Trench MFNA7 narrative

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Introduction

Trench 7 was located in the Scheduled part of the site in the Noah's Ark Inn garden over the south-east corner of the 'cella-style' temple complex within the temenos enclosure. This area was originally excavated by Bradford and Goodchild in 1937-8 (Bradford and Goodchild, 1939). The Bradford and Goodchild excavations were focused on exploring the robber trenches over the original Roman walls of the temple. This trench was sited over the front SE ambulatory walls of the temple and partly over the square 'cella' structure in the centre. It was opened in 2009, partly to explore the extent and thoroughness of the Bradford and Goodchild excavations, but also to hopefully discover further dating evidence and insights into the nature of the main temple structure. The north-west sector of Trench 7 intersected with another earlier excavation trench, Harding's trench of 1964-66 (Harding, 1987). The 2009 excavated area consisted of a series of slots over an area measuring 12m x 12m with a smaller 3m x 4m extension in the NW corner to confirm the location of the Harding trench. The trenches excavated by Bradford and Goodchild were easy to locate, a testament to their surveying skills. However, the shallow depth of most of their exploratory trenches was unexpected, most only reaching the tops of the robber trenches over the walls and not being excavated to any great depth. This meant that the temple remains and in particular the robber trenches over the temple walls were in a better state than had been assumed. Their plan of the eastern part of the temple proved to be extremely accurate. In contrast it proved impossible to locate the Oxford Archaeological Unit evaluation trenches of the 1980's, one of which at least should have run through our trench MFNA6 or MFNA8 (Miles and Wait 1987).

Excavation revealed that the outer or ambulatory walls ([7011]/ [7017]/[7020]/[7091]) and the inner cella walls ([7004]/[7036]) were largely robbed out and the robber trenches had been backfilled with large quantities of smaller stones and mortar from the robbing procedure. The dating of this robbing remains unclear. One small section of the original cella structure wall remained, context [7052], demonstrating that the wall foundations were made of vertical and pitched limestone pieces. As the size of the robber trenches over the cella structure and the outer temple ambulatory walls were roughly the same in all areas, we can estimate that the walls and their foundation cuts were all *c.* 1m wide and *c.* 0.5m deep. One detail that was not recorded by Bradford and Goodchild in their report was the existence of the small buttress-like extension cut [7169] at the south-east corner of the temple.

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The upper layers within the cella structure contained large pieces of limestone rubble but no floor layers survived. However, the large amounts of ceramic tesserae found across the trench, particularly in layers (7000) and (7005), suggested there was originally a plain tessellated floor that had been destroyed or spread by later ploughing. Nearly 900 tesserae were found in Trench 7, by far the biggest concentration anywhere in the main temple MFNA area. As well as the more common plain ceramic tesserae a number of smaller finer stone tesserae in black and white colours were found, suggesting there was probably a simple decorative element to the temple floors, like a geometric patterned border for instance. Underneath this destroyed floor layer were a series of silty layers containing few finds. No floor layers had survived within the ambulatory area between the outer temple wall foundations and the cella wall foundations. Signs of several small burning episodes in this general area in the upper layers may relate to activities within the original temple building but it is impossible to be sure. Where bedrock was exposed inside the temple building, no prehistoric or other cut features were found. This suggests that the Iron Age stake-walled

roundhouse found by Harding below the northern part of the temple structure (Harding 1987) was not accompanied by any major prehistoric structural features in this southern temple area. However, the presence of significant numbers of prehistoric sherds in some of the layers inside the cella does suggest there was some kind of prehistoric activity in this key area before the Roman temple was constructed.

Outside the ambulatory temple walls and surrounding the building were a series of destruction layers (contexts (7015), (7016), (7022), (7027) and (7080)). A large number of plain and painted plaster fragments were retrieved from these deposits, in particular from contexts (7000), (7015), (7016) and (7022). The total number of coloured and plain plaster fragments from the whole trench was 617, far more than in any of the other MFNA trenches or indeed any of the MF trenches on the rest of the site. By contrast only small amounts of painted plaster were found in the layers inside the ambulatory and cella walls. This discovery of quantities of decorative painted plaster mostly on the outer perimeter of the temple structure, rather than inside the cella, implies it was the outer rather than the inside of the temple that was decorated with painted plaster. With decorated outer walls, the temple would have been a colourful and striking sight both inside the wider temenos area and from other parts of the larger complex. This all adds to the picture of a classic Romano-British temple with tessellated floors, painted outer walls, and possibly also a decorative tiled roof (see Peter Warry's tile report). As to be expected, there was a lot of Roman building debris in this trench, including some 400kg of ceramic roof tile. The bulk of this roof tile was the standard red/orange colour but the presence of some tiles with coloured slip in cream and blue, suggests a dramatic three-coloured patterned roof.

Excluding the many painted plaster fragments that were given small find numbers, 107 small finds were found in this trench, with metalwork and residual prehistoric flints making up the largest numbers. There were 38 copper alloy items in total, 26 of which were Roman coins (largely 4th century CE in date, where dateable). The remainder of the copper alloy assemblage was made up of jewellery fragments, personal grooming tools, and fitting fragments. Both the coins and the other copper alloy items are typical votive offerings for our site, though you can never be completely sure this is the only explanation for their appearance in an area. But given the proximity to the main temple it is very likely that most were religious donations rather than casual losses. One rare early Roman silver coin <SF 397> was found in context (7027), a layer in the area of the temple pathway just outside the outer temple wall and close to the temple entrance. This coin dates to 90 BCE, well before the Roman occupation of Britain, and *c.* 100 years before this cella style temple was probably built. It cannot be used to date the earliest construction of a Roman temple here, but perhaps it was a long-curated family item given as a special votive offering after the temple was established?

