

Suburban life in Roman *Durnovaria*

Additional specialist report



Finds
Pottery

By Rachael Seager Smith

Pottery

Rachael Seager Smith

(This report was written originally for internal use only. The cross references denoted 'SL' in this report relate to *Suburban life in Roman Durnovaria Excavations at the former County Hospital site Dorchester, Dorset 2000-2001* M Trevvarthen 2008)

Overall, 23,717 sherds, weighing approximately 320kg, were recovered. The vast bulk of the assemblage was of Romano-British date, with only 138 medieval and post-medieval sherds, mostly from remnant garden soil layers etc, being identified. While sherds spanning the entire Roman period were found in all areas, the most significant early Roman assemblages came from Block 1/3 while the latest groups, extending into the early 5th century AD, were from Block 4.

In general, the whole assemblage survived in good condition with comparatively little surface or edge damage and a moderate (13.5g) average sherd weight. Some differences in the frequency and condition of sherds were, however, apparent (Table P1), reflecting the nature of the material itself as well as the archaeological features and deposits in these areas. For instance, over half the assemblage was found in Block 1/3 although here the average sherd weight was lowered by the inclusion of numerous tiny sherds from the dumping and levelling layers which were common in this area. While the largest sherds appear to be from Block 4, this figure is skewed by big pieces of amphora not present in other areas and numerous pieces of the characteristically late Roman thick-walled storage jar sherds (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, type 12; Seager Smith 1997, 110 and 229, fabric Q/E107), artificially raising the average weight. By contrast, the scrappiest material was derived from Block 2 where most contexts were associated with a single building and an external yard which, by their nature, were not conducive to the deposition of pottery or other artefacts.

Table P1: Overall number and weight of pottery sherds by Block

Block	No. sherds	Weight	Average wt.
1/3	12607	164.526kg	13g
2	5280	45.034kg	8.5g
4	5663	108.440kg	19g
WB/unstrat	167	2.239kg	13g

All the sherds were rapidly scanned and quantified (number and weight of sherds) by broad fabric types within each context so that a spot-date could be assigned and to provide basis data on the range and content of the assemblage (a shortage of funds prevented full analysis). Vessel forms, cross referenced to the Dorchester type series (Seager Smith and Davies 1993) and other published corpora (e.g. Fulford 1975 and Young 1977), and other features of interest such as evidence of re-use/repair, owner's/maker's marks, graffiti, unusual forms, surface treatments or decoration etc were listed in a free-text comments field, all linked with the context data in an Access database.

In total, 19174 sherds (81% of the total number recovered), weighing 284.5kg could be assigned to phase. These are quantified by fabric type and phase in Table P2. It should be noted here, however, that certain discrepancies in phasing, such as the presence of late 3rd and 4th century fabrics and vessel forms in "Middle Roman" contexts, are due to the practice of assigning phases at the landscape group level, rather than on an individual context basis.

Table P2: Summary of phased pottery by fabric quantified by count and weight (g)

Ware	Pre-Roman	Early Roman	Middle Roman	Late Roman	Post-Roman - Modern	Total
Imported and specialist wares:						
Samian	29/153	147/1005	392/3327	145/2337	82/772	795/7594
Other imported finewares		44/320	78/211	44/166	7/38	173/735
Amphora	2/123	340/6398	297/20745	63/26203	39/3031	741/56500
Mortaria		15/969	52/4500	23/1386	33/1642	123/8497
British finewares:						
Fine south-western mica' g'ware		5/28	27/270	2/17	1/2	35/317
London-type ware		¼	11/83	1/8		13/95
Mica-dusted ware		2/21	13/64	2/13		17/98
Unassigned colour-coated wares		½	5/73			6/75
New Forest colour coat		3/26	43/446	166/1719	200/2543	412/4734
Oxon colour coat		3/41	22/240	39/534	54/1548	118/2363
Oxidised wares:						
Corfe Mullen whiteware	8/41	19/150	53/340		1/8	81/539
Severn Valley ware		1/40				1/40
New Forest parchment ware		1/53	2/69	10/241	20/429	33/792
Oxidised ware	4/62	81/1560	208/2899	138/1937	68/932	499/7390
Verulamium region white-ware			12/113			12/113
White-slipped red ware		38/95	36/547	7/115		81/757
Whiteware			5/55	6/50	2/82	13/187
Other coarsewares:						
South-east Dorset Black Burnished ware (E101)	104/1507	1483/16246	4848/51210	3090/36553	2187/34512	11712/104028
South-western Black Burnished ware (E102)	109/665	863/9953	1940/16645	279/2632	186/1905	3377/31800
Coarse, oxidised Black Burnished ware (E107)		4/392	36/942	148/3906	416/10708	604/15948
Greyware		3/25	28/403	23/660	44/1012	98/2100
greyish ?Black Burnished ware				9/192	36/1027	45/1219
Southwestern greyware A			12/184		9/515	21/669
Alice Holt greyware				4/124	9/177	13/301
Exeter legionary fortress ware		1/6	8/35	1/2		10/43
Southwestern greyware B				4/109	4/87	8/196
South Devon ware			1/40		1/5	2/45
Briquettage		1/61				1/61
Calcareous ware		1/53				1/53
Medieval and later wares:						
Medieval coarseware		1/7	1/23	10/98	73/558	85/686
Industrial ware			2/8	1/6	1/8	4/22
Red earthen wares			2/13	1/12	33/422	36/447
Total	256/2551	3058/37455	8134/103485	4219/79039	3507/61992	19174/284522

