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The Lands of Ancient Lothian

Interpreting the Archaeology of the A1

Olivia Lelong and Gavin MacGregor

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Chapter 7

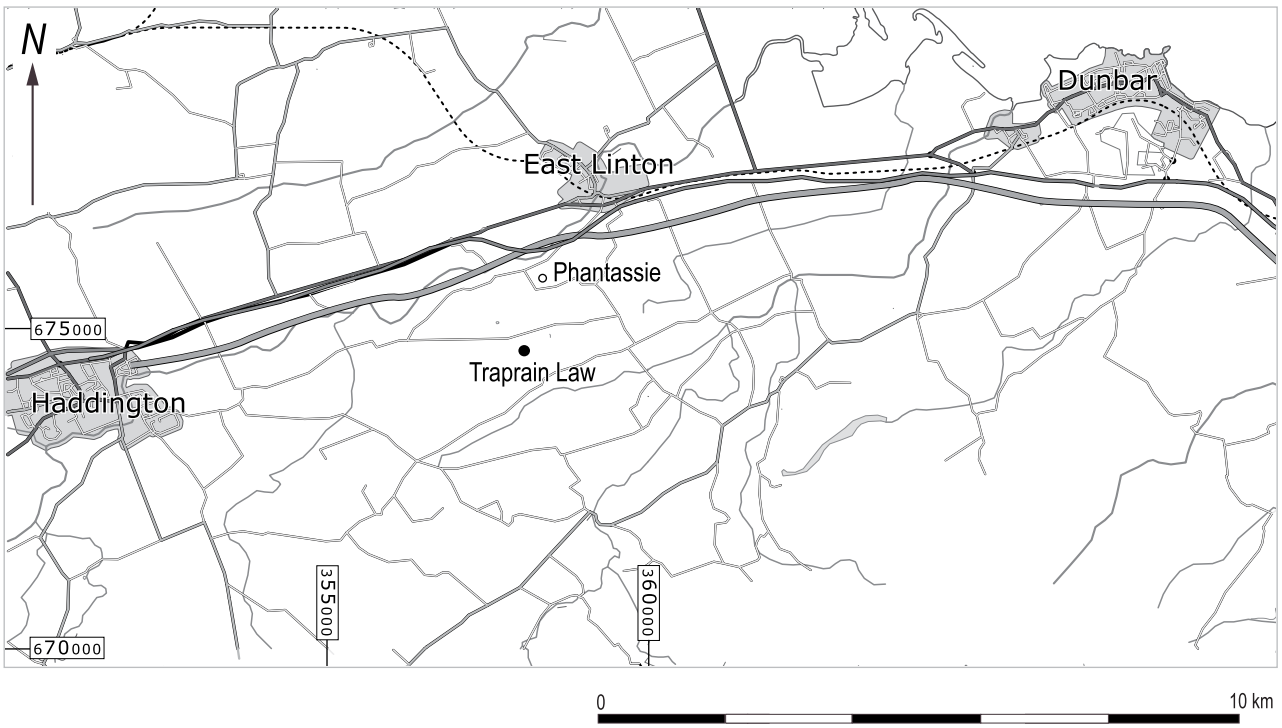
Everyday life on a Lothian farm: Excavations at Phantassie (210 BC–AD 340)

OLIVIA LELONG

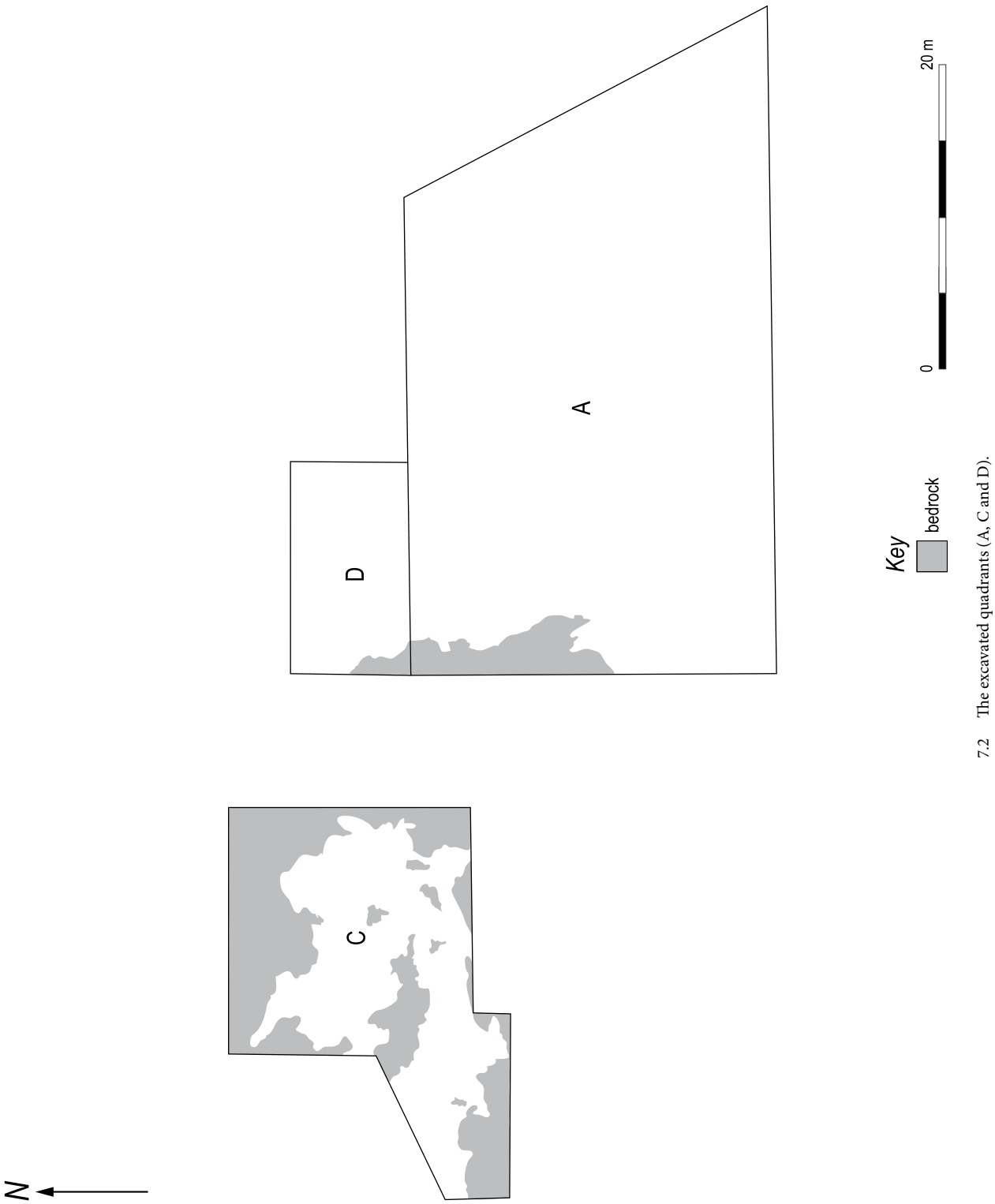
Introduction

At Phantassie, a substantial farming settlement thrived during the last two centuries BC and in the first two or three centuries AD (Figure 7.1). The excavation uncovered five broad phases for the occupation, construction and abandonment of different parts of the settlement. At least 15 buildings stood at various times during its lifespan, along with cobbled surfaces and pathways, working areas and boundary features. The excavation recovered charcoal, carbonised cereal grains and bone – both animal and human – as well as over 700 artefacts, including coarse pottery, stone tools, iron implements, copper alloy ornaments, glass and shale bangle fragments and industrial waste. Sixty radiocarbon dates were obtained from charcoal, bone and carbonised cereal grains from across the site and through the stratigraphy. The calibrated dates range mainly from 210 BC to AD 420, with the settlement's main period of occupation falling in the first and second centuries BC and the first and second centuries AD.

In this chapter, these different types of evidence are woven together to create a picture of Phantassie as it evolved in the late and early first millennia BC to AD.



7.1 Map showing the location of the site at Phantassie.



7.2 The excavated quadrants (A, C and D).

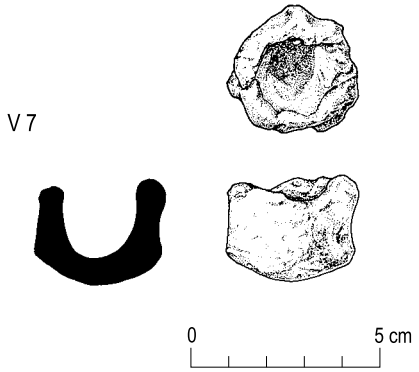
Excavations at Phantassie

The geology at the site played a significant part in determining its character, both in terms of the layout of the settlement and the survival of its archaeology: the bedrock, an extrusive basalt, lay close to the surface. In the centre of the settlement, this bedrock lay directly beneath the topsoil and the hillwashed silts, dividing the main domestic area (Areas A and D) from one containing outbuildings, a midden store and an area of hard standing (Area C) (Figure 7.2). The settlement huddled around this bedrock hump, its traces lying in natural, artificial and enhanced scoops in the rock, over sterile boulder clay or in some cases directly on the rock.

It was possible, during the excavation, to identify the results of many individual acts of construction, modification and deposition, and the sequence in which these happened in different parts of the site. However, for the most part these acts did not seem to fall into discrete, well-defined phases that applied across the whole site. Rather, the excavated evidence gives the impression of the settlement's piecemeal, constant development: buildings were constructed, then they were modified or fell out of use, and new ones were sometimes built over them; certain areas saw intensive activity and were later abandoned, or went out of use for a time; other areas were kept clean in some periods and became midden dumps in others. In order to make the story of the site easier to follow, the narrative is divided in a way that corresponds to the main phases of building or deposition, as evident through the stratigraphy and to some extent the radiocarbon dates. However, the reader should bear in mind that each component of these broad phases represents a moment or a period of time in the continuum of the life of the settlement.

During excavation, occupation deposits were identified as those that built up incidentally, as a result of everyday activities; midden deposits were identified as those resulting from everyday activities, which contained a high proportion of refuse (including both organic and inorganic material), and which were deliberately allowed to accumulate or were collected and piled up over time (see Needham and Spence 1997). References to charcoal, cereal and seed types below draw on the palaeobotanical analyses of samples from the excavation by Miller and Ramsay (see Chapter 12 and Archive), and references to animal species draw on analyses by Smith (see Chapter 12 and Archive). MacSween's analysis of the pottery (see text box 7.1) and Hunter and MacLaren's analysis of the other finds form the basis for comments on these types of artefact (see Chapter 12 and Archive).

Very small amounts of burnt human bone were also discovered in 42 of the excavated deposits. In most cases where this bone occurred, it is mentioned below, with the quantity given in grams and comments based on the work of Duffy and Marquez-Grant (see Chapter 12 and Archive). Many of the contexts where bone appeared were deposits interpreted as occupation layers or midden deposits. The wide and fairly consistent distribution of human bone, along with a late first millennium BC radiocarbon date for one fragment, point to its having been deliberately brought into the settlement for particular uses, such as incorporation in re-deposited midden; in some cases, it may have drifted from places where it had been deliberately deposited to become part of other, more incidental occupation deposits. This phenomenon deserves particular attention, and it is addressed in more detail in the final section and in Chapter 10.



7.3 A thumb-pot (V 7).

Phase 1

Light buildings in a yard, and cooking fires

The first people to occupy Phantassie in later prehistory chose an area of level ground above the 60m contour, to the east of the bedrock hump. This area, referred to throughout as the settlement platform, continued to be the focus of habitation throughout the life of the settlement. The first inhabitants left structural fragments and trampled ground surfaces, which were exposed only in the western part of quadrant A (Figure 7.4). As exposed, the structural fragments survived as a cluster of slight, straight and arcing lines of stone (474) and (450), with other ephemeral lines of stone (473) and (344) running at right angles to them (Figure 7.5). These lines of stone were only revealed in a sondage excavated through a later, massive wall base (100) that sealed them, so their original extent could not be established. They may have supported light, stake-built walls (although no stake-holes were identified in the sondage). A fragment of daub (SF 566) found close to them may have fallen from a clay-

plastered, wattle wall that stood on one of the stone bases. A scattering of charcoal, cereals and animal bone around the stone bases probably related to the use of the structures they represent.

The earliest ground surfaces on the site may date to this initial phase of activity. Those to the south and east of the structural fragments consisted of pink clay (405/420/353/301/451/398/424//317), weathered from the bedrock

7.1

The later prehistoric pottery from Phantassie

The pottery assemblage from Phantassie is the largest of the pottery assemblages recovered from the later prehistoric A1 sites. It consists of 350 sherds which represent up to 192 vessels, but this is almost certainly an over-estimate of the number of vessels because of variations in fabric, sooting and colour across any one pot.

While complete vessels could not be reconstructed, it appears from the larger sherds that many were either large, bucket-shaped pots (for example, V 51) or large, barrel-shaped ones. There were also smaller vessels, like V 24, which had an interior bevel on its rim and an everted lip; V 42, which had an inverted profile, and a small thumb-pot (V 7), which may have been made for or by a child (see Figure 7.3).

The condition of the pottery is very variable, ranging from sherds in a fairly fresh condition to sherds with edge and surface abrasion and sherds which were badly abraded and rounded. The most common fabric is sandy or fine sandy clay containing 10–20 per cent rock fragments. This fabric mix does not seem to have changed much throughout the settlement's period of use.

The pottery was made by the coil-construction method, usually with a diagonal junction between the coils. The pots' surfaces were generally finished by smoothing with a wet hand, leaving light wipe marks. Most of the sherds have fired grey, with brown or red surfaces or margins. This indicates a short firing on the domestic hearth which has oxidised only the surfaces of the vessel.

Decoration was noted on four pots from Phantassie, in all cases consisting of incised lines. The sooting and residues observed on many of the vessels indicate their use as cooking pots, with the exterior residues around the lips of some probably the result of liquids' boiling over. The band of sooting around the top of other vessels (for example, V 1) could indicate contact with fuel during firing.

The pottery from Phantassie is typical of the later prehistoric pottery recovered from sites throughout southern Scotland and northern England – for example, from Broxmouth hillfort near Dunbar (Cool 1982), from the recent excavations at Traprain Law (Rees and Hunter 2000) and from the ditched enclosure at St Germains, Tranent (Alexander and Watkins 1998).

Cool's analysis of the pottery from Broxmouth suggests a chronological split between Type I pottery, thought to date to the second half of the first millennium BC (although Cowie (2000, 137) has argued that its currency extended into the early first millennium AD), and Type II pottery, which was thought to date from the first century AD. Type I pottery consisted of thick-walled (*c.* 20 mm), bucket-shaped vessels with plain or occasionally in-turned rims, and rim diameters of 250–350 mm, made of fabrics with a coarse rock temper. Type II vessels were smaller, with bucket or barrel forms, thinner walls and finer fabrics.

Although numerous sites have produced broadly comparable material, there has been little opportunity to refine the chronology put forward by Cool. The emerging picture is that the later prehistoric pottery from the area consists of very simple forms, probably closely related to function and changing little with time, although only the construction of a radiocarbon-dated sequence will allow us to say this with certainty.

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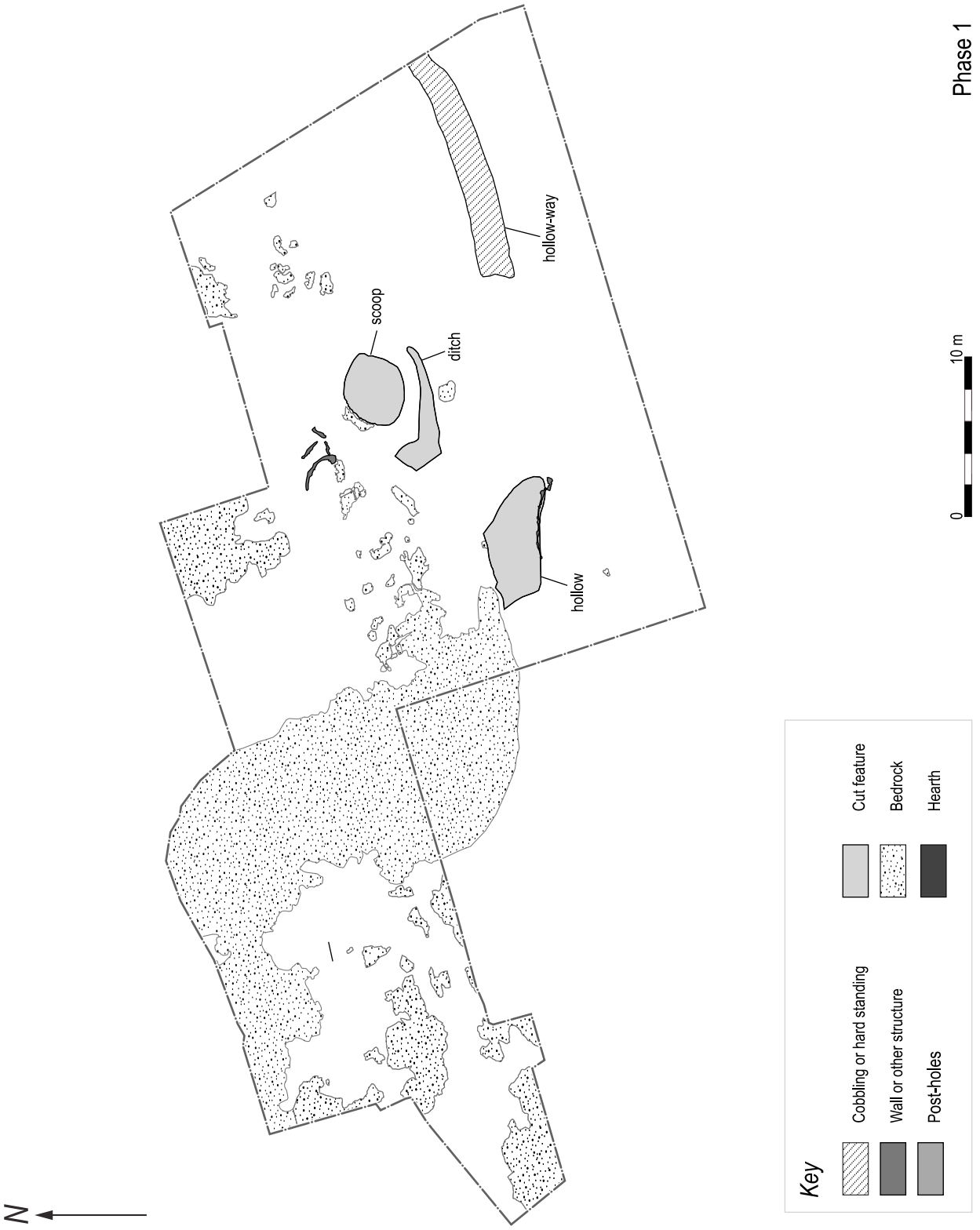
7.4 The earliest phases under excavation.

just beneath; some of these (301)/(398)/(317) contained cattle teeth and burnt ungulate long bone fragments, as well as human bone (3.3g). The early ground surfaces to the south and west consisted of firm, yellow-orange clay silt (410/412/160/329/189/408/157), and these were trampled and mixed versions of the sterile boulder clay (030) below.

