



Material Culture







Roman Pottery in the Fifth Century: a Review of the Evidence and its Significance

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a brief review of the evidence for fifth-century pottery production in a 'Romano-British' style. It examines theoretical and methodological issues before discussing a number of case studies. It concludes by reviewing the significance of Roman pottery in post-Roman contexts and directions for future research.

INTRODUCTION

At the 'End of Roman Britain' conference held at the University of Durham in 1979 the spectre of 'Roman style' ceramics being produced during the fifth century was laid to rest in two important papers. The first, by Gillam (1979), looked at so-called 'Romano-Saxon ware', a style of late Roman pottery that was primarily associated with the Hadham kilns in Hertfordshire, and was considered by some to represent a typological link between Roman provincial potting and early Anglo-Saxon ceramic traditions. Gillam persuasively argued that any such link was illusory. The second paper (Fulford 1979) took a theoretical approach and suggested that pottery production had been faltering for some time before *c.* A.D. 410. This phenomenon was the symptom of a wider late Roman economic malaise that became an economic collapse in the first decade or so of the fifth century.

As a model the 'economic collapse' hypothesis has held the field for the last three decades (for instance, Cooper 1996), and it has recently been restated on a wider stage by both Ward-Perkins (2005) and Wickham (2005, 307). Alternatives have been few and far between. Evans (1990) suggested a collapse in demand as a cause for the disappearance of the Romano-British potting tradition, but this interpretation failed to explain why communities that had used pottery vessels for generations suddenly decided they had no need for them in the early fifth century. There have also been commentators who have expressed doubts about the sudden disappearance of what was, for the southern lowlands of Britain at least, a dominant form of material culture for much of the preceding millennium (for instance, Whyman 1993). One of the most vocal of these commentators was Dark who, in a number of works (Dark 1996; 2000, 102–3), alluded to the possible continued production of Roman pottery during the fifth century. He marshalled one particularly dramatic piece of evidence in support of this hypothesis: the apparent discovery of a complete, but misfired Anglo-Saxon urn in the ashes of a Romano-British kiln near Lincoln (Dark 1996, 58; 2000, 103). However, the association was far from certain and reviewers were quick to highlight this ambiguity (Reece 1998, 471; Esmonde Cleary 2001).

The first half of this paper is concerned with reviewing the theoretical and methodological framework so that, when combined with empirical data, it may provide a model for continued pottery production after A.D. 410. The debate about when the production of Romano-British style ceramics ceased is an important one. However, it should not blind us to the recognition that Romano-British pottery (and other forms of material culture) may have existed in a variety of states and performed a variety of different functions — dependent on location, cultural context

^{*} The paper I presented during the AD 410 Conference (British Museum) concerned the distribution of the latest Roman material culture in London and Southwark (Gerrard 2012).
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and time — during the early post-Roman period. The evidence for this is briefly discussed in the second half of the paper.

WAS ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY PRODUCED DURING THE FIFTH CENTURY?

The identification of ‘Romano-British’ style pottery that could be shown to be diagnostic of the early fifth century would represent a major step forward in our understanding of this crucial period. Some would see its significance as evidence of ‘continuity’ or ‘an extended period of Romanisation’ but such a conclusion would be erroneous. Making pots does not make an individual or community Roman, any more than eating fish made communities in medieval Orkney Viking (Barrett *et al.* 2001). It is the social and economic choices that those communities made that are important. The identification of ‘Roman’ style ceramics that were produced during the early fifth century might provide an opportunity to identify and date sites, phases and assemblages of both artefacts and ecofacts to *c.* A.D. 400–450. This in turn would allow the process of social, economic and political change during the fifth century to be studied at a finer level of resolution than is presently the case. As Cool (2000; 2006) and others have argued, this process of transformation and how it was manifested in material culture is one of the keys to understanding the end of Roman Britain.

