

## PART FOUR

## PRAE WOOD AND ST ALBANS

## PRAE WOOD

TL 122 068

Verulamium Museum has, as well as most of the material published (Wheeler & Wheeler 1936), 58 boxes of pottery with some brick, tile and animal bones from Wheeler's excavations of the site in Prae Wood. Smaller amounts of pottery are in the BM and the Institute of Archaeology, London. An examination of the whole range of Prae Wood pottery was undertaken.

Despite a wealth of labelling, almost nothing on Wheeler's pl.XI corresponds with the numbers on the boxes (which come from the labelling of the original bags). The site notebooks, in VerM, are informative up to a point, and the markings on published vessels provide further clues.

Wheeler's published sequence is as follows:

- 1 'Primary levels associated with the main earthworks.'
- 2 Group A: rapid silt of the SE ditch of enclosure A, 'c.10 BC - AD 35'.
- 3 Group B: SE ditch of enclosure A above rapid silt, 'AD 5/10 - AD 30/35'.
- 4 Group C: 'from one of the small drainage ditches adjoining the S corner of enclosure A', 'AD 5/10 - AD 30/35'.
- 5 Group D: 'Zero Ditch, another of the small drainage ditches immediately SE of enclosure A', 'eve of Claudian invasion'.

Related to Wheeler's plans pls.XI and XVI, this covers the SE ditch of the enclosure A - an independent entity, since causeways divide its butt ends from the other sides of the enclosure - and two of the ditches outside the SE entrance to the enclosure, one being identified as the Zero Ditch on pl.XVI.

The pottery from these and other areas will be examined below, using a spatial division of the site as follows:

- 1 Enclosure A.
- 2 The area outside the SE entrance to the enclosure.
- 3 Main earthworks, including Wheeler's 'primary levels'.
- 4 Prae Farm and Pond Field.
- 5 Unknown and additional sites.

#### 1. Enclosure A.

The bulk of Wheeler's material came from the SE ditch of the enclosure, which seems to have been extensively excavated. The numbering assigned to it is:

XII, as on Wheeler's pl.XI.

LII-LXII, as on sketch plans in site notebooks.

II. This is not referred to in the notebooks, but some of the published Group B pots are marked 'II'. Since XII and LII-LXII take up most of the length of the ditch, II can only be the southern end of the ditch.

Group A was pottery from the rapid silt. This is not at all extensive, and much of it was published. The markings on the