Imported wares consisted of **samian** (see separate report by J.M. Mills), a small range of other fine tablewares, amphorae and the mortaria.

- Overall, the samian represented 4% of the phased assemblage, lower than at Greyhound Yard (9% - data in archive) and Wessex Court (5%) but higher than at County Hall (3%), Alington Avenue (2%) and the Dorchester By-pass (1%).

- But compared with sites across Roman Britain as a whole, this 4% is a pretty good figure – can generally expect *c.* 2% from the smaller civilian settlements/small towns (Willis 2005).

Other imported finewares

- These fabrics together represent 0.9% of the total number of phased sherds compared with 0.6% at Wessex Court, 0.8% at Greyhound Yard, 0.5% at County Hall and Alington Avenue and 0.3% on the Dorchester By-Pass sites
- Range is comparable with those from other areas of Dorchester (Seager Smith 1993a 46, Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 204-14)
- Earliest are 2 probable Terra Rubra sherds from pit 2391, sub-group 12131 – importation ceased by *c.* AD 60 but sherds were found at Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 205) so Dorchester receiving this fabric before the Conquest of this area
- sherds of Lyons colour-coated ware – 14 sherds from roughcast beakers and at least one rusticated cup (sherds in pit 1439- context 1442 and wall footing 10098 – context 1381) and Central Gaulish lead glazed ware – a base sherd from pit 1547 (context 1548), most of a very well-preserved hair-pin decorated beaker from pit 1481 (context 1488) and body sherds from layers 1127 and 1061. These fabrics were current in Britain *c.* AD 40-70
- Also 22 sherds of Terra Nigra – imported *c.* AD 10-85 – but with one exception (a rim from a globular bead rim jar/beaker found residually in ditch G605 (context 2030), all sherds from identifiable forms were from Cam 16 platters – perhaps the most common form in Britain but one of the latest (current *c.* AD 45-85 – Rigby 1973) – so TN probably all from the latest part of the overall TN date range. Similar dominance of Cam 16's at Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 205) and at Wessex Court (Seager Smith 1992; 1993b). This is one of the forms occasionally used to argue a military presence - but it is commonest pretty much everywhere so it is not a very reliable indicator
- 3 sherds of Pompeian Red ware – context 1363, ditch 1152 (context 1153) and robbing deposit 2022 – predominantly pre-Flavian in date but some forms current till *c.* AD 90 (Peacock 1977, 154)
- Central Gaulish colour-coated wares were also well-represented (27 sherds) - as at Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 209) and Wessex Court (Seager Smith 1992; 1993b). From several production centres including Lezoux; dating is complex as beakers were made well into the 2nd century AD with little morphological change, while the cups, datable to before AD 70, were always rare in Britain. Most of our sherds appear to be from beakers; mostly roughcast but 2 hairpin decorated too – these are generally (but not necessarily) dated to *c.* AD 70-140
- Colour-coated beakers also from the Argonne region (in previous reports refer to as North Gaulish colour-coated wares). Dated *c.* AD 80-135. Mostly roughcast decoration and from bag-shaped beakers with cornice rims
- Smaller range of imported finewares from the mid 2nd century AD onwards but parallel at other sites in Dorchester – 1 sherd of Cologne colour-coated ware with barbotine decoration (AD 150/60-260) from the construction trench 10078, Central Gaulish black slipped ware (AD 150-200, continuing into the 3rd century AD) and Moselkeramick (later 2nd into the late 3rd century, possibly 4th century AD) – represented by plain, fluted and indented beakers with rouletted decoration. Also *ceramique a l'eponge* from the Poitiers region of north-west France; 3rd – 4th centuries AD but generally dated to the 4th century in Britain (Fulford 1977, 46). Four sherds – two from flanged bowls (Rainbault 1973, 197, type 451) although both seem to have had their flanges chipped off.

