

# Guidelines for the Archiving of Roman Pottery

Edited by Margaret J Darling

## CONTENTS:

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	DEFINITION OF THE CERAMIC ARCHIVE	1
3	EXTENT OF A CERAMIC ARCHIVE	2
4	THE NECESSITY FOR AN AGREED MINIMUM ARCHIVE	2
5	DEFINITION OF A POTTERY ARCHIVE	2
6	THE SITE ARCHIVE: PHASE 1: Primary site data (MAP2, Appendix 3)	3
7	THE SITE ARCHIVE: PHASE 2: The ceramic archive (MAP2, Appendix 3)	4
8	THE CONTENTS OF THE CERAMIC ARCHIVE	5
8.1	Record of ware or fabrics	5
8.2	Record of vessel classes/forms and/or vessel types	5
8.3	Record of quantities	5
8.4	Measures	5
8.5	Record of decoration, surface treatment, stamps	6
8.6	Record of obvious sherd links between contexts	6
8.7	Record of condition of group	6
8.8	Indications of probable illustration requirements	6
8.9	Date	6
8.10	Future potential	6
9	COMPUTER USE	7
	ROMAN POTTERY ARCHIVE GUIDELINES : ACCOMPANYING NOTES	8
	THE ARCHIVE	8
	NOTES TO THE DOCUMENT	9
3	The extent of a Ceramic Archive	9
4	The Necessity for an agreed Minimum Archive	9
5	Definition of a pottery archive	9
6	THE SITE ARCHIVE: Phase I : Primary Site Data	9
7	THE SITE ARCHIVE: 2: The Ceramic Archive	9
8	The contents of the Ceramic Archive	11
9	Computer use	12
	GLOSSARY	14
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	15

Published by the Study Group the Roman Pottery  
c/o Louise Rayner. London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre,  
46 Eagle Wharf Road, London, N1 7EE

© Copyright Study Group for Roman Pottery 1994

## PREFACE

In 1980 the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings published *Guidelines for the processing and publication of Roman pottery from excavations* edited by C.J. Young. The impetus for this document came from the Study Group for Romano-British Pottery, whose members served on the Steering Committee and the working parties. The drafting and final publication were greatly facilitated by the Directorate's funding of expenses, provision of meeting places and publication costs.

The drafting of this document followed close on the heels of the Frere Committee's *Principles of Publication in Rescue Archaeology* (DAMHB 1975) and the comparative explosion of excavations in the 1970s. It sought to establish common methods of approach and some standardisation of recording. Quantification was in its infancy, with little understanding yet of either potential or cost. Within a few years, it was clear that implementation of some of the recommendations would involve excessive cost with little return in terms of useful evidence. Increasing use of computers in archaeology and particularly for pottery opened up new areas and demanded a reappraisal of recording. Revision was clearly required and in the absence of funding to reconvene working parties, the Study Group for Roman Pottery appointed a Convenor to deal with the updating of the document. This work was passed to the present Convenor but soon after revision had started, Professor Michael Fulford was asked by HBMC to conduct a survey of Roman pottery work in Britain (Fulford and Huddleston 1991) and the drafting of *the Management of Archaeological Projects* (second edition, MAP2, 1991) started. Since the minimum archive is the foundation for further work, revision of the Guidelines was necessarily shelved to await the results of both documents.

The original aim of the Guidelines, to establish common methods of approach and some standardisation of recording, remains of paramount importance for progress in pottery studies. With the advent of competitive tendering there is a clear necessity to ensure a level playing field for such tendering. The computer revolution opens new areas of research in the amount of information potentially retrievable from pottery particularly with GIS programs. These emphasise the necessity for a common approach and some standardisation if these new techniques, and those still being developed, are to be fully utilised.

