

The Roman Pottery
St Andrews, Holborn EC4

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p:city/757/HUD01/finds/rpotass01

5 Quantification and assessment

5.1 Site archive: finds and environmental, quantification and description

Table 1 Finds and environmental archive general summary

Roman pottery	135 sherds. Total 4.445kg
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5.1.1 The pottery

Table 2 Pottery

Roman pottery	4.445kg	135 sherds
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5.1.1.1 Roman pottery

5.1.1.1.1 SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

The assemblage consisted of 135 sherds of Roman pottery from one context, [1843]. The sherds are generally medium sized with a small number exhibiting signs of burning and sooting.

5.1.1.1.2 METHODOLOGY

The pottery was spot-dated using standard MoLAS/MoLSS methods. It was quantified by rows, sherds, estimated number of vessels (ENV) and weight and the data entered into the MoLAS/MoLSS Oracle database.

5.1.1.1.3 DATING AND FABRICS

Context [1843] dates *c* AD 200–250 and falls within a period which is under-represented across City/Southwark sites, *i.e.* *c* AD 160–250. As Table 3 shows imported wares account for only 15.8% of the assemblage, half that of the average for City/Southwark sites and is dominated by central Gaulish samian (SAMCG), which is dated *c* AD 120–250. Five sherds of amphora and two sherds of miscellaneous colour-coated wares were also identified and are included in the imported percentage (Table 4). Highgate ‘C’ ware (HWC), which is dated *c* AD 70–160, was the most common fabric within this assemblage with black-burnished ‘2’ ware (BB2), which is dated *c* AD 120–250, being the next at 11.1%. No pre-Flavian or early Roman fines wares were found within the context.

Table 3 Breakdown of fabric origin

ORIGIN	Rows	%	Sherds	%	Weight	%
Imported	9	15.8	17	12.6	1667	37.5
Romano-British	46	80.7	116	85.9	2749	61.8
Miscellaneous	2	3.5	2	1.5	29	0.7
Total	57	100%	135	100%	4445	100%

Table 4 Breakdown by fabric type

Ware	Rows	%	Sherds	%	Weight	%
Amphora	2	3.5	5	3.7	1439	32.4
Samian	7	12.3	12	8.9	228	5.1
Fine wares, imported	2	3.5	2	1.5	29	0.7
Black-burnished ware types	13	22.8	25	18.5	470	10.6
Fine wares, Reduced	2	3.5	3	2.2	40	0.9
Reduced wares	13	22.8	50	37.0	557	12.5

Tempered wares	3	5.3	5	3.7	244	5.5
Oxidised wares	15	26.3	33	24.4	1438	32.4
Total	57	100%	135	100%	4445	100%

5.1.1.1.4 FORMS

Within this context a narrow range of vessel types were identified with bowls being the most common vessel form at 21.1% by rows, jars are the next most common (17.5%), (Table 5). A sherd from possibly a seria was identified. This form of vessel is commonly associated to storage of some sort and is not particularly common in the City/Southwark area. However, with such a small assemblage its true significance is difficult to assess. An unusual bead-rimmed jar was identified in shell-tempered fabric which resembled the late Roman fabric known as CALC, ‘calcite’-tempered ware, which dates *c* AD 300–400. The form is similar to examples found in Colchester, fig no. 39 (Symonds and Wade 1999, 460), this form dates to *c* AD 300.

Table 5 Breakdown by form

Forms	Rows	%	Sherds	%	Weight	%
Amphora	3	5.3	6	4.4	1495	33.6
Beakers	2	3.5	2	1.5	30	0.7
Bowl	12	21.1	19	14.1	556	12.5
Cup	1	1.8	1	0.7	19	0.4
Dish	2	3.5	5	3.7	33	0.7
Flagon	2	3.5	3	2.2	289	6.5
Flagon/Jar	3	5.3	8	5.9	333	7.5
Jar	10	17.5	36	26.7	580	13.0
Jar/Beaker	2	3.5	3	2.2	87	2.0
Lid	1	1.8	1	0.7	11	0.2
Mortaria	2	3.5	4	3.0	271	6.1
Seria/Dolia	1	1.8	1	0.7	142	3.2
Miscellaneous	16	28.1	46	34.1	599	13.5
Total	57	100%	135	100%	4445	100%

