

STUDY GROUP FOR ROMAN POTTERY

NEWSLETTER 40

December 2005



Images from 2005 conference: Pottery viewing at Cotswold Archaeology, tour of Roman Cirencester

S.G.R.P. Website - www.sgrp.org

Remember to use our website for information and queries. If you would like to add an item, or suggest how the website may be developed, please contact Ted Connell Tel: 01474 872763 Email: ted.connell@btinternet.com

Secretary's news (secretary@sgrp.org)

Jane Evans writes: Welcome to the 40th edition of the SGRP Newsletter - another full edition. Thanks to Chris Lydamore for the cover photos. Included are papers from this year's **SGRP conference in Worcester** (speakers who have not yet provided summaries, please send these for inclusion in the next edition). This was a great success (thanks to the hard work of Laura Griffin of WHEAS, Richard Reece who led a tour of Roman Cirencester, and Annette Hancocks and Ed McSloy who organised a pottery viewing at Cotswold Archaeology). Also in this edition, news of **next year's conference in Ghent**. This should be a great experience, providing an opportunity to meet many of our European colleagues (and enjoy excellent food and beer!). The newsletter contains a number of interesting articles from members and non-members. There is a copy of an article by Andrew Peachey, just published in the IFA's 'The Archaeologist' (No. 58), which presents an interim statement on the **SGRP survey**. Those of you who have not already received a copy of the questionnaire by email will find a hard copy enclosed with this newsletter. Please take time to complete and return this, as it is providing valuable information to the Group. (Any new members who have slipped through the net, please contact me and I will send you a copy). The closing date for replies will be **7th January**, so you can put it on your new year's resolutions if you don't have time to complete it in the run up to Christmas! Emma Hancox from **Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service** has provided an article on their new **Online Archaeology Library**, which should provide a valuable resource for researchers working in this County. If you know of initiatives elsewhere that might help our research please let me know, so we can publicise them through the newsletter. We also have a report on **Roman Pottery Kilns at Short Street, Westbury, Wiltshire** by Jayne Lawes. Up-to-date contact lists will be going out with the next newsletter, early next year. Please let me know if any of your details have changed – particularly if you now have an email address.

It has been another busy year for the **Editorial committee**; JRPS 12 (Kay Hartley's feschrift) went to Oxbow in early August, and has a production date in early 2006; JRPS 13 (the mortarium bibliography), which is being published by the Museum of London, is due out in the latter part of 2006. Jude Plouviez is retiring as Honorary Editor, having completed her period in office. The committee is currently making arrangements for her replacement.

The first **Graham Webster Memorial Grant** was awarded in the summer to a delegate attending the conference in Worcester. No other applications were received. The grants will be available again in 2006. Details regarding deadlines will be published in the next newsletter.

Finally, the committee is keen to see regional groups, and in particular regional group meetings, revitalised. Could active groups send a report on their activities for inclusion in the next newsletter (and on the website). We would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to 'energise' groups that have been dormant!

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2006 will be due on the 1st January. Payment, of £15 (20 GBP for Overseas), can be made by cheque, made payable to 'The Study Group for Roman Pottery'. If you would like to arrange payment by Standing Order please download a form from the website or request one from Louise at the address below. Please note Louise's new email address, below.

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Committee News

The Committee comprise:

President: Steve Willis
Membership secretary/Hon. Treasurer: Louise Rayner
Hon. Secretary: Jane Evans
Hon. Editor: Jude Plouviez (standing down)
Ordinary Members: Andrew Peachey, Ed Biddulph, Roy Friendship Taylor, Chris Lydamore,
Charlotte Thompson, Fiona Seeley

The following members also have active roles:

Production Manager: Pam Irving
Reviews Manager: Vivien Swan
Website Manager: Ted Connell
Bibliography: Colin Wallace

The only change in membership of the Committee at the AGM in 2005 was the election of Chris Lydamore. Chris had previously been co-opted onto the Committee and has now been elected as an Ordinary Member, replacing Geoff Dannell whose term of office had expired. We thank Geoff for his great efforts as a Committee member.

The Membership

The Group currently has 140 members. We would like to welcome the following new members: John Coombs, Mark Wiltshire (undertaking an MA in Archaeology and Heritage at Leicester University and studying Alice Holt/Farnham wares as a personal project); Amy Richardson (Research Assistant, the British School at Rome), Alan Jacobs (Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service), Elizabeth Macaulay (rejoin), David Griffiths, Philip Stanley, Susan Jones, Jenny Wheeler, Benedict Gillett, Jayne Lawes and Rick Whyte (undertaking a distance learning degree with Exeter University, studying the samian from a villa site near Weedon, Northants and involved in a Community Landscapes Archaeological Survey Project 'C.L.A.S.P.', looking at the distribution of Romano-British settlements along the A5 corridor between Weedon and Towcester.

The John Gillam Prize

Steven Willis writes: It was unanimously agreed at the Groups' AGM in London in 2004 to institute an annual prize for an outstanding item of work in the field of Roman pottery studies. This prize, as previously reported, is to be named after one of our key founders, the late John Gillam, in acknowledgement of his tremendous contribution to the subject. The committee have agreed the criteria for making the award which includes a modest financial prize. The Group should therefore be in a position to make the first award in the near future. A sub-committee is considering items of work brought to its attention. If you have come across any recent items of work (ie. pottery reports (grey literature and otherwise), synthetic studies, student dissertations and theses, etc.), appearing over the past two years, that you think may be worthy of consideration could you please advise the Group secretary, Jane Evans, who will pass on your suggestion to the sub-committee. It is expected that a decision will be reached early in the new year, with the decision communicated to the Group in the next Newsletter.

Annual Conference 30th June – 2nd July 2006

Steven Willis writes: The 2006 Conference is to be held in Ghent, hosted by Wim de Clercq and Prof. Arjen Bosman, both of the University of Ghent. Sessions will summarize themes and latest research in Roman period pottery for Belgium and France, and will also cover cross-Channel issues such as trade, the military (including the Saxon Shore), comparative 'Romanization' and a special theme of BBW. The Conference will take place over 3 days, starting on the Friday after lunch and finishing at lunch time on the Sunday. There will be a

trip on the Saturday afternoon, probably to the Velzeke Museum, which houses the best collection of Roman pottery from Belgium Flanders.

