

Assessment of the Pottery from Minstrals, 18 Little Minster Street, Winchester (AY 105)

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A small collection of pottery (and a single piece of Roman tile) was recovered from test pits excavated at Minstrals, Winchester, by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd. This is the second collection of pottery examined from this site by the author. The collection consists mainly of Roman pottery, which includes some very early Roman vessels (pre-65 AD).

Description

Roman Pottery

One hundred and sixty-four sherds of pottery of Roman date were recovered. They were divided into 11 ware groups (Table 1). Most of the collection is probably of 1st to early 2nd-century date with a small quantity of later 3rd to 4th-century pottery.

Table 1

cname	full name
BB1	Dorset Black Burnished ware
DR20	Dressel 20 amphora
GAUL	Gauloise Flat-Based amphoras
GREY	Romano-British greywares
NFCC	New Forest Colour-Coated ware
OXID	Roman Oxidized wares
OXRC	Oxfordshire Red Colour-Coated ware
RTIL	Roman tile
SAM	Samian
TN	Terra Nigra
TR?	Terra Rubra?

Late 1st to 2nd Century Pottery

One hundred and sixty sherds were of types which are probably of later 1st to early 2nd century date (Table 2). Whilst many of these sherds cannot be closely dated, there are several vessels present which are probably of late 1st century date:

- A smashed Terra Nigra cup, of Camulodunum form 58B. Terra Nigra is rare on sites later than c.65AD.

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Figure 1

- A profile from a Samian form 23 dish, of conquest to Flavian date (Fig 2).



Figure 2

- Bead-rimmed handmade greyware jars (Fig 3).



Figure 3

- Shouldered greyware jars decorated with external all-over burnishing and cordons. Several of these appear to be handmade (Fig 4).



Figure 4

- Wheelthrown greyware jars with turning of the lower body.

- A Samian ware beaker of form 67, datable to the Flavian period to the early 2nd century.
- Several of the oxidized ware sherds appear to come from butt beakers or similar forms and have a fine off-white fabric, thin walls and a turned exterior. One had horizontal incised grooves at intervals (Fig 5) but the remainder are plain body sherds.



Figure 5

- One abraded sherd appears to come from a Terra Rubra beaker with a sharp carination. The identification of this sherd is doubtful, but given the other indications of an early date it may be worth submitting to a specialist.

Table 2

cname	Form	Nosh	Weight	NoV
DR20	AMPH	9	289	6
GAUL	AMPH/FLAG	2	14	2
	FLAG/AMPH	1	4	1
GREY	BOWL	1	27	1
	BOWL/DISH	3	51	1
	DISH	5	57	5
	DISH/PLATTER	2	26	1
	JAR	78	773	71
	PLATTER?	1	3	1
OXID	CLSD	9	45	8
	JAR	1	3	1
	TAZZA	1	23	1
RTIL	-	2	9	2
	IMBR	1	64	1

SAM	-	8	24	8
	BOWL	2	18	1
	BOWL/DISH	4	12	4
	CUP	2	3	2
	DISH	1	9	1
	DR18	1	6	1
	DR18/31	2	6	2
	DR23	1	6	1
	DR27	6	6	2
	DR30?	2	2	2
	DR37	5	21	3
	DR67	1	2	1
TN	CAM58B	8	61	1
TR?	BEAK	1	2	1
Grand Total		160	1566	132

There are a few sherds from vessels which are probably of early 2nd century or later date:

- Greyware flanged bowls, either with a flat top or a groove along the top.

However, there are no sherds of greyware with acute lattice decoration, imitative of early 2nd-century and later Dorset BB1.

Later Roman pottery

Four sherds of later Roman pottery were present. One of these is a small Dorset BB1 jar with obtuse lattice, and therefore probably mid 3rd century or later. The others are colour-coated sherds, of Oxfordshire and New Forest wares. The latter is also probably of later 3rd to mid 4th-century date whilst the former could be contemporary or slightly earlier.