Another rare find from outside the temple was the broken head and neck of a red colour-coated ceramic bull figurine (SF 434 from layer (7022)), probably the product of one of the local Oxfordshire pottery factories. This was a specially made votive item and seems to have had its muzzle, horns, and ears deliberately broken off, probably in a ritual act of 'killing' the object in readiness to give it to the gods (see further discussion in Sheila Raven's Votive

Finds report). Perhaps it may also be a clue as to which deity was worshipped in the temple at the time? There were also 21 iron items, including, nails, cleats, knife blades, a buckle and general fittings; seven glass fragments, most probably being Roman vessel fragments; 21 flints, largely simple flakes and scrapers, probably residual prehistoric items; four worked bone pieces, including a Roman hair pin and Roman needle; and six worked stone fragments which included a loom weight fragment. Given that this trench was largely re-exploring robber trenches and destruction layers of the original temple, it is not surprising that the predominantly 4th century coins indicate that most of the layers explored here belong to the later phase of the temple use and its destruction.

A total of 3,263 pottery sherds were found in Trench 7, with 651 sherds dating to the prehistoric period and 2612 sherds (*c.* 80% of the total assemblage) being Roman in date. The bulk of the prehistoric sherds are coarse wares but there are some fine wares too. The layers containing the higher quantities of prehistoric pottery are (7016), (7073) and (7077). The prehistoric pottery is largely MIA in date. Some of these layers containing MIA pottery may well indicate some form of pre-Roman Iron Age activity in this area. Layer (7016) is one of the main Roman destruction layers containing quantities of Roman pottery and other Roman finds, so this prehistoric material must be residual. The presence of 132 sherds of MIA prehistoric pottery in layer (7077), especially when contrasted with a mere 10 sherds of intrusive Roman pottery, is more puzzling however, as this a context right inside the central cella building. There are no Roman small finds from this context either, only 4x prehistoric flints. Only one of the layers beneath (7077), namely layer (7096), contains any dating material and this is also prehistoric in date, so it is possible that the excavation in this area dug down to the pre-temple Iron Age deposits. A number of fabrics are represented in the Roman assemblage, but the highest percentages are of reduced wares and white wares with only small numbers of imported fine wares like Samian. Late Roman pottery types such as grog ware and late Roman shelly wares are also present in moderate quantities and these are mostly found in the main destruction deposits. Indeed, it is these destruction deposits (contexts (7015, (7016), (7022) and (7080)) that have produced larger quantities of pottery and much of this is dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries CE.

References

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Harding, D. 1987. *Excavations in Oxfordshire 1964-66*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Department of Archaeology Occasional Paper No. 15.

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Prehistoric Phase

There are few prehistoric features in this small trench, situated as it is in the corner of the Roman temple. The only prehistoric contexts are the underlying Iron Age layers that the temple structure was built upon and one potential Iron Age posthole outside the temple

building. As noted in the introduction, the presence of Iron Age pottery in some of the layers inside the cella itself and in the broader ambulatory area must indicate pre-temple prehistoric activity, perhaps also suggesting some continuity of ritual focus. The dating of some of these layers still have questions hanging over them as to whether they are genuine prehistoric deposits or just very disturbed deposits that have a lot of residual prehistoric material in them. Most of them have a mix of MIA and Roman pottery but they all have a far higher % of prehistoric material than Roman, which is why they have been included in this pre-Roman phase. Some of the contexts such as (7073), (7077) and (7079) seem more secure as pre-Roman temple MIA Age deposits.

CUTS:

Posthole [7115]
is sub-rectangular in plan, with straight sides and a flattish base, measuring c. 0.4m x 0.25m across and c. 0.27m deep. It is situated outside the southern outer wall of the temple. The single fill (7116) contained 7x prehistoric sherds.

MAIN LAYERS:

Layer (7006)
is a dark silty layer within the SE corner of the cella structure with many large limestone chunks included, which may either represent fragments from the destroyed cella walls or make up for a floor. It is overlain by topsoil and overlies layers (7077) and (7066). The B&G trenches [7002], [7013], [7028] and [7030] were cut through this layer. The dating of this layer right inside the cella building is uncertain as it included 27 prehistoric sherds and only four Roman sherds. The prehistoric material may be residual of course but it still out numbers the Roman material found here.

Layer (7009)
is a yellow-brown layer covering a large area between the outer ambulatory wall and the inner cella structure. It is overlain by topsoil (7000) and overlies many layers such as (7073), (7076), (7081), (7086), (7090) and (7100). Rather like layer (7006) inside the cella structure this layer within the temple ambulatory walls contains larger amounts of prehistoric pottery, *c.* 23 sherds, compared to only seven sherds of Roman pottery. The prehistoric material may be residual of course but it still out numbers the Roman material found here.