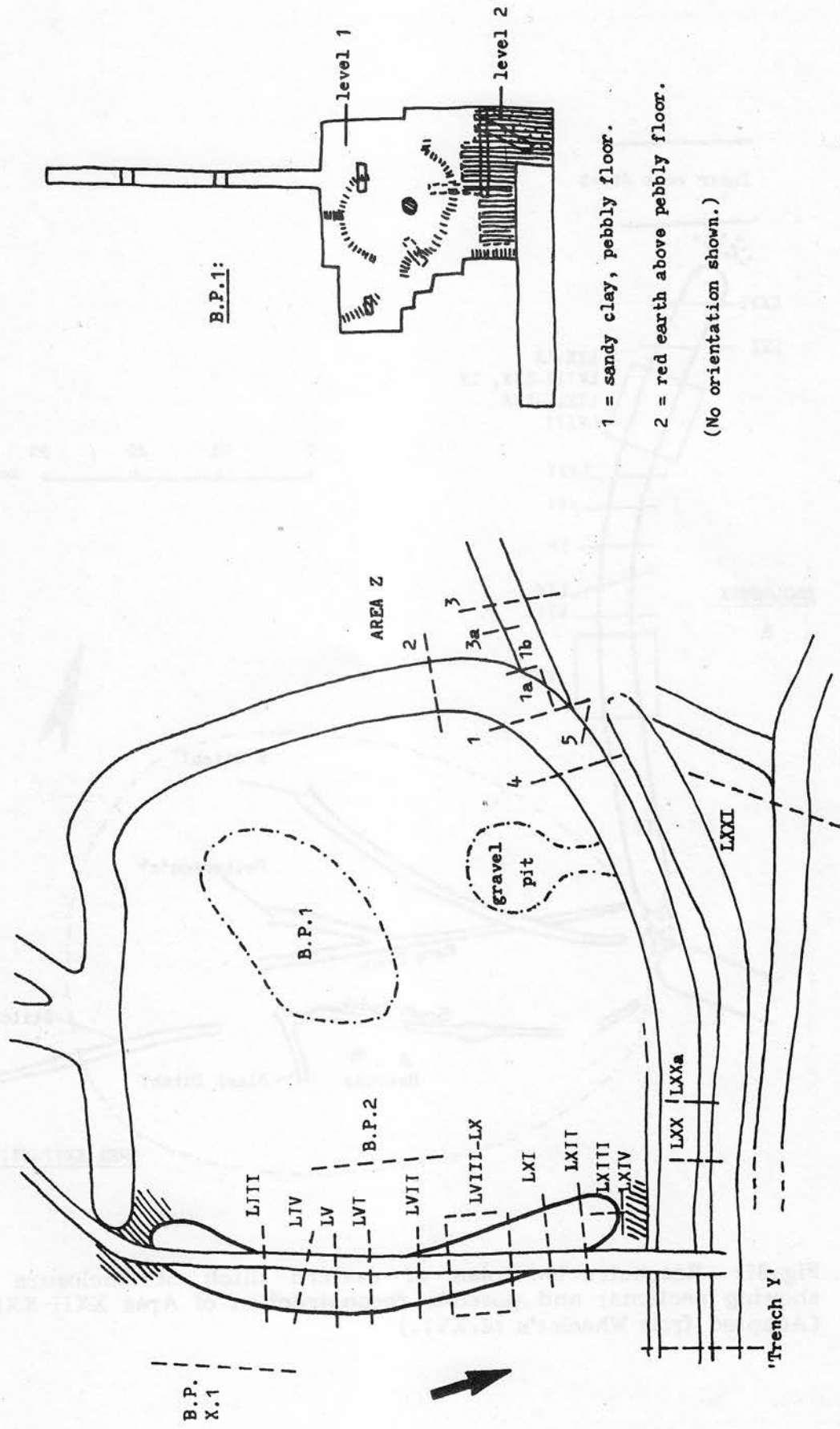


Fig.86: Enclosure A: sketch plan of sections cut, from site notebook.

