

# A commentary on key stratigraphic sequences from the 1972–73 rescue excavation at Redhill, Shropshire

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## **A commentary on key stratigraphic sequences from the 1972–73 rescue excavation at Redhill, Shropshire**

**C Jane Evans and Derek Hurst**

With samian ware by Gwladys Monteil

### **1.1 Artefact methodology**

A review was carried out of the 1972–73 excavation archive and was focussed on finds analysis for the purposes of dating and characterising key stratigraphic sequences. Attention was given to a published site summary by the excavator (Browne and Boon 2002), and to other site information, in order to aim at a better overall understanding of activity at *Uxacona*, covering both the military and civilian phases.

Browne had previously summarised most fabrics by count and weight by context (though samian was only counted), and without any individual forms being quantified). The present review covers 2522 sherds (27kg); 58% of the assemblage by count (out of 4320 sherds of pottery – for audit of archive see Hurst *et al* 2015, tables 2 and 5. This compares with 2098 sherds (53.6kg) from the 2011-13 excavations assemblage.

Browne recorded *c* 250 sherds of samian, with identifications verified by George Boon. Ninety-eight sherds came from contexts included in this review, however, most were residual and so only six sherds were re-assessed by Gwladys Monteil (see report below), to refine the dating of specific contexts. Browne identified 58 fabrics, but reviewing and rationalising them was beyond the scope of the project. For the purposes of the review the pottery was considered by 'fabric group'. Multiple, individual fabrics were, therefore, grouped as 'reduced,' 'oxidised,' 'cream' or 'colour-coated' ware etc. Where possible fabrics are cross-referenced with the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998; <http://romanpotterystudy.org/nrfrc/base/index.php>) and diagnostic forms were referenced to the Wroxeter form type series (Timby *et al* 2000) and other significant corpora. Levels of abrasion were not recorded.

Finds from the key contexts in select slots through ditches are summarised below in Tables 1–2, selection based on the better recorded slots. Non-pottery finds were scanned for items that might contribute to dating of the sequences, and are noted but are not otherwise discussed. In particular, the coin list (Boone 2002) has also provided dating evidence.

Relevant finds records were entered onto a Microsoft Access database, including small find number, AML lab number and x-ray number, context numbers, and ditch number (Roman numeral).

In most cases the exact positions of the excavated parts of the ditches cannot be given, though the general location can be indicated in all cases.

### **1.2 The finds**

The key features from the 1972–3 excavations being reviewed here are Ditches: I, II, III, Vc, VI, VII, the same ditches as identified by Browne and Boon (2002). The majority of finds came from Ditch VII, which was the largest of the ditches, particularly from upper deposits 075 and 080, which had an association with a coin hoard, though the exact nature of the association remained unclear. In general, more pottery and other artefacts were associated with the later infilling of ditches than with their primary fills, so that the dating of the first cutting of a ditch sometimes remains problematic due to a scarcity of material, whereas, in contrast, the disuse/closure of a ditch was more likely to be accompanied with demonstrably residual material.

Period	material	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight
Roman	animal bone		fragment	NA	783
Roman	ceramic		box tile?	1	131
Roman	ceramic		brick/tile	8	56
Roman	ceramic		daub	10	202
Roman	ceramic		fired clay	157	1931
Roman	ceramic		modern tile	2	17
Roman	ceramic		pot	2522	27023*
Roman	ceramic		tegula	2	235
Roman	ceramic		tile	1	145
Roman	coal		fragment	2	11
Roman	glass		bead	2	-
Roman	glass		fragment	5	-
Roman	glass		vessel	4	-
Roman	metal		coin	81	-
Roman	metal		fragment	1	-
Roman	metal		object	2	-
Roman	metal	cu alloy	brooch	2	-
Roman	metal	cu alloy	disc	1	-
Roman	metal	cu alloy	fragment	1	-
Roman	metal	cu alloy	offcut	1	-
Roman	metal	cu alloy	sheet	4	-
Roman	metal	cu alloy	tack	1	-
Roman	metal	iron	bar	1	-
Roman	metal	iron	bar or nail	1	-
Roman	metal	iron	frag	1	-
Roman	metal	iron	hammerscale		-
Roman	metal	iron	nail	68	-
Roman	metal	iron	object	4	-
Roman	metal	iron	rod	1	-
Roman	metal	iron	shaft	1	-
Roman	metal	iron	sheet	1	-
Roman	metal	iron	strip	12	-
Roman	metal	iron	unid object	2	-
Roman	metal	lead	sheet	1	30
Roman	metal	slag(fe)	fragment	62	2736
Roman	stone		quern?	1	1298
Roman	wood		fragment	1	-
post-medieval	ceramic		pot	13	103
post-medieval	glass		modern vessel	1	-
modern	ceramic		modern tile	4	53