Any attempt to demonstrate the production of pottery during the early fifth century must rest on firm theoretical and methodological foundations. The following discussion explores our conceptualization of the late Roman economy and the role of coinage as ‘dating evidence’ and concludes by presenting a number of case studies that could indicate pottery production and use between *c.* A.D. 400 and 450.

For Fulford in 1979 and more recently Ward-Perkins (2005) the economy of the late Roman Empire can be characterised as a highly integrated and interdependent system of monetised markets (see also Mattingly 2007, 506). The ‘fall of Rome’ led to the collapse of the tax-pay cycle, monetary dislocation and subsequent economic turmoil exacerbated by political and military instability: without money markets could not function, without peace and security traders could not take their wares to market. The result of these economic changes was a sudden and catastrophic collapse in the use of material culture to a state apparently not seen since the Bronze Age (Ward-Perkins 2005, 118; Wickham 2005, 327).

One of the most significant problems with this view of the Roman economy is that it ignores a very real and vibrant debate about how the economy functioned. Rather than talking of the Roman or Romano-British *economy*, it is arguably better to discuss the Roman or Romano-British *economies* (Gerrard 2013). Markets had their place, but so too did the state, taxation, tribute and social obligation. In a recent study Bang (2007) has characterised the Roman Empire as an agrarian society and tributary empire. These are useful terms that highlight the co-existence of an agrarian society with urbanism and literary ‘high culture’ and address the importance of imperial surplus extraction from localised economic and social systems. To these concepts Bang introduces the idea of the ‘bazaar’ to describe an imperfect trading world ‘characterised by chronic imbalances and asymmetries in the supply of available information and goods’ (Bang 2007, 139). The result is a series of regionalised interlocking economies that are far more resilient than the highly integrated and monetised markets envisaged by some.

This view of the economic systems that co-existed within the Roman Empire also ties in conveniently with recent works that emphasise how Roman Britain was divided into regionally distinctive zones (Mattingly 2007). Under such circumstances the blanket interpretations of Fulford (1979), Evans (1990), Cooper (1996) and others should no longer be accepted. A more regionally nuanced view would not expect the trajectories followed by pottery production after *c.* A.D. 400 to be the same in Kent and Dorset, Essex and Yorkshire, or Oxfordshire and South Wales. Thus while a rapid collapse could be hypothesised in some areas, a more prolonged period of change might be anticipated in others.

Regionality and integrated markets find themselves linked by the recent and considerable

advances in understanding the circulation of Roman coinage in Britain. Using data from the Portable Antiquities Scheme, Walton (2011, 172–208) has demonstrated how the distribution of coinage fluctuated both quantitatively and spatially during the fourth century. Furthermore, the identification of some very uncommon fifth-century copper-alloy coins in Britain has led Moorhead (2006) to suggest that Roman coin use (and thus market based exchange) might have continued for some decades after A.D. 400.

Coinage also provides a useful link between the theoretical and methodological aspects of this paper. The fifth-century economic collapse clearly occurred; even the most cursory comparison with the contemporary continental situation, or the early Roman period, demonstrates the point. Nevertheless, the chronology of this ‘event’ needs to be established. If Roman material culture largely disappeared from use over a decade then this ‘collapse’ would be far more dramatic than if there was a more gradual process covering half a century or so. Coinage has played a problematic role in this debate and it is one worth considering in some detail.