Accommodation has been arranged in a hotel (at a reduced rate) in the centre of Ghent, very close to the Conference centre. The Conference itself will be held in the 13th Century 'Het Pand,' situated by the famous old city. The complex is a delightful former monastery and now part of the University; it is a spacious building with 21st century AV and conference facilities. A virtual tour can be followed at <http://www.ugent.be/en/visitstaff/services/tour>. It is anticipated that c. 50+ delegates will come from Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Germany & Luxembourg, in addition to the British contingent. The all-in Conference fee is expected to be in the order of c. 210 € (just over £140). This will include 2 nights hotel accommodation with breakfast at c. 150 € (just over £100), an evening reception and Conference Dinner. (Delegates wishing to arrive the day before the Conference would need to book for 3 nights). A Eurostar standard return fare from London to Ghent is currently c. £40-60; by car from Calais to the centre of Ghent is 98 miles on straight-forward, good quality, roads.

An exciting programme of lectures is taking shape and there will be an opportunity to meet international colleagues, to explore common and contrasting ground, as well as the chance to view a variety of pottery types from the near Continent traded and otherwise. These aspects should make the prospect of this venue for 2006 particularly attractive to members. In addition there is the prospect of some pleasant summer days combined with good food, all within the environment of one of Europe's most charming historic cities.

Annual Conference 2005

This year's conference, with the theme of be 'Regional approaches to Roman pottery studies' was held at University College Worcester, hosted by Laura Griffin of Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service. The conference included a walking tour of Roman Cirencester, led by Richard Reece and a visit to Cotswold Archaeological Trust to view a selection of pottery from sites in the Southern Severn Valley. The conference was a great success, and a credit to those involved in organising and contributing to it.

List of Conference Papers and Summaries (in order of presentation)

Welcome and introduction

by Malcolm Atkin

Worcestershire has a long tradition of pottery manufacture, with notable industries from the Iron Age onwards. As a consequence, the Service has also had a long tradition of ceramics specialists within its team. We have recently extended this by creating the 'Ceramic research Centre' in partnership with University College Worcester. We hope that this will provide a focus for local research and also provide a 'home' for freelance researchers in the region. It is an enduring problem of archaeological specialists that they can work in isolation and we hope that this will help. In similar vein, we wish to integrate finds specialists within the 'mainstream' of local authority archaeology. It is no coincidence that our Historic Environment Record Manager is a recognised pottery specialist (Victoria Bryant). Historically, Sites and Monuments Records (now Historic Environment Records) have focused on sites rather than finds and we wish to provide a more comprehensive record, and also a record that is more integrated with museum finds catalogues. Only then can HERs fully develop their potential as research tools. It seems ridiculous that responsibility for an archaeological find is divided between an archaeological service who might be responsible for the planning brief which causes its excavation and recording and then a museum service who then becomes responsible for its long term storage. As a profession we need to work towards seamless management of the resource. We also need to work together to ensure that finds receive active curation and are maintained in such a way that their future educational and research potential can be properly assessed and periodically re-evaluated. This process means being prepared to take hard decisions about disposal as museum stores are not capable of perpetual expansion and it is surely right and proper that those decisions are made by specialists, archaeology curators and museum curators together. Otherwise there is a very real danger that the future fate of those pottery sherds that this group spends so much loving care over will be decided by non-professionals (i.e. politicians).

The Research Background

The development of an on-line resource

by Victoria Bryant



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Worcestershire's on-line ceramic database www.worcestershireceramics.org was originally envisaged as part of the planning process, rather than a public resource. Its primary purpose was to increase access to information for pottery specialists. Its creation was prompted by two key problems. First that research was being inhibited by the time taken to access published and unpublished work already undertaken and second that reports on ceramics are increasingly published as grey literature.

The on-line series brings together the results of 30 years of research. It creates an accessible research resource for specialists and students, facilitates research on individual collections and facilitates inter-site analysis. In the near future it will also address the problem of access to grey literature. At present grey literature reports for Worcestershire can be accessed via our on-line Library www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/library (see report by Emma Hancox below) but over the next year these reports will also be linked to the bibliography section of the Ceramic Database and to individual event records within the Historic Environment Record.

The online series is intended to enhance rather than replace the "real" fabric series. It holds fabric descriptions, photographs, information on manufacture, source, distribution, date ranges, forms found, a bibliography and a link to thin section data. Currently on-line are all prehistoric fabrics, Roman fabrics, post-Roman and medieval fabrics, and an example of a form series using pilot data. This year a new interactive front end with better help facilities and on-line identification guidelines will be produced. Also in the pipeline, ceramic overviews of the county and the post-medieval fabrics.

A number of problems have been encountered during the creation of this resource

- the difficulty of developing a consistent standard of data
- funding the maintenance of the database
- the slow speed of its development due to intermittent funding

There have, however, been many positive outcomes. There has been an enthusiastic response from specialists, and the user base is wider than anticipated. The database, unlike a conventionally published type series can be improved and enhanced as work is undertaken and users can help drive its development. The most important issues, as usual, are the quality of the data and the need to make provision for sustaining and developing the resource.

The on-line series can be found at www.worcestershireceramics.org

The Romans in the West Midlands

by Roger White

The West Midlands region covers the modern counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Hereford, and Worcestershire. This is a poor match with the suggested territories of Roman Britain, though there is some coincidence that can be suggested. The known tribes in the area are the *Cornovii* and the *Dobunni* and probably the *Corieltauvi*. It can be argued that the territory of the *Cornovii* in particular relates pretty closely to the modern boundaries of a combined Shropshire and Cheshire although their southern boundary with the *Dobunni* is weakly defined, as is that to the east where the *Corieltauvi* must lie. I tend to use the hypothesis that boundaries lie on natural fault lines so in this case this would define the territory of the *Cornovii* at the watershed of the Trent / Severn (and Mersey) in the east at the Mersey to the north, and within the foothills of the Berwyns / Clwydians to the west. The Teme may be the southern boundary. The match with the *Dobunni* is much weaker. It is clear that their territory extends much further south and Cunliffe has argued in the Iron Age for a 'southern' and 'northern' *Dobunni* divided (less convincingly to me) by an arm of the *Belgae*. On this basis, our region would include the 'northern *Dobunni*', a sept of the larger overall tribal area (as with the *Brigantes*). To the east, Warwickshire was probably divided between the *Corieltauvi* to the north and the *Catuvellauni* to the south but there is no obvious natural division here and certainly parts of Warwickshire could have belonged to the *Dobunni* or *Cornovii* too.

