

Provisional Identification of some Medieval Pottery from Deansway, Worcester

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Introduction

A number of sherds of pottery from Deansway, Worcester, were submitted for identification. Only those for which an identification has been proposed are included here (Appendix One).

Roman

No definite Roman wares were present but three vessels might be of this date. Of these Fabric 624 is most likely since it appears to be a standard Roman form and decoration (a burnished dish). However, the quartz sandstone sand temper is not familiar to me. The shell-tempered bowl base, Fabric 621, is heavily leached, which might favour a Roman over a late Saxon date for this vessel, but this argument depends on the detailed taphonomy of the site and is best left to those more familiar with it. The third vessel is represented by the base of a jar. The manufacturing method used left a very rough interior and trimmed exterior very much in the manner of Dorset BB1. The vessel itself is oxidized but might have been burnt after firing. However, no examples of shale, typical of BB1, were seen and the grain size is smaller.

Table 1

Context	name	Form	Nosh	Description	REFNO
16903	610	JAR	2	Low iron body with abundant fine quartz sand temper. Oxidised with grey core. Base sherd from jar with external trimming. Could be Roman?	5707
16901	621	BOWL	1	Shell-tempered fabric. The shell includes punctate brachiopod and is derived from the Oxford Clay in the Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire area. Could be late Roman (Harrold) or late Saxon (St Neot's type). Diameter of base suggests a bowl	5683
17221	624	DISH	1	Quartz sandstone sand tempered. Burnished dish probably Roman.	6208

Late Saxon

Six sherds of late Saxon fabrics were identified. One, a possible sherd of St Neot's type ware, has been noted above as it is as likely to be late Roman as late Saxon, in the absence of typological features. The remainder were mainly of Stafford-type ware. All were base sherds with no signs of wheelthrowing. In addition two atypical pieces of Stamford-type ware were noted: a tubular spout from a pitcher in a very pink fabric and a very abraded, and possibly burnt, rim from a cooking pot. The latter is quite coarse in

texture, a feature of 9th/10th-century Stamford ware whilst the pinkish fabric of the former is a known, but rare, 11th/12th century variant.

Table 2

Context	Context name	Form	Nosh	Description	REFNO
16145	616	PTCH	1	Stamford ware pitcher. Applied tubular spout. High iron content.	
16673	618	JAR	2	Stafford-type ware jar.	
16687	618	JAR	3	Stafford-type ware jar. Not necessarily one vessel	
16901	117	JAR	1	Stafford-type ware jar base sherd	5668
16901	621	BOWL	1	Shell-tempered fabric. The shell includes punctate brachiopod and is derived from the Oxford Clay in the Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire area. Could be late Roman (Harrold) or late Saxon (St Neot's type). Diameter of base suggests a bowl	5683
17280	625	JAR	1	Stamford ware? jar. Quite coarse fabric - 10 th C?	6275

11th and 12th centuries

No sherds of pre-Conquest/early Norman handmade wares were submitted for identification. A number of sherds of a single flint-tempered storage jar were present, given fabric numbers 609 and 619. The fabric is tempered with coarse rounded quartz and angular flint sand and has a smooth, micaceous appearance under the binocular microscope. The vessel was probably an extremely large storage jar, and was decorated with individual stamps on the inside of the everted rim and with combed lines, used to create geometric patterns, on the upper body. A very similar vessel from Winchester is present in Winchester City Museum. The lack of either chert or calcareous algae nodules distinguishes this fabric from Bath Fabric A, produced in west Wiltshire, which has been previously recorded from sites in south Worcestershire. Similar sherds were, however, found on the Berkeley Street excavations in Gloucester in early Norman contexts.

Sherds of several handmade glazed wares were submitted. These include Oxford Fabric Y, Minety-type ware, Shrewsbury-type ware and Malvern Chase ware. Of these, only the Oxford fabric is definitely of 12th century date. All the others are of types which span the 12th and early 13th centuries. Of particular note is a spouted bowl (Fabric 64, context 16295). The vessel appears to have been handmade and has an inward-bevelled rim decorated with wavy combing. Spouted bowls are not common in the West Midlands and elsewhere are mainly of 11th./12th century date, or earlier. Examination of the fabric on a freshly broken surface does suggest a local source, however.

