

ASPECTS OF CERAMIC USE DURING THE LATE IRON AGE AND ROMANO-BRITISH PERIODS: A STUDY OF POTTERY, PLACE AND PEOPLE

Alice Lyons BA (Hons), MA, MCifA, FSA

Student: 3385183

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Frontispiece. University of East Anglia coat of arms

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ABSTRACT

“Pottery helped structure the ways people socialized at mealtimes and grieved during funerals; and it was often present when gods-fearing families performed small ritual acts”

Roth (2003, 41)

This short thesis concerns Roman pottery in eastern Britain and how the analysis of this material type, which was deeply embedded and entangled in everyday life (Roth 2003), informs on the society which made it.

The main subjects included in this text are the introduction of new potting technology in the Late Iron Age and its adoption in the Early Roman era, a characterisation of pottery fabrics in use; a discussion of ceramic specialisation and the connectiveness of mortaria workshops, a review of the manufacture of Black Burnished ‘kindred wares’, and finally an examination of the use of pottery in the Roman funerary rite.

Keywords

Late Iron Age, Early Roman, Roman, northern East Anglia, Eastern Britain, technology, pottery, manufacture, specialisation, connectiveness, distribution and deposition

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LIST OF CONTENTS

Abstract

List of Contents

List of Illustrations

List of Accompanying Publications

Acknowledgements

Prologue Framework of analysis

Part 1 Early Roman pottery manufacture: technology and change

Part 2 Roman pottery and rural settlement: assemblage characterisation, and aspects of specialisation and distribution

Part 3 Roman pottery and the funerary rite: ceramic choices in death

Conclusion What has been achieved?

Bibliography

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Frontispiece. University of East Anglia coat of arms
- Figure 1. Area of Study and significant sites mentioned in the text
- Figure 2. The Itter Crescent enclosure, showing development from Iron Age roundhouses to Roman villa
- Figure 3. A Sandy grey ware Roman pottery jar base, showing the ‘string or cheese-wire’ marks where it has been cut from the fast potters’ wheel
- Figure 4. The Socket stone from a potters’ wheel found at Two Mille Bottom, South Norfolk
- Figure 5. An example of the Brampton Early Roman kilns and a grey ware jar
- Figure 6. Earlier kiln 275 – note the angular shoulders and single lid-seating
- Figure 7. Later kiln 239 – note the more globular jar form and variety of lid-seatings
- Figure 8. A Brampton ceramic cheese-press
- Figure 9. A Brampton kiln plate with cereal impression
- Figure 10. Samian bowl, stamped by Paternus showing a freestyle hunting scene
- Figure 11. Russian plate with a sickle, hammer and tongs. Petrograd porcelain factory, 1920
- Figure 12. A Lower Nene Valley white ware mortaria showing metal working debris used as trituration grits
- Figure 13. Great Ellingham mortarium rim stamped with both Regalis and trademark stamps
- Figure 14. An Ellingham mortaria stamped by ‘Regalis’, recovered from recent excavations at *Venta Icenorum*, with the Regalis stamp-detail below
- Figure 15. The Postwick mortaria Herringbone (or feather) stamp
- Figure 16. A Pentney ‘hammer-headed’ reeded-rim mortaria
- Figure 17. The Roman infrastructure of eastern Britain
- Figure 18. Boxes of Roman pottery from the recent A14 project in Cambridgeshire
- Figure 19. A reconstruction of the Brampton Wharf by the well-known archaeological artist Alan Sorrell
- Figure 20. The main pottery industries of Norfolk and north Suffolk and their suggested limits of local distribution
- Figure 21. Changes in pottery supply through time from the Late pre-Roman Iron Age to the Romano-British period
- Figure 22. Black-burnished ware 2 everted-rim jars and beaded dished with cross-hatch burnished decoration
- Figure 23. The distribution of Black Burnished ware products

- Figure 24. BB2-type ‘kindred’ jars and dishes from coarse ware manufacturing centres in the study area
- Figure 25. The site at Duxford, show the hilltop activity including pit digging, a shrine and associated burial
- Figure 26. Duxford accessorised inhumation and cremation burial
- Figure 27. Duxford accessorised inhumation burial
- Figure 28. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester site plan showing the cemetery (C.2 – in green) location
- Figure 29. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester cremation cemetery layout
- Figure 30. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester; a large ‘ritually killed’ Horningsea Storage jar used as a cinerary urn
- Figure 31. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester cremation 10520
- Figure 32. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester; a flagon within a larger cinerary urn

LIST OF ACCOMPANYING PUBLICATIONS

- Lyons, A.L., and Clarke, G., 2021, Late Roman pottery production at Gunvil Hall Farm, Wymondham, Norfolk, *Journal of Roman Pottery Studies*, Volume 18, 17-34

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Author contributions

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Author contributions

David Gurney suggested the authors collaborate on this publication. Michael de Bootman was the lead author as the original fieldwork and survey data are his. Alice Lyons conceptualised the report format, undertook the ceramic analysis and completed the text to include Michael de Bootman's early research

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- Lyons, A.L., and Blackbourn, K., 2017, Early Roman Pottery Production at Brampton, Cambridgeshire, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, Vol CVI for 2017, 23-48

[PCAS2017.NBPLATES.BramptonKilns.indd \(archaeologydataservice.ac.uk\)](https://www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/PCAS2017.NBPLATES.BramptonKilns.indd)

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Alice Lyons conceptualised the publication, wrote the complete text and undertook the ceramic analysis; Kathryn Blackbourn supplied the site data

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Declaration of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge; the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes. I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is mine and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

PROLOGUE

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

“*a pot is not just a pot*” Hill (2002a, 152)

Over the past 32 years I have worked as an archaeological excavator, finds supervisor, a ceramic specialist and post-excavation manager in the area of northern East Anglia, comprising Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. During this time, within the bounds of peer-reviewed commercial archaeology, I have published three monographs and co-authored another three (others are in press); in addition, I have written and co-authored nine journal articles. In the majority of these volumes I am either the solo or the lead author and the vision for the publication is mine. In addition, I have contributed to numerous publications as a specialist in Late Iron Age and Roman pottery helping to date, characterise and interpret the subject sites. It is the intention within this short thesis to focus on the main themes within my published body of work and to demonstrate its significant contribution to our understanding of the archaeology of eastern Britain, securely positioning this work within its broader academic context while bridging the gap between commercial and research archaeology. To this end it is beneficial that the *East Anglian Research Framework* has been recently updated (C. Evans 2020) and the series of monographs comprising ‘*New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain*’ have been published (Allen *et al.* 2017; 2018; Smith *et al.* 2016; 2018); both reference the publications submitted with this thesis and will function as a fundamental synthesis to this work and therefore will often be cited.

My professional career and research, also publications, in archaeology have throughout been strongly associated with ancient pottery. Within this thesis I discuss several distinct aspects of pottery-based research, incorporating aspects of the whole life-cycle of the pot, “life, death and after-life” (Cooper *et al.* 2022, 161).

The essay opens with a consideration of the historical, archaeological and theoretical background to the issues to be addressed:

Part 1

- the Late Iron Age-to-Early Roman transition from handmade to wheel-made pottery
- Early Roman pottery manufacture focused on the newly discovered industry at Brampton, Cambridgeshire, which allows for a new interpretation of pre-Flavian pottery making strategies within the region
- the rise of specialist mortaria production workshops and their levels of connectiveness

Part 2

- the coarse ware manufacturing centres of northern East Anglia, their markets and distributions
- a broad characterisation of ceramic use for the region and a discussion of why some communities selected specific fabric types
- a reconsideration of Black Burnished ware-type vessels, their manufacture and distribution

Part 3

- the development of the Roman accessorised funerary rite and associated ceramic choices

By the conclusion of this thesis, therefore, I will have reviewed the current state of Roman pottery research pertaining to these research topics, placing them firmly within the current published milieu, while also suggesting where future research could be beneficial.

Area of Study

(Figure 1)

Within the confines of this study the term ‘Eastern Britain’ focusses on Norfolk, north Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, traditionally viewed as the territory of the *Iceni* (Smith 2016a), located on the north-western edge of the Roman Empire (Farley 2012).



Figure 1. Area of Study and significant sites mentioned in the text

PART 1

POTTERY MANUFACTURE: TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGE

“When I examine a prehistoric pot, I do not simply see an ancient piece of fired clay. I usually describe the experience as being a little like having a conversation with the original potter”

G.W. Taylor (2013, 122)

“Every choice leaves a particular technological signature” Budden (2008, 2)

Roman pottery studies in Britain have a long history (Swift 2016) spanning from the antiquarian (Browne 1658; 1712, Camden 1586) to modern times (Hunt 2016), the sequence of which has been detailed in several sources (Tyers 1996, 1-23; Wallace 1990). The discipline relies on a mix of descriptive (Bortolini 2016), statistical (Bishop 2016; Orton and Tyers 1990), anthropological and ethnographical (Fowler 2016), and also scientific (Tite 2016) techniques to maximise its interpretative potential. Key scientific techniques presently include thin section petrography (Quinn 2009; 2013), geochemistry (Degryse and Bentley 2017), x-ray technologies (Hall 2016; Heimann 2016; Holmquist 2016; Rizzetto and Tabacniks 2016), as well as isotope (Wiegand 2016) and organic residue analysis (Barnard and Eerkens 2016; Historic England 2017). While the well-established dating techniques of luminescence (Blain and Hall 2016) and carbon dating (Van de Plicht *et al.* 2020) remain current; the new dating technique of hydroxylation is on the verge of being available for ceramic material (Avramovska *et al.* 2021; Barrett 2013).

That baked clay or pottery vessels have a predominance in the analysis of past cultures is largely due to the abundance of the material itself, which has been historically readily available and cheap, and to its plastic character that allows it to be easily manipulated. Indeed, once fired to over 800/900°C it becomes very difficult to completely destroy (Montana 2016, 88): a clay vessel can be broken, burnt and/or submerged in water but still survive enough to inform on its date of manufacture, source of supply, possible original function and actual use. Indeed, that pottery is so physically robust has resulted in this material type being termed “ubiquitous” (Taylor 2013, 180) and “disproportionally preserved in the archaeological record” (Mattingly 2007, 513), although Cooper (*et al.* 2022, 184) argues more positively that this allows for a “unique perspective” to be attained. The data that pottery analysis provides is an essential interpretive tool for the archaeologist (Hunt 2016; Millett 1979; Orton *et al.* 1993; Tyers 1996, 36-47), which has the potential to aid the characterisation of an activity, a settlement, a community or even a region (Revell 2016). Pottery production and the resultant individual marks a person makes upon the clay material used to form a completed, often sophisticated, vessel offers a fascinating insight into the people who made it (Sutton 2017; 2020a).

The emergence of pottery as an imported ‘novel technology,’ which took place in the eastern region of Britain during the Neolithic, *c.*3900 cal BC (Whittle *et al.* 2011, 869, figure 15.8), was the first time in this area that people manipulated this naturally occurring plastic material into vessels. The transformation from wet clay to a solid state, brought about by fire, may even have been viewed as so remarkable as to have been magical (*ibid.*, 876).

For the pottery making process to be successful a community had to have the organisational resources to perform a complex series of technical tasks often explored within the ‘*chaîne opératoire*’ concept

(Roux 2003; Sinclair and Schlanger 1990; Torres 2002). This construct grew from its origins in French cultural ethnography (Bordes 1961), whereupon it embraced anthropological and ethnoarchaeological research within contemporary archaeological theoretical frameworks (Roux 2016, 101) to eventually address all aspects of production (Gosselain 2018; Lewis and Arntz 2020).

The physical act of pottery manufacture begins with the labour intensive tasks of finding a suitable clay source (Montana 2016), transporting the heavy material, cleaning and preparing the clay (G.W. Taylor 2013, 124), before forming and decorating, drying and firing the pot (Rye 1988, 16-28). These actions have to be continuously repeated over a period of years to enable the transition of inherited knowledge, often from an early age (Budden and Sofaer 2009, 9), so that skills eventually become entrenched within society (Roux 2016, 102), which can result in culturally distinct styles (Cunliffe 2010, 504; Lewis and Arntz 2020, 6). The process of '*chaîne opératoire*', however, does not stop with the firing of a vessel but continues through post-firing surface finishes (Drieu *et al.* 2020), use (Duistermaat 2016, 120), re-use and repair (H.J.M. Green 2017, 134 and 136, figure 5.11; Wild 2013) or adaptation (Arthur 2002; Skibo 1992). Lemonnier (2013) emphasises that these physical human actions which have tangible result, in this case the manufacture of a pot – although other object types also have meaning (Lemonnier 2016) –, are technical representations of wider symbolic systems within society.

Although the form and use of pottery vessels changed significantly throughout the 4000 years of ceramic use in British prehistory (Hill 2002a, 144) the technology used to make them remained broadly unchanged; as most vessels were individually hand-built by experienced potters (Barley 1994, 9) and baked using an open fire (Gibson 2002; G.W. Taylor 2013). It should be recognised, however, that research has highlighted the range of social meaning (Hill 2002b, 76-77) and the sophisticated techniques that can be hidden within this period of apparent ceramic conservatism (Budden 2008, 2). It was not until the very end of the Iron Age (150BC-AD43), with the expansion of the Roman Empire into Gaul and eventually Britain, that a significant and relatively rapid, technological revolution in pottery manufacture can be observed within the archaeological record of the south and east of Britain (Anderson and Woolhouse 2016; J. Evans 2015, 427). This transition may have been particularly successful here because the area had abundant clay sources combined with a pre-existing established tradition of ceramic use in the Iron Age (Smith 2017, 201). However, the uptake of this new technology was not universal, with some parts of the country such as Dorset maintaining a tradition of hand building seen in the Black Burnished industry (BB1) (Tyers 1996, 182-186) – in this case associated with a wider supply network for salt (Smith 2017, 178) – while areas of Wales maintained an aceramic tradition (Smith 2017, 200), possibly as they never fully came under Roman rule (J. Evans 2016, 513-518). How this 'new' technology, which comprised the fast potter's wheel and the semi-permanent kiln (Swan 1984), was adopted within the area of study is a complex question (Sutton 2020b, 239) and one with huge research potential (C. Evans 2020; pottery studies).

The transition between the British Iron Age and Roman periods was a complex process and so it is understandable that finding appropriate nomenclature to successfully navigate it has proved challenging. The first use of the term 'Romanization' (Haverfield 1912) has since Millett's (1990a; 1990b) seminal publications – which instigated the modern debate – been criticised (Hingley 2000; Webster and Cooper 1996) as being "overly classical" (Weekes 2016, 440). Particularly, it has been argued that the term 'Romanization' implies an acceptance of the beneficence of the Empire (sometimes understood as a legitimising antecedent of the British Empire (Revell 2016, 2)) and thereby fails to reflect the multifaceted social relations that existed at that time (Millett 2007; J. Taylor 2013, 172).

As a result of this critique, the term ‘Romanization’ has generally been accompanied or superseded by ‘acculturation’, which allows for a more nuanced post-Colonial (Hingley 2014), or possibly anti-Colonial (Versluys 2014), exploration of this complex subject (James and Millett 2001; Rizzetto *et al.* 2017; Trow 2016; Woolf 1998; 2001; 2002). Limited historical narratives have been replaced with archaeological ones (Fulford and Brindle 2016, 6), which inform on aspects of agency and identity, ranging from the individual (Giles 2007, 105) to the broader society (Revell 2016, 1-18). Recent work has attempted to progress research away from the historical context by focusing on the study of archaeological material culture (Versluys 2014; Pitts 2017; 2019). Specific examples of this include coarse ware pottery (Hill 2002a), mirrors (Joy 2012), toilet instruments (Hill 1997), coins (Marsden 2011; Talbot 2011), brooches (Brindle 2018) and other small portable objects (Daubney 2016; Farley 2012; Harlow 2018; 2021; Hutcheson 2004). It is certain and indeed to be hoped for, that as more work is undertaken the ideas and language used to progress this concept will continue to evolve.

Within this developing academic framework, it is generally accepted that the 1st century AD was a period of dynamic change in Britain (Creighton 2006; Cunliffe 2010, 600; Mattingly 2006), when power shifted from the indigenous British elite, a process formalised by the successful invasion of AD43, and passed using differing levels of force and persuasion to governance under Roman rule (Upex 2008, 34-59). All aspects of life would have eventually been affected, including material culture (Farley 2012; Manley 2011). The introduction of new potting technologies, however, is viewed as a key index of social change (Sutton 2020b, 218) as it had an embedded social significance beyond the act of making pots (Roux 2003, 4).

Pottery had been made using a wheel in Oriental Asia (Mesopotamia, Iran and the Indus Valley), since the 4th millennium BC (Roux and Courty 1998), on the fast potters’ wheel in Europe from at least *c.*2000BC (Williams 1997, 86-87) and in France since 400-300BC (Rigby and Freestone 1997, 57). It is highly likely, therefore, that this technology was familiar to the indigenous peoples of southern and eastern Britain, especially as wheel-made ‘Gallo-Belgic’ wares were present in the ceramic repertoire of south-east Britain at this time (Fitzpatrick and Timby 2002). It was not until the influence of the Roman Empire began to rise in Europe, however, that this technology was first used in southern and eastern Britain during the Late Iron Age between *c.*150BC and AD43 (Hill 2002a, 143).

