

PREVIOUS WORK

J Walker

The Roman fort and settlement at Mamucium, a name which probably derived from the term "breast-like hill" (Rivet and Smith 1979, 409-10), lies south of the core of the later medieval and industrial city of Manchester. It stands on a sandstone bluff, capped in places by glacial sands and gravels, that overlooks the confluence of the rivers Medlock and Irwell. It also lies at the junction of several major Roman roads, one of which runs from the legionary base at Chester to that at York, and another coming from the south and running northwards to Hadrian's Wall. The fort stands near the centre of the Manchester embayment, a low lying circular area of land bordered on the north and east by the Pennines and, in the Roman period, to the west and south by large areas of mosses or swamps.

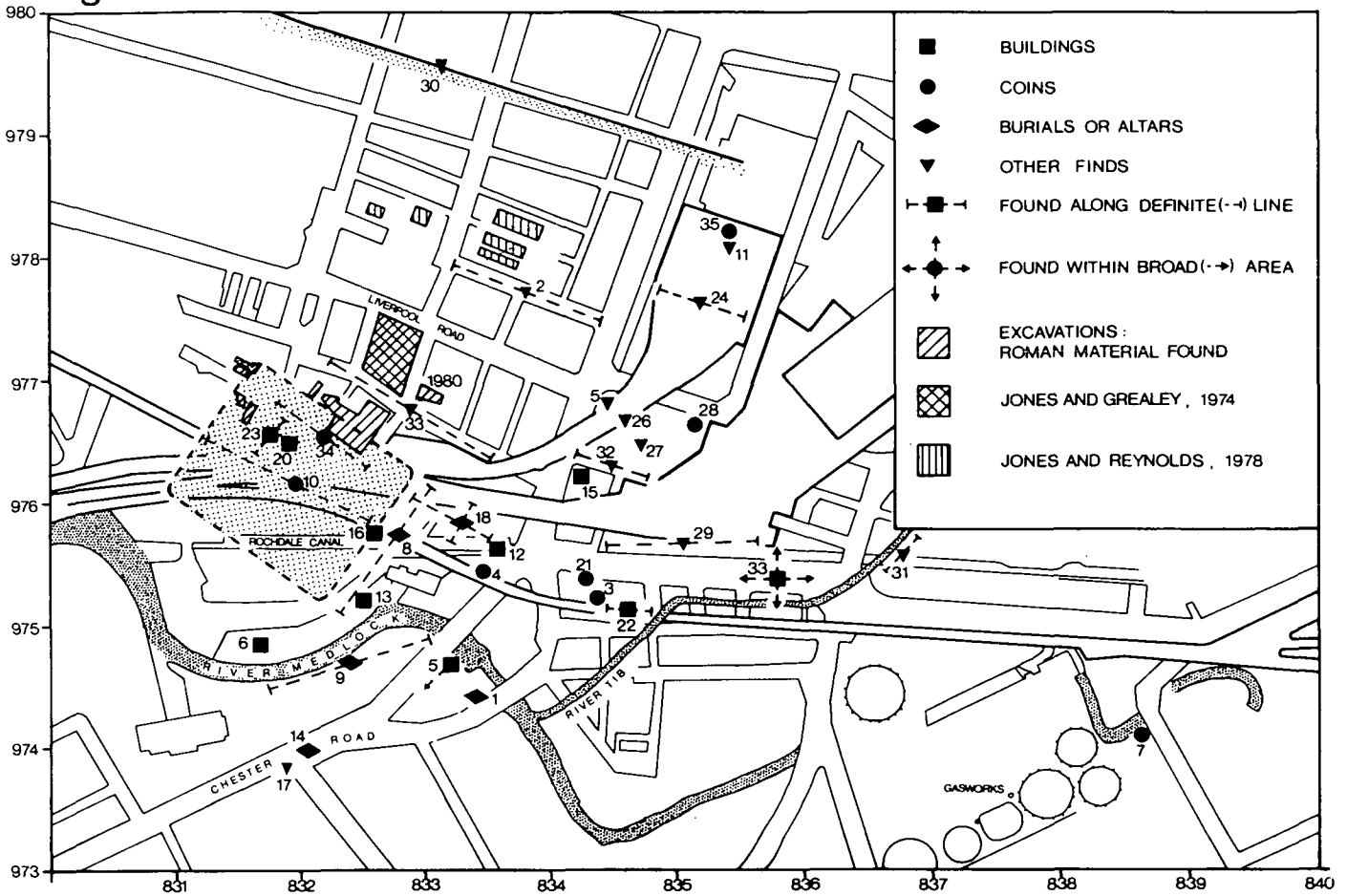
The history of previous work and research undertaken on the site of the Roman fort and associated civilian settlement (vicus) has been ably charted by Grealey (Jones and Grealey 1974). Antiquarian interest in the site began around 1540 when Leland noted the existence of Old Man Castel amongst the fields south of medieval Manchester. The Castel or fort was to remain largely undisturbed for the next two hundred years until the growing town of Manchester began to invade the area. Two 18th century observers (Horsley 1732; Stukeley 1776) left descriptions of the site and in 1773, Whitaker published a long, if somewhat complex, discussion of the standing remains. By this time it was clear that the civilian settlement covered an area of twelve (4.9ha) or more acres (Whitaker 1773, 33) possibly surrounded by a ditch. In 1899 Roeder published a full account of his observations of developments in the area and figure 1.1 shows his, and earlier, casual finds of Roman material.

