding of the floor and a clay make-up topped by coarse sand and small stones. Little remained even of the footings of the walls; at one or two points in the wall trench, rough limestone blocks were laid in herringbone style directly on the natural clay. From the presence of many fallen lias roof-tiles on the outer N. and S. sides of this wing (fig. 4a, 7), its roof axis must have been east-west (i.e. at right angles to the main block). Red *imbrex* fragments, mortared underneath, and occurring on the floor chiefly along this axis, may indicate a roof capping along the ridge. As the Roman field surface lay below the corridor floor level, a clay make-up (fig. 4a, 3) was deposited before the underbedding of the wing floor was laid. This underbedding, rarely more than 2 in. thick (fig. 4a, 2) was of coarse mortar mixed with crushed brick and lias; where the smaller *tesserae* were set, a finer white mortar was used.

The tessellated floor in this room is described by Dr. Smith (p. 73). With the co-operation of Imperial Chemical Industries Limited (Plastics Division), the Distillers Company Limited (Chemical Division) and L. A. Sim and Company Limited, who all kindly supplied the chemicals free of charge, two portions of this tessellated floor (the wine cup *motif* and a length of the cable pattern) were successfully taken up for display in Yeovil Museum.

The occupational material lying on this floor (fig. 4a, 1) explained its heavily damaged state. In the N.E. corner of the room, eleven limestone blocks about 10 in. square, with an inner row of smaller stones, lay in a half-circle 8 ft. in diameter, roughly mortared to the tessellated floor (plate IVa). Within this half-circle, several large fragments of fire-reddened Ham stone lay directly on the damaged floor, together with many lumps of slag. Dr. R. F. Tylecote of the Department of Metallurgy, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, writes: "It could well be the remains of a smith's hearth; the semi-circular wall would not be part of the hearth, but merely an enclosure or screen, and the hearth, which would be exceedingly primitive, would have been made amongst the fire-reddened stones."

Close by were found traces of a coal heap, and there the *tesserae* had almost completely gone. Specimens of coal were submitted to the National Coal Board Laboratory at Cardiff, and Mr. H. F. Adams writes:

"the evidence suggests that the Lufton coal may have come either from upper seams in the Bristol and Somerset Coalfield, or from seams in the Forest of Dean Coalfield, or (less probably) from one of the highest seams in the Monmouthshire part of the South Wales Coalfield; it is impossible to be more specific than this from an examination of the samples. In view of the proximity of the Radstock Basin to Yeovil, the most likely source appears to be upper seams of this basin. Here there are outcrops of upper seams at no great distance from the Fosse Way."

Similar evidence for the use of coal and for iron-working has recently been found at Ilchester Mead Roman Villa<sup>4</sup>.

#### Room 3.

This room, measuring 19 ft. by 14 ft., was also fully excavated, revealing below the debris a thick layer of dark occupation soil (fig. 4d, 17) with much pottery and two roughly made hearths (one with a brick *tegula* as its base). It originally had a plain tessellated floor in large grey *tesserae*, some of which lay on a coarse sandy underbedding with a large admixture of brick and lias chippings (fig. 4d, 19); beneath this were roughly pitched stones in the clay subsoil. On the S. side of this room, an oven (wrongly called part of a channelled hypocaust in the 1952 report) had been inserted (fig. 3): the furnace, 2 ft. wide and narrowing to 9 in. at its mouth, was lined with blocks of Ham stone, repaired with clay at one point, and fire-reddened on the insides. It was 5 ft. long and 1 ft. 3 in. deep; a 4 in. layer of ash covered a base of burnt Ham stone. One bridging stone survived *in situ*, and broken fragments of others lay in the furnace. At its W. end a semi-circular ash pit, 3 ft. 5 in. in diameter, was defined by a row of stones, and also filled with black ash. Loosely packed debris lay in the remains of the furnace, covered by broken roof tiles at floor level: it would appear to have been demolished before the final collapse of the roof. As no trace of parched grain was found, it probably served as a cooking oven<sup>5</sup>.



A disturbance in the bedding of the floor on its N. side revealed a very interesting feature—a channel for a lead water-pipe (fig. 4d, 21). It lay in line with a perennial spring rising 50 yards away in the adjoining field to the east. Investigation of the deep ditch at the edge of this field showed fragments of a Ham stone channel which may have carried water to a point immediately beneath the entrance into the corridor at its S. end. Here the stone-lined channel was found, 7 in. wide and 4 in. deep, with a base of clay and brick chippings: it ran underneath the Ham stone door sill, crossed the corridor where it was capped by lias slabs (visible in plate IIIId) and then crossed room 3 almost parallel with its N. wall. A gap in the foundations of the W. wall, faced by carefully-dressed stone, showed where the water-pipe emerged; it must have been linked with the octagonal plunge bath, but this was not proved by excavation. A concrete duct for such a lead pipe was found beneath the pavement on the south side of this bath<sup>6</sup>, which would clearly have needed a large supply of fresh water.

It was remarkably lucky that 6 ft. of lead piping (plate IVb) survived the demolition of this house. Sheet lead 0.2 in. thick had been curled over into a cylindrical form 1.75 in. in diameter, its edge being hammered over. A join had been made 2 ft. 7 in. from its E. end. A sherd of a 4th century cooking pot was found in the clay packing around the pipe. Where the pipe had been left undisturbed, it was clear that the distinctive bedding of the pavement in room 3 covered the lias capping of the channel (fig. 4d, 19 and 21); in the corridor, the two surviving lias slabs were below the level of the tessellation and the door sill (plate IIIId). It seems likely that this feature belongs to the first building phase.

No painted wall plaster occurred in this room. A shallow oval pit, its base lined with brick chips, had been inserted into the floor in the S.W. corner. Its fill consisted largely of potsherds, including many from two 4th century cooking pots: it may well have been a rubbish pit. Three times as many sherds (chiefly of cooking vessels and storage jars) were recovered from this room compared with the other living rooms. As it also had a piped water supply, it was probably the kitchen.

On the W. side of room 3, a wall of two straight courses of roughly-dressed mortared limestone extended for 5 ft. and continued beyond the limit of the excavation. It was not bonded into the main W. wall of the house, and no floor could be seen on either side. It could represent a lean-to shed. The S. wall at floor level was only 1 ft. 8 in. wide, and in view of the walling at its S.E. corner, it might appear that another room existed to the south. But the well-defined S.W. corner, and the presence of the weathered dark brown granular limestone mixed with small gravel used on the yard surface elsewhere, would indicate the outside of the building. Further excavation is needed to resolve this problem.

#### ROOM 4.

This room, measuring 23 ft. by 19 ft., was fully excavated except in its N.E. quarter. It had a tessellated floor which was tolerably well preserved in its S. half. Its preservation was largely due to the removal of the wall dividing rooms 3 and 4 (fig. 4d, 20) and to the laying down of a 3 in. layer of white mortar over the southern half of this room (fig. 4d, 18); the new floor was thus at the same level as that of room 3. A coin of Constantine the Great, issued in A.D. 330 to commemorate the refounding of Byzantium, lay on the original tessellated floor sealed by the mortar of the secondary floor.

In the N.W. quarter of this room, only a few loose *tesserae* were found, but the bedding of the original floor survived as a layer of coarse mortar (fig. 4b and c, 10) above large stones packed with clay (fig. 4b and c, 11). The secondary floor here was of yellowish-brown sandy mortar, on which lay a little 4th century pottery and the normal building debris (fig. 4b and c, 9). The line between the two secondary floors of this room is indicated by the remains of a partition wall, only 1 ft. 6 in. wide, with three courses where it abutted on to the W. wall of room 4 (fig. 3). Its lowest course, mortared and directly laid on *tesserae in situ*, could be traced for 8 ft. with a return to the S. which linked up with a rough stone platform built on the secondary floor. Its purpose is unknown. Further east, traces of hearths were noted in association with 4th century pottery (including New Forest beakers).

From its size and the quality of its mosaic floor, room 4 was the principal room of the villa, and if room 3 was the kitchen, this was probably the dining room.