Table 1: Summary of finds recorded by David Browne from the key features reviewed here, by period and material type (\*samian not weighed)

Ditch	Period	material	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight
I	Roman	ceramic		pot	68	1440*
		metal		coin	2	-
			cu alloy	disc	1	-
II	Roman	ceramic		pot	20	107*

		metal	iron	unidentified object	1	-		
III	Roman	ceramic		fired clay	1	24		
				pot	32	1342*		
		glass		bead	1	-		
		metal	cu alloy	brooch	1	-		
			iron	nail	2	-		
Vc	post-medieval	glass		modern vessel	1	-		
	Roman	animal bone		fragment	N/A	42		
		ceramic		fired clay	8	104		
				pot	115	1042*		
				tegula	1	15		
glass		vessel	1	-				
		metal		coin	2	-		
		metal	cu alloy	brooch	1	-		
				iron	nail	10	-	
					sheet	1	-	
VI	Roman	ceramic		pot	12	92*		
		metal	iron	nail	1	-		
VII	modern	ceramic		modern tile	4	53		
	post-medieval	ceramic		pot	13	103*		
	Roman	animal bone			fragment	N/A	741	
		ceramic			box tile?	1	131	
					brick/tile	8	56	
					daub	10	202	
					fired clay	148	1803	
					modern tile	2	17	
					pot	2275	23000*	
					tegula	1	220	
					tile	1	145	
		coal			fragment	2	11	
		glass				bead	1	-
						fragment	5	-
						vessel	3	-
		metal				coin	77	-
						fragment	1	-
						object	2	-
	cu alloy					fragment	1	-
						offcut	1	-
						sheet	4	-
						tack	1	-
	iron					bar	1	-
						bar or nail	1	-
						frag	1	-
						hammerscale	N/A	-
						nail	55	-
						object	4	-
						rod	1	-
						shaft	1	-
						strip	12	-
						unidentified object	1	-
			lead		sheet	1	30	
			slag(fe)		fragment	62	2736	
	stone				quern?	1	1298	
	wood				fragment	1	-	

Table 2: Summary of finds recorded by David Browne from the key features reviewed here, by ditch, period and material type (\*samian not weighed)

### 1.2.1 The Roman pottery

Table 3 summarises the fabric groups represented, with reference to the NRFRC where possible. The pottery is summarised and discussed by ditch and context, to date and characterise the ditch sequences.

fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	% count	weight
amphora	BAT AM 2?	1	0%	40
amphora	GAL AM 1?	2	0%	49
BB1	DOR BB1	464	18%	4942
BB1?		69	3%	980
colour-coated	LNV CC	62	2%	484
colour-coated	OXF RS	5	0%	40
colour-coated (import)		4	0%	4
colour-coated (import)	CNG CC 1	5	0%	6
colour-coated (import)	LYO CC	1	0%	13
colour-coated various		11	0%	54
cream		27	1%	204
Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	66	3%	4459
grog		2	0%	6
late Roman shell	ROB SH	11	0%	61
Malvernian	MAL RE A	3	0%	29
mortaria		1	0%	5
mortaria (Mancetter-Hartshill)	MAH WH	49	2%	1482
mortaria (West Midlands)		5	0%	379
mudstone?		7	0%	33
oxid/reduced		4	0%	43
oxidised		1368	54%	12034
reduced		192	8%	1262
samian	LMV SA	1	0%	NA
samian	SA	61	2%	NA
samian	SA (CG)	11	0%	NA
samian	SA (EG)	3	0%	NA
samian	SA (SG)	22	1%	NA
unclassified		65	3%	414
total		2522	100%	27023*

Table 3: Summary of the Roman pottery recorded by David Browne from key features reviewed here, quantified by fabric group (\*samian not weighed)

#### Ditch I

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
010 (upper fill)	oxidised		4	23	AD 45–100
	samian	SA (SG)	1	.*	
018	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	9	254	later 1st–3rd
	oxidised		11	51	
	reduced		4	22	
021 (lower fill)	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	2	292	later 1st–3rd
	oxidised		26	359	