These matters demand attention to ensure pottery studies progress and do not stagnate, but equal consideration must be given to the management of projects and economic use of resources, as embodied in MAP2. This introduced a formal assessment between the fieldwork and analysis to determine the potential of the results to answer not only questions framed in the project's research design, but also any new questions produced during the fieldwork. Such assessment is an essential phase to ensure time and resources are not wasted on material of debatable value. Moreover, studies of other artefacts and environmental material depend upon pottery data, particularly in the identification of groups with high residually or contamination. While the finds from many excavations will proceed beyond this assessment point, having proven potential, some excavations clearly will not fulfil the criteria. Future work in the area, tan escape studies and surveys may, however, at a later (fate still require a minimum level of information from such sites. In order to assess the potential information to be gained from further work (as for a MAP2 assessment) or

to assess the significance Of a site deemed unsuitable for extended study, certain information needs to be available. MAP2 lays down a framework of management procedures; definition of the detail required for each category of archaeological specialisation is the responsibility of' the specialists, as noted in its preface.

Pottery has enormous importance due to its almost total survival and provides information on chronology, trading contacts, function and socio-economic aspects. And yet our museums are stuffed full of boxes of popery, some unwashed, unrecorded and unstudied, most of totally unknown potential, impeding our understanding of the development and nature of human settlement. This is a storehouse of unrealised information which should not be added to.

The present document has several aims. On the one hand to establish a minimum level of information necessary to satisfactorily assess the potential of pottery from a site for MAP2 purposes, and on the other to ensure sufficient data is available to assess the material contribution from sites which did not progress beyond the site archive level. In addition to the archaeological value of material, its management and the efficient use of resources and new technology, there is also the question of museum collections, their management and usage, which again demand a minimum level of information. All three are concerned with the assessment of potential. whether for immediate use leading to analysis and publication in whatever format. or for future use. The aim of this document is not to address a single aspect. but to arrive at a minimum level of information that will satisfy all. Furthermore it recognises that an archive is a working tool to explore numerous other aspects of pottery research. both now and in the future.

The first drafting of this document used a survey of recording practices carried out in 1992, which showed that a very wide variety of approaches were in use. The results of a questionnaire on pottery processing were circulated to a sub-committee of the Study Group for Roman Pottery and a meeting was held to discuss the establishment of an agreed archive level at Lincoln on March 11, 1993, which produced a first draft. The resulting discussion document was presented to the Study Group's meeting at Birmingham on March 28, 1993, where it was approved by those attending. To ensure the fullest circulation, the discussion document was circulated to all members not present at the Birmingham meeting, and comments invited. The present document arises from the revision of the discussion document, taking into account both verbal comments from Birmingham and written comments. Copies were again circulated at the Study Group's meeting at Durham in April 1994 and a further period of consultation allowed, leading to further revisions of detail.

### **Archive Sub-Committee**

Convenor: Margaret Darling  
Paul Bidwell  
Paul Booth  
Barbara Davies  
Chris Going  
Jason Monaghan  
Rob Perrin

Richard Pollard  
Lindsay Rollo  
Vivien Swan  
Robin Symonds  
Colin Wallace

30<sup>th</sup> September 1994

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The archive is the most important record of pottery from excavations, field walking and evaluations. This may be the only record for some sites, but one which could contribute in the future to study of the archaeology of the landscape. whether in a rural or urban environment. For others, it will form the basis upon which to assess the potential of the assemblage, the necessity and extent of further work, and the foundation for that work.

1.2 The archive is, moreover, a working tool. As information is recorded from sites, the database achieved is of the utmost value for the exploration of numerous aspects of pottery, including the refinement of dating, functional and spatial analysis, investigation of trading connections and comparison of assemblages from sites of different date and/or character. It is the guardian against stagnation, and each site has something to contribute.

1.3 Archaeological recording and methodology does not stand still. These guidelines will quickly become out-dated and require revision as new methods and techniques are developed. They must not, therefore, be regarded as a straitjacket, but simply as a guide to the minimum that should be included in an archive today. Recording pottery is not an end in itself, but a means to an end; there must be a reason for recording each aspect.

1.4 It is emphasised that the recording levels listed are minimum recommendations; individual specialists are, of course, free to record more if they wish or if it is academically desirable. A balance, however, must be achieved between the basic archive and the more extensive data accumulated by further work. The archive should cover all pottery regardless of value stratigraphically or ceramically, and any extension of the recording must take this and the attendant cost implications into account.

