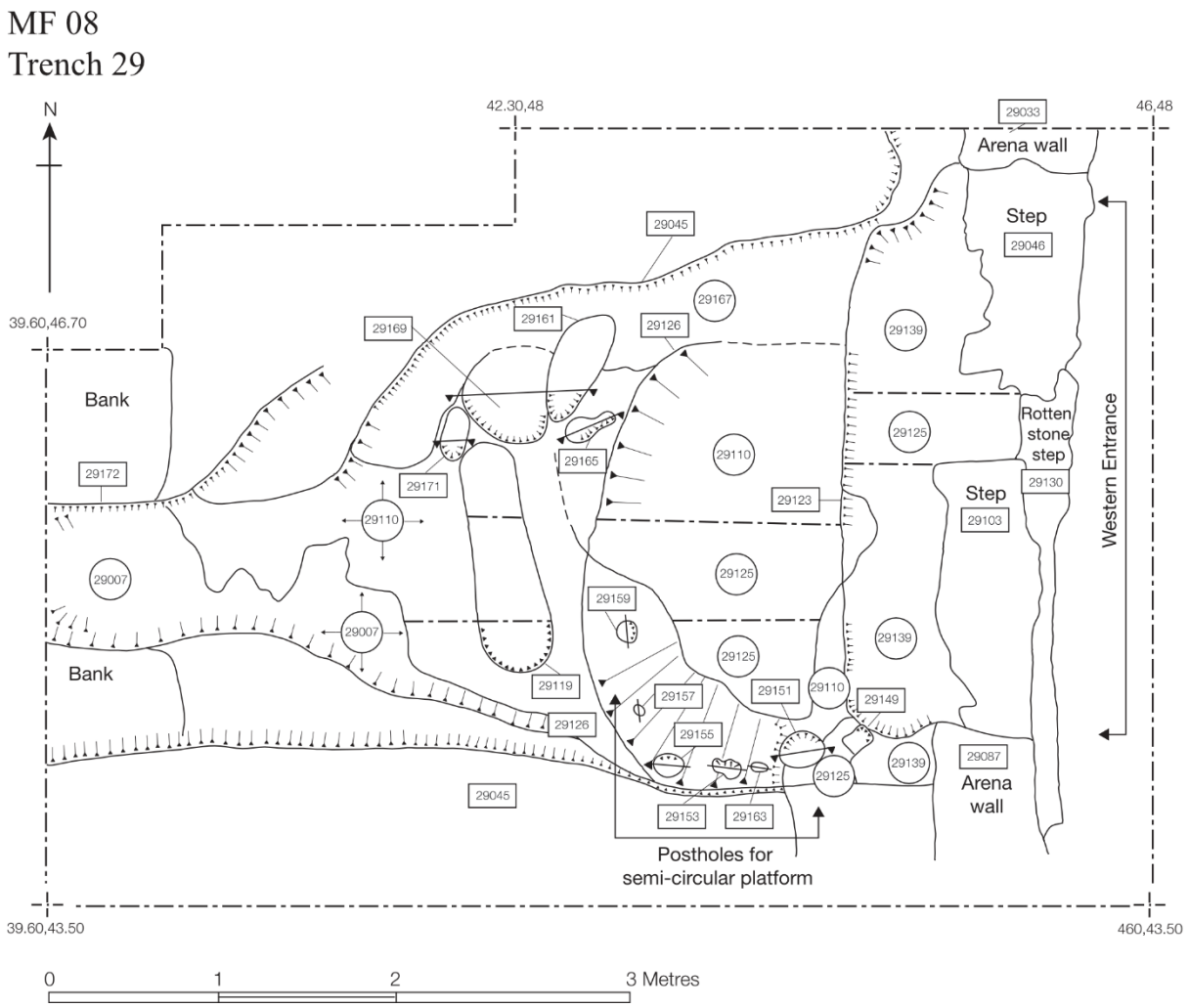
# Trench MF29 narrative

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Trench 29 was situated to the north of the Marcham site and was set across the Western entrance to the roman arena. This trench was the last of the four trenches opened to explore various aspects of the arena, in particular the perceived entrances, guided by geophysical survey evidence that indicated a possible pathway through the embankment and entrance into the arena,

Trench 29 was opened in 2006 and ran for three seasons. The geophysical survey indicated similarities with the eastern entrance with a clearly defined pathway through the embankment, forming a western entrance into the arena. This trench ran from the centre of the arena abutting trench 9, then westward across the arena wall to an area just beyond the embankment perimeter.




