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Special thanks are due to all the contributors for the time and effort involved in the writing of specialist reports. The illustrations are by the present author except for the following: the architectural fragments (fig. 20) by Mr K. Connor; the brick, roof and floor tiles (figs. 21-6) by Mr P. J. Drury; the chimney-pots (figs. 27–30) by Dr G. C. Dunning; the imported pottery (fig. 36) by the Anc. Mons. (D. of E.) Drawing Office; the window glass (fig. 37) by Mr P. A. Rahtz; the iron objects by Mr I. H. Goodall (figs. 38 and 39) and Mrs B. M. A. Ellis (fig. 40). The photographs of the excavation were taken by Mr P. A. Rahtz and Mr J. Sellers.

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In addition to the acknowledgements mentioned below plates, the following should be noted. Thanks are due to the Pierpont Morgan Library for permission to reproduce Plates XIV, XV and XVI; and to Her Majesty's Stationery Office (Crown Copyright Reserved) for permission to reproduce Plate XVI. It should be noted that Fig. 3 has been re-drawn from an Ordnance Survey original map.

An error has unfortunately been made in Fig. 21; the scale for the reconstruction drawing of the Type A and B chimney-shaft bricks should read '0 - 400 - 800mm', being \( \frac{1}{4} \) the size of the bricks to the left.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

LOCATION

Pleshey is a small village 9.7km NNW of Chelmsford with prominent earthworks, in fine condition, of a motte and bailey castle (TL 666144) and town enclosure. The geology of the area is a chalky boulder clay dating from the Anglian glaciation which overlies at depth glacial sands and gravels, in turn overlying London clay (information from the Institute of Geological Sciences, South East England Unit). The undisturbed stratum found in the excavation was a buff clay 0.5m thick with angular flints in its surface, the weathered upper part of the chalky boulder clay.

PRE-CASTLE OCCUPATION

A bronze socketed axe of mid-8th to mid-7th century B.C. date (Couchman, forthcoming) was found in the village in 1974 (in the approximate position marked on fig. 2) by Mr R. Spearman of 3, Woolmers Mead, Pleshey in whose possession it remains (personal communication from Mr P.J. Drury). Several other late Bronze Age implements have been found previously in the village and are now in Colchester Museum. In a small cut into the make-up of the motte made by Mr S.R. Bassett (1972-4) two linear features were uncovered both of which could have been peri-glacial, but did in fact contain a few sherds of hand-made flint-gritted pottery probably of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age date (personal communication).

A considerable number of finds of Roman material have come from Pleshey and the surrounding area. A group of coins, probably part of a 3rd century hoard are believed to have been found in 1907 during excavations in the castle (Rahtz 1960, 13) and part of a Castor-ware beaker was discovered during the consolidation of the brick bridge in 1958-9 (p. 144). From the earliest levels of the excavation described in this report came a Roman brooch (p. 185). The section of the bailey bank excavated by Mr S.R. Bassett in 1973 produced a considerable quantity of Romano-British pottery of late 3rd and 4th century date and some metalwork (personal communication). There were no associated features. Evidently, the finds from the castle and village suggest that there is a late 3rd to 4th century site in the immediate area (Christy 1923, 191-2; May 1918, 227-32; VCH Essex 3, 166-7).

At Plesheybury, west of the village (Essex Site Record No. TL 61/11), Romano-British material which has been found in the area since the middle of the 18th century can now be associated with a large courtyard-type villa, apparently fairly rich for the area (VCH Essex 3, 166-7; Rodwell forthcoming). A further significant contribution has been the recent identification of another