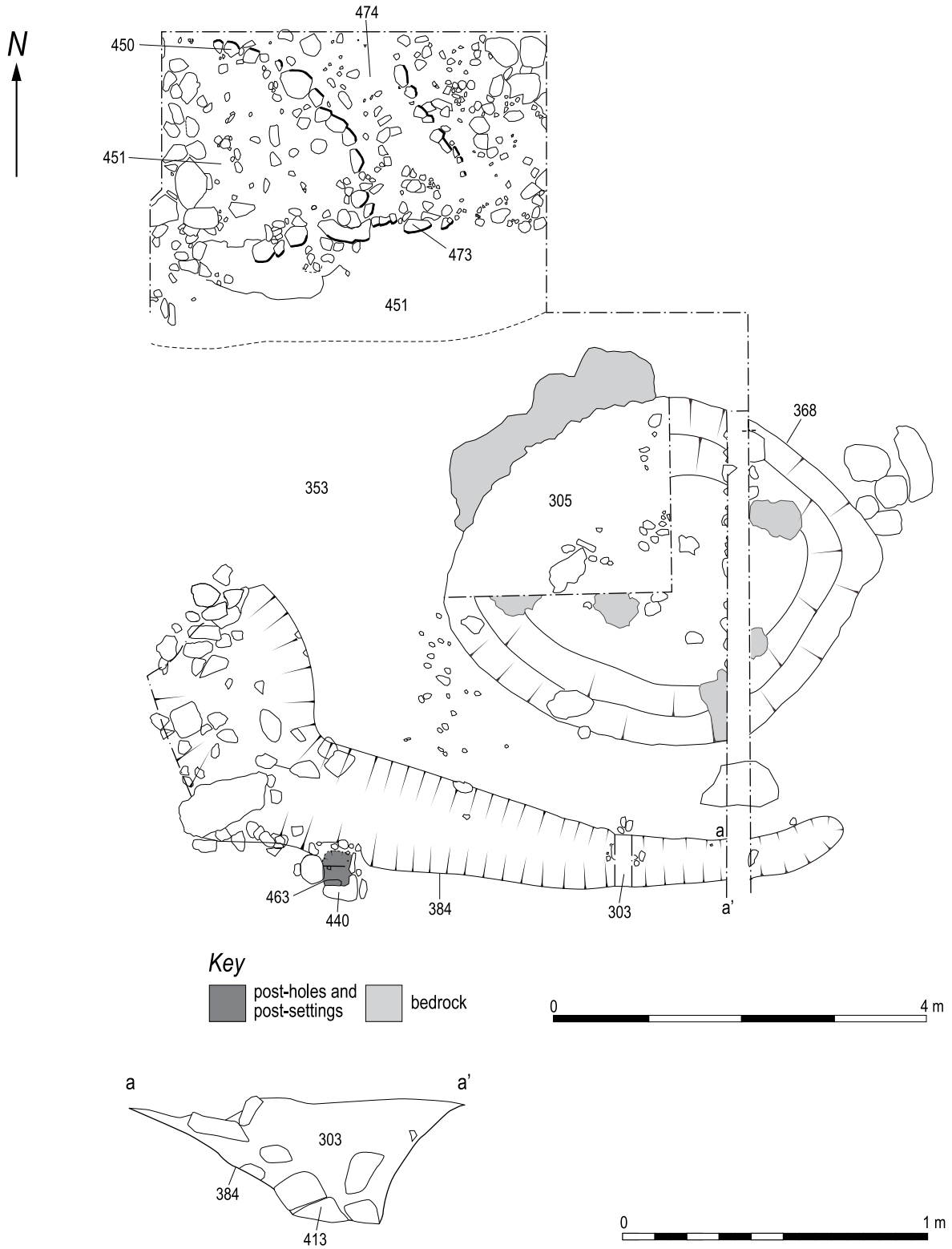
Other features may relate to the farmstead's inception. In its early phases, a large, shallow scoop (368) existed, about 5m across but only 0.35m deep (Figure 7.6). It may have been created by the trampling and wallowing of livestock. It contained stones and midden material (305)/(306), including hearth waste, pottery and human bone (2g), which also could have been introduced through animals' trampling. The inhabitants of the site dug a short ditch (384), about 7m long and 0.35m deep, to curve around the south and west of the scoop. They set stones (483) in its base, probably to support a fence or palisade, and backfilled it (presumably around the base of the standing fence) with more midden material that, two millennia later, appeared as dark grey-brown clay silt (303) containing burnt heather and some cereal grains. The fence would have created a yard that partly enclosed the scoop and the slight structures.

The inhabitants may have had cooking or parching fires in the southern part of area A. The fires left a spread of black silty clay (388) full of birch, hazel and heather charcoal, burnt animal bone and pottery, human bone (0.5g) and grains of wheat, naked barley and six-row barley. A grain of barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*) from the clay produced a radiocarbon date of 350 BC–AD 10 (SUERC-5620). A hollow way (478), evident as a broad, shallow, linear hollow, led into the settlement from the east, leading directly to the site of these fires. This track may have been worn down as people regularly walked and rode to and from their fields or the forests or other settlements.

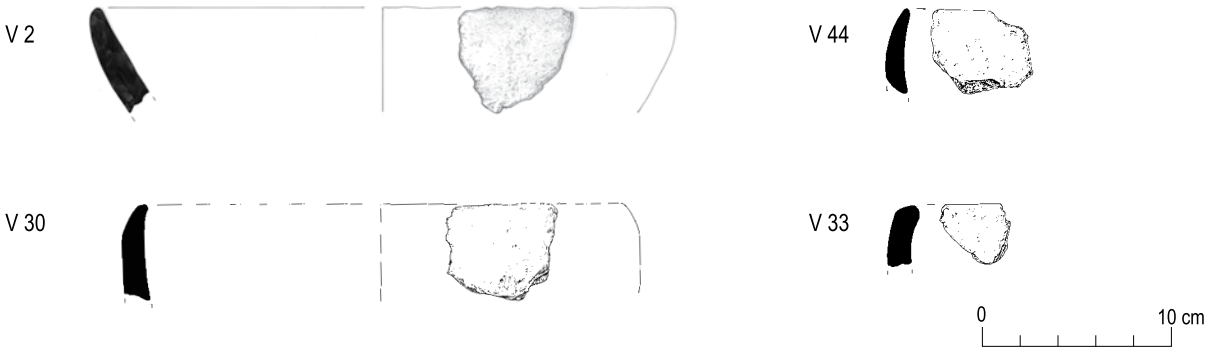
Also about this time, the inhabitants scooped out or wore down a broad, shallow hollow (132) to the south-west of the fenced-off yard, next to the bedrock hump. They set stones (037) along its southern edge to partly enclose it; this putative structure may have been more substantial originally and was probably later robbed for stone, as only a few of its stones survived into later phases. Into the base of the hollow, they trampled flecks of charcoal, daub and pot sherds, along with teeth from horses and other ungulates, burnt sheep/goat bone and human bone (1.6g). Birch (*Betula*) charcoal from a lower fill (308) dated to 180 BC–AD 20 (SUERC-5518).



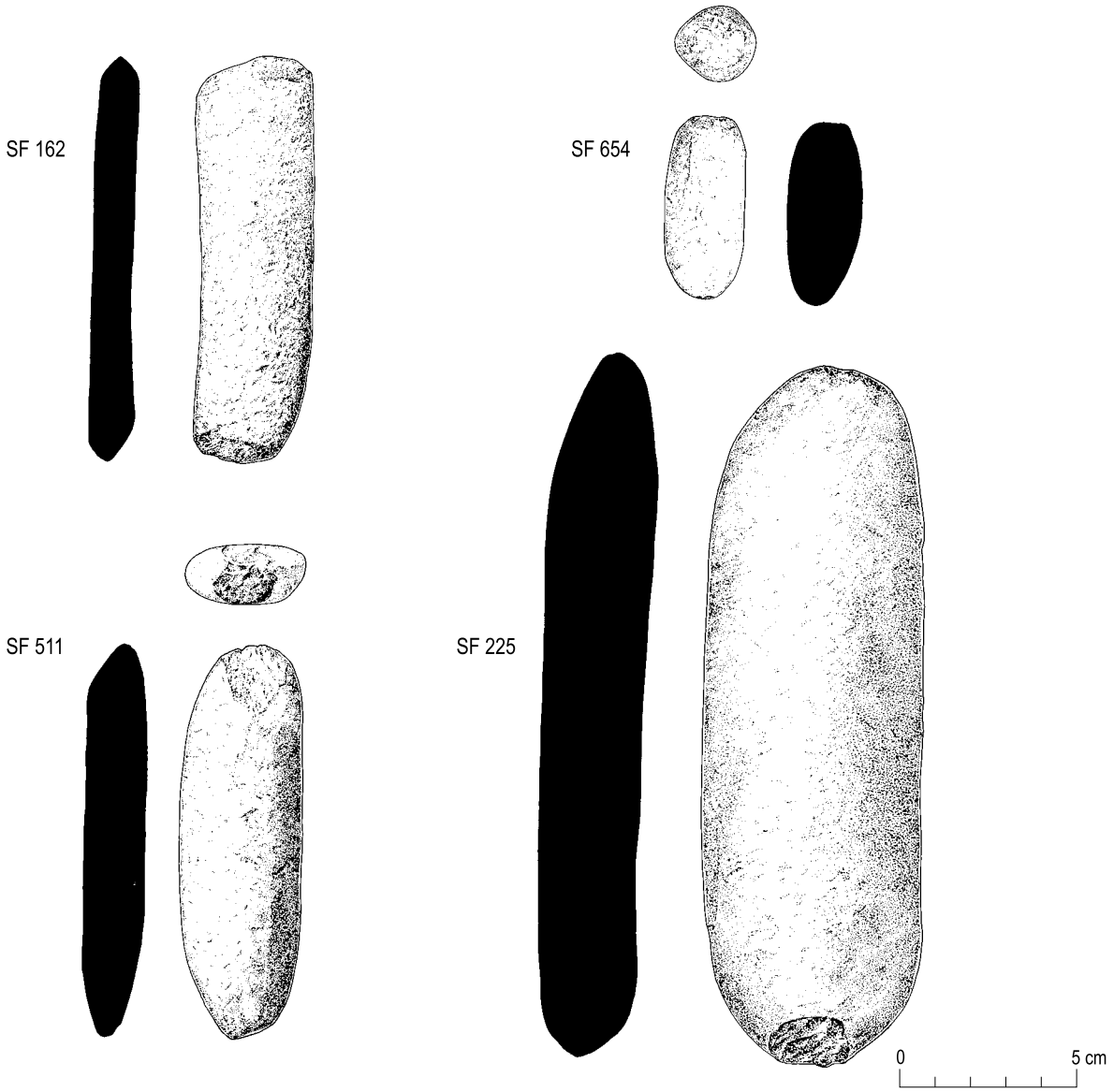
7.5 The phase 1 features at Phantassie.



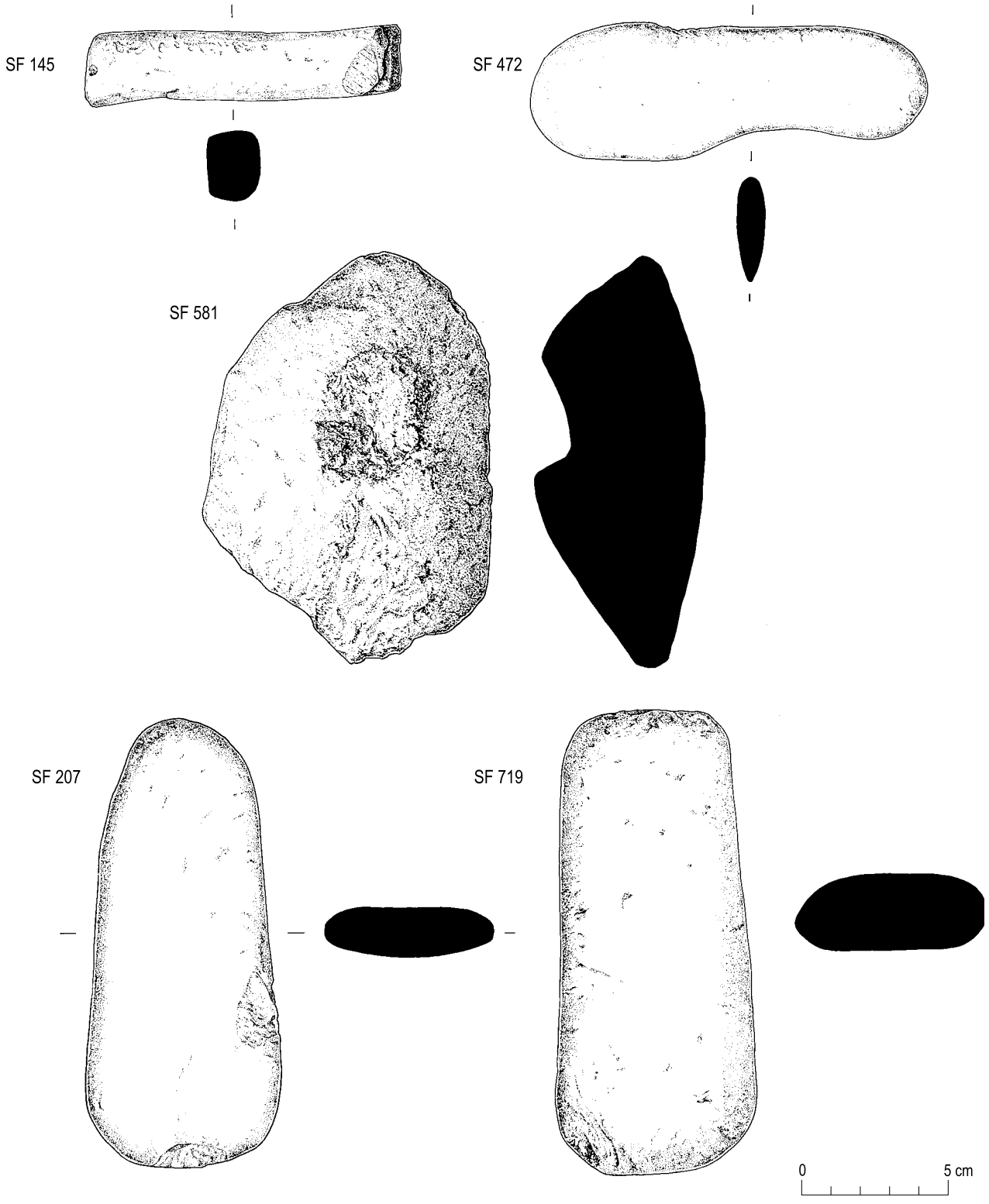
7.6 The phase 1 ditch, scoop and early structural features.



7.7 Pottery from phases 1 and 2.



7.8 Hammerstones, pounders and a whetstone.



7.9 Whetstones and a mortar.

7.10 The phase 2 features at Phantassie.

Because of the limited investigation of earliest deposits and also because of the intensity of later activity in the settlement, our picture of this earliest phase of occupation is somewhat imprecise and certainly incomplete. However, artefacts indicate the domestic nature of this phase of occupation. Sherds of pottery from nine pottery vessels were found in various phase 1 deposits (Figure 7.7), many of them trampled into the early ground surfaces (V 2), in the fill of the ditch (V 44) and in the ashes of the hearth (V 30). The ditch fill (303) also contained a polisher (Figure 7.8: SF 511).

Phase 2

From the second or first century BC, those living at Phantassie began to build more substantial buildings, pathways and boundaries in stone, defining the physical parameters and patterns of movement in the farmstead more formally (Figure 7.10).

A sub-rectangular house [1] in a yard

To the east of the bedrock hump, on the northern edge of the level ground, the inhabitants of Phantassie built a large sub-rectangular structure [1] (Figures 7.11, 7.12 and 7.14). It had a rounded (and, by the time of excavation, poorly defined) northern end, while its southern end was built over the in-filled trench (384). It survived best on its eastern side, where it proved to have a complex history (Figure 7.13). Its builders constructed the eastern wall (311) on the existing ground surface (424), setting slabs and boulders end-to-end to form two parallel wall faces. They packed the gap between these faces with midden material (354), which contained iron-working waste, human bone (0.1g) and rake-out from hearths where heather, birch, hazel and barley had been burnt. The northern end of the wall seemed to curve around to the west, perhaps defining a small yard or antechamber that abutted the bedrock, but later disturbance made this difficult to establish with certainty. A similar wall (105)/(459) ran parallel to the eastern one, defining the building on the west, but it survived less well.

At least one post (about 70mm in diameter) stood in the midden-filled core of the eastern wall, within a post-setting (434) framed by stones, with large pot sherds packed around its base. Other posts may have stood elsewhere along the building's walls, but time did not permit the discovery of more settings. The building's superstructure was probably of turf or timber, with posts supporting a thatched roof. Against the outer side of the eastern wall (311), a wedge of sticky, dark grey-brown clay silt (465) built up, possibly remnants of a turf superstructure.

Later occupants of the house thickened its eastern wall (Figure 7.13), perhaps to provide extra support for a boundary wall constructed against it (see below). They packed midden material (126) against the original wall face and faced it with an outer skin of large slabs, setting some of them upright in a cut (477) which they filled with hearth waste rich in burnt cereals and charcoal, including oak, birch, heather and many pieces of 12-year-old hazel roundwood. The hazel wands may once have been woven into a wattle panel that later burned – perhaps it was flung on a hearth when it began to fall apart or caught fire, accidentally, where it stood. The uniform thickness of the roundwood pieces suggests that the inhabitants were coppicing hazel to produce wands for building projects (Miller and Ramsay, this report). One of the hazel fragments produced a radiocarbon date of 110 BC–80 AD (SUERC-5490).

It appears that people entered the house from the south-east, through a door that swung on a post that stood in a deep, stone-packed post-hole (453)/(454)/(455). Bits of burnt heather and cereal found their way into the post-hole, scattered or swept as people moved out of the building over a lightly metalled surface (352) to the north of the in-filled trench (384).

Inside, the building was divided in two by a ridge of degraded bedrock (460) that ran across it; this could indicate where a partition had divided the interior, with the bedrock worn away to either side of it through use. The inhabitants trampled cereal grains, charcoal and flecks of burnt clay into the earthen floor. They may have swept it regularly, clearing away broken pieces of pottery (V 189 and 191) and animal bone from their meals, although there was no concrete evidence for discrete episodes of sweeping or trampling. They pressed small cobbles (461) into the floor to make it harder-wearing, with a band laid across the doorway to form a rough threshold. Only two portions of the floor deposit were excavated. From these samples, it seems that the southern part of the floor (362) was rather dirtier; it produced more charcoal, burnt animal bone and burnt human bone (1.2g). The northern part (361) produced relatively more cereal grains (as well as fragments of burnt human bone (0.5g)). This could be because the southern part lay closer to the door and the inhabitants walked over it more often, perhaps carrying hearth waste in a basket, from which flakes of charcoal sometimes sifted out to lodge in the floor. It is also possible that midden or other material was imported to repair the floor.