Amphorae

- frequency about consistent with Dorchester as a whole - 4% of the phased sherds from this site cf 3% at Wessex Court and Greyhound Yard, 2% County Hall, 1% Alington and 0.3% Dorchester By-Pass
- Dressel 20 are, as usual, overwhelmingly dominant. Produced in the southern Spanish province of Baetica, in the area between Seville and Cordoba, and the most widely distributed of all amphorae types especially in the western provinces, travelling via the Rhone and the Rhine rivers. Mainly used to transport olive oil. In Britain 1st – 3rd centuries AD. One stamp was noted on a handle from context 1442 (disuse of pit 1439, subgroup 10051) but was unfortunately badly impressed and illegible
- Sherds from a variety of associated contexts in Open Areas 4 (upper fills of boundary ditch 14111, context 4243) and 15 (pit 4230) are from a single vessel in the late hard, Baetician fabric – either a smallish Dressel 20 or just possibly a Dressel 23. The rim belongs to Martin-Kilcher's (1983) type 45, dated to *c.* AD 250-300, and has had post-firing graffiti scratched into its upper surface – unfortunately this has been badly chipped and worn and the lettering is now illegible. This vessel had also been stamped LQS (cf Callender 1965, 164, fig. 9, 34-9; Rodriguez 1986, 187-9 and 254, no.216) – L. Q(uinti) S(ecundi) although this stamp is generally dated to the 2nd century AD. A group of 7 joining body sherds from pit 4230 (it is not certain whether they are from the nearly complete vessel or another one like it) had a post-firing scratched X graffiti just below the lower handle stump
- Other Dressel 20 sherds have evidence for the re-use of these vessels after the olive oil had been used up and it is likely that there was an extensive trade in them as empty containers. Sherds from layer 1043 in Open Area 10 and wall 1090 of Building 7 have small post-firing perforations, possibly suggesting that these vessel were repaired with lead rivets/plugs or leather thongs while other sherds from layer 1043 and redeposited soil layer 1100 in Open Area 8 have been trimmed to make a new, wider and therefore more useful openings at about the level of the lower handle attachments after the removal of the neck and handles. The example from layer 1043 also has a scratched graffiti X on its outer surface
- Gallic amphorae accounted for approx 7% (50 sherds) of all the amphorae from this site – not as many as at Wessex Court (16%) or Greyhound Yard (41%, more common than Dressel 20). Most are probably from the flat-bottomed Pelichet 47/Gauloise 4 form made in southern France, around the mouth of the Rhone and principally used in the transportation of wine. One of the pieces from redeposited soil layer 1100 in Open Area 8 also has a small post-firing perforation, probably indicating repair
- Other types (including a variety of unassigned fabrics not commented on further here) present only in small quantities but reflect the variety present elsewhere in Dorchester and give some idea of the trading contacts and range of perishable commodities reaching the town during the Roman period
 1. Cam 186 – southern Spanish coast around Cadiz; principally for fish-based products; predominantly mid 1st – early 2nd century
 2. Carrot amphora – source uncertain but Mediterranean desert environment is likely – principal commodity: dates or other fruit; late 1st BC – late 1st AD century. Another pottery type often (but not invariably) associated with early military sites in Britain and Germany
 3. Dressel 2-4 – produced in a variety of different areas – Italy, France, Spain and the Aegean; predominantly carried wine; 2nd half of 1st BC – mid 2nd AD century
 4. Richborough 527 – source in a volcanic region – western Mediterranean, France and Italy have all been suggested; principal content unknown; 1st to early 2nd AD century

5. Rhodian wine amphorae – commonly (but again not exclusively) found on early military sites (possibly by way of a tribute imposed on the island of Rhodes by Claudius); late 1st BC – early 2nd AD century
 6. North African – mostly from Tunisia and generally 3rd-4th AD although the trade may have started as early as the 2nd and continued into the 5th century. Principally olive oil although possibly fish-based products to a lesser extent. 8 sherds, all from period 3 or 4 deposits
- One amphora lid in a fine yellow-buff fabric, source unknown, was also noted.