Geologically, this is a region dominated by clays, usually glacially derived, and often overlying acid sandstones and much older base rocks (igneous and metamorphosed silt and mudstones). Locally, minerals abound: coal, copper, lead, zinc, silver, iron and rock salt were heavily exploited in the Roman period with the exception of coal. Coal Measures clays were certainly exploited though, especially for the production of mortaria. Topographically the region is largely low-lying but is punctuated by ridges and hills that can be igneous in origin (Malverns, Wrekin, The Clee Hills), sandstone (Grinshill, Beeston) or limestone (Wenlock Edge, Llanymynech). Natural heathlands are also found (Press; Sutton Park) but are not major barriers.



Photographs taken by Graham Norrie for Birmingham Archaeology

As a consequence of the geology, the region is dominated traditionally by pasture, especially in the north, but there is clear evidence that arable was an important component in the Iron Age and Roman periods where the soils were lighter. In practice this means especially the major river valleys that pass through the region (notably the Severn and Wye basins). These rivers form essential and natural routes into this largely land-locked region (the only direct outlet to the sea is to the north, via the Dee estuary, or from the Wirral since the Mersey was too dangerous to use because of the rip tides at the mouth) and to the south via the Bristol Channel.

Much of this background may seem unnecessarily detailed but it is important to realise that the geological and physical constraints of the area have had a profound impact on its peoples during prehistory. The lack of direct access to the sea lanes, and hence the trade routes, means that the area is not as open to external influences as, say the southeast or southwest of Britain. Similarly, the predominance of livestock-based agriculture might be argued to have an impact on the ability of the population to amass portable wealth since livestock are not a storable or tradable asset in the way that grain or other agricultural commodities can be. Indeed, it has been argued that the measure of wealth among the *Cornovii* in particular may have been head of cattle. The importance of livestock may be reflected in the form of lowland enclosures common throughout the region. The largest of these have multiple, widely spaced

ditches with staggered entrances that might be interpreted as livestock corrals. If such an economy did exist, then this is a clear economic difference with the moneyed economy imposed by the Romans, and which prevailed in the south and east of Britain in the century before the conquest. It will also have had profound social consequences too in that wealth may perhaps have been less readily convertible into artefacts and thus there will have been less visible differentiation of wealth across society.

The consequence of the geographic position of the region, therefore, is that there is both a dearth of imported artefacts and a poorly developed material culture. These factors have been used to promote the idea that the region is 'poor'. Superficially, this is true: there are no Welwyn Garden City or Folly Lane type burials and hence no evidence for a wealthy, and Romanised elite. There are occasional finds of high quality Iron Age metalwork but they are rare and comparatively insignificant, and there is no pottery to speak of at all. Tellingly, where there is evidence for Iron Age vessels, they are in wood (Breidden) or leather (Beeston). The exception to this are the coarse pottery containers (VCP) used to transport salt. Elaine Morris' study of these wares, deriving from the Dobunnic salt spring at Droitwich or the Cornovian springs at Nantwich, Middlewich and Northwich, demonstrate a remarkable distribution pattern that carry the latter vessels as far west as Cardigan Bay, via the port at Meols, and as far east as Crick in Northants. The evidence too is that Cheshire salt was competing successfully with Droitwich salt in the Bristol Channel region in the late Iron Age. The organisation of this industry alone hints clearly at a well-organised society with a strong controlling hierarchy. A similar social structure may be evidenced by the control and exploitation of iron at Weston-under-Penyard, *Ariconium*, (see below) in the later Iron Age. Similarly, the existence of numerous hill forts (and for that matter the multiple-ditched enclosures) implies the ability of the same hierarchy to command corvée labour. Despite this, it is probable that such an elite would have had a relatively flat hierarchy, hence the lack of very high status burials. Without substantial portable wealth with which to reward warriors, the elite could not compete with each other to the same extent as in other regions of Britain. Consequently, they could not gather enough followers to allow them to develop oppida. There is evidence, however, that this situation was changing since there are hints that a 'territorial' oppidum was developing at Weston, and another has been suggested at Old Oswestry and at Bury Walls, both in Shropshire. These are not in the class of a Bagendon, however, let alone the great oppida of the southeast. Such developments do hint that members of the tribal elites were beginning to emerge just before the conquest.

This excursion into the Iron Age background has been necessary to 'set the scene' but also to emphasise the enormous shock that must have been engendered by the Roman conquest and the imposition of Roman control. The arrival of the Roman army will have profoundly affected the local society. First will have been the sheer violence attendant on any conquest but the subsequent garrisoning and settlement of the region will have had much longer lasting consequences. Not least will have been the sudden introduction of a completely new economic system based on coins, both bullion and base, and a bewildering array of consumer goods. For the *Cornovii* in particular this must have been a real shock and there is evidence that they were not able to respond. At Wroxeter, the earliest Roman civilian settlement appears to have been Dobunnic in origin, as demonstrated by the use of Dobunnic coins and Malvernian pottery. The earliest pottery too is clearly military in inspiration and probably manufacture. The combined influences of Dobunnic and military potters soon leads to the foundation of the only major pottery industry in the region: Severn Valley ware. There is little sign of the indigenous population in all this. More subtle introductions include a Mediterranean diet including wine and olive oil, imported along with many other exotics such as samian, glazed pottery and glassware. The fraternisation between Roman and native in the fort or in the trading settlements established outside them will have gradually acted as the focus for social interaction, and the transmission of these new ideas and services.