Table 3

Context	Context name	Form	Nosh	Description	REFNO
10368	620	TP	1	Minety-type jug or tripod pitcher.	

10509	64	JUG	1 Shrewsbury-type jug/tripod pitcher. Handmade, plain lead-glazed. Decorated with large square stamps depicting a stylised figure. Unique in my experience.	
10820	642	JUG	1 Malvern Chase tripod pitcher/jug (Hereford B3)	
10829	64	JUG	1 ?Worcester or Shrewsbury-type ware. Handmade?	2020
16295	64	SPBO WL	1 Worcester-type ware? Spouted bowl. Appears to be handmade and without copper in glaze. Might therefore be earlier west midlands type, eg 'Shrewsbury-type ware'. Wavy combing on top of flat, inward-bevelled rim.	
16331	619	SJ	1 Flint-tempered storage jar. stamped and comb-decorated	
16515	623	TP	1 Minety-type tripod pitcher. Undecorated body sherd. Leached interior.	5504
16524	609	JUG?	1 Quartz sand tempered. Collar rim from unglazed jug. Vaguely similar to early Rhenish vessels.	5522
16656	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
17105	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
17105	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
17106	619	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
17221	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
17226	609	SJ	1 Flint-tempered and greensand-derived quartz temper in a fine, micaceous body. Storage jar. Paralleled at Winchester (published in Winchester Studies)	6213
20617	600	TP	1 Oxford Y tripod pitcher rim and handle with plaited handle - 12 th C	

Medieval

The majority of the submitted sherds were of 13th to 15th-century date. They are discussed below in relation to their suggested sources: local, regional imports and continental imports.

Locally-produced

Sherds of Malvern Chase wares and Worcester-type ware were submitted either to confirm their identity, since they were in some way atypical, or for comment on their form or decoration. In addition, a single vessel of Fabric 604 was identified as a Welsh Borderland product (eg Hereford Fabric A7B) although it has a highly elaborate decorative scheme involving the application of areas of white slip together with panels of white slip pellets, which cannot be precisely paralleled. The fine, micaceous fabric is similar to that of Mill Green ware, but the decoration is not typical of that industry either.

The Malvern Chase wares include some examples of the earliest wheelthrown glazed wares (Fabrics 614 and 648). These vessels were oxidized, unlike previous products, and tempered mainly with quartz sand. Rare angular fragments of Malvernian rock were probably present in the parent clay. A distilling base (Fabric 69) was found in the standard, copper-green glazed late medieval fabric. The Worcester-

type wares include a number of elaborate and unusual forms, notably tubular spouted jugs and roller-stamped pipkins. The latter are present in some number at Gloucester. A rod handle with an elaborate roller stamp depicting two animals (a bird and an unidentified quadruped) is quite unlike any other roller stamp previously known for this industry.

Table 4

Context	Cname	Form	Nosh	Description	REFNO
10832	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug with applied white slip	
10854	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated	
10802	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated	
10091	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated	
10099	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated	
16145	626	CP	1	Malvern Chase cooking pot	
15899	617	CP	1	Malvern Chase cooking pot	
18010	69	ALUD EL	1	Malvern Chase distilling base (see paper by Moorhouse in Med Arch)	
10801	648	JUG	2	Malvern Chase jug. Splash glazed and low fired therefore probably 13 th century. Pulled spout	
11364	614	JUG	1	Malvern Chase jug. Splash glazed, relatively low firing temperature therefore probably 13 th /14 th C rather than later.	
16608	608	JUG	1	Probably Worcester-type jug. White slipped and copper-green glazed.	
16259/ 16279	64	BOW L	1	Worcester-type bowl with decoration on the upper face of the rim and on the exterior. Might be a lid (but very large - what would it be a lid for?). Unusual/unique form.	
16251	64	BOW L	1	Worcester-type bowl. White slipped exterior. Thick glazed interior.	
15496	64	?	1	Worcester-type jug or specialised vessel? White slipped and little glaze	
10533	64	JUG	1	Worcester-type jug rim. Wavy grooved lines on neck	
11353	641	JUG	1	Worcester-type jug tubular spout. Unusual form.	
15578	64	JUG	1	Worcester-type jug.	
16356	64	JUG	1	Worcester-type jug. Rod handle decorated with ?roller stamp with two figures. Unique in my experience.	
18027	64	JUG	1	Worcester-type jug. Tubular spouted with vertical red clay strips around neck.	
16145	64	PIP	1	Worcester-type pipkin	
16112	64	PIP	1	Worcester-type pipkin rim and base of handle. Sooted.	
18040	64	PIP	1	Worcester-type pipkin rim. Unusual form.	
16251	64	PIP	1	Worcester-type pipkin with diamond lattice roller stamping	