Mortaria

This includes the products of the Oxfordshire and New Forest industries but excludes the samian mortaria.

- Not common in this assemblage (0.6% of the sherds from phased contexts) but then there were only 233 mortaria sherds out of a total of *c.* 55,500 from Greyhound Yard (although this total does not include the Oxfordshire and New Forest ones)
- As at Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 224) and other Dorchester sites, the typically Claudian wall-sided and pre-Flavian flanged forms are completely absent, indicating that the town did not receive mortaria till after *c.* AD 60/65 despite the presence of other imported fineware types
- Mortaria were mainly imported from north-west France (GY fabrics 42A, N, O and W) – vessel forms include examples of Bushe-Fox 26-30 type vessels (1913, fig.19, 26-30), dated *c.* AD 80-150, as well as Hartley's Group 1 and 2 mortaria (1977, 11), *c.* AD 60-150
- Other Continental sources include the Massif Central region of France (GY fabric 42S, AD 50-80/85) and the Rhineland (GY fabric 42R, AD 150-250)
- Four sherds from a very well-worn vessel in a soft, powdery bright orange fabric from dumped layer 1027 in Open Area 10 and another from a rubble layer 4030 within building G722 are probably from South Wales while one Verulamium region white ware sherd was found in Open Area 22 (context 1171). 1st – 2nd century in date
- As noted for the rest of Dorchester, the imported mortaria from this site tend to be very well-worn with relatively few grits surviving – a very parsimonious population? Difficult to get hold of and therefore used to their very limits? Used for unusually hard foodstuffs or possibly even non-foodstuffs that needed grinding?
- From *c.* AD 250 the supply of mortaria switched to the major regional production centres, the Oxfordshire and New Forest kilns (Continental supply routes interrupted by unrest in the Rhineland). Oxford = 33 sherds in total; New Forest 8 or approx 4:1 – probably reflects the quality of mortaria from these different centres, the softer or more gritty New Forest fabrics being less suitable for grinding/pulverising
- Oxfordshire products were the most numerous – 16 red colour-coated ware sherds including examples of the imitation samian form 45 vessels (Young 1977, 173, type C97), dated *c.* AD 240-400+ and the angular flanged variety (*ibid* type C100) dated to the 4th century AD. Whiteware mortaria and white-slipped red ware vessels (*ibid* type WC7; dated *c.* AD 240-400+) were also noted
- New Forest parchment ware mortaria included rims from later 3rd century (Fulford 1975, type 103) and 4th century (Fulford 1975, type 104) vessels as well as a single brown colour-coated ware mortaria sherd.

British finewares

- Early Roman fabrics in this group – Fine, south-western micaceous greywares, London type wares, mica-dusted wares are of late 1st – early 2nd century AD date and although present in negligible quantities form part of Dorchester's standard range
- Dominated by the late Roman colour-coated wares from the Oxfordshire and New Forest industries:
- New Forest are more numerous (*c.* 3.5 sherds:1), but the range of products reflect the strengths of each industry – bowls tended to be from Oxford – superior quality to those from the New Forest – while flagon, jug and especially beaker forms in the hard durable New Forest colour-coated fabric were chosen in preference to the softer Oxfordshire ones
- Oxfordshire forms include Young (1977) types: C8 flagon, plain (C22), rouletted (C23) and scale-decorated (C28) beakers, C45, C48, C51, C52, C55, C71 and C75 bowls – most were made throughout the life of this industry but forms C52, C71 and C75 are exclusively 4th century date
- The New Forest sherds were predominantly from indented beakers (Fulford 1975, type 27), the most successful and widely distributed of all the forms they made although bag-shaped (*ibid* type 44) and globular bodied (*ibid* type 30) forms were also noted – the latter are also of 4th century AD date, becoming more common after *c.* AD 350. Other forms included a globular flask (*ibid* type 1 – early 4th century), a jug with a pinched-out spout (*ibid* type 18, also 4th century), a cup (*ibid* 53), a small necked jar or bowl (*ibid*, type 54 or 57, also dated to the second half of the 4th century), bowls copying samian form 38 (*ibid*, type 63) as well as plain, bead rim types (*ibid*, type 67) also of 4th century AD date. Sherds from a small barrel-shaped vessel with a pronounced girth groove were found in Late Roman pits 4127 and 4128 – the closest parallels in Fulford's type series are the type 55 cup or the type B decorated sherds, both assigned 4th century AD dates (1975, 60 and 62). Also a possible candlestick – see section on lighting
- One beaker base is unusual for having a pre-colour-coating, pre-firing X scratched into the underside of its base – I have never seen this before but it is certainly a maker's mark of some sort - possibly somebody having fun. From soil layer 4031 in Open Area 22.