This initial phase of contact will have had its greatest impact in and around the forts and fortresses, many of which later became the nuclei of towns in the region. As such, these settlements remained nodes of Romanisation but how far did their influence spread? From what we can see of the settlement pattern, it stays remarkably static. Many of the enclosures established in the Iron Age continue to flourish in the same location. Analysis of the enclosures around the immediate area of Wroxeter indicates that they are biased towards the

best pasture land instead of prime arable as might be anticipated. This suggests that the Iron Age focus on livestock was not lost but continued into the Roman period. For the elite this is a time of transition. If, as has been argued, the wealth of the elite was measured in cattle the transition to a money economy would have been difficult since it would have considerably reduced their wealth and status. However, it is likely that those who welcomed the Romans were appropriately rewarded, perhaps with loans from wealthy Roman senators like Seneca. Alternatively, if such leaders held the tribe's assets in common trust, then they may have been able to reap the reward of the cash realisation of these assets for their own benefit. Whatever the case, there is clear evidence for the investment of wealth in Romanised buildings such as that at Berwick Alkmund Park, near Shrewsbury where a 1ha square enclosure in an otherwise native landscape contained a small villa with underfloor heating. Other examples at Acton Scott and Ashford Carbonnel, both in Shropshire but towards Dobunnic territory, show a similar association of Roman buildings and enclosures. More radical is the farm at Duncote, 1 mile north of Wroxeter where there is evidence for the reorganisation of an Iron Age landscape into one laid out in *iugera* for market gardening. This is perhaps rare evidence for the settlement of a veteran.

In this climate, it is not surprising that there is an explosion of pottery use in the later first century and throughout the second. It is epitomised especially within the towns and these are clearly fully Romanised in outlook. A neat example of the pervasive influence of trade comes from Wroxeter's forum where a catastrophic fire in 165-175 caused the collapse of market stalls into the gutter. The goods remained uncollected until retrieved by Atkinson in the 1920s. The finds represent a trade route taking samian from central Gaul, up the Rhine and into London. From here new Kentish ragstone whetstones are collected and then shipped up Watling Street. Entering the West Midlands, the load passes by the kilns at Mancetter where large new mortaria are added before arriving at Wroxeter. Work on the Wroxeter Hinterland Project has shown, however, that the use of material culture is limited to the town and its immediate (500m) hinterland. Note, however, that material is dragged out further along the roads, as at Atcham. Beyond this there is a sharp fall-off in quantity of finds and it is apparent that there was little penetration of Roman material culture into the countryside. (Travelling in Russia recently I was struck by the change in diet between metropolitan St Petersburg and provincial western Russia. In the countryside, simple peasant food was the norm; in the city it was sophisticated western-style cuisine. It struck me that this may have been what Roman Britain was like: Roman in the towns but outside in the countryside, the same people might be living a much simpler and older existence that did not necessarily require the use of Roman dishes, plates and other paraphernalia).

This pattern of existence continues into the third century but there is then change and dislocation in the countryside. The causes of this change are not clear, but they are Empire-wide. Sites like Alkmund Park are abandoned, or deliberately demolished. Other new sites are occupied, such as the villas at Yarchester or Whitley Grange in Shropshire. Small towns begin to proliferate and some potentially reach the status of quasi-civitas capitals, as at *Deva* (Chester) or *Magnis* (Kenchester). These latter developments reflect the growing economic success of the province, and perhaps its growing self-sufficiency. Certainly, evidence for long distance trade declines and is replaced by provincial trade largely from the major pottery production centres in the south east and south. Concomitant with this is the shift of political power from London to the regions, as manifested by the establishment of Cirencester as the capital of Britannia Prima, in which much of the West Midlands lay. The consequence of this was the massive growth in wealthy villas that not only express the wealth of the elite but also their reluctance to reside in towns. Even so, from what we can see of the towns it seems that some of the elite continued to function there and invest in major buildings. This continued into and throughout the 5th century at the end of which there was further dislocation and change. This resulted in the emergence of Romanised centres of power in the towns, of which the most famous is Wroxeter. These are archaeologically difficult to detect and invisible in terms of material culture since their occupants continue to use Roman objects wherever possible. This is probably a symptom once again of the renewed isolation of the area from trade routes, although some Byzantine amphorae do get through. The villa at Whitley Grange (near Shrewsbury) demonstrates a similar phase of occupation, while pottery and coins from some of the hillforts (Nesscliff; Bury Walls) indicates re-occupation at the end of the 4th century and probably into the fifth. In other words, we see a restatement of native, Iron Age values and

elites, and with it the decline once again of pottery use. The perpetuation of life in the towns (if not urban existence) may be a reflection of the presence of the church. Evidence is slight but telling for the existence of Christian communities in the late Roman period, including a Bishop at Chester (named on late Roman salt pans in demonstration of their right to the revenues of salt production) and it has been argued that the survival of Wroxeter as an urban or quasi-urban centre into the 7th century can be attributed to the presence of a Bishop or clergy here. The occurrence of *Eccles* (*Ecclesia*) placenames hints at rural Christian British communities, as does the presence of early Christian monasteries whose foundation must lie in the 6th century or later.

In reaching the 'Dark Ages' we thus appear to come full circle and arrive back in a Romanised Iron Age that is almost analogous to that in Denmark or Ireland. For all the region's apparently deeply embedded Roman culture, there is little that is perpetuated into the Early Middle Ages, with the notable exception of the church. Even the indigenous language is abandoned, along with the use of pottery. The latter is only fully but briefly taken up again 600 years later in the high middle ages when once again the region flourished economically.

Streets paved with iron' – discovering Roman Worcester by James Dinn
No summary available

New members/student contributions

Defining Roman Worcester by Alan Jacobs
To be included in the next edition

The Romano-British Pottery Industry at Rowland's Castle by Jonathan Dicks
There were three major Romano-British pottery centres in Hampshire. The New Forest site was documented by Mike Fulford in 1975 and the Alice Holt site by Lyne and Jefferies in 1979. The Rowland's Castle kilns were excavated in 1963 by Margaret Rule but there are no known documented records or corpus of the pottery types. The objective of this research project was to establish the character and range of coarse grey ware produced at the Romano-British pottery kilns at Rowland's Castle (SU 734 104). The corpus is broken down into the different fabrics and forms produced at Rowland's Castle. The estimated comparative production volumes of each type were also calculated.

Rowland's Castle has been known as a centre for Roman ceramics since the beginning of the 19th century when the remains of a complex of buildings were discovered at Maize Coppice. Large quantities of pottery fragments and deposits of black earth were evident on the surface associated with these buildings and at numerous sites to the north. The 1963 excavation by Margaret Rule produced 59 boxes of pottery wasters weighing 158 kg. The washed sherds were stored at Portsmouth Museum and the unwashed sherds are at Fishbourne Roman Palace.