Layer (7073)
is a small patch of dark silty material just outside the main cella building, on the south edge of robber trench/wall [7004]. It is overlain by layers (7009), (7053) and (7166) and overlies layer (7093). The presence of 73 MIA prehistoric sherds (with five intrusive Roman sherds) and four flint small finds (blades and scrapers) suggests this may be a pre-temple Iron Age deposit.

Layer (7077)
is one of the middle layers inside the SE corner of the central cella building, measuring *c.* 0.3m in depth. It is overlain by layers (7066), (7167) and (7168) and overlies layers (7049), (7096) and (7159). It contained 132 sherds of MIA pottery and 10 sherds of intrusive Roman pottery. The only small finds were four prehistoric flints. No Roman pottery was found in the layers below (7077) and the only context below it containing any dating material (layer (7096)), also produced prehistoric pottery. There is a strong chance this is a pre-temple Iron Age deposit.

Layer (7079)
is a dark yellow sandy layer inside the main cella structure, overlying bed rock and cut through by trench [7030], one of Bradford and Goodchild's original trenches. It is overlain by layer (7078). Thought to be a preserved Iron Age ground surface but there was absolutely no dating material, so its designation remains uncertain.

Layer (7093)
is a reddish silty clay similar to other reddish layers found across other parts of the site, potentially thought to be Iron Age deposits. It is situated just to the south of the main cella structure and below layers (7073) and (7077), both rich in prehistoric pottery and thought to be potential pre-temple Iron Age deposits. Because of the relationship with these layers and the fact it lies directly over bedrock, it seems likely that this is an Iron Age layer. This deposit contained very few finds but four prehistoric sherds were found.

Layer (7096)
is dark brownish red silty layer inside the man cella building, by the east wall. It is overlain by layer (7077) which as discussed below has high quantities of prehistoric pottery and may well be pre-temple Iron Age deposit and lies directly on top of bedrock (7001). This stratigraphic relationship with (7077) and the presence of 15 prehistoric sherds makes it another candidate for a pre-Roman temple Iron Age layer.

Roman Phase

Aside from cella foundation cuts and remnants of the original cella wall, there is only one other potential Roman feature in this trench. Also included are a number of Roman layers outside the ambulatory walls and in the area of the temple pathway, including destruction deposits from the final phase of the temple. Context (7022) in the temple pathway area is particularly rich in Roman finds and includes 4th century Roman coins and an extremely rare fragment of a votive ceramic bull figurine.

CUTS:

Linear Feature [7112]
was a wide shallow linear feature on a SE-NW alignment and situated outside the temple ambulatory walls on the eastern side. It measured *c.* 0.5 – 0.7m across and was *c.* 0.2m deep with sloping sides and an irregular base. The feature cut layers (7080), (7105), (7132) and

(7160) and is overlain by layer (7022). The single fill (7113) contained four prehistoric sherds and 31 Roman sherds. It was probably Roman in date, but its function is unknown.

? Buttress Foundation cut [7169]
is a square cut situated at the SE corner of the ambulatory walls. It appears to be a foundation cut for a buttress-like extension to the outer temple walls. It measures *c.* 0.8m by 0.8m and is *c.* 0.35m deep with largely vertical sides and a flat base. The single fill (7170) contained two prehistoric sherds, probably residual, and seven Roman sherds. What phase of the temple construction this buttress-like feature was created in is not clear?

STRUCTURES:

Cella wall Foundation [7052]
is a small surviving section of the foundation of the east cella wall, inside robber cut [7004], close to the SE corner. This wall foundation consisted of a single course of vertical and pitched limestone pieces, ranging from *c.* 0.22m to 0.04m in length, with shapes varying from sub-square to oblong, and surviving to a depth of *c.* 0.6m in this area.

Structure [7067]
is a single row of limestone pieces lying along the north edge of robber cut [7036] of the southern cella wall. The row of stones uncovered is *c.* 1m long running from one side of the excavated trench to the other. The stones themselves vary in length and width from *c.* 0.12m to *c.* 0.23m and overlie a thin layer of mortar (7068). Whether this represents a surviving remnant of the original cella wall or part of the destruction of the same is not clear. This line of stones provided no dating material, but its presence so close to the original cella wall, suggests a Roman date.

MAIN LAYERS:

Layer (7015)
is an extensive destruction layer outside the outer ambulatory walls on the eastern part of the trench. This layer was overlain by (7000) and (7019) and abuts temple pathway layer (7022). Robber trenches [7011] and [7017] cut this layer. It overlies layers (7016), (7034), (7043), (7083), (7084), (7085), (7117), (7133), (7135). It contained many fragments of painted plaster and CBM (140kg.). It also contained large quantities of Roman pottery (mostly reduced wares), some 432 sherds, and 22 sherds of prehistoric pottery. Most of this pottery was mid to late 3rd century CE in date.

Layer (7016)
is a reddish-brown deposit situated to the south of the ambulatory walls and just to the south of the gravel pathway (7022). Included in this layer were many fragments of Roman building material, including 39 kilos of CBM. The layer also contained large quantities of prehistoric pottery (some 94 sherds), but larger quantities of Roman pottery, *c.* 197 ssherds -which, like a number of the layers in this area, makes the dating rather confusing. The Roman pottery is

largely 3rd century in date. This layer also produced 36 small finds, the bulk of which (27x pieces) were Roman painted plaster fragments. The remainder were a mix of iron fittings, Roman glass, worked bone fragments including a comb, and one copper alloy coin dating to the mid-4th century.