*Table 4a: Summary of the Ditch I (south), quantified by context and fabric group (\*samian not weighed)*

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
012	oxidised		2	44	later 1st–mid 2nd
	reduced		5	30	
023 (lower fill)	mortaria (West Midlands)		1	306	later 1st–2nd
	oxidised		2	54	
	reduced		1	5	

*Table 4b: Summary of the Ditch I (south), quantified by context and fabric group*

The two lowest fills (021 and 023) produced a total of 32 sherds. The only diagnostic material in 021 was Dressel 20 amphora. Although imported from the 1st–3rd centuries, its presence is consistent with other 1st century military assemblages at Redhill and elsewhere in the region, such as Wroxeter, Pentryhyling fort and Brompton camp. Fill 023 produced a rim from a mortarium in a West Midlands fabric. The rim was very hard fired, possibly misfired which might indicate a fairly local source. It is similar to form M5.4 at Wroxeter (Timby *et al* 2000, 239, fig 4.73), with a hooked rim, downturned at the tip. While broadly within the range of military types at Wroxeter, this form was considered unique, and it was also found in a context contaminated with later material, so its 1st century date was not secure, though there was no later Roman material from this ditch. The lowest fills (021 and 023) had high average sherd weights (23g and 91g respectively), but these were biased by the presence of a few heavy amphora sherds and a mortarium rim.

Fill 012 produced a reduced ware, bead-rim jar (cf Webster 1976, fig 1.2); 018 sherds of Dressel 20 amphora; and an upper fill (010) the rim from a South Gaulish samian Dr 18 plate dated to *c* AD 45–100. The average weight for the uppermost fill (010) was very low (6g, excluding the unweighed samian), reflecting the presence of residual samian.

A worn coin dated AD269–71 (Victorinus; fill 019, sf85), was found in the middle fill of another Ditch I slot but also underlying fill 010 – other 3rd century coins cited by Browne and Booth (2002) were only in the vicinity of this ditch, and so not directly dating it.

#### *Dating and character of Ditch I*

The current finds dating for Ditch I indicates that it was constructed, at the earliest, in the later 1st century AD and, also, could have been infilled at much the same time ie quite possibly short-lived. It was V-shaped and sometimes exhibited a flat cleaning slot at the bottom.

Browne and Booth (2002) have suggested that the east and south parts of this assumed continuous ditch had different lives, with the suggestion that the south ditch had been re-excavated. However, this seems to be entirely based on the coin data (see above), as there was no diagnostically later Roman pottery to support this, and so this interpretation cannot be fully substantiated.



**Ditch II**

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
005 (lower fill)	grog		2	6	1st century AD
	oxidised		18	101	

*Table 5: Summary of the Ditch II Roman pottery, quantified by context and fabric group*

Ditch II produced very little pottery from several slots, and this included sherds of early Roman, grog-tempered ware. This same type was found in Phase 1 contexts in the 2011-13 Redhill excavations, and has been noted at other mid-later 1st century sites in the Midlands (eg Metchley fort; Greene and Evans 2002, 90–3, table 17, Fabrics 5.3, 6.2, 6.3, 7.3; Wall eg Leary 1998, 26-7, Fabrics GTA1-3, BSB1, OAA2). The low average sherd weight (5g) suggests that this may have also been residual. Browne and Boon (2002) also suggested that the ditch was only open for a short period.

*Dating and character of Ditch II*

Though dating evidence is scarce, it seems that Ditch II (closely following Ditch I in parallel just outside it) has an early Roman date, and could be in contemporary use (the ditches were also of similar proportions at c 2.2m wide). It had a more irregular profile than Ditch I varying from V-shaped to U-shaped, though a generally more homogenous fill.

**Ditch III**

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
848 (upper fill)	oxid/reduced		1	20	Roman
	oxidised		6	63	
	reduced		3	23	
033	oxidised		1	38	Roman
	reduced		1	2	
034	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	4	1078	later 1st–3rd
	oxidised		6	34	
	reduced		1	45	
087 (lower fill)	oxidised		2	6	Roman

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
38					1st century AD
040	?mudstone		1	3	1st century AD
041	?mudstone		6	30	1st century AD

*Tables 6a–b: Summary of the Ditch III (south) Roman pottery and dating, quantified by context and fabric group; Table 6b is a slot through Ditch III (west side)*

Ditch III produced a small assemblage, and this was mostly undiagnostic oxidised and reduced wares. The lower fills (087 and 034, 040 and 041) included sherds of Mudstone temper, dating to the 1st century or possibly earlier, and Dressel 20 amphora. The latter is consistent with mid–late 1st century military activity, as is the melon bead in fill 038. At Wroxeter a quarter of the melon beads came from stratified legionary contexts (Cool and Price 2002, 252).