An inventory of each box identified the forms and fabrics present and recorded the Estimated Vessel Equivalent (EVEs), the weight and the number of sherds in each form category. All major vessel forms were drawn and constitute an important part of the documentation.

Summary of Rowland's Castle Forms

Form	Eves	Quantity	Weight in grams	% Eves
Dishes	13.58	159	6,269	7.61
Beakers	0.93	7	285	0.52
Bowls	13.9	137	5,325	7.79
Jugs	2.82	32	1,695	1.58
Jars	115.17	1,123	57,105	64.54
Lids	32.06	318	14,365	17.96
Total	178.46	1,776	85,044	100

Any major Romano-British pottery site, such as Rowland's Castle, should have a guide to the range of the products produced during the life of the kilns to assist archaeologists in identifying this pottery style from other excavations and sites. This research project has established a catalogue and an analysis of the products produced at Rowland's Castle between the 1st and 3rd centuries and using the results of the 1961 - 1969 excavations of Barry Cunliffe at Fishbourne Roman Palace as a basis for producing indicative dates of the assemblage. Marketing and distribution trends will be the subject of future studies of the Romano-British kilns at Rowland's Castle.

Ritual deposition, or just a load of old rubbish? The case of pottery in Essex and Hertfordshire, c. 50 BC – AD 200

by Martin Pitts

This paper stems from recently completed doctoral research on pottery consumption and identity in south-east Britain. General statistics showing a preference for the deposition of ceramic 'consumption technology' in pits and wells were followed up by intra-site case-studies from the first and second centuries AD. At pre-Boudican Colchester, contextual associations of vessel types (elucidated through correspondence analysis) showed a distinction between probable Roman military and native elite patterns of consumption (at the sites of Head Street and Sheepen respectively). In the second century AD, the site of Elms Farm, Heybridge was used to demonstrate the spread of military-style suites of vessels (witnessed previously at Head Street) into the countryside in the generations following conquest. In contrast, unusual drinking-orientated assemblages at Baldock demonstrated continued links with late Iron Age practices, showing that cultural change in this period was complex and not easily explained by blanket terms such as 'Romanisation'. At a wider level, the patterning in this paper reaffirmed the significance of deposition and the need to interpret pottery in a contextual manner (especially using computer-based tools such as correspondence analysis).

Sites and Research in the Midlands

The pottery of the late Iron Age and Roman period from the industrial settlement at Ariconium, Herefordshire

by Steven Willis

Ariconium, by Weston-under-Penyard, is a site frequently referred to in synthetic review papers and studies (cf. Rogers White's paper above). The site is particularly known as a centre for iron production in the Roman era, drawing upon Forest of Dean iron sources. Whilst some exploratory excavations conducted in the 1920s and 1960s were partially published much work and data, including the results of various more recent explorations, had not appeared in print. A project bringing together the old and new evidence co-ordinated by Robin Jackson has been completed with a monograph in press.

This project has enabled the detailed study of the pottery from *Ariconium*, shedding new light upon its chronology and functional areas. A wealth of pottery from the site has been examined. The assemblage includes a regionally important Iron Age component. The Roman pottery includes an interesting range of Severn Valley ware types (which are prominent), made with apparently 'local' silt/mudstone tempering. Overall the Late Iron Age and early Roman era pottery is unusually varied and evidently reflects the importance and dynamic nature of the site at this time. The site continues through to the late Roman era with a range of Oxfordshire ware products represented. GIS and other analytical tools have helped map and characterise the pottery assemblage and the site.

One Regional Approach to Roman Pottery Studies – thoughts and results from Lyonshall, Herefordshire

by Colin Wallace/Amy Richardson

To be included in the next edition

Briquetage and Droitwich

By Derek Hurst

Droitwich is situated in the west Midlands to the south of Birmingham, and is an inland source of salt with a long history of production. Droitwich brine is the source of a very pure edible salt, about 2.5-3lb of salt per gallon being achieved. The brine springs once emerged on the surface naturally towards the north end of the town and, after collection, from at least the Iron

Age period onwards, this brine was artificially heated in order to bring about crystallisation of the salt.

The salt makers at about the time of the Roman Conquest period were using large water-tight tanks and oven/kiln-like structures as part of their manufacturing plant. The former are usually interpreted as settling tanks to clarify the brine, whereas the latter are less easy to explain. Recent attempts by the author at making replica prehistoric salt containers, using open firing as part of a *Meet the Ancestors* programme, suggest that these ovens/kilns might have played a part in achieving the highly oxidised finish which is a characteristic of the outside of most briquetage. Incidentally this bright orange appearance was a precursor of the coloration so familiar in Severn Valley ware, the characteristic Roman ware of the region.

The briquetage salt containers may have continued in general use till the beginning of the 2nd century AD. Since salt is assumed to have continued to be made, the question then arises as to how it was later packed. It has previously been suggested that Malvernian tubby cooking pots may have performed this function but they are quite small, and they are at least partially contemporary with briquetage vessels rather than being their successors – and, though certainly present at Droitwich, they do not seem to be especially common. One vessel form that is very common in Droitwich in the 2nd century is the Severn Valley ware wide-mouthed bowl. It is much the commonest form in this period which might hint at a salt connection. If so, then it would partially bridge the gap in salt containers from the clay prehistoric pot to the medieval wicker basket. Despite the excavation of waterlogged deposits around the Saxon salt hearths no obvious salt containers were found, though ceramic pots (typically shouldered bowls of the period) were present. Perhaps ceramic pots took on the role of container after the essentially prehistoric briquetage pots were dispensed with, presumably because of a fundamental change in production techniques.