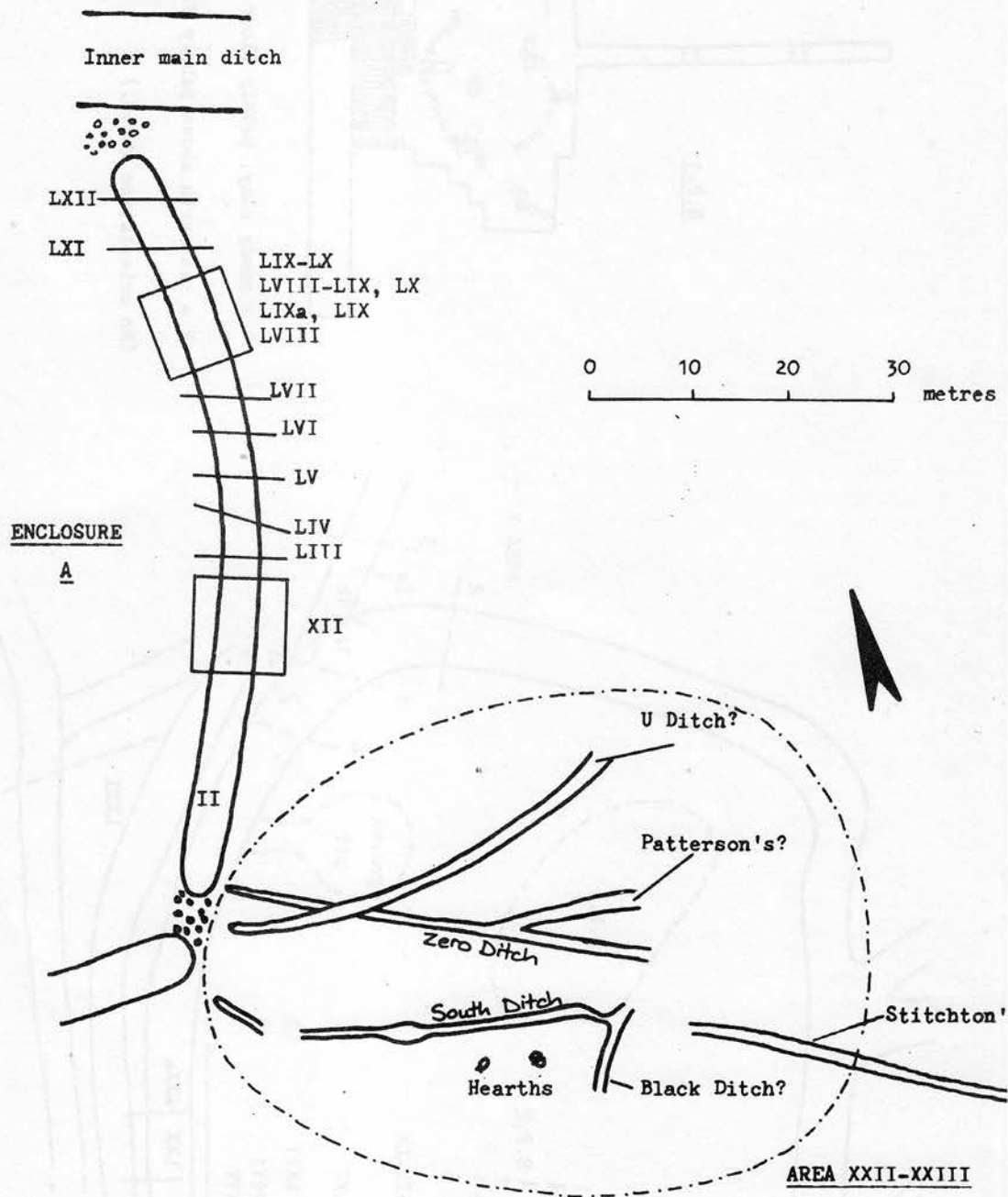


Fig.87: Reconstructed plan of eastern ditch of Enclosure A, showing sections; and possible reconstruction of Area XXII-XXIII. (Adapted from Wheeler's pl.XVI.)



vessels are noted here, but not all are described individually: grog is invariable unless otherwise noted.

Wheeler's fig.10:

- 1 C7-1. Not marked.
- 2 C7-1. LIX-LX Rapid silt.
- 3 D2-3. Rapid silt.
- 4 E1-2. Rapid silt.
- 5 G5-6. Not marked. Grog with worn orange surfaces.
- 6 G5-6. Rapid silt.
- 7 C5-3. Rapid silt.
- 8 A1. Rapid silt.

No.9 does not belong here: see under section 3 below (main earthworks).

Unpublished group A pottery:

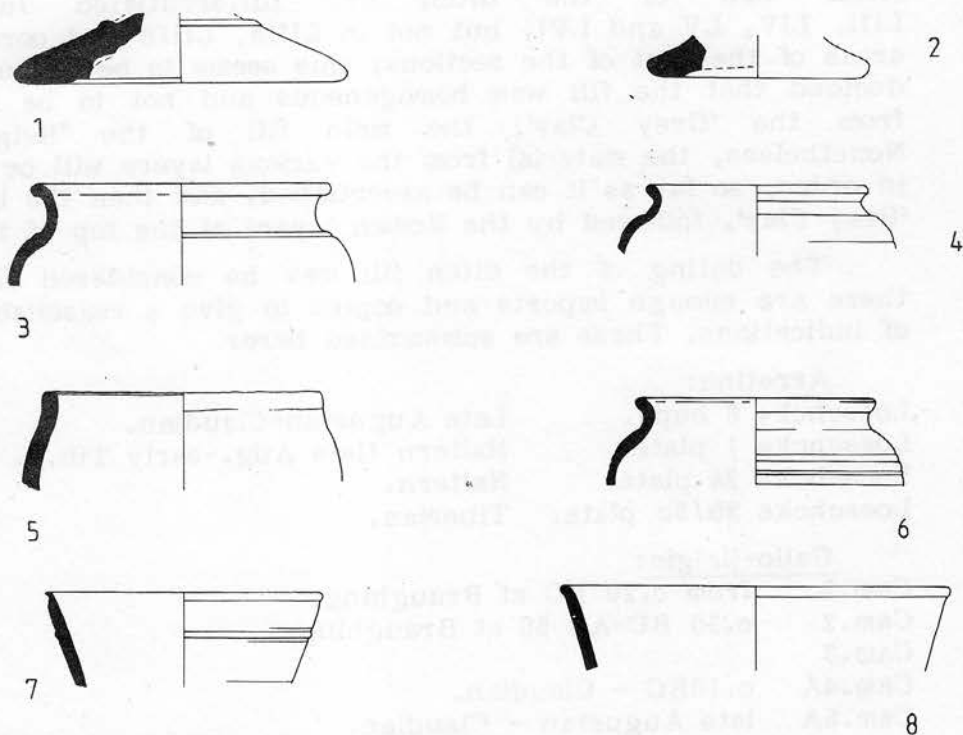


Fig.88. Unpublished Group A pots.

1 A1 [304]. LIX-LX Rapid silt. Coarse grey grog, patchy, not symmetrical.

2 A1 [292]. (B.II.2, Inst. Arch. marking for group A). Hard pale grey grog, smoothed; buff patch on top.

3 B1-1 [288]. (B.II.2). Hard grey grog, dark grey smoothed outside; faint cordon.

4 B3-1 [291]. (B.II.2). Hard black overfired probable grog, orange-grey hard smooth surfaces.

5 C1-2 [289]. (B.II.2). HM pale grey grog, some vesiculation; very smooth soapy buff inside, grey-buff irregular outside.

6 C7-1 [446]. Rapid silt. Grey grog, reddish-grey inside, burnished dark grey outside.

7 E1-2 [290]. (B.II.2). Hard grey grog, pinkish-grey surfaces, tooled outside.

8 not in series [293]. (B.II.2). Pale grey grog, grey surfaces worn to brown inside.

Some of this pottery, then, came from near the N end of the ditch at LIX-LX; there are two copies of butt-beakers, and some white sherds possibly from a jug. Dating of this group depends on that of the main fill of the ditch, group B; there does not seem to be a gap in time between the two groups.

Group B: Wheeler evidently dug the ditch in chunks: categories XII and II are treated essentially as homogeneous in context, while the categories LIII-LXII are dealt with in much greater detail, a series of stratified layers marked on the pottery and a few section drawings made in the site notebooks which make some sense of the layers. The tips and lenses of darker fill in the lower half of the ditch are differentiated in sections LIII, LIV, LV and LVI, but not in LIIIa, LIIIb and corresponding areas of the rest of the sections; this seems to be because Wheeler decided that the fill was homogeneous and not to be kept apart from the 'Grey Clay', the main fill of the 'Belgic' ditch. Nonetheless, the material from the various layers will be dealt with in order, so far as it can be ascertained, and then the bulk of the 'Grey Clay', followed by the Roman layers at the top of the ditch.

The dating of the ditch fill may be considered first, since there are enough imports and copies to give a reasonable number of indications. These are summarised here:

Arretine:

Loeschcke 8 cups.	Late Augustan-Claudian.
Loeschcke 1 plate.	Haltern (late Aug.-early Tib.).
Loeschcke 2a plate.	Haltern.
Loeschcke 2b/3b plate.	Tiberian.

Gallo-Belgic:

Cam.1	from c.20 BC at Braughing.
Cam.2	c.10 BC-AD 50 at Braughing.
Cam.3	
Cam.4A	c.10BC - Claudian.
Cam.5A	late Augustan - Claudian.
Cam.8	c.25-70 AD.
Cam.51B	Haltern.
Cam.53	I-III at Sheepen, c.10-48 AD.
Cam.58	AD 5-30 at Nijmegen.
Cam.76A	I-IV at Sheepen, 10-61 AD.
Cam.113	from Tiberian at Sheepen.
Cam.165	I-IV at Sheepen, 10-61 AD.
Cam.246	post-43 at Sheepen.