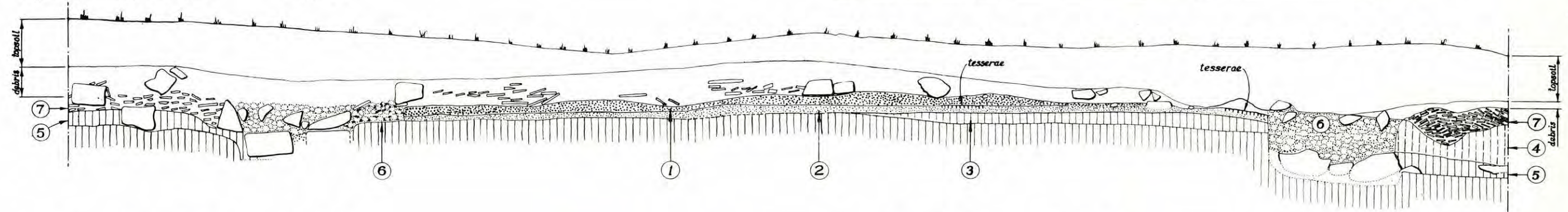
#### ROOM 5.

Rooms 5 and 6 were planned as heated rooms, their hypocausts linked by a channel mid-way along the partition wall. This channel, 1 ft. wide and lined with carefully dressed Ham stone,

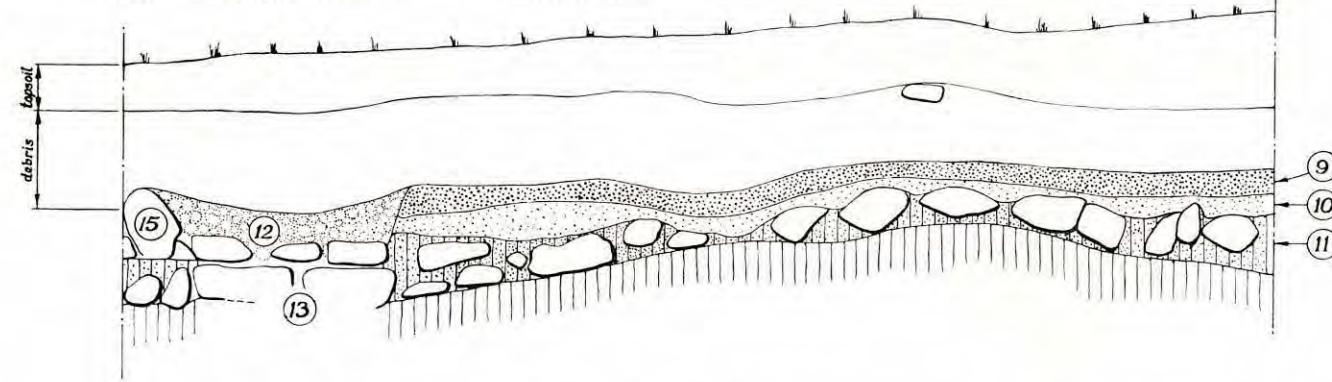


# Roman Villa at Lufton, Som.

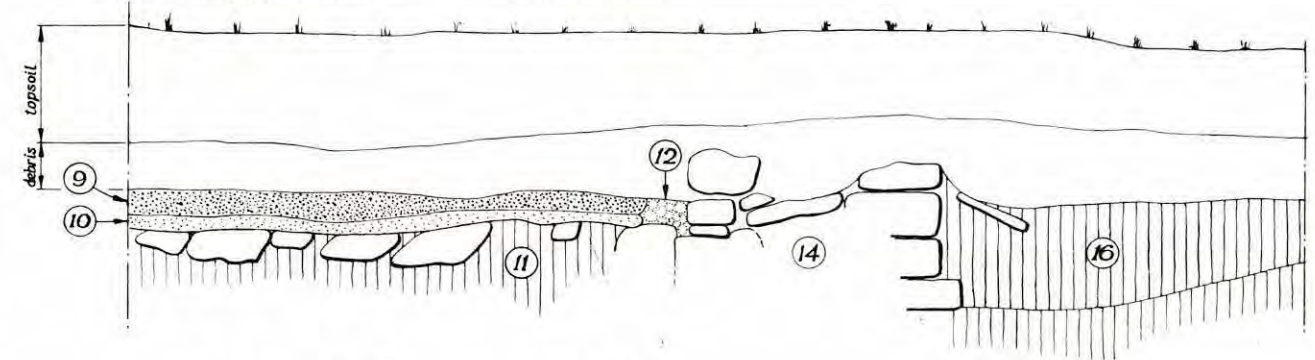
Fig. 4 (a) Section A-A' Room 2



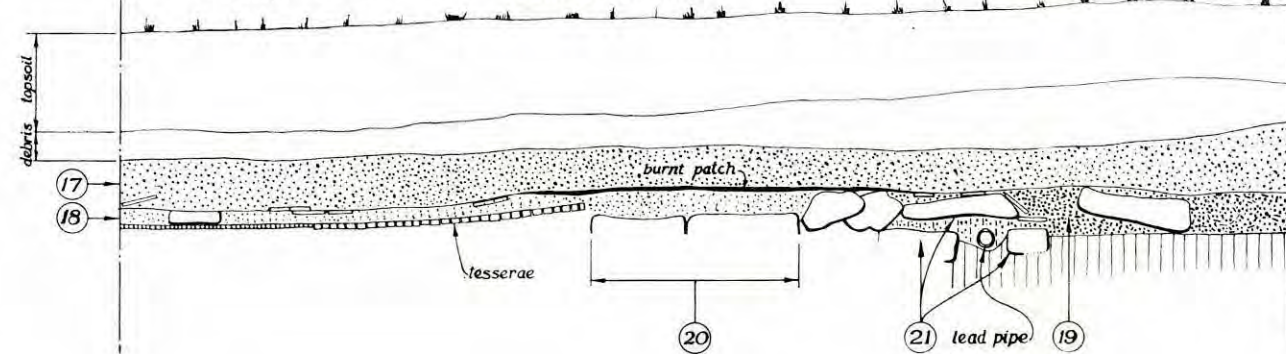
(b) Section B-B' Room 4



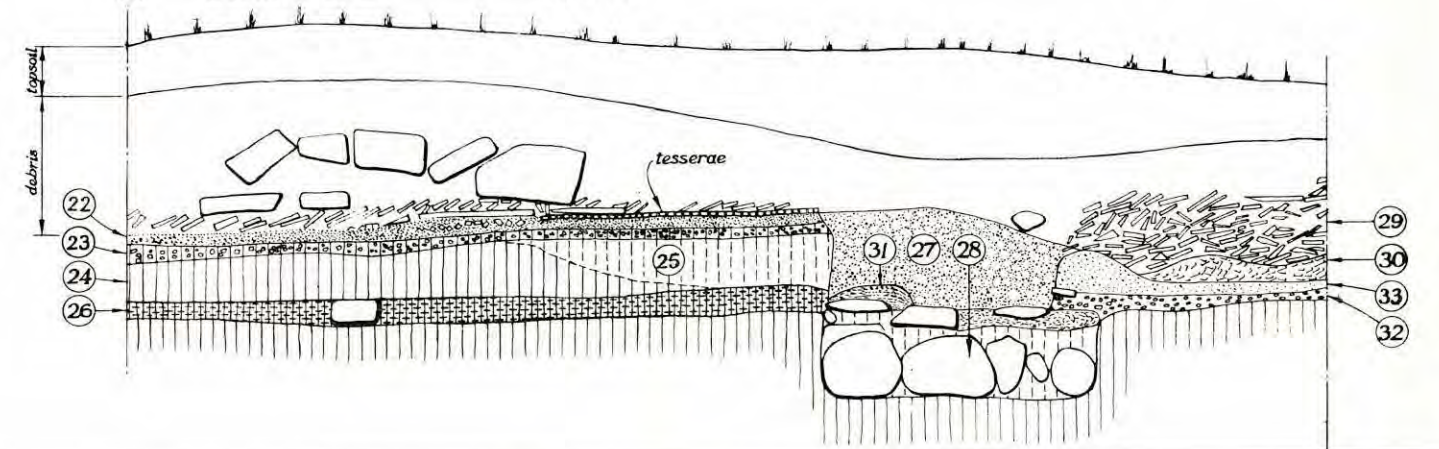
(c) Section C-C' Room 4



(d) Section D-D' Rooms 3 and 4



(e) Section E-E' Corridor





bore no signs of use, and had been deliberately blocked with clay and stone. Built against its southern face and completely covering the mouth of the channel were roughly dressed stones in three straight courses topped by a herringbone one, forming one side of the actual hypocaust channelling, and serving to support the stone bridging which would have spanned the channels. The floor had been completely wrecked: over 300 *tesserae* of two sizes and four colours prove that it was tessellated. The channelling (fig. 3 and fig. 4b, 15) was faced with mortared limestone in herringbone courses finished with coarse cement bearing soot marks; it varied in width from 9 in. to 1 ft. 4 in., and had a cement base. The filling contained *tesserae* and wall plaster as well as occupational rubbish. A trench which was opened on the W. side revealed the furnace, faced with heavily burnt Ham stone and provided with an ash pit; black sooty material covered the bottom, and lias slabs, 1 ft. 5 in. thick, lay in it. The stoking area was filled with rubble, mortar, bonding brick and lias roof tiles from the demolition of the house.