In 1906-7 Bruton (1909) began a major excavation in the north-east corner of the fort, and mapped

the earlier discoveries made along and within the defences (fig 1.2). After Bruton, further small scale excavations took place along the northern defences (Phelps 1912; Petch 1951, 1954, 1956). It was not until 1972 that large scale excavations began again (fig 1.1), this time led by Professor G D B Jones (Jones and Grealey 1974; Jones and Reynolds 1978). In that year a large area of the northern part of the vicus was uncovered (Jones and Grealey 1974). In 1975 the north-western corner of the fort was examined at Duke Place, and in 1977 areas around Tonman, Elfort and Severn Streets were investigated (Jones and Reynolds 1978). In 1979 Professor Jones began work on the site of the north gate of the fort, work which was to lead firstly to the creation of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit and secondly to a better understanding of the chronology and layout of the Roman fort.

At the end of 1979 the following tentative conclusions about the development of the whole Roman complex had been reached. In AD 79 a small fort was established at Manchester after which the area continued to be occupied up to the end of the Roman period cAD 410. Within that long time span the fort was rebuilt several times, so that it eventually enclosed over five acres (2ha) within a stone wall. To the north of the fort lay a civilian settlement that started in the 1st century AD, grew to its largest extent in the early 3rd century and began to decline from around AD 250. It was clear from the distribution of Roman material (fig 1.1) that further civilian settlement existed to the east of the fort, and that south of the Medlock was an area of Roman temples and cemeteries. The Duke Place excavations, reported in this volume, had established the broad phases of the fort, but the Northgate excavations served to expand and revolutionise our understanding of how the fort and town developed.