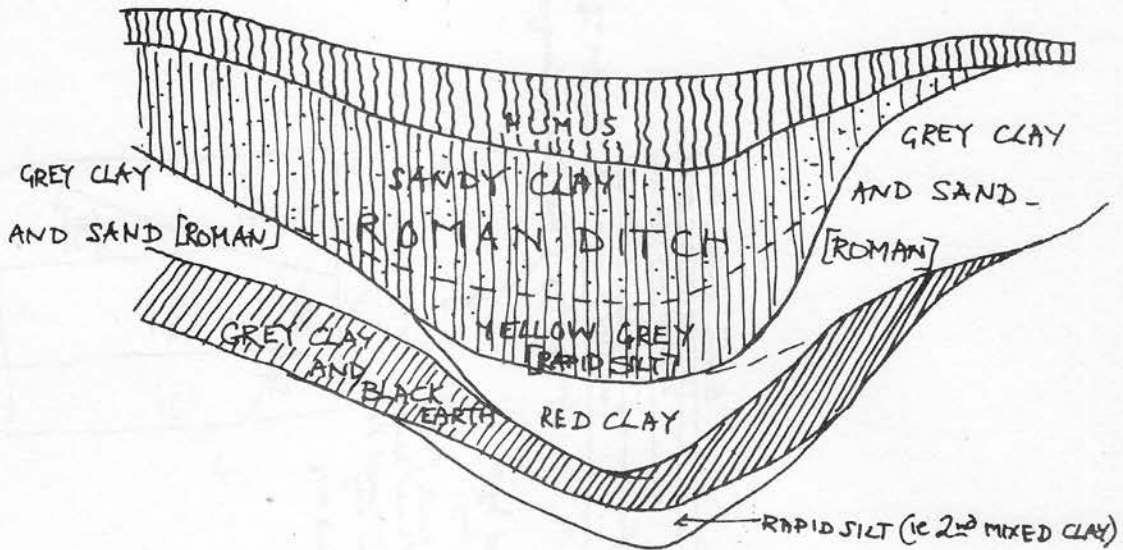
Copies of Gallo-Belgic in addition to the above:

G1-7, copying Cam.12.	One. I-IV at Sheepen, 10-61 AD.
?G1-9, copying Cam.14.	?one. From Claudian at Sheepen.
G2-3 to G2-5.	Post-43 at Sheepen, copying Cam.46 and Ritterling 12.
G4.	I-IV at Sheepen, 10-61 AD.
G6, copying Cam.161/5.	I-VI, from Tiberian.



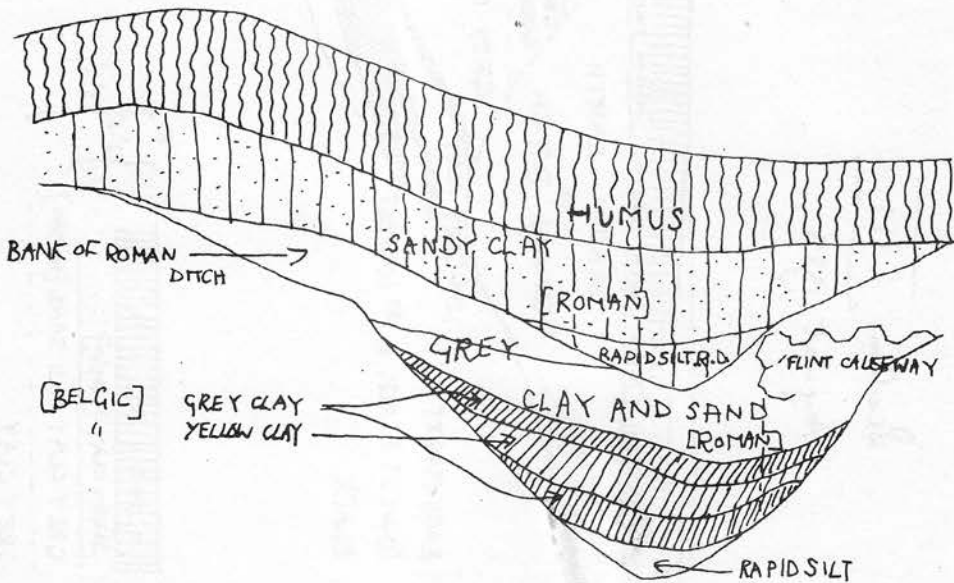
Section LVII August 1933

NORTH FACE OF CUR.



N.B. RED CLAY similar in texture to the natural.