#### ROOM 6.

This room was remarkable for its unusually wide N. wall, 4 ft. thick and made of dressed limestone with a rubble core. Through it, and directly in line with that in the opposite wall, was a second channel, bridged on each side by large blocks of Ham stone which were fractured by the weight of the masonry above. In the area examined (about one third of the room) the clay subsoil had been dug out for a hypocaust which was never built. The space was filled up with clean clay and builders' rubbish, and a floor inserted: its composition is uncertain, only a few *tesserae* and some fragments of *opus signinum* surviving. When the adjoining hypocaust was wrecked, a search was apparently made by the stone-robbers for what they presumed was another hypocaust, possibly in search of treasure. The resultant disturbance showed heavily burnt patches overlying a thin black layer which might indicate a short period of abandonment before the final destruction.

#### ROOM 6A.

To the N. of room 6, the W. wall of a small room was uncovered, in line with the channel and blocking its mouth. This wall was constructed of roughly-dressed mortared limestone; three herringbone courses and one straight course remained, with a 6 in. off-set on the E. face. It was not bonded into the masonry of room 6, and at the junction it rested on a clay make-up mixed with brick chippings. The room had a plain tessellated floor of large grey *tesserae* set in coarse mortar which overlay stones packed with clay. The floor had sunk slightly in the centre. Such a small room (7 ft. 8 in. square), placed at the end of the main living rooms, could have housed a wooden staircase, though it is smaller than that recorded at Grately Roman Villa, near Andover<sup>7</sup>. It is unfortunate that its E. side could not be examined to verify the presence of a door into the corridor; there was certainly no doorway in the W. wall. The area outside that wall showed the remains of a rough floor of Ham stone on which had accumulated rakings from the adjacent furnace for the bath block, as well as a rubbish dump containing bones, shells and much broken pottery. A bronze coin of Constantius II or Constans as Caesar lay in the burnt material.

#### THE WALL PLASTER.

Many fragments of painted wall plaster were found, chiefly in the debris layers, but nowhere in groups large enough to attempt a reconstruction of the designs. Close examination of this material showed that a layer of plaster with an admixture of brick and lias was applied to the walls, and finished with a thin layer of fine white plaster. This layer was sometimes smoothed down with a tool which left slight corrugations 1 mm. wide. A very few pieces showed the application of a new layer of plaster 0.5 in. thick. The design was often marked out by scoring lines on the plaster while it was still wet.

Very little painted plaster was found in rooms 2, 3 and 4, in all of which there was evidence of sub-Roman occupation. Possibly the plaster was deliberately removed, for a large heap, much weathered, lay on the yard surface covered by many broken lias roof tiles (fig. 4e, 30). Cream, red, green, ochre, blue and buff colours were noted, but disintegration made the recognition of patterns difficult; green and red stripes occurred on a cream background. Room 5 produced over 600 pieces, and room 6 over 350, although less than half of its area was excavated. These fragments showed panels outlined by stripes of red, green or buff on red or cream backgrounds; a few had red blobs on cream. No floral or other *motifs* were found.

Miss Joan Liversidge, F.S.A., has examined the plaster from the bath block, and I am greatly in her debt for comments on this material<sup>8</sup>. In room 3 (the cold room) red and cream predominate.



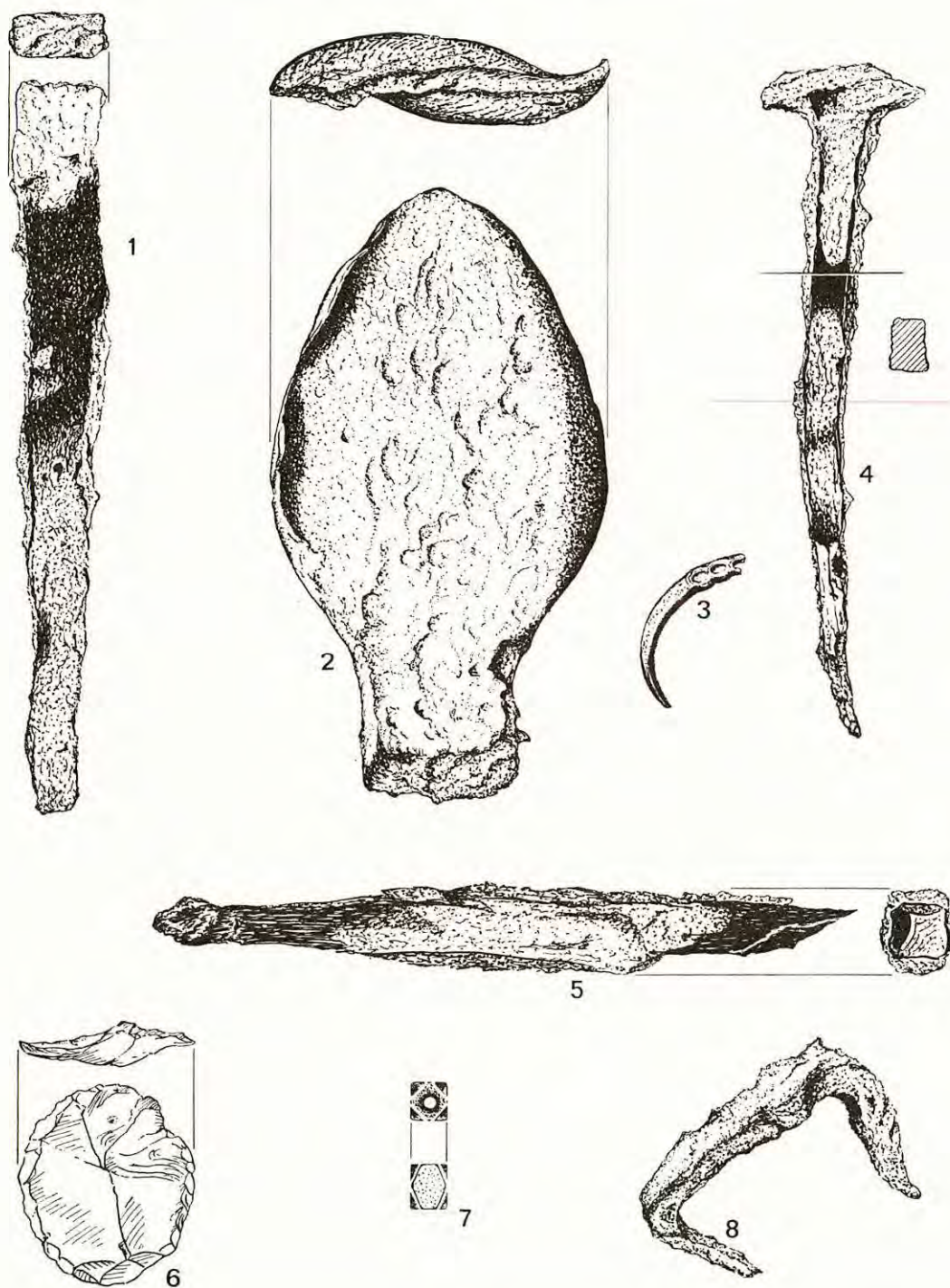


Fig. 5: Small finds (full size).



ated, with lines in red and buff forming panels; *tesserae* also seem to be represented in a plain border of white or yellow marked off with short thick black lines, forming 1 in. squares. In the adjoining octagonal bath, red and green were the commonest colours, as well as buff, yellow and blue. Corner fragments correspond with the angles formed by the shape of the plunge bath; others, with diagonal red or orange stripes on cream, came from door or window jambs. Similar fragments came from the heated rooms, and in room 16, red and black splashes on buff were noticed. Room 7 was unique in producing purple and black coloured plaster.