## **2 DEFINITION OF THE CERAMIC ARCHIVE**

2.1 The archive must contain sufficient data to allow interrogation leading to an understanding of its archaeological and ceramic significance. It should be sufficient to facilitate a MAP2 assessment without overlapping into a research archive.

### **3 EXTENT OF A CERAMIC ARCHIVE**

3.1 All assemblages, whether from excavations, watching briefs, evaluations, field walking or other forms of archaeological intervention should be recorded to the level defined above.

3.2 All pottery, irrespective of stratification, should be included in the archive, unless an academic case can be made for its exclusion.

3.3 Exclusion of unstratified material could be a case in point, but all such material should be examined to ensure its exclusion will not detract from the evidence available for the site and its pottery.

### **4 THE NECESSITY FOR AN AGREED MINIMUM ARCHIVE**

An agreed minimum archive would:

- i. promote good practice and high standards of work.
- ii. facilitate the interchange of data between specialists.
- iii. set standards for Museum collections, particularly for any dispersal of material.
- iv. specify archive levels for contract archaeology to maintain standards and promote equitable tendering.

### **5 DEFINITION OF A POTTERY ARCHIVE**

5.1 Two levels of archive are identified:

5.2 The Site Archive (MAP2, Appendix 3) to consist of two phases:

- i. Primary site data for pottery: prepared during or immediately after an excavation, specifically to aid the excavation process.
- ii. Ceramic archive: basic ceramic data recorded post-excavation, usually covering all contexts irrespective of stratigraphic or ceramic value.

5.3 The Research Archive (MAP2, Appendix 6): the ceramic archive upgraded with further detail and quantification where necessary.

5.4 This document is concerned with the Site Archive only.

## 6 THE SITE ARCHIVE: PHASE 1: Primary site data (MAP2, Appendix 3)

6.1 How the archive is compiled will necessarily vary between different specialists and organizations and is related to the circumstances prevailing, the nature of the site and availability of trained personnel. Depending upon circumstances, work on the pottery during the excavation may not be essential or feasible; in which case Phase I could be omitted. It is recognized that the primary purpose of pottery work during an excavation is to aid the excavator with dating and information potentially helpful to the progress of the excavation, sampling policies and the interpretation and chronology of the site.

6.2 Thus the first phase of the Site Archive is limited to those aims and termed **PRIMARY SITE DATA FOR POTTERY**, recording:

- i Rough quantity per context, in terms of small-medium-large.
- ii A terminus post quem
- iii Time span for the assemblage.
- iv A provisional date of deposition.
- v Optional assessment of condition, if exceptional.
- vi Optional comments on any notable level of residuality, possible intrusions, and broad emphasis.
- vii Date of the record.
- viii person responsible.

6.3 It is strongly emphasized that this work should be undertaken by the most experienced person available, since errors at this stage could have far reaching consequences. It is further emphasized that the sole purpose is to facilitate the excavation, and that in no way can this dating record be the basis for an assessment or the only work to be undertaken on the pottery. This record would normally only be used during or immediately after excavation; backlog sites are excluded.

6.4 The record should be a paper record, to be incorporated in either existing context or bulk finds records, and computerization is optional. It is essential that all records normally kept on site are photocopied or copied to disk to be kept safely elsewhere as insurance against loss.

6.5 While this is undertaken during excavation, it is emphasized that the **CERAMIC ARCHIVE** produced in the post-excavation period is equally part of the excavation, to be budgeted as an excavation cost.

## 7 THE SITE ARCHIVE: PHASE 2: The ceramic archive (MAP2, Appendix 3)

7.1 This should contain sufficient data to comply with the definition (above 2.1)

7.2 Depending upon the potential of the site and pottery, this record could be the only record or could form the basis for a **RESEARCH ARCHIVE**.

7.3 It is emphasized that the work must be undertaken by the most skilled specialist available. It must be a complete record of ALL pottery, including residual pre-Roman and intrusive post-Roman sherds, before extraction of specialist wares. and including objects made from sherds.

7.4 The post-excavation period is the optimum time to produce a **CERAMIC ARCHIVE**, when a provisional matrix or phasing is available. The pottery can be archived in stratigraphic sequence, with the component contexts of cut features viewed together, to gain the maximum information from the pottery, the **PRIMARY SITE DATA** for the pottery providing a useful objective double-check on both dating and condition.