The latest Roman coins that occur in Britain in anything like significant numbers are the small copper-alloy *nummi* of the House of Theodosius. The majority of these coins were struck between A.D. 388 and 402 and occasionally, where legends and mintmarks are fully legible, some of these *nummi* can be shown to have been struck no earlier than A.D. 395. However, the distribution of these coins is biased towards particular types of sites and regions (Walton 2011). This means that the latest Roman assemblages are skewed towards the same regions and types of site. Perhaps more importantly, material culture associated with these coins is often dated to the period of the coin’s minting. This ignores a fundamental rule of archaeology: that a *terminus post quem* merely provides a date after which an archaeologically observable event must have occurred (Barker 1993, 205–6, 224–9). It might be more relevant to ask when such a copper-alloy coin was lost. In the fifth century it could be assumed that this would occur once the link between the precious metal coinage and the base-metal coinage failed. Of course, the date at which this occurred is a matter for speculation but *c.* A.D. 430 has been suggested by some (for instance, Brickstock 2000; Moorhead and Walton, this volume). If this was the case, then many of the deposits and assemblages that we are dating to *c.* A.D. 400 might be up to three decades later. For our purposes the implications are clear: what appears as a dramatic and rapid collapse over the course of a decade may actually represent a more prolonged period of change over half a century or more.

The only way of conclusively demonstrating fifth-century ‘Romano-British’ pottery production (as opposed to use) would be to excavate a kiln loaded with misfired vessels securely stratified above a piece of demonstrably fifth-century dating evidence. Coins would be the most likely candidates but some forms of metalwork might also be of use. However, such a site has yet to be excavated and the closest we have come to date is Kiln Z998 at Bestwall Quarry (Dorset) (Ladle 2012, 54). This feature was cut into the fills of a backfilled sunken building. The fills of this structure produced a number of corroded and illegible coins of perhaps mid- to late fourth-century date as well as Oxfordshire and New Forest colour-coated vessels that should be no earlier in date than *c.* A.D. 340 (Ladle 2012, 71–2; Lyne 2012, 229–34). Unfortunately the kiln did not contain its final products. The dating evidence might superficially suggest a late fourth-century date for the kiln. The pottery, however, represents some of the latest forms produced by the Oxfordshire and New Forest industries and could have been manufactured in the 390s as easily as the 340s. Thus there remains a strong possibility that this kiln was in operation during the fifth century.

In the absence of evidence from production sites we are left reliant on assemblages recovered from the sites of consumption. It is possible by carefully considering a site’s stratigraphic sequence, pottery assemblage and other dating evidence, to produce a strong circumstantial case that pottery was being not only used but produced and supplied during the early fifth century. Methodologically the evidence for this can be derived from either typological study or the analysis of assemblage composition. A number of case studies to demonstrate each of these methods are discussed below.

There have been a number of typological studies that have identified potential fifth-century forms. My own work in Somerset and Dorset demonstrated that a particular Black Burnished

bowl form decorated with burnished diagonal lines (a so-called ‘half lattice’) (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, Type 18) commonly occurs in association with coins of the House of Valentinian and the House of Theodosius (Gerrard 2004) (FIG. 1). Since the publication of that work further examples of the form have been identified in Dorchester (Trevvarthen 2008, fig. 76), at the Dewlish villa (personal observation), and at Bestwall Quarry in Dorset (Lyne 2012, fig. 145). Lyne’s (2012, 208) discussion of this form (his Class 2 ‘necked bowl’) at the latter site concurs with the dating evidence collated in 2004. A date range of mid-fourth to mid-fifth century seems appropriate if the comments about coin-dating advanced above are accepted as valid. It is worth noting that this vessel can only be identified if a complete vessel profile exists or can be reconstructed (Gerrard 2004, 68). A small sherd decorated with burnished diagonal lines, such as that from a very late fourth-century well at Shadwell, East London (Douglas *et al.* 2011, 68 and fig. 59), may be derived from the ubiquitous jar form, which is less chronologically sensitive.

The recent discovery of a nearly complete vessel in a coarse, sandy ware that appears to imitate the Black Burnished Type 18 bowl is also relevant to this discussion (Rachel Seager Smith pers. comm.). The vessel was recovered from the fill of a late Roman corn-drying oven at High Post, near Salisbury, and was accompanied by late Alice Holt and Oxfordshire vessels (Powell 2011, 58–62 and fig 27.33–4 — the caption in the original is incorrectly labelled). The latter pots included base sherds that had been modified into discs and then burnt. The dating of this assemblage can be pushed into the fifth century because the same context also yielded the pedestal base from an early Saxon vessel. The association of this Saxon sherd with the imitation Type 18 bowl supports the argument that this ‘late Roman’ form was current during the fifth century.