20452	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin with roller-stamped decoration.
10874	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin with roller-stamped decoration.
15492	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin with traces of thumbing at handle base and pulled spout. Wavy line decoration
10888	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin. Roller-stamped.
10874	64	JUG	1 Worcester-type ware jug. Large diameter vessel with wavy combing and comb-nicked ribs on neck. Very unusual.

Regional imports

A handful of sherds of regional imports were submitted. Of these, several were produced in white-firing clays probably derived from the Coal Measures. Known production using these clays took place at Nuneaton to the northwest and Bristol to the south, as well as in Staffordshire. Other potential sources might be the Forest of Dean and south Shropshire, although assemblages of medieval pottery from consumer sites in that area do not include noticeably more whitewares than those elsewhere in the middle Severn valley. A pilot study of the feasibility of using chemical analysis to characterise these wares suggests that it will be possible to pinpoint sources once a database of known sources has been completed. At present, however, the wares cannot be reliably provenanced. Other regional imports submitted include Ham Green ware (Fabric 642), Developed Stamford ware (Fabric 643) and unprovenanced quartz-tempered wares (Fabric 64, context 16259, and fabric 608).

Table 5

Context	name	Form	Nosh	Description	REFNO
21015	628	JUG	1	Coal Measures whiteware baluster base. Reduced core and abundant calcareous inclusions. Specks of copper in glaze. Source unknown.	
10062	642	JUG	1	Coal Measures whiteware jug. Part of highly decorated jug with self-coloured and red-firing clay	
10246	607	JUG	1	Coal Measures whiteware with suspension copper glaze. Source unknown	
16259	64	JUG	1	Coarse sand-tempered, relatively low iron fabric jug. Copper-glazed. Combed handle (remote influence of Developed Stamford ware?). Not Worcester-type.	
20614	643	BOT	2	Developed Stamford ware bottle neck and scrap	
10820	642	JUG	2	Ham Green jug	
15555	608	JUG	1	Quartz sand tempered, relatively low iron and micaceous. Copper-green glazed. [I don't know what it is but I'm sure it is not Merida as stated on label!]	

Continental imports

A single medieval sherd of continental origin was submitted for identification. The vessel, a chafing dish base, was tempered with abundant, coarse quartzose sand. Rare large (c.1-2mm) flakes of muscovite were also present. The fabric is similar to that used in the southwest of France for highly decorated mortars, a type known in the western British Isles from Bristol and Dublin, but the author has no personal experience of any precise parallels for this Worcester find.

Table 6

Context	cname	Form1	Nosh	Description	REFNO
1121	643	CHAF	1	?French whiteware chafing dish with copper-green glaze. Abundant coarse quartzose sand temper, with sparse flakes of muscovite	

Post-Medieval

Sherds of four late and post-medieval Malvern Chase wares were submitted. All were visually atypical but proved to contain sparse fragments of Malvernian rock when viewed under the binocular microscope. The lower part of a drinking jug with sparse drips of dark brown glaze has a variegated white/pink streaked body, typical of coarsewares made from mixed Coal Measure clays in the late medieval or early post-medieval periods. No precisely source can be suggested but it is probably to be classified as a Midlands Purple ware. A Tudor Green/Border ware vessel cannot be precisely paralleled in the London corpora (Surrey whiteware and Border Ware) but is closest to Pearce's goblet and Straight Jar forms (Pearce 1992, Nos 198-203 and 414-6, 418-25). The fine fabric suggests a 16th rather than 17th century date. Finally, the base of a honey brown glazed albarello was found. This is probably a Seville *Morisco* ware, of the late 15th or 16th century. Only three other finds of similar type have been noted in the British Isles: a closed form from Exeter, and dishes from Exeter and Newton Abbot (Allen 1995, 311, Nos 69-71). Given the rarity of this type, further scientific analysis is recommended to confirm the identification.

