

For: Foundations  
Site: Elm Farm, Ebrington, Glos  
Site Code: EGE 09  
Status: spot date/ assessment  
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## **POTTERY**

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The archaeological work undertaken in 2009 resulted in the recovery of a moderately large assemblage of 1344 sherds of pottery weighing 20.7 kg mainly dating to the Roman period. In addition there are 18 sherds of later Iron Age date; a single post-medieval piece and 82 pieces (0.8 kg) of ceramic building material.
- 1.2 For the purposes of the assessment the pottery was sorted into main fabric types and scanned to assess its likely date range. Known named or traded wares were coded using the National Roman fabric collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). These codes have been added in brackets. The sorted assemblage was quantified by sherd count and weight. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1 along with provisional spot dates.
- 1.3 Pottery was recovered from a total 129 contexts with an additional 169 unstratified pieces. Two contexts produced only tile but no pottery. Quantities ranged from single sherds up to a maximum of 212 sherds from cxt 1061. The pottery was assessed without details of the site stratigraphy or the nature of the contexts or their geography within the site.
- 1.4 The condition of the sherds was moderately good but typical of rubbish material reflected in an overall average sherd weight of 15.4 g. The pieces were moderately fresh with the preservation of surface finish and relatively sharp edges.

### Iron Age

Eighteen moderately small sherds were recovered from contexts 3018 and 3064 which are likely to date to the later Iron Age. None are featured.

The sherds include two pieces of Malvernian rock-tempered ware along with fossil shell and oolitic-limestone-tempered sherds.

Whilst the Malvernian ware could date anywhere from the later prehistoric period into the early Roman period; the other sherds are more characteristic of the Iron Age.

## Roman

Most, or all the Roman pottery is typical of the mid-later Roman period (2nd-4<sup>th</sup> centuries). The assemblage is quite diverse in composition with a mixture of continental and regional imports alongside wares of more local origin.

Continental imports include 57 sherds of Central Gaulish samian (LEZ SA) and one from Les Martres-de-Veyre (MDV SA). A total 4.7% of the total Roman assemblage which is quite a high figure. Despite this amount of samian there are no accompanying imported finewares or amphorae present.

Forms include cups Dragendorff types 27 and 33; dishes 18/31, 31, 36, 42; bowls type 37 and mortaria 45.

One vessel from cxt (1204) has been repaired in antiquity with at least two mends one of which still has the lead rivet *in-situ*. Some sherds have been burnt and other show evidence of use from wear.

At least four vessels were stamped with the potter's name although only one is legible: Albucius ii who was producing wares AD 145-175 (Hartley and Dickinson 2008, 137-43). This vessel came from cxt (1061).

Regional imports are quite diverse and include

10	probably sherd of Alice Holt (	ALH RE) storage jar from Surrey.
1	Dorset black burnished ware (	DOR BB1);
9	Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware (	LNV CC) and a
8	Nene Valley mortaria (	LNV WH);
7	Mancetter-Hartshill (	MAH WH) and
4	Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (	OXF RS);
5	Oxfordshire white ware and white-slipped mortaria (	OXF WH/ WS);
2	Midlands pink grog-tempered ware (	PNK GT) and
3	shelly ware (	ROB SH);
6	Wiltshire white-slipped ware (	SOW WS),

The DOR BB1 includes examples of plain-walled dishes, flat rim and grooved rim dishes/bowls, flanged-rim conical bowls and jars decorated with acute and oblique burnished line latticing indicating the presence of types spanning the 2<sup>nd</sup> through to the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Amongst the OXF RS are dishes, Young (2000) forms C45 and C51 whilst the mortaria include a whiteware form M17 of 3<sup>rd</sup>-century currency.

One of the Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria is stamped on the flange with the potter's name VOLVVIIF.

A significant part of the assemblage comprises sherds of oxidised Severn Valley ware (SVW OX), 28% of the total by sherd count. Forms include tankards and wide-mouthed jars with pendant or triangular rims.

Various grey wares are also well-represented accounting to 27% by count. Some may include reduced Severn Valley ware and Oxfordshire wares.

The other main group of material is shelly ware which accounts for 12% by sherd count. This is probably an Oxfordshire industry dating from the 2nd century. A few sherds belong to the later shelly ware industry based in the Bedfordshire area in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2 Post-medieval

- 4.1 A single glazed sherd was recovered from Building 1 which is of post-medieval date.

## 3 Ceramic building material (CBM)

- 3.1 In total 82 pieces of CBM were noted weighing 922 g. All appear to be of Roman date.
- 3.2 Most of the pieces are quite fragmented but a few could be identified as roofing tile including examples of both *tegulae* and *imbrices*.

## 4 Potential and further work

- 4.1 Previous work at Ebrington has demonstrated the presence of late Roman activity and this assemblage is quite typical of that previously recorded. The main phase of use appears to span the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century through to the later 4<sup>th</sup> century. A small number of later Iron Age sherds suggest an earlier phase of use.
- 4.2 The quality of the assemblage in terms of the range of material present is good and this together with the amount of samian (4.8% of the assemblage by weight) might be regarded as a typical profile from a settlement of some status such as a villa, roadside settlement or small town. The absence of other imported fine wares, amphorae and specialist wares are at slight variance with this conclusion.
- 4.3 Many of the industries represented are long-lived, for example, the Severn Valley ware spans the entire Roman period and BB1 from the 2<sup>nd</sup> through to the 4<sup>th</sup>-century. Where there are single, or small numbers of unfeatured, sherds

from a context it is difficult to produce a close date. In this assemblage 59% of the deposits produced between 1-5 sherds and 78% between 1-10 sherds which has some ramifications in terms of the accuracy of the dating. Later amalgamation of contexts into features may address some of this.

- 4.4 If publication is envisaged the pottery could be summarised in a quite a short report. Most of the forms are well-known ones so illustrations would be limited to the stamped mortaria and possibly any key groups, if these exist, to visually demonstrate the character of the assemblage.

#### References

Hartley, B R, and Dickinson, B M, 2008, Names on terra sigillata. An index of makers' stamps and signatures on Gallo-Roman terra sigillata (Samian ware). Volume 1 (A to Axo). Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, BICS Supplement, 102, London,

Tomber, R, and Dore, J, 1998 *The National Roman fabric reference collection: a handbook*, Museum of London / English Heritage/ British Museum

Young, C J, 2000, *The Roman pottery industry of the Oxford region*, BAR 43, Oxford (reprint)