Layer (7022)
is an area of the temple pathway leading to the central cella structure, situated outside the eastern ambulatory wall and extending over a large area. It is made up of yellowish sandy silt with many small stone or gravel inclusions. It is overlain by topsoil (7000) and partly by layer (7080). The latter context contained late 3rd to 4th century CE pottery. Layer (2022) overlies several layers and features including cut [7162] and layers (7113), (7145), (7160) and (7174). This layer contained a lot of Roman pottery, some 280 sherds, plus a few residual prehistoric sherds. The Roman sherds were mostly reduced wares and white wares, dated late 3rd to 4th century alongside some residual 2nd century material. Forty-eight small finds were discovered in this layer, largely made up of 35 painted plaster fragments plus various iron, lead and copper alloy fragments and six Roman copper alloy coins. The six Roman coins all dated to the 4th century and included minims, 'fel temp' issues and a Constantine commemorative coin. The assemblage also included a very rare fragment of a ceramic bull figurine, probably a specially made votive piece. Only the head was found, with its' muzzle, horns and ears apparently deliberately knocked off, perhaps in some ritual procedure to 'kill' the object. It seems to be made from the local Oxfordshire red colour coat fabric, but no other figurine like this made in this local fabric has yet been found. In line with the late Roman dating of the coins, this fabric type tends to be 3rd or 4th century in this area. The discovery of a votive piece plus the collection of late Roman coins (which in a temple site were often votive offerings) in the area leading up to the cella and its surrounding outer wall suggests this temple building was still in active use at the end of the Roman period.

Layer (7026)
appears to be a gravel and mortar-rich spread, around the temple pathway outside the ambulatory eastern wall, to the north of layer (7025). It may be the same as temple pathway layer (7022) or perhaps a destruction spread in the pathway area. It is overlain by topsoil (7000) and overlies layer (7027). This yellowish-brown silty deposit includes *c.* 70% of small stone gravel. The layer included only 15 Roman sherds.

Layer (7027)
is a destruction layer in the area of the temple pathway, abutting and just outside the temple's outer ambulatory walls on the east side. This layer was a sandy silt with gravel and was overlain by topsoil (7000) and overlies layers (7087) and (7163). It abutted gravel pathway layer (7022). This layer contained 4x sherds of prehistoric pottery and 11 sherds of Roman pottery. The pottery dates largely to the late 2nd and 3rd centuries. This area also produced 4x small finds, the most interesting of which was a rare late Iron Age/early Roman silver coin dated to 90 BCE (SF 397). This date far preceded the origins of the Roman temple at Marcham, and must have been a specially curated item, possibly deliberately deposited as an offering in the area of the main temple on the site. The other small finds from this layer were

another Roman coin (SF182) dated to the 4th century; a copper alloy Roman ligula <SF 443>; and a copper alloy bracelet fragment (SF 394).

Layer (7068)
is a thin layer of mortar underlying masonry stone layer [7067] on the inner edge of robber trench [7004]/[7036] over the south cella wall. It probably represents the remnant of the mortar these stones were laid into. It is also overlain by layers (7006) and (7066). The mortar deposit overlies (7077), (7167) and (7168). It is cut by robber trench [7036]. The layer contains no dating material but its association with the robbed cella wall, suggests it was probably Roman in date.

Layer (7146)
is a rough stony surface, mostly limestone with some soil and flecks of charcoal, situated in the SE corner of the trench outside the ambulatory walls. It runs across the width of the excavated slot in this area and was up to 0.10m deep. It is overlain by layer (7016) and overlies layer (7132). It may abut layer (7131). No pottery was found but there were some large pieces of CBM present, so the assumption is this this is a Roman layer.

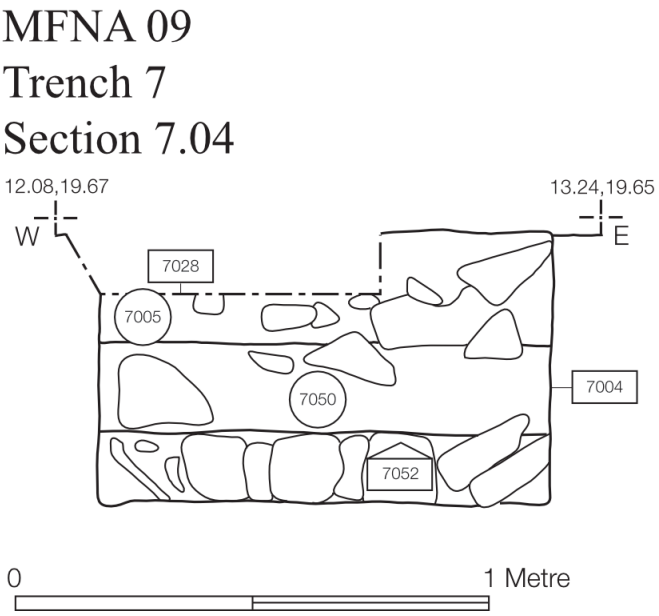
Late Roman and Post-Roman Phase [Robber cuts]

The robber cuts explored in this trench naturally include an assortment of Roman material, but as this may well represent largely residual finds present when the temple was out of use and the walls were available to be robbed, this does not really give us a fix on the dating of this robbing procedure. As some of the Roman coins from the whole site date as late as the early 5th century, suggesting activity in some of the temple buildings at least carried on till the very end of the Roman period, then the date of this robbing is probably 5th century at the earliest but it might well be a few hundred years later.