Oxidised wares

- The range of white/orange/buff ware fabrics (4% of the phased sherds) form part of the standard range of products seen in Dorchester (Seager Smith 1993a, 1997, 2002; Seager Smith and Davies 1993) and indeed on most Roman sites, and span the entire Roman period.
- Most of these sherds were recorded under unprovenanced, 'catch-all' fabric groups, e.g. oxidized ware, white-slipped red ware, whiteware. All were wheelmade; as at other Dorchester sites, comparatively few features sherds were present, the majority of pieces being plain body sherds from flagon forms although smaller numbers of bowls and beakers were represented
- Early Roman fabrics include Corfe Mullen ware, dated to the third quarter of the 1st century AD (Calkin 1935, 54, Bidwell 1979, 192) – flagon sherds. Especially interesting as locally made on a wheel at a time when just about all other Dorset fabrics were hand made – production possibly linked to the supply of the military establishment at Lake Farm but ideas did not spread
- 'Oxidised wares' include bowl and especially flagon forms from north-west France – the same kilns that produced the mortaria as noted at Greyhound Yard (281)
- Of particular interest are sherds from three tazza (two in white-slipped red ware and one in an unprovenanced oxidized fabric) and a large reeded rim flagon with finger-pinched 'frilled' decoration in the same white-slipped red ware fabric; both forms are, as yet, unparalleled in Dorchester. More about the tazza below

- Sherds in these fabrics have also been repaired – pieces with post-firing perforations probably indicative of repair with lead staples/plugs or leather thongs were noted in body sherds from soil layer 2099 within building G626, pits 1410 (context 1408), 1562 (context 1563; a staple in position survives here) and 2401 (context 2374).

Other coarsewares

- This group dominates the assemblage, accounting for 83% of all the phased sherds. Unsurprisingly, the most numerous group were the various Black Burnished wares: the South-east Dorset (Wareham/Poole Harbour) fabric, the South-western Black Burnished wares and sherds of the very coarse, shale-rich and often oxidized late Roman version Wareham/Poole Harbour fabric (fabric E107). Fabric proportions for this site, and comparisons with other areas of the town are shown in Table P3:

Table P3: proportions of the various Black Burnished ware fabrics (as % of total sherds from site) and comparisons with other Dorchester sites

Fabric	this site	Greyhound Yard	Wessex Court	County Hall	Alington Avenue	By-pass sites	Western Link Road
SE Dorset	61%	60%	data not available	71%	85%	63%	67%
SW BB	18%	15%		18%	7%	10%	20%
E107	3%	not identified		not identified	not identified	4%	9%

- The other fabrics in this group occurred in only negligible quantities (Table P2) but in general, form part of the standard range of wares seen in Dorchester – Exeter legionary fortress wares (c. AD 60/65 until well into the Flavian period) also occurred at Greyhound Yard for instance. 'Greywares' = another catch-all group
- The presence of the Southwestern greywares A and B is new (but this is probably due to my ability to identify it – I really only got to grips with it after looking at the stuff from Pomeroy Wood in 1998 and I had finish all the other Dorchester assemblages long before then). Anyway, these fabrics were made by a series of interrelated industries, probably including kilns at Norton Fitzwarren (Timby 1989, 54) producing coarseware for local markets in Somerset and East Devon between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 171, Seager Smith 1999, 310-12). However, on occasion, these wares did travel considerable distances – sherds from a storage jar, for instance, have been found in Staines (McKinley 2004, 55)
- Relatively small number of non-Black Burnished ware sherds present in this assemblage overall, together with the relatively limited range of forms, indicates that the normal range of functions usually assigned to grey and white/orange/buff coarseware fabrics in other parts of the country (e.g. food preparation and storage roles) were ably filled in this area by the Black Burnished wares. The BB potters enjoyed such overwhelming dominance of the Dorchester market that there was little room for anything other than 'specialist' vessels such as mortaria, amphorae, fine tablewares, flagons and a few curiosities – at least until the Late Roman period when a slightly wider range of fabrics does seem to have reached the town. In the Dorchester area, many of these 'other', non-BB coarsewares probably functioned outside the normal utilitarian kitchen roles, meeting a demand for slightly better quality pottery between the Black Burnished wares and the true finewares
- All the Black Burnished ware vessel forms identified were common elements in the Late Iron Age and Romano-British ceramic traditions of the Dorchester region
 - Jars forms (as always) were represented by the widest range of types – WA 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18, 41, 46, 47, 62 and 72
 - Open bowls: WA13, 15, 16, 33, 36, 40