Late Saxon to Medieval Pottery

Eighteen sherds of late Saxon to medieval date were recovered. Most of these were of gravel-tempered ware, (containing abundant calcareous inclusions and sparse flint and quartz grains) which was in use from the 9th to the 13th centuries. None of the sherds have the everted rim, thickened neck and bag-shaped body of the late 9th to early 11th-century jars and the likelihood is that all the jar sherds are of mid 11th to mid 13th-century date. Of particular interest is a large fragment of a lamp. Such lamps were used from the 9th to the 12th centuries and cannot be closely dated (the base, which might have been more distinctive, is missing).

Table 3

Cname	full name
NBYA	Newbury Group A
WINC GT	Winchester Gravel-Tempered ware

Assessment

Test Pit 1

The earliest feature in this pit to produce pottery was linear feature 508, pit fill 596, which produced the gravel-tempered lamp. This could be of any date from the late 9th century onwards. Subsequent surfaces, 595 and 593, produced early Roman pottery, presumably residual. Pit 506, fill 589, produced sherds of gravel-tempered ware jars, including an everted rim of probable 11th/12th-century date and a Newbury group A jar sherd. This group is probably of mid 11th to mid 12th century date. The sealing layer, 586, contains a sagging base sherd from a gravel-tempered jar, of similar date.

Test Pit 2

Pottery was recovered from a series of pits, postholes and horizontal deposits. The second lowest of these deposits, 581, included a sherd of a small Dorset BB1 jar with acute lattice burnishing and this dates the deposition of this and subsequent layers (578, 579, 580, 577, 576 and 574) to c.120 or later. Despite this, the character of the remaining pottery is late 1st to early 2nd-century and includes a smashed Terra Nigra cup, which should be no later than c.80AD. Context 576 produced a fragment of imbrex tile.

Test Pit 3

The earliest pottery from this pit comes from a yard or road surface, 557, which was sealed by a clay floor, 556 and a silty layer 554 which overlay it. The pottery from the lower two deposits is not closely datable but layer 554 can be dated to the early 2nd century or later on the basis of two greyware flanged dish sherds.

These layers were cut by pit 500, with fills 558, 553 and sealing layer 552. These layers produced a sherd of Dorset BB1 jar with obtuse lattice, and the Oxfordshire colour-coated bowl sherd. As a group, they indicate a later 3rd- or 4th-century (or later) deposition date.

Test Pit 4

A sherd of Samian type 18/31 dish was recovered from context 567, a clay silt layer and a sherd of wheelthrown local greyware jar was recovered from context 565. These cannot be closely dated and a late 1st to early 2nd-century date is likely.

Interpretation

The presence of the Terra Nigra cup in a smashed condition in context 578 suggests that the site was occupied in the 80s, although context 578 cannot have been deposited any earlier than c.120.

Further Work

The Terra Nigra vessel is apparently the only example in the national database at present being maintained by Dr J Timby. It is also the first example of this ware to be recorded from Winchester itself (several have been found at the Winnall Estate, including 4 of similar form). This and other potential Gallo-Belgic imports from the site should be submitted to Dr Timby to confirm the identifications and should be drawn and sampled for chemical analysis.

The local greyware should be compared with the Winchester Roman fabric type series. The Samian ware could be identified to source but is probably all of South Gaulish origin.

Retention

All of the finds should be retained for future study.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Barbara Precious for identifying the Terra Nigra vessel and to Dr Timby for supplying information about the local distribution of similar vessels.

Table 4

Context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Wt	Action	Description
552	GREY		JAR	1	1	11		BURNISHED EXT
553	BB1		JAR	1	1	3		OBTUSE LATTICE
554	DR20		AMPH	4	1	28		
554	GAUL		AMPH/FLAG	2	2	14		
554	GREY		BOWL/DISH	3	1	51		
554	GREY		DISH	3	3	28		
554	GREY		DISH	1	1	8		FLANGED RIM
554	GREY		DISH	1	1	21		GROOVE ON TOP OF FLANGED RIM
554	GREY		JAR	1	1	7		BURNISHED DEC
554	GREY		JAR	29	29	302		BURNISHED EXT;WT;TURNED
554	OXID		CLSD	2	2	7	SPEC	
554	OXID		JAR	1	1	3		FAINT RED PAINT ON LIGHT-BODIED SILTY BODY
554	OXID		TAZZA	1	1	23		
554	RTIL		-	1	1	7		
554	SAM		BOWL	2	1	18		
554	SAM		BOWL/DISH	4	4	12		
554	SAM		CUP	2	2	3		
554	SAM		DISH	1	1	9		
554	TR?		BEAK	1	1	2	SPEC	CARINATED
556	GREY		JAR	1	1	3		
557	GREY		JAR	3	3	12		BURNISHED
558	GREY		JAR	1	1	19		HM
558	OXRC		BOWL	1	1	18		
565	GREY		JAR	1	1	23		WT
567	SAM		DR18/31	1	1	2		
574	GREY		JAR	1	1	18		BEAD RIM;HM
574	GREY		PLATTER?	1	1	3		