*Trench 29*

**Trench dimensions**

Trench 29 was approximately six metres at its widest point and 38 metres in length. However, these dimensions altered slightly as specific aspects and features within the trench were explored, particularly over the step entrance set into the wall. The width of the trench within the arena was dictated by the depth of the trench at about two metres and the need to provide a stepped trench side

for safety considerations. Therefore, the effective width of the trench within the arena was approximately four metres. Beyond the wall westward it was possible to use the full six metre width of the trench, when necessary, where the soil depth was considerably shallower.

**Trench description and Main Features**
**The arena sector: Roman phase.**
The section of the trench from the centre of the arena to the west wall provided an opportunity to see if the extensive drainage system identified in trench 9 continued in trench 29. Indications from the direction of some of the drainage channels in trench 9 may have extended into the western quadrant of the arena, particularly the western feeder drain system. Unfortunately, no such evidence was found. Excavations in this sector showed a rather benign floor surface, the ground surface having been stripped down to natural clay over bedrock over which a deposit of sand and gravel had been laid to provide a floor surface (as found in trench 9). At the end of its life the arena was filled with a thick deposit of clay that was rich in animal bone and pottery.

The only outstanding features in the arena section of this trench were two areas of cobbling. The first area [29031] measured 1m x 1.5m and was laid approximately two metres from the arena wall and on the south side of the trench. The second area [29040] was laid directly below the wall and steps into the arena forming a foot pad into the arena and a continuation of the step arrangement. This area of cobbling was approximately 50cm in depth from the wall and three metres in width.

Beyond this initial excavation in the arena section of the trench little more could be carried out in the seasons beyond 2006 due to severe flooding.

**The western wall sector.**
The western wall section of the arena wall proved to be of the same quality of construction found elsewhere in the arena. The inner wall surface being constructed of dressed and mortared limestone blocks that had been plastered with white plaster and dark red lines in an ashlar pattern as seen in other areas of the arena, notably trench 9. Pieces of painted plaster were found in the debris at the bottom of the arena wall. No drawings were made or measurements taken of the wall at the time of excavation, it has therefore been assumed that the wall height was similar to other areas of the arena at around two metres.

Similar to findings in trenches 1 and 17 the bedrock had been cut into to facilitate the building of the wall. A void existed between the wall and the bedrock which was filled with earth and building rubble, although the void was not completely excavated a Roman pot was found within its fill (29086). The finish of the wall within the void was left in a rough undressed state.

A step arrangement had been created to facilitate access into the arena that appeared to have gone through a number of phases of development. This step area lowered a section of the wall approximately three metres in width, leaving two wall terminals, the north wall [29033] and the south wall [29087], both being at original build height, between which were two positively identifiable step arrangements [29046] and [29103]. A possible third step was identified as a block of rather decayed stone [29130] set lower down into the arena wall inside the arena.

Both the north and south wall terminals underwent significant repair. Wall [29087] the southern terminal had been coated in an abundance of concrete that almost covered the three courses of herring bone topping of the wall. The northern terminal appears to have undergone a significant rebuild to the top section of the wall.

Although it was not possible to determine the order of construction of these steps, step 1 [29103] was placed close to the southern wall terminal [29087] and was 1.5m in width and 50cm in depth. The second step [29046] extended southward from the northern terminal wall [29033] with a width of 1.25m and a depth of 50cm. Both steps were constructed of a number of flat limestone blocks mortared into position. A gap of approximately 20cm separated the two steps.