The transition to fast wheel-made pottery began with the introduction of the northern Gaulish (Late La Tène or Julio-Claudian) style of Aylesford-Swarling type pottery (Thompson 1982) which was made using a hybrid of hand- and wheel-making techniques; significantly giving the visual impression of being wholly wheel-made (Sutton 2020b, 240). Vessel shapes were typically angular (carinated or corrugated), often with pedestal or foot-ring bases and with decorative motifs located within a neck cordon (Pollard 1988, 30). That this innovative technology was adopted only at this particular time may, in part, have been due to the perceived increased social value of the new ceramic technologies, as they formed part of the infrastructure of a dominant Empire (Hegmon 2000, 133). The adoption of innovation, therefore, was not only a functional response to change, with new food stuffs (Alcock 2001) and foodways available at this time (Cool 2006), but also reflected the wider political social dynamic (J. Evans 2016). The shift in manufacturing techniques continued into the Early Roman period with the fast potters’ wheel being widely adopted in eastern Britain, with local variations, during a focused period of transition over *c.*60-80 years, bridging the mid-1st century AD. This period of change, spanning at least 3 or 4 human generations, reflects the length of time it may have taken indigenous potters to change their “customary motor pattern(s)”, which ethnoarchaeological evidence suggests would take an individual at least ten years to master (Roux 2003, 15), and within a society may take at least two generations to complete (Hill 2002a, 143; 2002b, 76). So, what appears a ‘fast

transition' in archaeological terms was actually slow in the context of ethnoarchaeological comparisons.

Archaeological evidence has proven that the influence of the Roman invasion and subsequent rule was felt with varying levels of intensity throughout the land (Hill 2002a, 143; Rippon 2018; Thompson 2015). In parts of rural Cambridgeshire, for example, initial reactions appear to have been minimal (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 4), while other nearby settlements embraced change, such as at the Itter Crescent enclosure (Figure 1) where round houses were seamlessly replaced by a rectangular wooden house that in turn developed into a sophisticated villa (Lyons *et al.* in press) (Figure 2).

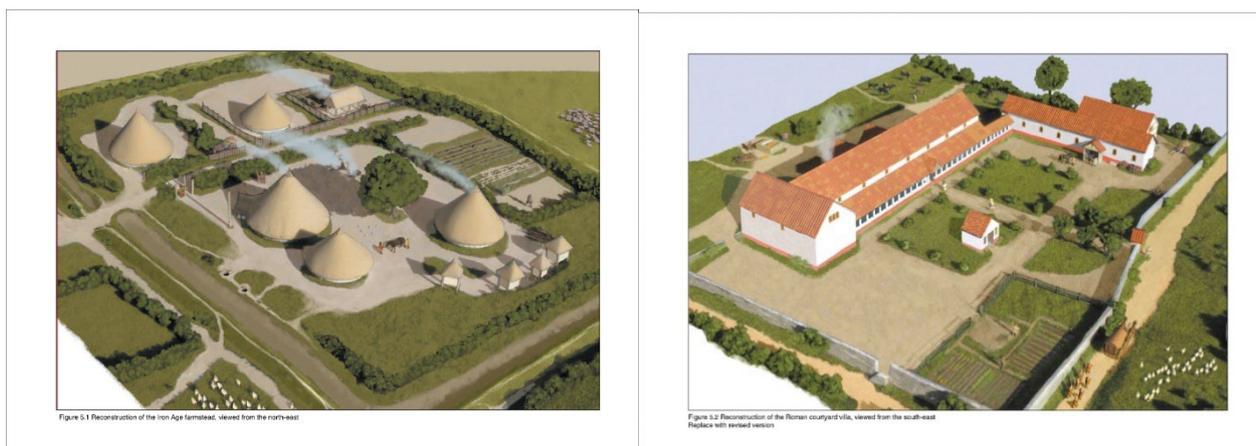


Figure 2. The Itter Crescent enclosure, showing development from Iron Age roundhouses to Roman villa
(Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

In northern East Anglia, traditionally viewed as the heartland of the *Iceni* (Davies 2009; Smith 2016a), the adoption of new pottery technologies was largely absent until the later part of the 1st century AD, probably as they chose to retain aspects of their traditional life-style as a client kingdom until this could no longer be sustained and the Boudican rebellion ensued (AD60-61) (Crummy *et al.* 2015). The singular culture of northern East Anglia has often been reported on, most recently by Harlow (2018, 11 and 422) and even today Norfolk has retained the regional identity of “do different”, as depicted on the University of East Anglia coat of arms (Frontispiece).

That the change to new potting technology was not directly associated with the successful Roman invasion of AD43 has also been established as “pottery was changing independently of whether legions crossed the Channel and stayed” (Willis *et al.* 2008, 74) and as such demonstrates the close social, economic and cultural links that existed between this part of Britain and Roman Europe during the Late Iron Age (Champion 2016; Creighton 2006, 14-34). By the later 1st century AD, however, the majority of locally made utilitarian pottery in the east of Britain was made, at least partially, on the fast potter’s wheel.

Evidence for these developments can be seen in the change of both fabric and form within the British repertoire (Hill 2002a, 147, figure 13.4; Rigby and Freestone 1997, 59, figure 4) as pots broadly evolved from handmade Iron Age coarse ware vessels, often tempered with the local flint (Cunliffe

1991, figures A:17, 22-24), to Aylesford Swarling-type grog-tempered carinated jars, bowls and cups (Thompson 1982; classes B, D and E), to the Early Roman quartz tempered globular jar (Lyons 2009a). It is noteworthy that by the Early Roman era ‘string-marks’ left on the bottom of the pot, where each pot was cut from the fast-rotating wheel, can often be seen: a manufacturing signature not found on handmade or slow wheel-made pots (Spencer 1997, 63, figure 2) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. A Sandy grey ware Roman pottery jar base, showing the ‘string or cheese-wire’ marks where it has been cut from the fast potters’ wheel (Photograph by Alice Lyons)

It is interesting, while discussing direct physical evidence for this technological change, to observe that while numbers of known Early Roman kilns are rapidly expanding with frequent new discoveries within the study area (C. Evans 2020: pottery studies), evidence for surviving pottery wheels is still unusual. This goes some way to explain why the subject is so poorly represented within the British archaeological literature; even Hills 2002 seminal paper, ‘Just about the Potter’s Wheel’, does not discuss what a potter’s wheel actually looked like or how it was used. During excavations of a kiln site at Two Mile Bottom, South Norfolk (Lyons 2003a), however, an extremely unusual example of a potters’ wheel socket stone was found (Figure 4), one of only a few found in the country (Swan 1984, 50, plate 13). This discovery is particularly significant as it could suggest that rod-driven single wheels (which rely on a drilled socket stone), rather than dual kick-wheels (which were mounted in a wooden frame), were in use within the region. Single wheels also had the advantage of being easy to dismantle and therefore relatively portable (McCallum 2009, 61-62).

Current pottery ‘forming’ research does not, or cannot, distinguish between the different making signatures left by the varying types of fast potter’s wheel, although the potential to do so is recognised (Jeffra 2013, 44; Roux and Courty 1998). This topic, therefore, will benefit from future advances in scientific analysis which may allow for the different throwing signatures that each fast wheel type makes to be distinguished. It would be interesting to try to establish if the hand-formed and wheel finished Aylesford-Swarling type pots (Sutton 2020) and other Early Roman mixed technique production such as that at Brampton in Cambridgeshire (Livermore 2018) were produced using rod-driven single wheels: which would mean that portable wheels were in use with contemporary portable kiln furniture. If this premise could be proven it would then suggest that the kick-wheel was adopted

in the later 1st and 2nd centuries AD when larger more industrial pottery industries were established in Britain and when issues of portability were no longer relevant: which would mean that heavier more complicated kick wheels were in use with contemporary permanent solid floored kilns. That both socket stones and probable potters' kick wheel have been found together within the large mid-to-late Roman Nene Valley Industry (Perrin 1999), in a well adjacent to a potters workshop (Swan 1984, 50), is broadly supportive of this suggested transition. The poor preservation of wheel furniture, which has hampered aspects of this research so far, is most likely due to the organic nature of their wooden components, which do not survive out of waterlogged deposits, as well as the intrinsic value of their metal and stone parts which would most probably have been reused (Duckworth and Wilson 2020).



Figure 4. The Socket stone from a potters' wheel found at Two Mile Bottom, South Norfolk (Reproduced with the kind permission of East Anglian Archaeology)

The adoption of these innovative technologies is particularly well-illustrated by the recent excavations at Brampton, Cambridgeshire (Lyons and Blackburn 2017). Here eight, apparently isolated, Early Roman kilns, in use between AD60-80, were discovered only 1.2km distant from River Great Ouse (Figure 1). Although the Brampton kilns differed slightly in design from each other, it can be said that they were generally figure-of-eight in plan with a circular clay-lined firing chamber, a single stokehole, and also substantial rectangular and cylindrical portable internal fitments (Figure 5). What makes this kiln group particularly significant is that stratigraphic analysis demonstrates that not all kilns were in use at the same time and that the pottery assemblages, where they could be associated with a single kiln, showed distinct time-sensitive characteristics.

Analysis of both the kiln structures and their associated pottery assemblages suggest that at least two generations of potters worked at this site where the earlier kilns produced lid-seated jars with distinctive high shoulders and the later kilns produced more globular jar types (Figures 6 and 7). The

hand of more than one potter is also reflected in the decision to provide single or double lid-seating grooves within the vessel rims, with multiple lid-seating types more common in the later kilns. Forming analysis has shown that a mix of techniques was used to form these pots which were finished on the fast potters' wheel (Livermore 2018).



Figure 5. An example of the Brampton Early Roman kilns and a grey ware jar (waster)
(Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

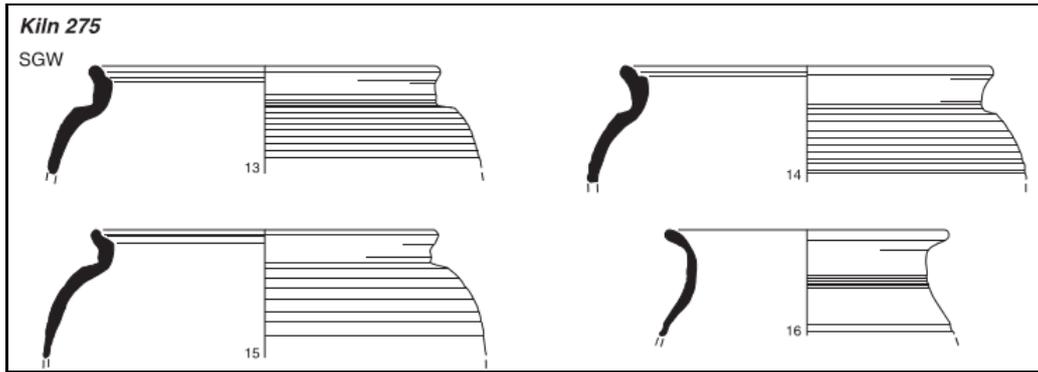


Figure 6. Earlier kiln 275 – note the angular shoulders and single lid-seating (not to scale)

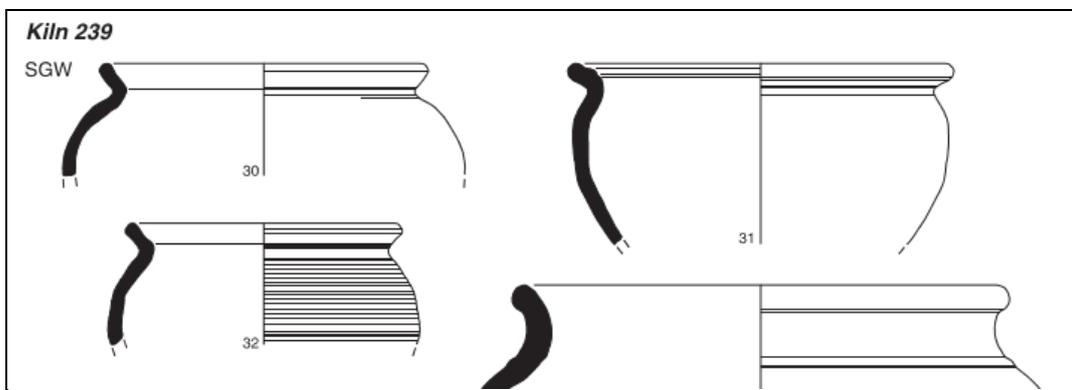


Figure 7. Later kiln 239 – note the more globular jar form and variety of lid-seatings (not to scale)

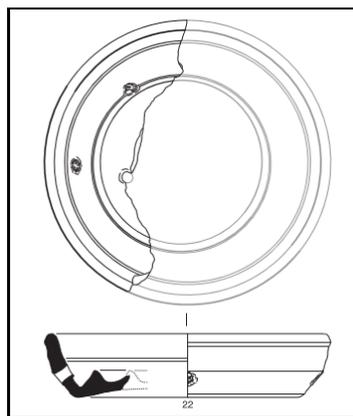


Figure 8. A Brampton ceramic cheese press (not to scale)
 (Figures 6, 7 and 8 reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

Being able to demonstrate the progression of both kiln and pottery design within one group of kilns is rare in the archaeological record. Another example is the Ellingham mortaria kiln site, discussed below. It is interesting to consider that this evidence suggests that at least two generations of potters returned to the same isolated site to fire their pots, repairing old kilns or overbuilding them on new alignments. When considering the origin of these potters, the level of conformity in the design of their utilitarian vessels, even though changes can be demonstrated, suggests that these were local people with limited exposure to new ceramic influences.

One vessel type particularly informs on the character of the Brampton potters and that is the cheese press; a moulded dish or lid used to compress and shape soft ewes cheese (Cool 2006, 94-97; J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 120; C. Green 2017, 121) (Figure 8). That cheese production was important to the Brampton community, especially when combined with spelt cereal impressions found preserved in the kiln furniture (Figure 9), suggests that the Brampton potters were ‘potter farmers’ seasonally working within a mixed agrarian regime (Hamilton 2002, 45).

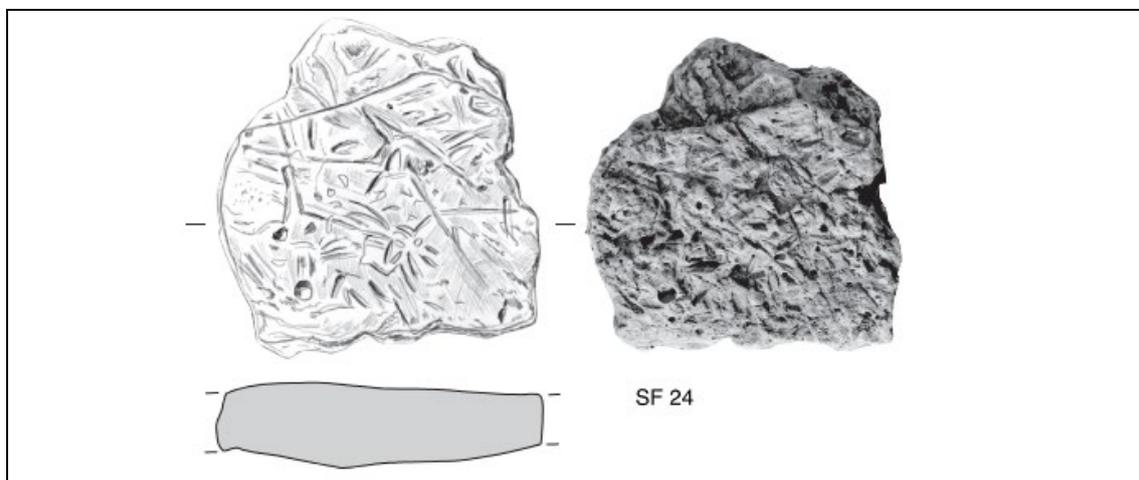


Figure 9. A Brampton kiln plate with cereal impression (Lyons and Blackbourne 2017, 41, figure 11, SF24)
(Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

It is worthy of note, however, that large numbers of cheese presses have also been found at the Early Roman (AD50s) site, Longthorpe Fort (Dannell and Wild 1987, 151-152), only 32km to the north of Brampton. This raises the question of whether the Brampton potters had a military - possibly a retired soldier and his descendants - connection. C. Evans *et al.* (2008, 131) argue that itinerant specialist potters were not necessary to the transfer of pottery skills within rural communities; rather such skills could have spread through “communal gatherings” (A. Jones 2011, 283) such as markets and weddings, and the exchange of labourers (either serfs or slaves) as well as through the military. Anderson and Woolhouse (2016, 23) have proposed itinerant potters, possibly with continental origins for the flagon-making site at Duxford.

Since the publication of these first eight kilns, a further 47 examples have been discovered in the vicinity, as part of the A14 road improvement scheme (Sutton *et al.* in press). As such, Brampton in Cambridgeshire, with 55 known kilns, is the largest Early Roman coarse ware industry to have been

discovered in Britain in modern times (*ibid*). This discovery of a large Early Roman pottery industry in the region significantly changes our understanding of how pottery of this period was made, as contemporary local pre-Flavian kilns sites at Cherry Hinton (J. Evans 1990), Greenhouse Farm (Gibson and Lucas 2002), War ditches (Pickstone and Mortimer 2012), Addenbrooke's (C. Evans *et al.* 2008), Swavesey (Willis *et al.* 2008) and Duxford (Anderson and Woolhouse 2016) were all making on a much smaller scale (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 32-38; Smith 2017, 205). The discovery of the Early Roman kiln industry at Brampton also raises questions about 'ownership' of not only the land but of the resources to needed to make pots (clay, fuel, water and labour) (Buckland *et al.* 2001), as evidence for established villa estates at this time is rare, although not unknown (Lyons *et al.* in press).

