Graffiti
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Introduction
Relatively large numbers of graffiti were noted during pottery recording. All fabric and vessel types are represented, although the preferred vessel classes seem to be dishes, beakers and jars. Graffiti can be loosely divided into two types, literate and non-literate, and both can be applied either before or after firing. Graffiti incised after firing, however, appear to be the most numerous. Archive drawings were produced, as a matter of course, for all graffiti and other marks noted on the coarse pottery. The samian was isolated from the pottery assemblage before recording work commenced on the coarse pottery, and the identification of graffiti on samian sherds was carried out by Brenda Dickinson. Archive drawings, therefore, were not produced for these.

At least 134 examples of graffiti were recorded, and further possible examples, recognised as faint marks or part-letters, were also noted. Full details can be found in the archive. Most of the graffiti (91) occurred on coarse wares and regional traded wares of both Late Iron Age and Roman date; thirty were recorded on samian, three on amphora, two on micaceous *terra nigra* and one on Pompeian-red ware (Fabric 5). There is no evidence that graffiti appear more often on a particular type of pottery, for instance on samian, which has long been thought to be the case. At Heybridge, there are as many graffiti on black-surfaced ware as there are on samian. It may be notable, though, that graffiti on amphora sherds were restricted to three examples.

For the purposes of this study, non-literate graffiti, in the form of crosses and notches, were selected. Literate graffiti, numerals and other symbols are noted in the archive and form a resource for further study. Those on coarse pottery are illustrated (Fig.00, nos 1-16).

Comparative data (for archive only)
Of the total, 22% of graffiti are on samian, and 68% on local coarse wares; of the 101 examples of pottery other than samian, coarse wares form 89% of the total. There are single examples on regional fine wares of all dates, representing the remaining 11%. Interestingly, a locally-produced mortarium has, scratched on the flange, a herringbone 'stamp' copying the type normally found on Colchester products. Two early shell-tempered jar sherds carry so-called batch marks, incised before firing. The type is described by Going (1987, 102; fig.49, nos 1-10; 1992, fig.58, no.1) for examples (eighteen) found at Chelmsford. That only two were recorded at Heybridge may be noteworthy. A similar example (archive 1697), comprising three incised lines on the shoulder of a jar in coarse grog-tempered ware, was found in cut 4148, along with two complete f30 samian bowls (Fig.00).

The most commonly-occurring graffito is the simple cross (X), found on 39% of the total sherds with graffiti. Literate graffiti, and numerals other than X, formed 17% of the total, and notched graffiti formed a further 25% of the total. The remainder was taken up by complex cross graffiti and other symbols, such as incised circles and 'batch marks'. Comparison of graffiti on samian with those on other pottery types shows interesting trends. Remarkably, literate graffiti on both samian and other pottery types occur in equal numbers at 8% each of the total graffiti recorded. As a proportion of the total on samian, however, literate graffiti form 37%, compared with

only 11.5% of the total for other pottery. Simple crosses are more commonly found on other pottery types (40% of the graffiti on other pottery), compared with 33% of the graffiti on samian. Notched graffiti occur mainly on other pottery types at 26%, compared with 20% on samian. Complex crosses and other symbols do not seem to occur on samian, indeed only one possible example of a complex cross on samian was noted. In summary, then, graffiti on samian seem to be confined to literate graffiti, simple crosses, numerals and, to a lesser degree, notches. There is a greater variety of marks on other pottery types, although literate graffiti occur with the same frequency as those on samian. Complex crosses and other symbols form almost a quarter of the graffiti on other pottery types. This difference does not necessarily indicate illiteracy, since post-firing graffiti on all pottery types are more likely to have been made by the *users* of the pottery, rather than at source.