Charcoal from a putative hearth scattered less densely over the area to the west, which seemed to lie outside the building and was covered in firm reddish sand (369) with rough cobbling (365) set into it. A hearth (312) lay against the edge of the bedrock in this area, consisting of small, closely set slabs that were reddened by heat; little charcoal was found around it, so either highly oxidising fires burned here or the residues had been carefully cleaned out. To the

7.11 Plan of Structure 1, the boundary wall and the palisade ditch.

north, some short lengths of walling (112 and 182) may have defined a woodshed or other outbuilding.

A yard for Structure 1

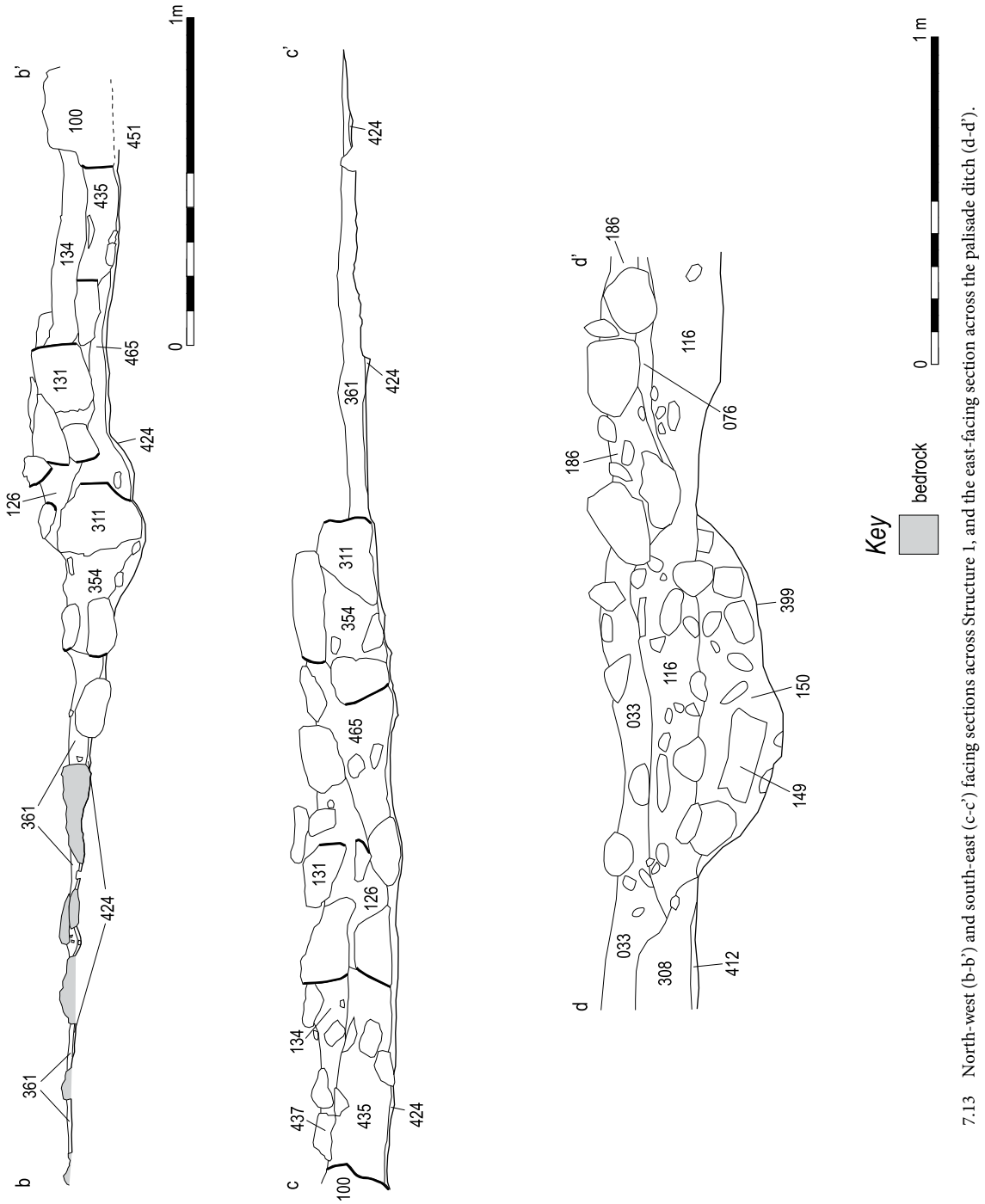
The occupants of Phantassie appear to have partly enclosed the house with another fence or palisade (Figures 7.10 and 7.11). They dug a shallow trench or ditch (399)/(439) that ran eastward for about 20m from the bedrock hump, skirting the building's southern end and running parallel to the filled-in ditch (384). They left this new trench open for a while, and its sides weathered and the base filled with silt and gravel (442). Later, they filled it with midden material (150)/(409), scooping up charcoal from birch, willow, hazel, heather and blackthorn type trees, as well as burnt cereal grains, pottery sherds, a cattle mandible and teeth and other burnt animal bones, and human bone (2.4g). Clusters of stones (149) along the length of the trench may have supported a wooden fence, with the midden helping to hold it in place, and a stone-lined post-hole (464) dug into the fill of the old northern ditch may have also supported it. The fence may have provided protection from the wind, or kept stock away from the house. Several kinks and bulges along the line of the trench suggest it was made in four segments.

A cereal grain from the eastern fill (438) of the ditch produced a radiocarbon date of 200 BC–AD 30 (SUERC-5636), while birch (*Corylus*) charcoal from its western fill (150) was dated to much later, 20 BC–AD 210 (SUERC-5637). The latter material may be intrusive, given the dates from material that sealed the ditch (see below), but the overlap in the calibrated ranges could still suggest that the ditch was filled in the last decades BC or the first decades AD – which accords with the first century BC/AD date for the thickening of Structure 1's wall. Although there was no direct stratigraphic relationship between the shorter northern trench and the longer southern one, the fact that the former lay beneath Structure 1 while the latter respected it suggests that they relate to different periods.

A cobbled, gated path and a wall

The occupants of the farmstead created a path that led northward to Structure 1 (Figure 7.10). They appear to have left an entrance through the palisade, indicated by a gap in the packing stones (149) where the path crossed the ditch. The path was about seven paces (6.7m) long, and wide enough for one person to walk with plenty of room on either side. It was floored with cobbles (468), with a

7.12 Structure 1 during excavation.



7.13 North-west (b-b') and south-east (c-c') facing sections across Structure 1, and the east-facing section across the palisade ditch (d-d').

7.2

The querns from Phantassie and Eweford Cottages

The Phantassie querns are an interesting assemblage. All are bun-shaped rotary querns, consistent with the later Iron Age date of the settlement.

Table 7.1 Characteristics of the Phantassie querns. An asterisk indicates an incomplete quern

SF no	*Diameter (mm)*	*Height (mm)*	*Handles*	*Decoration*	*Notes*
72	354	88	2 horizontal	Socket	
231*	?	126			Unfinished quern
398*	400	57	1 slot	-	Unusual slot
495*	*c.* 364	70	2 horizontal 1 vertical	-	
508	343	107	1 horizontal 1 vertical	Collar	
563*	392	85	1 horizontal	Quarters; one radial, one cup-marked	Socket worn through

Interestingly, one of the querns was unfinished. All the others had seen heavy use, with polishing on the grinding surfaces and handle slots worn through. In three cases, the handle socket had been replaced; with two of these querns, whoever was using them eventually switched to vertical handles. This is similar to the picture from several other sites (for example, St Germains, Traprain Law, and the Dod; Alexander and Watkins 1998, 222, illus 12; unpub.; Cool 2000, 305–7). It seems that querns were usually heavily used before they were discarded for grinding corn. At Phantassie, most of the querns were re-used in walls and paved surfaces (see Figure 7.18).

A surprising number of the finished Phantassie querns (three out of five) are decorated. One has a pecked band around the feeder pipe to create a low collar, another has radial lines, raised areas and circular hollows, while the third has circular hollows around the handle socket. Querns are rarely decorated – we know of only about 30 other Scottish examples, from a dataset of several hundred – and the proportion at Phantassie is remarkable. Parallels for the decoration are discussed in the full report (McLaren and Hunter, Chapter 12). However, it is notable that there are two other local examples of bun-shaped querns with cup-marked decoration, from Traprain Law and Broxmouth (both unpublished, and held in the National Museums of Scotland), a style which is otherwise rare. Although the decoration is not exactly the same, this seems to be a related decorative style, suggesting a regional type.

The excavations at Eweford Cottages also produced rotary querns, with three intact but heavily used stones (an upper and two lower quern stones) re-used in paving. The incorporation of large stone tools, especially quern stones, in structural elements is a common feature on Iron Age sites; there are plentiful East Lothian parallels, for instance from Traprain Law, St Germains and Dryburn Bridge (for example, Cree 1924, 247; Alexander and Watkins 1998, 222, illus 12, 18:12; Dunwell forthcoming). Hingley (1992, 32) has discussed the likely symbolic significance of the re-use of quern stones, suggesting their placement within structural features or settlement boundaries had a symbolic as much as a functional role. The positioning of re-used querns at Eweford Cottages and Phantassie had clear functional aspects, but this does not rule out symbolic aspects as well.

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double-skinned stone wall base (337) along its western edge. Near its southern end, a shallow, stone-packed setting (343) supported a post, while another post stood at its northern end in a post-hole (358) surrounded by a flat, oval stone setting (336).

From here, a curving length of walling (315; Figure 7.11), again with two faces and surviving to two courses high, continued along the western side of the path and the eastern side of the hollow (132) that had filled with trampled occupation debris in a previous phase. The stone wall base may have supported a hurdle fence along the western side of the passage, or it may have originally stood higher and been robbed at a later date. The posts at either end may have supported gates, or wattle panels along the passage's east side. Another post-setting (382) along its western side, beside a gap in the wall (337) where it joined the hollow, may have supported a gate leading westward, or a light wall that enclosed the hollow.

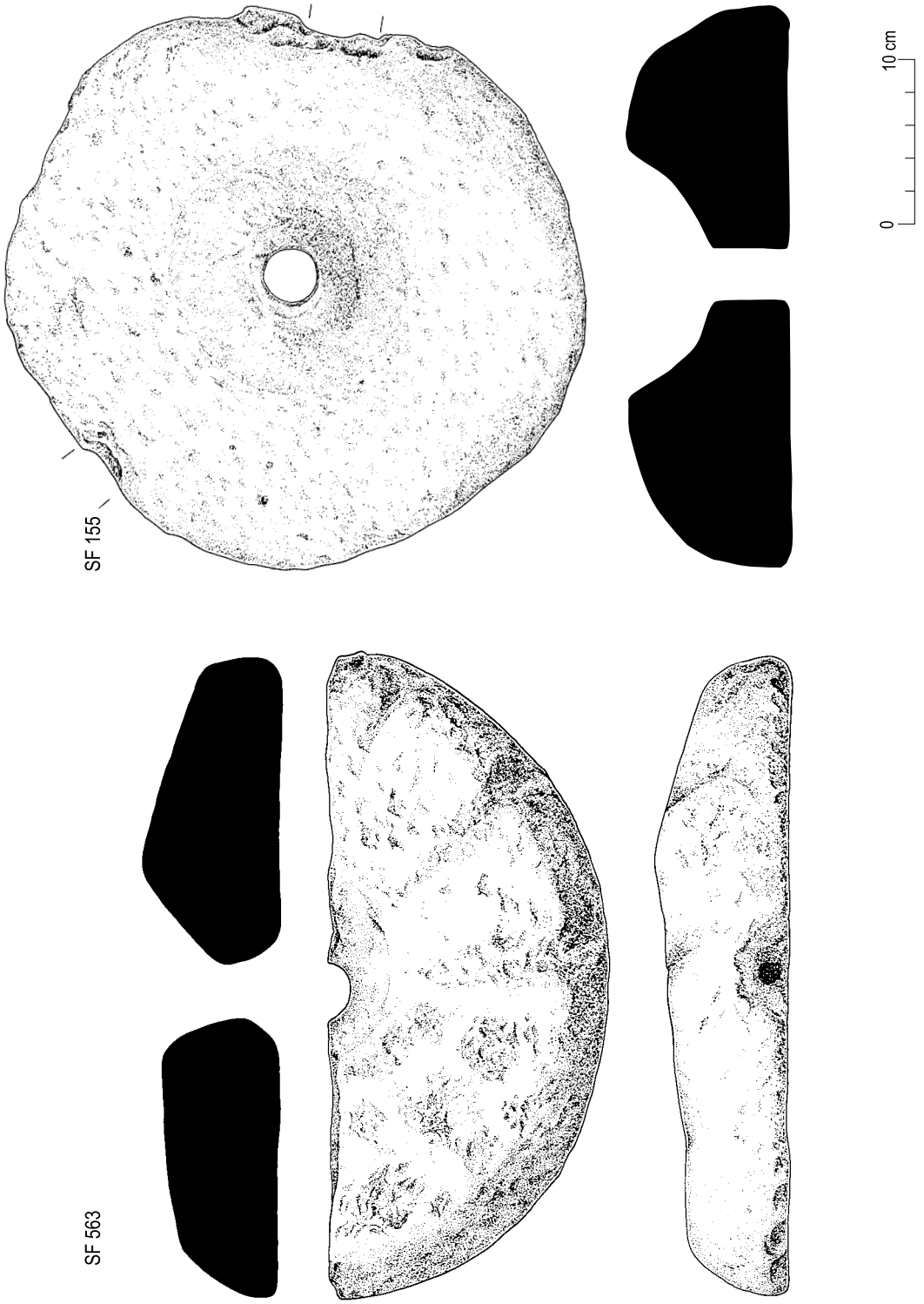
A long-lasting stone boundary

After they had built Structure 1, the inhabitants of Phantassie defined the heart of their settlement in a monumental and ambitious way. They further enclosed the area of their buildings and formally defined the space they inhabited, an arrangement which would endure through the life of the farmstead. Using large boulders up to 0.5m across, some water-worn and apparently taken from a river bed, they built a massive wall base or revetment around the settlement platform, laying the stones only one or two deep but about 1.8m across (Figure 7.15). They built it to run eastward (100) for 14m from Structure 1, then turned a rounded corner and extended it for another 4m to the south (088). For at least part of this latter stretch, the builders made a shallow cut (421) into the existing ground surface (160) and onto bedrock to level the ground.

The breadth of the structure and its relatively flat surface suggest that, in addition to defining the heart of the settlement, it may have been a working area or provided hard standing for cattle to the east of Structure 1. Three shallow post-settings (166)/(099)/(323) in the stonework may have held posts that supported a fence along the north side, which would have sheltered the platform from northerly winds. Near the inside curve of its corner, the builders laid part of a well-used, upper bun rotary quernstone (Figure 7.16: SF 563). The upper surface had been decorated with radial lines and pecked

7.14 Reconstruction of the farmstead during phase 2.

7.15 Plan of the eastern part of the boundary wall and areas of hard standing.



7.16 Querns from phase 2.

circles, and it had been laid with the decoration showing (see text box 7.2).

The inhabitants built this stone boundary to respect the large scoop (368), meaning that the latter may still have been a focus for wallowing livestock at this stage, and laid cobbling (379) between the scoop and the boundary. The boundary and the putative fence supported in the southern trench (399) would have formed a small, square, open yard adjoining Structure 1 on the east (see Figure 7.14). One would have entered the yard from the south-east, and from here had access to the door of the building.

Hard standing for cattle, and a gate

The lower ground to the east of the boundary wall (100)/(088) may have been given over to cattle. It was covered with large, flat boulders, laid one stone deep over an area about 8m square, abutting the boundary wall (Figure 7.15). If the eastern leg of the boundary (088) had originally provided hard standing, then this represented its extension, suggesting the farmstead began to keep more cattle as time went on.

Where the bedrock outcropped close to the surface, the boulders had been fitted around them, probably to level up the uneven natural surface and create areas of hard standing. There was a linear gap through the two areas of hard standing ((124) to the east and (125) to the west), and at the southern end was a ditch (429) that had been lined or revetted with stones (325). When it was excavated, rubble (430) was found lying against the revetment, and this may have been a collapsed wall that stood above ground. Although only part of the ditch was excavated, the upper stones of the putative collapsed wall (430) continued in an arcing line to the west and curved sharply to the east, perhaps indicating the line of the ditch. Barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*) from a layer of clay sand (431) that formed over the rubble within the ditch yielded a radiocarbon date of 160 BC–AD 80 (SUERC-5634), while birch (*Betula*) from a later silt (326) produced a date of AD 0–220 (SUERC-5627). The stone-lined ditch and putative wall may have kept stock from straying off the hard standing.

To the south of here, where the hollow-way (438) led into the farmstead from the east, this generation of Phantassie dwellers created what may have been a more formal entrance. They laid well-defined areas of paving (355)/(356)/(155) over the western end of the hollow way (438) and the eastern end of the southern ditch (399), with a large stone post-setting (357) against the north side of the paving (not illustrated). So little of this stonework was exposed during excavation that its interpretation is difficult, but it could have supported a gate leading into the farmstead. What is clear is that the upper stone of a heavily used bun rotary quern (SF 155), with pecked decoration around its socket, was set into the southern paving (155) (Figure 7.16).