## **8 THE CONTENTS OF THE CERAMIC ARCHIVE**

### **8.1 Record of ware or fabrics**

The agreed definition is that imports, major traded wares and significant local *wares should be individually recorded. It is not intended that detailed* sub-divisions of grey wares for instance should be involved, and it is stressed that the fabrics recorded should be identifiable macroscopically without undue use of microscopic examination.

Fabric codes, whether numeric, alphabetic or a combination should be designed for the greatest ease, both in basic recording and for computerization and extraction. The use of prefixes for groups of fabrics is especially useful to aid their ordering in basic listing and in extracting and manipulating data. It is recommended that where possible, any nationally agreed codes are used, or that there is a concordance between those and the recording codes in use.

### **8.2 Record of vessel classes/forms and/or vessel types**

8.2.1 The Students' Guide to Roman Coarse Pottery defines form as 'Classes of vessels sharing form and function'; the definition used here is that form means flagon, jar, bowl, while 'type' defines the type of form, as ring-necked flagon, reeded rim bowl etc.

8.2.2 A hierarchical code is recommended so that data can be extracted at different levels, i.e., all flagons or, in more detail, all flagons of ringed-neck type. It is recommended that vessel type should be recorded, as considered necessary by the individual specialist.

### **8.3 Record of quantities**

8.3.1 It is recommended that the record should be of quantities for fabric and vessel type, since the extra information over a presence/absence record involves minimal time and yields more information. More time is spent on the initial sorting into fabrics and vessel types than on the actual recording.

### **8.4 Measures**

8.4.1 Since vessel types are to be recorded, sherd count is the fastest measure (weight would involve endless weighing of single sherds; it can be shown that 60-70% of records relate to single sherds). The recommendation is sherd count, the use of weight being optional, particularly where amphorae form a potentially useful group and for some rural sites and particularly where breakage may assist stratigraphic understanding.

8.4.2 It is emphasized that recording weight was moving beyond the necessary level of basic archive into the research archive although for some sites this may be advisable. The recording of EVEs does not form part of the basic archive, and



should be reserved during any further work for only those groups where there is clear potential for useful information to be gained from quantification.

8.4.3 If weight is added to the record, consideration should be given to confining this to fabrics as groups, leaving the count as the basic record for vessel types; weighing for vessel types would double the recording time.

## **8.5 Record of decoration, surface treatment, stamps**

8.5.1 It is considered that stamps (potters' names, trademarks or decorative) and graffiti are essential records, and that decoration considered to be chronologically significant or potentially useful should be recorded as an option. If the definition of fabric or ware covers vessels which can be hand- or wheel-made, it is essential that the type of manufacture is recorded where identifiable.

## **8.6 Record of obvious sherd links between contexts**

8.6.1 It is recommended that cross-links observed between contexts during recording should be noted, without involving time-consuming searches.

## **8.7 Record of condition of group**

8.7.1 This is essential when the condition is exceptional (e.g., very abraded, fresh, burnt), and comments should be made on unusual levels of residuality, possible intrusions and kiln products. Assessments of the value of groups are useful to flag assemblages with potential for further work.

## **8.8 Indications of probable illustration requirements**

8.8.1 To facilitate estimates for future work, it is recommended that vessels worth drawing for their intrinsic and stratigraphic value are recorded separately.

## **8.9 Date**

8.9.1 This should contain a *terminus post quem*. the time span of the assemblage and a considered date of deposition.

## **8.10 Future potential**

8.10.1 This section is only applicable to the **SITE ARCHIVE** if the pottery is to be deposited in the appropriate museum without further work: otherwise this belongs with the assessment document, prepared as a preliminary to further work and a **RESEARCH ARCHIVE**. This should be a summary of the complete pottery assemblage from the site. identifying contexts of crucial importance for retention and those of dubious value, with clear recommendations for their retention or dispersal. If dispersal is recommended, it is essential that the archive record contains sufficient detail for future research use.

