NOTES

A ROMANO-BRITISH INTAGLIO FROM HEADBOURNE WORTHY, HAMPSHIRE

In October 1995, a copper-alloy finger ring was brought into the Winchester Museums Service for identification by a metal detector user (ref. 89'1995). It was reported as having been found at NGR SU 483 328 in the parish of Headbourne Worthy. The object has been retained by its finder.

The ring is 24 mm in diameter with a hoop having a central ridge externally and a flat internal surface. Inset is an oval intaglio, 11 mm by 8 mm, of light green, moulded glass featuring a figure debased into a form of cross standing on a rectangular base.

The shape of the ring, with prominent shoulders and a pronounced carination, is typical of the third century (Henig 1978, 35, fig 1, ring type VIII). The item is a Romano-British imitation in glass of a gemstone intaglio. Other examples of this category are known, most of which have been found south of a line running roughly from the Severn to the Wash (Henig 1978, 132). A local example was excavated at the Meonstoke villa (A C King, pers. comm.). Such rings are thought to attest the downward shift of Romanizing ways (including the use of seals) to the lower orders of Roman society (Henig 1978, 133).

Reference

Henig, M 1978 *A Corpus of Roman Engraved Gemstones from British Sites* (2nd ed), Oxford: British Archaeological Reports **8**.

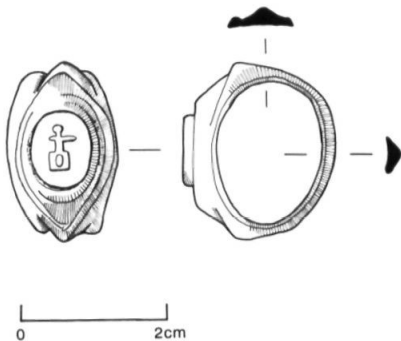*Author:* Dr G T Denford, Historic Resources Centre, 75 Hyde Street, Winchester SO23 7DW

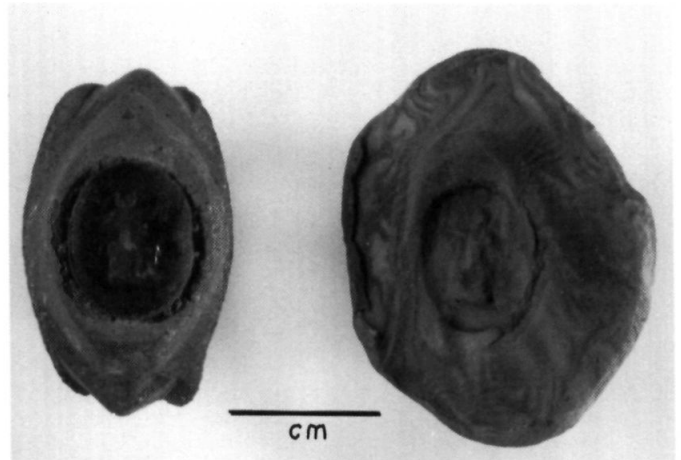Fig 1. Headbourne Worthy: Roman finger ring (scale 1:1). Illustration by Brendan Cronin.

Fig 2. Headbourne Worthy: Roman finger ring intaglio, with impression.