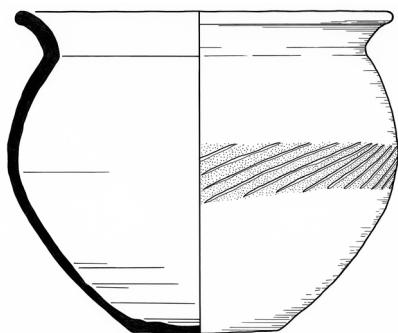


FIG 1. Type 18 Black Burnished bowl.
(After Gerrard 2004, fig. 8.1)

Other possibly late fourth-/early fifth-century forms have been postulated elsewhere. In south central England a series of convex-sided dishes decorated with external bosses (Fulford 1975, Type 114) have been identified in a variety of fabrics (Lyne 1999, 285–6) (FIG. 2). These unusual vessels appear to be consistently associated with the latest Roman deposits at a number of sites. Interestingly, excavations at Dorchester-upon-Thames (Oxon.) have apparently yielded examples in a ‘Saxon’ fabric and Lyne (1999, 285–6) has suggested a ‘Germanic’ inspiration for these vessels.

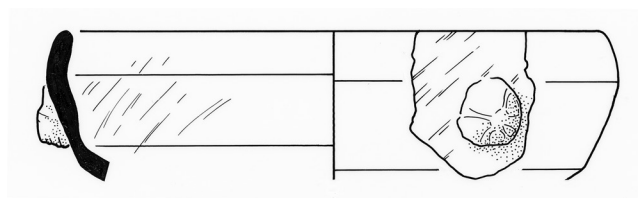


FIG. 2. Convex-sided dish.
(After Lyne 1999, fig. 5)

The recent publication of the Carlisle Millennium Project excavations has drawn attention to an unusual mortarium form (Swan 2009, fig. 330.543) first identified by Corder and Birley (1937, Type 8) (FIG. 3). Swan (2009, 586) was unable to find parallels for this type of vessel in fourth-century assemblages and suggested, given its rarity and stratigraphic position, that it was a candidate for a fifth-century form (see also Bidwell 2005, 20).

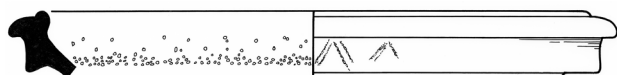


FIG. 3. Unusual late mortarium form.
(After Swan 2009, fig. 330.543)

At Cleatham (Lincs.) a large Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery yielded four vessels that were considered to be Romano-British in style and manufactured in a local fabric (Leahy 2007, 126–7) (FIG. 4). However, none of these vessels was easy to parallel in local assemblages and the report's author concluded that they could be the product of 'sub-Roman' pottery kilns.

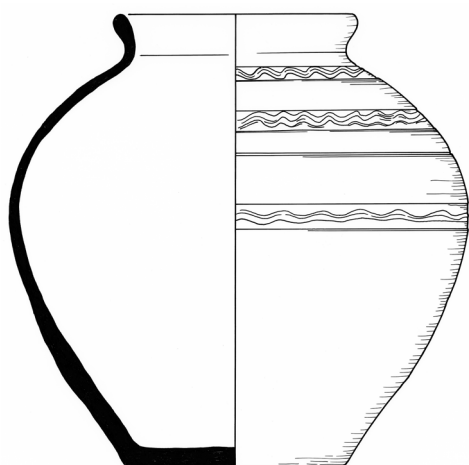


FIG. 4. 'Romano-British' jar from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Cleatham. (After Leahy 2007, fig. 63)