The third possible step [29130] consisted of a single rather decayed slab of limestone approximately 2.25m in length and positioned directly below step [29103] at ground level and led onto an area of cobbling (29103) on the arena floor. Being placed where it was and given its condition might suggest that it was contemporary with step [29103] and possibly the first phase of step construction.

**The Western entrance into the arena**

The area directly behind the wall and steps consisted of bedrock that had been cut away forming a void behind the steps that accommodated the wall. This area [29045] and [29085] was approximately 3m in length on a north/south axis that formed an arc, about 75cm in width and 30cm deep, filled with rubble and silty material. Behind this cut away section lay a broad entrance path 3.5m wide and 3m in depth forming an open area that sloped gently down to the steps. A distinct cut [29126] was observed which clearly delineated the slope in the path. This shaping of the bedrock was also observed at the eastern entrance to the arena in trench 1. The path surface variously consisted of gravel, clay, sand and pottery fragments mixed with small stones. Beyond this the path narrowed to about 1.5m in width running between the north and south embankment terminals.

The embankment terminals north and south were identified through considerable amounts of stone packing. The pathway between the terminals appears to have been protected from ploughing by this packing. Beyond the embankment terminals the pathway had undergone significant plough damage and was only identifiable as a thin spread of gritty sand.

Two features were recorded at the start of the open path area down to the steps that appeared to form the outline of what might have been the impression of two wooden planks [29119] and [29121] set across the surface of the path on a north/south axis. These features were each 3–3.5m in length and each 20 –30cm in width and set 2 – 2.5m back from the steps. At the time of excavation, the notion arose that these planks may have been part of a more complex structure that formed a wooden step arrangement. This idea arose from the recording of what appeared to be a series of postholes that formed an arc following the line of [29123] directly behind step [29103] and may have supported a handrail or other wooden step arrangement. However, analysis of the dimensions of these postholes showed that many were not postholes but most probably natural features (possibly where stones had been removed), with several holes being no more than 3 – 5cm wide and 3 – 5cm deep, which does not support the wooden step theory. Similar features to [29119] and [29121] were noted in trench 9 east/west section that were thought to be drainage channels.

At approximately ten metres along the trench from the wall an arced cut [20031] that spanned the width of the trench was recorded and thought to be a possible revetment to the southern embankment within which was a small area of cobbling. However, given its position across the entrance path it is doubtful that this was the embankment revetment.

At the most westerly end of the trench and close to the southern embankment terminal the footprint of a masonry structure was excavated. This arrangement of stones formed three sides of a building that appears to have had an open westerly front. The structure appeared to be similar to structures noted in trenches 22 and 24. It consisted of a complete north wall [29013] measuring approximately 5.2m in length, set on an east/west axis and constructed from random limestone pieces. From the north walls eastern end, a second wall [29020] running southward into the bank of the trench that measured 2.8m

in length. The third wall [29015] consisted of little more than an 80cm turn on the western end of the north wall to form a corner. The thickness of each of these walls was consistently 40 – 50cm. Excavations were limited to the three walls and were not extended beyond the confines of the existing trench. Various groups of stones, some set upright inside the structure or close to the outer walls were recorded. In total there were four such groups [29030], [29035], [29036] and [29016]. These stone groups which seem to be neither post pads nor post packing as thought at the time of excavation may therefore be random groups of stones fallen from the walls. Similar groups of stones were found in trenches 8b and 24.

**Cuts**
It is important to raise the issue of postholes, for as many as 19 were recorded in and around the area of the steps, four of which were recorded on top of the steps and one on top of the north wall [29033]. These five possible postholes were associated with another group of possible postholes that was thought to have formed an arc that supported a guide rail, barrier or wooden step arrangement above steps [29103]. However, scrutiny of the shape and size of these post holes as recorded on plans and context sheets suggest that the majority are probably natural features (possibly where stones were removed from clayey soil), particularly those that made up the arc. These postholes ranged in size from 3cm to 5cm in width and 3cm to 15cm in depth and mostly with an irregular shape and with gently dished sides. The five post holes recorded as being on the steps and wall, given their very irregular shape (one being delta shaped) were more likely to be gaps in the wall and steps where stones had been removed over time. A number of these holes were packed with small stones.