CUTS:

Robber Trench [7004]
east and south cella wall is the ancient robber trench over the original Roman cella building walls of the SE corner of the building. It has been used for both the eastern section of the wall/robber trench and the joining southern section. However, see cut [7036]/[7004] for further exploration of a section of the southern wall only. The top fill of this trench was (7005), which in turn overlay (7050). These represent the original backfill of the robber trench and contained large quantities of smaller stones and mortar from the robbing procedure. Fill (7005) contained 10 prehistoric sherds and five Roman sherds, plus five Roman small finds including three coins of 3rd and 4th century date and a gaming counter. Whether these late Roman coins actually date the timing of the robber trench or just represent residual material in the area is difficult to tell. Fill (7050) contained only two Roman sherds. Below these backfill deposits was structure [7052], a surviving section of the original stone foundation of the cella wall. As the dimensions of the robber trenches over the cella structure and the outer temple ambulatory walls were very similar in all areas, we can estimate that temple walls were all *c.* 1m wide and c. 0.5m deep. Though the stone was largely robbed the

survival of wall foundation [7052], suggests that the wall foundations were made of vertical and pitched limestone pieces.



Cut [7004]

Robber Trench [7011]/[7017]
south ambulatory wall is the ancient robber trench over the southern outer or ambulatory wall of the temple. The flat base, straight sides and dimensions (*c.* 1m wide and *c.* 0.5m deep) are very similar to the other robber trenches in the temple area. The robber trench cuts layers (7004), (7009), (7015), (7043), (7073), (7093), and (7118). It is in turn cut by pit [7064] at the western end, and by a later secondary robber cut [7091] also at the western end. Three at least of the layers cut by [7011] appear to be prehistoric in date, namely (7009), (7073), (7093)). There are two backfills in this robber trench, namely fill (7044) in the centre of the trench and fill (7012) on the southern edge. Fill (7044) contained numerous stones and mortar fragments and six sherds of prehistoric and 14 sherds of Roman pottery. It is possible that (7044) represents a later small cut and fill into [7011] rather than a contemporary fill. Fill (7012) contains many fragments of building destruction material like CBM, tesserae, painted plaster, mortar and stones but only 11 sherds of Roman pottery.

Robber Trench [7020]
is the ancient robber trench over the eastern ambulatory wall. It is flat based with slightly undercut sides and measures *c.* 1 -1.3m wide and *c.* 0.5m deep, in line with the other robber trenches over the temple walls. This section of robber trench cuts layers (7009), (7063), (7086), (7097) and (7102). It is cut by the 20th century trenches [7032] in the southern part and diagonally by [7094] in the north. Upper fill (7021) contained one Roman coin (sf 533), plus five residual prehistoric sherds and 116 Roman mostly 3rd century sherds. Lower fill (7051) contained no dating material.

Robber Trench [7036]/[7004]
south cella wall represents the 2009 exploration of part of the robber trench over the south-east corner of the 'cella' building walls, specifically in this case two small stretches of the southern cella wall leading into the SE corner. The number [7004] has also been used for other parts of the southern cella wall robber trench and all of the eastern cella wall robber trench (see above). The [7004] sections of the wall robber trench and the [7036] sections are all part of the same robbing procedure. The first stretch of the cut exposed in [7036] was the east end of the south wall, in a slot measuring *c.* 0.9 across and *c.* 1m long, and the second was a slot going into the SE corner, also measuring c. 0.9m across and c. 1m long. The depth of both these robber cuts was *c.* 0.55m.

The first slot through the robber trench contained five fills, the uppermost being (7037), containing large quantities of decaying mortar and other fragments of building debris like tesserae, plaster and CBM. Below this was fill (7046), (7047) and (7048), representing a series of weathering deposits, which suggests this robber trench was left open for some time before being backfilled. The bottom or primary fill was (7049), also containing large quantities of decaying mortar. Upper fill (7037) contained only 11sherds (a mix of prehistoric and Roman) and fills (7046) and (7047) produced only two sherds each. No other dating material was found in this cut.

The second slot through the robber trench contained five fills, the upper ones also being (7037) and (7046) as detailed above. Below this was mortar rich fill (7059), overlying the two bottom or primary fills (7050) and (7060). The three lower deposits contained no dating material apart from a solitary sherd and no other finds of any type.

Pit/Posthole 7064
is a circular shallow cut, *c.* 0.5m across and *c.* 0.2m deep. It cuts outer ambulatory wall robber cut [7011] at the west end and the potentially prehistoric layers (7073) and (7009). The single fill (7065) contained no dating material except 3x prehistoric sherds which must be residual. As it cuts the Roman ambulatory wall robber cut, it is likely that this is a post-Roman feature.

