

Area Q - LPRIA & Roman Pottery Summary

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Introduction: Area Q contained 144 contexts, yielding *c.* 91872g of pottery. Ten contexts were selected for quantification by Eves. The area is archaeologically busy, with numerous intercutting features. A number of generalisations can be made at this stage. Firstly, the pottery spans the period from the LIA to the middle of the 3rd century AD, with nothing later. Of the contexts which can be dated, most lie within the LIA/early Roman period. Activity tails off towards the 3rd century, suggesting a shift of focus to a different part of the site. Secondly, there is a propensity towards locally made domestic and utilitarian vessels, with relatively few examples of finewares, particularly imported varieties. Potentially, the pottery can contribute to the analysis of residuality, discard activity and the refining of LIA/early Roman chronologies, though any study is hampered by the variance of recording standards.

Structures: Establishing structures or other integral features is difficult. The dating of features does little to clarify their integrity. The arrangement for the tentative building (Q20) cannot be discerned since the dating evidence suggests that not all its constituent features are contemporaneous. Some associations are possible, such as post-holes 17220 and 17243, which share a LIA date, but little can be extrapolated from them in terms of structure or function type. In addition, the inherent residuality of pottery within post-holes gives little indication as to periods of use. If the post-holes do belong to a single feature, the pottery within them relates either to its construction or disuse phase. A cautionary note, therefore, should be struck regarding the dating of post-holes as the task of assigning the pottery to the construction or disuse phases is onerous. Similarly, fencelines 17027, 17357 and 17125, for example, tentatively associated with the northern and southern ditches, cannot be confirmed as such by the pottery evidence, which is often not closely datable. Indeed, assigning the post-holes and gullies to structures is problematic for this reason. Some features are likely to be associated. The beamslot lines of 17049, 17052, 17165 could belong to a single structure or contemporary phases (mid-1st century).

Landscape: The earliest ditch is the northern E-W running ditch (17340, 17314, 17318 & 17348) which appears to have been in-filled during the LIA, though the dating for the in-filling of recut 17412 suggests continued post-conquest use. The appearance of the similar pottery types in different fills suggest short periods between episodes of deposition. The latest is the southern E-W running ditch and its recuts (17086, 17055, 17013 & 17198) which share a pre-Flavian disuse date. Other features which can be grouped together include the N-S running ditch (17353 & 17208). Speculatively, this may relate to the perpendicular E-W ditch 17066, which shares its LIA date.

Pits: Amongst the latest features is the pit 17038 which was in-filled during the late 2nd century. It does not appear to be associated with its surrounding features which are LIA suggesting a lone feature, or contemporary activity further north. The pit complex in the SE corner of the area (17177, 17175 and 17297), dated from the late 1st to early 2nd

century, contained intrinsically interesting pottery by way of perforated sherds, though the stratigraphy is unreliable, undermining the significance of the pottery evidence.

Brickearths: There is no clear ceramic difference in the features cutting the first and second brickearths (Q2 and Q3). The features cutting Q2 have a LIA to Flavian date range, though there is continuation beyond that period within Q9 and Q16. Those cutting Q3 have a longer date range, from the LIA to the 3rd century. Clearly, some features are broadly contemporaneous. Of interest, is the difference in assemblage size within the brickearths themselves. Q2 contained a mere 5 sherds, while *c.* 250 sherds were recovered from Q3. This is perhaps indicative of these layers belonging to a single deposit, Q3 being uppermost, thus showing more signs of disturbance.

Fabrics: Locally made utilitarian vessels predominate the assemblage. Grog tempered wares, BSW and GRS fabrics abound. Post-conquest contexts, such as ditch recut 17412 (fill 17258), where grog vessels form much of the assemblage, though GRS is present, represent the transition from LIA to Romanised production. This has implications for the refining of LIA/early Roman ceramic chronologies, as well as contributing to the wider issue of Romanisation. A wide range of imported and Romano-British finewares are present, but not in great quantity. Some fabrics, such as NGWF and LRC, are represented only by small sherds. There are some interesting fabrics, such as a pre-Flavian glazed beaker from central Gaul, and micaceous TN, a fabric which does not continue into the Roman period.

Forms: These are mainly confined to jars, platters and beakers. In larger contexts the same forms tend to be represented by different fabrics. Lid-seated jars, such as G5 were popular. The pit 17155 contained a number of G5 types in GRS, BSW and miscellaneous RED fabrics. The lids themselves were not as well represented. If every jar had a lid, one should expect a proportionate amount of lid sherdage within the same contexts. However, lid sherdage is minimal. This may reflect discard habits. If a lid breaks, the jar remains in use, but lids without jars are perhaps less so. The infrequent incidence of bowl forms perhaps reveals more about the subjective nature of form interpretation than consumer demand for certain types. Of note are the presence of jars with single or multiple basal perforations, for example from pit 17177. Most holes were drilled post-firing, suggesting use of the vessels as strainers was secondary. Flagons imported in the LIA are present in a number of contexts, as are locally produced varieties.

Quality: The quality of the pottery was generally good with few contexts containing examples of really abraded, and therefore obviously residual sherds. Assessing residuality is, however, problematic, since in features where contamination is likely to have occurred, such as 17086 and 17297/17177, or 17198 and 17179, the pottery is of similar date. One is reliant on sherd size and quality. This is a very subjective process, especially with the lack of defined parameters.

Quantified groups: Of the ten contexts which were selected for quantification by eves, two (17037, 17258) are possible candidates for publication. From ditch 17198, four contexts were intensively recorded, due to the size and quality of the sherdage. There is

scope for further study in these contexts. The usefulness of 17258, single fill from ditch 17412, regarding the LIA/Roman transition has already been noted. In addition, the range of forms and amount of pottery within these contexts suggests that using the pottery to refine chronologies is viable. Initial research on discard activity is possible.