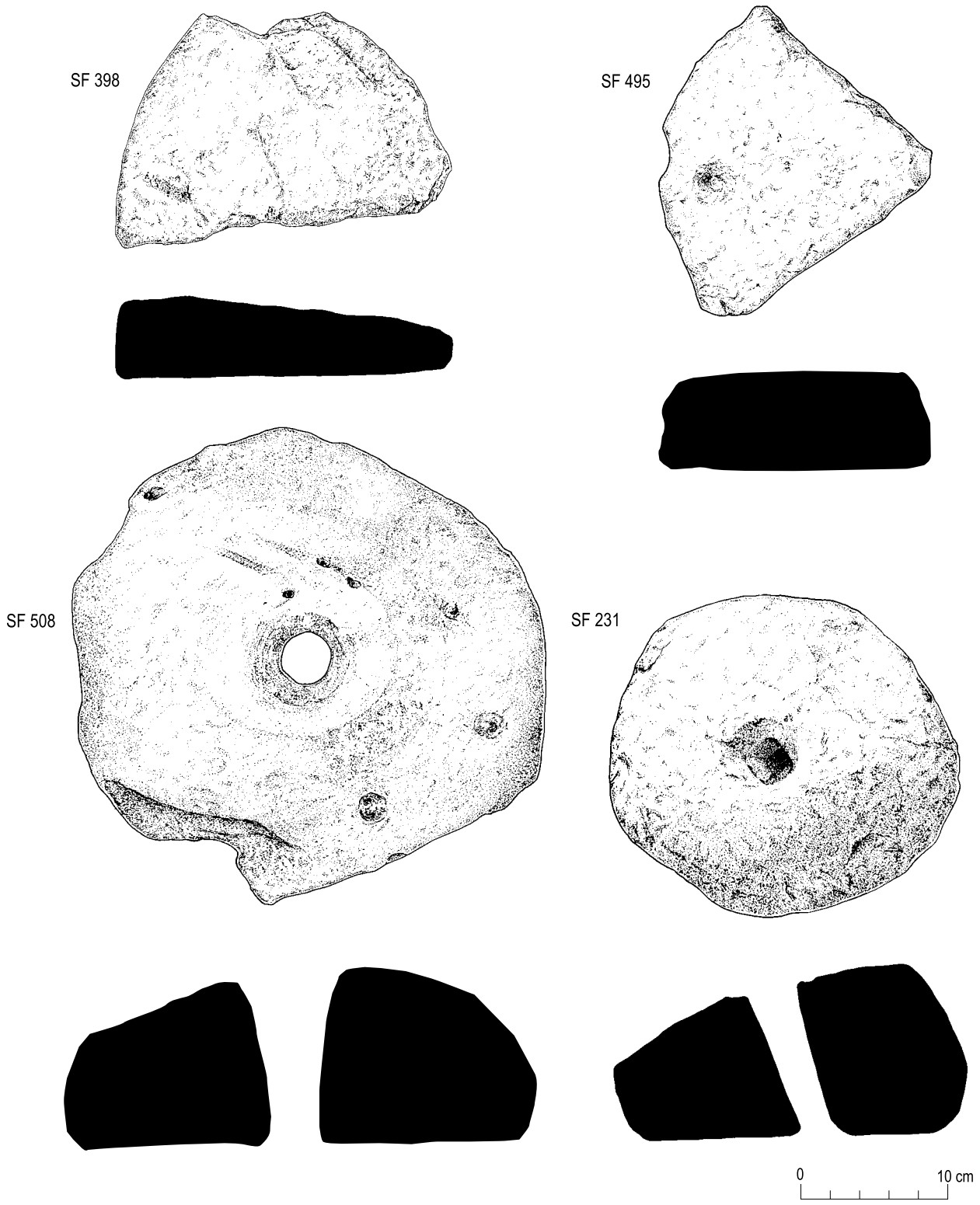
A frame and fire for parching grain (Structure 2)

To the west of the cobbled path and south-west of the building [1] in its yard, an enigmatic set of features may have been associated with the drying of grain over fire (Figure 7.10). They consisted of an arrangement of three post-holes or pits: a large post-pit (111), its base packed with stones to support a post, had a fill (031) containing burnt human bone (0.4g); a smaller, slab-covered pit lay immediately to the east (426) of this (and contained 2.2g of human bone), and another stone-packed post-hole (377) lay 3m to the west. These features are collectively termed Structure 2. A spread of scorched, pink-orange silty clay (110) built up around the pit and post-holes, rich in heather charcoal and heavily burnt cereal grains, including six-row barley – as well as pot sherds and a little human bone (0.1g). The burnt spread also partly covered a filled-in, shallow, curvilinear ditch (117) which disappeared beneath the southern baulk, and was perhaps a foundation trench for an earlier building.

Activity in this area could have involved cereal parching, from the relative abundance of burnt cereal grains and heather charcoal scattered here (Miller and Ramsay, see Chapter 12 and Archive). The large post-hole and the smaller one may have supported a frame that suspended cereal over a fire, allowing it to dry gently; the role of the slab-covered pit is unclear, but it appears to have been contemporary with the post-holes. The radiocarbon dates from these features form a tight suite: barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*) from the scorched deposit (110) dated to 110 BC–AD 80 (SUERC-5502); birch (*Betula*) charcoal from the post-pipe (163) in the large post-pit (111) dated to 160 BC –AD 70 (SUERC-5501), and birch charcoal from the fill (423) of the slab-covered pit (426) dated to 150 BC–AD 80 (SUERC-5629) – calibrated ranges that coincide with the cutting of the hazel roundwood that was eventually used in Structure 1's thickened wall.

A light enclosure (Structure 3)

Radiocarbon dates suggest that, around the same time, an ephemeral structure [3] stood to the north of the sub-rectangular house [1] on ground that sloped down from the settlement platform (Figure 7.10). Two curvilinear stoney spreads (060 and 062) defined it, and had perhaps held a light, stake-built wall in place. The firm, dark brown sticky matrix (061) of the stones may have been remnants of turf cladding. Sherds from five pots were found in it (Figure 7.7: V 33), along with a little human bone (0.1g). Hazel (*Corylus*) from the wall's matrix (061) produced a radiocarbon date of 100 BC–AD 130 (SUERC-8196). Inside the building or enclosure, a compact floor surface (127)



7.17 Querns from phases 3 and 4.

contained sherds of pottery (V 145) and part of a shale bracelet (SF 357; see text box 10.1, Figure 10.8). Outside to the east, the builders laid slabs (097) to fit snugly around a lump of bedrock, creating a level surface. Part of a copper alloy trumpet brooch was found on the slabs (Figure 7.27: SF 188).

A midden store (Structure 4)

About 30 paces to the west of the site of the sub-rectangular structure [1], and down a slight slope, the farmstead had another, separate part that seemed to be the focus of agricultural activities rather than dwelling (Area C).

Here, the bedrock dipped to form a large hollow. The inhabitants of Phantassie seem to have enhanced this, chipping away the rock in straight, nearly vertical faces, creating a sub-rectangular hollow about 0.5m deep, 6m east to west and 4m north to south. Its base was undulating, irregular and weathered, and no cut marks could be identified with confidence during excavation, but the hollow's regular shape and the way it was used suggested that it had been modified. They built stone wall bases along the east (241) and west (251) sides of the hollow (Structure 4), and some of the boulders used derived from bedrock and had, perhaps, been quarried from the hollow itself (Figure 7.19). Over a period of several generations, the inhabitants of the farmstead dumped their rubbish into the hollow (the evidence for this is discussed further below). A light wall stood around the south and west sides of the hollow. It probably consisted of wattle-and-daub (see Phase 4 below), supported on uprights that were bedded in the underlying midden and supported by an arc of stones (235)/(246). A gully (270) led out of the hollow for about 5m to the west; its base was packed with stones (269), and it may have allowed water to drain out. Another stone-filled gully (278) on the north-east may have served a similar purpose.

When the inhabitants were first using the hollow as a midden store, they made a hard surface (253) of small stones, packed around lumps of bedrock and edged with boulders, on its east side. This level area lay closest to the settlement platform. The passage of feet formed a layer of dark brown sandy silt (252) over the stones, with abundant heather charcoal and a cattle tooth trampled into it. Later, they set a line of slabs (254) that descended into the hollow to a large, firmly set pink slab, flanked by two upright stones. This formed rough steps down into it, and they laid small cobbles (262), with another boulder kerb (264) bordering these and an area of paving at the top of the steps, sealing the stoney surface (253).

A post-built structure [5] and a small cell [6]

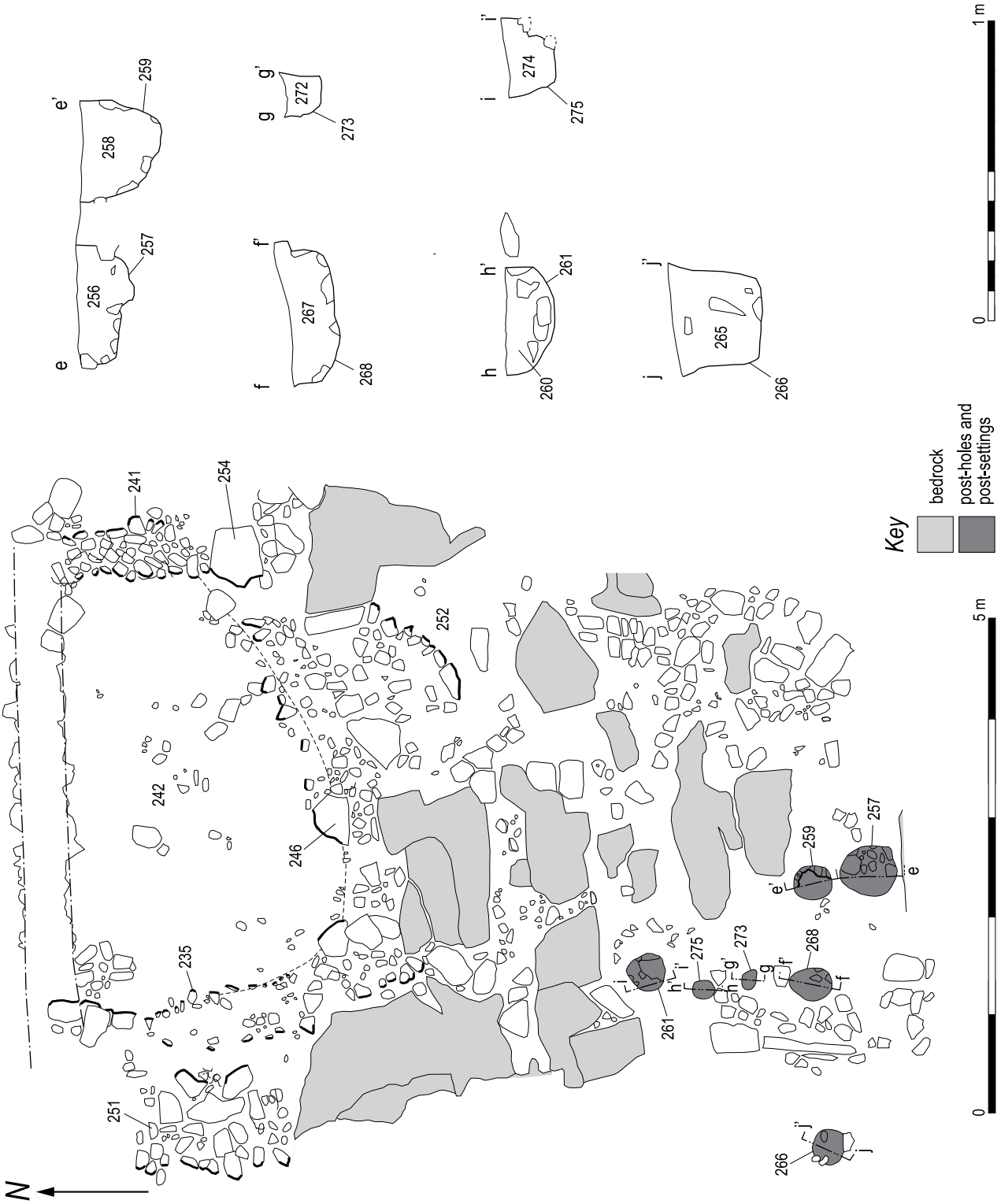
Directly to the south of the midden store, on level ground between outcropping bedrock, was a post-built, T-shaped or narrow rectangular building (Structure 5) (Figure 7.19). Two posts in stone-packed post-holes (259 and 257) formed a line that ran parallel to four posts, set in large, packed post-holes (261 and 268) at either end with two smaller pits (273 and 275) between them. A seventh post stood in a post-hole (266) farther to the west again. The fills of these post-holes and pits produced about 4g of heather charcoal along with birch, hazel and cereals, and cremated human bone (2.4g). A grain of six-row barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*) from the fill (267) of one post-hole (268) produced a date of 100 BC–AD 90 (SUERC-5531), while hazel (*Corylus*) from another (256) dated to 170 BC–AD 50 (SUERC-5530).

7.18 Quern (SF 508) built into a post setting in Structure 7.

To the south-west of the midden store was a small cell [6], defined by a semi-circular stone kerb or wall base built against an outcrop, which may have been in use at the same time (Figures 7.20 and 7.21). This cell seems to have been abandoned for a time, because a deposit of sandy silt (234), containing hazel and heather charcoal, burnt human bone (2.4 g), sherds of pottery and a broken bone point accumulated over the wall base. The cell was later rebuilt with another stone kerb (219) that echoed the earlier one but lay slightly outside of it. Hazel (*Corylus*) charcoal from the silty deposit (234) produced a radiocarbon date of 170 BC–AD 30 (SUERC-5506), providing a terminus post quem for the rebuilding of the cell.

Phase 3

During the decades that followed, the settlement platform at Phantassie became a busier, more crowded farmstead, perhaps as generations multiplied or their farming grew more productive. From the spatial and stratigraphic relationships between the new buildings, it is possible to reconstruct how the settlement grew on the ground surfaces that had built up during previous lifetimes (Figure 7.22).



7.19 Plan of Structures 4 and 5, with sections through the Structure 5 post-holes.

7.20 Plans of the earlier (top) and later phases of Structure 6.

A rubbly, cellular building [7]

Probably the first new building was a cellular structure [7]; the others grew up around it. It had thick, rubbly wall bases (054)/(089)/(153)/(482) that defined an irregularly shaped, roughly oval building, measuring about 6m north/south by 4m wide and nestling into the massive stone boundary (088) and the hard standing (125) (Figure 7.23). The walls seem to have had recesses, perhaps for storage. Two large stone post-settings, one (065) against the south end and another (161) against the east side, would have helped to support the roof. Into the latter, the builders set the upper stone from a decorated, well-used rotary quern (SF 508) (Figures 7.17 and 7.18; see text box 7.2). A third post stood in a stone-packed post-hole (349) at the building's north end. The brown clay silt matrices (053)/(063)/(193) of the walls may have been the remnants of an organic superstructure that stood on the wall bases. People entered the building through a doorway on the south-east, through a porch or a gate supported on posts that stood in two small, stone-packed post-holes (390) and (444) (Figure 7.24).

Although the interior was relatively clean, excavation found a few clues of what people did inside it; it may have been a workshop. Just inside the entrance, a small, shallow pit (327) was full of fragments of degraded shale (302), so people may have been shaping shale into bangles or other objects here. As they swept the chips of shale into the pit, the broom caught burnt cereal grains and pieces of industrial waste as well. On the eastern side of the interior, a slab (338) lay flat on the floor against the wall, surrounded by a thick deposit of blue-green clay (339), with small stones set on edge around it. This might have had an industrial function, perhaps forming the base of a quenching tank used during metalworking.

In the northern part of the building, cobbling (340) covered the midden that filled the large scoop (368) of the earlier occupation. Beside this, larger stones (090) extended inward from the wall, creating a bay or cell. Bits of burnt human bone (2.7g) and the molar of a large ungulate got caught in the soil matrix (194) that built up between the stones.

A broken iron linch pin from a chariot or cart (SF 588; Figure 7.25), decorated with strips of inlaid bronze, also lay between the stones. It may have been quite old when it was brought into the house: J-shaped linch pins are usually thought to date to the third to the first centuries BC (see text box 7.3; Hunter, see Chapter 12 and Archive). The paving in which the pin had become caught sealed the upper fill (335) of the large scoop, and cherry type (*Prunoidaea*) charcoal from that fill dated to 40 BC–AD 130 (SUERC-5529); this provides a *terminus post quem* for the linch pin's deposition which is slightly later than the usual date range for these objects. It could have fallen from an old chariot and been kept as an heirloom, with the intention of recycling the metal.

Metalling the hollow way

The occupants of Phantassie were still walking and riding into the settlement on the long-established track (478) that led into it from the east, along the contour (Figure

7.3

The chariot linch pin from Phantassie

One of the most striking and unusual objects from Phantassie was a decorated iron linch pin, the first of its kind from Scotland (Figure 7.25). This would have secured a wheel on a chariot. It is J-shaped, about 143mm high, tapered to fit through a hole in the axle, and with a loop (now broken) to tie it in place. It is made of iron, and the head is decorated with two inlaid strips made of bronze with a trace of lead.

Although J-shaped linch pins are known from southern Britain (for example, from the recently excavated chariot burial at Wetwang in Yorkshire; J D Hill, pers comm), there are no close parallels for this one. Chariots were exclusive vehicles during the Iron Age, and the decoration of this linch pin suggests it was an object of some status, although it had broken and been discarded. While this is the first Scottish example, there must have been more in use in Scotland; our picture of Iron Age iron is very partial due both to its poor survival and to our ancestors' frustrating aversion to burials and hoards at this period. Related pins elsewhere suggest a third to first century BC date (see Archive Report for details).

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7.22). The passage of feet, hooves and wheels had worn the boulder clay away into a slight hollow, and in wet weather it was probably slippery and treacherous. To firm up the ground, they spread a layer of small rubble (072) along it, and toward the east (at the edge of the excavation trench) they built a kerb of boulders along its upslope side. This created a metalled track about two metres across, wide enough for a farm cart or chariot, or for two people to walk side by side with room to spare.

With time and traffic, the stones became firmly packed together in a matrix formed from the dirt and detritus of daily life (073). Mud that clung to wheels, shoes and hooves became trampled into the soil between the stones. Sherds of pottery from 15 different vessels (Figure 7.26: V 24), as well as many smaller fragments, scattered over the stones, along with pieces of charcoal (hazel, heather, birch), burnt cereals, and burnt animal and human bone (3.3g) – perhaps shaken out of carts heaped with midden that were heading for the fields. If the paving (355)/(356)/(155) and large post-setting (357) at the track's western end had formerly supported a gate, it had fallen out of use by this time: the rubble surface of the metalled track spread over it. A slight wall base (075) along its northern side may have defined the approach toward the cellular structure [7]. The orange-brown sandy silt (074) that formed around it contained a concentrated scatter of human bone (18.5g) and sherds from three pots.

A covered porch [8]

As people entered the farmstead along the track from the east, they now passed between two short walls that seem to have formed a porch (Structure 8; Figure 7.23). Its north wall was supported on two posts, seated in post-holes (380) and (385), with stones jammed into both to keep the posts upright (Figure 7.24). A line of boulders (347) beside the posts formed the wall base. People leaving the cellular structure [7] might have turned south and entered the porch through a door that swung on a pivot hole in the large, flat stone at the wall's eastern end. Two posts also supported the wall on the southern side of the porch (Figure 7.24), with rubble (068) like that making up the track laid around their bases.

After the track had been in use for some time, the occupants of Phantassie improved the porch, setting large slabs to form two areas of paving, (052) to the west and east (067). The western paving (052) extended north to the wall of structure 7, so the porch clearly abutted that building. The paving also led people directly into a concentric structure [9], and to a fire that burned at its centre.