It may be that the Early Roman Brampton industry in Cambridgeshire was superseded by the coarse ware production centred round Horningsea, located only *c.*30km to the south-east of Brampton, where 24 kilns have so far been identified. Production at Horningsea started in Flavian times and continued on a large scale in the area until *c.*360AD (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 41, table 3.3 and 79, figure 3.21). The discovery of the Early Roman coarse ware industry at Brampton, in Cambridgeshire, has therefore clearly demonstrated the presence of different Early Roman making strategies within the region which supports the view, discussed above, that the adoption and implementation of the new potting technologies of the Late Iron Age and Early Roman periods were complex. Even with the discovery of such large numbers of pottery kilns at Brampton, however, no evidence of potters' wheels or associated workshops have survived.



Figure 10 (left). Samian bowl, stamped by Paternus, showing a freestyle hunting scene (Walters 1908, plate XXXI)

Figure 11 (right): Russian plate with a sickle, hammer and tongs. Petrograd porcelain factory, 1920 (Rozendorf 1980)

Alongside, and contemporary with, the adoption of these modern technologies and their associated fabrics and forms, was fine ware pottery imported directly from the large kiln industries of South, Central and Eastern Gaul (Brindle 2017; Webster 1996, 13-16). These distinctive red glossy and

sometimes highly decorated samian fine table wares (Figure 10), started to arrive as a vanguard of imports into Britain after the successful Roman invasion in AD43 and reached most rural populations in eastern Britain by the Flavian period (J. Evans 2016, 519). How they were viewed by the British population is an interesting research question and one that has only relatively recently been addressed (Willis 1996; 1997, 38-41; Willis 1998, 85-6; Willis 2011;190). As a result of this research, Willis has proposed that either most rural communities wanted and “keenly acquired” samian ware (Willis 2003, 101), or traders thought that there was sufficient demand to target the rural economy (Willis 2011, 168). Early research suggests that decorated wares were the most popular (Willis 1997, 38-39) with particular regional preferences also found, such as the elevated level of samian cup-use in Essex (Willis 2011, 220-221).

The use of image-rich samian ware as propaganda has not yet been researched (Gwladys Monteil *pers. comm.*), although pottery has certainly served this purpose in many other contexts both earlier (Lamb 2018) and later (Christies 2022) (Figure 11). Samian wares, however, did gradually become more widespread and were fully incorporated into both the settlement (Part 2) and funerary (Part 3) ceramic repertoires of eastern Britain, with supply peaking in the 2nd century AD (Willis 2011) before rapidly declining in the early-to-mid 3rd century AD (Webster 1996).

As Roman Britain entered the 2nd century AD, the technological transitions of the Early Roman era were largely embedded into everyday manufacturing practice in the east and the region was generally peaceful, with an established infrastructure (Smith 2016a) (Part 2). Within this economic and social framework, although the ‘potter farmer’ (C. Evans *et al.* 2008, 131) remained a constant throughout the Roman period in eastern Britain (Lyons and Clarke 2021), many smaller manufacturing centres were replaced (Smith 2017, 203 and 206, figure 5.18) with the newly established large industrial pottery complexes which manufactured and distributed huge amounts of pottery until the end of Roman Britain (J. Evans 2015, 435; Mattingly 2007, 513-520; Tyers 1996). Within our study area, the most influential of these large industries was that established in the Lower Nene Valley during the mid-2nd century, centred around modern day Water Newton, near Peterborough. It has been proposed, based on stylistic similarities, that this industry had strong links with Rhenish potters (Tyers 1996, 173), and a range of colour-coated fineware beakers, grey wares and latterly also colour-coated coarse ware jars and dishes (Perrin 1999, 78) were made on an industrial scale to be traded both locally and up the eastern seaboard (Bidwell 2017, 293; J. Evans 2015, 434 and 439; J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 119-120) until at least the latter part of the 4th century AD (Bidwell and Croom 2010, 34; Perrin 1999; Tyers 1996,173-175) and perhaps into the early 5th (Upex *et al.* 2008). Large coarse ware industries, which served the local market, were also established at this time. These comprised Horningsea (J. Evans *et al.* 2017) and Godmanchester (H.J.M. Green 2017, 135-137) in Cambridgeshire, the Nar Valley (de Bootman 1983; 1984, Gurney 1990; Lyons 2004; Peachey 2018; in press) and Brampton (C. Green 1977; Knowles 1977) in Norfolk, and also Wattisfield (Smedley and Owles 1959), Pakenham (Smedley and Owles 1961) and West Stow (West 1989) in north Suffolk. The publication of the Horningsea kiln industry and its environs (J. Evans *et al.* 2017) has given a major boost to regional pottery studies, as although work continues on the publication of the Nar Valley kiln sites and its products (de Bootman and Lyons in press), the Brampton, Wattisfield and Pakenham industries have been written-up only in fragments and await synthetic publication and as such constitute a huge gap in Roman ceramic research for the region (Willis 2004, 10-11). How these pottery industries interacted with each other is further considered in the next section (Part 2).

It has been proposed by Jeremy Evans (2015, 436), that when the large post-conquest military investment associated with regional production centres such as Verulamium (Tyers 1996, 132-134)

ended in the Hadrianic period this change initiated the foundation of smaller manufacturing enterprises (Reece 2013; Smith 2017, 178). With this in mind it is helpful to review the specialist mid-to-late Roman mortaria workshops that have been discovered and published within the study area of Norfolk, at Great Ellingham (Bates and Lyons 2003, 1-27; Hartley and Gurney 1997), Postwick (Bates and Lyons 2003, 28-56) and Pentney (de Bootman and Lyons 2021). Here the term ‘specialist’ is used to describe a kiln or workshop that was primarily used to make a single vessel type (Anderson and Woolhouse 2016, 23).

Mortaria are a distinctive type of robust mixing bowl (Tyers 1996, 117-135), lined with sharp grits, made of either stone chips or metal working debris, which aided grinding when used in conjunction with a pestle (Figure 12).



Figure 12. A Lower Nene Valley white ware mortaria showing metal working debris used as trituration grits (photo by Alice Lyons)

Mortaria were a rare ‘elite’ import into south-east Britain in the pre-conquest period (Cool 2006, 43 and 166), becoming more common after the conquest, as they accompanied and were produced by the military (Hartley 1987, 127-128). Subsequently, after the Hadrianic period (J. Evans 2016, 520), they were enthusiastically adopted by the wider British population (Cool 2006, 45; Symonds 2012), to an even greater extent than in other parts of the Roman Empire (J. Evans 2016, 520; Hartley 1998). It has traditionally been thought that they were intended to grind herbs for refined Roman tastes (H.J.M. Green 2017, 241-242); however, recent residue analysis studies of British examples suggest their function was more complex as they were not only used to make “a porridge-like food” (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 108), but evidence for the preparation of plant and animal products was also found (Cramp *et al.* 2011). It has also been proposed that their use was adapted beyond a kitchen utensil into a more general purpose vessel (Cool 2004a, 31; Symonds 2012, 170-172). Significantly, examples are commonly found with soot residues (Cramp *et al.* 2011, 1340-1341; Lyons 2018b, 235). It has been

observed, however, that they were produced by potters who had specific skills in the making of this type of vessel (Lyons 2003b, 50), often in discrete workshops and sometimes paired with other 'difficult to make' vessels such as flagons (Hartley 2006, 15).

Excavations at Great Ellingham, South Norfolk, have so far revealed two mortaria kilns. The first, excavated in 1997 (Hartley and Gurney 1997) was a substantial structure (c.1.8m diameter) not only containing large numbers of mortaria wasters (837 fragments) but the kiln itself was largely also constructed of mis-fired mortaria. This showed that production had occurred on-site previously, although the earlier kiln has not yet been found (Hartley and Gurney 1997, 3-4, figure 2 and plates 1 and 2). In 1996 the disturbed remains of a second chronologically slightly later and also slightly smaller kiln (c.1.2m diameter) were found (Bates and Lyons 2003, 1-27), again containing large numbers of mortaria wasters both in its construction and use deposits (647 fragments). What makes these Sandy white ware bead and flanged type vessels of particular interest is that they are commonly stamped with either literate name stamps or non-literate 'trademark' stamps. These have led pottery analysts to feel confident that the work of four or five individual potters could be represented, two of whom, Regalis and the 'Herringbone' potter, were employed in the same workshop or were even the same potter - as at least one of the mortaria had both maker's stamps on its rim (Hartley 1997, 10) (Figure 13).



Figure 13. Great Ellingham mortarium rim stamped with both Regalis (*incomplete stamp on left of the rim*) and trademark stamps (*two complete examples either side of the spout*) (Hartley 1997, 13, plate III)

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Why the makers of this distinctive type of coarse ware pottery stamped a percentage of their work is not yet fully understood (Jauch 2016, 92), but in a workshop where several potters communally fired their work it would have been useful to be able to distinguish between individuals, to monitor both the quantity and quality of their product; it may also have served as a form of advertisement (Symonds

2012, 170). Significantly, these same maker's stamps, on vessels of similar fabric and form, have also been found on production sites in Colchester (Hartley 1997, 24), located *c.*70km to the south. It seems, therefore, that the Ellingham production site was a secondary satellite workshop built after the Colchester site in *c.*AD170-180, using the stamps of established makers – possibly only one of many (Hartley and Tomber 2006, 81). It is not known if the original potters set up this workshop in person – although the similarity of the vessels makes this a real possibility – or if the Colchester potters ‘leased’ their stamps (Hartley 1996, 149) to a relative or business partner. Recent epigraphic research exploring the transfer of Roman pottery production in northern France and central Belgium does support the idea of this process happening through kinship (Borgers *et al.* 2021, 14). The similarity between the mortaria in both fabric and form between the Colchester and Norfolk production centres (Hartley 1997) contrasts with the significant difference in kiln design (Bates and Lyons 2003, 27). This may suggest that the specialist mortaria makers travelled from Colchester, perhaps in family groups, but relied on local skilled labour to construct the kilns.



Figure 14. An Ellingham mortarium stamped by ‘Regalis’, recovered from recent excavations at *Venta Icenorum*, with the Regalis stamp-detail below (Bates and Lyons 2004, 8, figure 7, 1) (Photo by Alice Lyons; stamp image reproduced with the kind permission of East Anglian Archaeology)

The movement of these potters and their stamps, therefore, provides new evidence for how the manufacture of this specialist Roman pottery form spread throughout the east of Britain, and how a satellite industry could be established at a significant distance from its home base, providing evidence for an economy that did not restrict the ambitions of specialist makers to within the same region of *Civitas* control (Buckland *et al.* 2001, 86). In another significant analytical development, the stamp of Regalis (as used at Ellingham) can be mapped onto the eastern seaboard at both South Shields and Walls End on Hadrian's Wall. This suggests that this modestly sized workshop was producing pottery not only for the local market - the stamps of Regalis have been found on at least nine other East Anglian sites including *Venta Icenorum* (Figure 14) (Hartley 1997, 25, figure 14) - but also for the militarized north (J. Evans 2015, 440). The Ellingham products, therefore, constituted a minor component of the large trade initiated by the Black Burnished 2 (Fulford *et al.* 2017, 356) and Lower Nene Valley colour-coated wares (primarily beakers) which were traded up the eastern seaboard at this time (Bidwell 2017, 293; J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 120).



Figure 15. The Postwick mortaria Herringbone (or feather) stamp (Bates and Lyons 2003, 49, plate XI)

(Reproduced with the kind permission of East Anglian Archaeology)

A single mortaria kiln found at Postwick, located 5km to the east of modern Norwich and only 6km north of the Roman *Civitas* of *Venta Icenorum* (at Caistor St. Edmund) (Figure 1), also manufactured

Sandy white ware bead and flanged stamped mortaria (Bates and Lyons 2003, 28-56). No literate stamps were found, only a Herringbone (or feather) motif (Figure 15). The kiln has an archaeomagnetic date of AD130-170, which combined with the style of the vessel suggests a date of AD160-170, broadly contemporary with the Ellingham kilns. The Postwick Herringbone stamp is similar to slightly earlier examples known from *Venta Icenorum* but not identical (Kay Hartley *pers. comm.*). This similarity in stamp-design suggests that the potters at Postwick may have been influenced by their Caistor neighbours; or indeed this may be another (minor) example of a satellite workshop, if not a very long-lived one.

The research subject of connectivity between potters and multiple workshops is particularly relevant to mortaria production at Pentney, West Norfolk (de Bootman and Lyons 2021). The kiln production site at Pentney, although it has never been excavated, has been subject to 40 years of field walking and survey by Michael de Bootman. This remarkable period of concentrated and continuous research has revealed at least one (possibly two) mortaria kilns located within their own trapezoidal roadside enclosure, within which the kilns are overlain by numerous mortaria fragments (over 1000 have so far been recovered), disturbed by prolonged periods of ploughing. These specialist kilns are located within the larger dispersed West Norfolk coarse ware pottery industry which typically produced utilitarian dark black jars, often decorated with a functional (it aided grip) rusticated motif (Lyons 2004, 34 and 36, figure 25, no 21). The mortaria made within these kilns, however, have a distinctive burnt orange colour, often with a grey core and have a hammer-headed 'reeded-rim' typical of production in the mid-to-late Roman period (Figure 16). Unlike the bead and flanged mortaria made at Ellingham and Postwick, these vessels were not stamped by their makers.



Figure 16. A Pentney 'hammer-headed' reeded-rim mortaria (reproduced with the kind permission of Michael de Bootman)

Research has demonstrated that the market for Pentney products, both coarse wares and mortaria, was especially strong in West Norfolk, with examples found in local settlements, villas and the Saxon Shore forts (de Bootman and Lyons 2021, 10). The subject of connectivity becomes apparent when it is considered that the reeded-rim Pentney mortaria are almost identical in form, although not in fabric, to contemporary production within the huge industrial Lower Nene Valley complex (Hartley and Perrin 1999; Hartley and Tomber 2006, 82). It is also interesting to observe that the Nene Valley and Pentney production sites are located c.65km distant of each other, either side of the Fen Basin; a

distance not dissimilar to the *Regalis* workshops of Colchester and Ellingham. Although the direct connection of literate stamps to join these two sites does not exist it seems likely that the growing West Norfolk coarse ware pottery industry, with an established customer base, which included the military Saxon Shore fort at Brancaster with its links to the eastern seaboard trade route, may have provided the economic incentive to establish a satellite industry.

Reviewing these mortaria production sites and comparing them to one another has demonstrated that the potters who made this specific vessel type were specialists who concentrated on producing these technologically challenging forms in distinct workshops which were sometimes demonstrably interconnected, possibly at a kinship level or possibly through a single owner (Smith 2017, 204). Future research, as more workshops are discovered, will hopefully continue to throw light on these issues while scientific research, such as fingerprint analysis (Albert-Weiss *et al.* 2019), may also inform on connectivity.

PART 2

ROMAN POTTERY AND RURAL SETTLEMENT: ASSEMBLAGE CHARACTERISATION, AND ASPECTS OF SPECIALISATION AND DISTRIBUTION

“The key to any understanding of Roman settlement patterns in the East of the region is the network of these nucleated roadside settlements, which is among the densest anywhere in Britain”

Smith (2016a, 241)

“The rural sites generally lack the diversity and quantity of continental imports, both finewares and amphorae, but, on the other hand, they had access to many of the regionally traded wares”

Timby (2017, 335)

The following section discusses how aspects of Roman pottery analysis can be characterised within the rural settlement of the study area.

Historically the rural settlement of Roman Britain has not been a particularly popular area of research (Millett 2016, 699). Settlement studies initially focused on the larger Roman towns (C. Evans 2020; Towns, Wachter 1974), which includes the one *civitas* capital identified within the study region at *Venta Icenorum* in Norfolk (Frere 1971; Wachter 1974, 226-238) - the interpretation of which has recently been fundamentally updated (Bowden 2013; in press) - and the villas of the elite or landed classes (Gregory 1982; J. Percival 1976; J.T. Smith 1997). When smaller communities did begin to be researched initially the results were not encouraging; Todd (1970, 117) described them as a “shadowy group of scattered settlements”. Gradually, however, interest in the smaller settlement-types developed and as a result two seminal publications were completed (Burnham and Wachter 1990; Frere 1975). In the study area, moreover, researchers began to look at the smaller Roman towns in earnest with the publication of Brown’s (1995) *Roman Small Towns in Eastern England and Beyond*, within which

the ubiquity (Millett 1995, 32, figure 4.1), character (Gurney 1995, 53) and nomenclature (Condron 1995, 103-118) of rural settlement was discussed. The narrative was successfully updated on a national level by J. Taylor (2007; 2013) and subsequently reviewed by Millett (2016). Research into the rural settlement of Britain has, however, recently seen a major advance with the publication of '*New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain*' (Allen *et al.* 2017; 2018 and Smith *et al.* 2016; 2018), which has utilised previously unpublished commercial excavation reports to provide detailed regional interpretative papers, to achieve a new level of understanding for the subject.