Robber Trench [7091]
south ambulatory wall seems to be a secondary robber cut over the south ambulatory wall and cutting earlier robber cut [7011]. It also cuts layers (7009), (7073) and (7093). The single fill (7092) contained only two residual prehistoric sherds and one Roman sherd but the relationships suggest it is either late Roman or post-Roman in date.

Irregular robber cut [7162]
is an irregular linear feature running largely parallel to the eastern ambulatory wall and situated *c.* 1m east from it. After running parallel to the eastern ambulatory wall, it seems to turn west towards it on the western edge of the excavated slot. It is deeper on the east facing side and shallower and irregular on the south-facing side. There is a shallow scoop at the southern end of the feature. The extent of this feature to the west is unknown but it appears to

run some 3.4 m on the N-S trajectory. At its deepest point it measures *c.* 0.35m. Single fill (7163) contained large amounts of fragmented stone, plaster and painted plaster. The fill also contained 11 Roman sherds. This is probably another robber trench, but it is not clear what was being robbed. Possibly some smaller structure outside of the ambulatory walls.

?Robber Cut [7171]
is a shallow ovoid cut inside the original area of the southern ambulatory wall, cutting the robber trench [7017] in this area. It measures *c.* 0.7m across and *c.* 0.15m in depth. Single fill (7045) contained painted plaster, plus two residual prehistoric sherds and seventeen Roman sherds. Probably a later robber cut of some sort.

Modern Phase [20th c. exploratory trenches – re-excavated in 2009]

These cuts represent a re-visiting (on a smaller scale) of 20th century trenches which for the most part explored the post-Roman robber cuts over the temple walls. So, the material found in them is of necessity remnants of their backfill, which in turn consists mostly of destruction deposits and any residual Roman material from earlier phases that was thrown up by this robbing procedure. Unfortunately, no post-Roman finds (e.g. Saxon or later) were found that might give us any hint of exactly when this robbing procedure took place.

CUTS:

Bradford and Goodchild Trench [7002]
is a rectangular trench *c.* 1.1m wide set across the robber trench of the southern cella wall. Only a small part of this B&G trench was explored in the 2009 excavations and that section was severely truncated by Harding's later exploratory trench [7013]. The B&G trench cuts layer (7006) and the only backfill discovered was fill (7003) which contained no dating material at all.

Harding's Trench [7013]
is a section of Harding's original 1964-66 trench situated over the SE corner of the cella temple and its southern wall. This exploratory trench runs in a SW-NW trajectory and may have been *c.*0.5m deep, although the whole exposed area was not all excavated down to the base. The excavated sides were very straight and cut and truncated the earlier B&G trench [7002]. The only backfill uncovered was (7014) and this contained a mix of Roman building debris, some animal bone, plus 11 prehistoric sherds and four Roman sherds.
B&G Trench [7028]
is an irregular T-shaped trench over the robber trench across the south-east corner cella wall. It appears to have been later extended north to meet the other B&G trench [7030] in a long narrow spit. The original [7028] trench measured *c.* 1.6m wide by *c.* 1.45m and *c.* 0.2m deep (perhaps a little smaller as the 2009 investigation may be overcut). The northern extension measured *c.* 1.25m by *c.* 0.6m. The single back-fill (7029) contained only five pottery sherds, a mix of prehistoric and Roman and no other dating evidence.

B&G Trench [7030]
is a long narrow rectangular trench running E-W along the northern edge of our 2009 exploratory trench and cutting across both the robber trench over the inner cella wall [7004] and the robber trench over the outer ambulatory wall [7020] and extending across an area outside the ambulatory walls including two narrow N-S slots [7152] and [7125]. It measured *c.* 0.6 – 1m across and *c.* 7.5m long. Most of this trench was shallow at *c.* 0.3m deep, except at the east end over the cella wall, where they cut to *c.* 0.7m deep, down to bedrock. The single backfill context (7031) contained Roman nail and a fragment of Roman bone hair pin, plus eight prehistoric sherds and 16 Roman sherds.

B&G Trench [7032]
is a narrow rectangular trench with a curved north end, running N-S over the robber trench cutting the south-east corner of the inner 'cella' wall. It was c. 0.7m wide by c. 3m long and was cut to a depth of c. 0.1 - 0.2m. The single back-fill (7033) contained a single 4th c. Roman coin (sf 197) and a fragment of Roman bone hairpin, plus 68 Roman sherds.

B&G Trench [7034]
is a broad slot with a curved end running on a NW-SE alignment on the south edge of our 2009 excavations. It is situated to the south of the robber trench over the southern ambulatory walls and runs under the 2009 south baulk. It cuts across linear cut [7034] and deposits (7015) and (7016). The single back-fill (7035) contained 34 Roman sherds and one prehistoric sherd.

B&G Trench [7094]
is a long rectangular slot on a SW-NE alignment running across robber trench [7020] over the eastern ambulatory wall. The dimensions are *c.* 3.3m long by *c.*1.3 m wide. This B&G trench was not fully excavated in 2009, only the upper part of the backfill, context (7055) was revealed. No dateable material was found in this part of the backfill.

Unphased

Some of these 'unphased' features may belong to the Roman period proper, whilst the temple building was still active, but others are very likely to date to the post-Roman phase of wall robbing or even later.