Literate graffiti

At least twenty-three examples of literate graffiti were recorded, comprising letters, numerals and groups of letters, some of which are part-examples. Eleven of these graffiti were recorded on samian and twelve on other pottery types. Single letters are difficult to interpret, especially if they are at the edge of sherd breaks, and may represent numerals or the remains of names. Ten examples of groups of letters were recorded, with the remainder comprising probable numerals, such as V, VI and VII. Literate graffiti comprising three or more letters are normally published in *Britannia*. A single samian graffito from Heybridge was published in *Britannia* 27 (Hassall and Tomlin 1996, 442, no.5), but, unfortunately, a further three were omitted. These read MELVA[on a dish base, FIR[and FII[both on f31 dish bases. A single amphora graffito, on a Dressel 20 body sherd, reads VAΛ. The graffiti on coarse pottery were published in *Britannia* 32 (Tomlin and Hassall 2001, 394, nos 23-33). The 'three-letter' rule was waived, since several graffiti (the first four listed below - and possibly the fifth) are inscribed on pottery of apparent late Iron Age date.

Illustrated literate graffiti

Britannia ref.	Archive	Context	Fabric	Detail
24	454	11269	TN[M]	Platter with graffito AT[within footring
23	2003	8890	GROG	Platter with graffito AIAS within footring
26	3101	440	GROG	Body sherd with graffito A or V
25	3102	441	GROG	Body sherd with graffito A
27	440	11193	GROG	Body sherd with graffito FEKI[T]
30	850	14564	BSW	B1 dish sherd with graffito AI or VI
31	2792	5239	BSW	B1 dish sherd with graffito AI or VI
33	705	16182	BSW	Base sherd with graffito]XXIA
28	2851	5266	BSW	Beaker rim with graffito ARNVI
32	2010	8802	GRS	Jar rim with graffito VII
29	1327	14093	HAX	Lower wall sherd with graffito VI
	1829	5721	ESH	Body sherd with 'batch mark'
	900	20485	ESH	Body sherd with 'batch mark'
	2058	8740	GROG	Body sherd with graffito
	3130	3671	GROG	Body sherd with circle graffito
	2861	5436	BSW	B2 dish with interlocking circle graffito

Non-literate graffiti

Notched graffiti

Twenty-eight sherds marked with incised or notched graffiti were recovered from Elms Farm. These graffiti typically take the form of a series of short incisions made after firing in the rim or base of the vessel, though cuts made both in the body and before firing are also represented. Each example was examined to ascertain the maximum number of notches present. Since multiple notches tended to be equidistant, a group of notches was deemed to be complete if there were no further notches visible at the expected distance beyond the last extant notch. If a sherd had broken before a position where a notch might be expected, the group of notches in question was deemed to comprise at least the number of notches visible. Based on these criteria, a summary is presented in Table 00.

Number of notches	*Number of sherds*
Group of 2	1
Group of 3	9
Group of 4	1
At least 1	3
At least 2	6
At least 3	3
At least 4	1
At least 5	1
Group of 3 and group of 1	1
Group of 2 and group of at least 2	1
Two groups of at least 4	1
Total	28

Table 00. Notches on pottery

In complete examples, groups of three notches are commonest. Even with incomplete sherds, groups of at least four or more appear infrequently. The single example of a group of five is clearly exceptional. So, mainly groups of up to three notches were cut into vessels, with three appearing to be the optimum number. None of the graffiti was found on complete parts of vessels, and it remains a possibility that some formed part of repeating patterns extending around the edges of rims or bases (cf. Symonds and Wade 1999, fig. 6.92.57), though not necessarily comprising equidistant notches.