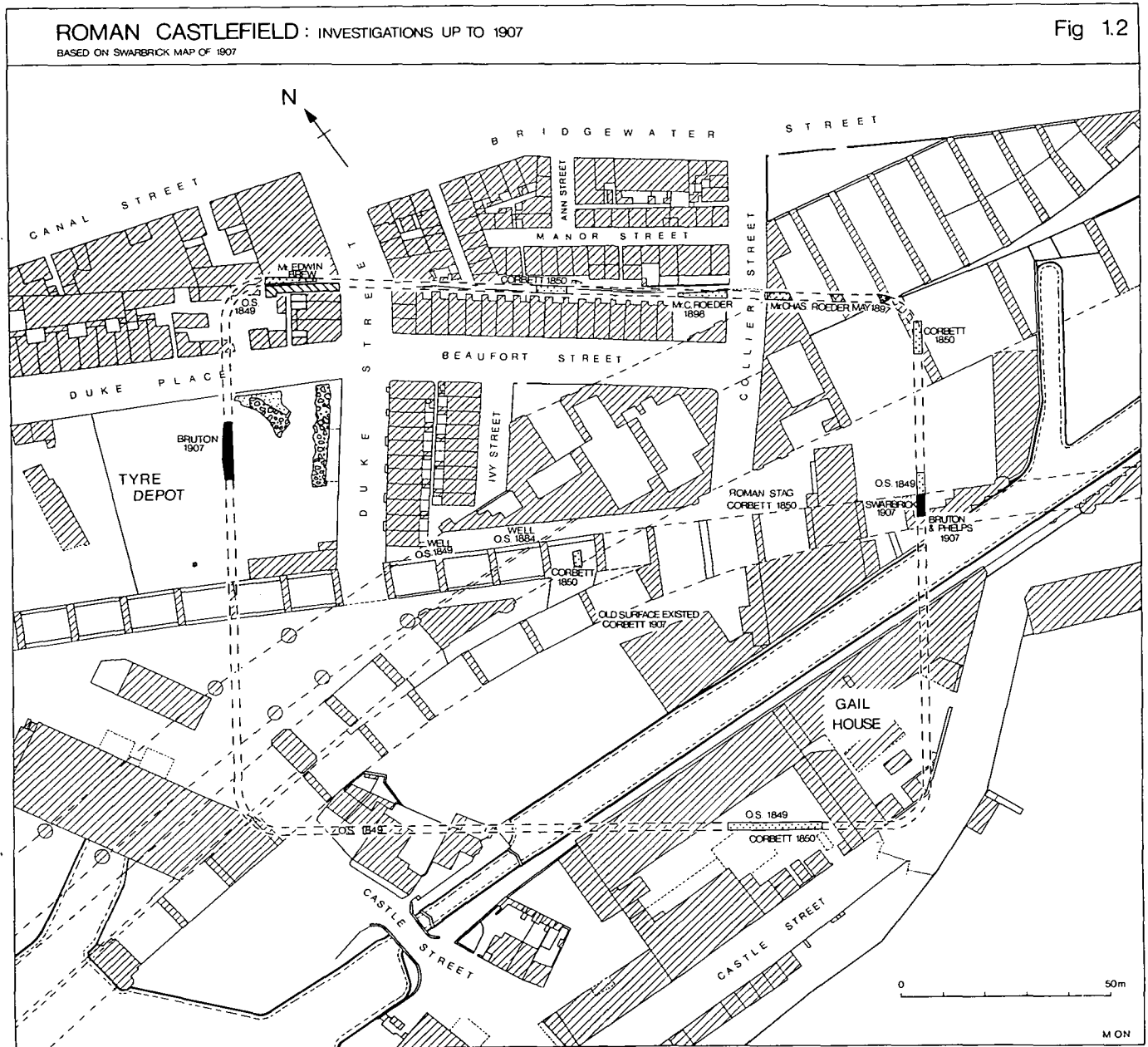
Fig 1.1 CASTLEFIELD ROMAN FINDS



Key to Numbered Map (fig 1.1)

List of possible Roman objects found in the Castlefield area. The numbers with asterisks represent the second group of three figures on the accession card of the Queen's Park Museum catalogue; eg 120* represents 1909.120.