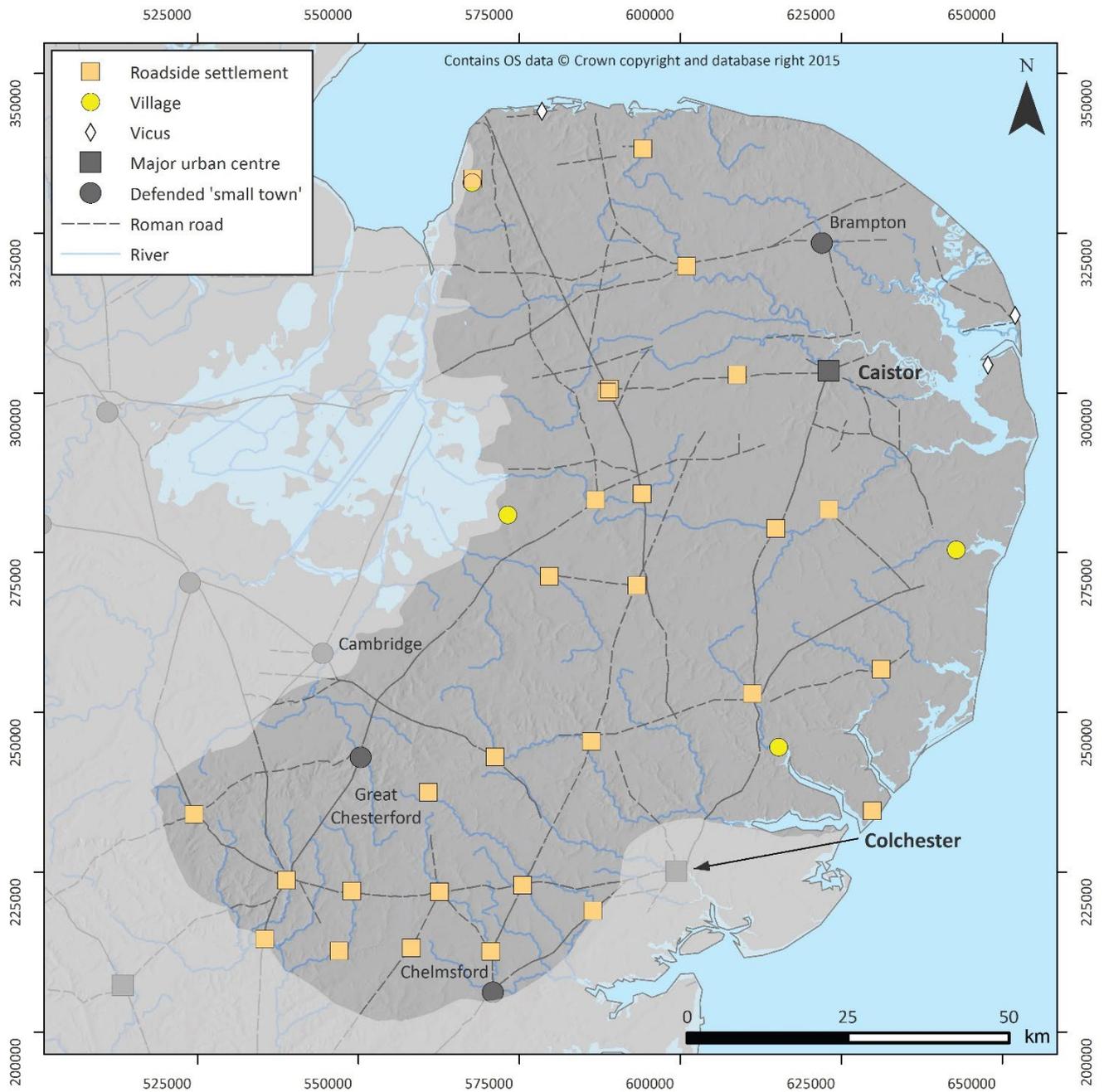


Figure 17. The Roman infrastructure of eastern Britain (Smith 2016a, 223, figure 6.18) (reproduced with the kind permission of Alex Smith)

As the result of this and earlier work (Gurney 2005, 28-29), it has been established that within the area of study in eastern England, there was a network of rural settlements more closely distributed than anywhere else in Britain (Smith 2016a, 241) and that by the mid-2nd century AD there was a growing infrastructure of a *Civitas*, several small defended towns, roadside settlements (described with terminology ranging from villages to ‘small towns’ in the literature), military installations and industrial centres connected by a well-maintained network of rivers and roads (J.E. Jones 2012) (Figure 17).

For Norfolk and Suffolk, the publication of roadside rural settlement sites has been slow to emerge. However, as the 21st century continues more are coming to fruition, with notable examples including Thetford (Atkins and Connor 2010), Billingford (Wallis 2011) and Scole (Ashwin and Tester 2014; Rogerson 1977) in Norfolk, and Hacheston (Blagg *et al.* 2004), Wixoe (Atkins and Clarke 2018) and Wenhaston (Clarke 2021) in Suffolk. In Cambridgeshire (Smith 2016c, 145, figure 5.4) other noteworthy rural settlement publications include Little Paxton (A. Jones 2011), Cambourne (Wright *et al.* 2009) and Loves Farm (Hinman and Zant 2018). In addition, large-scale rural landscape studies have recently been undertaken in Cambridgeshire, more so than single settlement excavations, with a particular focus on the Ouse and Cam valleys, which are either close to being published (Lyons and Billington in press; Phillips and Mortimer in press; Smith in press) or already have been (Abrams and Ingham 2008; C. Evans *et al.* 2008; C. Evans *et al.* 2013; C. Evans *et al.* 2018; C. Evans and Lucas 2020). It is not within the scope of this thesis to provide an all-encompassing assessment of recent excavations, but it should be noted that a large amount of fieldwork focusing on rural settlement has been written and published within the last two decades.

A phenomenon which all these projects encountered, without exception, was that even in excavations of modestly sized settlements copious quantities of pottery have been found; for example: Loves Farm 350kg (Lyons 2018b), Scole 756kg of pottery (Lyons and Tester 2014), Earith an impressive 1648kg (Anderson 2013) and the A14 landscape project a massive 2,117kg (Sutton *et al.* in press) (Figure 18).



Figure 18. Boxes of Roman pottery from the recent A14 project in Cambridgeshire (Photo by Alice Lyons)

This should not come as a surprise, when it is realised that rural sites were where the majority of the population lived (between 80-90%; J. Taylor 2013, 173). Moreover, in eastern Britain where ceramic use had been continuous since prehistoric times, the rural population was also the largest consumer group (J. Evans 2015, 427 and 443). These excavation projects, therefore, have led commercial archaeology into the territory of how to cope with big data sets (Allison *et al.* 2018), resulting in a large number of stand-alone, although inter-referenced, pottery reports (examples include: Anderson 2013; Jane Evans 2011; Lyons 2010; 2018a; 2018b; 2021; Lyons and Cooper 2011; Lyons and Tester 2014; Seager-Smith 2009). All of these reports have individually advanced our understanding of pottery use and when synthetically reviewed inform on the general trends within the region. As a result of the available corpus of pottery reports from rural settlements, patterns of coarse ware production, distribution and use have not only been outlined both for Norfolk and north Suffolk (Lyons and Tester 2014) and Cambridgeshire (J. Evans *et al.* 2017; Lyons 2018b) but also for East Anglia as a whole (Rippon 2017).

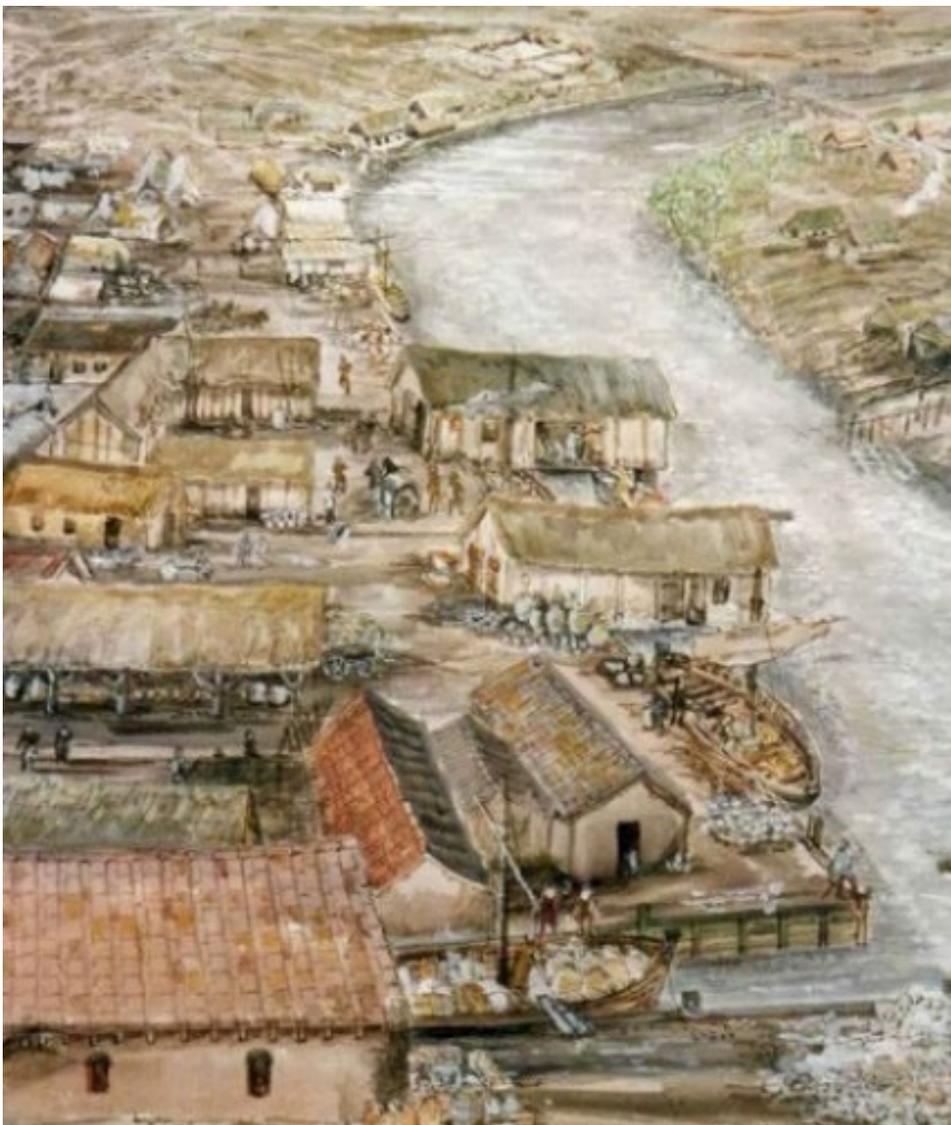


Figure 19. A reconstruction of the Brampton Wharf by the archaeological artist Alan Sorrell commissioned by Dr Knowles based on his unpublished excavations (Norwich Research Committee Bulletin 17 (1969))

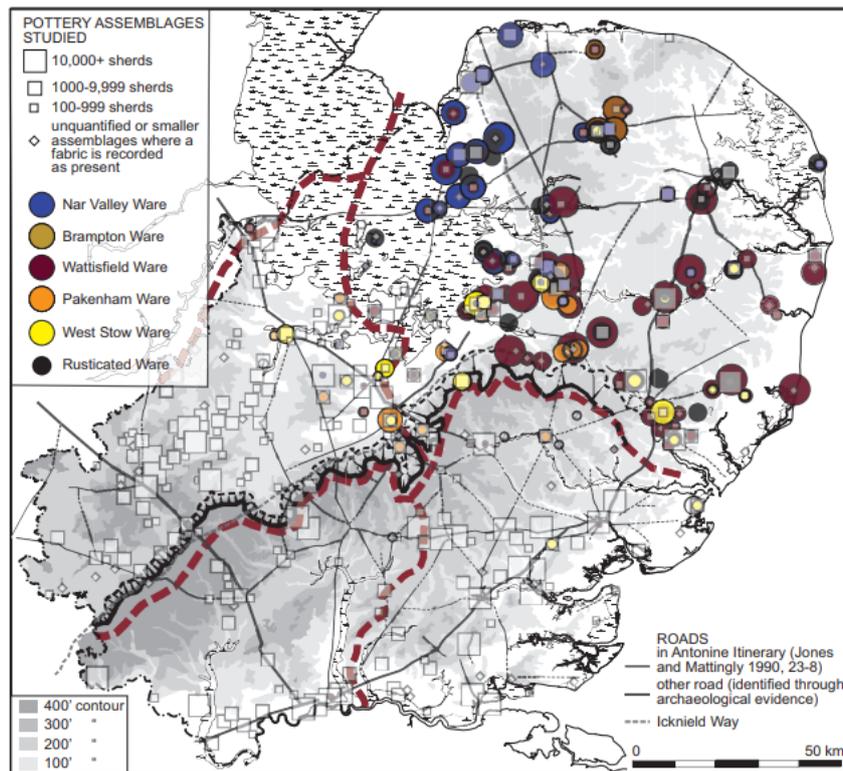
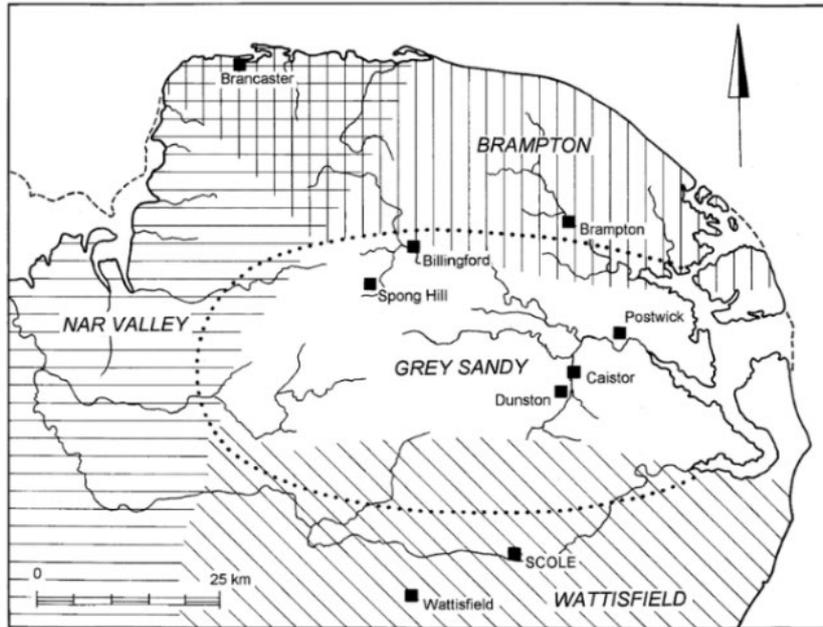


Figure 20*. The main pottery industries of Norfolk and north Suffolk and their suggested limits of local distribution (Lyons and Tester 2014, figure 6.34 (top) and Rippon 2017, figure 7.47 (bottom))

*This Figure shows both an early distribution map by Alice Lyons and (the late) Cathy Tester which was drawn in 1998 but not published until 2014 (top) and a more sophisticated version produced using GIS technology as part of the ‘*New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain*’ (Rippon 2017, 349, figure 7.47) (bottom); although both illustrations broadly show the same result it is an interesting example of new technology improving the presentation of data.

(Reproduced with the kind permission of East Anglian Archaeology and Professor Stephen Rippon)

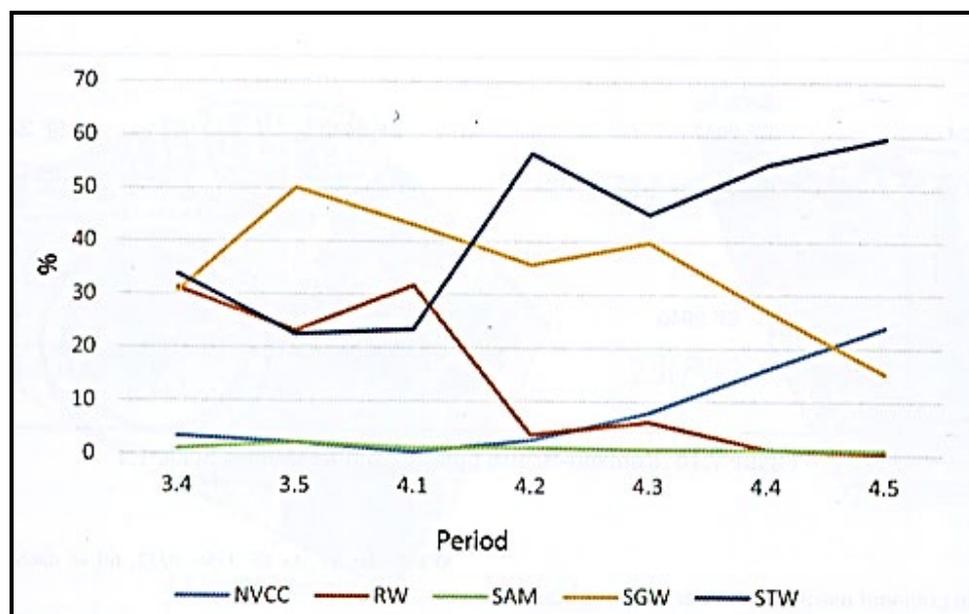
A particularly informative aspect of this characterisation work has been analysis of the distribution patterns for pottery manufacturing centres in Norfolk and north Suffolk (Figure 20). Present research shows that there were three large post-Flavian contemporary coarse ware factories centred around Wattisfield in north Suffolk (Rippon 2017, 344-347), Brampton in central Norfolk and the Nar Valley in west Norfolk on the fen edge (Rippon 2017, 347-348). That it is unusual to have three large co-existing coarse ware industries within one region has been commented on by Timby (2017, 314) in her exploration of pottery supply to south-western England and it is likely these were established here as a response to the new economic opportunities that arose with Empire (Reece 2013). Each of these three eastern industries had a “sprawling rural production zone” (Rippon 2017, 350) whereby they distributed their wares intended for the local market at least within the 50km range suggested by Fulford *et al.* (2017, 282 and 355) and sometimes up to c.90km (Rippon 2017, 347), with the central part of Norfolk benefitting from supply from all three industries (Figure 20). Pots perhaps intended for a wider distribution, particularly the Black Burnished 2 type wares, are a focus of discussion below.

