

The Roman pottery from the Eastern Cemeteries
Report on the database

Part 1, the burial pots

1. Some 200 vessels were found in graves. The following fabrics were represented:

BB-type wares:

BB1	14	7.0%
BB2	12	6.0%
BB2F	3	1.5%
BBS	12	6.0%
	41	20.5%

Tempered wares:

COAR	2	1.0%
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Grey wares:

AHFA	9	4.5%
AHSU	11	5.5%
ERSA/B	1	0.5%
FINE	3	1.5%
HWC	6	3.0%
HWC+	3	1.5%
SAND	9	4.5%
TSK	29	14.5%
	73	36.5%

Oxidised wares:

BHWS	2	1.0%
LOMI	1	0.5%
LOXI	9	4.5%
NVWW	2	1.0%
OXID	7	3.5%
OXPA	1	0.5%
RWS	1	0.5%
VCWS	5	2.5%
VRR	1	0.5%
VRW	11	5.5%
	40	20.0%

Colour-coated wares:

CC	4	2.0%
KOLN	3	1.5%
MOSL	8	4.0%
NVCC	12	6.0%
OXRC	1	0.5%
	28	14.0%

Amphorae:

DR20	16	8.0%
PE47	2	1.0%
	18	9.0%

2. The following forms were represented:

Flagons:

1 8 4.0%
1B 1 0.5%
1B7-9 2 1.0%
1B9 2 1.0%
1D 1 0.5%
1J 1 0.5%
15 7.5%

Beakers:

3 16 8.0%
3A 2 1.0%
3E 1 0.5%
3F 3 1.5%
3K 5 2.5%
3L 5 2.5%
32 16.0%

Jars:

2 18 9.0%
2A 1 0.5%
2C 1 0.5%
2D 4 2.0%
2E 1 0.5%
2F 8 4.0%
2F1 1 0.5%
2F6 16 8.0%
2F9 1 0.5%
2F13 8 4.0%
2G 8 4.0%
2G3 3 1.5%
2H 1 0.5%
2J 2 1.0%
2Q 1 0.5%
2R 4 2.0%
2T 12 6.0%
90 45.0%

Bowls:

4 1 0.5%
4H5 8 4.0%
4H 1 0.5%
4H1 1 0.5%
5J 7 3.5%
5J1 3 1.5%
5J2 1 0.5%
4M 3 1.5%
4P 1 0.5%
4G226 1 0.5%
27 13.5%

Other forms:

6 1 0.5%
9A 12 6.0%
9C 3 1.5%
9F 1 0.5%
9N 1 0.5%

18 9.0%

Amphorae:

8AMPH 18 9.0%

A general comment to be made on the proportions of fabrics and forms in the burial vessels is that they are generally similar to the proportions found in 2nd and 3rd century occupation sites elsewhere, with the major exceptions of the complete lack of any vessels in samian ware, and of any mortaria. Only two hundred vessels is, however, a relatively small sample.

BB-type wares: Grey wares:

Flagons:

4P

4G226 1

Total: 6 7 3 9 1

Other forms:

6

9A 3 1

9C

9F

9N

Total: 3 1

Amphorae:

Total: 14 12 3 12 9 11 2 1 3 6 3 9 29

Table 1b, total numbers of burial pots, by fabrics and forms

Oxidised wares:										Colour-coated wares:										Amphorae:				
BHWS LOMI LOXI NVWW OXID OXPA RWS VCWS VRR VRW										CC KOLN MOSL NVCC OXRC										DR20				
PE47																								
Flagons:																								
1		2	2			1	1														8			
1B						1															1			
1B7-9						1	1														2			
1B9	2																				2			
1D								1													1			
1J						1															1			
Total:	2		2	2		1	4	2													15			
Jars:																								
2					1	1															18			
2A																					1			
2C																					1			
2D																					4			
2E																					1			
2F																					8			
2F1																					1			
2F6																					16			
2F9																					1			
2F13																					8			
2G		1		1		2	3														8			
2G3		1					2														3			
2H					1																1			
2J			1				1														2			
2Q																					1			
2R									1												4			
2T																					12			
Total:		2		2		4	7			1											90			
Beakers:																								
3	1					1	3	7	3	1											16			
3A																					2			
3E																					1			
3F																					3			
3K									3												5			
3L									5												5			
Total:	1						1	3	7	11	1										32			
Bowls:																								
4																					1			
4H																					1			
4H1																					1			
4H5																					8			
5J																					7			
5J1																					3			
5J2																					1			
4M																					3			
4P				1																	1			
4G226																					1			
Total:				1																	27			
Other forms:																								
6						1															1			
9A		7		1																	12			
9C				1		1	1														3			
9F										1											1			
9N				1																	1			
Total:		7		3		1	1		1	1											18			
Amphorae:																								
8AMPH																					16	2	18	
Total:	2	1	9	2	7	1	1	5	1	11	4	3	8	12	1	16	2	200						

3. The proportions of fabrics in inhumations (with function types):

4. The proportions of forms in inhumations (with function types):

5a. Damaged pots.