Editors note: For those with an interest in Roman Droitwich, the CBA are now advertising 'Roman Droitwich: Doddershill fort, Bays Meadow villa and roadside settlement' edited by Derek Hurst

General Session

Samian Studies after BRH: an assessment of current research by Geoff Dannell
To be included in the next edition

An update on the Gallo-Belgic Pottery project by Jane Timby
To be included in the next edition

Roman pottery from a hillfort at Mellor - its relationship with military networks
by Ruth Leary

Ongoing excavations at Mellor conducted by a local amateur group assisted by archaeologists from the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit have revealed an Iron Age hillfort with Romano-British debris in the upper fill of the fort ditch. Preliminary study of a group of nearly 500 sherds has suggested a site of relatively high status with a relatively high ratio of bowls/dishes: jars. This pattern was also noted at the rural site at Tarbock and may indicate that some higher status sites in this region adopted some Romanised ways, such as eating off individual bowls and dishes, but not others, such as drinking with beakers and flagons. The high status of the site at Mellor has also been borne out by a preliminary study of the non-ceramic finds. As regards trade, a relatively large proportion of 1st-2nd century samian, BB1 and Cheshire Plains ware suggest contact with the nearby forts at Melandra, Manchester and the Wilderspool depot in the 1st and 2nd century and the proportions of these wares are similar to the nearby forts. However, quite different patterning can be detected in the 3rd and 4th centuries when Mellor had a high proportion of Derbyshire ware and other types such as Dales ware, double lid-seated jars and Midlands shelly wares contrasting with the East Yorkshire wares found on the civilian Cheshire Plains sites. It may be that this high proportion of Derbyshire ware jars indicates that the people of Mellor resumed traditional trading patterns/exchange patterns in the 3rd and 4th century since analysis of the Iron Age

pottery from the site indicates a Derbyshire source for the Iron Age jars. Further work on the site may yield more Romano-British pottery and the preliminary work indicates even small groups of sherds can yield significant information about the relationship between natives and Romans.

Production, distribution et usages: a new ceramic research project at the Universitee libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

by Kevin Greene

I began by stating that an expanded version of my 2004 paper, which scrutinised attempts to extract economic interpretations from Roman ceramics, will appear in the 2006 volume of *Journal of Roman Archaeology*; the final version benefited from comments and ideas from several members of the Study Group. In this year's paper I took the opportunity to emphasise the fact that my analysis of existing publications is not an attempt to prove them 'wrong' by destructive criticism, but a desire to see what underlying ideas are driving interpretation. This constructive exercise is intended to remind us all to keep asking ourselves 'What is the question that I am answering by studying Roman pottery?' and 'What kinds of assumptions and preconceptions are influencing my approach and conclusions?'

These are precisely the questions that I suggested when invited to address a new project launched in 2004 by The Archeological Research Center (CReA) of the University of Brussels (ULB). According to its website 'This project focuses on the relations between the producer and the user of vases in antiquity. In order to have a wide view of the problem, the research will take into account various kinds of wares (common, cooking, fine...) made in different periods and areas of the ancient world (Egypt - New Kingdom, Greece - Archaic and Classical periods, Roman Empire, Near East - Late Roman and Byzantine period). The aim is to improve our understanding of pottery workshops (organisation, distribution, social and cultural aspects of ceramic production) by comparing different study cases' (http://www.ulb.ac.be/philo/arc_ceramique/index.html).

It is an impressive five-year project addressing the three themes of 'production, distribution, usages', and the organisers (notably Prof. Georges Raepsaet and Prof. Athna Tsingarida, Roman and Greek specialists respectively) are to be congratulated on gaining funding for this ambitious collaborative exercise.

Urning a living? A survey of the opinions and concerns of Roman Pottery specialists *by Andrew Peachey*

(Copy of an article appearing in the IFA's 'The Archaeologist', No. 58, Autumn 2005, with the theme of 'working with finds.' This edition is well worth a look, with articles on archives, training, finds reports, conservation and 'Roman family fun days' at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, Exeter)

Since it was founded in 1971 the Study Group for Roman Pottery (SGRP) has been concerned over the professional status, roles and training of Roman pottery specialists. These concerns were highlighted by the recent annual review of Jobs in British archaeology (TA56) which demonstrated that the average annual income of general 'specialists' had plummeted to £15,254 after several years of fluctuating but generally positive progress. Prompted by this the SGRP is conducting a survey of its members to gauge their professional status and opinions.

The aims are firstly to profile members anonymously, to assess the demographics of the Group, and then to canvas opinions on our future direction. It is the former that is of most concern here. The following comments are interim results and it is hoped that the full survey will have been completed this year.

Of the respondents, approximately 50% are involved in day-to-day recording and analysis of Roman pottery, with an even split between those who work for archaeological units and those who work freelance. A further 25% are now involved in other post-excavation and project management roles, and 6% in academic research, several commenting that they are still

irregularly involved in pottery research. Numerous unprompted comments relating to job position and job titles make it clear that, as in field archaeology, many are frustrated by the lack of structure and career development in all but the largest of organisations. These concerns came both from those working as specialists and those wishing to become these.

The latter group is difficult to define – only one response has so far been received by a ‘digger’ with an interest in Roman pottery, though many diggers have a good knowledge of Roman pottery, and do not envisage remaining as diggers forever. The survey has highlighted the lack of paths to become a ‘specialist’, most glaringly through the age ranges of those who have opted to join SGRP, ie the majority of the Roman pottery specialists. Less than 10% are under 40, 78% have been studying Roman pottery for over ten years and the most common reason cited for leaving the SGRP in the next 3-5 years was retirement.

The vacuum between field and post-excavation roles is an issue that must be bridged if the discipline seeks to provide career development; an issue commendably kept prominent by IFA. This divide is, arguably, made worse by the increasing trend to ‘outsource’ work to freelance specialists, rather than maintain in-house expertise to train junior staff. Future initiatives have the potential to link closely with the IFA, especially on training and standards. However, only 35% of specialists surveyed belong to IFA. Of those, the majority are at MIFA level, having been employed in a wide range of archaeological capacities in their careers. In the current environment wider opportunities are not so accessible to those in the early stages of their careers. There is potential, perhaps, for the SGRP and other finds research groups to be working more closely with IFA Finds Group to promote the views and concerns of their membership within the IFA.

The need to set standards provides a common ground on which to base future initiatives to allow career development. Both IFA's *Standard & Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* and SGRP's *Guidelines for the archiving of Roman pottery* are fundamentally important documents, but both are static. There is a concern that more specific guidelines, such as those produced by SGRP, are not being referred to by curators and contractors, who are faced with a multitude of specialist guidelines. As discussed by IFA Finds Group some years ago, there is a need for these to be collated and the key elements drawn out. One initiative under discussion, so far receiving 100% backing in the survey, is to provide mentoring. Group members, especially younger specialists, could seek guidance from more experienced members, perhaps submitting their reports for review. The initiative is still at an early stage of discussion and the logistics are unclear; 50% feel that such a service should be free-of-charge but this may be untenable.