**Bedrock**. Various cuts into the bedrock to accommodate the construction of the wall.

**Entrance path cut [29045]**
A considerable cut into bedrock to provide a pathway down to the stone steps. This feature ranged approximately six metres westward from the stone steps, was three metres in width at its widest point and at its deepest, closer to the stone steps was approximately one metre. Toward the western end of this cut the path narrowed to about 1.5 metres. The path sloped down west to east. Toward the westerly end the stone gives way to a layer (29110) of light sand which migrated down through the path providing a useable surface material.

**Posthole [29050]** A post hole measuring 35 cm in width and 15 cm deep with two fills, stone packing (29056) and sandy silt (29051). This post hole was situated in the western end of the trench close to the rectangular stone structure.

**Cut [29053].** A cut into bedrock associated with the of wall [29020] running alongside the wall. Filled with sandy silt (29054) and dark grey silty loam (29057). Inclusions within the fill were a piece of bone, a Roman pot and a piece of slag (SF 4461).

**Foundation cut [29061]** Foundation cut for wall [29103] into bedrock. Single fill of sandy silt (29062).

**Posthole [29071]** Possible posthole situated close to the rectangular stone structure in the west of the trench. It was 23cm in width and 9cm deep with two fills, brown sandy clay (29072) and stone packing (29073). One small piece of shell was found within the fill. This posthole was located just north of posthole [29050].

**Posthole [29076]** Possible posthole or beam slot but very poorly defined, situated close to the rectangular stone building in the west of the trench. This is in alignment with wall [29015] of the

structure and may be associated with the wall's construction. It was 60cm x 20cm in area and 20cm deep. Single fill of sandy silt (29077). No dating evidence was found.

**Cut [29085].** A continuation cut of [29045]. Cut into bedrock to create the path into the arena.

**Cut [29088].** A cut into bedrock to accommodate the construction of the stone step [29046]. This cut ran the length of the stone step. It had a single fill (29089).

**Revetment cut [29091].** Possible cut for the revetment of the south arena bank to the south of the west arena entrance. It was situated on the south side of the entrance path. It is very difficult to determine where the stones for the revetment begin and where the gravel/cobble area of the path stop. The cut is 16cm deep and 26cm in length. This cut had a single fill (29092) of sandy silt.

**Posthole [29113].** Possible posthole 31cm long x 25cm wide x 9.5cm deep, cut into bedrock with sharply rounded sides. It is positioned four metres back from the steps. Single fill (29112) of sandy silt. No dating evidence found.

**Posthole [29115].** Possible posthole or beam slot 60cm long x 20cm wide x 9cm deep. Positioned two metres north and in line with [29113]. Single fill (29114) sandy silt. No dating evidence found.

**Pit [29117].** Possible pit 50cm deep but no other dimensions recorded. This feature was not fully excavated. Said to undercut the bedrock. Single fill (29116) sandy silt. No dating evidence.

**Beam slot or plank impression [29119].** Recorded as a beam slot or the impression of a wooden plank. This feature was approximately 2.5m in length x 37cm wide and 20cm deep in the centre, with gently sloping sides to a dish form. The plank theory came from the idea that it might be associated with the possible wooden step construction over the steps into the arena. However similar impressions were noted in trench 9 east/west section that were confirmed to be drainage channels. This feature had a single fill (29118) of brown sandy silt. No dating evidence found.

**Beam slot or plank impression [29121].** The second of two possible beam slots or the impression of a wooden plank measuring approximately 3m in length x 55cm wide x 12cm deep at the centre and as with [29119] the profile was dished. It was noted that it was difficult to photograph these features as the cut was in sand and once dried out the cut was difficult to discern. A single fill (29120) of sandy silt with small stones. No dating evidence found.