Although the Wattisfield and Nar industries remain only partially published, the distribution of their wares has recently been mapped and reviewed (Rippon 2017, 346, figure 7.44). Unfortunately, however, Brampton in Norfolk still remains largely unpublished, although an interim report does exist (Knowles 1977). Brampton, a walled small town (Gurney 1995) with a riverine wharf (Knowles 1977, 211, figure 1, no 9) (Figure 19), has c.150 known pottery kilns, mostly recorded after topsoil removal (Knowles 1977, 216), of which only fourteen have been excavated (C. Green 1977). Although kiln designs vary, most are circular with a permanent vented floor (C. Green 1977, 39; Knowles 1977, 216; Swan 1984, 31, figure III). Coarse ware products were made using the distinctive blue-grey Bure Valley clay and include stamped mortaria and Black Burnished 2 type jars and dishes (Knowles 1977, 216-219). As such this is potentially one of the largest coarse ware pottery industries in Roman Britain and possibly also the least archaeologically explored, although presently it is being remotely surveyed as part of the Aylsham/Brampton aerial investigation and mapping project (Sophie Tremlett *pers. comm.*) the results of which will be published in 2023. It is unfortunate that Rippon (2017) does not discuss this site in detail within his recent regional study of eastern pottery manufacturing centres - although understandable given the under-researched state of the site, this adds to the unbalanced nature of published data for the region. Significantly, although protected from commercial development, the Norfolk Brampton kiln fields continue to be ploughed and therefore damaged.

Away from the region’s manufacturing centres it can be seen that the huge body of analytical work on ceramic assemblages that has been published within the wider study area allows for a broad characterisation of ceramic supply to rural settlement throughout the Roman period. The most comprehensive review of the data so far has been undertaken by Jeremy Evans *et al.* (2017), as part of the analysis of the Horningsea pottery industry in Cambridgeshire. This work and others (Lyons 2018b; Lyons 2019) have established that the rural sites of the east are characterised by an abundant use of pottery, and by the generally conservative nature of this production, with a limited number of fabrics and forms in use (Lyons 2019, 213).

A broad characterisation of ceramic use for the region is that in the post-Flavian early-to-mid Roman period most communities rely on the local production of wheel-made Sandy reduced (grey) ware jar/bowl forms (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 109; Lyons 2021, 34); usually supplied by a local coarse ware manufacturing centre (Fulford *et al.* 2017, 282) and generally supplemented by a small number of finewares – primarily Gaulish samian wares which Jeremy Evans (2015, 430) suggests typically represent at least 3% of the total assemblage. In the mid-to-late Roman era the supply of Sandy grey coarse wares changed to include not only more jar/bowl forms but also dishes which were challenged

for their place in the local coarse ware market by both the Lower Nene Valley coarse ware colour-coated jars and dishes, and also the Shelly coarse ware jars and dishes; a ceramic pattern that is particularly clear in the Loves Farm pottery assemblage (Figure 21). After the East Gaulish samian factories went into decline in the early-to-mid 3rd century AD and imports into Britain ceased, fine table wares were supplied by the Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware products and to a lesser extent by the Late Roman red ware industries of Oxford (Tomber and Dore 1998, 176) and Hadham (Tomber and Dore 1998, 151).



Key: NVCC = Lower Nene Valley colour-coated ware; RW = Reduced coarse ware; SAM = Gaulish samian (all factories), SGW = Sandy grey (reduced ware); STW = Shelly ware

Figure 21. Changes in pottery supply through time from the Late pre-Roman Iron Age to the Romano-British period (by sub-period) using weight (%) as a ceramic measure (Lyons 2018b, 2014, figure 7.17) (Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

Within the area of study, however, there is one pattern of pottery fabric use that is more complex. In Norfolk and north Suffolk there are virtually no naturally occurring shelly clay deposits (Swan 1984, 5, map 1; Tomber and Dore 1998, 212) and as a result the use of Shelly ware did not become widespread until this material was regionally traded in the later Roman period (Brown 1994). In Cambridgeshire the situation is different as there are extensive Jurassic Shelly clay resources, particularly in the north and west of the region (Vince 2013), where Iron Age and Roman Shelly wares are common (J. Evans 2017, 109; Lyons 2019, 211; S. Percival 2018). The analysis of the large Loves Farm assemblage, located near St. Neots in west Cambridgeshire, gave the opportunity to discuss the use of ‘shell versus sand’ (Lyons 2018b, 242-243, table 7.20). In western Cambridgeshire at least, it appears that from the mid-Iron Age there was an observable cultural choice between naturally shell-rich and adapted sand-tempered clay use, with the Great River Ouse acting as a partial cultural barrier (S. Percival 2018, 212). While in the Early-to-mid Roman period Shelly ware jars remained more strongly associated with low-order settlement (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 109) and sand tempered clays became affiliated with the more affluent. The choice of which fabric to use could also be related to the additional preparation time needed when adding a sand temper (or mixing agent), into the clay rather than using the natural shelly material. This would make the whole ‘*chaîne opératoire*’ more time

consuming and expensive, “if one follows a labour theory of value” (Willis 2011, 171), although both Shelly and Sand tempered wares were made (at least partially - see above) on the fast potter’s wheel. By the later Roman period, however, the patterns of use for the traded Shelly ware, which possibly originated from the Harrold kilns in Bedfordshire - were broadly the same for the whole of the study area.

It is interesting to note that while several large Sandy coarse ware production centres are known in the study area (such as Horningsea, the Nar Valley, Brampton and Wattisfield) this is not true for Shelly wares. Although small-scale Shelly ware production has been identified at Haddon (Vince 2003) and Earith on the Cambridgeshire fen-edge (Vince 2013), also possibly at Lakenheath on the Suffolk/Cambridgeshire boarder (Tyers 1996, 192), the only significant Shelly ware industry so far discovered in the eastern region and outside this study area is at Harrold in Bedfordshire (Brown 1994). It is highly likely that others remain to be discovered (Tomber and Dore 1998, 212; Tyers 1996, 192).

I thought it would be apt to conclude this chapter, in which pottery manufacturing centres and fabric choices have been briefly touched upon, with a discussion of one particular style of pottery: Black Burnished ware 2 (BB2). BB2 ware is a type of wheel-made Sandy grey ware with a distinctive range of everted-rim jars and beaded dishes (Figure 22) very strongly stylistically influenced by the handmade Dorset Black Burnished ware 1 (BB1) industry (Smith 2017, 203; Tyers 1996, 67), which has recently benefitted from a scientific study of its fabrics (G.P. Jones 2017). It has been observed that where BB2 material is common, BB1 material is rare (Bidwell 2017, 297). This is the case within the study area, where only BB2-type vessels are commonly found in rural settlement (Tyers 1996, 182-186, figure 229). BB2 is known to have been produced at sites in North Kent, London (Farrar 1973; Monaghan 1987) and south Essex (Jefferies and Lucy 2016, 178) within the Thames Valley estuary (Swan 1984, 27, map 27), where production continued on a large scale between the mid-2nd century and mid/late-3rd century AD (AD120-250) (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 119, Tyers 1996, 187). It is possible that BB2, similarly to BB1, was used to transport salt, as salterns were common in the Thames Valley region (J. Evans 2017, 119).

What makes this wheel-made coarse ware product particularly interesting is that copious quantities of this material, produced in the south-east, have been discovered - indeed were first classified by Gillam in 1960 (Steer 1960; Darling 1993, 207) - in the militarized north along the lines of both the Antonine and Hadrian’s Wall (Figure 23). Monaghan (1987, 211-213) suggested that as much as 50% of BB2 in his northern samples was of Thameside origin. Where petrological analysis has taken place an additional Colchester source for the northern BB2 material has also been suggested (Williams 1977a; 2016). Indeed, Bidwell proposes that by the early 3rd century AD the BB2 Colchester and Thames Valley industries may only have existed to export their products north (Bidwell 2017, 297). While the problems of identifying the specific sources of BB2-type vessels have long been recognised (Darling 1993, 207-8; Tyers 1996, 66-68), recently published research by Bidwell (2017) states that the origins of the various coarse wares classified as BB2 in the north are now so unclear, and suspected to be numerous, that he has reclassified them as ‘South-eastern reduced wares’ (SERW) (*ibid*, 293).

Why BB2 and SERW vessels are relevant to this thesis is because, while all the known regional coarse ware industries of the east had their own characteristics and distinctive products – Horningsea for example was well-known for its large distinctive storage jars (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, Rippon 2017, 343) - they also all dedicated a significant part of their ceramic repertoire to BB2 ware-type production (Figure 24). Tyers (1996, 67) states that it is unhelpful to call these BB2-type wares “imitations of

BB2". Although he does not propose an alternative term, Fulford (2017, 356) happily suggests the term 'kindred wares', which I will adopt here.

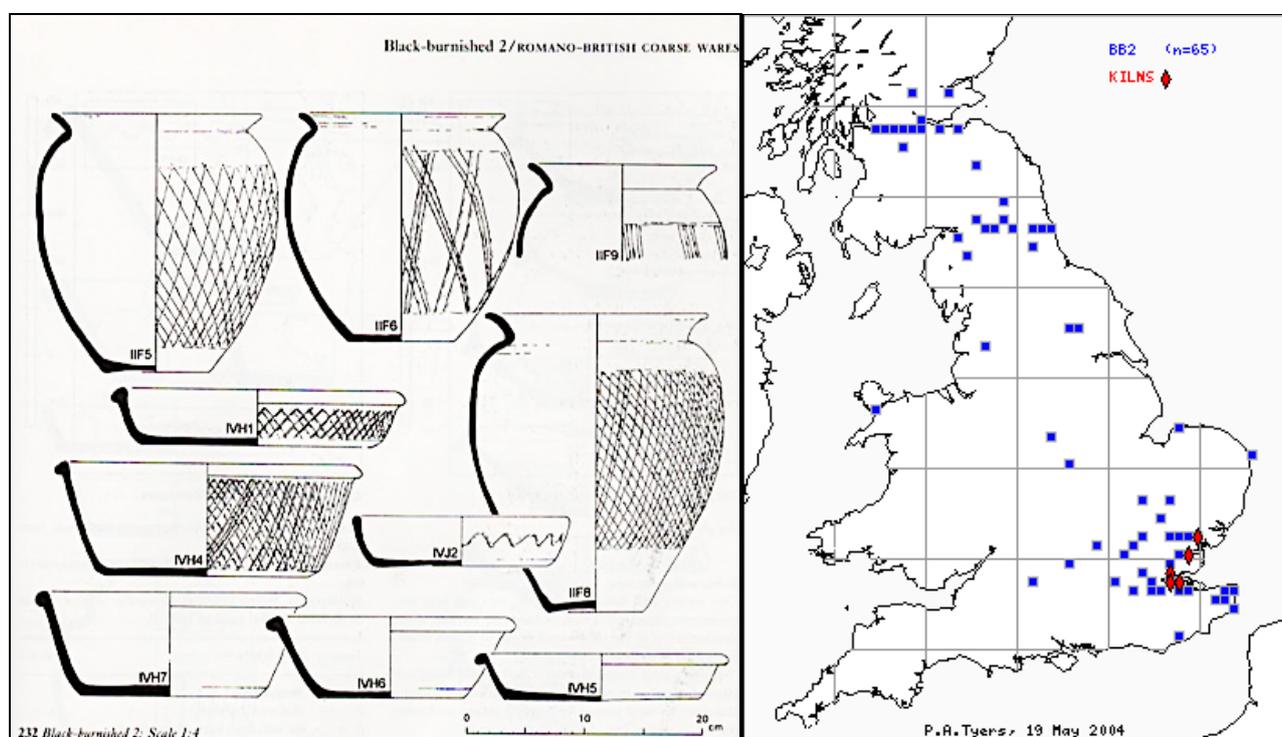


Figure 22 (left). Black-burnished ware 2 everted-rim jars and beaded dishes with cross-hatch burnished decoration. (Tyers 1996, 187, figure 232)

Figure 23 (right). The distribution of Black Burnished ware products
<http://www.potsherd.net/atlas/gallery/mapping/GB/ware/BB2.png>

As previously mentioned above, products of the East Anglian coarse ware industries have been recorded on the northern walls, as not only have examples of Ellingham and Brampton mortaria been found (Bidwell 2017, 293) (Part 1) but also Horningsea Ware (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 111), Nar Valley (de Bootman and Lyons 2021, 10), and possibly also Wattisfield Ware (Bidwell 2017, 290; Monaghan 1987). The question I pose here is, as well as these more easily identifiable East Anglian coarse wares such as the stamped mortaria of Ellingham and Brampton, is: did significant consignments of BB2 'kindred wares' also take place? Has the lack of widespread and recent petrological study for the northern BB2 pottery assemblages effectively hidden this trade from view? Could this northern military market, which may have extended across the North Sea to the German Limes (Sánchez and Guglielmi 2017), be one reason why the three large coarse ware industries of the Nar Valley and Brampton (in Norfolk) and Wattisfield (in north Suffolk), - as well as Horningsea (in Cambridgeshire) - managed to co-exist within one relatively small area? Was the traded pottery of the east (and/or their contents) indeed just a minor, almost incidental, component of the large-scale trade up the eastern seaboard? Or did these large manufacturing centres take advantage of an existing trade route as an economical and profitable way to move their goods (Fleming 2021; Reece 2013)?

I say this with caution, but perhaps it is time to re-visit the distribution model (C. Evans *et al.* 2008, 133) proposed for the ceramic coarse wares of northern East Anglia (Rippon 2017) and ask if a

proportion of the products of these northern East Anglian manufacturing centres, i.e. the BB2 ‘kindred wares’, was intended for northern military markets. Could these vessels have been used to transport the salt extracted from the Norfolk and Cambridgeshire brackish fen (Lane and Morris 2001), which had a long history of production (Cunliffe 2010, 509)? Or indeed comestibles (meat and fish) preserved by the salt (Cool 2006, 56-8; 186 and 201)? Taking advantage of the good road and river infrastructure to load their products from The Wash (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 119) and/or one of the three coastal Saxon Shore forts (Figure 17; marked as vicus) at Brancaster (Hinchliffe 1985), Caister-on-Sea (Darling 1993) and Burgh (J. Johnson 1983). It is accepted that a wide range of other products, including Lower Nene Valley colour-coated beakers, were traded using this well organised route (J. Evans *et al.* 2017, 111 and 119, table 5.3). Certainly BB2 wares were traded from the Thames Valley Estuary, where they are seen as “the dominant evidence for the coastal movement of goods” (Fulford 2017, 356)? Is it possible that modern ceramic research, hampered by incomplete publication, is still making the mistake of referencing Haverfield (1901; 1912) by viewing northern East Anglia as a backwater of little importance not capable of external trade?

Recent research exploiting remote survey techniques - including the English Heritage Aerial Mapping Project ([Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer | Historic England](#)) and the large-scale geophysical surveys being undertaken in the west of Norfolk by Michael de Bootman (as yet unpublished but curated by Cambridge University), have the potential to ‘infill’ the settlement map constructed as part of the ‘*New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain*’ (Figure 17) with levels of intensive settlement and industrial activity that have not so far been reported. The Nar Valley ceramic industry at Pentney, for example, is now thought to be as large, or larger, than that of Brampton (in Norfolk) with its own riverine wharf (de Bootman *pers. comm.*). This work, combined with the development in scientific ceramic analysis (see Part 1), should enable specific ceramic wares to be assigned to their source with more certainty than before. What is very apparent, however, is that there is huge potential for further research into all aspects of the BB2 industry (Bidwell 2017, 293) and that the BB2-type kindred wares of northern East Anglia need to be included in, or perhaps be the focus of, any future analysis.