#### SMALL FINDS (Fig. 5).

*Iron.* The commonest iron objects were nails (nearly 200), with square shanks and round heads, varying in length from 1.5 in. to 3.5 in.; the bigger ones were used to secure the roof tiles, a few remaining in the nail holes. Hob nails and double pronged "boot protectors" or segs were also found. Five iron objects are illustrated in fig. 5:

1. Chisel, slightly tapering.
2. Boring tool, found in the debris of room 9. Dr. W. H. Manning, who examined it, concludes that it is "the blade of an auger or reamer turned by a wooden cross-handle. Complete spoon augers<sup>9</sup> are 12-14 in. long and have a lanceolate head; upon the whole, the size of the blade suggests that it would need some force to turn it and I feel that this argues against too long a shank. I can see no reason why it should not be Roman."
4. Tie or holdfast, probably for fixing box-tiles, found on pavement in corridor.
5. Bit with oblong shank.
6. Staple, one point broken off, found on pavement in corridor.

*Bronze.* The five bronze objects included the fragment of a bracelet, and binding for a strap or box. Only one is illustrated (fig. 5, 3):

3. Part of a finger ring with three settings for jewels, found in the debris of room 6.

*Glass* was also of little interest. A very few pieces of window glass were recovered, as well as fragments from 9 vessels, one handled. A glass bead is illustrated (fig. 5, 7).

7. Facetted blue glass bead of unusual type<sup>10</sup>, found in the debris of room 5.

*Stone* objects include a shale spindle-whorl, part of a whetstone and three worked flints, one shown in fig. 5, 6:

6. Flint scraper, found sealed by a clay make-up on the old field surface under the corridor opposite room 5.

Bones and bone fragments were found in all rooms, with by far the largest number (106) in room 4, which was probably the kitchen. Ox bones predominated, but sheep and pig also occurred. The shells of oysters, edible cockles and mussels were recognised.

#### THE POTTERY.

The relatively short period of occupation and the lack of stratified deposits make it possible to consider the whole of the pottery as typical of the 4th century up to A.D. 367. No samian occurred in the excavations here described, and only two scraps in the previous one. In all, 1,480 sherds were found, 400 of which were examined macroscopically to produce a series of type fabrics, among which the hard black wares, so common on all local Romano-British sites, make up 61% of the total. A description of each type fabric (T.F.) follows, with further details of the more interesting vessels.

##### *Black wares*

I. Hard dark grey or black ware, exterior surface wholly or partly burnished, interior sometimes scoriated; cooking pots with everted rims and bands of wide lattice decoration (diameter 4 in. to 10 in.), flanged bowls with looped decoration (occasionally also found on the base) and burnished interior and exterior surfaces (diameter 7 in. to 12 in., height 2.5 in. to 5 in.), shallow dishes usually burnished inside and out with plain rims (diameter 6 in. to 11 in., height 1.3 in. to 2.5 in.). 61%.

Fig. 7, 9 unique rim of bowl;

Fig. 7, 10, 13 and 14 have incised marks (possibly batch marks).

II. Very hard fine dark grey ware, highly burnished inside and out; flanged bowl and shallow dish. Very rare—0.25%.

III. Hard grey/brown coarse fabric, black smoothed exterior; jar with ribbed interior, flanged bowl, shallow dish, flagon. 3.25%.

Fig. 6, 6 neck of flagon;

Fig. 6, 3 fragment of colander.



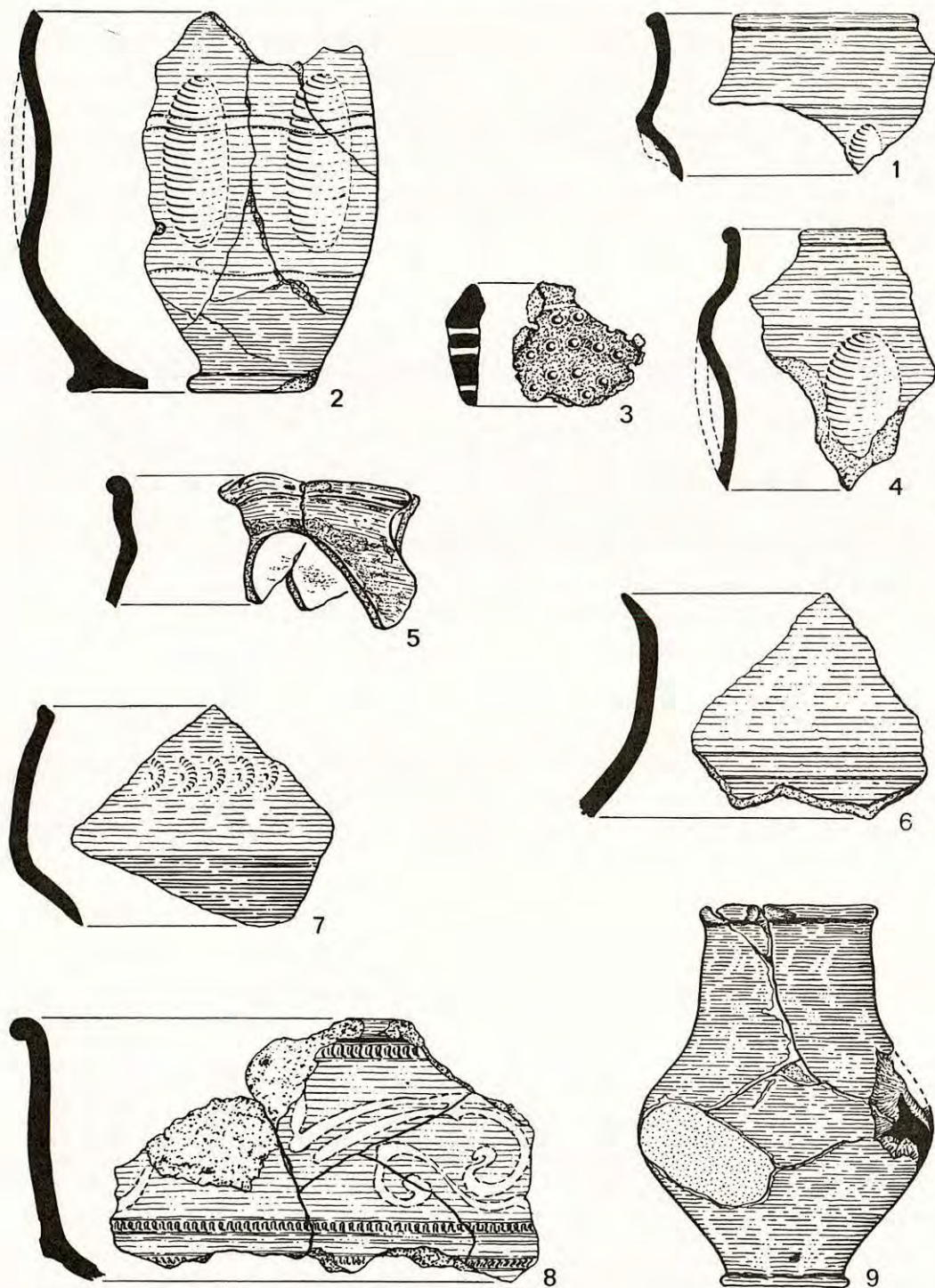


Fig. 6: Pottery (one-half).



*Grey wares*

IV. Medium hard sandy grey fabric, smoothed surface with no girth grooves or other decoration, flat bases and ribbed interior; cooking pots with everted rims, jars, handled jug and flagon. 8.25%.