This summary has highlighted the most striking concerns amongst our members. These may not be new or surprising, but when the survey is complete we should at least have some quantified data to support our case. We hope the survey will provide a foundation for further discussion and action. The final results and discussion will be available through the SGRP.

SGRP provides a forum for the discussion of all matters relating to Roman Pottery, and membership is open to all those with an interest (professional and amateur).

For further information see www.sgrp.org.

Who, What, Where?! Who is really out there?

Andrew Peachey writes: The Group has recently been contacted by parties asking if it can give details of specialists working in particular geographical regions. The Group is not willing to offer recommendations on the grounds of impartiality but it has highlighted the issue that the Group may be able to offer a method of raising the profile of its members to archaeological units, academic researchers, freelance illustrators and most importantly each other!

Such a scheme would be web-based and would allow members to submit a short text about their work and projects (perhaps with a short selection of key publications), which regions they work in, and if they so desire, their contact details. It must be highlighted that this is not

intended as a forum to advertise and should not be taken as a recommendation, although it is hoped any members included would abide voluntarily by the standards of recording and archiving published by the Group. This forum may also give members an opportunity to promote grey archive reports and projects that may not otherwise find their way into the wider domain of other researchers. The proposed scheme is currently under discussion (early stages only!) for future inclusion on the web page, and if members would like to express opinions on this idea, it will after all depend on your involvement, we would be grateful to hear from you before taking it forward. Email: ajpeachey@yahoo.co.uk.

IFA Finds Group model contracts for specialists

The IFA Finds Group is currently developing a model contract for finds specialists, which may be of benefit to SGRP members. Details of this are included in the latest edition of 'The Archaeologist' (No. 58), which also includes an article on the work of the IFA Finds Group. This notes, 'sadly, in the cut and thrust world of developer funded archaeology, it can easily be forgotten that finds workers are archaeologists too. This can go as far as specialists not seeking IFA membership, as they cannot see how they fit in or how to express their experience on the application form.' Membership of the IFA's Finds Group is free to IFA members, but only costs £5 for non members.

If you are interested in joining, contact Nicola Powell, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED.
npowell@museumoflondon.org.uk,

A helping hand with Correspondence Analysis (using free software!)

Hilary Cool and Mike Baxter have regularly been asked for advice about doing Correspondence Analysis. One of the problems is always the cost of the statistical software packages, not an issue for those in university departments, but not so easy for those outside.

With this in mind, they have written a paper providing a step by step guide to doing CA using a state of the art statistical package that is available free. The package is aimed at professional statisticians, and thus archaeologists need some hand holding (*Hilary's words, but as someone who definitely needs some hand holding I can't disagree, Ed.*). This is what they aim to provide in the guide. The paper will shortly be submitted for publication to a journal, but they would be interested in having it tested before it is published so they can iron out any glitches. They might also put a more extended guide on the web where they could respond to any issues raised. They would therefore be very happy to email the text to anyone who is interested in trying it out.

If you are interested, please email Hilary at hilary.cool@btinternet.com.

'Grey Literature' Online by Emma Hancox (WHEAS)

Access to unpublished research and fieldwork reports is a problem for both professional archaeologists and private researchers. This so-called 'grey literature', is often difficult to obtain as only a few copies of these reports were usually produced. In light of this **Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service** has set up an Online Archaeology Library for Worcestershire.

The **Online Archaeology Library** provides a new means of access to the majority of these 'grey literature' reports. The library mostly contains reports that are produced via the development control process in Worcestershire, along with a few produced by local history societies and private individuals. As these often exist in only a few copies, they are largely inaccessible to a general audience. The aim of the library is to make these reports widely available and to make sure that they do not 'disappear' from the archaeological record.

Currently there are around 900 reports on the site and we hope to have all the reports of archaeological work in Worcestershire online within the next few months. The full reports are

available as PDF files. PDFs of older reports have been produced from photocopies and are, therefore, not of the same quality as the modern digital documents.

The site has been designed to be as simple and user friendly as possible and therefore has simple search facilities. It is aimed mainly at contractors carrying out desk-based assessments and members of the public who wish to research their local area. You will not be able to carry out complicated searches looking for reports containing information on particular types of archaeology or specific time periods. These searches must still be done through the HER. However, once done, you can access any reports needed from your own home or work place. We are also working with the **Archaeology Data Service (ADS)** to integrate our system with their online 'Grey Literature Library'. This is an online searchable database of archaeological reports for the whole country, which has far more sophisticated search facilities than Worcestershire's Online Archaeology Library, but currently has few reports from the county.

The inclusion of confidential or commercially sensitive information means that not all reports can be made freely available over the Internet. However, very few reports fall into this category, and as most archaeological contractors have given permission for their reports to be on the site, it will be pretty comprehensive. Let us know what you think.

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology/library
email: ehancox@worcestershire.gov.uk

Food for thought by Chris Lydamore

In September 2004 a one-day symposium looking at aspects of food production, processing and consumption in Roman Britain, titled "Roman Food Day" was held at the Museum of Harlow, followed in October 2005 by "Roman Food Day II (the second helping)", this time at the Museum of London. The aim for the days was to look, in as broad a fashion as possible, at food in Roman Britain. Inevitably Pottery played an important part in the subject (four of the six talks at RFD2 involved aspects of ceramics in food) and may be of interest to members of the SGRP. I am eager that the work started by the first two sessions, (RFD I, and RFD II) is continued and so am hoping to hold a third RFD in 2006. If anyone is interested in finding out more about the RFD or has an aspect of food (its production, transportation, storage or consumption) that they would like to present I would be delighted to hear from them.

Please contact: Chris Lydamore, The Museum of Harlow, Harlow Essex, CM20 2LF
(01279) 454959 chris.lydamore@harlow.gov.uk

'Roman pottery production in the Walbrook Valley: excavations at 20-28 Moorgate, City of London, 1998-2000'

Fiona Seeley writes: the pottery kiln site in Moorgate, London, is due to be published at the end of December 2005 by the Museum of London Archaeology Service. This 2nd-century kiln site was producing a wide range of coarse and fine fabrics including Verulamium region white ware and London ware. This is the first major production site to be excavated in the City of London since the uncovering of kilns during the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral. The discovery of these kilns has revised our understanding of pottery supply to the provincial capital during this period. Study Group members are offered this volume at a reduced price of £23.00 (normally £28.95) plus p&p. The title of the volume is 'Roman pottery production in the Walbrook Valley: excavations at 20-28 Moorgate, City of London, 1998-2000. MoLAS Monograph 25'.