Finally, it is worth considering the excavations at Wellington Row in York. This sadly unpublished site was examined in considerable detail by Whyman (2001) in his doctoral thesis. Fortunately, this is now available electronically from the British Library and it is to be hoped that it will receive wider attention than it has to date (although see Wickham 2005, 806). At Wellington Row a significant stratigraphic sequence began with a series of deposits within a stone building that contained coins to A.D. 348. This was followed by a further six phases of activity associated with significant quantities of material culture including large pottery assemblages (Whyman 2001, 285–301). The first of these subsequent phases contained coins of A.D. 364–378 and a coin of 388–402. The remaining five phases all contained coins of A.D. 388–402 (Whyman 2001, fig. 13). The detailed analysis of the calcite-gritted pottery from this building revealed changes in the so-called 'Huntcliff' jar through this sequence. However, what was more striking was that the *fabric* of these calcite-gritted vessels also changed in relation to the stratigraphic sequence (Whyman 2001, 306–40).

By studying the variability of inclusions in calcite-gritted ware, Whyman (2001, 340–2) was able to demonstrate that as the stratigraphic sequence progressed, the composition of the 'fabric' changed. This is an important point because it demonstrates that the material could not be 'residual' or redeposited from an earlier phase of activity. It also demonstrates that new vessels were being manufactured because the variations in fabric are chronological.

Changes in the pottery fabrics being manufactured also occurred in the south-east Dorset Black Burnished ware industry (Gerrard 2010). During the late fourth century a new variant of the standard BB1 fabric appeared. This variant — named South-East Dorset Orange Wiped Ware (SEDOWW) — is orange with roughly wiped surfaces and sometimes sherds have considerable numbers of shale inclusions. The most common vessel in this fabric is a large storage jar with a pie-crust rim and multiple pre-firing perforations around the neck and in the vessel's base. It is typical of the latest 'Roman' deposits in Dorset and is associated with late fourth-century coinage and metalwork (Gerrard 2010). However, a significant quantity of SEDOWW has recently been identified at the Dewlish villa (Dorset) in late contexts (personal observation).

The introduction of 'new' or 'variant' fabrics during the late fourth or early fifth centuries can be seen at York and arguably in Dorset as evidence of continued production. However, it is worth considering the incidence of particular fabrics in specific regions. In a useful, but unfortunately

unpublished, paper Martin (2004) has reviewed a number of fourth-century assemblages from Essex. He has drawn attention to the appearance in this region of a number of 'fourth-century' non-local wares, such as Alice Holt/Farnham ware, Harrold shell-tempered ware, Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware and Portchester D ware. These are well-known 'late Roman' products and are usually dated *c.* A.D. 250/300 to 400+. The danger here is that the broad date range applicable to an industry over-rides the dates derived from a local context. Coin and stratigraphic evidence indicates that these 'late Roman' vessels only occur on sites in Essex after A.D. 360/380 (Wallace 1993).

The analysis of pottery assemblages in Essex was taken one step further by Martin (2004). Rather than amalgamating a number of assemblages to create large groups of pottery, he analysed context groups individually. This enabled the identification of changes in group composition. Groups dated A.D. 380–400 were characterised by declining quantities of local pottery but increased shell-tempered wares and the appearance of vessels from Oxfordshire. This was followed by groups of pottery dominated by shell-tempered vessels and Oxfordshire pottery. Finally, there were groups that contained no locally-made pottery and tiny quantities of the four fabrics mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Dating is uncertain but it was hypothesised that this pattern might encompass the period A.D. 400–450.

This discussion of the situation in Essex during the early fifth century leads inexorably on to an analysis of what happened once Roman pottery ceased production. The role and significance of Roman pottery once the kilns were no longer manufacturing new vessels is the subject of the next section.

ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY IN POST-ROMAN CONTEXTS

At some point in the fifth century ceramics in a Romano-British style stopped being produced. However, Romano-British pottery remains a consistent feature of many post-Roman assemblages. In the final part of this paper the significance of this material is discussed.