Table 7

Context	cname	Form1	Nosh	Description	REFNO
15571	605	PIP	1	Malvern Chase Pink fabric pipkin. Late 16 th /early 17 th C	
15777	611	PIP	1	Malvern Chase pipkin	
16742	601	?	1	Malvern Chase pipkin?	
15555	612	JUG	1	Malvern Chase small jug. Bib of plain lead glaze. 15 th /16 th century.	
15555	99	ALB	1	Melado albarello with mottled brown glaze inside and out. Drips of thick copper-green glaze on exterior.	
15578	613	DJ	2	Midlands purple drinking jug. Specks of dark brown	

			glaze. Variegated body
16075	603	?	1 Tudor Green/Border ware.
			Unusual form, close to Pearce's Goblet and Straight Jar forms (1992, 198-203 and 414-6, 418-25).

Bibliography

Allen, J 1995 Iberian pottery imported into South-West England, c 1250-1600 in C M Gerrard, A Gutierrez and A G Vince (eds) *Spanish Medieval Ceramics in Spain and the British Isles*. BAR Int Ser 610, 299-314.

Pearce, J 1992 *Border Wares*. HMSO

Pearce, J & Vince, A 1988 *Surrey Whitewares*, LAMAS Special Paper 10

Appendix

Context	Fabric	Form	No	Description	Part	REFNO
1121	643	CHAF	1	?French whiteware chafing dish with copper-green glaze. Abundant coarse quartzose sand temper, with sparse flakes of muscovite		
10062	642	JUG	1	Coal Measures whiteware jug. Part of highly decorated jug with self-coloured and red-firing clay		
10091	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated		
10099	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated		
10246	607	JUG	1	Coal Measures whiteware with suspension copper glaze. Source unknown		
10368	620	TP	1	Minety-type jug or tripod pitcher.		
10376	64	JUG	1	same vessel as 10509		
10509	64	JUG	1	Shrewsbury-type jug/tripod pitcher. Handmade, plain lead-glazed. Decorated with large square stamps depicting a stylised figure. Unique in my experience.		
10533	64	JUG	1	Worcester-type jug rim. Wavy grooved lines on neck		
10801	648	JUG	2	Malvern Chase jug. Splash glazed and low fired therefore probably 13 th century. Pulled spout		
10802	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated		
10820	642	JUG	2	Ham Green jug		
10820	642	JUG	1	Malvern Chase tripod pitcher/jug (Hereford B3)		
10829	64	JUG	1	?Worcester or Shrewsbury-type ware. Handmade?		2020
10832	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug with applied white slip		
10854	604	JUG	1	Hereford A7B jug. Slip decorated		
10874	64	PIP	1	Worcester-type pipkin with roller-stamped decoration.		
10874	64	JUG	1	Worcester-type ware jug. Large diameter vessel with wavy combing and comb-nicked ribs on neck. Very unusual.		