A concentric house [9], and a fire for parching grain

Whoever designed Structure 9 built in concentric arcs. The building had a wall base defined on the west and south

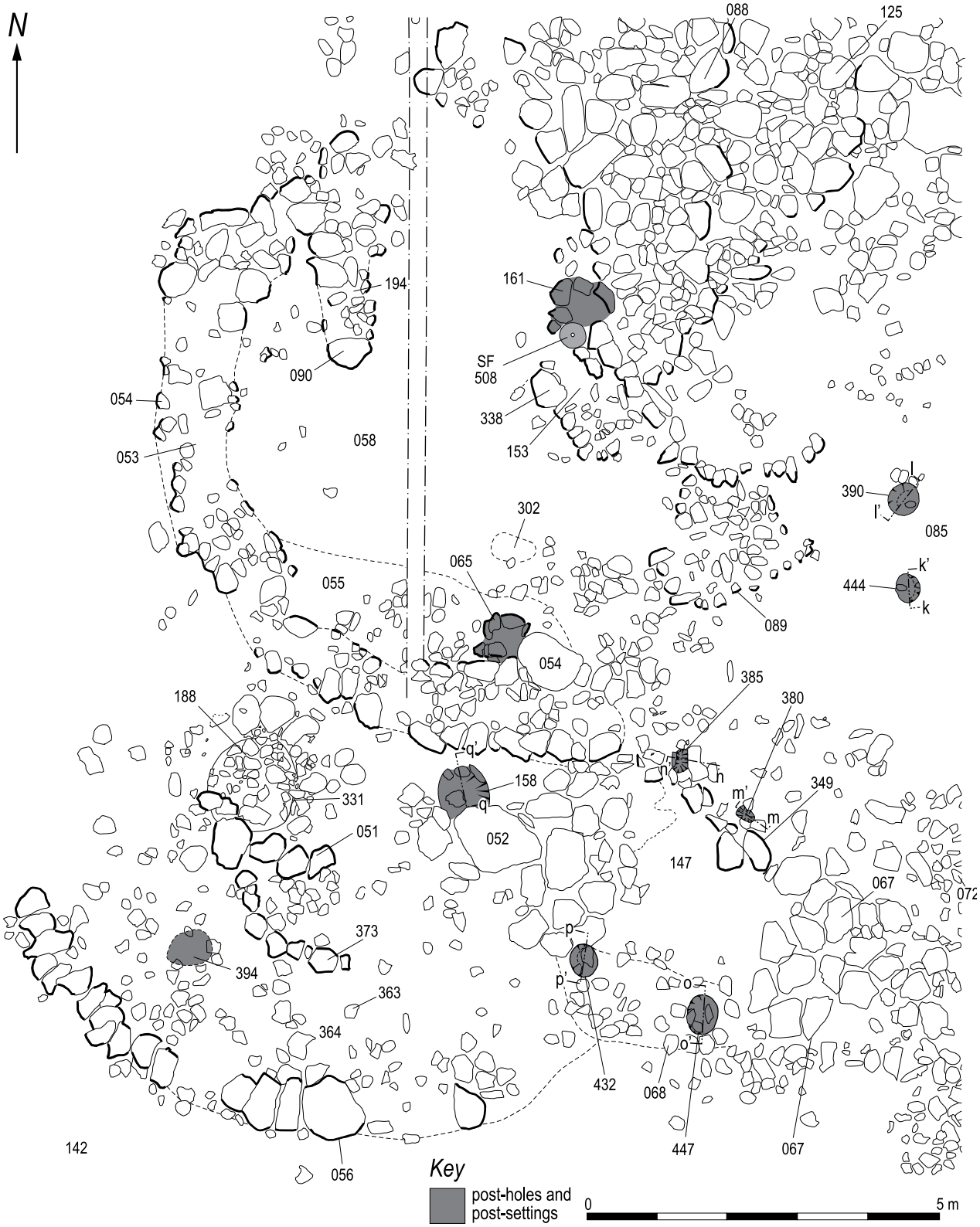
7.21 Structure 6, with the kerb of the earlier phase exposed in the background.

by an arcing line of slabs and boulders (056), curving between the paved porch (Structure 8) and the cobbled passage that led to Structure 1 (Figure 7.23). Where the building abutted the porch [8], a large post stood in a pit (158) packed tightly with stones (159) (Figure 7.24), and another stood in a smaller post-hole (413) close to the wall of the cellular building [7]. Another post-hole (394) in the south-west interior may have formed part of an arc of posts that would have supported a steeply sloping roof. Structure 9 might have been a semi-circular lean-to against the cellular building [7] and the porch [8].

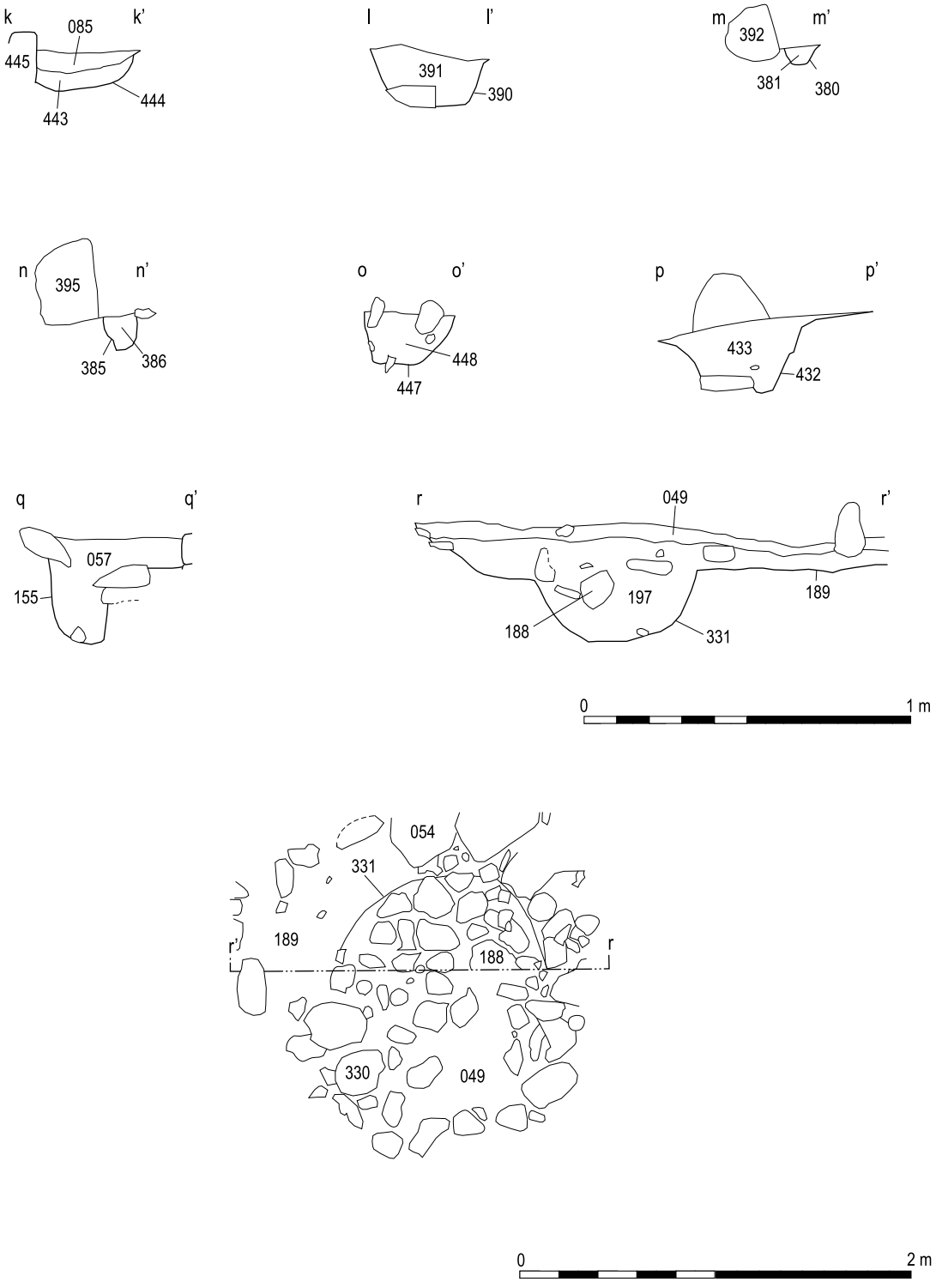
Inside was a fire-pit (331), suggesting that Structure 9 served as a house. A curving, stone wall base (471) sheltered the hearth on the north. Boulders and slabs formed a tight setting (330) around it to the north, while another setting (373) defined the hearth area to the south (Figure 7.24). The hearth settings may have served as benches, on which those tending the fire could perch or rest pots. A firm layer of dark brown, charcoal-flecked silty sand (364) accumulated inside the house, and burnt cereal grains, heather charcoal and a little human bone (0.2g) scattered and were trampled into it.

When the pit (331) was excavated, it was found to be packed with stones (188), most of them heat-affected (Figure 7.24). The lower stones lay in a matrix of dark brown clay silt (197), full of heather charcoal and burnt cereal grains and a little (0.4g) human bone. This combination suggests that cereals were parched over the pit. If it had contained stones and smouldering heather twigs, the heated stones would have given off a more diffuse heat than flames. A wattle platform could have stood over the pit, with the grain spread on it to dry. Sucking moisture out of the grain in this way, the farmers at Phantassie would have been able to keep it through the months that followed harvest without its going mouldy.

7.22 The phase 3 features at Phantassie.



7.23 Plan of structures 7, 8 and 9.



7.24 Sections through the post-holes from Structure 7 (k-k', l-l'), Structure 8 (m-m', n-n', o-o', p-p') and Structure 9 (q-q'), and the Structure 9 fire-pit in plan and section (r-r').

7.25 The linch pin from Structure 7.

When the grain was parched, they would have gathered it up, perhaps storing it in clay pots until it could be ground into flour. With each parching, some of the cereal grains would have fallen into the embers or scattered around the fire. If the inhabitants regularly cleaned out the pit, sweeping up detritus from the floor around it, they may have scooped the rake-out into baskets and carried it out through the porch [8] and along the track to a midden dump. As they passed through the porch, they dropped cereal grains and fragments of charcoal. These found their way into the post-holes on either side (as did human bone (0.2 g)), knocked there by passing feet or a heather broom, and some of it fell between the paving stones. Structure 8 contained the greatest concentration of charcoal (particular heather) and cereal grains on the site.

Cherry type (*Prunoideae*) charcoal (189) sealed beneath the wall (056) of Structure 9 produced a radiocarbon date of 20 BC–AD 210 (SUERC-5639), while hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*) from the fill (057) of the large post-hole dated to 50 BC–AD 120 (SUERC-5488). On balance, it seems likely that the building was constructed during the first century AD. The settlement was in flux, in terms of the buildings that made it up and what its inhabitants did there; as new buildings rose up, others went out of use. The settlement became, at least for a time, a smelly place (see below), and eventually a more crowded one.

Enclosing the cobbled passage

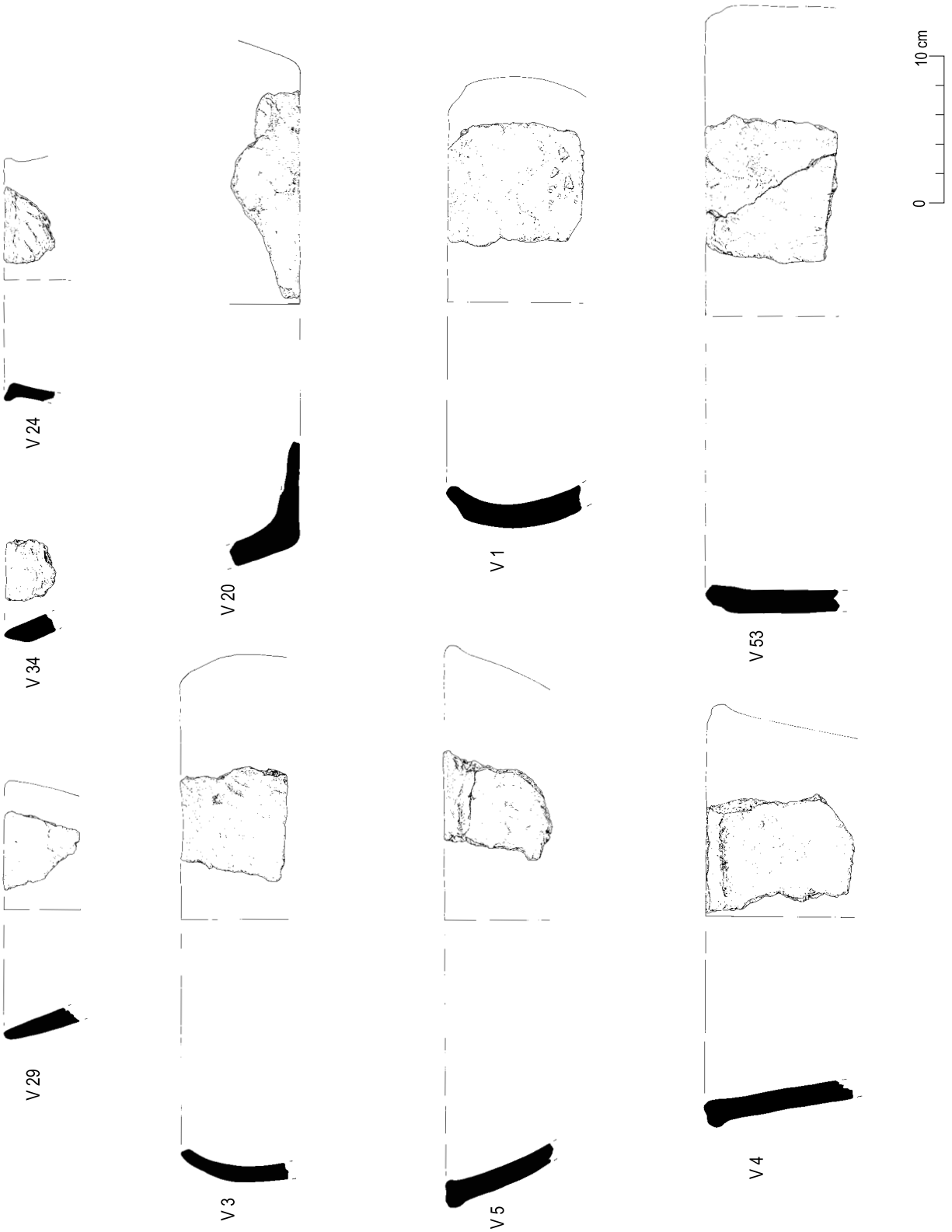
The inhabitants of Phantassie also enclosed the long, cobbled entrance passage that led to the west side of the sub-rectangular building [1] (Figure 7.22). They built a low, stone wall base (316) along its eastern side. On the south, this wall terminated at a large, flat, pink boulder that lay just north of Structure 9, opposite a gate or fencepost that stood in a post-hole (358) surrounded by a paved setting (336). This new wall ran for about 3m to the north, parallel to the wall (315) that defined the western side of the passage. Its northern end joined the western wall (105) of Structure 1 and ran on the same alignment as it. This created a passage that was sheltered on both sides, perhaps with hurdling supported on the wall bases, which would have separated the western part of the farmstead from the new buildings [7, 8 and 9] to the east and south-east.

The sub-rectangular building [1] abandoned, and midden spread over the ground

At some point, people stopped using the sub-rectangular building [1], either allowing it to fall down or deliberately dismantling it. The walls might have consisted of well-dried turf, with hazel, alder or birch wattling; soot-penetrated heather thatch may have formed the roof. These constituents would have made good fuel for fires or rich additions to the compost heap.

After the building was abandoned, it was covered with midden deposits. A thick layer of greasy, dark brown sandy silt (120)/(016) built up over its walls and interior. It covered the area (020) between the cobbled passage, the cellular structure [7] and the concentric building [9]. People kept the cobbled passage mainly clear, but piled midden (020) along one side of it, against the eastern wall (316). Midden spilled over the northern edge of the settlement platform on its far side (134); it filled gaps in the bedrock to the west (128) and built up (116) in the old, enclosed hollow (132) to the south-west of the abandoned building. A penannular copper alloy brooch (SF 435; Figure 7.27) was found in the midden material (116) dumped into the hollow.

The midden spread over this area was full of pieces of broken pottery from at least 14 vessels (Figure 7.26: V 15); burnt bones from cattle and other ungulates; grains of wheat and barley, hazelnut shell and seeds from heathland turf; and charcoal from alder, birch, hazel, willow, oak and blackthorn-type trees. It also contained a scattering of burnt human bone, most of it recovered from bulk samples and therefore probably representing only a proportion of the true content (5.8g in midden (020); 1.9g in midden (120); 0.1g in midden (134); 0.2g in midden (116)). The material listed here is that which was carbonised or robust enough to survive for two millennia in the soil, but the dark and greasy character of the deposits indicates that much more



7.26 Pottery from phase 3.

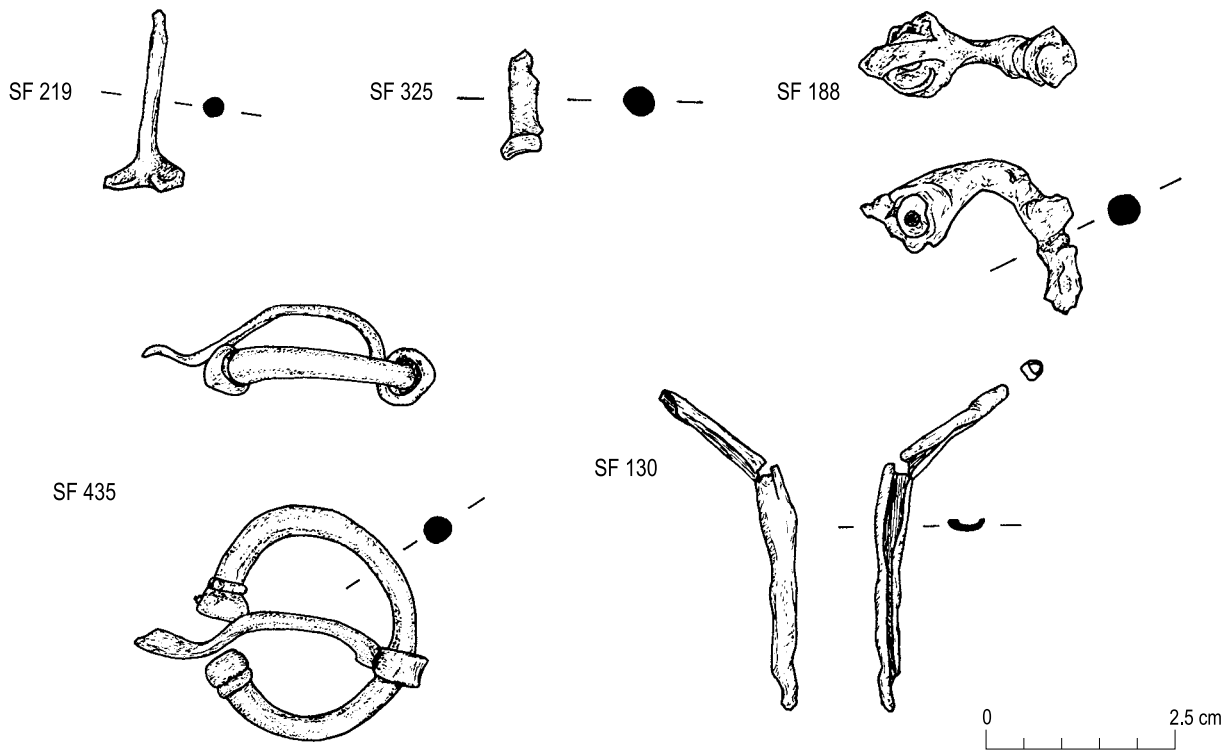
organic matter originally made it up and has since decayed away. Much of the midden probably came from hearths – the remains of meals, fuel (in the form of wood and heathland turf) and the cereal parching process.