The collection of twenty-eight notched graffiti proved large enough to extract clear trends. Notches were cut into the angular parts of vessels, twenty-three of which were rims. Just four examples were cut into the base - usually externally at the junction of the base and wall. A single example, a graffito on a samian f33 cup, was cut on the body, though even this was at the sharp angle of the carination. All but five graffiti were cut into jars or dishes, which share roughly equal numbers of examples. Two graffiti were cut into platters, although given that dishes and platters could well have served similar functions (ref. function) the motivation governing the choice of platters was probably the same as that governing the choice of dishes. Two graffiti were cut into cups (both samian f33), and one into a beaker. The majority of graffiti (sixteen) were cut into locally-produced coarse wares (fabric codes BSW, GRS, GRF and

GROG). Eight were cut into regional coarse wares (fabric codes BB, BB1, BB2, LSH, PORD, RET and HAB), while four were found on samian ware. This probably reflects ceramic supply patterns (ref. supply), and there appears to be no selection made on the basis of fabric. Determining whether the graffiti were made before or after firing was particularly difficult, since they amounted to little more than shallow nicks in most cases. Sixteen were cut after firing, one before firing, and the remainder are undetermined.

Dating is potentially problematic. Most sherds are small and undiagnostic, and the assumption is that they are contemporary with the dated pottery in their contexts. This assumption is crucial to dating the practice; the single grog-tempered example was recovered from an early Roman context and so is dated to that period, but it may well be residual. Taking this dating at face value, the practice of cutting notches into pottery was undertaken throughout the Roman period at Heybridge. It does not appear to have taken place during the late Iron Age, despite the earliest evidence for the practice providing a date shortly after the conquest. On the contrary, with the majority of examples recovered from Ceramic Phase 11 (AD370-410+) contexts, the practice appears to have been predominantly late Roman.

Ceramic Phase	*Number*
Phase 4	3
Phase 5	2
Phase 6	0
Phase 7	1
Phase 8	3
Phase 9	0
Phase 10	2
Phase 11	13
Unphased	4
Total	28

Table 00. Chronology of notched graffiti

The distribution of notched graffiti seems to be reasonably evenly spread across the settlement. Seven examples were recovered from the northern settlement zone, ten from the central zone and eleven from the southern zone. Expressed as proportions of the total amount of pottery recovered from each zone, this equality remains. For every 217kg of pottery in the northern zone, one notched graffito was recovered. In the central zone, the ratio is 212kg per graffito, while the southern zone has the lowest incidence at 227kg per single graffito.

Notched graffiti are not restricted to Heybridge. At least six notched graffiti have been recovered from Chelmsford (Going 1987, 102; 1992, 108). Five of these (four dishes and one jar) are either 2nd century or 4th century in date. The remaining example, a platter, dates to the mid 1st century AD. The groups of two or three notches were scored mainly on rims. Four notches were cut into a samian dish footring. Examples were also recovered from Colchester. One of these has already been alluded to above. Another is a dish whose rim is scored with four notches (Symonds and Wade 1999, fig.6.43.83). A third is a cup with at least five notches, also on the rim (Symonds and Wade 1999, fig.6.94.60). At least five vessels with notches were recovered from Brightlingsea, Essex (Martin 1996). Just one example

shows a complete set of notches: a group of three cut into the carination of a jar (Martin 1996, fig.8.18). The wider distribution of notched graffiti is a harder to gauge. While the graffiti appear only occasionally outside the eastern region, it is impossible to ascertain from published reports alone whether this absence reflects a genuine regional phenomenon.

Explanations for this practice range from the mundane to the ritual. Batch, capacity, or owners' marks remain remote possibilities. It has also been suggested that the notches represent Roman numerals (*e.g.* Martin 1996, 315). Though a variety of notch combinations exist - groups of two to five-plus and double groups of two and three notches, this idea is not entirely convincing. Considering the apparent late Roman emphasis of notched graffiti at Heybridge, these explanations are among the least likely. For the same reasons, other explanations can also dismissed, though perhaps not rejected altogether. These include the possibility that notched vessels were associated with specific contents. The notches perhaps acted as a visual label or enabled the user to identify the vessel by touch if the user had impaired vision through poor light or blindness. If notched vessels contained harmful substances or were associated with unpleasant activities, then positive identification of these vessels was absolutely necessary. That notches were cut mainly into rims, the most prominent part of the vessel, supports this idea. It is worth noting that dishes and jars were usually chosen for the practice, and it may be no coincidence that this practice was principally a late Roman phenomenon. It has already been suggested that, during this period, dishes and jars shared functions (ref. function) and the evidence of notched vessels by no means contradicts this view. Whatever functional significance notched vessels had, the function could be served equally well by both dishes and jars.