To order please call 020 7410 2224 or email bookshop@molass.org.uk for details on payment and postage charges. Please quote 'SGRP offer' when you order to ensure you get the discount. Further details on this volume can be found at www.molass.org.uk.

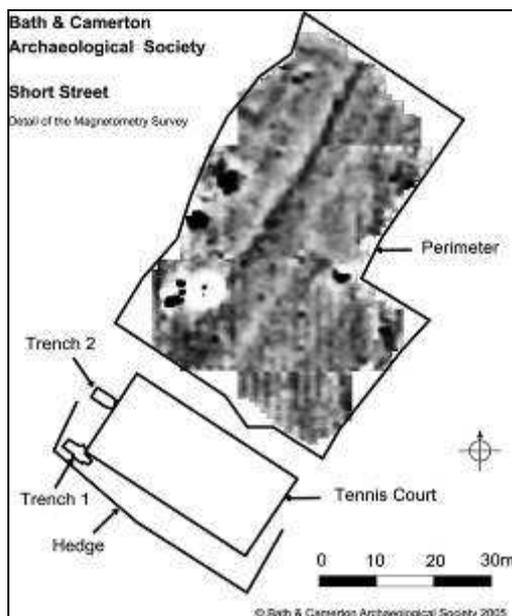
Please note that this offer is only open until March 2006.

Roman Pottery Kilns at Short Street, Westbury, Wiltshire by Jayne Lawes

In 1999 three possible pottery kilns were discovered during the building of a tennis court at the hamlet of Short Street near Westbury in Wiltshire. The kilns were not properly recorded, but photographs were taken and a lot of pottery recovered from the site.

The owner of the tennis court was approached by a group of local interested people, including a potter, who wanted to investigate the possibility of pottery production on the site. They were given permission, by the landowner, to excavate a fourth structure located on the northwest corner of the tennis court, where charcoal rich deposits had been seen during the construction work, but no kiln found. In 2004/5 they dug a trench at this location and uncovered a well preserved pottery kiln (figure 2). The County Archaeologist (Roy Canham) advised the group to get some expert help to proceed with the excavation, but this was not sought until October 2005 when I was approached by one of the group and after some unfortunate misunderstandings had to step in to rescue the situation as the kiln and another trench to the north had been excavated and little or no recording had taken place and the landowner was becoming alarmed at the depth of the trenches and lack of recording.

When I became involved all the archaeological contexts in and around the kiln had been completely removed and many kilos of pottery had been taken out, but not assigned to any particular feature. Along with a number of volunteers from the Bath & Camerton Archaeological Society I was asked by the landowner to record the extant archaeology and we agreed to cover the kiln and backfill the deep trenches. This was also the wish of Roy Canham, who had become increasingly alarmed by the group's activities. We also undertook to do a geophysical survey of the paddock northeast of the tennis court to see if any more evidence of pottery production was likely.



Geophysics plot copyright of Bath & Camerton Archaeological Society, photograph by Jayne Lawes

The area around Short Street is very rich with Romano-British remains and large quantities of pottery have been recovered both in the area where the kilns were found and in surrounding fields. The evidence suggests a big industry on the edge of a greensand scarp overlooking Dilton Marsh, from where the clay may have been extracted. The main products of the kilns were mica rich greywares, with many forms mimicking the Black Burnish and later New Forest industries. The production may predate the Roman period and probably lasted for many centuries as field finds around the site include coins from the fourth century AD.

My interest was aroused because the type of pottery found on this site has been found on the Late Iron Age into early Romano-British site that I have been investigating at "Blacklands", Upper Row Farm, Hemington, Somerset, about 5 miles to the northwest of the pottery site. At

Blacklands we have securely dated early RB pottery that is similar in both form and fabric to the pottery from Short Street. The pottery has not yet been fully analysed, but we hope to do more work in the near future to confirm this connection.

The two small trenches were drawn and surveyed and the paddock geophysically surveyed. Figure 1 shows the magnetic survey with the tennis court and the position of the two trenches. Trench 1 was located over the kiln and trench 2 appeared to show evidence of some occupation, unfortunately the floor of a possible workshop had been dug through and was only seen in section. There were three possible postholes, two had been packed with stones, but over excavation made it impossible to tell the nature of this structure. The magnetic survey was very interesting as it shows the possible location of more kilns to the northeast of the tennis court. We hope to survey the field to the northwest in the future and if possible undertake a controlled excavation of a kiln to obtain better dating evidence from the site.

Research into post Roman ceramic production centres in Europe

Clive Orton of the Institute of Archaeology in London is looking for support for a project that he is developing in order to bid for EU money under the eContentplus programme. He would like to hear from Fellows or MIFAs who might have ideas for funding or who are willing to make a contribution. The aim of the project is to create a five-language web-based database of pottery production centres across Europe, for the historic time-range AD 400 to 2000, linked to a suite of maps. The data will be extracted from records held digitally in many European countries, with a limited amount of new research to fill any gaps. Data will be entered into a field structure already established and tested for part of the time-range in one of the participant countries. This prototype format provides a research resource of pottery production from domestic to industrial, and by expanding the geographical spread it will log the distribution of similar products on a Europe-wide canvas, and thereby chart continent-wide historic patterns of trade, as well as of craftsmen, techniques and ideas. The database will be illuminated by a series of country-specific narrative texts, highlighting recent discoveries and research.

Data-collection will create one research post in the co-ordinating country, and one in each contributing country. The data structure is open-ended, so the project is able to offer a welcome to new partners to join and contribute during the life of the project. A secondary but vital objective is to create a five-language thesaurus of archaeological ceramic terms relating to production centres. Leading the consortium is the Medieval Pottery Research Group, which was closely involved in setting up the prototype database, and has promoted the present initiative under the aegis of the European Association of Archaeologists. It is supported by the Institutes of Archaeology in London and Oxford.

Please remember to keep your contact details up to date, including any new e-mail addresses.

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