

1 Note on the Roman pottery from Broadgate Ticket Hall (XSM10) context range [1017] to [1448]

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1.1 Introduction

The pottery from this phase of XSM10 was spot-dated and recorded in accordance with current MOL archaeology procedure, using standard fabric, form and decoration codes. The data was entered onto the Oracle database, including quantification by sherd count, estimated number of vessels and weight in grams. This phase of excavation has produced an assemblage of 684 sherds (weight 43812 g) of Roman pottery from 53 contexts (all hand collected). The majority of the assemblages are small in size (less than 30 sherds) and some are comprised of only one or two sherds. There are three medium-sized groups (30 – 100 sherds), two large (100 sherds and over) and one very large (four standard boxes).

1.2 Roman Pottery

It is notable that most of the pottery dates to the 2nd century AD, in particular the period dating from c AD 120/40. There are relatively few sherds of 1st-century pottery and these tend to be residual in later contexts. A few assemblages date to the 3rd century AD but there is a notable absence of forms and fabrics that are typical of the late 3rd and 4th centuries. The sherd size is notably larger than is typical of City assemblages and this may be due to the pottery once deposited, being little disturbed. Mudstaining is a feature of the assemblage and is especially evident on the amphorae and oxidised wares and is in keeping with the material being deposited in a marshy or waterlogged environment. Much of the pottery exhibits signs of use such as sooting on the cooking vessels, limescale from the boiling of liquids and wear marks on the mortaria and, to some extent, on the samian vessels. There is one jar that was used to contain a cremation [1439]. Additionally, there are several vessels from one context [1437] that are semi-complete and may have been accessory vessels to burial and cremations.

The assemblage as a whole is dominated by the reduced wares, in particular Highgate Wood ware C and the various black-burnished ware fabrics that occur in London from c. AD 120 (BB1, BB2, BBS). There is slightly more BB2 than BB1 and this combined with the high levels of Highgate Wood ware C, may suggest the overall assemblage dates from the middle of the 2nd century AD rather than the second quarter. Both the main oxidised fabrics produced by the Verulamium region, Verulamium region white ware (VRW) and coarse white-slipped ware (VCWS), are present in significant numbers.

The majority of the samian is central Gaulish (Lezoux and les Martres-de-Veyre) as would be expected of this period. Other imported fine wares include Cologne colour-coated ware beakers which are decorated with roughcasting or hunt scenes. A range of amphorae is present on the site, mainly Dressel form 20 in context [1301], which was used to transport olive oil. Context Of particular interest amongst the imports is a late Rhineland mortarium rim which is similar to those produced by the potter Verecundus from context [1284].

1.2.1 Groups of particular interest

Walbrook sequence:

Context [1439] Cremation vessel: This Brockley Hill white-slipped ware necked jar with thick squared off rim (BHWS 2G3) was found . The form is typical of the jars produced by the Verulamium region industry in the 2nd century AD. However, it is not commonly found in this fabric which was made at the kilns at Brockley Hill. Also associated with this jar is a fragment of a Highgate Wood ware C lid which may originally have sealed the cremation. Dated AD 100-60.

Context [1391] Yellow river sand and gravel: This medium-sized assemblage is mostly composed of domestic pottery and is dated AD 140-200.

Context [1437]: There are several semi-complete vessels from this context which given the proximity of the site to the western section of the northern cemetery could conceivably have been originally related to burials these include a Verulamium region white ware neckless jar (VRW 2J), a Highgate Wood ware C round-bodied necked jar (HWC 2E), a black-burnished ware 1 jar with everted rim (BB1 2F AL) and a London oxidised ware lid (LOXI 9A). There is also a fragment from a face pot which is of interest given that another face pot was found in the same fabric from an earlier excavation on the site (context [714]). These vessels are not common and two examples from the same area is noteworthy. Overall this is dated AD 180-200.

Contexts [1422] [1447]. Overall these small groups of pottery are dated AD 120-200.

Context [1448]. This small group of pottery is dated AD 120-200.

1.3 Recommendations:

Outstanding work

Wet-sieved pottery to be scanned.

Two ceramic accessions to be recorded <468> and <361>.

Twelve vessels have been selected to be considered for illustration dependant on their context and the requirements of the eventual publication.