**Note.** These two features were positioned side by side and laid in a north/south orientation across the entrance path and approximately 2.5m back from the arena steps.

**Cut [29123].** Recorded as a possible post support for an entrance gate associated with the wooden step theory, but only having excavated a very small portion of it. However, plans 2945, 2946 and 2950 show this feature to be part of a larger cut that ran the whole length of both steps positioned 22cm back from the steps producing a void 31cm deep with a single fill (29122), consisting of a mixture of rubble, clay, sandy silt with stones and three pieces of yellow mortar. More accurately this feature is the cut into bedrock that enabled the arena wall to be constructed.

**Entrance path cut [29126].** This cut relates to the entrance path cut [29045] and forms a semi-circular feature set back approximately 1.6m from the steps with an arc of about 2.7m. It appears to form a further delineation of the path sloping down toward the steps and is about halfway along cut [29045].

**Posthole [29132].** A possible posthole, irregular in shape being 2 cm x 27cm wide and ranging in depth from 3cm to 10cm and with the deepest part being about 1 cm wide at the base. This posthole was positioned on top of step [29046] and directly below wall [29033]. Thought to support possible shuttering or gate. Single fill (29133) of compacted sandy silt.

**Posthole [29134].** Irregular shaped posthole being delta shaped, 30cm x 40cm along each long axis and 20cm deep and situated on top of step [29103]. No section drawn. Although no specific fill context sheet was recorded comments on the cut context sheet advises to use context [29104], a context which seems to be a cover all fill of gaps between the step stones, being loose grey sandy silt. Another posthole thought to support shuttering or a gate on the step.

**Posthole [29135].** Irregular shaped posthole being lozenge shaped, 10cm wide x 20cm long x 20cm deep and situated on top of step [29046]. As above fill (29104). Another posthole thought to support shuttering or a gate on top of the step.

**Posthole [29136].** Irregular shaped posthole, 10cm x 20cm wide and 20cm deep. Again, situated on top of step [29046] and alongside [29135]. Fill as (29104). Another posthole thought to support shuttering or a gate.

**Note.** The above four postholes given their position on top of the stone steps and their irregular shape are just as likely to be evidence for the removal of stones from the step.

**Posthole [29141].** Possible base of a posthole 30cm x 30cm x 5cm deep with gently curved sides. Situated alongside wall [29033] and step [29046]. Possibly a natural feature. Single fill (29140) of sandy silt with flecks of pink plaster.

**Posthole [29151].** Possible posthole 20cm x 20cm x 10cm deep. Part of the so-called arc of postholes behind step [29046]. Single fill (29150) of sandy silt. No dating evidence.

**Posthole [29153].** Possible posthole, said to be beam shaped being 10cm x 9cm x 5cm deep with gently dished sides and rounded base. Possibly a natural feature. Part of the so-called arc of postholes. Single fill (29152) of yellow sandy silt. No dating evidence found.

**Posthole [29155].** Recorded as possible posthole but most likely a natural feature, 10cm x 10cm x3cm deep and dished in section. Part of the arc of postholes. Single fill (29150) of yellow sandy silt. No dating evidence found.

**Stake hole [29159].** Possible stake hole 11cm x 11cm x 9cm deep, dished in section. Probably a natural feature. Part of the arc of postholes. Single fill (29158) yellow sandy silt. No dating evidence found.

**Note.** Many of the stake and postholes recorded on the path area behind step [29103] that formed the so-called arc of postholes are very problematic, primarily in terms of their depth, dished sections and their shallowness ranging in depth from 3cm to 10cm, which do not seem capable of supporting a post.

These postholes were cut into bedrock, and all may of course be natural features as seen in trench 1. In addition to these, postholes [29149] 5cm x 5cm wide x 15cm deep, [29157] 4cm x 4cm wide x 4cm

deep and [29163] 2cm x 3cm wide x 5cm deep have already been excluded being regarded as natural features in the bedrock.