10888	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin. Roller-stamped.	
11353	641	JUG	1 Worcester-type jug tubular spout. Unusual form.	
11364	614	JUG	1 Malvern Chase jug. Splash glazed, relatively low firing temperature therefore probably 13 th /14 th C rather than later.	
15492	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin with traces of thumbing at handle base and pulled spout. Wavy line decoration	
15496	64	?	1 Worcester-type jug or specialised vessel? White slipped and little glaze	
15555	99	ALB	1 Melado albarello with mottled brown glaze inside and out. Drips of thick copper-green glaze on exterior.	
15555	608	JUG	1 Quartz sand tempered, relatively low iron and micaceous. Copper-green glazed. [I don't know what it is but I'm sure it is not Merida as stated on label!]	
15555	612	JUG	1 Malvern Chase small jug. Bib of plain lead glaze. 15 th /16 th century.	
15571	605	PIP	1 Malvern Chase Pink fabric pipkin. Late 16 th /early 17 th C	
15578	64	JUG	1 Worcester-type jug.	
15578	613	DJ	2 Midlands purple drinking jug. Specks of dark brown glaze. Variegated body	
15777	611	PIP	1 Malvern Chase pipkin	
15899	617	CP	1 Malvern Chase cooking pot	
16075	603	?	1 Tudor Green/Border ware. Unusual form, close to Pearce's Goblet and Straight Jar forms (1992, 198-203 and 414-6, 418-25).	
16112	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin rim and base of handle. Sooted.	
16145	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin	
16145	616	PTCH	1 Stamford ware pitcher. Applied tubular spout. High iron content.	spout
16145	626	CP	1 Malvern Chase cooking pot	
16251	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin with diamond lattice roller stamping	

16251	64	BOWL	1 Worcester-type bowl. White slipped exterior. Thick glazed interior.	
16259	64	JUG	1 Coarse sand-tempered, relatively low iron fabric jug. Copper-glazed. Combed handle (remote influence of Developed Stamford ware?). Not Worcester-type.	
16259/16279	64	BOWL	1 Worcester-type bowl with decoration on the upper face of the rim and on the exterior. Might be a lid (but very large - what would it be a lid for?). Unusual/unique form.	
16295	64	SPBOWL	1 Worcester-type ware? Spouted bowl. Appears to be handmade and without copper in glaze. Might therefore be earlier west midlands type, eg 'Shrewsbury-type ware'. Wavy combing on top of flat, inward-bevelled rim.	
16331	619	SJ	1 Flint-tempered storage jar. stamped and comb-decorated	
16356	64	JUG	1 Worcester-type jug. Rod handle decorated with ?roller stamp with two figures. Unique in my experience.	
16398	622	-	1 ?Bone and quartz sand tempered. No idea of source or date.	
16515	623	TP	1 Minety-type tripod pitcher. Undecorated body sherd. Leached interior.	5504
16524	609	JUG?	1 Quartz sand tempered. Collar rim from unglazed jug. Vaguely similar to early Rhenish vessels.	5522
16608	608	JUG	1 Probably Worcester-type jug. White slipped and copper-green glazed.	bs
16656	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
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16742	601	?	1 Malvern Chase pipkin?	bs
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17105	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
17105	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	
17106	619	SJ	1 Flint-tempered	
17221	609	SJ	1 same vessel as 6213	bs
17221	624	DISH	1 Quartz sandstone sand tempered. Burnished dish probably Roman.	6208
17226	609	SJ	1 Flint-tempered and greensand-derived quartz temper in a fine, micaceous body. Storage jar. Paralleled at Winchester (published in Winchester Studies)	bs 6213
17255	99	CP	1 ?Coarse London-type ware. Cooking pot body sherd. This sherd, tempered with a coarse quartzose sand with sparse shell fragments, is well outside the normal distribution of 12 th -century London area coarsewares. It may therefore be a misidentification. TS?	
17280	625	JAR	1 ?Stamford ware jar. Quite coarse fabric - 10 th C?	6275
18010	69	ALUDEL	1 Malvern Chase distilling base (see paper by Moorhouse in Med Arch)	
18027	64	JUG	1 Worcester-type jug. Tubular spouted with vertical red clay strips around neck.	
18040	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin rim. Unusual form.	
20452	64	PIP	1 Worcester-type pipkin with roller-stamped decoration.	
20614	643	BOT	2 Developed Stamford ware bottle neck and scrap	
20617	600	TP	1 Oxford Y tripod pitcher rim and handle with plaited handle - 12 th C	
21015	628	JUG	1 Coal Measures whiteware baluster base. Reduced core and abundant calcareous inclusions. Specks of copper in glaze. Source unknown.	