We cannot fail to consider the possible religious or superstitious connotations that notched vessels may have had. The vessels themselves are mainly ordinary. They were locally produced and common pots. The appearance of the vessel, rather than its functional qualities, does not appear to have played a significant role. These vessels are part of the everyday, and, likewise, any ritual use to which they may have been put was also regular and part of everyday life. Rather than the notches acting as a tactile or visual reminder of vessel contents, they may have reminded the user to give thanks for the items that the vessels held or for the service that the vessels provided. The act of notching might have itself formed part of the ritual, and linked to prayers or sequences of incantations. That the number of notches is commonly three is likely to be significant. Many religious practices involve the number three. In pagan Roman religion, this is perhaps most notable in terms of the Capitoline Triad, comprising Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. However, there is certainly no direct link between the use of notched pottery and formal religious practice. Notably, none was found within the temple precinct in Area J. Just one notched vessel was found at the religious complex at Ivy Chimneys, Witham (Turner-Walker and Wallace 1999, fig.114.29). This was not recovered from the temple complex itself, but instead found within a deposit of pottery kiln waste.

Returning to Heybridge, two examples were found in structured deposits. Area F boundary ditch 25027 (ref. strat narrative) yielded a jar rim with a minimum of three notches, along with a complete flagon, a face-mask flagon and personal items. The second example came from pit 20008. This yielded a collection of eleven complete vessels and substantial portions of at least three others. A jar rim with at least two

notches was also recovered (Fig.00.5). The ritual significance of both deposits is discussed elsewhere (ref. ritual deposition). In both contexts, seemingly ordinary and mundane broken pottery was included, presumably discarded as rubbish. The notched vessels were incomplete also, and so should probably be regarded in the same light. Considering, too, that no other notched graffito was found in an obviously ritual context, there is no strong reason to assume that the graffiti from ditch 25027 and pit 20008 were deposited in a structured manner. This is not to say, however, that the entire waste assemblage in both contexts gained special significance when deposited alongside the structured deposits. If this is the case, then it is the waste as a whole that was significant, not any one individual piece. Nor can we rule out the possibility that notched pottery enjoyed special significance during its life, but lost this connotation when the vessels became broken.

Fig.00.32. Archive 3010 A2 (BSW), context 7000
Fig.00.33. Archive 1312 B1 (HAB), context 4140
Fig.00.34. Archive 1717 B6 (BSW), context 13238
Fig.00.35. Archive 2790 ?Jar (GRS), context 5160
Fig.00.36. Archive 2468 Jar (GROG), context 7232

Simple 'X' graffiti

More common than notched graffiti, forty-three simple 'X' graffiti were recovered from Elms Farm. This assemblage comprises only crosses that have been cut into the vessel. Burnished crosses, typically placed on the internal surfaces of open forms, are regarded as decoration and thus excluded from this study. The size of this graffito assemblage appears to be large enough to show trends, though data are required from other sites to verify the significance of those from Elms Farm.

All forty-three 'X' graffiti provided general sherd information, such as fabric, broad vessel class, and ceramic phase. Twenty-nine examples, principally those that had been extracted for illustration, were examined in closer detail to ascertain on which part of the vessel they were cut, whether they were cut before or after firing, their positioning, and whether they were large or small. [some confusion over this figure? - 10 Type 1 Xs and 17 Type 2 Xs, plus one, equals 28, not 29. Thus, the 'Final Report' text has had 28 substituted for 29, even though 29 may well have been examined] Based on size, it was possible to identify two types. Type 1 comprises graffiti with relatively long strokes cut into the underside of the base. These strokes, which can each measure more than 40mm, usually extend from one edge of the base through the centre to the opposite edge. The strokes are typically cut *before* firing, though post-firing graffiti are also known. Ten of the twenty-nine examples are Type 1 graffiti. Type 2 is more numerous, consisting of seventeen examples. These 'X' graffiti are relatively small, comprising scratches of less than 20mm in length. They are usually cut *after* firing and located on the side of the vessel or the underside of the vessel base. The sole remaining graffito from the twenty-nine examples was pre-fired, comprising a long, slightly curving, stroke and a second stroke that ends just after it intersects the first stroke (KPG24, fig.00). Fitting neither type closely, it is perhaps more likely to be an accidental manufacturing mark