**Posthole [29161].** Possible post hole 20cm x 30cm x 10cm deep. Oval and dished in section. Located to the north side of the entrance path and 3m back from step [29046]. Single fill (29160). One piece of Roman pot found in the fill.

**Posthole [29169].** Possible posthole conjoined with [29161], 20cm x 40cm x 10cm deep and irregular in shape. Single fill (29168), yellow sandy silt. No dating evidence found.

**Posthole [29171].** Ephemeral post hole, 15cm x 20cm wide x 10cm deep. Situated just below posthole [29169]. Dished in section with rounded base. Single fill (29170) of yellow sandy silt and small stones. No dating evidence found.

**Structures**

**Wall [29013].** Remains of a wall at the west end of trench 29, composed of random sized pieces of limestone set at ground height. This wall is on an east/west axis and measured 5.3m in length and 40cm to 50 cm in width. This wall is the most northerly of three walls.

**Wall [29015].** The west wall is little more than an 80cm turn in the western end of wall [29013] to form a corner. This wall is of the same construction and is 40cm to 50cm in width.

**Wall [29020].** The east wall drops down from the eastern end of the north wall [29013] for 2.5m (this wall was not excavated beyond the baulk of the trench). This wall is of the same construction as the other two and is 40cm to 50cm wide.

**Revetment [29031].** A group of stones recorded as being part of the revetment to the southwest of the arena although there is very little additional data to support this interpretation. This feature comprised of limestone blocks, sub-angular and poorly sorted. Plan 2906 shows a one metre square group of stones. However, where it is situated in the centre of the line of the path to the arena would suggest that it is more likely to be an area of coarse cobbling.

**Wall [29033].** North wall of the west arena entrance. The overall height of the wall was not recorded, it has been assumed therefore that it is like other areas of the arena walls at approximately two metres and finished with three course herring bone structure to the top. The wall rises approximately one metre above the step and is about 90cm in width. This would put the step down into the arena at around one metre. Unlike Trench 1 there were no blocks of stone observed inside the arena to act as an additional step except for a decayed stone slap [29130] at the bottom of the wall. A significant rebuild [29068] to a section of the top of the north wall was presumably to repair structural damage to the top of the wall sometime after the wall was lowered to accommodate the step.

**Stone [29036].** A group of four sub-angular limestones situated just north of wall [28013] at the western end of the trench and thought to be a possible post pad associated with the wall. They might also be a random group of stones.

**Step [29046].** A step set into the lowered arena wall providing an entrance into the western arena between walls [29033] and [29087]. This step sits below the northern wall [29033]. The step was constructed of mostly squared limestone pieces, well laid and mortared into place, providing a step approximately 1.3m in length and 70cm wide. Three possible postholes were thought to exist on top

of and set into the step [29132], [29135] and [290136]. However, given their very irregular shape and position they are more likely to be where stones have been removed at some time after construction.

**Wall rebuild [29068].** A substantial repair to the top of wall [29033], described as rough stones bonded with mortar and an infill of earth over three irregular courses of the wall. An area of about 1m in length x 70cm deep and 30cm wide, thought to be a structural repair to the top of the wall. A hob nail was found in the mortar of the repair.

**Wall rebuild [29087].** Repair to the top of the arena wall south of the steps alongside step [29103]. This repair described as the herring bone topping of the wall was almost covered in concrete, presumably to stabilise the top of the wall next to the step. The area of wall involved was 1.9m in length x 80cm deep and 3 cm in width.

**Step [29103].** A step set into the arena wall and situated below wall [29087] the southern section of the lowered arena wall and south of step [29046]. The build is the same as step [29046]. The step was approximately 1.8m in length x 60cm in width. Two possible postholes were thought to have been set into the top of the step [29134] and [29138]. However as with step [29046] these may well be stones that have been remove from the step.