Straight-sided bowls and dishes: WA20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 69

Miscellaneous beaker (WA10), imitation Gallo-Belgic platters (WA73, 83 and 96), lid (WA26), flagon (WA29 – including ring-necked, pinched mouth and cupped rim forms, WA 35 and 37), jug/jar (WA66), lamp (WA 89) and closed forms (WA107)

- Sizes and proportions of the vessels conform to those suggested by Gillam (1976) and Davies and Hawkes (1987), while the techniques of surface treatment and decoration follow the generalized 'rules' described elsewhere (Farrar 1973, 76-8, Gillam 1876, Williams 1977, Seager Smith and Davies 1993). One highly novel feature is the presence of a significant quantity of wheel-made BB1 among the latest Roman groups
- Some sort of change of used indicated by post-firing perforations in the bases of South-East Dorset BB1 pots from the surface (context 1221) of trackway 10180 (Road 2) and soil layer 1540 in Open Area 2 while a handled jar (WA9) from Late Roman layer 4071 in Open Area 21 had several small, post-firing perforations drilled through its base
- Sherds from a moderately large jar, decorated with acute-angled burnished line lattice, and with a thick flat base seem to have been deliberately set into the ground (feature 1052) in the area of Building 7 – presumably as a complete pot although its upper part no longer survives. This vessel also had a post-firing central perforation through its base and deposits of limescale adhering to the inside of its walls (although not the base). The decoration on this jar suggests that it was made during the 1st or 2nd century AD date – but the perforation indicates a change of use and it could (potentially at least) have been deposited considerably after manufacture
- A small post-firing perforation, probably from a lead staple or leather thong repair, located just beneath the flange of a dropped flanged bowl (WA25) from a rubbly soil layer 2025 overlying the geometric mosaic in Open Area 22 was also noted.

Brief generalised descriptions of typical Dorchester assemblages by chronological period

Early Roman (c. AD60/70-120): presence of samian (especially from the southern and early central Gaulish sources); other fine tablewares may include Lyons colour-coated ware, Central Gaulish glazed ware, Terra Nigra, Pompeian Red ware and Central Gaulish colour-coats. The locally produced Corfe Mullen ware as well as mica-dusted wares, fine micaceous greywares, Exeter Legionary fortress wares, Severn Valley wares etc also belong to this period. Amphorae-bourne commodities included fish-based products from the Cadiz region of Spain (Cam 186), fruit and wine from a variety of Mediterranean sources ('Carrot', Dressel 2-4, Rhodian and Gallic amphorae) as well as olive oil from Spain (Dressel 20). Mortaria only from imported sources, especially north-west France. Black Burnished ware assemblages include high proportions of the South-western fabrics at this time (c. 20-50% of the sherds from the group); the South-east Dorset sherds are likely to be very variable fired – brown, even oxidized, rather than black or very dark grey of the slipped South-western fabrics at this time. A small minority of these South-western fabrics may be red-finished. In both fabric groups, vessel forms are dominated by upright-necked (WA1 and 4) and bead rimmed (WA 6, 7, 8 and 10) jars and round-bodied open bowls representing the continuation of the local pre-Roman Iron Age ceramic tradition (WA 13, 15, 16 and 33) or based on Continental prototypes (WA36, 40, 73, 83 and 96). Lids (WA26) and flagons (WA29) too. Early versions of some of the straight-sided dishes (WA 20, 22 with plain, rilled and occasionally notched flanges, and 25 – shallow dishes only, sometimes with rilled and/or decorated flanges), occur in the Southwestern BB fabrics only towards the end of this period, from c. AD 80+.