Romano-British pottery in post-Roman contexts has been the subject of study for some time (for instance, Burrow 1981, 117–18). One of the most extreme examples of this phenomenon is an intact Black Burnished ware jar of probable fourth-century date used to contain an Anglo-Saxon cremation of fifth- to sixth-century date from Alton (Hants.) (Evison 1988, 42 and fig. 42.C44). This use of a Romano-British vessel is interesting given the arguments about the types of messages that Anglo-Saxon cremation vessels may have been intended to convey (Richards 1987). Less dramatic examples range from a large and fresh chunk of an Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware bowl in a *grubenhäus* at St Mary Cray, Orpington (Kent) (Hart 1984), to the Black Burnished ware sherds found in a pit containing a Migration period knife at Cadbury Castle (Somerset) (Burrow 1981, 280), to the many hundreds of sherds redeposited by the post-Roman earth moving at Wroxeter (Symonds 1997). Each of these situations might be the result of a different process that led to these Romano-British vessels and sherds occurring in post-Roman contexts. Four possibilities present themselves and these are discussed below.

Firstly, there is the possible retention and curation of vessels from the late Roman period. Under this model a vessel produced during the late fourth century may have been carefully cherished once ceramics stopped being easily available. This would have extended its useful life into the fifth century. Evidence for this phenomenon is equivocal. Some sites produce vessels that display evidence of repairs and when this occurs in the latest 'Roman' deposits it might imply the careful retention of vessels (for instance, Wickenden 1988, fig. 54). However, repairs are also exhibited on vessels, especially so-called finewares, during the first, second, third and fourth centuries so the phenomenon is far from clear cut.

Secondly, it is possible that post-Roman communities, operating in a largely aceramic society, sought either substantially complete or complete vessels from abandoned Roman sites. Waster heaps associated with pottery production sites would be obvious targets for such 'salvage' (Clough and Myres 1973, 74–6). The presence of a possible greyware waster from the Congresbury kilns (Usher and Lilley 1964) in a post-Roman context at Cadbury-Congresbury (Burrow 1981, fig. 36; Rahtz *et al.* 1993, 147) could be evidence of this process. Late Roman inhumation burials

were sometimes accompanied by ceramic grave-goods and these would provide another source of complete vessels. The excavators of London's eastern cemetery (Barber and Bowsher 2000) suggested that during the Roman period grave-diggers encountered earlier vessels that were then 'recycled' as grave-goods accompanying later burials. A similar process could easily have occurred during the fifth and sixth centuries. It should also be noted that intact vessels were sometimes set into the floors of late Roman dwellings (for instance, Lawrence and Smith 2009, pl. 4.17). Examples of this phenomenon are quite common and these vessels could also be salvaged and reused at a later date.

Thirdly, there is the possibility that fragments of Roman vessels were deliberately recovered by post-Roman communities. Red and decorated sherds (such as samian) would be particularly noticeable and their decoration, stamps and hard glossy fabrics might have led to post-Roman interest in them. Explaining why individuals might have collected this material is more problematic. It has recently been suggested that pot sherds came to be seen as indicators of *Romanitas* during the fifth century (for instance, Bowles 2007), but this seems a little far-fetched. More plausible are suggestions that these sherds were picked up as curios or as raw materials for spindle whorls, or (where examples show evidence of wear) as 'tools of opportunity' (Eckardt and Williams 2003, 155). It may also be worth considering whether highly decorated and brightly coloured sherds may have been imbued with some magical or symbolic significance (Eckardt and Williams 2003, 155–7). The occurrence of depictions of humans, animals and deities, as well as other forms of decoration, could all have implied a ritual significance. In the largely illiterate societies of early post-Roman Britain writing, in the form of stamped vessels, may also have led to individual sherds becoming imbued with some special significance. Interestingly, at Cleatham the presence of Romano-British greyware sherds in Anglo-Saxon urns was considered to be a deliberate act by the mourners as part of the funerary ritual (Leahy 2007, 225) and this provides a contrast to the pattern suggested above.