Average sherd weights were very low for the basal fill (087) and two fills producing 1st century pottery (040, 041), which are all primary fills, and could indicate redeposition/residuality, though their early Roman date might suggest another explanation ought to be sought in this case – for instance, perhaps the result of trampling during cleaning out of the ditch.

#### *Dating and character of Ditch III*

Browne and Boon (2002) indicated a pre-Flavian date for this ditch followed by a late Neronian/Vespasianic abandonment. This ditch was much wider than Ditches I–II at c 5m wide, and had a distinctive Punic profile on the south side of the circuit and also probably on the west side (though section here was incomplete). Browne and Boon (2002, 6) favoured this as the earliest fort on the site, and this remains possible, as the current review of the ditch assemblage confirmed a mid–later 1st century AD date for its origins.

#### **Ditch Vc**

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
884** (sealing layer)	amphora	BAT AM 2?	1	40	Mid-3rd
	BB1	DOR BB1	3	34	
	cream		1	5	
	oxidised		13	139	
	reduced		1	20	
61 (upper fill)	colour-coated	LNV CC	2	32	c 360/70 (with residual 1st and 2nd–3rd century)
	colour-coated (import)	CNG CC 1	5	6	
	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	18	242	
	late Roman shell	ROB SH	1	8	
	Malvernian	MAL RE A	2	11	
	Mortaria (Mancetter-Hartshill)	MAH WH	1	132	
	oxidised		29	193	
	reduced		15	139	
	samian	SA (CG)	1	-*	
	samian	SA (SG)	10	-*	
	unclassified		11	41	
63 (lower fill)	samian	SA (SG)	1	-*	AD 45–65

*Table 7: Summary of the Ditch Vc Roman pottery quantified by context and fabric group (\*samian not weighed; \*\* associated coin)*

The primary fill of the three fills of the ditch (063; c 0.3m in thickness) produced only a single sherd, a stamped South Gaulish samian base (sf100) closely datable to c AD 45–65.

Finds from the upper fill were far more prevalent with upper fill (061) producing 95 sherds. The latest of these, late Roman shell-tempered ware, provided a *tpq* of c

360/370, though this was the only diagnostically late Roman type. A sherd of Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria had predominantly black/brown grits, suggesting a date of c AD 140–160 or later, and the base of a Nene Valley ware beaker dated to the late 2nd to 3rd century. Other residual fabrics dated from the 1st to 2nd century, including South Gaulish and Central Gaulish samian, handmade Malvernian ware, and Central Gaulish (white) colour-coated ware (eg an everted rim from a beaker similar to types common in military deposits at Wroxeter; Timby *et al* 2000, fig 4.52, form BK3). Early Roman forms were also present amongst the oxidised ware, for example a Severn Valley ware, Iron 'C' derived, carinated bowl and a bead-rim jar (Webster 1976 fig 9.59-60, fig 1.2), and the Dressel 20 amphora is also likely to be contemporary with this earlier material. The upper fill, therefore, clearly contained largely residual material.

The average sherd weights for the upper fills (061) was average, at 8.5g (excluding samian), which does not appear particularly degraded in size. The character of the upper fills was, however, also distinct, including more nails, fired clay, glass, as well as more pottery, so was being filled with general domestic debris. Proximity to the area of later activity to the south may be a major factor in the composition of the assemblage, as a slot dug through the eastern arm of the ditch (Ditch Vb) produced no finds at all.

#### *Dating and character of Ditch Vc*

This pattern of data suggests that this V-shaped ditch, just over 1m wide, may well have originated in the mid–later 1st century AD, and became about one-third infilled, when it probably remained as an earthwork. The final infilling was then possibly a gradual process from the 2nd/3rd–4th century. This review of the assemblage dating broadly agrees with Browne and Boon (2002), though it concludes with the ultimate backfilling being later (ie a mid 4th century *tpq*).