It is interesting to observe that even in the east of Britain where Roman pottery had been manufactured and used on a large-scale for at least 300 years, when the influence of the Roman Empire finally faltered in the early 5th century AD (Gerrard 2016), the mass-produced and standardised pottery forms, craft skills and infrastructure that came with the ‘social control’ of Empire, quickly disappeared (Esmonde Cleary 2016, 140; Lyne 2016; Smith and Fulford 2018, 356). In post-Roman Britain, when the ceramic-using community could have maintained small-scale wheel-made production it instead chose the ancient method of hand building and open firing (McKinley 1994; Myres 1977). This transition may have occurred as quickly as by 430AD, which was when the dwindling supply of Roman coinage finally stopped (Walton and Moorhead 2016), and by implication also the ceramic industry (J. Evans 2017, 140-142). If accurate, this means that the return to traditional potting techniques happened much faster than the uptake of the potters’ wheel (see Part 1). However, it is worthy of note that these handmade vessel forms quickly began to reflect the styles favoured by the newly mobile northern Europeans, whose ingress into Eastern Britain has been mapped through recent Genome analysis (Schiffels *et al.* 2016). The choice of ceramic production method and vessel style can be understood as not only affirming what the eastern British may have felt suited their post-Roman identity but also as forming part of their navigation through new and challenging circumstances; a combination of reactions and interactions which produced the English identity we know today (Fleming 2021).

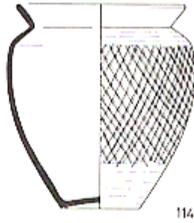
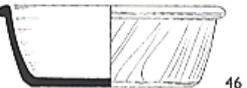
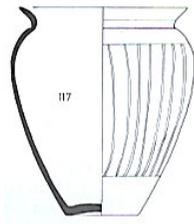
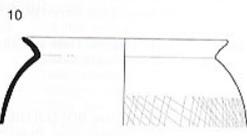
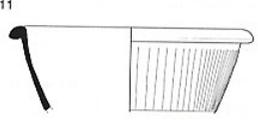
Kiln Industry	Fabric Description	BB2-type everted- rim jars	BB2-type beaded rim dish	Dated context
<p>Brampton, Norfolk</p> <p>Images: C. Green 1977, 74, figure 32</p>	<p>A blue grey body with abundant quartz and occasional silver mica inclusions</p> <p>Williams 1977b; Lyons 2009a</p>			Late 2 nd century AD
<p>Nar Valley, Norfolk</p> <p>Images: Lyons 2004, 38, figure 27</p>	<p>A coarse dark grey/black granular quartz-rich reduced ware</p> <p>Peachey 2018; NAR RE 2</p>			Mid-2 nd to mid-3 rd AD
<p>Wattisfield</p> <p>Images: Rogerson 1977, 185, figure 78</p>	<p>Reduced grey ware with abundant naturally occurring silver mica, often with burnished black slip surfaces</p>			Mid-2 nd century AD
<p>Horningsea</p> <p>Images: J. Evans <i>et al.</i> 2017, 74, figure 3.18</p>	<p>A reduced fabric with a darkgrey-brown core, margins and black slipped surfaces</p> <p>J. Evans <i>et al.</i> 2017, 52, RO4</p>			Later 2 nd to earlier 3 rd century AD

Figure 24. BB2-type 'kindred' jars and dishes from coarse ware manufacturing centres in the study area (images not to scale)
(Reproduced with the kind permission of East Anglian Archaeology)

PART 3
ROMAN POTTERY AND THE FUNERARY RITE:
CERAMIC CHOICES IN DEATH

“When the Funerall Pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took a lasting adieu of their interred Friends, little expecting the curiosity of future ages should comment upon their ashes, and having no old experience of the duration of their Reliques, held no opinion of such after-considerations”

Thomas Browne (1658, 3)

In this final thematic part of my thesis I have arrived at the topic which first started me on the path to doctoral studies: pottery use in the funerary rite. Unlike pottery manufacture and use (Parts 1 and 2), which have close parallels to the modern day, the complex funerary rites (Smith 2018, 216) and the associated ceramic choices discussed here feel particularly of their time and yet still quite personal. This impression of connectivity prevails because funerary ceramics are the only class of pottery, discussed within this thesis, which were deliberately placed and have moreover remained *in-situ*, therefore maintaining their original connection not only to the dead individual but also to the community that buried them.

To place these mortuary processes in context the chapter begins with a brief background to research of known funerary practices used in the Iron Age out of which the Roman accessorised rite emerged.

Studies of the British Iron Age benefitted from intensive research in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Cunliffe’s influential publication of *Iron Age Communities in Britain*, first published in 1974, and reprinted several times since (Cunliffe 2010), was followed by other seminal studies including: Haselgrove (1982; 1984; 1989; 1995; 1997; 2001; 2002), Hill (1995a-c; 1997; 2002a-b; 2007), Moore (2007) and Sharples (2007; 2010). This innovative body of research referenced the burgeoning archaeological dataset (see Part 1), alongside new theoretical ways of thinking (M. Johnson 2011), to refresh archaeological approaches to the British Iron Age. Within this framework of continuing excavation and research it is all the more remarkable then that the primary evidence for human identity, ‘the body’ remains largely missing from the Iron Age, and to a lesser extent from the Roman, archaeological record of eastern Britain (Smith 2017, 275).

The general, although not complete (Booth 2017, 42), absence of Iron Age skeletal remains suggests that the ancient indigenous population used a combination of funerary processes that for the most part did not employ formal burial (Cooper *et al.* 2020; Pearce *et al.* 2000) or cemeteries (O’Brien 2014). Excarnation of the body either in water or air (Esmonde Cleary 2000; Mays 2004, 110), also partial exposure and the collection of body parts (Lyons and Billington *in press*) or burial followed by exhumation (Booth and Madgwick 2016) and curation (Harding 2015, 125) are all thought to have been employed in the mortuary ritual: methods which leave little physical trace behind. Harlow (2018, 4) suggests that only between 5-10% of the indigenous population were interred at all. Towards the later Iron Age, however, distinct archaeologically visible regional funerary traditions did begin to become established (Fitzpatrick 2007; Carr 2007), such as the inhumation cemeteries developing in Dorset and Cornwall (Sharples 2014, 141).

It is relevant to this thesis that by the late Iron Age in south-east England the remains of the dead began to be interred using a mortuary rite during which the dead body went through a series of complex processes, including preparation, display and combustion (Fitzpatrick 2000, 20; Weekes 2016, 425). After which the cremated remains, which included not only the human burnt bone but also any objects or offerings that had been on the pyre (Cooper *et al.* 2020), were placed in a receptacle such as a wooden casket (Atkins and Popescu 2014, 245; Lucy *et al.* 2016, 394; Smith 2017, 259-262) or more often a pottery jar (Weekes 2016, 437), alongside unburnt ceramic dining and drinking services and other meaningful objects (Alcock 1980; Biddulph 2005; 2009; 2018; Harding 2015, 170; Philpott 1991). Mortaria are never included in this vessel selection – which is an interesting exclusion (Biddulph 2005, 36) - and coins are generally absent, seemingly reserved for ritual discard in temple settings (Smith 2016b, 644-5). Despite there being some unifying factors in pottery selection, such as the presence of samian ware and coarse white ware flagons in most cremation burials (Biddulph 2005, 36), no typical suite of vessels has been satisfactorily established for the rite (Weekes 2016, 438).

It has long been recognised (Fitzpatrick 2000, 17), moreover, that any grave goods must have been placed by the mourners (Cooper *et al.* 2020) and therefore may say more about the motivations and relationships (Brück 2004; Jenkins 1996, 4) of the living than the identity or status of the dead (Giles 2012, 91-213). The origins of this rite, as with all aspects of archaeology, are complex, and may at least in part involve a re-introduction of the Iron Age cremation tradition known to have been practiced in parts of southern Britain (Booth 2017, 42).

This accessorised cremation funerary rite was, however, very similar to contemporary mortuary customs practised in Northern Gaul (Pearce 2011, 237; Tuffreau-Libre 2000), referred to in British literature as the ‘Aylesford-Swarling’ tradition (Roth 2016, 224; Whimster 1981). The term ‘Aylesford-Swarling’, (the appropriateness of which has itself recently been questioned (Cooper *et al.* 2022, 24-25)), has become short-hand for accessorised Late Iron Age and Roman cremation burials in Britain. The term originated from the publication of two cemeteries in Kent: one at Aylesford (A. Evans 1890) and followed by another at Swarling (Bushe-Fox 1925), which together became the acknowledged type-sites. The original premise for this new funerary behaviour (or a renewed “coincidence of traditions” if you accept they also referenced southern British cremation rites (Atkins and Popescu 2014, 233)), was based on the acceptance of regular ingressions into Britain by Belgic peoples, as reported by Caesar (Mattingly 2007, 83), a thesis that has been repeatedly questioned (Birchall 1965; Clark 1996; Cunliffe 2010, 126-7; Thompson 1982). A particularly interesting development in this area of research has recently been made using the ‘big data’ from the ‘*New Visions of the Countryside of Roman Britain*’ project (Allen *et al.* 2018; Smith *et al.* 2016), which has produced evidence to support a decrease in the density of settlement in northern Gaul and a corresponding increase in eastern Britain at this time. Although any interpretation should be treated with caution, one explanation could be the Gauls fleeing their homes or even being deliberately relocated into south-east Britain to increase agricultural production so as to support the Roman troops (Fulford 2020). More certain is that recent isotope analysis has proven that peoples from around the Roman Empire did make their way to Britain and were eventually buried here (Eckardt 2010; Eckardt *et al.* 2014; Eckardt and Müldner 2016).

The ‘Aylesford-Swarling’ burial rite, either through migration and/or acculturation, emerged in the late Iron Age and early Roman period (Cunliffe 2010, 559-561). Eventually it passed beyond a rite just for the elite (Mattingly 2007, 77-80; Weekes 2016, 428) to become widespread (Smith 2018, 221, figure 6.12) not only in the south-east, where it was first recognised in Kent (Booth *et al.* 2011; Bushe-Fox 1925; A. Evans 1890), but also in Hertfordshire (Partridge 1981; Stead and Rigby 1986; 1989),

Buckinghamshire (Akins and Popescu 2014, table 4.24; Bull and Davies 2006), Essex (Crummy *et al.* 2007; Havis and Brooks 2004; Lucy *et al.* 2016) and also Cambridgeshire (Hill *et al.* 1999; Lyons 2011), although rarely met with in Norfolk (Gurney 1998). Examples also occur in the north of England (Cool 2004b), although instances in Scotland are extremely rare (Collard and Hunter 2000). It should be noted, however, that large numbers of both the Late Iron Age and Roman population are as yet still unlocated (Smith 2017, 222; Weekes 2016, 427) and that various funerary rites were in use (Smith and Fulford 2018, 346) during this time, of which accessorised cremation was only one (Harding 2015; Smith 2018, 216).

The site which first attracted my interest in Late Iron Age and Early Roman funerary ceramic use was Broughton, near Milton Keynes, in Buckinghamshire (Atkins *et al.* 2014). This was a large cremation cemetery comprising 49 cremation pits which on first glance closely followed the Gaulish accessorised burial rite (Weekes 2016, 436-437). Here, burnt human remains (some in wooden caskets, most in ceramic pots) were accompanied by unburnt fineware dining and drinking pottery vessels. Closer inspection, however, revealed that the Gaulish fine wares included in the burials were nearly all (excepting the samian ware – which although new was often deliberately broken (Lyons 2014, 221-222)) very old and often repaired (*ibid.*, 242-243). This suggested a community with close links to northern Gaul, which chose to use in its burial rites pottery which it had either brought directly from Gaul or had inherited and therefore was effectively irreplaceable. The pottery used in the cremations contrasted starkly with the adjacent contemporary settlement ceramic assemblage, which was largely composed of local coarse wares, a variance which suggests that pottery was selectively and differently used in ‘life’, ‘death’ and ‘afterlife’ deposits at this time (Cooper *et al.* 2022, 161). As it is still relatively unusual in the archaeological record of eastern Britain to find a settlement and its contemporary associated cemetery (another example is the Rectory Farm Godmanchester cemetery discussed below), comparisons of this type are “a rare luxury” (Biddulph 2005, 36) and should be the target of future research (*ibid.* 2005, 43).

In addition to the Broughton cemetery, which falls outside the geographical scope of this thesis but is nonetheless important as a clear example of distinct funerary ceramic selection, my published work includes two Iron Age and Roman cemeteries in Cambridgeshire: Duxford (Lyons 2011) and Godmanchester (Lyons 2019). These are particularly significant as in Cambridgeshire although the number of recorded burials is growing (Smith 2018, 221, figure 6.12) published examples of Aylesford Swarling-type cemeteries are still relatively rare (C. Evans *et al.* 2008, 137; C. Evans and Lucas 2020; Pearce 1999). How these individual communities interpreted the funerary rite and how their responses changed through time, with particular reference to pottery, is briefly detailed below.

Case Study 1: Duxford

Duxford is located in the chalky low-lands of South Cambridgeshire, within the Cam Valley (Lyons 2011). This is an area rich in archaeological remains, ranging from hillforts (Pickstone and Mortimer 2012) to agrarian settlement (C. Evans *et al.* 2008). The site itself is raised in the landscape, as it sits on a high chalky knoll which overlooks a tributary of the River Cam (Lyons 2011, 2, figure 1). Although no evidence of settlement was found, c.60 early-to-mid Iron Age large cylindrical pits were discovered, which are thought to have been used as silos for communal storage of the cereal crop (Cunliffe 2010, 570). One of these pits was re-used for the flexed burial of an adult male (Lyons 2011, 10-12); other pits were frequently back-filled with large quantities of butchered animal bone, possibly feasting waste, together with other deliberately placed objects of special meaning (*ibid.*, 121-122). Of particular note was a deeply stratified pit containing human body parts, high status bone artefacts and

also a flexed horse burial (*ibid*, 17-18, figure 11). Before the Duxford publication this type of activity had only rarely been recorded in Cambridgeshire and it raises questions about communal behaviors, such as the concept of ‘delayed return’ – which accompanied the storage of cereals during the transition to settled agricultural living (di Lernia 2022), and also cyclical hilltop communal gatherings which included feasting (Ralph 2007) within the framework of ritual actions which Hill has defined as a “pit belief system” (Hill 1995a, 15; Hill 1996, 28). As such the chalky knoll on which this activity was focussed was a natural feature that had attracted human attention and ritual behaviours over at least two and half thousand years (Bradley 2002; 2017, 160). With this long sequence of burial and ritual activity, the Duxford hilltop should, therefore, be viewed as evidence for a “persistent place” (Daubney 2016, 42), where a shared social memory was maintained over a significant period of time (Peterson 2012, 271).

The main focus of discussion here, however, is the final stage of burial that took place during the late Iron Age and Roman periods. At this time a rectangular wooden shrine was constructed, a feature which is also rare in the archaeological record (Cunliffe 2010, 566; Smith 2016b, 643), together with an associated cemetery (Figure 25).

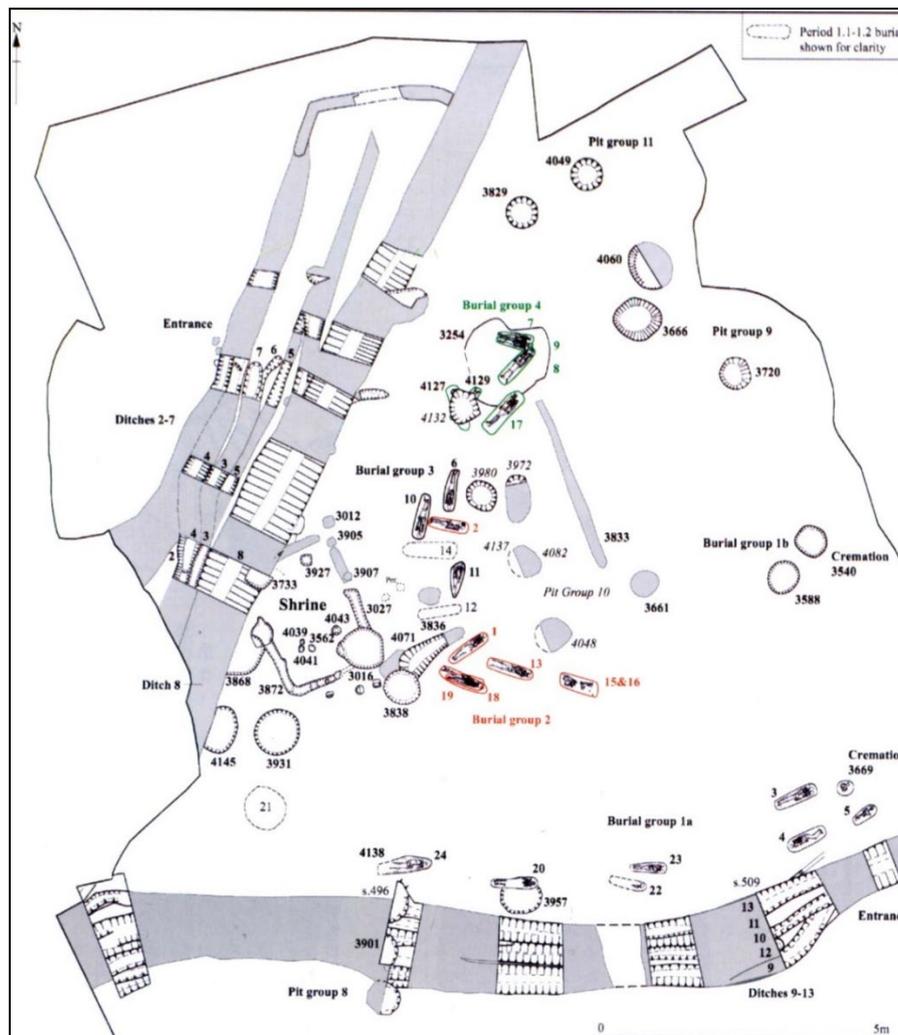


Figure 25. The site at Duxford, show the hilltop activity including pit digging, a shrine and associated burial (Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

The cemetery comprised 25 inhumation burials and two cremations and included men, women and children who were interred between *c.*110BC and AD200 (Lyons 2011, 118). Some of the inhumations were buried with grave goods: two were accompanied by ceramic pots carefully placed by their heads, while others were buried with what may be personal possessions, including a knife, a quartzite hammerstone, glass beads and a bracelet (Figure 27).