Section LVIII

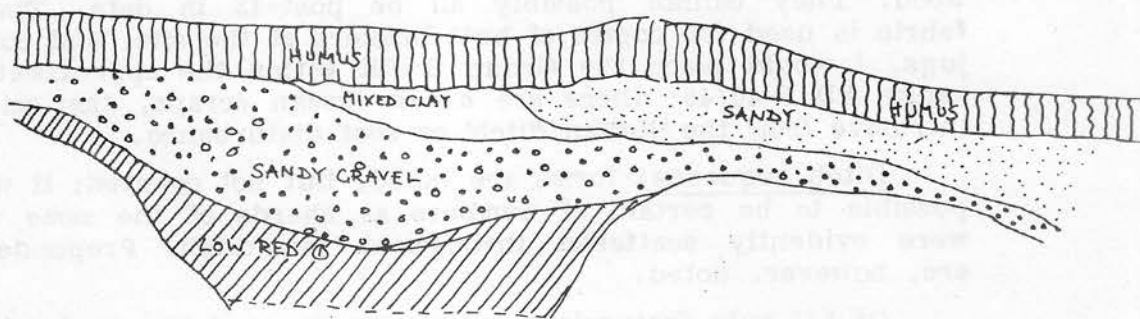


The flint causeway overlies the prehistoric ditch and is cut into by the Roman ditch. ∴ pre-roman - post-prehistoric.

**Fig.90: Wheeler's unpublished sketches of Sections LVII and LVIII.**



SECTION - LXI



SECTION - LXII

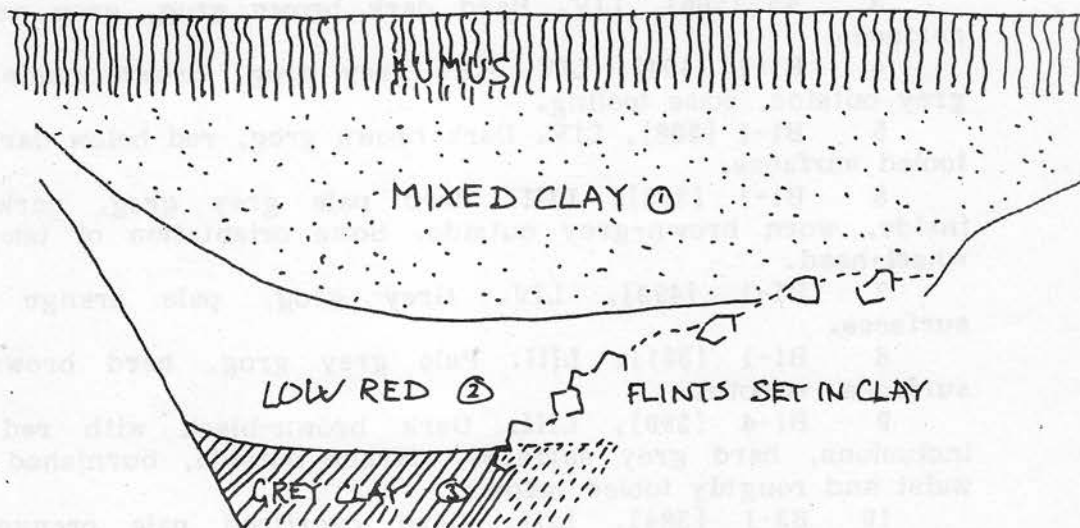


Fig.91: Wheeler's unpublished sketches of Sections LXI and LXII.

Unlike some of the Braughing deposits, there is no extensive series of imports at Prae Wood; the inhabitants made do with many copies. I would conclude that the ditch fill spans a period from some little time after the first copying of imported wares, since butt-beakers appear in the rapid silt beneath the main fill; it seems to continue as far as the conquest. There is nothing here that prompts a certain post-conquest date except an L7 lid which may be in fact a Cam.14 copy, which as a development of pre-conquest forms is not a strong piece of evidence; and the bowls, Cam.246 and the copies G2-3. There are many examples of this form at Prae Wood; I feel that their abundance and the habitual use of the fine grey-brown grog tempering with red or orange surfaces argues for their pre-conquest manufacture at Prae Wood. They cannot possibly all be post-43 in date. The same fabric is used for copies of butt-beakers at the site, and copies of jugs. I would place the Group B fill within the approximate date range AD 5-40/45: there are a few Roman scraps, that might be intrusive from the 'Roman ditch' or root disturbance.

