

Roman Pottery from Chronicle Hills

Gavin Lucas

The assemblage of pottery collected from the surface around the villa site at Chronicle Hills was briefly examined to obtain some idea of the range of wares and their date. The pottery was in remarkably good condition for surface finds, most of the sherds were very large and showed little sign of abrasion, suggesting that this material has been recently drawn out of features on the site, and that they may have been originally deposited soon after breakage. Most of the pottery was also Roman, but there was some quantity of post-medieval sherds present.

The range of wares on the site seems limited - about ten - but the quality of production is very high, including the greywares. In fact, apart from some coarse sandy greywares, mostly large storage jars of Horningsea type, and the occasional shell-tempered sherd, most of the pottery seems to comprise of vessels of high quality in a very fine fabric. Three main production centres seem to account for most of the finewares recovered - Hadham in Essex, the Nene Valley and Oxfordshire. Hadham appears to be the most common by far, with both red and grey wares present, frequently burnished, and represented by various bowls and flagons. The Nene Valley vessels also include mostly red colour-coated bowls, such as a shallow wall-sided bowl dating to the 4th century AD, and a brown colour-coated castor box. Reeded mortaria are also present. From Oxfordshire are various decorated necked bowls, including Young types C82, C77 and C78, all dating to the later 4th century and after. Some redware mortaria, either from Oxfordshire or more likely, Hadham, are also present, two with curved flanges and upright, grooved bead rims in a white slip, and one hammerhead, all with quartzite trituration grit and dating from the later 3rd century onwards. One sherd of samian was noticed, from a 2nd century cup (Drag.33), and another sherd that could have come from the early 4th century kilns at Harston.

Apart from Hadham greywares, there was one other fine greyware, unsourced but quite common. It was in a hard buff fabric with visible quartzite temper and had a grey colour-coat - the same ware occurred on the late Roman site at Wimpole (Wait & Horton, PCAS forthcoming). Large quantities of brick and tile were also present.

In summary, the pottery assemblage from Chronicle Hills shows a very high percentage of finewares from various sources, and mostly dating to the later 3rd and 4th century AD, as one might expect from a late Roman Villa site.

26 Scale 1:50,000 8A 5-1 Cambrian Museum of Antiquities