Some 46 vessels, or 23.0% of the buried pots were damaged in some way. The list is as follows:

Burial	Acc	Fabric	Form	Damage
B153	34	NVCC	3L	LOPSIDED
B175	99	BBS	4H5	DISTORTED SIDE
B175	97	NVWW	1	SLIGHTLY WONKY+
B177	86	TSK	2F6	LARGE CRACK
B195	72	AHFA	2R	UNEVEN FIRING
B195	71	AHFA	2	WONKY RIM
B207	62	OXID	9C	SLIGHTLY WONKY
B231	104	HWC	9A	VERY WARPED
B251	144	BB2	4H5	WARPED TO OVAL
B290	313	VCWS	2G	WONKY RIM
B297	61	BB2	4H5	SAGGING BASE
B310	307	TSK	2F9	DENT IN SIDE
B323	215	FINE	2R	BUBBLES IN SIDE
B333	96	LOXI	9A	SOMEWHAT WONKY
B337	169	SAND	2T	RIM VERY WARPED
B352	297	COAR	2T	RIM VERY WARPED
B368	286	BB1	5J1	RATHER WARPED
B368	285	BBS	4H	SLIGHTLY WARPED
B374	182	AHFA	1	DENT ON SIDE
B388	253	BBS	2	SHALLOW DENT
B395	266	BB1	4G226	SLIGHTLY WARPED
B445	639	AHFA	2R	SLIGHTLY WONKY
B4	40	TSK	2F6	SLIGHTLY WARPED
B581	379	AHFA	2	WARPED
B581	379	BBS	4M	BADLY DEFORMED
B581	379	BBS	5J	RATHER DEFORMED
B581	379	BBS	5J	SOME DEFORMED
B620	87	AHFA	2F13	DEPRESSED RIM
B644	136	BBS	5J	WARPED
B662	587	OXID	2G	RIM WARPED
B673	592	BB1	4M	DENTED FLANGE
B673	593	CC	3	SEVERAL LUMPS
B733	442	OXPA	4P	DENTED BASE
B753	72	DR20		DENT IN SIDE
B759	351	AHFA	2F13	HOLES FROM INT
B760	596	HWC	9A	WARPED RIM/BODY
B775	252	HWC	9A	WARPED RIM
B785	816	TSK	2T	WONKY RIM/BASE
B799	3	AHSU	2	HOLE IN WALL
B813	166	BB1	2F1	ONE SIDE BURNT
B815	409	VCWS	2G	BADLY WARPED
B817	405	AHSU	2C	2 4MM HOLES
B818	550	AHSU	2D	PROTRUBERANCE
B839	136	TSK	2T	DENT IN SIDE
B840	119	SAND	2	HOLE IN SIDE
B848	142	VRR	9C	WONKY

This number of damaged vessels, nearly one-quarter of the burial pots, seems very high, although this is an aspect for which there is no comparative data from other sites. Evidence of damage does not necessarily imply that the vessels were not used for their normal, appropriate functions prior to burial, but it does suggest that when choosing vessels for burial, damaged pieces were chosen fairly frequently.

5b. Abraded pots.

A total of 109 vessels, or 54.5% of the burial pots, were found to be slightly abraded (28 or 14.0%), abraded (72, or 36.0%), or very abraded (9, or 4.5%). These were as follows:

Burial	Acc Fabric	Form	Abr ext
B153	34 NVCC	3L	ABR
B175	98 TSK	2F6	ABR
B175	100 DR20		ABR
B175	96 NVWW	1	ABR
B175	97 NVWW	1	ABR
B177	86 TSK	2F6	ABR
B179	55 SAND	3F	ABR
B180	148 TSK	2F6	ABR
B193	307 TSK	2F6	ABR
B195	73 NVCC	3L	ABR
B207	62 OXID	9C	ABR
B231	102 DR20		ABR
B251	144 BB2	4H5	ABR
B279	10 BB1	5J	ABR
B290	326 OXID	9A	ABR
B297	61 TSK	2F6	ABR
B303	206 DR20		ABR
B304	322 DR20		ABR
B310	307 TSK	2F9	ABR
B316	117 TSK	2F	ABR
B316	116 TSK	2F6	ABR
B323	215 FINE	2R	ABR
B324	216 OXID	9N	ABR
B325	262 BB2	4H5	ABR
B343	50 BBS	2F	ABR
B349	356 SAND	2	ABR
B362	213 COAR	2G	ABR
B362	213 BBI	5J1	ABR
B368	286 BBI	5J1	ABR
B388	253 BBS	2	ABR
B395	266 BB1	4G226	ABR
B399	191 TSK	2T	ABR
B413	339 TSK	2F6	ABR
B432	PE47		ABR
B437	614 KOLN	3	ABR
B451	655 NVCC	3	ABR
B461	630 OXRC	3	ABR
B462	696 DR20		ABR
B483	496 SAND	2T	ABR
B533	487 BB1	2F	ABR
B547	532 TSK	2F6	ABR
B555	512 SAND	3A	ABR
B581	379 BBS	5J	ABR
B644	136 BBS	5J	ABR
B662	587 OXID	2G	ABR
B670	659 RWS	9C	ABR
B673	592 BB1	4M	ABR
B712	777 HWC+	2F	ABR
B717	840 NVCC	3K	ABR
B733	442 OXPA	CA	ABR
B752	100 TSK	2T	ABR
B753	89 TSK	2F6	ABR
B760	590 AHSU	2D	ABR
B762	332 TSK	2	ABR
B763	336 LOXI	9A	ABR
B764	348 TSK	2F6	ABR
B771	290 VRW	2G	ABR
B773	316 HWC+	9A	ABR
B773	313 LOXI	2G	ABR
B785	817 BBS	5J	ABR
B785	816 TSK	2T	ABR
B785	769 DR20		ABR

B795	609 VRW	2	ABR
B795	610 LOXI	9A	ABR
B811	140 AHSU	2	ABR
B814	330 BBS	2F6	ABR
B815	409 VCWS	2G	ABR
B816	411 VCWS	2	ABR
B838	144 PE47		ABR
B838	151 TSK	2	ABR
B840	119 SAND	2	ABR
B842	88 BB2F	4H5	ABR
B175	99 BBS	4H5	SABR
B185	123 TSK	2F6	SABR
B195	70 AHFA	4M	SABR
B231	104 HWC	9A	SABR
B232	88 NVCC	2R	SABR
B242	131 NVCC	3	SABR
B251	146 TSK	2	SABR
B297	61 BB2	4H5	SABR
B308	141 DR20		SABR
B325	261 BB2	2F6	SABR
B326	175 KOLN	3	SABR
B335	71 TSK	2F6	SABR
B417	328 TSK	2T	SABR
B445	639 AHFA	2R	SABR
B467	677 CC	6	SABR
B480	682 NVCC	3K	SABR
B581	379 BBS	5J	SABR
B719	650 MOSL	3	SABR
B733	426 BBS	5J	SABR
B759	351 AHFA	2F13	SABR
B760	596 HWC	9A	SABR
B763	335 VCWS	2H	SABR
B775	309 HWC	2E	SABR
B776	248 LOXI	9A	SABR
B776	247 AHSU	2D	SABR
B798	61 HWC+	2T	SABR
B799	3 AHSU	2	SABR
B814	745 LOXI	9A	SABR
B291	159 CC	1	VABR
B301	187 BHWS	1B9	VABR
B301	188 BHWS	1B9	VABR
B368	285 BBS	4H	VABR
B435	679 AHSU	3A	VABR
B505	636 NVCC	3L ROD	VABR
B559	516 BB2F	4	VABR
B673	593 CC	3	VABR
B793	204 TSK	2F6	VABR

This large number of abraded vessels at first view seems to suggest that many of the buried vessels had experienced relatively long domestic service before their final use as burial pots. There is, however, an alternative explanation for the abrasion which might not entail any domestic use at all. An image which arises from the study of the cremated bones is that there were people whose role it was to collect the bones from cremations in order to bury them subsequently in a cremation urn. Such people might also have sold pots for burial, to accompany either cremations or inhumations. It is conceivable that the less scrupulous of these pottery dealers may have disinterred pots a few days after burial, and re-sold them for re-burial sometime later. If this process continued over some time, it could have resulted in abraded pots which had never seen domestic use.