Ditch sequence: forms are noted, but not counted; it was not possible to be certain of numbers as sherds of the same vessels were evidently scattered throughout the ditch. Preponderances are, however, noted.

Of LII only featureless scraps remain, and its precise location was not noted.

Lowest Black Earth

Fig.92 no.1 E1-2 [381], LIII. Pale grey grog, hard brown-grey surfaces, smooth outside.

Also noted: G5-6; and soft pink micaceous sherds.

Lower Black Earth: one grog-tempered body sherd.

Black Earth (figs.92 & 93):

2 Cam.113 [1267], LIII. Hard sharply detailed smooth cream fabric.

3 A5 [506], LIV. Hard dark brown grog, grey smoothed surfaces.

4 B1-1 [504], LIV. Pale grey grog, brown inside, dark grey outside, some tooling.

5 B1-1 [508], LIV. Dark brown grog, red below dark grey tooled surfaces.

6 B1-1 [392], LIII. Hard pale grey grog, dark grey inside, worn brown-grey outside. Some orientation of temper to wheel-head.

7 B1-1 [499], LIV. Grey grog, pale orange gritty surfaces.

8 B1-1 [381], LIII. Pale grey grog, hard brown-grey surfaces, smooth.

9 B1-4 [299], LIII. Dark brown-black with red grog inclusions, hard grey surfaces, darker outside, burnished above waist and roughly tooled below.

10 B3-1 [384], LIII. Hard overfired pale orange-buff, probably grog; worn inside; more orange smooth unburnished outside.