Finally, there are some Anglo-Saxon vessels (including an 'Anglo-Saxon' mortarium) where a Roman inspiration has been suggested (Mackreth 1996, 237). This suggests that Roman sherds could have been used as 'prototypes' by experimental potters in the fifth and sixth centuries.

As a concluding comment it should be recognised that the vast majority of Romano-British pottery in post-Roman contexts is likely to be residual. Any activity that disturbs and redeposits Roman period archaeological strata is likely to redeposit pottery sherds and in some urban contexts Roman sherds may vastly outnumber medieval sherds in a medieval context. Such an assemblage may be highly fragmented and abraded. It may also contain a diverse range of material of both early and late Roman dates.

THE FUTURE

This paper has reviewed some recent work on the significance of Romano-British pottery in the fifth century. However, much remains to be done. To state the obvious, it is clear that useful effort could be directed towards resolving the chronological ambiguities that surround the year 400. Scientific techniques offer one avenue that should be pursued, although the recent radiocarbon dates from the Lankhills cemetery suggest that this is not without its own problems (Booth *et al.* 2010, 455–6). New techniques, such as rehydroxylation dating (Wilson *et al.* 2009) may yet provide a silver bullet that solves our problems. Equally, such a solution may remain beyond our reach. If this is the case, then our understanding of Romano-British pottery in the fifth century can only increase if we undertake a considerable amount of detailed work. In the final part of this paper some possible future directions for research are explored.

The problems posed by dating the fifth century absolutely are paralleled by the difficulties inherent in relative dating. Coins remain our most common intrinsically datable artefact and coin-dated assemblages are needed to establish dated sequences of ceramic change. Unfortunately, fourth-century coins are small and easily overlooked, especially in the rapid and pressurised circumstances of commercial excavation. Metal-detecting is more common on archaeological sites now than it has been historically. However, there is a clear need to ensure that this procedure is undertaken on a context by context basis by an experienced detectorist. Furthermore, there is

an equally pressing need to ensure that post-excavation resources are in place to fund not only the analysis of the ceramics from a site but also the coinage.

Many of the standard typologies for late Roman pottery were produced some decades ago (for instance, Young 1977). Since their publication developer-funded archaeology has led to an exponential increase in available data. It seems likely that synthesising some of these data and revisiting some of the established typologies may pay dividends. There are also significant late Roman pottery producers whose products remain poorly studied and woefully underpublished. The Hadham kilns in Hertfordshire are one example of this phenomenon (Tyers 1996, 168–9). Undertaking some old-fashioned typological analysis may yield considerable results.

The increased data available are important not just for the study of typological development. Equally important are syntheses of assemblages through time and space so that compositional changes can be identified and understood. Pottery that might be indicative of the fourth century in one region might, as the Essex case study discussed above suggests, be indicative of the fifth century in other areas. Nor should attention be focused only on recent discoveries. The re-evaluation of old archives is equally important. One starting point might be the huge assemblage of pottery from the late and post-Roman phases at Wroxeter (Symonds 1997). Much of it is likely to be residual but there are hints of unusual aspects within the assemblage. The presence of a few sherds of Portchester D ware at this site deserves a brief mention (Symonds 1997, 281). The fabric is a very late Roman phenomenon. It was produced at Overwey in Hampshire from c. A.D. 300/330 but only reached sites like London from c. A.D. 350 and is typical of the latest Roman groups in south-eastern England (Lyne and Jefferies 1979). Given its restricted distribution the occurrence of this fabric at Wroxeter is noteworthy and it is unfortunate that the published report does not allow the reader to link these sherds to the stratigraphic sequence.

The role of Romano-British pottery in the fifth century remains an under-studied topic. These suggestions are intended merely to point the way for other researchers. As new data accrue and methodologies develop it seems likely that pottery may well come to play a more important part in understanding the early fifth century than has hitherto been assumed to be the case.

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