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Context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Wt	Action	Description
574	SAM		-	1	1	16		
576	RTIL		IMBR	1	1	64		
577	OXID		CLSD	2	1	12	SPEC	
578	GREY		BOWL	1	1	27		FOOTRING;HM?
578	GREY		JAR	7	7	26		BURNISHED EXT;HM?
578	GREY		JAR	1	1	12		CORDON ON SHOULDER;BAND OF WAVY BURNISHING ABOVE;HM?
578	GREY		JAR	1	1	20		FOOTRING;HM
578	OXID		CLSD	3	3	9	SPEC	WT;TURNED EXT?
578	TN	TN1	CAM58B	8	1	61	DR;SPEC	TURNED INT AND EXT
579	DR20		AMPH	1	1	37		
579	GREY		JAR	1	1	3		
579	GREY		JAR	6	1	25		HM;BURNISHED EXT
579	OXID	OFFWHITE	CLSD	1	1	3	SPEC	
579	SAM		-	1	1	1		
580	GREY		JAR	1	1	17		BEAD RIM;BURNISHED EXT
580	GREY		JAR	1	1	53		CORDONED SHOULDERED
581	BB1		SMALL JAR	1	1	4		ACUTE LATTICE
581	DR20		AMPH	2	2	80		
581	GAUL		FLAG/AMPH	1	1	4		
581	GREY		JAR	3	3	13		
581	GREY		JAR	2	2	32		HM
581	GREY		JAR	2	1	10		HM;BURNISHED EXT
581	GREY		JAR	1	1	16		WT;CORDONED;SHOULDERED;EXT BURNISHED
581	SAM		-	2	2	4		
581	SAM		DR18/31	1	1	4		
581	SAM		DR27	1	1	1		
581	SAM		DR67	1	1	2		DEC
582	GREY		JAR	2	1	21		WT
586	WINC		JAR	1	1	15		SAGGING BASE

Context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Wt	Action	Description
	GT							
589	DR20		AMPH	1	1	2		
589	GREY		JAR	1	1	4		
589	NFCC		JAR	1	1	4		ROLLED-OUT RIM
589	NBYA		JAR	1	1	2		
589	WINC		JAR	11	11	24		
	GT							
589	WINC		JAR	1	1	7		EVERTED RIM
	GT							
593	GREY		JAR	1	1	5		
593	GREY		JAR	1	1	2		BURNISHED EXT;HM?
594	GREY		JAR	1	1	7		
594	GREY		JAR	1	1	28		BEAD RIM;FETTLED EXT;WT?
594	GREY		JAR	1	1	7		BURNISHED EXT
594	OXID		CLSD	1	1	14	SPEC	
594	RTIL		-	1	1	2		
594	SAM		-	1	1	1		
594	SAM		-	1	1	1		DEC
595	DR20		AMPH	1	1	142		
595	GREY		DISH/PLATTER	2	1	26		ROUNDED RIM;INT BURNISHED ZIG ZAG
595	GREY		JAR	2	2	12		
595	GREY		JAR	1	1	22		CORDONED BURNISHED
595	SAM		-	2	2	1		
595	SAM		DR18	1	1	6		
595	SAM		DR23	1	1	6		
595	SAM		DR27	5	1	5		
595	SAM		DR30?	2	2	2		
595	SAM		DR37	2	2	7		
596	SAM		DR37	3	1	14		DEC
596	WINC		LAMP	1	1	36		

Context	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Wt	Action	Description
PITS IN CORNER	GT GREY		JAR	3	3	43		
PITS IN CORNER	NBYA		JAR	1	1	11		
PITS IN CORNER	WINC GT		JAR	2	2	41		SAGGING BASE