In two cases, ceramic pots were placed by the head of buried individuals, a particular placement imbued with meaning that has a long tradition in inhumation burial (Cooper *et al.* 2022, 69, figure 3.14).

- Burial 3 (Figure 26) contained the skeleton of an adult male aged between 35 and 57 years at death. Two Sandy grey ware ceramic vessels were placed either side of his head. One was a miniature wheel-made wide-mouthed jar and a small wheel-made platter. These vessels would have been used as a set and date from 10-50AD. The platter had been deliberately damaged or ritually killed (Lyons 2014, 221-222) by the drilling of at least 5 small holes near the rim.
- Burial 13 (Figure 27) contained a single Sandy grey ware high-shouldered jar, made at least in part on the potters' wheel, which had been placed on the northern side of the head of an adult (age unknown) male. The pot is a local and probably dates to the later part of the 1st century AD.

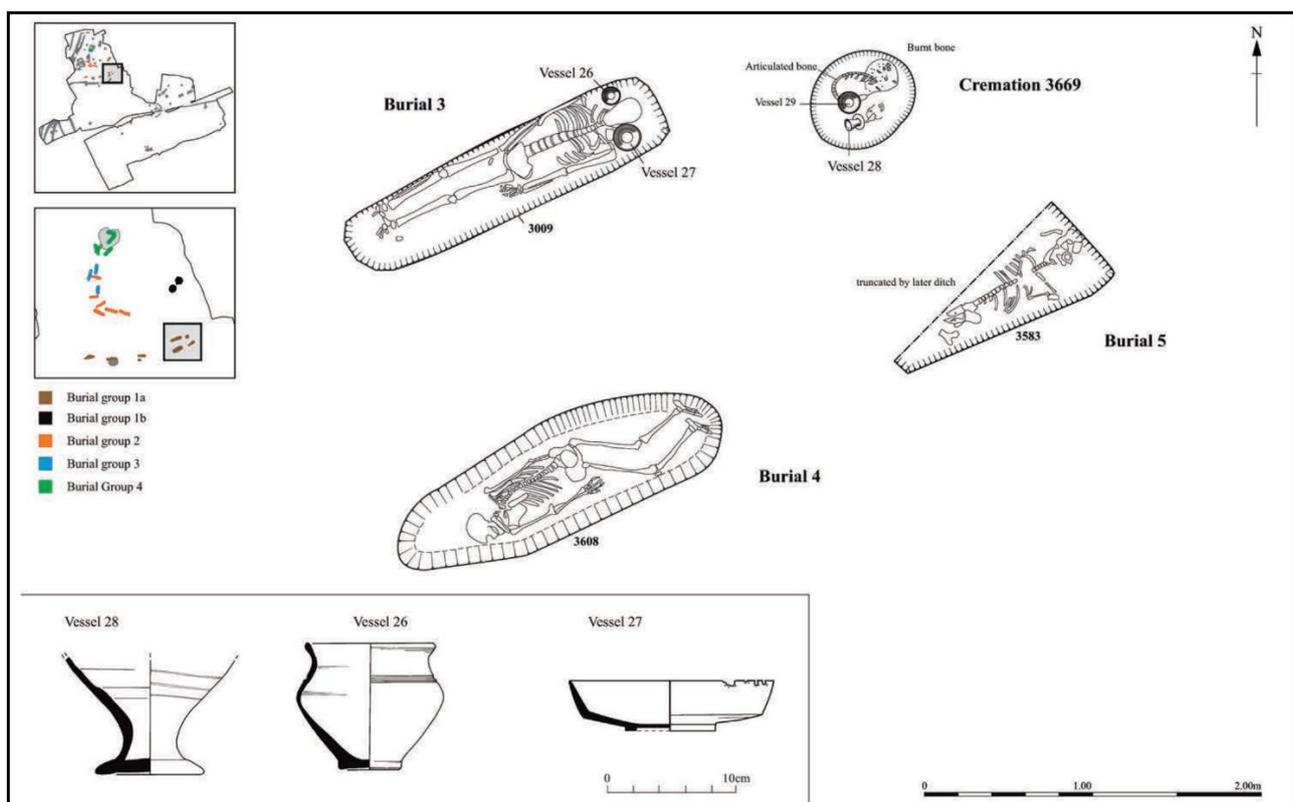


Figure 26. Duxford accessorised inhumation and cremation burials (Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

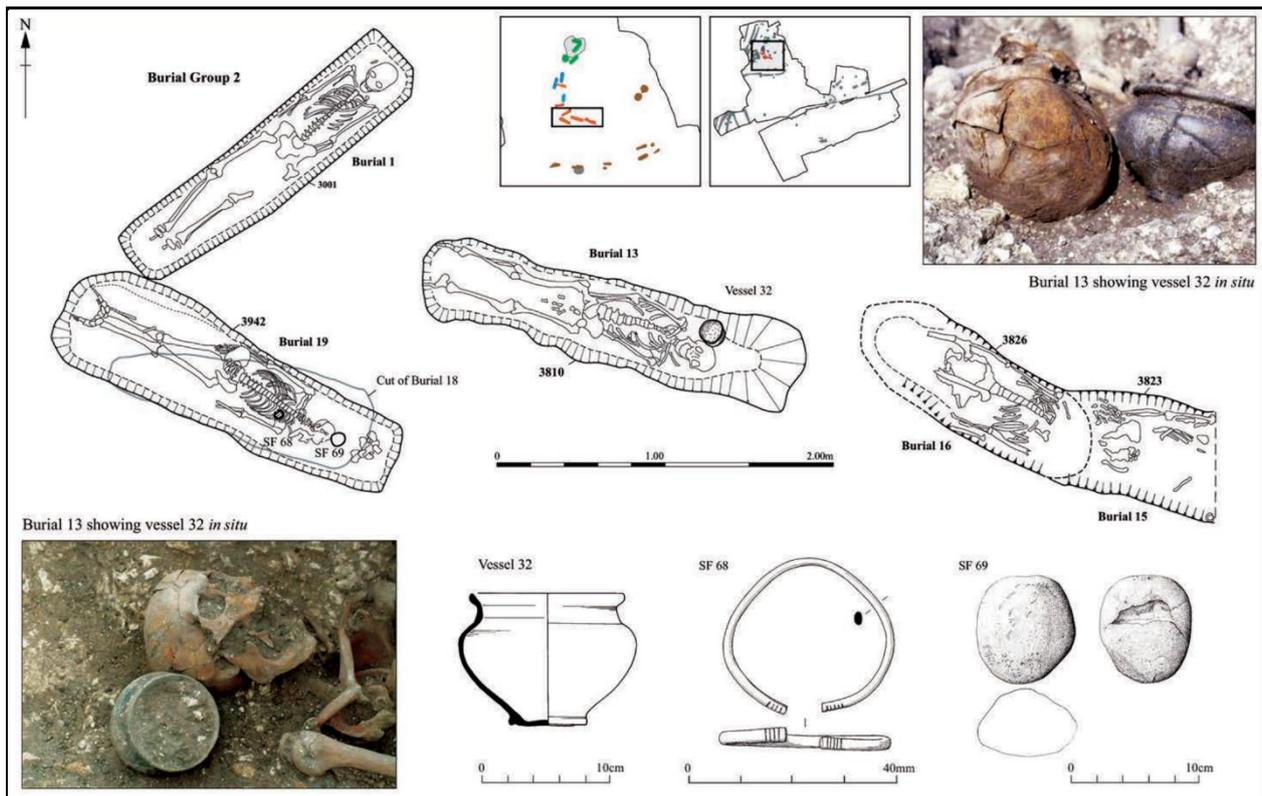


Figure 27. Duxford accessorised inhumation burial
(Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

Alongside, and contemporary with, the more numerous, inhumation burials were three accessorised Aylesford Swarling-type cremations.

- Cremation 3540 contained a patch of burnt human bone; also in the grave was a handmade Iron Age-type coarse ware jar base and an unburnt bone toggle and sewing needle.
- Cremation 3669 (Figure 26) contained a pile of undiagnostic fragments, possibly only a token (McKinley 2000, 42-43) of burnt human bone. Also in the burial pit was a partial articulated piglet skeleton and two fragmentary pottery vessels; one was the pedestal base of an urn and the other a jar/bowl with a footring base, both of a mid-1st century date.
- A scatter of adult human bone and a later 1st-century AD Butt beaker (S. Percival 2011, 65, no. 31) that has been deliberately punctured or ‘killed’ (see above), was found disturbed. The Butt beaker was a common choice of grave good in Southern Cambridgeshire during the early/mid-1st century AD (Thompson 1982).

The Late Iron Age and Early Roman cemetery at Duxford, although being the end-point of a long tradition of burial and ritual practice on the hilltop, is in other ways quite typical for the region, “being a small cemetery plot situated at a peripheral location” (Weekes 2016, 432). Hilltop burial has also been previously recorded elsewhere in the region (Fitzpatrick 2000, 27). The ceramic grave goods, both used in inhumation and cremation, were all of local manufacture (no imports were found), consisting of a handmade Iron Age coarse ware jar and also Early Roman locally manufactured wheel-made jars, a platter and a local copy of a Gaulish-type Butt Beaker. The platter and the Butt beaker had both been deliberately damaged or ritually killed, a recognised part of the funerary rite at this time (Biddulph 2005; Lyons 2014, 221-222), whereby the “deliberate breakage of objects is a typical, cross-

cultural way of consigning objects to an afterlife of strictly symbolic functionality” (Weekes 2006, 435). Furthermore, research shows that inhumation burial, sometimes accessorised, alongside Aylesford-Swarling type accessorised cremation is quite normal for parts of the British south-east (Lucy *et al.* 2016, 391-395), East Anglia (Ralph 2007) and south Cambridgeshire (Pearce 1999; Lyons and Billington in press). Other similarly sized small mixed rite contemporary cemeteries within the Cam Valley include those at Vicar’s Farm (C. Evans and Lucas 2020) and Addenbrookes (C. Evans *et al.* 2008, 47-57).

It is relevant to this discussion that adjacent to the hilltop cemetery at Duxford, a contemporary low-lying late Iron Age Aylesford-Swarling-type cemetery, dated to 50-10BC, was found at Hinxtton (c.1km to the north). This short-lived cemetery, although contemporary with the Duxford example, used a variation of the burial rite whereby eight late Iron Age cremation pits were dug, five of them enclosed by ring-ditches (Hill *et al.* 1999). The Hinxtton cremation site was accessorised (*ibid*, 252, table 1) mainly by brooches and ceramic vessels comprising grog tempered pedestal urns and also a tazza (a skeuomorph of lathe-turned wooded vessels (Stead and Rigby 1989, 160)). None of the graves contained platters or flagons or imported ware. This was a very different rite then from the Duxford cemetery which contained both inhumation and cremation burials which, although placed on a hill-top, were not formally enclosed by individual ring-ditches. This suggests that even within a very small geographical area and in a period of over-lapping time different communities were practising distinct versions of the Aylesford-Swarling tradition (Smith 2017, 278).

Case Study 2: Rectory Farm, Godmanchester

Rectory Farm is located to the north-west of Cambridge, near Huntingdon, in the clay lands of the Ouse Valley, where there are numerous Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments (Dawson 2000; Lyons 2019, 3-4, table 1.1, figure 1.4) including the unique Neolithic trapezoidal enclosure and later cursus recoded at Rectory Farm (Lyons 2019, 21, plate 2.1). The walled small town of Roman Godmanchester or *Durovigutum* (H.J.M. Green 2017) grew up at a crossroads with Ermine Street and the River Ouse (Lyons 2019, figure 1.5). The Roman villa site at Rectory Farm (Figure 28) was located to the north-east of *Durovigutum*, with its own metalled access road leading from the town, respecting the alignment of the monumental earthworks of the Neolithic trapezoidal enclosure, an example of “the antecedent landscape that influenced the subsequent use of place” (Daubney 2016, 9).

Located within the villa-farm enclosure was a discrete Aylesford-Swarling type accessorised cremation cemetery, which was laid-out during the mid-2nd century AD in an area which had already been used for a small number of earlier (and possibly forgotten) inhumation burials (Lyons 2019, 297, figure 4.5). The cemetery was in use for approximately 50 years and eventually held 52 urned and four unurned burials, containing 55 individuals and three food offerings; carefully laid out in probable family groups (*ibid*, 295-358) (Figure 29). Although within the country as a whole many examples of cemeteries attached to villa complexes are known (Smith 2017, 236, figure 6.24 and 247), such large groups of burials including both adults and children are rare.



Figure 28. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester site plan showing the cemetery (C.2 – in green) location (Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

Most of the buried were adult, several were children, and one was an infant. Where gender could be assigned, males outnumber females by a factor of *c.*2:1. Two of the bodies appear to have been cremated accompanied by animal remains, a possibly joints of meat deliberately placed on the pyre. However, there is no evidence for the pyre site, and this combined with the low percentage of buried cremated bone, suggests that only a token amount of bone was carried away from the pyre to be buried within the cemetery. As the cemetery is within the villa farm compound it would make sense if the unpleasant and smelly combustion process was undertaken elsewhere (Pearce 2013, 27-39).

All, bar one of the urned cremations were placed in ceramic vessels, usually a locally made Sandy grey ware used cooking jar. In one unusual example, however, the remains of a large middle aged man were buried in an equally large ‘ritually killed’ Horningsea storage jar (Lyons 2019, 349, figure 4.50) (Figure 30). This choice of vessel is unique within the cemetery and perhaps references the individual’s large size in life. Another interesting cinerary urn vessel choice is the use of a ‘poppy headed’ beaker (Lyons 2019, 320, figure 4.23) - as the poppy was associated with peaceful sleep and death because of the opium extracted from the seed head (Scarborough 1995). Atypically, one of the first cremation burials, potentially the richest (Philpott 1991, 26), contained a glass flask used as a cinerary urn (Figure 31), a type of vessel rarely used by the mid-2nd century AD (Biddulph 2005, 36).



Figure 4.4 Early Roman: Period 4.1. Cemetery 2. Scale 1:150

Figure 29. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester cremation cemetery layout (Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

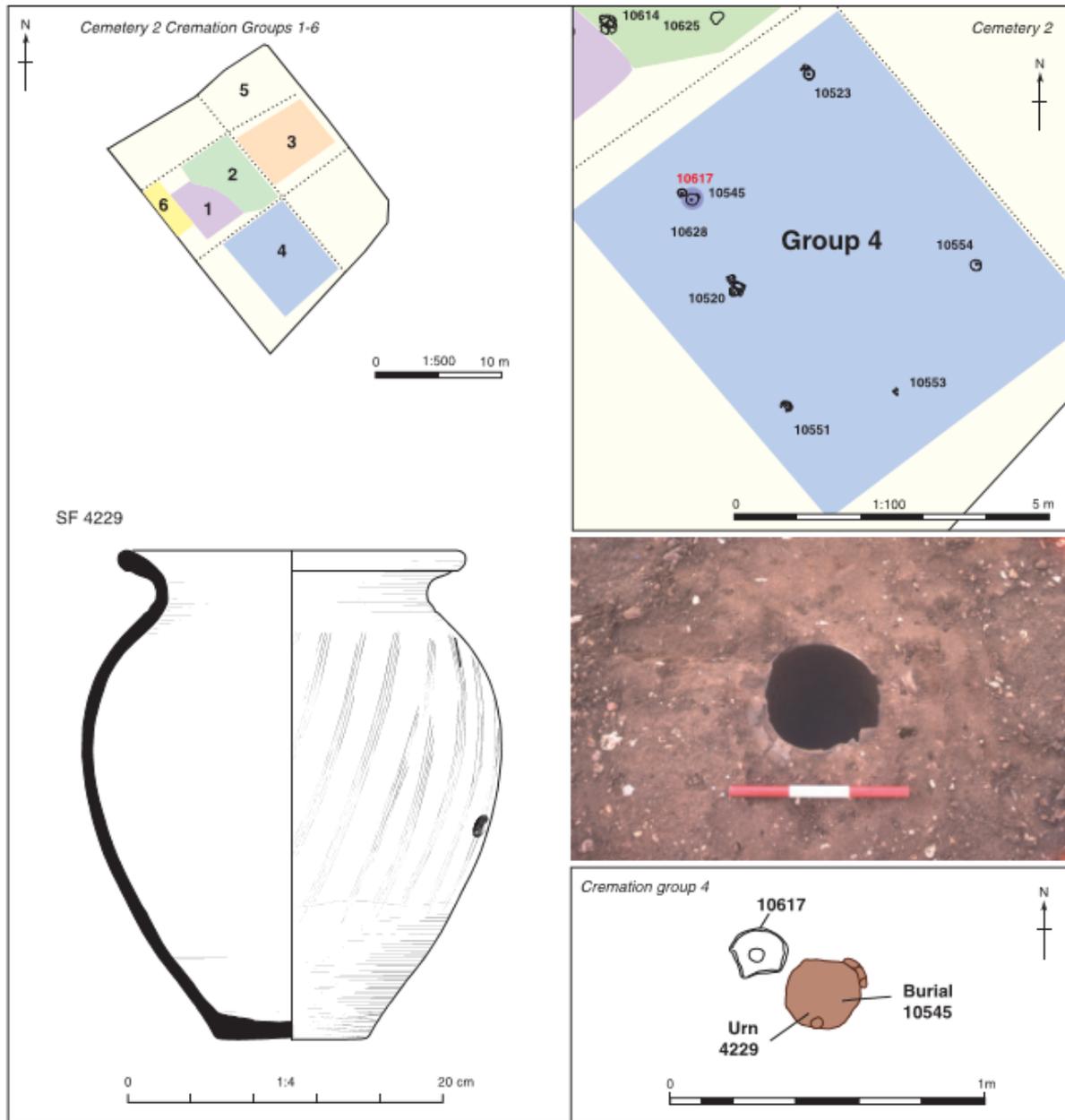


Figure 30. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester, a large ‘ritually killed’ Horningsea Storage jar used as a cinerary urn
 (Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