Fig. 6, 9 restored small jar with incised upright cross on side, found in occupation soil of room 3.

Fig. 7, 5 diameter 4.5 in.

V. Hard thin light-grey/buff fabric, black slip or 'purple gloss' with girth grooves; small jars and indented beakers, all from New Forest kilns. 7.25%.

Fig. 6, 1, 2 and 4 (no. 2 has five indentations).

VI. Medium hard light-grey/buff fabric, thicker and softer than V, brown or black slip usually much worn; small jars and one indented beaker. Probably New Forest. 5%.

Fig. 7, 3 small jar with brown slip.

Fig. 7, 4 indented beaker, black slip.

VII. Hard slate-grey fabric, wholly or partly burnished; one body sherd had a band of oblique burnished lines; cooking pots with everted rims. Not New Forest. 1.5%.

Fig. 7, 2 shallow bowl, diameter 6 in.

VIII. Medium hard sandy grey/brick-red fabric, buff slip, thin; small jars with slightly ribbed interior. Not New Forest. 1.75%.

*Reddish wares*

IX. Fine hard grey fabric, red glossy surface; flanged bowl (imitating Form 38); cf. Allen's Pit Kiln, Oxfordshire (unpublished, Ashmolean Museum); rare — 0.5%.

X. Medium hard light-red/grey fabric, red slip with rouletting or white painted decoration; carinated bowls imitating Form 29, small jars and mortaria with pink grits, cf. Potter's Dump, Dorchester, Oxfordshire; (unpublished, Ashmolean Museum). 4%.

The bands of notched rouletting found on seven sherds of this ware (all carinated bowls) are similar to those on a bowl from the Westland Roman site, Yeovil<sup>10</sup>. The bowl illustrated in fig. 6, 8 has more stylish rouletting and white painted decoration, features found in vessels from a late Roman context in Bath<sup>11</sup>.

XI. Softer brick-red fabric, red slip frequently much worn, quite distinct from T.F. X; stamped crescent-shaped decoration; flanged bowl imitating Form 38, and mortaria with pink grits. 4.25%.

Mrs. V. Swann suggests that T.F. X and XI were not in fact made in the New Forest but in the Oxford kilns; the red wares here, however, tend to be harder, except at Rose Hill, Kiln III and Churchill Hospital (Ashmolean Museum).

Fig. 6, 7 carinated bowl.

Fig. 7, 1 base of jar with twin girth grooves, diameter 2.5 in.

XII. Fine medium hard cream/buff fabric, orange/biscuit slip; small jars, handled jug and a mortarium with coarse grits. 1%.

Fig. 6, 5 has a lip. Diameter 2.5 in.

Fig. 7, 6 jar, diameter 3 in.

XIII. Soft cream fabric, biscuit slip; flanged bowl imitating Form 38. 1%.

*Thick coarse wares*

XIV. Very hard dark grey gritty fabric, black slip; heavy storage jar 0.8 in. thick, with indented oblique strokes on rim. 0.5%.

Fig. 7, 8 diameter 1 ft. 3 in. possibly New Forest, Old Sloden XIV, 6.

XV. Very hard dark grey/buff fabric, slightly gritty, smoothed exterior; storage jars with stab marks.

Fig. 7, 12 diameter 1 ft. 7 in. found in the earlier excavation but not in the later<sup>12</sup>.

XVI. Hard grey/brick-red fabric with larger grits; heavy storage jar with oblique strokes on rim. 0.5%.

Fig. 6, 7 diameter 1 ft. 7 in.

XVII. Hard sandy brick-red fabric, smoother finish; large jar with everted rim.

Fig. 7, 11 diameter 10.8 in., found in earlier excavation but not represented here.

## THE COINS.

Eight coins were found and have been identified by Dr. A. S. Robertson, F.S.A., of the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow University.

- Room 2 in disturbed clay at inner north-east corner near edge of robber trench: very corroded bronze coin, probably Constantinian.
- Room 2 in clay make-up below pavement much disturbed by smith's furnace: corroded bronze coin, probably Constantinian.
- Room 4 on pavement sealed by secondary floor: bronze coin of Constantine commemorating refounding of Byzantium  
CONSTANTINOPOLIS  
Victory on prow of ship.  
L.R.B.C. I, 1009 330-335 A.D.
- Room 5 in debris layer: bronze coin, not much worn.  
CONSTANTINIUS IVN NOB C  
GLORIA EXERCITVS, 2 soldiers and 2 standards  
L.R.B.C. I, 49 Mint TRS 330-335 A.D.
- Room 6 in debris layer: bronze coin, not much worn.  
DN CONSTANTIVS PF AVG  
FEL TEMP REPARATIO  
L.R.B.C. II, 253 Mint CPLG 353-260 A.D.



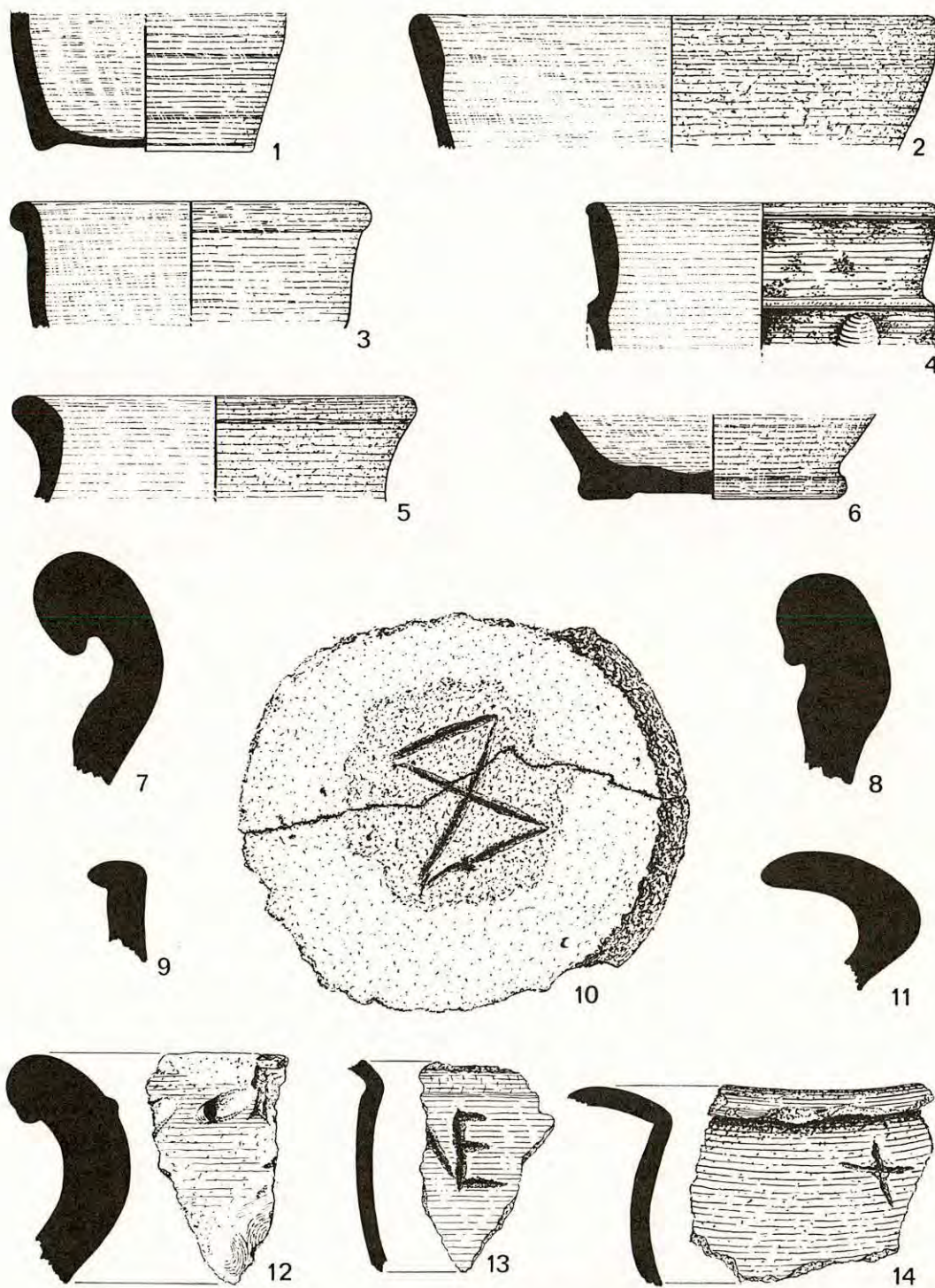


Fig. 7: Pottery (one-half).