As this midden was piling up over the abandoned building [1], someone placed in it an iron draw bar (SF 543), used to make wire for jewellery or chain mail (Figure 7.28, text box 7.4). This bar still had shavings of pure copper and brass stuck in its holes. It was found sitting upright, on end, in the midden deposit (016) just west of the wall of Structure 1. It appeared to have been been deliberately pushed into the soft, rotting matrix.

Radiocarbon dates from carbonised material in the midden range from 100 BC–AD 140. Birch (*Betula*) charcoal from the midden (120) sealing Structure 1 dated to 100 BC–AD 80 (SUERC-5508), a similar range to the hazel from the thickened wall of the structure. Alder (*Alnus*) from the same deposit and hazel (*Corylus*) from midden (020) to the south both produced dates of 50 BC–AD 130 (SUERC-5616; SUERC-5618), while barley (*Hordeum vulgare var vulgare*) from midden (128) to the west dated to 40 BC–AD 140 (SUERC-5497). Hazel (*Corylus*) from midden (170) to the east of Structure 1 dated to 50 BC–AD 130 (SUERC-5522). It is possible that the midden had been accumulating elsewhere for some time (perhaps in the midden store in Area C), and that the dated burnt wood and grain had been dead for some time before they were spread across parts of the farmstead.

The sub-rectangular structure [1] may have been abandoned at any time while the new structures, discussed above, were being constructed, or after they were all standing. The midden deposits that eventually covered the structure respected the new buildings, so all of them had been built by the time midden covered Structure 1, but it may already have been dismantled or been in the process of falling down for some time.

By perhaps the late first or early second century AD, we can picture a farmstead enclosed by a massive, stone-built boundary. A fence or palisade stood atop the boundary along the northern side of the settlement. A metalled track led into it from the east, past areas of hard standing where cattle were kept. At the end of the track, visitors would enter a small, roofed and paved porch [8]. Inside, a door opened to the right, leading to the sheltered entrance of a workshop [7]. Ahead, the porch led into a semi-circular house [9] where a fire smouldered in a pit; if it were autumn, the smell of drying cereals would mingle with the smoke that filled the building. If the visitors stepped off



7.27 Copper alloy brooches and pins.

the track and circled around the porch [8] and the house [9], they would come to a cobbled path that led northward toward the site of an older building [1]. To reach it, they may have had to pass through a gate or two, or between hurdling walls that stood on stone wall bases. To their left, a smaller structure or frame built of posts (structure 2) may still have stood, where fire was also used to parch grain. What they would have seen from the cobbled path depends on when exactly they visited: they might have seen the old sub-rectangular house [1] of a previous generation still standing, or its collapsed roof and slumped turf walls, or stone wall bases stripped of their superstructure, or heaps of stinking midden.

Phase 4

The period of midden spreading ended with the construction of a new suite of buildings over the decaying rubbish (Figure 7.29).

A rambling, paved and cobbled building [10]

The inhabitants of Phantassie constructed a large and (to the excavator) somewhat incoherent building over the partly covered ruins of Structure 1. They collected or quarried over 100 massive, thick slabs (084), along with an old mortar (SF 581; Figure 7.9). Over the walls of Structure 1 and the midden that covered its northern part, they set the blocks close together to form a level, crescent-shaped surface (Figure 7.30). They laid them so that the outer wall skin (131) of the old building was still just visible, running below the east side of the paving, and they chocked small stones above the slabs of the earlier wall to keep the paving stones level. Several gaps around the edges of the paving and an oval slab setting (017) may have held posts to support a roof. A massive boulder (483) beside the oval setting could have provided extra support for a post or could even have served as a seat.

The building (Structure 10) seems to have extended over the area to the west of the paving, although this seems more likely to have been an open yard with a metalled floor rather than a roofed structure, given its breadth and shape. Between the paving and the area

7.4

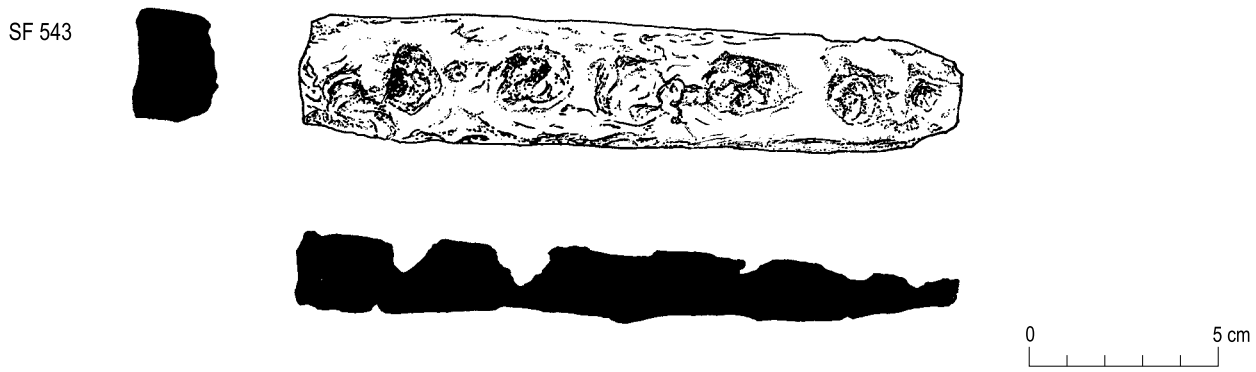
Fine metal-working at Phantassie

One of the most remarkable finds from Phantassie was an iron draw plate – a precision tool used to manufacture wire for use in fine metal-working. It is a slightly bellied, rectangular bar, 88.5mm long, tapering to a rounded tip, with six conical perforations along its length. These were used to form metal into wire by drawing it through a series of tapering holes of decreasing diameter. Corrosion obscures the details, but the perforations are of varying size, and are tapered such that each would have reduced the wire by between a fifth and a third of its diameter. Draw plates could be used for making wire from iron, copper alloy and precious metals. In this case, copper alloy shavings survive around some of the holes; analysis by Dr Jim Tate (NMS) shows that these comprise both copper and brass.

This is only the second draw plate known from Iron Age Scotland (there is another from Fairy Knowe, Stirlingshire; Hunter 1998a, 357), but there are examples from Iron Age Europe and from the Roman world (Jacobi 1979; Nothdurfter 1979, Taf 16, 266–7; Sim 1997). The holes on all of these are rather larger than the draw plates used in later periods for precious metals. While they could have been used in the manufacture of iron wire for ring mail armour, their main use was probably for non-ferrous metals. Wire was a key component of brooches and chains, although in a Scottish context it was most probably for pins or for links in bigger, more complicated objects. This was a specialist metal-working technology, and the draw plate shows that the inhabitants of Phantassie were using advanced metal-smithing techniques.

The residues on the Phantassie plate are also very interesting. The presence of pure copper and high-zinc brass shows that the smith was exercising careful control to maintain pure metals or clean alloys for producing wire. The brass would have come from recycled Roman material (Dungworth 1996; see text box 10.2).

FRASER HUNTER



7.28 The draw bar.

where the bedrock rose was a spread of smaller stones (004), mixed with reddish sandy silt (006), that included a whetstone/hammer/pounder (SF 225; Figure 7.8) and sherds from up to five pots (Figure 7.31: V 39). A sharp boundary to these stones on the north indicates where a fence may have stood, although this was otherwise difficult to identify. The builders erected a small post, its base braced with stones (011), against the edge of the bedrock to the west. To the west of the stony spread, they covered the old midden deposit (128) with neat cobbling (135), including part of a broken quern base (SF 398; Figure 7.17). Three stakes (008, 009, 010) set in a line along its edge would have supported a light wall that ran along the bedrock.

They extended this wall through the bedrock itself, cutting a narrow gully (360) into the living rock, and continued it to the south-east with a stone wall base (035) around standing posts (077) and (080) (Figure 7.32). They packed one of the post-holes (077) with stone and also chips of shale, perhaps created through shale-working. This southern section of walling (035) may have enclosed a small porch, with the western wall base (105) of the abandoned building [1] enclosing it to the east. At its entrance, two small, stone-packed post-holes (151 and 309) held posts for a gate or a porch (Figure 7.32).

The cobbled passage led directly to this putative porch. It was still defined on the east by the western wall (105) of Structure 1 and its southward extension (316). Along the northern stretch of the passage, the wall (315) that had defined it on the west had tumbled by this stage, and no one bothered to rebuild it; a trampled ground surface (142). The builders laid fresh cobbles (342) over the southern part of the passage, to the south of the putative gate set in the post-hole (358) and paving (336).

A building with three cells [11]

Next, the occupants of the farmstead built a small, three-celled structure (Figure 7.33), squeezing it in between the rambling structure [10], the cellular building [7] and the boundary wall (100)/(088). This three-celled structure had rubbly walls, similar to those making up Structure 7, with the northern one (096) built atop the boundary wall (100) (Figure 7.34). The central, oval cell was about 7m long. A stone post-setting (351) and a slab-lined post-hole (177) at opposite sides of its long walls would have supported the roof, and a third post-setting (375) lay under rubble (481) at the eastern end; the rubble may have collapsed over it when the post was removed. A smaller cell led off this to the north-east, probably to the building's entrance. It led out onto the boundary wall beside a post-setting which may have supported the door, and the boulders of the wall were worn smooth from the passage of feet.

To the west of the central area was another small cell, squeezed against the edge of Structure 10. What divided it from the central cell was the outer, secondary wall face of the abandoned building [1]; the tops of its stones were just visible in the midden (170)/(171) that had been dumped over them. This generation of builders set rubble against the stones to create a base (169) for a partition wall and extended it into the bedrock to the north by hacking a slot into the rock. Stones resting around the edges of the slot may have been set to support a timber or wattle partition.

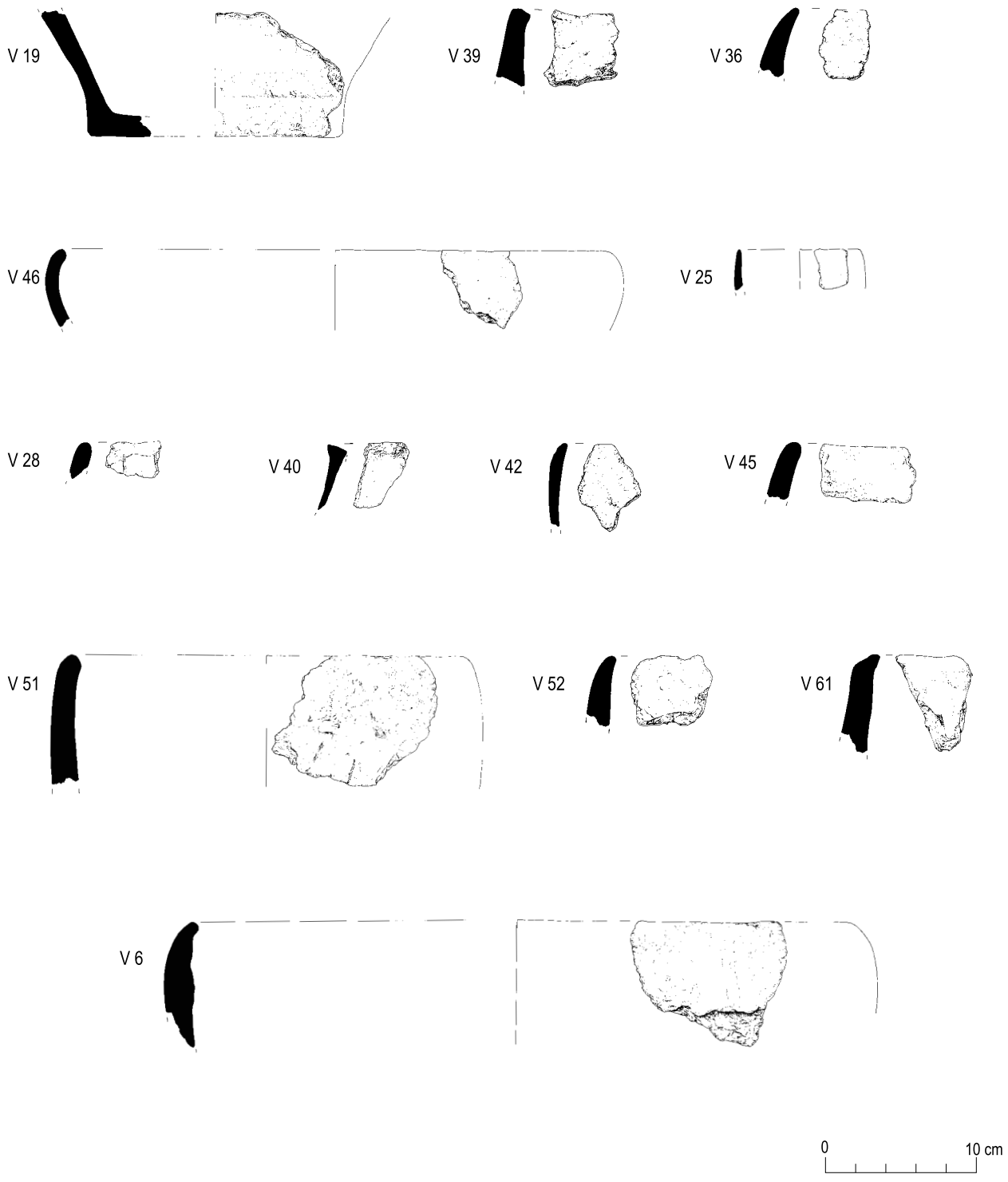
Relatively little charcoal or carbonised cereal was found in the floor (092)/(093) of this structure; it may have been used for storage.

Two small cells (Structures 12 and 13) beside the cobbled passage

As part of this same burst of building activity, the farmstead's inhabitants also built two tiny, semi-circular cells against the eastern side of the cobbled passage (Figure 7.35). They stood against the old wall (105) of the abandoned

7.29 The phase 4 features at Phantassie.

7.30 Plan of Structure 10.



7.31 Pottery from phases 4 and 5.

building [1] and the later eastern passage wall (316), which continued along the same alignment as (105).

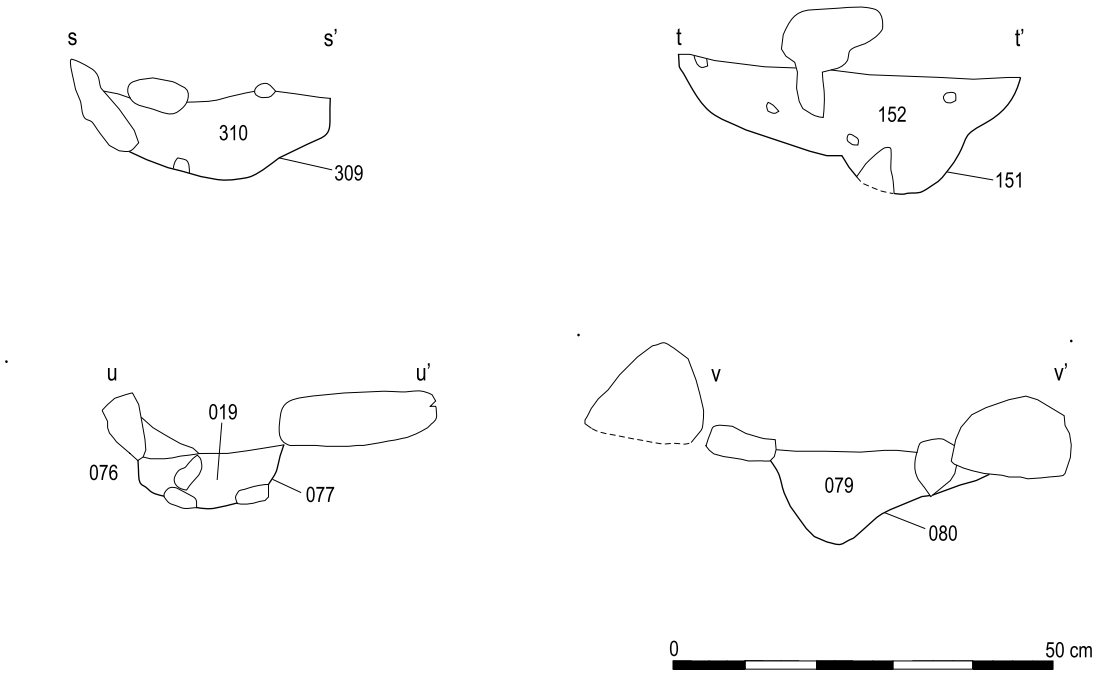
The northern cell [12] was defined by a slight, stoney wall base (081) that formed a tight arc against the earlier walls to the east; its northern end crossed the earlier wall (105) and continued east to join the outer wall face (091) of Structure 11. A doorway led into the cell from the south.

Inside, against its north wall, lay the upper stone of a roughed-out quern (SF 231; Figure 7.17), never finished but with a squarish hole, probably made with an iron chisel (Maclaren and Hunter, see Chapter 12 and Archive). The stone broke while it was being shaped, and its maker may have abandoned it at that point, finding no other use for it. A thumb pot (SF 223; Figure 7.3) lay close by. This had been made simply by pushing a thumb into a lump of wet clay, pinching the sides to thin them and then firing the tiny pot. It might have been a child's toy.

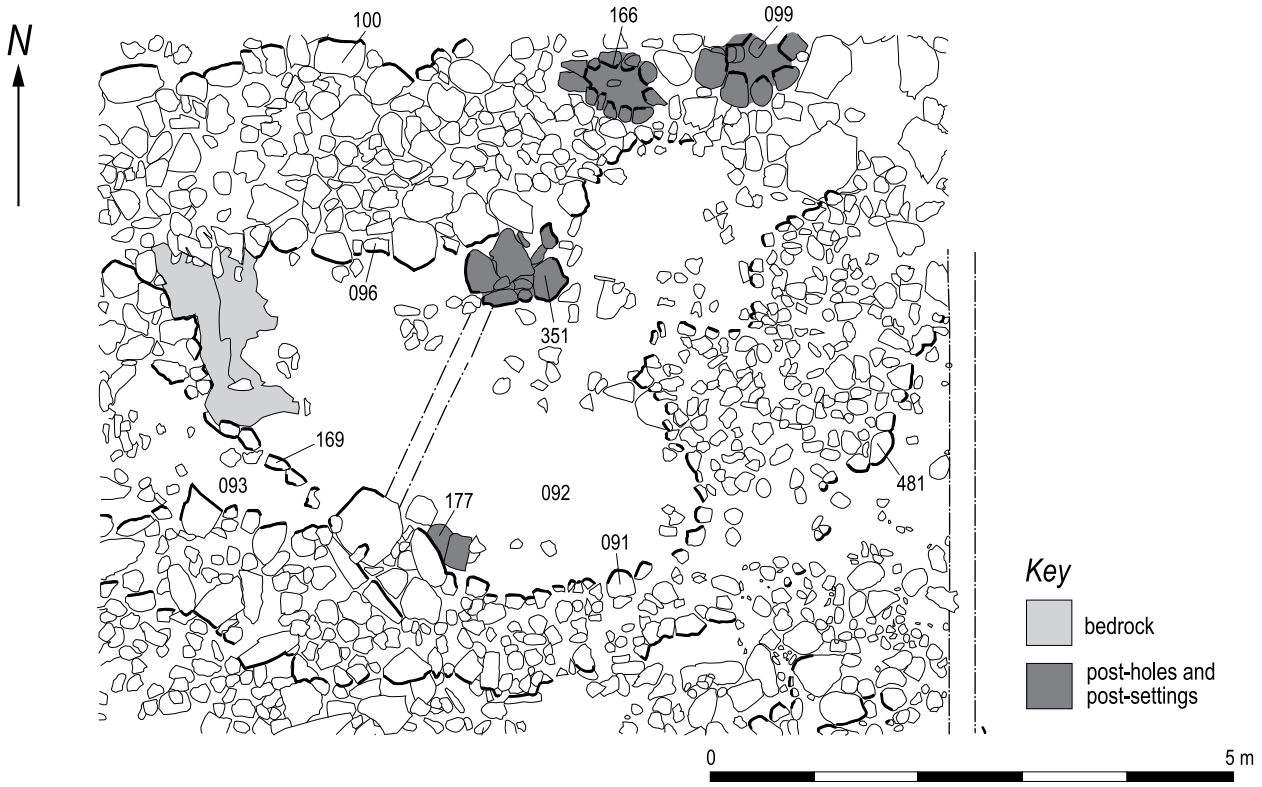
The southern cell [13] stood against the northern one, beside the paving (336) for the putative gate (Figure 7.35). Its construction constricted the passage, leaving a gap just wide enough for one person to pass. It had a similarly slight, stoney wall base (328) with a doorway on the south and a small post-hole (366) just inside the door. Inside, the floor was covered with firm, pink-orange silty clay (199), its colour brightest toward the east, next to the flat pink boulder at the southern end of the passage wall (316). The floor contained heather charcoal and grains of emmer wheat, six-row barley and other cereals too burnt to identify. People may have lit fires on the floor of this cell, reddening the soil and the adjacent boulder, to parch cereal here. The post-hole may have supported a parching frame. Birch (*Corylus*) roundwood charcoal from the fill of the post-hole (367) produced a radiocarbon date of 50 BC–120 AD (SUERC-7345).