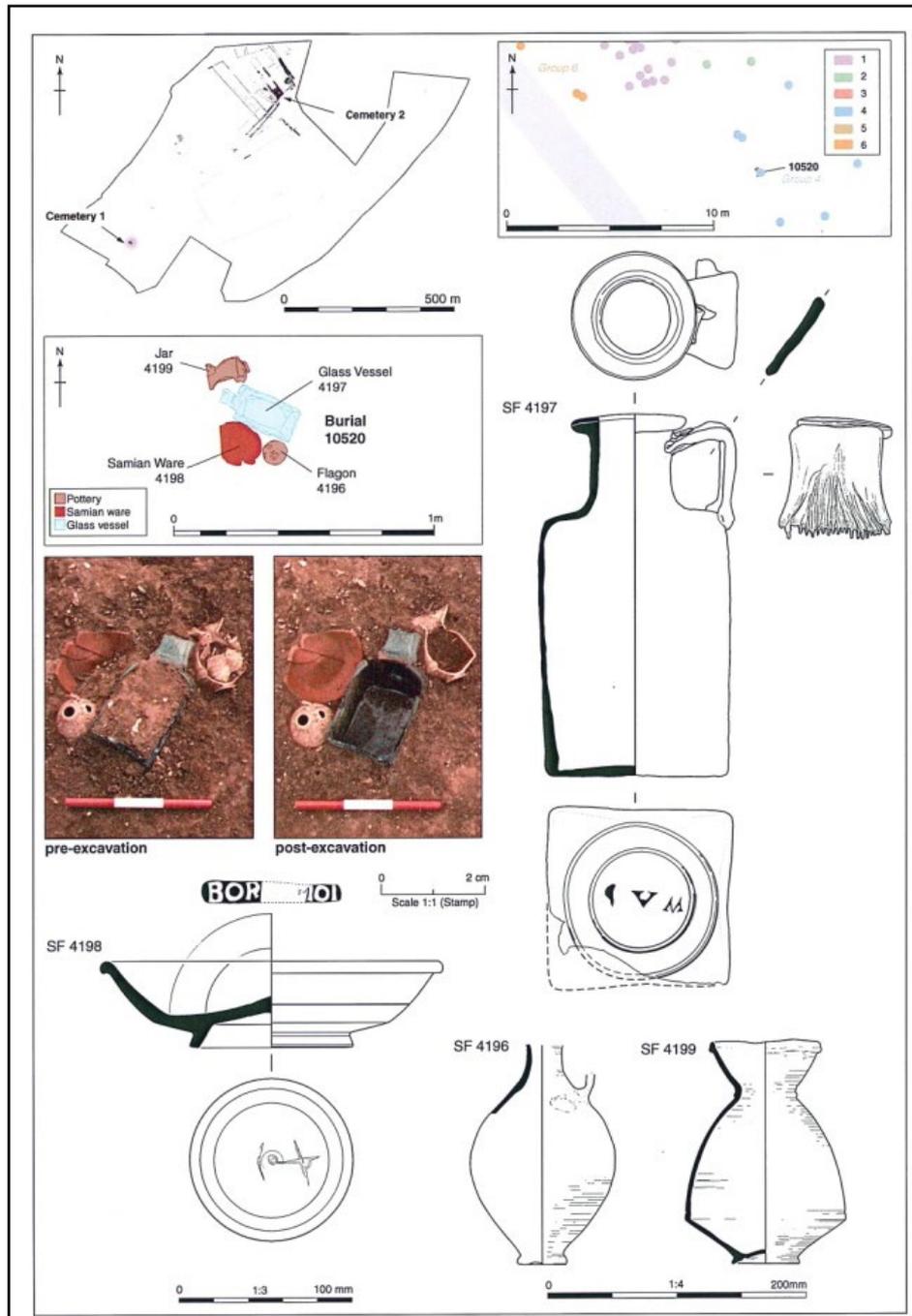


Figure 31. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester cremation 10520
(Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

Typically, within the Rectory Farm cremation cemetery, burial was accessorised with between 1 and 3 vessels, mostly comprising flagons (19 examples) or small beakers (13 examples), also samian dishes (seven examples). Otherwise, the burials contained very few personal possessions; one grave held a pair of unburnt hobnailed shoes placed next to the funerary urn (Lyons 2019, 329, figure 4.31).

The small number of accessory vessels selected for burial suggests that the *funerary feast* and subsequent display of associated vessels, as practiced in the late Iron Age and Early Roman Aylesford-Swarling cemeteries of the south-east (Biddulph 2018), had been significantly pared down. This

pattern fits with the known evidence which indicates that after the Early Roman period accessory vessels became less numerous (Smith 2017, 264). Not only were less vessels interred as accessories but those that were placed in the grave were now primarily associated with drink (i.e. flagons and cups), suggesting that the *funerary feast* had evolved into *funerary drinks*.

Moreover, some of the flagons (five examples) and also beakers (three examples) were carefully placed within the larger cinerary urn (Figure 32). This is a practice also seen in prehistoric cremations, where it has been coined an “inter-pot relationship” (Cooper *et al.* 2022, 180). This placement may be an indication that libation (Sterrett-Krause 2017, 4) was part of the funerary rite, where liquid was poured over the cremated bone as a ritual act of commemoration (Biddulph 2005, 32). This ritual may have taken place in conjunction with ‘ritual killing’ (see above), where the urns had been deliberately pierced, so as to allow any liquid poured into the cremation urn to pass through the burial into the ground. The libation ritual may have taken place during the period the burial pit was left open – possibly for display or to allow people to pay their respects; the presence of wild animal pit-falls supports the idea that the cremation pits were not immediately covered (Howard-Davies and Lyons 2019, 373).

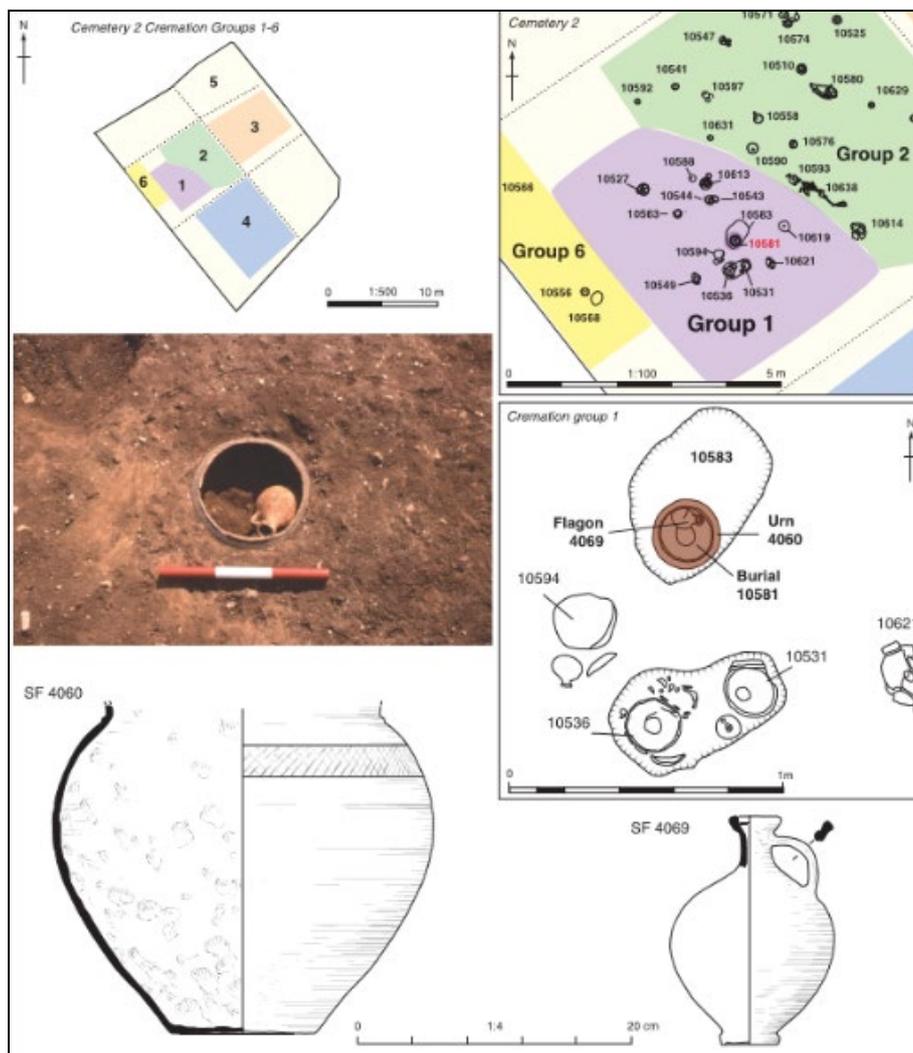


Figure 32. Rectory Farm, Godmanchester, a flagon within a larger cinerary urn (Reproduced with the kind permission of Oxford Archaeology East)

Another interesting observation concerning the flagons used at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester are that they are typical of local manufacture within the Godmanchester industry ceramic industry (Lyons 2019, 358-359). They are, however, not only very small but often also a bit ‘wobbly’ and this may suggest these not quite perfect vessels were put aside as suitable for burial (a trait also seen within the Broughton cremation cemetery (Lyons 2014)). That flagons are present at all, however, is significant as by the mid-Roman period they had generally taken the place of their glass predecessors and are therefore “a potent symbol of *Romanitas*” (Biddulph 2005, 36). This leads us on to consider the status of the people buried at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester. It should be said at the outset that the fact that they were formally buried at all was still unusual within rural settlement and probably reflects the elevated status associated with living and working in a villa farm estate. The burials, however, were not particularly richly accessorised; for example none of the metal vessels which often accompanied elite examples were found (Biddulph 2005, 40) – while the common use of beakers in the funerary rite may suggest that the inhabitants were mead or ale drinkers (rather than the more expensive option of wine) and therefore of only modest rank (*ibid*, 36). The cremation cemetery at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester, fell from use in the later 2nd century, at a time when inhumation burial, separate from settlement, became the dominant funerary rite for the region (Esmonde Cleary 2000, 139).

Both the case studies described here have demonstrated that death in Roman Britain was very much part of life, whereby the “living undertook a proper treatment of the dead” (Esmund Cleary 2000, 141).

The mixed inhumation and cremation cemetery at Duxford is an early example, within the eastern region, for the adoption and adaption of the Aylesford-Swarling type burial practice. It is interesting to observe that during inhumation personal objects were placed in the grave as well as locally made ceramic vessels, one of which had been ‘ritually killed’. This is relevant as a Butt beaker, also deliberately damaged was also found associated with a cremation burial. This demonstrates that there was at least one shared belief and funerary ritual connecting both those who chose to be buried or cremated. ‘Killing’ a vessel may have been a symbolic act to create a ‘dead pot for a dead person’ (Wait 1985, 240); maybe also combined with the prosaic motivation to prevent valuable pots from being targeted for re-use by grave robbers (Lyons 2014, 221).

The Aylesford-Swarling type burials excavated firstly at Hinxton (Hill *et al.* 1999) and latterly at Duxford (Lyons 2011) were initially thought to be distant outliers of the Aylesford-Swarling tradition. Recent research, however, suggests that “the core-periphery models”, where defining traits decay with distance from their origin (C. Evans 2020; pottery studies), are too simplistic (Hill *et al.* 1999). The distribution of known sites in the east would suggest that this funerary rite travelled up the navigable river valleys of the region (Lyons 2011, 119), while the adoption of this rite in the borderlands of Cambridgeshire may also have provided a social message concerned not only with the processes of death but also with political and social identities in life (C. Evans *et al.* 2008).

While the community at Duxford were early adopters of the Aylesford-Swarling funerary rite, the villa farm cemetery at Rectory Farm, Godmanchester, is one of the latest known examples in the region; the whole town of Godmanchester continued to practice this rite into the mid/late 2nd century AD (H.J.M. Green 2017; Lyons 2019, 424). Here the use of personal possessions, apart from one pair of shoes (which are thought to be a symbol of the deceased journey into the afterlife (Atkins and Atkins 2004, 396)) are completely unknown. By this time and in this place, the accessory ceramic vessels were mostly associated with the consumption of drinks. Pottery, as the most common grave good, consistently played a key role not only as a cinerary urn – possibly sometimes chosen to reflect the

character of the deceased (see above) - but also as remnants of funerary eating and drinking rituals, which could be displayed and possibly also used in the post-pyre pre-burial ritual of libation.

The two case studies have clearly demonstrated that the human response to death in this part of eastern Britain was consistently meaningful and heavily imbued with ritual behaviours, although these were uniquely interpreted by the people of each community.

CONCLUSION: WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

“When eras die, their legacies are left to strange police” Clarence Day (1928)

“All archaeology is a form of ongoing research” Hartley (2006, 15)

Within the lengthy period of study and reflection covered here, I have researched a wide range of topics associated with the Roman pottery of eastern Britain. The majority of my studies are, however, focused on the most unglamorous of all Roman pottery types – the ubiquitous and lowly coarse ware vessel, the type of pottery that would have been found in most Roman rural homes in the east of England between the mid-1st and early 5th centuries AD. This is a class of vessel, however, that has often been overlooked throughout the history of archaeological ceramic study, due to the perception that it is not only less easy to date and source than some finewares but also that it is difficult to incorporate into wider research due to the many different descriptive fabric codes and typologies developed by individual specialists. This lack of cohesion has made Roman pottery coarse wares analysis impenetrable to the non-specialist (Fulford *et al.* 2017, 281; Rippon 2017, 337). The result of this perceived difficulty has been that the focus of much of the recent non-specialist ceramic-based research has been on the distribution of amphorae and samian wares (Brindle 2017), which have an international typology combined with a limited range of fabrics and forms and are therefore much more easily used in general archaeological research (Willis 2011, 167). Although, that being said, all classes of Roman pottery are becoming more within reach with the publication of the *Roman National Fabric Series* (Tomber and Dore 1998), *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* (Barclay *et al.* 2016) and most recently a regional type series for eastern Britain (Lyons 2020).

Within this thesis I have demonstrated that Roman coarse wares are a powerful interpretative tool for the archaeologist and one that still holds much potential for further study.

These findings, taken in the context of the theoretical constructs outlined at the beginning of this thesis (Part 1), have added valuable detail to the topic of Romanization and acculturation, showing how in the Late Iron Age and Early Roman east new ways of accessorised burial (the Aylesford-Swarling rite) were adopted by a number of communities – particularly in the borderlands of south Cambridgeshire and also the Cam Valley, where these rites were developed in various ways. Similarly the contemporary adoption of the new potting technology was incorporated into the indigenous skill-set gradually over several generations culminating in the establishment of the pre-Flavian Brampton

coarse ware pottery industry which shows evidence for Early Roman manufacture on a scale not previously recorded in the region and radically changes, therefore, our understanding of how pottery was made at this time. While it is important to note that both the pottery makers and those who were burying pots with their dead continued to reference beliefs and practices from pre-Roman times (such as ‘ritual killing’ and the hybrid technique of using both hand- and wheel-making practice), it is clear that this was also a time of dynamic change.

In addition, my research on specialist mortaria production has informed on the presence of satellite workshops within the region, revealing levels of connectivity and shared practice not previously reported on from the northern East Anglian perspective. Furthermore, my work concerning the regional manufacturing centres and the production of Black Burnished ‘kindred wares’ suggest it is time to look again at the distribution of these coarse wares beyond the recognised local markets and examine their potential importance to supplying the militarised north. Both these areas of study question how far archaeological research has really come from the view of Haverfield (1912) that this region was a remote backwater and joins with recent regional research (Bowden 2013; in press; J. Evans *et al.* 2017) to progress our understanding of the role this region played in the economy of not only Roman Britain but the wider Empire.

Finding my unique voice and demonstrating a significant contribution to the archaeology of eastern Britain has been both a struggle and a joy but one which I hope will prove useful to the ongoing process of study that is archaeology.

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