#### **Ditch VI**

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
65	?BB1		1	20	late 3rd–4th century
	oxidised		10	72	
	samian	SA (SG)	1	-*	

*Table 8: Summary of the Ditch VI Roman pottery, quantified by context and fabric group (\*samian not weighed)*

Ditch VI produced a small assemblage. The date range was mixed, but a late 3rd to 4th century *tpq* was provided by a BB1 cooking pot (Gillam 1976 fig 2.10–11), while this context also included a tiny sherd South Gaulish samian (Dr 24/25 hemispherical cup of Claudian date identified by George Boon), revealing a residual component. The average sherd weight was 8g (excluding samian).

#### *Dating and character of Ditch VI*

Browne and Boon (2002) indicated that Ditch VI was stratigraphically later than the infilled Ditch Vc, which they dated to the 'late 3rd century or later'. Since Ditch Vc can now be given a mid–late 4th century *tpq* for its final infilling, it is possible to suggest that Ditch VI was cut at that period or later, and so potentially is the latest feature on this part of the overall site. The ditch has a rather odd profile being a rather narrow V-shape and surviving as c 0.5m deep, and so seems of little practical use other than to mark out a boundary.

## Ditch VII

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
69 (upper fill of 6 fills)	BB1	DOR BB1	64	672	c 360/70 (with residual 1st, and 2nd–3rd century)
	?BB1		7	102	
	colour-coated	LNV CC	12	42	
	colour-coated various		1	5	
	cream		1	1	
	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	2	408	
	late Roman shell	ROB SH	1	4	
	Mortaria (Mancetter-Hartshill)	MAH WH	10	293	
	oxidised		165	1226	
	reduced		13	71	
	samian	SA	7	-*	
	samian	SA (CG)	3	-*	
	samian	SA (SG)	2	-*	
unclassified		9	45		
70** (third fill)	BB1	DOR BB1	2	8	AD 120+
	oxidised		2	16	
	reduced		2	10	
	samian	SA (SG)	1	-*	
	unclassified		2	12	
73 (second fill)	colour-coated (import)	LYO CC	1	13	mid-1st century AD
	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	3	174	

Table 9a: Summary of the Ditch VII Roman pottery (most easternly slot), quantified by context and fabric group (\*samian not weighed)

context	fabric group	National Roman Fabric Series	count	weight	tpq date
075/080 (upper fills)	amphora	GAL AM 1?	2	49	4th century (possibly 395–402 based on a coin)
	BB1	DOR BB1	392	4211	
	BB1?		58	820	
	colour-coated	LNV CC	48	410	
	colour-coated	OXF RS	5	40	
	colour-coated (import)		4	4	
	colour-coated various		10	49	
	cream		22	181	
	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	23	1790	
	late Roman shell	ROB SH	6	28	
	Malvernian	MAL RE A	1	18	
	mortaria		1	5	
	mortaria (Mancetter-Hartshill)	MAH WH	38	1057	

	mortaria (West Midlands)		3	58	
	oxid/reduced		3	23	
	oxidised		1044	9390	
	reduced		138	845	
	samian	SA	54	-*	
	samian	SA (CG)	7	-*	
	samian	SA (EG)	3	-*	
	samian	SA (SG)	3	-*	
	unclassified		34	270	
083 (2nd fill)	BB1	DOR BB1	3	17	c 360/70
	BB1?		3	38	
	cream		3	17	
	Dressel 20	BAT AM 1	5	221	
	late Roman shell	ROB SH	3	21	
	mortaria (West Midlands)		1	15	
	oxidised		21	162	
	reduced		5	29	
	samian	LMV SA	1	-*	
	samian	SA (SG)	2	-*	
	unclassified		7	41	
081 (lower fill)	oxidised		6	63	2nd–3rd century (though possibly mid–later 1st century – pre–early Flavian)
	reduced		3	21	
	samian	SA (SG)	1	-*	
	unclassified		2	5	

Table 9b: Summary of the Ditch VII Roman pottery (middle slot) quantified by context and fabric group (\*samian not weighed)

Ditch VII produced by far the largest finds group, with the majority of pottery sherds coming from upper fills 075 and 080, and relatively little from the bottom third of the fill where thinner layers of fill – fill 069 seems to incorporate a mass of burnt material at its base ie above fill 070 in the eastern slot.

#### Lowest fills

The lowest fill of the middle slot (081) yielded only a small assemblage. The latter included a flake from a form DR 15/17 dish from la Graufesenque in South Gaul, a typical pre-Flavian form (see Monteil below), though a broadly 2nd to 3rd century *tpq* was indicated by a Severn Valley ware jar (Webster 1976, fig 4.22).