6. Outside room 6A in *rakings from furnace*: bronze coin, not much worn.  
 FL IVL CONST NOB C  
 GLORIA EXERCITVS, 2 soldiers and 1 standard.  
 L.R.B.C. I, 50 Mint TRP? 330-334 A.D.
7. Corridor on *disturbed clay beneath bedding for pavement*: bronze *foliis*, slightly worn.  
 IMP LICINVS PF AVG  
 GENIO POP ROM  
 C 49 Mint PLN 307-323 A.D.
8. Outside corridor in *debris layer*: bronze coin, not much worn.  
 DIVO CLAVDIO  
 CONSECRATIO  
 R.I.C. 261 268-270 A.D.

Even with the addition of the 7 coins recorded in the earlier report<sup>13</sup>, the total number from the site is only 15. Of this total, 2 fall within the third quarter of the 3rd century; 10 are Constantinian and 3 Valentinian. Together with the lack of samian and of the carinated bowls in black ware so common in 3rd century deposits at Ilchester Mead Roman Villa, this points to an occupation wholly in the 4th century.

#### HISTORY OF THE BUILDING.

Excavation down to the natural clay subsoil in the whole of room 2 and in most of rooms 3 and 4 revealed no evidence whatsoever of earlier buildings on the site. Four phases of the 4th century occupation may be recognised. Rooms 3, 4, 5 and 6 appear to belong to the first phase, together with the corridor where the slightly worn *foliis* of Licinius would give a date A.D. 320. The second phase is marked by the removal of part of the corridor wall opposite room 4 to build the wing room (fig. 3, room 2). The two coins found here were too corroded for certain identification, and in any case were found in contexts contaminated by the "squatters" and the stone robbers. If they can be accepted as being contemporary with the building of the wing room, this addition may well have taken place within the second quarter of the 4th century. The third phase occurred when room 4 was re-floored and used by occupants whose standards of living were very inferior to those of the original owners: rough hearths and patches of burning occur in the layer of black soil containing many animal bones and other rubbish. The original floor was already well worn and coin 3 found on it and sealed by the secondary floor had been in circulation for a considerable time. To this phase belong the industrial activities in room 2 and the adjoining corridor, where similar ill-treatment of tessellated floors occurred. The final phase was one of demolition, in which all the usable stone above floor level was removed, and in some cases even the footings of the walls. The robber trenches (fig. 4a, 6; 4b, 12; 4e, 27) all showed the normal mortar fill with fragments of bonding brick, wall plaster, broken tiles, *tesserae*, nails, bones and 4th century sherds. The octagonal plunge bath and the adjoining heated rooms showed the same deliberate destruction. Weathering and the presence of snail shells in the upper debris may indicate a period of abandonment before time and soil creeps eventually buried the site.

#### APPENDIX.

##### THE MOSAICS OF LUFTON

BY D. J. SMITH

The fragmentary patterned pavements discovered at Lufton during the excavations of 1960-3 bring the number of mosaics known to have existed at this site to at least nine, and it seems worthwhile to review the earlier discoveries<sup>14</sup> as well as to describe and comment on the more recent. I am indebted to the excavator, Mr. L. C. Hayward, for affording me this opportunity to do so, and for providing all available information, photographs and colour transparencies. The latter included photographs of the six coloured scale drawings of details of the mosaics discovered in the earlier excavations which were executed by Mrs. M. Swaine and are now preserved in Yeovil Borough Library and Museum.

The mosaics are first described below in the numerical order of the rooms in which they were found. A discussion follows, and there is a summary with conclusions.



## ROOM 1 — THE CORRIDOR (P. 61, Fig. 3,1, Pl. IIIId)

From the scant remains of this pavement the pattern was evidently a plain rectilinear grid of red bands, three *tesserae* wide, dividing a grey background into squares of approximately 12 in. each containing some 144 irregularly square *tesserae*.

Opposite Room 2, however, this pattern gave way to one apparently of alternating grey and red stripes in *tesserae* approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. square. Parts of three stripes survived, the first two being three *tesserae* wide and the third at least four. It has been suggested by the excavator (p. 61), though admittedly without supporting structural evidence, that this change of pattern may indicate an entrance to Room 2 through a wooden partition across the corridor.

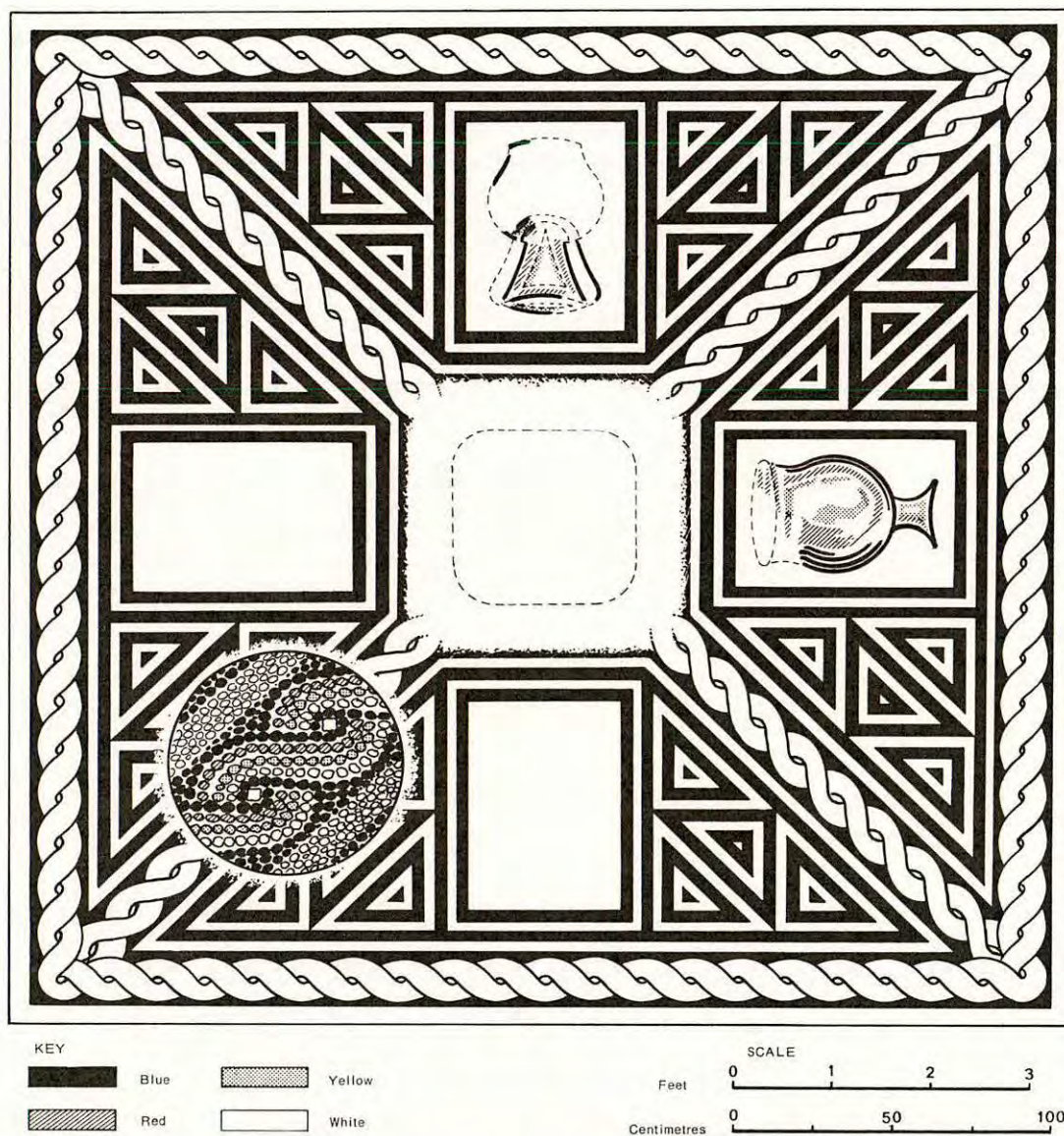


Fig. 8: Reconstructed design of tessellated floor in room 2.



in blue, while double lines of blue marked the eyebrows. The neck, thick and muscular and the only feature certainly identifying the figure as male rather than female, was shaded with red and blue, the shading on the left side extending down to the shoulder. The shoulders were indicated but no more, the underside of the bust being rounded to fit the medallion. The medallion itself was encircled by a frame of 'rainbow pattern' in red, brown and white outlined with blue, and set in the irregularly polygonal space formed by the corner of the design and the interlaced triangles and oblongs on the adjacent sides.