Pit/Posthole [7007]
is a sub-rectangular pit/posthole with a flat base, measuring, *c.* 0.4m x 0.44m and *c.* 0.17m deep. It may be two cuts but the records are unclear. It is situated inside the ambulatory eastern wall and contains a single fill (7008). No dating material was found and its function is unknown.

Rectangular cut [7089]
is a small sub-rectangular cut set on the west edge of robber cut [7004] through the eastern cella wall, at the north end of this part of the robber trench. It measures *c.* 0.56m by 0.4m

(though its real western edge was probably obliterated by cut [7004) and was cut to a depth of *c.* 0.33m. In plan it looks like this cut could also be part of the robbing procedure after the end of the temple's use, but it was cut from a lower level than robber cut [7004] suggesting it preceded the main robbing procedure. The single fill (7090) only contained two Roman sherds. As robber cut [7004] appears to cut through [7089] on the section, this feature may date from the time of the temple's use rather than after its demise? This feature is overlain by layer (7009) which confusingly contained more prehistoric sherds (23x), than Roman sherds (7x), and a number of the layers that the main robber trench cut through in this area also contained prehistoric material (e.g. layers 7006 and 7077). There clearly was prehistoric activity in this area of the central Roman cella structure but what phase this small cut belongs to is unclear.

Possible hearth [7099]
is an extremely shallow feature situated to the south of southern cella wall robber cut [7004]. Only part of it was revealed in the trench so its actual shape is unknown, though it has one very straight edge. It was extremely shallow, at *c.* 0.06m in depth, with straight sides and an uneven base. It had three shallow fills, the uppermost being clay fill (7100) which contained only two prehistoric and two Roman sherds. Below that was fill (7103), an extremely thin charcoal rich fill containing no finds. This overlay bottom fill (7104), which contained decomposed mortar. There were no finds in either of the lower layers. This has been postulated as possible hearth, but its very shallow depth suggests that if it was such, it was a temporary and ephemeral structure. The dating of this feature is uncertain.

Sub-rectangular cut [7107]
is an irregular cut situated in the NE corner of the trench adjacent to linear gully [7152]. Only one corner of it appears in the excavated area, so its exact shape and dimensions are unknown. The uncovered part measures *c.* 0.6m by 0.36m and is *c.* 0.15m deep. It contained two fills, the uppermost being fill (7108) which contained no pottery, but some fragments of CBM. The lower fill was (7111), which also contained some CBM, a large piece of limestone, but no pottery.

Posthole [7109]
is a large oval post-hole situated on the inner edge of the eastern cella wall and was cut by the robber trench [7004] over this original wall. It had a flat base and sloping sides and in its entirely it would have measured *c.* 0.7m by *c.* 0.6m, with a depth of *c.* 0.2m. The single fill (7110) contained only one prehistoric sherd and no other dating material.

Beam-slot cut [7121]
is a wide shallow 'beam-slot' cut running immediately next to the eastern ambulatory wall robber cut [7020] and parallel with it in a N-S alignment. The slot measures *c.* 0.38m wide and is *c*. 0.04m deep. It runs along the length of the robber cut over the original ambulatory wall for *c.* 3.4 m. It is probably a late feature, either late or post-Roman, but its close alignment to the ambulatory east wall suggests perhaps a rebuild or shoring up of the original Roman outer wall here? The single fill (7023) contained no dating evidence.

Narrow gully [7125]
is a linear cut, running N-S in the NE corner of the trench outside of the temple's ambulatory walls. It runs close to, and exactly parallel, with a very similar gully (cut [7152]) to the east and at is cut by this feature on the north baulk. Their close trajectory suggests they are contemporary or related in some way. This feature measures *c.* 0.25m wide and is only 0.5 - 0.2m deep. It is overlain by layer (70270 and (7022) and cuts layers (7106) and (7087). The single fill (7126) contains only 2x Roman sherds and no other dating material. N.B. So called 'scoop' [7153] is actually part of cut [7125].

Linear cut [7134]
is a curved cut only partly visible along the south baulk for *c.* 2.5m of its original length. Because it is only part is visible in trench, it's exact shape, dimensions and function remain unknown. The part appearing in section in the baulk has sloping sides and is *c.* 0.25m deep. It is cut by B&G trench [7034]. The single fill (7135) included only one Roman sherd.

Oval pit [7136]
is situated on the southern baulk, south of the southern ambulatory walls. Only half is visible in the baulk and it was cut by the B&G trench [7034]. It measures *c.* 1.3m in length and was not fully excavated so its depth is unknown. Top fill (7137) contained no dating evidence.

Irregular shallow cut? [7142]
is situated at the NE corner of the trench in an area where two sections crossed so its shape and dimensions are unclear. It may have been circular, had a flat base and was very shallow at less than 0.10m. Single fill (7137) contained no dating evidence.

Possible robber cut [7148]
is a long ovoid or irregular rectangular cut running immediately south of the south ambulatory wall robber cut [7017]. The feature measures *c.* 1.5m long and was excavated to a depth of *c.* 0.25m but was not fully excavated. It cuts the south edge of [7017] and is cut by a small ovoid cut [7150]. Top fill (7149) contained no dating evidence. It may be another robber cut, but clearly later than robber cut [7017].