The lowest fills in the eastern slot produced no finds, though a small assemblage was recovered from fill 073, comprising Dressel 20 amphora and a Lyon ware (LYO CC) rough-cast beaker (Greene 1979, fig 8, Usk type 20) dating to sometime from the Claudian/Neronian to early Flavian period. The fill above this (070) had a *tpq* of c AD 120, based on the presence of BB1, but also included early Flavian, South Gaulish samian (not seen by Gwladys Monteil), and a Republican coin dated to 32–31 BC.

#### Intermediate fills

Fill 083 from the middle slot had a *tpq* of c 360/370, based on three sherds of late Roman shell-tempered ware, but a wide range of dates was represented. The samian included South Gaulish ware from La Graufesenque, dating to the 1st century (pre-Flavian, see Monteil below) but also a Central Gaulish, Lezoux samian Dr 37 bowl dated to c AD 130–155. Two sherds of reduced ware had rusticated decoration, dating broadly to the late 1st to early 2nd century, and the oxidised ware included white-slipped ware dating to the 1st to 2nd century. There were also sherds of BB1

from a plain-rimmed dish dating to the late 2nd/early 3rd or later. Associated with the pottery was a single coin, a *dupondius* of Antoninus Pius dated to c AD 148 (sf191). However, it is clear the bulk of the finds were residual in a 4th century dump.

#### *Uppermost fills*

The assemblages from the upper fills (069, and 075/080) were much larger with a range of pottery types. Both had *tpq* dates of c AD 360/70 based on late Roman shell-tempered ware, but included residual 1st century and 2nd to 3rd century fabrics and forms. This is similar in content to the intermediate fills and likely to be a 4th century dump.

The residual finds in fill 069 included South Gaulish samian (forms Dr 27 and DR 15/17) and sherds of cream 'flagon ware', all dating to the 1st century. The Dressel 20 amphora may also derive from 1st century activity, but may have been in use later. A Dupondius dating to AD 90–1 was also recovered. Diagnostic 2nd century wares included Central Gaulish samian, amongst which Browne identified a late Antonine form DR 45 mortarium, and an Antonine form DR 31 bowl (not seen by Gwladys Monteil). There was also a Nene Valley ware hunt cup, with barbotine decoration under the slip, dating to the later 2nd to early 3rd century, and a Mancetter-Hartshill, hammerhead mortarium, post-dating c AD 180.

#### *Latest finds from Ditch VII*

Middle slot – including the coin hoard and its context

The largest and potentially most interesting assemblage, being associated with the coin hoard dated to c AD 275–80, came from upper fills 075/080. Unfortunately the relationship with the hoard and between these two fills is unclear and all the pottery was bagged and recorded as 075/080. The original pencil drawings do identify vessels from these contexts separately, but there was insufficient time to integrate this information onto the database. Most of the hoard is recorded as from fill 075 (68 coins). The coins were, therefore, associated with a variety of other finds: fired clay, daub (one with wattle impressions), a spindle whorl, box tile and *tegula*, iron nails and other iron and copper alloy fragments, a lead sheet with nail impressions, a polychrome glass bead, iron slag, hammerscale and animal bone. A broadly similar range of finds is recorded from 080, along with four coins attributed to the hoard (sf168, 209, 210, 223) and three further coins: a *sestertius* dated AD 173–4 (sf171), an Antoninianus dated AD 243–4 (sf224) and a coin of Honorius dated AD 395–402 (sf167).

The assemblage recorded as 075/080 also encompassed a wide date range, with even some intrusive post-medieval pottery present. Though there was also much residual material. The samian (not seen by Gwladys Monteil) mainly comprised later Antonine Central Gaulish forms, but included early vessels such as a Neronian, South Gaulish form Dr 29 and later 2nd to early 3rd century East Gaulish ware. Other earlier Roman types include a handmade Malvernian tubby cooking pot, and probably the Dressel 20 (BAT AM 1) and South Gaulish amphora (GAL AM 1). There were broadly 2nd to 3rd century types in BB1 (eg Gillam 1976, fig 3.43, fig 5.77), Severn Valley ware (Webster 1976, fig 7.42-3), and examples of Nene Valley ware with underslip barbotine. However, sherds of late Roman shell tempered ware indicated a *tpq* of c AD 360/60, and other characteristically 4<sup>th</sup> century fabrics included Oxfordshire red slipped ware (OXF RS) and in Nene Valley ware, a pentice-moulded beaker, a 'Castor ware' lid, and sherds with the characteristic metallic sheen of later examples of this ware type. Scanning through the drawings these two contexts also produced a similar range of 3rd to 4th century forms: Severn Valley ware jars and flared tankards (Webster 1976 fig 3.8, 10-11, 13; fig 5.28, fig 7.44), BB1 jars and bowls (Gillam 1976, fig 2.11, fig 4.45-49), and another Mancetter-Hartshill wall-sided mortarium.