A wider range of vessel classes than that bearing notched graffiti was found to have 'X' graffiti, although dishes, jars and beakers predominated.

Vessel class	*Number*
Dish	13
Jar	10
Beaker	10
Platter	3
Lid	1
Bowl-jar	1
Bowl	1
Uncertain	4
Total	43

Table 00. Vessel classes with 'X' graffiti

In the sample of twenty-eight graffiti, [And note that 29 has turned back into 28 here] Type 2 graffiti are found to a greater extent on dishes, and a lesser on beakers and jars. Type 1 graffiti are found on beakers and jars, but are absent from dishes, and therefore exclusively associated with narrow-base vessels. These bring to mind an encircled cross graffito cut into the side of a jar from Chelmsford, which has been interpreted as a wheel symbol with apotropaic properties (Going 1992, 108, fig.58.7). Type 1 graffiti are in some ways similar: the intersecting strokes meet and are encircled by the edge of the base. In plan, the strokes, too, resemble the spokes of a wheel (cf. Black 1986, 224). Unlike the Chelmsford 'wheel', Type 1 graffiti were incised mainly before firing. If they did serve superstitious functions, then this role was ascribed at the point of manufacture, a factor of which the buyer must have been aware. Interestingly, two of the four Type 1 graffiti that were incised *after* firing were regional wares, made in Oxfordshire and Colchester respectively. This hints at a restricted regional practice. The function to which the vessels were put was significant enough at Heybridge for local potters to include 'special pots' in their repertoires.

As with notched graffiti, 'X' graffiti were inscribed throughout the Roman period. None was dated with certainty to the late Iron Age, although one on a platter was in a context (4012) which only had grog-tempered pottery (JC). The lack of late Iron Age examples cannot be for want of pottery, and the practice of cutting crosses into pottery must be a predominantly, if not exclusively, Roman phenomenon at Heybridge. Table 00 suggests intermittent X-cutting activity, with peak periods of deposition occurring during the mid 1st century AD, the late 2nd and first half of the 3rd century, and second half of the 4th century. So, rather than the practice continuing throughout the Roman period, it is one that gained most significance during the mid and late Roman periods. On this evidence, it is difficult to place the practice (involving both types of graffiti) at Heybridge within a 'deeply rooted pre-Roman Celtic *milieu*' (Going 1992, 108).

Ceramic Phase	*Number*
Phase 2	1
Phase 3	0
Phase 4	7
Phase 5	1

Phase 6	1
Phase 7	9
Phase 8	8
Phase 9	1
Phase 10	1
Phase 11	10
Unphased	4
Total	43

Table 00. Chronology of 'X' graffiti

As with notched graffiti, 'X' graffiti were evenly distributed across the settlement. Twelve graffiti were recovered from the northern zone, which converts to a ratio of 126kg of pottery per graffito. The central zone yielded fourteen examples, or 152kg per graffito, while seventeen examples were recovered from the southern zone (133kg per graffito).