Middle Roman (c. AD 120 – late 2nd/early 3rd century AD): although many of the Black Burnished ware forms characteristic of the preceding period continued to be produced well into the 2nd century AD, a range of new and increasingly Romanised forms was introduced after the expansion of the BB industry to serve military markets from c. AD 120. These included jars with increasingly everted rims (WA2, 41 and 62) with the straight-sided bowl/dish forms were taken up by the

Wareham/Poole Harbour potters and gradually replaced the earlier round-bodied bowl and imitation Gallo-Belgic platter forms. A wide range of less common forms was also developed during this century (WA 46, 47, 66) and by the end of this period, the change from acute- to obtuse-angled lattice decoration on cooking pots was complete – horizontal groove defining the upper limits of the decorative band on jars in place by *c.* AD 235/245. By the late 2nd/early 3rd century AD the proportion of the South-western BB fabrics had also decreased markedly, to less than *c.* 10% of the sherds. Imported wares include the continued presence of samian, mainly from Lezoux and towards the end of this period, from the East Gaulish production centres as well as small amounts of Argonne and Cologne colour-coated wares in the mid/late 2nd century followed by Central Gaulish black slipped and Moselkeramik types from the end of the 2nd century AD onwards. Mortaria still from north-west France, thereafter the Rhineland; wine from southern France and olive oil from southern Spain but with a decline in other amphorae-bourne foodstuffs.

Late Roman (*c.* AD 240 – late 4th or early 5th century AD): a more limited range of fabrics and vessel forms is apparent. The main late Roman regional industries – Oxfordshire and New Forest - supply oxidized wares, the only mortaria available during this period as well as a range of tablewares, bowls and beakers in red-slipped and colour-coated ware fabrics. Imports are limited to North African amphora (olive oil) and *ceramique a l'eponge* bowls. The Black Burnished ware assemblage is characterized by the virtual absence of the Southwestern fabrics except as residual finds, while the vessel forms consist of shallow, circular (WA20) and less commonly oval (WA21) straight sided dishes, dropped flanged bowls and dishes (WA25) and jars with everted rims (WA3) or dropped flange rims (WA11). The finish afforded to these vessels tends to be more cursory than in preceding periods, the use of slip and heavy wiping or burnishing being characteristic of this time. Decoration is largely restricted to narrow bands of obtuse-angled lattice on jars and interlocked hoops or random scrolling on bowls and dishes.

During the second half of the 4th century AD, things degenerate even further – the lattice decoration on jars diminishes to parallel lines or herringbone motifs, and is sometimes even left completely blank while the flanges of some WA25 bowls become narrower, almost residual – cf Exeter type 47 (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 109, fig. 31). A new squat jar/bowl form (WA18) was also introduced sometime after AD 350. Unusual inclusions such as limestone, other rocks and grog, appear in the Wareham/Poole Harbour fabric perhaps as a result of the sloppy preparation of the clay while the very coarse, shale-rich and often oxidized fabric (fabric E107), generally used for large storage jars with everted and/or pie-crust rims (WA2 and 12) was also developed. These vessels may have been associated with some new and very specific purpose – often these vessels have small, square-sectioned, prefiring perforations around their necks and sometimes around the base too, surrounding a large, central hole (Seager Smith 1997, fig. 108, 13). A programme of residue analysis is underway in an attempt to elucidate this purpose but the results are not yet available (J. Gerrard pers. comm.). Clearly all was not well in the Wareham/Poole Harbour pottery industry during the last quarter of the 4th century AD – not only were their products degenerating while the Dorchester markets were gradually being infiltrated by coarsewares from further afield – South Devon ware, Alice Holt and Overwey/Tilford wares for example – but for the first time in *c.* 300 years they chose to use the potters' wheel, technology that they had successfully ignored for the past 300 years! A small but still significant proportion of the everted rim jars (WA3) from the latest groups on this site are wheelmade in a hard, greyish fabric – it is not certain whether or not the bowls were wheelmade too because the surface treatments applied to them generally mask all traces of manufacturing technique.

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LIGHTING

This assemblage contains unusually explicit and plentiful evidence for lighting (Table P4)