### Eastern slot

A Mancetter-Hartshill mortarium from 069, wall-sided with zig-zag painted decoration, is similar to types dating to the late 4th century at Lincoln (Darling and Precious 2014, fig 168 MWS 1739-40). A fragment from a rouletted, Nene Valley ware 'Castor box' lid is also indicative of 4th century activity, while BB1 decorated with obtuse cross-hatch broadly dates to the later 3rd to 4th century.

### *Dating and character of Ditch VII*

Browne and Boon (2002) suggested that this large V-shaped ditch (up to 4m wide) was constructed in the 4th century, with a *tpq* of AD 395–402 for the final filling. Based on re-assessment of the pottery, there is no evidence that the ditch was necessarily constructed in the 4th century. Its primary fills were uniformly earlier containing (ie mid–later 1st century (samian) or possible 2nd/3rd century), though finds quantities were rather small. The bulk of the ditch fills were made up of deposits that were 4th century even though they contained large quantities of 2nd–3rd century finds, including even an intermediate fill 083). This suggests either a continuous but gradual infilling over a long period or a deliberate backfilling in the mid-late 4th century (or later). Dating of the final demise of the ditch was given a *tpq* by a ?slightly worn coin of 395–402 (Honorius) from 080, which is in agreement with Browne and Boon (2002, 6)

In the light of this dating it would appear that Ditch VI may represent an attempt to delineate an area to the north of Ditch VII. Its infilling seems to bear no resemblance to the final infilling of Ditch VII, and the relationship between these two ditches, which seem to have been at least partially contemporary, is still unclear.

### **1.2.2 Select samian from key contexts, by Gwladys Monteil**

Six fragments of samian ware from four key deposits of the 1970s excavations were submitted for comments. These came from the lower fills of ditches I, Vc and VII. The fabric of each sherd was examined, after taking a small fresh break, under a x20 binocular microscope. Each catalogue entry consists of a context number, fabric, form, condition, sherd count, weight, rim or base EVEs (Estimated Vessel Equivalents), rim or base diameter, comments and a date range.

With the exception of a decorated bowl in context 083, which is Central Gaulish and late Hadrianic-early Antonine, this small group of samian ware is South Gaulish in origin and pre-Flavian. The most diagnostic piece was recovered in the lower fill of ditch Vc (063 sf100), a stamp that can be quite narrowly dated to AD 45–65 (see below). This seems to have been omitted by Browne and Boon (1974, 4) where it is stated that 'there were no diagnostic artefacts found in the primary fills' of Ditch Vc.

The South Gaulish pieces examined here are entirely consistent with the ones recovered from more recent excavations on the site (Monteil 2015, 47).

### *Catalogue*

#### Ditch I

Context 010: Very worn rim fragment from a South Gaulish dish form Dr.18, 3g, the external surfaces are almost excoriated. This is not a particularly diagnostic form and can be broadly dated AD 45–100

#### Ditch Vc

Context 063, SF100: Near-complete base of a South Gaulish cup form Dr.27g, 59g, EVE(base) 0.7, diam 49mm.

Complete internal stamp by La Graufesenque potter Albinus iii, die 5a (OFALBIN with AL ligatured – see Hartley and Dickinson 2008, 123). The potter is dated AD 30–65 but this specific die has a narrower date range of AD 45–65 (*ibid*, 127).

#### Ditch VII

Context 081: Flake from the rim of a dish form Dr.15/17 from La Graufesenque, burnt black, 2g. The form tends to be more common in the pre-Flavian period, though early Flavian examples are known.

Context 083: Rim of a decorated bowl form Dr.37 from Lezoux in Central Gaul, 9g, EVE(rim) 0.03, diam 230mm.

