

Assessment of the Roman, medieval and early post-medieval pottery from the Victoria Works, Dursley, Gloucestershire

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Excavations at the Victoria Works, Dursley, were carried out by Bristol and Region Archaeological Service (BARAS) in 2004. The excavations investigated four separate areas: the eastern and western parts of the Area A street frontage, trial excavations behind that frontage and a separate area, Area B.

All of the pottery earlier than the late 17th century was submitted for identification and assessment.

Description

Prehistoric

Roman

Medieval

Late 15th to early 16th century

Late 16th to mid 17th century

Assessment

Area A

Western portion

Period 1/2A

Five sherds were recovered from Period 1/2A levels. A base from an Oxfordshire Colour-Coated bowl was found in the subsoil and two further Romano-British sherds came from the garden soil above. As a group, they date to the later Roman period but are not closely datable. The other two sherds, from the garden soil, are handmade shell-tempered wares which cannot be precisely matched elsewhere without further work (temporarily termed MEDLOC A). They do appear to be of the medieval sagging-based, squat jar form which first appears in Gloucestershire in the early to mid 11th century (i.e. just before the Norman conquest). There is no reason why these sherds should be so early, but the fabric is not a common one in later medieval layers on the site.

Period 2a

Period 2b

Eastern portion

Period 2

Thirty-four sherds of pottery were recovered from Period 2 contexts (Table 00). The pottery ranges in date from the possible prehistoric period to the late 17th or 18th century. The latter sherd, of Staffordshire Mottled ware (Gloucester TF74) is assumed to be intrusive.

Table 1

cname	Form	Nosh	Mean Wt
BR	JUG	2	42.5
GLOS41B	JAR	2	2.5
HERA7B	DISH	1	6
	JUG	1	7
HERB4	PANC	1	56
HG	JUG	3	9.67
MEDLOC B	JAR	5	3.4
MEDLOC D	JAR	2	17
MEDLOC E	JUG	2	44
MEDLOC F	JUG	1	6
MINETY	JAR	1	7
	PANC/JAR	1	9
	RIDGE	1	26
PREH?	JAR	1	14
WORCS	JUG	1	3

The pottery can be divided into several groups. The possible prehistoric sherd, from context 4304, is in fresh condition suggesting (a) that it is actually an unusual medieval vessel of unknown form and fabric or (b) that there is prehistoric occupation on the site. There are then a group of 10 sherds of handmade wares which can at present only be broadly dated to the mid 11th to mid 12th centuries and a group of 6 later 12th to mid 13th-century sherds and 8 later 13th to 14th-century sherds, including one of definite 14th-century date (BR). All of these presumably represent occupation on the site in the 12th to 14th centuries. The earlier sherds have a mean weight of 6.5gm whereas those of later 12th to 14th-century date have a mean weight of 23gm. This suggests a possible difference in the origin of the two groups. Only three sherds in this collection were abraded, and all are of later 13th to 14th-century date.

The last group within Period 2 consists of later 15th to early 16th-century sherds (Table 00). These consist mainly of large sherds which might all have been current in the mid 16th

century. The only vessel to show any sign of wear is the AK lid, which is nearly complete but is spalled inside and out and has a black deposit inside. It is likely that the vessel was reused as a lamp (or candlestick) whilst the spalling might be due to being left in the open for freeze-thaw to operate.

Table 2

cname	Form	Nosh	Mean wt
AK	BOWL	1	40
	LID	1	92
	PIP	2	3.5
CSTN	CUP	1	1
HERB5	PANC	1	11
PMEDX	COST?	1	5
SANDY MINETY	PANC	1	39

The pottery is therefore consistent with agricultural/horticultural use of the site in the late 11th to mid 12th centuries, occupation in the later 12th to 14th centuries, a hiatus in the 14th to mid 16th centuries (possibly due to the presence of a stone building on the site) and activity in the mid 16th century, perhaps associated with the construction of new stone buildings.

Period 2a?

Period 2/3

Area B

Four contexts in Area B produced pottery (Table 00). Two produced single sherds (3177 and 3185), datable to the later 13th- to 15th centuries and the later 12th to mid 16th centuries respectively. Context 3176 produced a sherd of CBW lobed cup, a type with a long lifespan, and a sherd of AK bowl. If the two sherds are contemporary, they must date to the mid 16th century, if not then the context can only be dated to the mid 16th century or later (up to the mid 18th century). Finally, context 3170 produced 12 sherds, which range in date from the late 11th/early 13th centuries to the early 18th century to early 19th century. The most numerous period represented in the assemblage is late 15th to late 16th century (probably mid 16th century). This may indicate activity on Area B at a similar time to that on Area A.

Table 3

Context	cname	Nosh	Mean wt
3170	AK	4	15.5
	GLOS41B	1	11
	HERB5	1	25
	MEDLOC E	1	7

	MINETY	3	14.33
	SSOM	1	10
	STCO	1	5
	STMO	1	5
3176	AK	1	18
	CBW	1	3
3177	HERA7B	1	7
3185	MINETY	1	27