**Step [29130].** A possible third step composed of a slab of decaying stone which seems to be a concretion of lime hardened gravel together with a course of limestone slabs. This possible step is situated below step [29103] and part of step [29046], set at ground level inside the arena. The step appears to be approximately 2.2m in length and 30cm wide x 20cm deep. The stone appears to be part of a natural outcrop that together with additional stone coursing has been utilised as a possible step and perhaps performed the function of an immediate step down into the arena as single blocks did in the eastern arena entrance.

**Significant layers.**
**Layer (29021).** A layer of rubbly bank deposit together with areas of cobbling that form the entrance path. This area is situated to the west of the trench and is associated with possible revetment [29031]. Recorded as a yellow rubbly bank deposit south of the path and part of a longitudinal flanking bank.

**Layer (29047).** A rough cobbled area within the arena forming part of a pathway from the western entrance to the centre of the arena. The cobbling consisted of well compacted limestone pieces as rough cobbles. This area was situated just to the north of the trench approximately two metres from the arena wall, and in area about one metre in width and 1.3 metres in length.

**Layer (29047).** Cobbled surface constructed from angular limestone pieces forming part of the path just north of the revetment [29031] and in area approximately 1m x 1.5m.

**Layer (29131).** A sparse cobbled area set directly below steps [29046] and [29103] forming a solid path as you step into the arena. This area was approximately 5m in length and 60cm wide. Thought to be contemporary with step [29130] but does not abut it.

**Pottery Analysis**
The total number of pottery sherds recovered from trench 29 was 1,385. This sample was made up 617 (44.5%) Iron Age and 759 (54.7%) Roman pottery sherds.

**Iron Age Pottery**
Unlike Trenches 1, 9 and 17 Trench 29 had a very high level of Iron Age pottery, much of which was found toward the western end of the trench, particularly in the area where the possible shrine was located. However, on analysis, possibly as much as 53% was recovered from the topsoil or sub soil contexts in areas where ploughing activity was noticeable. Significant among these contexts were (29100), (29001) and (29002) yielding 49 sherds and being immediate topsoil contexts. Subsoil contexts (29008), (29012), (29013), (29022), (29023(, (29054), (29058) and (29100) yielded 303 sherds. These contexts were recorded as showing clear signs of plough damage and contained high levels of abraded pottery. This was particularly the case toward the western end of the trench where the depth of soil over bedrock was noticeably shallow. It is likely that much of the pottery was introduced, co-mingled with gravel, cobbles and other path building material. This use of pottery was noted both in the construction of the pathway into the eastern entrance within trench 1 and within the arena where it was necessary to build up the arena floor.

**Iron Age pottery: Important contexts**
Four contexts associated with the arena bank are of interest, context (29009) yielding 51 sherds, was located at the north edge of the trench within the bank material, context (29025) yielded 63 sherds in the upper layers of the bank to the south of the arena entrance, however their locations might indicate that they are either later deposits or were moved with material when the bank was constructed and therefore not in their original place of deposition. Context (29029) yielded 13 sherds and was located beneath the bank revetment and context (29039) yielded 16 sherds was recorded as being found in preserved soil beneath the bank which might indicate that these contexts formed part of the original Iron Age surface upon which the bank was constructed.

Two other contexts within archaeological levels and both associated with the arena wall area were contexts (29054) yielding 13 sherds appear to fill the gap created by the cut (29053) into bedrock to enable the construction of the wall. Context (29082) yielded ten sherds and formed part of the cobbled path surface directly beneath the wall inside the arena.

Pottery from archaeologically valid contexts (29011), (29041) and (29055) yielding 86 sherds were associated with the surface of the path into the arena. Contexts (29024), (29025), (29029), (29031), (29039) and (29057) yielded 104 sherds were associated with the arena bank material. Contexts (29027), (29067), (29101) and (29102) yielded 17 sherds were in and around the area of the wall.

**Roman Pottery**
In total 759 pottery sherds were recovered from Trench 29 the sample being made up of the following principal pottery types.