5.1.1.1.5 DISCUSSION

The site itself is just outside the west wall of the Roman city and also quite close to one of the cemeteries lying adjacent to roads entering the city. However, there are a number of pointers that suggest that this site is not within the burial ground area. Context [1843] contains a wider variety of vessels than would be expected if this were associated to the burial ground, and no vessels of a ritual function were identified. However, more importantly, the percentage of samian within the assemblage is too high for a cemetery site. Samian is not commonly used as a burial vessel or even found as grave goods. Therefore the high percentage of samian suggests that this assemblage is perhaps associated to something other than a cemetery.

The high percentage of black-burnished wares (BB1, BB2 and BBS) and low percentage of amphora may appear unusual when compared to the City/Southwark

averages. However, in the 3rd century AD amphorae are not common in the City and BB1, BB2 and BBS has become more common suggesting that the percentages for this site are not unusual for this period.

6 Analysis of potential

6.1 Pottery

The Roman pottery assemblage has limited potential for the refinement of the dating once the spot-date information has been fully integrated with the stratigraphic sequence. However, due to its position, i.e. just outside the west city wall and near the western cemetery it has potential to aid in increasing our understanding of extra-mural development.

A total of five vessels have been chosen for further study and illustration (Table 6)

Table 6 Vessels of individual significance

Context	Form and Fabric	Comments
1843	Black-burnished style ware round-rimmed bowl (BBS 4H)	Unusual form of this type of bowl
1843	?Shell-tempered late bead rimmed jar (SHEL? 2AX)	Possibly CALC? Unusual jar, cross between bead-rimmed and lid-seated jar, late feel
1843	Unsourced fine oxidised fabric ring-necked flagon with a cupped mouth (OXIDF 1B7-9)	Quite shallow, wide cup mouth
1843	Unsourced oxidised ware hammerhead mortarium (OXID 7HAM)	Possibly NVWW
1843	Unsourced white slipped ware two-handled flagon with squat bulbous body (RWS 1E)	Uncommon in this fabric
1843	Unsourced white slipped ware hook-rimmed jar (RWS 2W)	Mudstained

7 Significance of the data

7.1

7.1.1 International and National

The pottery has little national or international significance as a standalone assemblage

7.1.2 Regional and Local

The site as a standalone assemblage has little significance for the area but gains significance when considered in a wider study for understanding the development of extra-mural areas of Roman London.

8 Method statements

8.1 Pottery

Task 1. Full integration of spot-date information with stratigraphic sequence on the ORACLE database and checking of discrepancies to finalise phasing. Production of combination reports and interpretation.	0.5pd
Task 2. Preparation of dating table	0.5pd
Task 3. Writing of contributing text to the chronological narrative	1.0pd
Task 4. Preparation of figure list using Oracle	0.5pd
Task 5. Attendance at Finds Review	0.5pd
Task 6. Illustration of approximately 5 Vessels by Drawing Office at 6 vessels/day	1.0pd
Task 7. Check pencil illustrations @ a rate of 50pd	0.5pd
Task 8. Selection, preparation and packaging of pottery for Finds Review	0.5pd
Task 9. Liaison with external specialists	0.5pd
Task 11. The following pottery to be seen by specialists	
4 Decorated Samian	0.5pd
* Graffiti – By Mark Hassell who usually does not charge	0.0pd
Task 12. Editing	1.0pd
Total	
Roman Pottery	5.5pd
External Specialists	0.5pd

9 Bibliography

Davies, B, Richardson, B, and Tomber, R, 1994, *A dated corpus of early Roman pottery from the City of London*, CBA Res Rep 98, London

Symonds, R P, and Tomber, R S, 1991, Late Roman London: an assessment of the ceramic evidence from the City of London, *Trans London Middlesex Archaeol Soc* No. 42, 59-101

Symonds, R P, and Wade, S, 1999, *Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86*, Colchester Archaeological Report 10, Colchester