Lamps

- One almost complete lamp in an unprovenanced colour-coated ware fabric (*SL* Fig. 34) was found in soil layer 1189 associated with Road 1 which produced numerous abraded sherds of 1st to 3rd century AD date. It broadly conforms to Loeschcke's (1919) type Xb Firmalampen and is similar to examples from London (Eckardt 2002, fig.79, 2014 and fig. 84, 2008). The discus is decorated with a very blurred theatrical mask or bust of a deity, possibly indicating that it had been made in a very well used mould
- Part of a Central Gaulish green glazed lamp was also found in layer 1061 in Open Area 10 – this fabric was current in Britain between *c.* AD 43 and 70 – but the sherd was too small to assign to any specific type
- Eckardt's recent survey of Roman lighting equipment in Britain shows clearly just how rare lamps were during the 1st and 2nd century AD in the south-west (2002, figs 9 and 16), their distribution clustering around major centres such as London and Colchester and other military sites – perhaps not surprising for what was, in Britain, a very new, intrusive item of Roman material culture. [There was one definite lamp fragment and about 5 other pieces possibly from this form (all in Lyon ware) in the much larger assemblage from Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 209) but that is about all I remember for the whole town]
- It is possible that olive oil was the preferred fuel in these lamps – there is some evidence to suggest a correlation between peaks in lamp usage and the numbers of Dressel 20 amphora reaching Britain although this is far from problem-free and it is possible that locally-available oils such as hazelnut and walnut oil may have been used instead (Eckardt 2002, 36)
- There is also part of a possible open lamp (WA89; Loeschcke type XIa) in the South-western Black Burnished ware fabric from layer 1043 in Open Area 10, associated with lots of very small sherds spanning the entire Roman period although the majority dated to between *c.* AD 70 and 120. Similar vessels, but made in the South-east Dorset BB fabric have also been found in early Roman contexts at Wessex Court (Adam and Butterworth 1993, fig.12, 4) and at Compact Farm, Worth Matravers (Seager Smith 2002, fig.1.31, 60). These are sometimes interpreted as lamp holders, used to collect the seeping oil from the closed forms but they could easily have functioned as lamps in their own right. Eckardt (2002, 232) suggest the use of animal fat or tallow as fuel.

Tazza

- Never a common form and I have never come across them in Dorchester before. Form first appears in Britain during the Claudian period and its distribution follows the army (so full range is mid 1st to 2nd century AD in date). Rarely, if ever, found on Romano-British rural or villa sites but they are often associated with lamps
- Sherds from 3 from this site, 1 in a miscellaneous oxidized fabric and the other 2 in white-slipped red wares, all with frilled decoration. The vessel from the two contexts within Building 7 (1293 and 1363) has the internal sooting characteristic of this form, the other two are clean inside
- Tazza are generally interpreted as libation cups (but why sooted and the frill gets in the way of drinking), lamps, lamp holders or incense burners, their high base cavities perhaps suggesting that they were mounted on poles or stands (Davies *et al.* 1994, 51). Their presence is often interpreted as indicative of religious or ritual activities but it is highly probable that they were used in purely domestic contexts too – and of course, it is impossible to separate this from use in association with household shrines, for example, at a time and in a culture where religion, and its associated rites and rituals, are likely to have formed an integral, inseparable part of daily life. Outside London and the major centres such

as Colchester, these vessels are most common on military sites and they formed part of the standard range of forms made for and by the army. Consequently, their presence has also been used to point to military activity on sites where they occur – but again, they are not an exclusively military form

- Tazza do occur in contemporary depictions of Mithraism and there are documentary references to burning pinecones during childbirth – I have heard comments (Ray McBride, SGRP Conference 2003, Newcastle) linking tazza use with these references. These probably cancel each other out – Mithraism being a predominantly 'male' religion, beloved by soldiers while childbirth is exclusively female

Candlesticks

- Use of ceramic candlestick seems to have started in the 2nd century and continued into the 4th century (where ours all belong). They were clearly a much more widespread form of lighting (Eckardt 2002, 58, fig. 24), finding their way out even to rural sites, and utilizing wax or tallow as fuel rather than oil. The New Forest was one of the most important production centres
- All three examples found here are from the New Forest – 2, from feature 1170 in Open Area 10 and yard surface 1172 in Open Area 9, being of parchment ware (Fulford 1975, type 96, dated to *c.* AD 270-380) – the former has brown painted decoration (*SL Fig. 26*). The third example is also fragmentary but is made in the hard-fired colour-coated ware more usually used for beaker and flagon forms. It looks rather like the neck of a disc-mouthed flagon (e.g. Fulford 1975, fig.10, type 11) but because the central hole is so very narrow, it is perhaps more likely to be a candlestick. It was found in soil layer 4007, part of the interfacial soil layers sealing the *in situ* Roman deposits in Open Area 22, alongside other pottery of very late 4th or early 5th century AD date
- Greyhound Yard (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 226), and Wessex Court (Adam *et al.* 1992) could only muster one New Forest candlestick apiece.

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