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|---|---|
| Roman oxidised coated fine ware | 139 sherds. (18.2%) |
| Roman reduced coated and fine wares | 357 sherds. (47.0%) |
| Roman white ware/fine white ware | 57 sherds. (07.5%) |
| Oxford fine ware red/white | 90 sherds. (11.9%) |
| Decorated wares | 40 sherds. (05.2%) |
| All other Roman pottery types | 76 sherds. (10.1%) |

However, 64.4% (489 sherds) of the total came from topsoil contexts where evidence of plough damaged had been observed particularly toward the west end of the trench beyond the embankment area, therefore these samples have been excluded from further analysis.

**Important archaeologically significant contexts**

**Context (29027).** Yielded 23 sherds. This context was recorded as being part of the embankment although it did run for the whole length of the trench therefore it is difficult to be precise about the exact location of the finds. The context sheet indicates that they were found in the mid-section of the trench toward the northern edge of the trench. Whilst this context is primarily sub-soil it has been included here as this location was part of the path surface. However, this being the case these sherds may have been introduced with other path surface building material.

**Context (29032).** Yielded 65 sherds. This context was located at the foot of the arena wall inside the arena. It is possible that they fell into the arena from the top of the wall/embankment as they were co-mingled with other wall material. They may of course have been deliberately placed there to form the path. 61% of these sherds were Roman reduced coated and fine wares.

**Context (29049).** Yielded 62 sherds. Predominantly Roman oxidised wares (14 sherds) and reduced wares (12). These sherds were located at the eastern end of the trench close to the centre of the arena. It is most likely that these sherds were introduced co-mingled with other material to provide a prepared floor surface as was noted in Trench 9.

**Context (29049).** Yielded 62 sherds, predominantly Roman fine oxidised ware (35) and Roman coated reduced ware (17). Section drawings indicate that these sherds were from a layer that made up the entrance path as it sloped down toward the arena wall. It is most likely therefore that these sherds were deposited deliberately as part of the path construction

**Context (29101).** Yielded 20 sherds, were in a layer within the embankment close to the arena wall at the southern side of the entrance.

**Small Finds Analysis**

In total 197 small finds were recovered, although 86.8% were found in either topsoil or sub-soil contexts, certainly within plough soil depth and therefore are not archaeologically significant. The contexts that made up this group are as follows:

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|---|---|---|
| Context 29000 topsoil | 52 sherds | |
| Context 29001 subsoil | 3 sherds | |
| Context 29002 subsoil | 101 sherds | |
| Context 29005 subsoil | 5 sherds | |
| Context 29006 subsoil | 1 sherd | Total 171 sherds. 86.6% |
| Context 29008 subsoil | 3 sherds | |
| Context 29009 subsoil | 4 sherds | |
| Context 29016 subsoil | 2 sherds | |
| Context 29022 subsoil | 1 sherd. | |

The finds from these contexts included 138 copper-alloy 3rd/4th century Roman coins, four miscellaneous iron objects, four flint tools, six jewellery items (including a shale bracelet, a finger ring and a copper-alloy duck brooch), eight miscellaneous cu-alloy objects, six vessel fragments, three bone objects (two hair pins), and an iron nail.

The contexts that make up that archaeologically significant finds are:

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|---|---|
| Context 29027 | 8 sherds |
| Context 29032. | 2 sherds |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Context 29044. | 1 sherd | |
| Context 29049 | 1 sherd | |
| Context 29057. | 1 sherd | |
| Context 29059 | 1 sherd | |
| Context 29086. | 1 sherd. | Total 26 sherds. 13.6% |
| Context 29090 | 1 sherd | |
| Context 29101 | 6 sherds | |
| Context 29107. | 1 sherd | |
| Context 29124. | 1 sherd | |
| Context 29128 | 1 sherd | |

The finds from these significant contexts comprised ten copper-alloy 3rd/4th century Roman coins, three pieces of iron slag, five miscellaneous iron objects, one animal bone object, two pieces of painted wall plaster, one bone hair pin, one piece of iron plate, two large iron nails and one flint tool. It is thought that the three pieces of iron slag were brought into the area as waste material to consolidate the entrance path. There is no evidence of iron smelting within the trench.