5c. Burnt pots.

A total of 36 vessels, or 18.0% of the burial pots, were found to be slightly burnt (13 or 6.5%), burnt (17, or 8.5%), or very burnt (6, or 3.0%). These were as follows:

Burial	Acc Fabric	Form	Brnt ext
CB179	55 SAND	3F	BNT
CB195	72 AHFA	2R	BNT
B207	62 OXID	9C	BNT
CB231	104 HWC	9A	BNT
CB251	144 BB2	4H5	SBNT
CB279	10 BB1	4J	SBNT
B284	12 BB1	2F13	BNT
B310	308 OXID	2J	VBNT
B326	95 BBI	2F13	SBNT
CB333	91 BBI	2F13	BNT
CB333	96 LOXI	9A	SBNT
B336	169 SAND	2T	BNT
CB368	284 SAND	2T	SBNT
CB368	286 BBI	5J1	VBNT
CB460	700 BB2	2F	SBNT
B504	434 TSK	2T	SBNT
B533	487 BB1	2F	VBNT
CB559	516 BB2F	4	VBNT
CB581	379 BBS	5J	VBNT
CB581	379 BBS	4M	VBNT
CB581	379 BBS	5J	BNT
CB581	379 AHFA	2	BNT
B588	545 BB2	2F6	SBNT
B644	136 BBS	5J	BNT
B670	659 RWS	9C	SBNT
B673	593 CC	3	BNT
B704	198 BB1	2F13	SBNT
CB753	90 BB2	5J2	BNT
CB760	596 HWC	9A	BNT
CB760	590 AHSU	2D	SBNT
CB765	597 ERSA/B	2Q	BNT
CB771	290 VRW	2G	BNT
CB776	247 AHSU	2D	SBNT
CB795	609 VRW	2	BNT
CB795	610 LOXI	9A	BNT
B823	27 BB1	5JI	SBNT

Evidence of burning seems rather less marked than damage or abrasion, and it seems rather more associated with cremations rather than inhumations. 23 of the 36 vessels, or 63.8%, are from cremation burials, although this is almost exactly the same as the overall proportion of cremation burial vessels versus inhumation vessels (131 of 199 vessels, or 65.8%).

6. Limescale.

Pots with limescale represented 3% of all quantified pots present made up of the following records, or 6.7% of the jars present.

Site Burial C/I Fabric Form Residues

HAY86 B166 I VRW 2J A TRACES OF LIME

HOO88 B620 I AHFA 2F13 A LIMESCALE

MSL87 B325 C BB2 2F6 P SOME LIMESCALE

MSL87 B588 I? BB2 2F6 A? SOOT/LIMESCALE (?redeposited cremation)

MST87 B180 C TSK 2F6 P LIMESCALE INT

SCS83 B5 C BB2 2F P SOME LIMESCALE

While this does not seem an exceptionally high percentage of vessels, some limescale may not have survived burial or subsequent processing. The presence of limescale does indicate that at least some of the buried vessels had been used for cooking prior to burial, and this was equally the case for primary cremation vessels as well as those included in inhumations. Obviously this is the contrary of what is shown by damaged pots (Table xx), which may show re-use of pots for burial, or perhaps also the deliberate use particular vessels for burial without any intermediate culinary use.

It is difficult to compare these percentages of vessels or jars with limescale against those found in non-burial contexts or on other sites, since in the latter sorts of contexts many sherds might represent a vessel. This nevertheless seems a fairly similar proportion of vessels as would be found on most sites in London.

Functions of burial pots

1 Primary vessels

These occur only in cremations, and contained the cremated material. There are 61, plus five possible primary vessels and one which may have been either a primary vessel or a lid (the latter is thought more likely). These are entirely jars with the exception of three beakers (one of the latter is a possible primary vessel, which could also be a residual part of the fill). They make up 50.0% of the vessels associated with cremations, or 33.7% of all the burial pots. Although the number of pots involved is too small to permit firm conclusions, it is interesting that the ratio of early BB-type jars (2F, 2F1, 2F6 and 2F9) to late BB-type jars (2F13) is 19:2 in the cremations (all vessels), and 7:6 in the inhumations. This seems to imply that while there are some late cremations (at least 250-400), there are more late inhumations, and it suggests, perhaps more importantly, that there may have been a relatively gradual transition from one burial practice to the other.

2 Accessory vessels

3 Secondary vessels

4 Lids

5 Vessels of uncertain function