The practice of inscribing crosses into pottery is widespread within the eastern region, but infrequent. Around fifteen 'X' graffiti from Chelmsford have been published (Going 1987, 102; 1992, 108), mainly mid and late Roman. Just one example, incised before firing on the exterior of the base of a later 4th century beaker (Going 1992, fig.49.12), is most likely to be a Type 1 graffito. A more certain example, also pre-fired, was found at Woodham Walter (Rodwell 1987, fig.24.162). In all of the above, the incised lines extend to the edge of the base. Another probable Type 1 graffito was recovered from Folly Lane, Verulamium (Lyne 1999, fig.78.106). In this case, a vestigial footring encircles the pre-fired cross. A samian f33 cup from Brightlingsea, Essex was found to have an 'X' graffito (Martin 1986, fig.8.1). Here, the cross is encircled by the junction where the top of the footring meets the base. The assemblages at both Heybridge and Chelmsford far outnumber that at Colchester, given the very large amount of pottery recovered from this site; just four examples are published in the recent volume (Symonds and Wade 1999).

Despite these occurrences, the motivations behind the practice cannot be established with any certainty, and, given the apparent differences in types of crosses, no single explanation is likely to fit all the evidence. Traditional explanations, such as batch marks, owners' marks, or symbols denoting capacity (cf. Going 1992, 108), have, perhaps rightly, fallen out of favour. Inscribed during manufacture, pre-fired crosses could never be owners' marks, since the vessels had yet to be owned. More generally, it is not the ubiquity of this type of graffito which renders these unlikely (*pace* Going 1992, 108), but their intermittent chronology. We might otherwise expect more occurrences in all periods of occupation. That these graffiti at Heybridge appear mainly on dishes or beakers suggests deliberate selection. Perhaps, like notched vessels, the crosses marked out pots that were used for specific purposes.

A spindle whorl from Chelmsford (Going 1992, fig.46.2) made from a reused samian base provides an intriguing possibility. The base has a post-fired 'X' graffito that meets the edges of the base in a similar fashion to our Type 1 graffiti. Where the lines intersect, a hole has been drilled, perhaps to utilise the sherd as a spindle whorl. It is possible, then, that the pre-marked cross enabled the 'spinner' to centre the hole more accurately to ensure correct balance during spinning. Obviously, Type 1 graffiti cut before firing were not done so on the off chance that, once broken, the vessel was to

be reused as a spindle whorl. In any case, all but one of the identified spindle whorls from Heybridge created from pottery sherds have no such crosses.

Allusion has already been made to the possibility of the graffito resembling a wheel that had both religious and magical connotations. These took several forms. The wheel is strongly linked to Fortuna and appears in a number of stone reliefs depicting the deity, for example from Netherby (Webster 1986, 171). The wheel thus has connotations of luck and fate - the 'wheel of fortune'. Wheels depicted on reliefs tend to have six spokes, but four-spoke wheels are also known, for example as depicted on a relief from Wiesbaden, Germany (Webster 1986, 131). Chariot wheels depicted on Colchester colour-coated beakers also tend to have four spokes (*e.g.* Fig.00.81, archive 1535). If Type 1 graffiti did represent wheels symbolic of Fortuna, then it remains unclear whether an 'X' graffito gave the vessel and its contents luck, or imbued the user with good fortune. Whole vessels, though portable, would be somewhat impractical as amulets. Instead, we can imagine that these vessels were used as part of a regular, perhaps daily, rite within the household. Eating or drinking from Fortuna's vessels ensured good fortune. If the graffiti made vessels lucky, then a more prosaic use might have involved pastimes for which good luck was required; beakers, for example, may have been used as dice-shakers in gambling. The graffito ensured good luck on the throw. However, if acquiring good luck was only a matter of scoring a cross on a pot, then many more crosses, especially post-fired examples, perhaps should be expected.

The wheel was not just an attribute of Fortuna, but was central to celestial iconography of pre-Roman cultures of northern and eastern Europe. The solar overtones perpetuated into the Roman period. The wheel was also an attribute of the sky-god Jupiter, who was identified with the Celtic deity, Taranis 'the Thunderer' (Green 1995, 155-6). It has been suggested that wheels were offered as votives (Webster 1986, 130). Exceptional evidence of this nature, which included four copper-alloy wheel models, was found at Wavendon Gate in Buckinghamshire, identified as a possible solar-cult centre (Green 1995, 116). By scoring vessels after firing with 'X' graffiti, or wheels, the vessels, or parts of vessels, might become makeshift votives. None of the vessels with post-fired graffiti was placed in obviously ritualised contexts, although the vessels could have been set above ground.