As already noted, Design A was flanked by two oblong panels. One of these apparently contained a length of 'enlarged guilloche'. The other was divided crosswise, presumably by lengths of guilloche interbraided with a surrounding border of guilloche, into six oblong compartments. No details of either panel, however, are indicated in the reconstruction drawing.

Design B, the smaller, was 8 ft. square and of the familiar type comprising a central circular panel, four semi-circular side-panels, four quarter-circular corner-panels, and four concave-sided quadrilateral interspaces. All the panels had borders of guilloche, those of the side- and corner-panels interbraided with the guilloche enclosing the design as a whole. The pavement was extensively damaged and hardly anything survived of the central panel: it may have been, and seems most probably to have been, a floral motif. Two opposite side-panels contained different stylised leaf-motifs, the third half of a floral motif, but the fourth had been destroyed. The only remaining corner-panel depicted a twig with leaves. Of the two surviving interspaces one contained a guilloche knot in a circle and the other a simple four-petalled flower in a circle. Outside the enclosing guilloche were three rows of small white *tesserae*, as employed for the background of the design; then came the plain surround, as usual of much larger *tesserae*.

#### ROOM 14 — THE COLD BATH

The mosaic in this room was designed as a decorative surround for an octagonal bath and comprised eight sections or panels which have conveniently been designated panel *a*, *b*, *c*, etc.<sup>19</sup> Panel *b* had been destroyed.

The decoration of panel *a* was mainly contained in an oblong divided into three squares, all outlined in blue. The central square enclosed two concentric blue circles within which was depicted a round-bottomed bowl standing on a small foot, above the thick rim of which appeared three round red and two blue ovoid forms possibly intended to represent fruit<sup>20</sup>. The squares on either side each contained a guilloche knot in a square turned lozengewise, but the knots were of different size and execution and the triangular spaces between the lozenge and corners of one square contained a small lotiform flower while those of the other contained only an open triangle.

The trisected oblong was framed at either end by a band of guilloche which was interbraided with the simple guilloche surrounding the panel as a whole; and between these bands and the ends of the panel were two spaces of unequal size — the trisected oblong being markedly off-centre — into the smaller of which was crammed a representation of a tapering bush or conifer in a tub, while the larger end-space merely contained a truncated open triangle.

Panel *a* was entirely enclosed by its border of guilloche, but except for a strip of 'double crowstep pattern' between panels *f* and *g* the other panels — including most probably the missing panel *b* — depicted an uninterrupted procession of fish and other aquatic creatures. 'Of the six existing fish panels two contain four fish, three five fish, and one six fish, including two eels or congers, each of which is entwined about the body of another fish, making a total of twenty-nine surviving. The fish are drawn in a somewhat summary, but lively, style, many of them blowing from their noses clusters of bubbles, as they swim along to right or left. They are worked on a white ground in six different colours — white, yellow, pink, red, blue, and black. Among them a sharp-nosed creature like a sword-fish can be detected; but the rest are schematic and conventional, less naturalistic than ornamental and their individual equation with individual species is not possible<sup>21</sup>. All the figures appear to have been produced by one man, but the work of two craftsmen of differing ability was evident in the chain pattern bordering these panels, the borders of panels *c*, *d* and *e* (and the missing panel *b*?) being considerably inferior to those of panels *f*, *g* and *h*. It is tempting, therefore, to attribute to the less skilled craftsman the carelessly executed panel *a*.

#### ROOM 15 (Fig. 9)

The mosaic in this room had a simple design consisting of an eight-petalled flower encircled by guilloche and then enclosed in a delicate chaplet-like octagonal frame which in turn was contained in an octagon of guilloche squared off by right-angles of guilloche on four alternate



sides. Red predominated in the flower and was employed in a small solid triangle in each corner of the panel, and the only other colours were blue and, in the flower, brown; the background was white. It was noted that 'the setting out showed blemishes'<sup>22</sup>.



Fig. 9.

#### Room 16

Of this room it is recorded that 'two portions of the floor showing the cable pattern and a border of large blue *tesserae* lay *in situ* on the south side'<sup>23</sup>.

#### DISCUSSION

Of the pavements of Rooms 5, 9 and 16 nothing can be said. For those of Rooms 2 and 15 it is at present impossible to cite parallels; and of that of Room 1 — the corridor — it need only be remarked that a rectilinear grid pattern in large *tesserae* is entirely in context in a villa which, on the evidence of coins and pottery, was certainly not constructed before the late third or the fourth century (p. 71)<sup>24</sup>.



Of the other three mosaics the most immediately interesting is that of Room 14 — the cold bath. In the first place, as already observed (p. 73), two standards of workmanship can clearly be seen: but whether the inferior work is contemporary with the better, or whether it represents later restoration — perhaps when Room 2 and its mosaic were added to the villa — must remain conjectural. Secondly, the fish of Room 14 recall representations of fish in mosaics of four other villas within relatively short distances from Lufton, at Fifehead Neville<sup>25</sup> and Hemsworth<sup>26</sup> in Dorset and at Low Ham and Whatley in Somerset. Regrettably, the fish of Whatley are only sketchily recorded<sup>27</sup>, and only a single fish survived at Low Ham<sup>28</sup>; but those of Lufton and the other two sites compare well enough to suggest that all can be attributed to the same mosaicist. Furthermore, they are one aspect of a repertory of aquatic figures which has been noted as especially characteristic of mosaics in Dorset and Somerset, indicative of a local workshop probably located in Dorchester-Durnovaria<sup>29</sup>.

In the adjoining Room 13 the smaller design — Design B — also invites attribution to the 'Durnovarian school', for it is a simpler version of another mosaic at Fifehead Neville<sup>30</sup>. The centrepiece of the latter was a bust in a medallion, and this again is a motif especially characteristic of the repertory of the 'Durnovarian school'<sup>31</sup>. It is therefore interesting that Design A in Room 13 preserved a bust in a medallion: in fact there was probably such a motif in the other three corners, and perhaps also in the centre, of this mosaic. Admittedly, however, unlike most of the busts in mosaics assignable to the 'Durnovarian school', that surviving at Lufton had no identifying attribute and can certainly not be recognised as any deity. It must, then, be a representation, if not actually a portrait, of some mortal; and though it has been suggested that the bust may have been one of a set of portraits of the villa-proprietor's family<sup>32</sup> it seems improbable that the *frigidarium* of the baths would be chosen as the portrait-gallery, or that a member of the landowning class would have been depicted without any indication of clothing. If indeed a portrait it may more probably have commemorated an athlete: the bulging muscles of the neck and absence of clothing would be in keeping with such an interpretation, and the subject would not have been inappropriate in the baths<sup>33</sup>.