Remodelling the hearth and entrance to the concentric building [9]

It is not clear what had defined the northern side of Structure 9 in its original form; some kind of wall must have run between the fire pit (331) and the outer, slab-built wall base (056), but no traces of this were identified during excavation. Now, the occupants of Phantassie built a new wall base (472) straight along this line, sealing the floor layer (364) that had already built up (Figure 7.35). This, with the southern side of the southern cell [13], created a narrow corridor into the building from the west. A post-hole (370) for a door post and some slabs defined



7.32 Sections through the post-holes relating to Structure 10.



7.33 Plan of Structure 11.

the threshold. The door that swung on the post would have given access both to Structure 9 and the cell [13]. The fill of the post-hole (371) contained abundant heather charcoal and some from birch and hazel, along with a little human bone (0.2g).

Inside, the corridor led to the fire-pit (331). This pit was filled with charcoal and burnt stones (188) from previous fires and, from this point on, fires were set on top of the fill. This generation built a new hearth setting (051) around it, partly covering the old outer setting (373) and the residues of the old fires (188). Over time, the rake-out (049) from subsequent burnings built up inside the new hearth setting (051).

Analysis of the samples shows that the fuel used in the hearth also changed. Those who laid the earlier fires had burned mainly heather, hazel and some oak, along with (presumably accidentally) grains of hulled six-row barley and emmer wheat. Those tending the new fires burned a great deal of heather, but also hazel, willow, blackthorn-type and cherry, along with the same cereal grains and hazelnut shells. The carbonised seeds and heather stems show that they were also burning turves cut from heather moorland. Turves would have partly smothered the fire, producing a more gentle heat than open flame or embers. With the pit filled in, people could no longer use the old method of heating stones inside it to parch cereals above; perhaps this later generation decided it was better to use turves than stones, so they did not bother to clear out the pit. Burnt human bone (2.7g) was also found in the rake-out.

Hazel (*Corylus*) from a residue of the earlier fires (197) produced a radiocarbon date of AD 20–230 (SUERC-5520), while wheat (*Triticum*) from the ashes (049) of a later fire was dated to AD 70–240 (SUERC-5511). This suggests that the inhabitants of Phantassie remodelled Structure 9 between the mid first century AD and the early third century AD.

Continued use of the other buildings

Inside the cellular structure [7], a trampled and charcoal-flecked occupation deposit (055) accumulated. It was darker (058) around the walls, perhaps having been swept there from the centre. Abundant heather and a little oak charcoal were found in samples from this deposit, along with sherds from several pots, burnt cereals and human bone (0.3g). A grain of hulled six-row barley (*Hordeum vulgare var vulgare*) from (055) yielded a radiocarbon date of AD 0–220 (SUERC-5496). A clay bead (Figure 7.36:

SF 118) and sherds of pottery (Figure 7.31: V 36 and 46) became trapped in the turf matrix of the wall (054)/(193).

The porch [8] was still in use, but it was no longer swept out; a dirty floor deposit of dark brown fine sandy silt (066) built up inside, between the two areas of paving. This deposit also crept out over the north wall, sealing the stone wall-base and the post-holes, so it appears that this wall (and the putative roof) had been dismantled and that the porch was now open. Again, numerous burnt cereal grains and pieces of heather charcoal built up inside (along with 0.1g of human bone and sherds from three pots). People were probably still parching cereal in the fire-pit next door and carrying the rake-out through the porch.

Part of a pale blue glass bangle (SF 10; Figure 7.37), with inlaid blue and white herringbone decoration, also became wedged between two of the large paving slabs (052) on the porch floor. Perhaps it fell from a basket of midden someone carried over one shoulder, or broke on the owner's arm and, as she gathered up the fragments to toss away, slipped into the crack and was left.

Just before the porch fell out of use, someone dropped a handful of hearth waste from parching fires on the eastern paving (067). It lay on the stone for two millennia, appearing to the excavators as a patch of reddish fine silty clay (070), which proved to be full of burnt six-row barley, emmer wheat, heather charcoal and 0.1g of human bone. A grain of hulled six-row barley (*Hordeum vulgare var vulgare*) from this deposit dated to 50 BC–AD 130 (SUERC-5486), another from the matrix (069) of the south wall dated to 40 BC–AD 140 (SUERC-5645), and a third from the dark brown floor deposit (066) also dated to 40 BC–AD 140 (SUERC-5492).

Plinths and post-holes for parching grain? (Structure 14)

Away from most of the buildings, in the southern part of the farmstead, the post-holes and burnt sediment (110) that had made up the possible parching frame (Structure

7.34 Structure 11 during excavation.

7.35 Plan of Structures 9, 12 and 13 and the cobbled passage during phase 4.

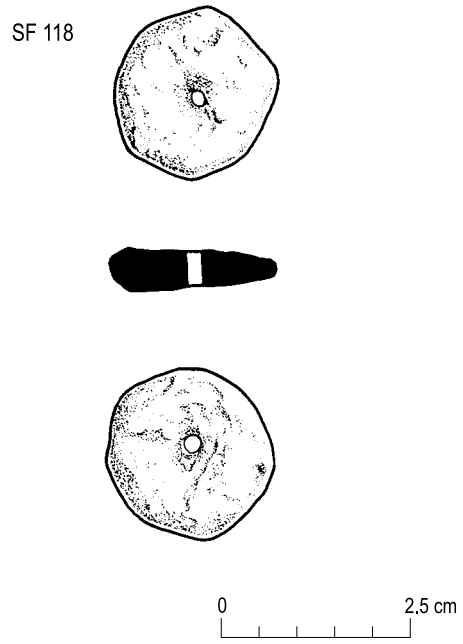
2) were covered over in this phase. Spreads of dark brown sandy silt (040 and 024) built up over them, with sherds of pottery from four pots, scattered cereal grains and charcoal, burnt animal bone and human bone (2.9g). A grain of six-row barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*) from one of the spreads (024) yielded a radiocarbon date of 60 BC–AD 120 (SUERC-5500). Sometime after it accumulated, the occupants of Phantassie built two enigmatic stone features over the occupation deposits here.

Both were oval features, possibly plinths or platforms, made of flat stones set close together (Figure 7.38). The larger, eastern one (025) measured about 2.6m by 2m across, with a notch in its western side. A post stood in a large post-hole (108) set in the northern edge of the plinth, and a smaller one (191) stood just to its north-west. Abundant heather charcoal, along with birch and hazel charcoal and human bone (0.7g), was recovered from the larger post-hole's fills (026)/(109). The western plinth (039) was smaller, with a post (114) in a notch at its north-west edge and another post-hole (121) beside it. Three other post-holes or small pits (184, 183 and 314) lay to the north of the plinths.

Cereal grains and heather charcoal found their way into most of the post-holes making up these configurations (collectively called Structure 14). The plinths and post-holes may have supported parching or drying frames for cereals. A tiny pounder (SF 654; Figure 7.8) found in the fill of the western plinth's post-hole (041) could suggest that people prepared food in the area.

Filling the midden store

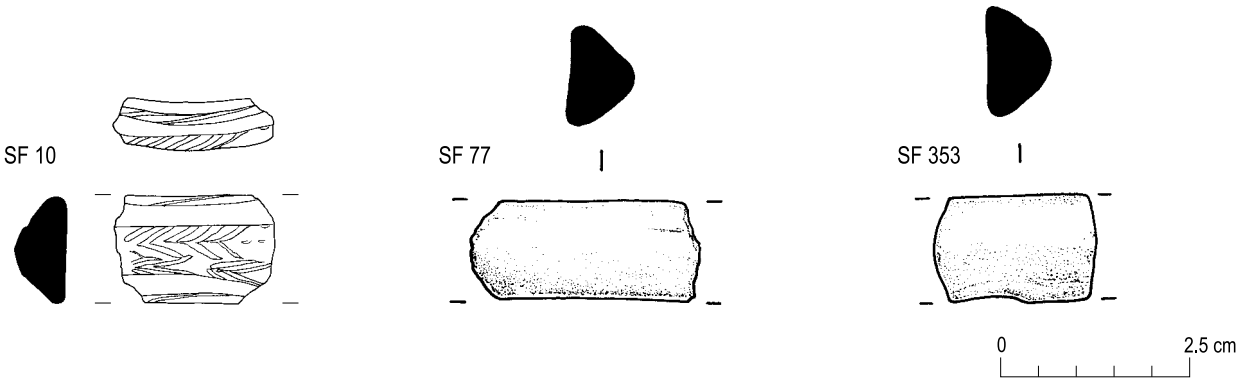
The inhabitants of Phantassie continued to dump rubbish into the enclosed bedrock hollow (Structure 4) in Area C, at least into the second century AD. The lower (245) black, greasy midden deposit was full of large sherds from bucket-shaped pottery vessels, the teeth of cattle and other ungulates, burnt human bone (0.7g), burnt cereals and hazelnut shell. It was rich in charcoal from fires where mainly heather (but also hazel, ivy and oak) had burned. The upper midden deposit (242)/(224)/(237) contained even more pieces of recognisable detritus, including large sherds of pottery (Figure 7.26: V 3, 4, 5, 29, 34), worked flint and quantities of hearth waste, with much more hazel charcoal than elsewhere in the settlement (where heather charcoal was most common). Fragments of an iron knife (SF 430) and ard (SF 494) were found in the midden and on the trampled surface outside it (Figure 7.39). The midden also contained burnt human bone (1.2g) and some animal bone, mainly teeth from cattle and other ungulates. Micromorphological analysis of samples from the midden deposits confirmed the interpretation that the material was being composted. It also identified residues from manure-impregnated turf, which may have been used as bedding for animals and tossed here when byres were cleaned out (Simpson, see Chapter 12 and Archive).



7.36 The clay bead from Structure 7.

If people were dumping rubbish into the hollow until it was needed for other purposes – for fertiliser, for example, or for spreading over parts of the farmstead during phase 3 – then they would have periodically cleared it out, shovelling the rubbish into carts or baskets but probably leaving some behind each time. Both the hazel (*Corylus*) charcoal from the upper midden deposit (224) (350–40 BC (SUERC-5498)) and the apple type (*Maloideae*) charcoal from the lower deposit (245) (160 BC–AD 70 (SUERC-5528)) may have been left over from earlier phases of accumulation. Later radiocarbon dates and a well-sealed Samian sherd suggest that most of the midden built up in the second century AD.

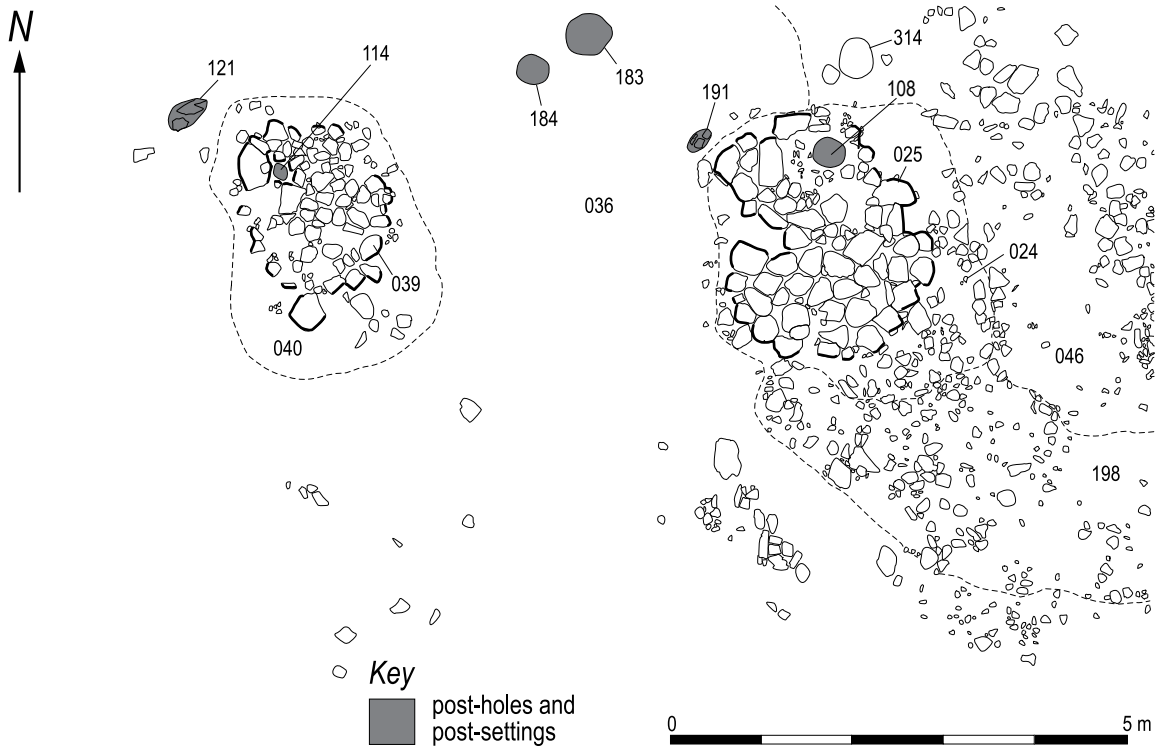
At the very base of the lower midden deposit (245) there lay a sherd from the rim of a plain Samian bowl, made in Central Gaul during the second century AD, with trailed barbotine decoration in the shape of a leaf (Wallace, see Chapter 12 and Archive) (SF 622; see text box 10.2, Figure 10.9). Blackthorn-type (*Prunus spinosa*) charcoal from the upper midden deposit (242) dated to AD 20–240 (SUERC-5517) and a grain of six-row barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*) (SUERC-5499) to AD 20–230, while barley (*Hordeum vulgare sl*) from the lower midden deposit (245) dated to AD 20–220 (SUERC-5700). On balance, the evidence suggests that the main phase of midden accumulation was during the second century



7.37 Glass bangle fragments.

AD, although some of it may have formed earlier or later. The conflicting chronological evidence provided by the Samian sherd's stratigraphic position and the radiocarbon dates highlights the need to understand how deposits have built up and been modified, rather than relying purely on diagnostic artefacts or even dates.

At some point the wattle-and-daub wall bedded in stones (235)/(246), which had enclosed the midden store, burnt down: pieces of burnt wattle-and-daub (SF 401) were found in the matrix of the stones on the west side. Hazel (*Corylus*) charcoal from the matrix (235) produced a radiocarbon date of AD 20–220 (SUERC-5507). The close correspondence between the dates for carbonised material from much of the midden would suggest that



7.38 Plan of the plinths and post-holes of Structure 14.

these last deposits accumulated within a relatively short period of time, and were not cleared out before the occupants of Phantassie turned the site of the midden store to a different use.

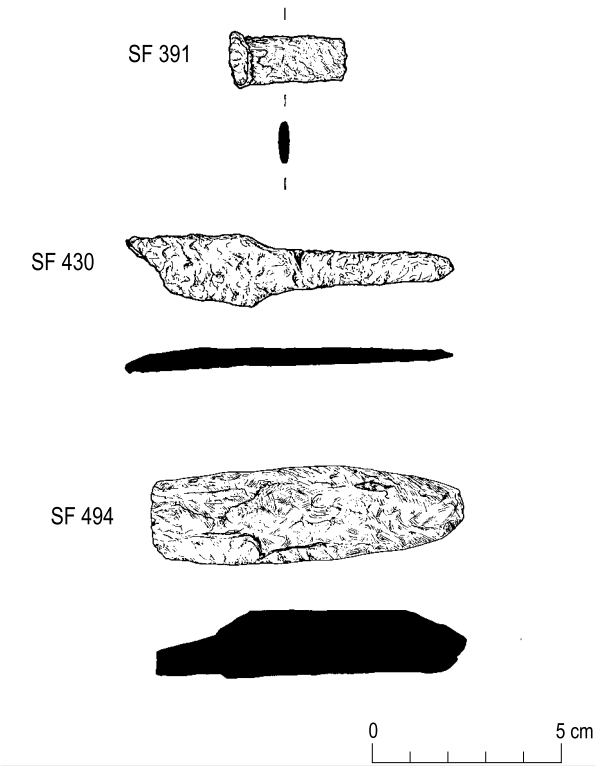
Cobbled surfaces and outbuildings (Structures 15, 16 and 17)

During or after the second century AD, the inhabitants ceased to pile up midden in the hollow and did not clear out its contents. Instead, they sealed it with well-laid cobbled surfaces (Figure 7.40). They created five contiguous areas of cobbling (212)/(213)/(202)/(214)/(206), differing in character from each other. They laid the largest area (206) over the west side in an irregular trefoil shape; the other, smaller cobbled surfaces extended east from here. Along the eastern edge of the midden, they built a stone wall-base (204) which turned westward in a sharp corner at its southern end (as 203), defining a rectangular enclosure (Structure 15) around part of the filled-in hollow. The rough steps (254) of the earlier phase were kept, and led through this wall. The inhabitants laid another, semi-circular area of cobbling (207) to the east of the former midden and the steps, and built a slight stone wall (209) to curve around the whole area on the east, at the base of the bedrock slope, perhaps defining a yard. They set other patches of cobbling (284) to the west of the midden, filling a gap in the bedrock and sealing the rock-cut drain (270).