The purpose of Type 2 graffiti at Heybridge is just as open to speculation. Since most of the vessels with this type are dishes, the purpose of the graffiti and the function of the form might be closely linked; the graffito might denote the special role of the vessel during dining or cooking. Vessels with similar crosses have appeared in funerary contexts, for example at Kelvedon (Rodwell 1988, fig.88.G25; fig.89.G101; fig.89.97c) and Ospringe, Kent (Whiting *et al* 1937, pp). The occurrence of vessels at Heybridge *outside* funerary contexts, however, suggests that the graffiti were not exclusively funerary in purpose, if indeed at all.

Parallel (from Steve)

Green, M. (ed), *The Celtic World*, 1995 – fig.25.4
An altar from Bockingen dedicated to Taracucnus (=Taranis?) which is surmounted by 6-spoked wheels.

Illustrated simple 'X' graffiti

Archive	*Context*	*Fabric*	*Detail*
1007	10001	GRF	Type 1, post-fired, jar or beaker
2002	8570	COLC	Type 1, post-fired, beaker
2255	15986	NVC	Type 1, post-fired, beaker
2694	10662	GRS	Type 2, post-fired, B6 dish
2508	7453	GRF	Type 2, post-fired, dish
2600	10104	BSW	Type 2, post-fired, dish
484	23087	GRF	Type 2, post-fired, H34 beaker
541	23121	PR	Type 2, ?post-fired, lid

Complex 'X' graffiti

Complex 'X' graffiti were identified on twelve vessels. This type of graffito superficially resembles the simple 'X' graffito, but incorporates further scratches and marks. All graffiti were inscribed into the bases of locally-produced platters, dishes, jars and beakers. Although the dataset is small, the indications are that complex 'X' graffiti share trends with so-called simple 'X' graffiti. The dates of both have a mid and late Roman emphasis. No two graffiti are exactly alike, but some groupings based on style may be tentatively suggested.

Some graffiti are formed by a series of intersecting strokes (*e.g.* archive 2788, 2827 and 2868). Archive 2788 might represent a poor attempt at producing a cross or star similar to archive 2868. Alternatively, the former could represent a somewhat crude chi-rho symbol (M. Hassall, pers. comm.), and, conceivably, the latter represents a neater version. While the date of archive 2788 lies within the second half of the 4th century, archive 2868 dates to the second half of the 2nd century, which would seem to preclude its interpretation as a Christian monogram. Exceptionally among these complex graffiti, archive 2868 is a pre-fired graffito, and the strokes seem to extend to the edge of the base. It is possible that this example is a complex version of a Type 1 'X' graffito, and its function may well be identical. If these graffiti represent wheels, then archive 2868 is an example of a six-spoke wheel. Archive 2827 may be another poorly-executed cross, or perhaps may even represent letters, now indecipherable.

Other graffiti that comprise a single line extending in one direction, intersected at right angles by at least two other strokes (*e.g.* archives 654, 2507, 2109 and 1254) form a second grouping. Unfortunately, none of the bases is complete, so it is possible that the motifs extended to show more detail. These graffiti have all been incised after firing. The purpose is just as unclear, but similar interpretations to those suggested by the simple and other complex 'X' graffiti may be suggested.

Illustrated complex 'X' graffiti

Archive	*Context*	*Fabric*	*Detail*
2788	5148	BSW	?Dish base
2827	5230	HAB	B1
2868	13083	GRS	Base
654	6692	GRF	Base
2507	7569	GROG	Base
2109	8967	BB1	B6
1254	14093	GRF	Jar base