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| 1 | Altar dedicated to Fortune found under the root of an oak in Medlock near Knot Mill (Hollinworth 1612, 3; Baines 1899, 8). | 6 | Bath buildings and three coins found 1771 (Roeder 1899, 129-33). |
| 2 | Bronze statuette of Jupiter Stator found in Tonman Street, Campfield in 1839. It forms the frontispiece of Bruton's "The Roman Fort at Manchester" (1909). Now in the Fletcher Moss Museum. | 7 | Three coins found at the New Gasworks, Cambridge Street, in silt of the ancient channel of the Medlock. Bruton (1909) gives details on page 129 of his coin catalogue. |
| 3 | Coin hoards found in digging the foundations for Knott Mill Station. Bruton (1909) gives details on pages 44-78 of his coin catalogue. | 8 | Two cinerary urns found outside the east wall of the fort in 1762 and 1765 (Whitaker 1771, 42-4). |
| 4 | Coin found during the digging of foundations for an arch of the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway at Knott Mill (Bruton 1909, 120, coin number 316). | 9 | Log coffin (possibly of oak) and bones found on south bank of Medlock (Whitaker 1771). |
| 5 | Centurial stone found in 1760 on the South Bank of the Medlock, near Knott Mill, on the left of the road from | 10 | 41 coins found in Castlefield during construction of the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway. Bruton (1909) gives details on pages 98-101 of his coin catalogue. |
| | Manchester to Stretford (Bruton 1909). | 11 | A bronze statuette and bronze ornaments including coins. (Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 15, 1897, 219). |
| | | 12 | A wooden "box" (Transactions of the Manchester Geological Society, 1888-9, 165; GMAU Sites and Monuments Register |



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| | Identification Number 861). | 17 | Objects found on the corner of Great Jackson Street (Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 16, 1898, 184). |
| 13 | Long rectangular structure (Whitaker 1771, 33-5). | 18 | Numerous sepulchral urns and one inhumation found in 1849 excavations (Roeder 1899, 109). |
| 14 | Mithraic stones from Hulme (Bruton 1909, pl 12; Whatton 1821, 257). | 19 | "Ornamental bowls of samian ware" (Roeder 1899, 113). |
| 15 | Site of the Crown Hotel whose rebuilding in 1904 produced pottery, charcoal, iron, a piece of oak, coins (including gold), a pit or well, six feet (1.8m) square cut into the rock and containing rubbish, three bronze coins and a piece of thick gold wire (Roeder 1905, 85). | 20 | Inscribed tile (Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, 16, 1898, 184). |
| 16 | Centurial stone found in 1796 when removing rubbish which obstructed the Praetorian gateway (Watkins 1883, 100-1). | 21 | Lump of Sal Ammoniac and coin of Tetricus found by Barritt 1788 (Roeder 1899, 114). |

- 22 Pottery, iron nails, charcoal, lead, broken tiles, fragments of glass found along the railway arches of Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway, between Gilbert Street and Mount Street (Roeder 1899, 114). Castlefield, on Trafford Street.
- 23 Atkinson's excavation of 1950 (Atkinson 1952). 32(106*) Neck of a large amphora found at Trafford Street.
- 24 Pottery from a single layer (Roeder 1899, 128). 33(120*) Mortarium found in fragments and restored from railway excavations, Bridgewater Street, Castlefield.
- 25 Possible Road (Roeder 1899). 33(127*) Handle of a lamp found at Bridgewater Street, Deansgate in 1900.
- 26 Possible Road (Roeder 1899). 33(199*) Two glass counters found in Bridgewater Street.
- 27 Possible Road (Roeder 1899). 33(202*) Small fragments of lead from Bridgewater Street.
- 28 Coin hoard (Roeder 1899). 33(208*) Fragments of alabaster found in Gaythorn.
- 29 Pit, pottery and other finds (Roeder 1899). 33(209*) Leaden nails from Bridgewater Street.
- 30 Limit of Roman material (Whitaker 1771). 33(211*) Fragments of glass from Bridgewater Street.
- Mapped objects in the catalogue of the Queen's Park Museum**
- 31(103*) Urn from the ancient course of the Tib at Gaythorn (from the old river silt). 34(449*) Coins, the latest being of Valens AD 378 (Bruton 1909; the Yates Collection).
- 32(105*) Amphora found in fragments at 35(465*) Coins found in Beaufort Street c1854. Later coins dating to Gratian AD 383 and possibly Valentinian II AD 392 (Bruton 1909; the Esdaile Collection).