The frame of 'rainbow pattern' which encircled the medallion is noteworthy, for in Britain this pattern is known at only three other sites, namely Colliton Park, Dorchester (Dorset)<sup>34</sup>, Keynsham (Som.)<sup>35</sup> and Rudston (Yorks.)<sup>36</sup>. Hardly less widespread are the analogies for the 'enlarged guilloche' of one of the oblong panels flanking Design A, for these are recorded at Lydney Park (Glos.)<sup>37</sup>, Fullerton (Hants.)<sup>38</sup>, Wigginton (Oxfords.)<sup>39</sup> and Bignor (Sussex)<sup>40</sup>. It must be emphasised, in fact, that, were it not for the suggestions of 'Durnovarian' repertory in the employment of a portrait-medallion in Design A — though not in the portrait itself — and in the character of Design B, it would not be possible to consider Design A as a product of the 'Durnovarian school'. Indeed, in due course it may perhaps be necessary to recognise the possibility of a mosaicists' workshop at Ilchester-Lindinis in addition to the postulated *officina* of Dorchester. The distribution of mosaics decorated with fish at Fifehead Neville, Hemsworth, Low Ham and Lufton tends to support this possibility; and it is particularly interesting that the design of the pavement of Room 4 which is unknown in any other mosaic so far attributed to the 'Durnovarian school' is paralleled at Ilchester, and that the parallel extends not merely to a design of four pairs of interlaced squares contained in a square but also to an associated panel, as in Room 4, of running-pelta pattern<sup>41</sup>.

## REFERENCES

- 1 *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 97 (1952), 92-7.
- 2 *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 97 (1952), 94.
- 3 *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 97 (1952), 96 and fig. 2, C-D.
- 4 *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* 29, 124.
- 5 Cf. Star Roman Villa in *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 108 (1964), 59.
- 6 *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 97 (1952), 101.
- 7 *Proc. Hants. Field Club* 4, 341.
- 8 Wall Painting in Roman Britain: a Survey of the Evidence (reprinted from *Antiquity and Survival* 2, no. 4 (1958), 377).
- 9 Cf. Newstead, Roxburghs (Flavian), length 11.5 in. Curle, J. *A Roman Frontier Post and its people: The Fort of Newstead* (1911) 281, pl. 54, 14; Brampton, Cumbd. (Hadrianic), length 14.8 in. Manning, W. H., A Hoard of Romano-British Ironwork from Brampton, Cumb., *Trans. Cumb. and West. Antiqu. and Arch. Soc.* 66 (1966) 15, no. 11; Walbrook in London (1st-2nd century), length 14.0 ins. (Unpublished, Guildhall Museum).
- 10 *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 74 (1928), plate F3.
- 11 Cunliffe, B., *Roman Bath*, fig. 60, 34.
- 12 Cf. Settlement Sites of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age in the Somerset Levels, *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 113 (1969), fig. 9, 95; The Roman Temple on Brean Down, *Proc. Bristol Univ. S.S.*, 10 (1965), fig. 52, 36.



- <sup>13</sup> *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 97 (1952), 109-110.
- <sup>14</sup> L. C. Hayward, 'The Roman Villa at Lufton, near Yeovil', *Proc. Som. A.&N.H.S.* 97 (1952), 90-112.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 95, Fig. 3, Pl. V. For the only account hitherto see J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Britain under the Romans* (1964), 247.
- <sup>18</sup> D. J. Smith, *Ant. Jour.* XLIX (1969), 235-43; cf. esp. Pl. XLII, b (now known to show part of a mosaic at Halstock, Dorset).
- <sup>19</sup> Hayward, 90, Fig. 1, 100-1, 111-2, Pls. VII-IX; J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Roman Britain* (2nd ed., 1963), 201, No. 194, Pl. 230; *ibid.*, op. cit. (1964; see note 17), 246-7.
- <sup>20</sup> This is one of the details recorded by Mrs. Swaine.
- <sup>21</sup> Toynbee (1964), 246-7; cf. Hayward, 111-2. Two of Mrs. Swaine's drawings are devoted to panel *f* and a single fish in another panel.
- <sup>22</sup> Hayward, 101. This panel is recorded in one of Mrs. Swaine's drawings.
- <sup>23</sup> Hayward, 97.
- <sup>24</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 103-7, 109-10.
- <sup>25</sup> A. L. F. Rivet (ed.), *The Roman Villa in Britain* (1969), Pl. 3.30.
- <sup>26</sup> R. Hinks, *Catalogue of the Greek, Etruscan and Roman Paintings and Mosaics in the British Museum* (1933), 99, No. 33, Pl. XXX.
- <sup>27</sup> Coloured lithograph, a print of which is preserved in Somerset County Museum, published by 'Bedford's Lithography, Bristol' (undated, but probably c.1837/38); hence the drawing reproduced in 'Romano-British Somerset', *V.C.H. Somerset* I (1906), Fig. 77.
- <sup>28</sup> Unpublished. I am indebted to Mr. H. J. Cook, Manor Farm, Low Ham, for a photograph of this fragment.
- <sup>29</sup> D. J. Smith, in *La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine* (Paris, 1965), 99-105; *ibid.*, in Rivet (ed.), op. cit., 109-13.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit. (1965), 103-4, Fig. 9 following p. 116.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit. (1969), 111 and note 1.
- <sup>32</sup> Toynbee (1964), 247.
- <sup>33</sup> The well known athletes in mosaic from the Baths of Caracalla are, of course, the obvious example. Moreover, the head, neck and shoulders of these figures and of the bust at Lufton have something in common.
- <sup>34</sup> No published illustration except the postcard sold at Dorset County Museum.
- <sup>35</sup> *Archaeologia* LXXV (1926), 128, Pl. XVIII, 2 (in the border of the lunettes depicting a peacock).
- <sup>36</sup> In the border of a medallion depicting one of the Seasons in a mosaic discovered in 1971: I am indebted to the excavator, Dr. I. M. Stead, for permission to cite this example in advance of publication.
- <sup>37</sup> W. H. Bathurst and C. W. King, *Roman Antiquities at Lydney Park, Gloucestershire* (1879), Pl. XVI; hence R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler, *Report on the Excavation . . . in Lydney Park, Gloucestershire* (1932), Pl. XX, B.
- <sup>38</sup> Unpublished. I am indebted to Mr. David S. Neal for a photograph of his drawing of this mosaic.
- <sup>39</sup> Unpublished. I am indebted to Mr. David S. Neal for a tracing of his drawing of this mosaic.
- <sup>40</sup> S. Lysons, *Reliquiae Britannico-Romanae* III (1817), Pl. XV; hence T. Morgan, *Romano-British Mosaic Pavements* (1886), pl. captioned 'Head of Winter' following p. 204.
- <sup>41</sup> *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries* 27, 80-81. I am indebted to Mr. Hayward for knowledge and photographs of this mosaic.





Plate IIIa. Castle Neroche. General view of top of motte during excavation, from S.E.



Plate IIIb. Castle Neroche. The footings of the "shell-keep" at the S.E. side of the summit area of the motte, from N.E.

Plate IIIc. Castle Neroche. The footings of the "curtain wall" at the N.W. side of the summit area of the motte, from S.W.



Plate IIId. Lufton Villa. Southern end of corridor, room I.





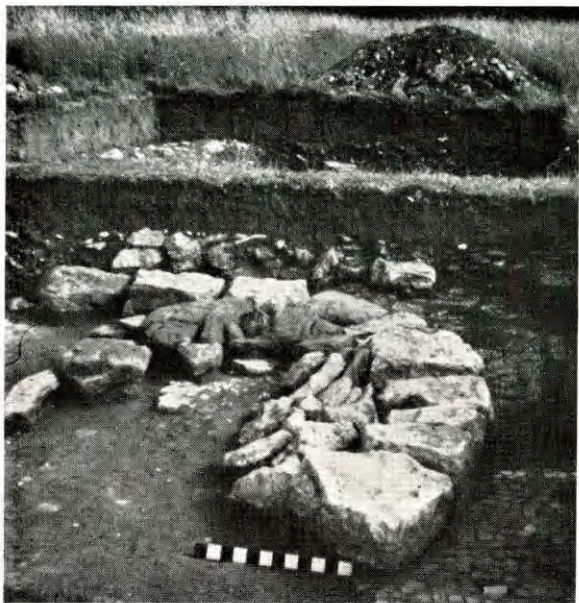


Plate IVa. Lufton Villa. Smith's furnace in room 2.



Plate IVb. Lufton Villa. Lead water pipe in room 3, West.

Plate IVc. Lufton Villa. Tessellated floor in room 4, from South.







Plate V. Lufton Villa. Design B, tessellated floor in room 13.

*Photo: H. C. Tilzey*