Very little of the decoration remains and the ovolo was almost wiped out when the rim was added. The tongue ending seems to be a large rosette which perhaps suggests that it is ovolo B7/B24 (Rogers 1974). The top of tripod Q21 (*ibid*) is visible alongside a beaded border and the edge of a festoon. The tripod started being used by Trajanic Les Martres-de-Veyre potters but was also part of the repertoire of a limited number of later Lezoux ones, the Large S potter (Dickinson and Hartley 2000, no.1015) and Docilis (*ibid*, no.435). Assuming the identification of the ovolo is correct, Docilis is more likely. AD 130–155

One flake, La Graufesenque, 1g, 1st century AD.

One rim, La Graufesenque, Dr.27, 2g, EVE(rim) 0.06, diam 120mm. The angular profile of the bead suggests that this is an early example of the form, probably pre-Flavian.

### 1.3 Discussion

The pottery from David Browne's excavations complements the 2011–13 assemblage. A similar range of fabrics was noted, but the earlier site assemblage provides more extensive evidence for later Roman activity. This is reflected in the fabric profile for Browne's assemblage, which has higher proportions of BB1, colour-coated ware and oxidised wares, and lower proportions of amphorae and samian (Fig 1). It is beyond the remit of this project to discuss the two assemblages in detail, but this would make a worthwhile study, particularly as many of the forms from Browne's excavations are already illustrated.



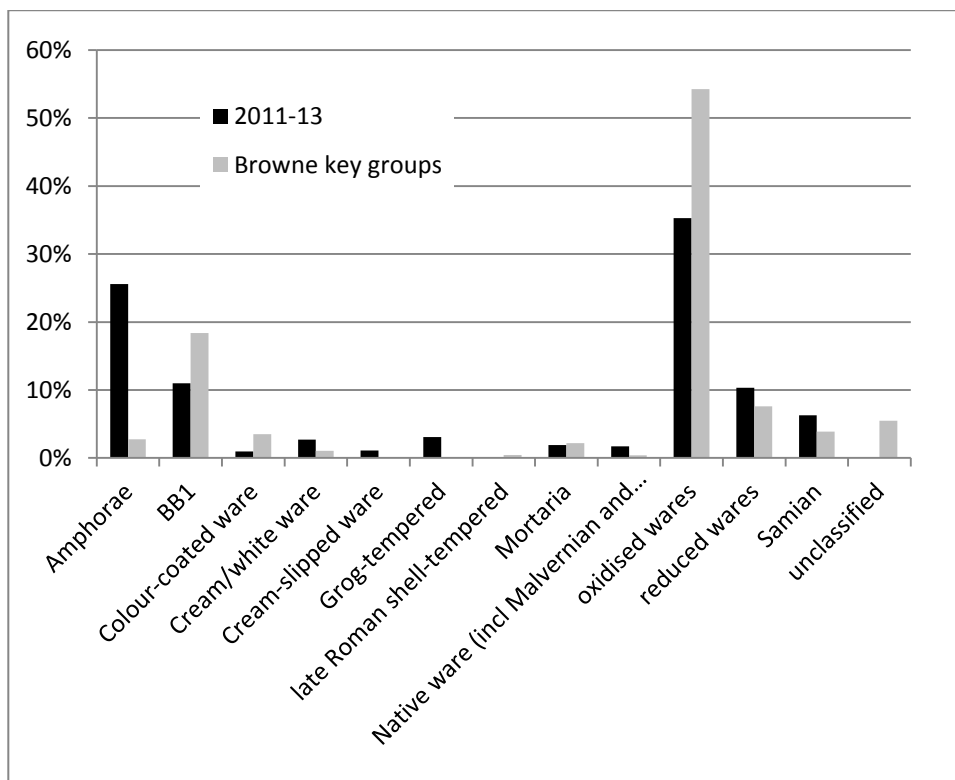


Figure 1: Comparison of the pottery assemblages from the 1972–3 and 2011-13 excavations (% count)

In terms of the overall sequencing of the fort ditches (I, II, III), and probable annex ditch (Vb, Vc; attached to Ditch III), there is no definite sequence that emerges, though there is a strong impression that the military activity was focussed on the mid–later 1st century AD. However, no further light was shed on the relationship of Ditches I/II and III – Browne and Boon (2002) favoured Ditch III being earliest, though perhaps it could equally be argued that the scarcity of finds in the infilled Ditch II might imply it existed before much activity across this part of the site.

Ditch VII, in contrast, marks a major departure in its alignment on the Roman road and its non-military character - the minor ditch VI seemingly being associated in its latest phase. This is in keeping with the changed character of the site towards a civilian function.

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