Shallow pit/scoop [7150]
is a small cut situated south of the southern ambulatory wall. It cuts larger robbing cut [7148] and layer (7084) and is overlain by (7015). It measures *c.* 0.6m long and was *c.* 0.15m deep. It was not fully exposed so its width is unknown. Single fill (7151) contained no dating evidence.

Linear feature [7152]
is a long narrow gully-style feature situated in the NE corner of the trench, running N-S. It measures *c.* 0.4m across and *c.* 0.3m deep. It cuts layers (7087), (7111, (7106). It runs roughly parallel and very close to similar gully cut [7125] and partly cuts [7125] at the north end. Single fill (7124) contained no dating evidence,

Small scoop or posthole [7153]
same as [7125], no separate fill.

Truncated linear cut [7155]
is situated within the cella area and truncated by robber trench [7004] over the eastern cella wall, and partly destroyed by excavation machining, so its extent and shape are unknown beyond the fact it had sloping sides and was at least *c.* 0.5m deep. It is overlain by layers (7158) and (7088) and by cut [7156]. The feature cuts layers (7077), (7079) and (7159). The single mortar rich fill (7078) contained no dating evidence.

Linear cut [7156]
is a shallow linear cut in same area of cella as [7155], situated on the west edge of eastern cella wall robber cut [7004]. It is truncated by [7004] and also by B&G trench [7038] and modern machining, so its shape and extent are unknown. What is visible is *c.* 0.40m long and *c.* 0.12m deep. It cuts layers (70060, (7066) and (7158 and is overlain by topsoil. Single fill (7157) contained no dating evidence.

Small rectangular cut [7172]
at SE corner of cella wall. it abuts the south edge of the southern cella wall. The cut measures *c.* 0.9m by 0.75m and is *c.* 05m deep with vertical sides. Single fill (7122) contained a few fragments of iron but no pottery. It may represent either access for the original foundation cut for the cella wall or another small robber cut. Probably Roman or immediately post-Roman but the phasing is uncertain.

Linear spit [7175]
Mortar-edged feature long ovoid feature situated on the north edge of southern ambulatory wall robber trench [7011]. It measures *c.* 2.8m long by 0.45m wide. It is overlain by topsoil and cuts layers (7009) and destruction spread (7015). Single fill (7095) contained no dating evidence.

LAYERS

Layer (7009)
is an extensive layer situated between the inner cella or temple structure wall and the outer ambulatory wall. It is overlaid by topsoil layer (7000) and overlies (7073), (7076), (7081), (7086), and (7090). Both the position within the temple ambulatory walls and the stratigraphic position directly below topsoil might suggest this is a Roman layer at the earliest but the presence of 23 prehistoric sherds and only seven Roman sherds makes the dating uncertain. One of the main layers it overlies (layer (7073)) is also potentially prehistoric in date, so it may be prehistoric also?

Layer (7075)
is a hard, dark clay layer adjacent to the south edge of robber trench. [[7004]/[7036] over the southern cella wall. It measures *c.* 0.3m thick and extension across the excavated trench in this area for 1m – 1.5m. It is overlain by layer (7009) and appears to abut layer (7073), though its relationship to this deposit is not fully clear in the records. Only five prehistoric sherds were found in this layer and no other dating material, so its dating is not clear.

Layer (7119)
is a narrow spit of stones and gravel situated in the SE corner of the trench outside the ambulatory walls and south of the temple pathway, running E-W across the excavation cut. Originally thought to be a wall but later re-evaluated as a cobbled area. This layer underlies (7015) and overlies layer (7132). It provided no dating material.

Layer (7133)
is a cobbled area situated in the SW corner of the trench, south of the ambulatory walls. The limestone cobbles vary in size from *c.* 0.10m to *c.* 0.25m and the layer is *c.* 0.15m deep. This layer runs N-S across the full width of the trench and measures c. 0.7m across. It is overlain by destruction layer (7015) and may overlie layer (7118). It may represent some kind of cobbled pathway approaching the temple from the south. No dating material was found in this deposit.

Layer (7147)
is a small triangular area of grey clay in the SE corner of the trench, south of the ambulatory walls. It lies to a thickness of *c.* 0.05m and may represent hard standing for some structural feature? It is overlain by layer (7016) and overlies layer (7131). There was no dating material in this deposit.

Layer (7160)
is a cobbled surface situated east of the eastern wall of the ambulatory in the area of the temple pathway. It measures *c.* 3m across at its widest point and is cut by narrow gully [7112]. Its thickness is *c.* 0.10m. it is overlain by layer (7080) and overlies layer (7132). It may bear some relationship to the original temple path. Only one prehistoric and one Roman sherd was found in this layer, so its dating is uncertain.

Layer (7165)
is a patch of burning on the western baulk in an area just south of the southern ambulatory walls in robber cut [7011]. The patch measures *c.* 0.6m across and is *c.* 0.01m deep. It was overlain by layers (7164) and (7166) and it overlies layer (7073). No dating material was found in this layer.

Layer (7167)
is a thin layer of burning inside the cella structure, north of the southern wall of the cella. The thin spit is dark and ashy and only about 2cm in depth. It is overlain by layer (7168) and overlies (7077). It contained no finds but may represent a burning episode within the life of

the Roman temple structure or given that it directly overlies possible prehistoric layer (7077), it may be associated with pre-Roman activities in the temple area.