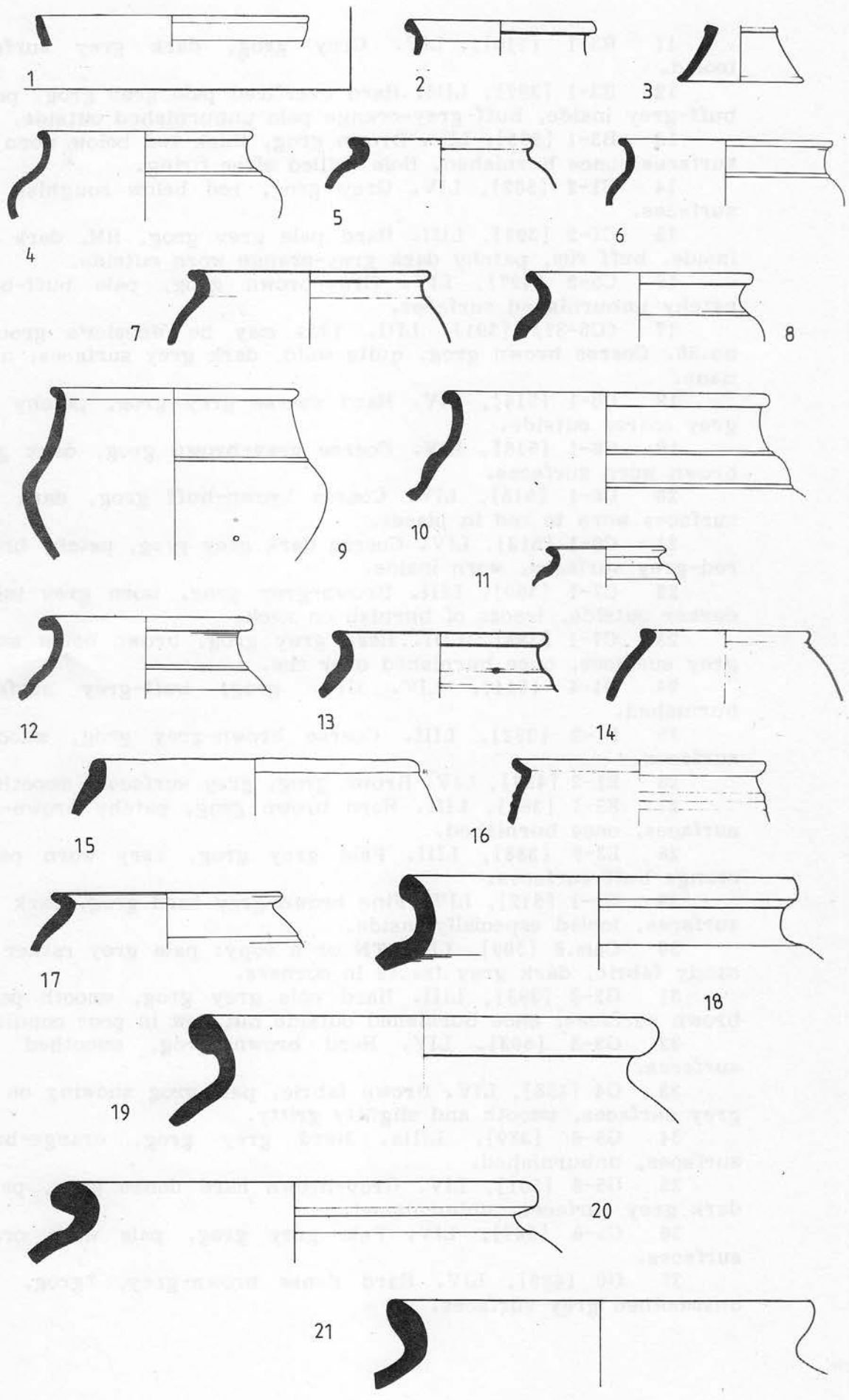


Fig.92: Pottery from Enclosure A ditch. 1:4

- 11 B3-1 [510], LIV. Grey grog, dark grey surfaces, tooled.
- 12 B3-1 [387], LIII. Hard overfired pale grey grog, patchy buff-grey inside, buff-grey-orange pale unburnished outside.
- 13 B3-1 [505], LIV. Brown grog, thick red below worn buff surfaces; once burnished. Hole drilled after firing.
- 14 C1-2 [502], LIV. Grey grog, red below roughish grey surfaces.
- 15 C1-2 [393], LIII. Hard pale grey grog, HM, dark grey inside, buff rim, patchy dark grey-orange worn outside.
- 16 C5-3 [497], LIV. Grey-brown grog, pale buff-brown patchy unburnished surfaces.
- 17 (C5-3?) [391], LIII. This may be Wheeler's group B no.56. Coarse brown grog, quite solid, dark grey surfaces; neatly made.
- 18 C6-1 [514], LIV. Hard coarse grey grog, patchy red-grey coarse outside.
- 19 C6-1 [516], LIV. Coarse grey-brown grog, dark grey-brown worn surfaces.
- 20 C6-1 [515], LIV. Coarse brown-buff grog, dark grey surfaces worn to red in places.
- 21 C6-1 [513], LIV. Coarse dark grey grog, patchy brown-red-grey surfaces, worn inside.
- 22 C7-1 [390], LIII. Brown-grey grog, worn grey inside, darker outside, traces of burnish on neck.
- 23 C7-1 [388], LIII. Hard grey grog, brown below smooth grey surfaces, once burnished over rim.
- 24 D1-4 [511], LIV. Grey grog, buff-grey surfaces, burnished.
- 25 E1-2 [382], LIII. Coarse brown-grey grog, smoothed surfaces.
- 26 E1-2 [498], LIV. Brown grog, grey surfaces, smooth.
- 27 E3-1 [385], LIII. Hard brown grog, patchy brown-grey surfaces, once burnished.
- 28 E3-6 [386], LIII. Pale grey grog, very worn patchy orange-buff surfaces.
- 29 G1-1 [512], LIV. Fine brown-grey hard grog, dark grey surfaces, tooled especially inside.
- 30 Cam.8 [509], LIV. TN or a copy: pale grey rather soft sandy fabric, dark grey traces in corners.
- 31 G2-3 [383], LIII. Hard pale grey grog, smooth patchy brown surfaces, once burnished outside but now in poor condition.
- 32 G2-3 [503], LIV. Hard brown grog, smoothed grey surfaces.
- 33 G4 [496], LIV. Brown fabric, pale grog showing on pale grey surfaces, smooth and slightly gritty.
- 34 G5-6 [389], LIIIa. Hard grey grog, orange-brown surfaces, unburnished.
- 35 G5-6 [501], LIV. Grey-brown hard dense grog, patchy dark grey surfaces, unburnished.
- 36 G5-6 [507], LIV. Pale grey grog, pale worn orange surfaces.
- 37 G6 [495], LIV. Hard dense brown-grey, ?grog, hard unsmoothed grey surfaces.