Trampled layers (211)/(222) that built up over and between the cobbles contained burnt cereals and abundant hazel and heather charcoal, as well as a little oak, willow and cherry-type charcoal, and human bone (1.5g).

The post-built structure [5] had gone out of use, and a brown silty sand surface (233) built up over the post-holes; part of a broken quern (SF 495; Figure 7.17) became incorporated in it. A new stoney building [16] was constructed over it, but with some reference to the earlier one (Figure 7.41). A short wall, composed of two faces with a rubble core (231), ran over and on the same alignment as the longest row of posts from the earlier building, with two short lengths of walling (232 and 230) extending east from it, perhaps to define stalls or storage areas. To the west, a spread of cobbling (208) was laid between areas of outcropping bedrock to firm or level up the ground, with a substantial stone partition (216) extending between areas of bedrock to the west again. A whetsone/hammerstone (SF 207; Figure 7.9) was found among the stones of the wall. On the other (east) side of Structure 16, slabs (205)/(229) were laid to create an arcing wall base, again perhaps to form a bay or stall (Structure 17; Figure 7.41). Hazel (*Corylus*) charcoal from the deposit (239) sealed by these slabs produced a radiocarbon date of 50 BC–AD 120 (SUERC-5512).

The creation of these cobbled surfaces, a yard and small, stone-walled structures may indicate that more animals were being stalled in the settlement at this phase, and so the inhabitants of Phantassie needed more buildings and areas that incorporated hard standing.



7.39 Fragments of an iron bar, knife and ard.

Phase 5

The farmstead's gradual abandonment

Most of the buildings fell out of use in the last phase of the settlement's life, and it gradually became a quieter, less crowded place (Figure 7.42). The paved, rambling structure [10] seems to have continued in use the longest.

After the last fire burned in its hearth, the concentric house [9] was abandoned. Oat (*Triticum*) from the hearth's rake-out (049) produced a radiocarbon date of AD 70–240 (SUERC-5511). A layer of soapy, yellow-brown clay silt (048), containing only enough charcoal to have blown in from nearby fires, built up over the hearth and its setting, the interior and partly over the building's wall base. People tossed large sherds from at least 10 pots into the ruins of the building, along with hazel charcoal, perhaps the remains of burnt wattle panels (Figure 7.31: V 45).

Just across the cobbled passage to the west, a similar

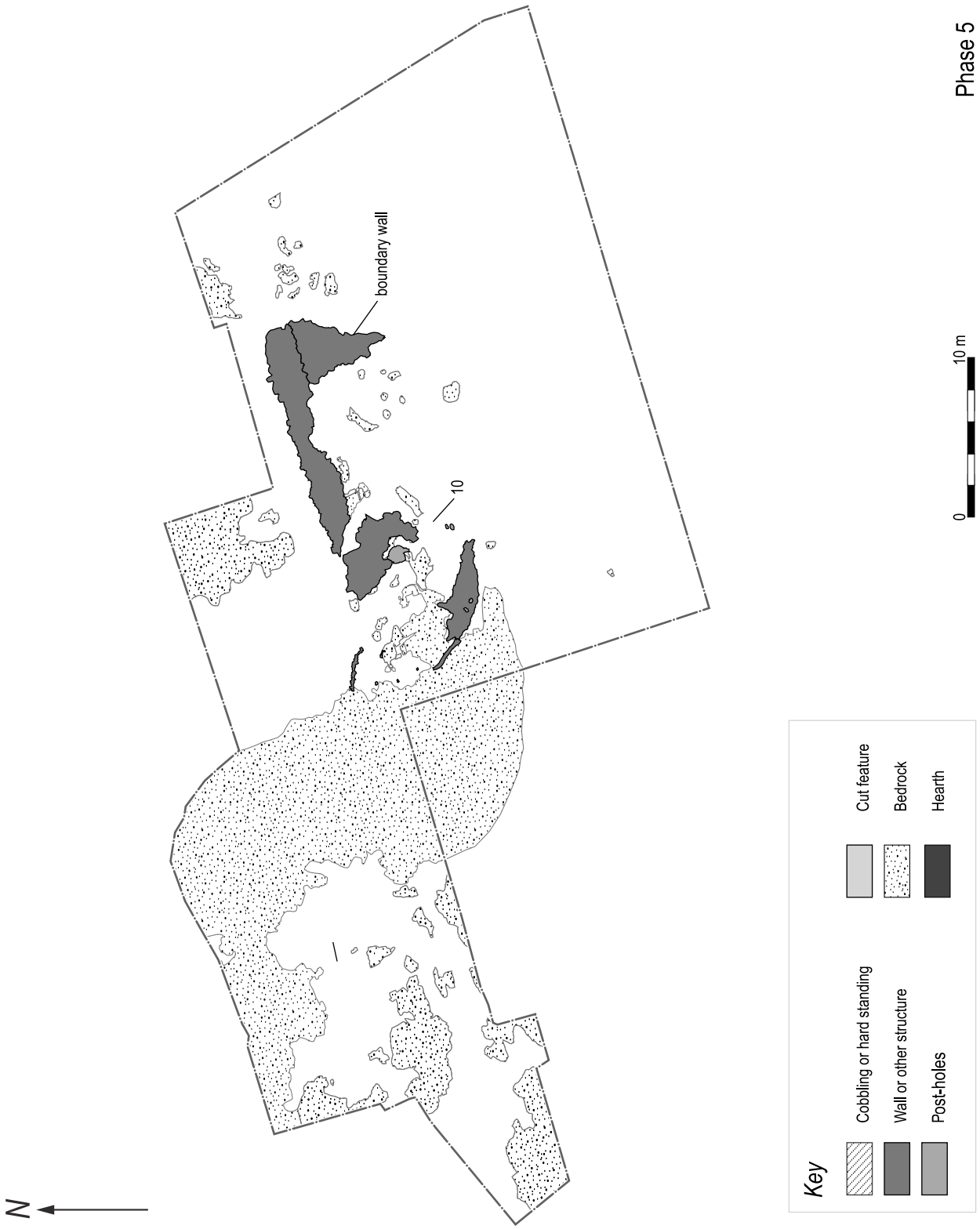
7.40 Plan of the cobbled surfaces and walling of Structure 15.

7.41 Plan of Structures 16 and 17.

layer of post-abandonment sediment (046) built up to the east of the plinths and posts making up Structure 14. The large, conjoining sherds of pottery found in it (from four different pots; Figure 7.31: V 6 and 51) show that people no longer walked regularly over this ground. To the east of the settlement platform, a ground surface (078)/(085)/(086)/(087)/(107) built up over the areas of hard standing (124)/(125). Large sherds from up to 15 pottery vessels, including most of one pot, were found in it, suggesting that this area, too, was no longer regularly used (Figure 7.31: V 40, 42, 52, 55, 61). Fragments of copper alloy ornaments (SF 219, 325, 130; Figure 7.27), part of an iron bar (SF 391; Figure 7.39), glass bangle fragments (SF 77 and 353; Figure 7.37), two spindle whorls (SF 19 and 620; Figure 7.43), and various stone tools (SF 162 and 472; Figure 7.8 and 7.9) found in phase 5 deposits also give an impression of things being casually abandoned as the settlement fell quiet.

Along the passage, the posts that had supported walls or gates decayed or were removed (there were no clear post-pipes indicating decay, although the stone packing remained in place), and the post-holes silted up. A trampled, silty surface (021) built up over the cobbling (342) and paving (336), and the small cells (12 and 13) along the passage fell out of use. Sherds from 10 pottery vessels became incorporated in the floor of the passage (Figure 7.31: V 20 and 297). A reddish brown silty clay (083) formed over and around the tumbled stones (082) of these and the other buildings. The larger cellular building [7] may have continued in use, but the smaller one [11] fell down or was dismantled. A spread of scorched sediment (013) containing burnt human bone (1.8g) lay north of the boundary wall and Structure 11, apparently dumped by someone standing on the wall base, suggesting that the building no longer stood at this point. A fragment of human bone from the deposit produced a radiocarbon date of 360–50 BC (SUERC-9040).

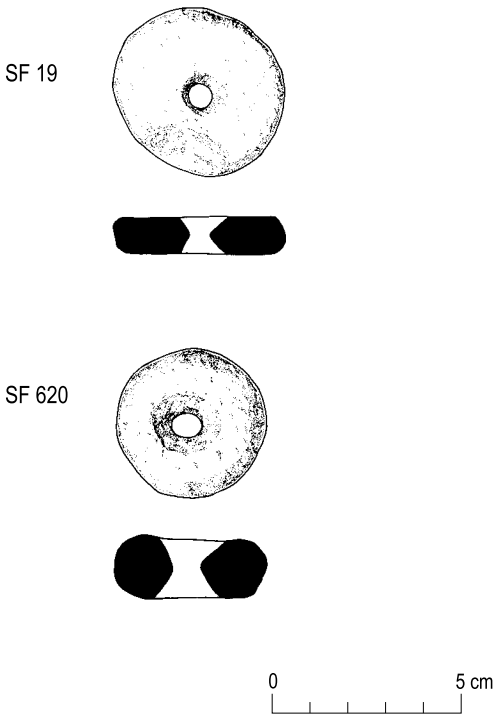
The paved, rambling structure [10] seems to have continued in use longer than the others. Those living on there scattered the burnt bone of sheep/goats and other ungulates, broken pottery from about eight pots, an unfinished shale finger ring (SF 16) and other bits of rubbish on the trampled surface (021) that led to it along the formerly cobbled entrance passage. Alder, hazel and willow charcoal, cereals and human bone (0.5g) were



7.42 The phase 5 features at Phantassie.

found in a dark brown sandy clay (033) that built up against its south-west wall (035). A grain of hulled six-row barley (*Hordeum vulgare var vulgare*) from this produced a radiocarbon date of AD 80–340 (SUERC-5614).

Probably by the mid third century AD, the last occupants of the farmstead had left. The buildings were reduced to their stone wall bases, perhaps with remnants of turf walls slumped over them. Rubbish heaps and the ashes from timbers burnt in final fires marked those parts of the settlement that had already been abandoned during the last years. The remains survived relatively undisturbed by later activity. The survival of discrete occupation deposits and wall lines show that the farmstead stood deserted and decaying until hillwash deposits (005) covered its traces.



7.43 Spindle whorls.

Discussion

The dynamics of the settlement

The farmstead at Phantassie began as a few light structures partly enclosed by a fence, perhaps as early as the second century BC. Over the next 200 to 400 years it became busier and more crowded, until at last it declined and gradually emptied.

After building the first ephemeral structures in the first or second century BC, the inhabitants invested time and effort in building more lasting, substantial things (in phase 2): a sub-rectangular house [1] in a fenced yard, a stone-built boundary and hard standing around the main settlement area, a cobbled and enclosed or gated passage, and a frame perhaps used for parching grain over fire. Later – probably in the late first century BC or the first century AD (phase 3) – a new suite of buildings sprang up, filling the eastern part of the settlement platform. The concentric building [9], with its hearth, may have replaced the sub-rectangular one [1] as the main dwelling, with a porch [8] leading into it and an adjacent cellular building [7] serving as a workshop. At some point during this phase, the inhabitants abandoned Structure 1 and began dumping rubbish over and around it, covering what had been the main focus of earlier generations' lives. The midden deposits produced considerable evidence for what people ate, burned, used and discarded during this time. In deliberately spreading these residues of daily life over the abandoned house, they may have been symbolically marking its death or preparing the ground for a new phase of occupation (see Chapter 10).

When they had finished spreading midden in the settlement, this generation of Phantassie dwellers sealed it and the abandoned building beneath it with a new, large structure [10] formed partly of massive paving slabs and probably also comprising a fenced yard (phase 4; Figure 7.44). They proceeded to fill up other spaces on the settlement platform with small cells, squeezing them into the available spaces. The area to the west of the cellular building [7] remained open throughout, and this may have been a yard during the life of the settlement, a place where goats were tethered, children played or women ground grain. This was the settlement at its most crowded, probably in the first or second century AD. It was also the period when the inhabitants converted the midden store in Area C into new areas of hard standing and outbuildings, suggesting that they were keeping more livestock than before.

Finally, many of the smaller buildings fell down or were dismantled and their sites were used to dispose of rubbish (phase 5). The large paved building [10] stayed in use while its occupants scattered rubbish freely over parts of the farmstead that had been abandoned, but this seemed less deliberate or concentrated than the midden-spreading of the earlier phase. At last, these people left or died and the settlement lay deserted.

On the nature of Phantassie

What kind of settlement was Phantassie? What sort of community occupied it, and what were their relationships to the surrounding landscape and other settlements? The range and quality of the artefacts, the evidence for fine-

quality metalworking, the livestock herds suggested by areas of hard standing and the energy apparently invested in building projects all contribute to a picture of life there. They do not conjure up an image of a high-status community, living a luxurious existence with abundant imported goods and extravagant accommodation, supported and fed by subservient groups. Nor do they suggest an impoverished community, barely scraping by on the edge of starvation. There was no evidence to suggest that the settlement was only occupied seasonally. It also seems unlikely to have been simply a collection of workshops and farm buildings serving a separate settlement, given the quantity of cooking pots left scattered around the site that indicated everyday domestic occupation (see text box 7.1).

Rather, the evidence evokes a picture of a settlement permanently occupied by a working farming community, perhaps the size of an extended family, who were reasonably prosperous in terms of grain and stock. They produced enough surplus to trade for the occasional beautifully decorative object, such as the Samian bowl or the glass bangles (see Macinnes 1989). Its members also had time to devote to craft production beyond what they needed for everyday use, making wire for jewellery or chain mail with the draw bar (see text box 7.4). Over time, the community clearly thrived and grew enough that it needed to expand the domestic and agricultural accommodation with more buildings and hard surfaces.

The palaeobotanical evidence (Miller and Ramsay, see Chapter 12 and Archive) and the character of the wall bases show that the inhabitants were drawing on diverse areas for fuel and building materials, ranging from scrub woodland to moorland to riverbeds. They also had access to raw materials such as recycled metals of Roman origin (see text box 7.3), and to markets or traders for exchanging agricultural surplus and crafted objects for other things they wanted or needed, perhaps exchanged at a centre such as Traprain Law (see Jobey 1976, 193–8).

7.44 Reconstruction of Phantassie during phase 4.

These implied relationships raise questions about the inhabitants' social relations with other communities. Did they live a free and independent existence and, if so, how did they establish and maintain rights to land for grazing, raising crops or gathering fuel? Alternatively, did their existence depend upon the protection of a larger, more powerful community – perhaps one that was simultaneously growing on Traprain Law, or in one of the larger enclosed settlements clustered around the hill – to which they paid tribute or rent for land?

These are questions to which archaeology can provide only teasing, tenative answers, but they are worth asking. Chapter 10 considers the evidence from Phantassie in combination with that from other contemporary sites in the region, and in the context of broader changes in settlement and society, to offer models for social structure that fit the assembled evidence.

Tapestries of later prehistoric life and death

The excavated evidence and the assemblages of artefacts, palaeobotanical remains, animal and human bone have yielded a complex, nuanced understanding of the lives that left these traces, one developed further in the context of other contemporary sites in Chapter 10. We use these remains to explore the ways that Phantassie's occupants defined space through architecture and moved around it, and how this changed during the 200–400 years the settlement was occupied. We examine the evidence for the daily, seasonal and annual routines of life – their farming practices, the animals they raised, butchered and ate, the crops they grew or at least processed and stored to make daily bread, the objects they made for themselves, and those they acquired through trade. We also consider how the inhabitants interacted with the surrounding natural and social landscape: how they exploited woodland, moorland and agricultural land, and their relationships with other settlements, the inhabitants of nearby Traprain Law and the Roman army.

Certain aspects of the site raise other tantalising questions. The excavated remains give a strong impression of continuity during the settlement's lifespan – in the endurance of defining features like the boundary wall for the settlement platform, in the re-use of old walls for new buildings or the continued preference of certain spots for successive buildings. The particular ways that midden seems to have been stored up and then re-used, sometimes spread over parts of the settlement, hints that people saw this as a special kind of deposit with certain appropriate uses; these are also explored further in Chapter 10.

The disparate scatter of burnt human bone across the site also raises questions about memory and belief. The bone represented an estimated minimum of 62 individuals – 19 adults, three infants (0–3 years), another three children and 14 non-adults (Duffy and Marquez-Grant, see Chapter 12 and Archive). While this estimate was based on context, and remains from one individual may have been spread across different deposits, much of the bone was recovered from bulk samples, so it probably represents only a percentage of the true quantity in the deposits. Less than a third of the bone was weathered, and the greatest proportion by far comprised long bone fragments. Only one fragment from the human bone assemblage was both large enough and sufficiently combusted for radiocarbon submission; this, from a discrete scorched deposit (013) outside the large, paved structure [10], yielded a calibrated date of 360–50 BC (SUERC-9040).

Some of the burnt human bone at Phantassie came from midden deposits, but much of it occurred as a scatter in occupation layers – in buildings, around hearths, in association with animal bone or charred cereal grains, in the matrix of the rubble track leading into the settlement. Figure 7.45 shows the distribution of human bone by phase across the site. It is possible that some of the human bone was residual, washed in from a nearby cremation cemetery that was disturbed by Iron Age ploughs. However, given the relatively good condition of much of the bone, its consistent appearance across and through the stratigraphy, and the late first millennium BC date of one fragment, it seems likely that most if not all of it came from people who lived and died during the settlement's occupation, rather than deriving from residual burial contexts. If we accept this as a hypothesis, it has important implications.

The presence of so much human bone hints at complex, meaningful practices contemporary with the settlement, rather than simply incidental incorporation. After they died, perhaps the community's members were cremated, and their burnt remains were dumped onto the midden; most of this would have eventually been spread on the fields, feeding the new crop which would in turn feed the community. Sometimes human remains were put – along with the midden of which they formed part – into ditches or pits or over abandoned houses, perhaps to ensure future fertility or mark a significant transition in communal life.

Numerous pieces of the archaeological puzzle, such as the deliberate uses of querns and midden at this and other contemporary sites, point to the integration of an agrarian view of the world into many aspects of life. These were objects and materials vital to agricultural transformation and regeneration, and the ways they were used expressed ideas about transformation and regeneration in other spheres (see Chapter 10). The way the dead were treated at Phantassie may have been wrapped up in the same world view: in death as well as in life, the community's prosperity and continuity mattered more than individuals' corporal

7.45 Distribution of human bone by phase.

identity.

The presence of bone throughout occupation deposits also suggests that, after being cremated, in addition to being put on the midden, people's remains were scattered in the settlement. Perhaps a handful was scooped up from each cremation pyre and dropped somewhere in the farmstead, so that each member of the community returned to it in fragmented form, to become part of its fabric. In this way, he or she remained physically integrated in the settlement's ongoing social life. The act of bringing a few fragments of each person back in among the living may have kept their contributions alive in the collective memory. A perceived need to re-assimilate the dead into the settlement and the agricultural system might, like the building of boundaries, have also been a way of mitigating against communities' tendencies to fracture and fragment. Chapter 10 explores these ideas further.