## **9 COMPUTER USE**

9.1 It is highly desirable that the archive is computerised, and essential if the data relating to vessel types is to be adequately used. Even small sites benefit from the ease of extraction of information and its integration with site and other finds data. The financial outlay on hard and software is small compared to not only the savings in labour cost, but also the increased use and availability of the data.

9.2 The ability to upgrade the ceramic archive to both quantified and specialist ware records should be aimed for from the inception of a scheme, and should present few difficulties, avoiding duplication of effort. Any archive software must have the capability to transfer data to a new datafile with extended fields to accommodate quantification and specialist information.

9.3 Since the archive forms one of the most valuable assets of any archaeological organization, it will require active curating including, as changes occur in both hard and software, transfer to new formats.

## ROMAN POTTERY ARCHIVE GUIDELINES : ACCOMPANYING NOTES

### THE ARCHIVE

An archive in the wider sense accumulates over a period of time, each individual site adding its measure. The archive criteria of tomorrow will not be those of today, but in the absence of crystal balls, this document takes the view that the structure of today's archive should be determined by foreseeable demands upon it. The potential value and use of data is what governs the extent of any record.

An archive contributes useful information at several different levels, some of which are identified as under:

- 1 Most immediately to enable the crucial assessment of the potential of the material to answer questions posed, whether in the initial research design or arising during fieldwork. This is the MAP2, Phase 3, and an essential prelude to any further work on the material.
- 2 For those sites with no obvious potential for immediate further research, the archive is the factual statement of what was found. This is also the case for contexts and groups within a site that are deemed unsuitable for further work and quantification, but can still contribute to the overall view of the site.
- 3 Low cost data for all sites for comparisons either within an area or region, or within a city, as for instance, samian as a proportion of the overall assemblage, or more finely as the proportions from different samian factories. The spatial distribution with count as a measure for any number of wares deemed to be useful to explore chronological development and regression of settlement, status, trading patterns and economic aspects.
- 4 If both fabric and vessel type is recorded, the archive enables the identification of levels of residuality, essential both for the assessment of future work on the pottery, but equally essential to aid the assessment of future work on artefactual and environmental finds. Both also facilitate spatial analysis over an area to highlight anomalous sites which may have a bearing on the type of occupation, status and chronological changes.
- 5 Records even with low cost sherd count as the measure enable examination of the proportional occurrence of both fabrics and vessel types chronologically, and when related to the defined deposition date and the size of the individual group, can aid definition of the floruit of the fabric and/or type for future work.
- 6 The archive is a factual statement of the contents of the physical archive and should enable its efficient curation once deposited in a museum or depository, and aid both educational and research aspects. The inclusion of a comments field in the archive for each record facilitates the identification of, for instance, complete vessels useful for display and educational purposes, while records defining both fabrics and vessel types aid future research, i.e., all mortaria. All barbotine decorated colour-

coated ware, amphorae of a certain type etc. can be extracted for assessment for a research project

## **NOTES TO THE DOCUMENT**

The following notes are attached to amplify various sections. The archive provides useful information at several different levels, one more immediately referring to the assessment of the potential information to be gained from further work on the group, while others contribute data to aid continuing and *future* research. Aspects of both are noted.

### **3 The extent of a Ceramic Archive**

3.1 On the basis that **all** interventions have the potential for producing useful evidence, no group of material should be excluded.

### **4 The Necessity for an agreed Minimum Archive**

4.1 This is viewed as essential to future progress in archaeology as a whole. and in pottery studies in particular.

### **5 Definition of a pottery archive**

5.2 The Site Archive is split into a possible two phases dependent upon the site and the circumstances of excavation primarily to ensure the most effective and efficient data collection, the first being to facilitate the excavation, and the second to achieve the maximum retrieval of ceramic information. A flexible approach is essential; it may be necessary to complete the second phase during the excavation and accept a certain loss of information see 7.4).

## **6 THE SITE ARCHIVE: Phase I : Primary Site Data**

**6.2 This record should be an extremely rapid scanning of each context. Every effort** should be made to ensure that contexts are complete when viewed, a common problem when viewing pottery during an excavation. Apart from its primal), purpose of providing information to the excavator to aid the progress of the excavation, it provides the pottery specialist with an overview, but does NOT

constitute the site archive for pottery and does NOT provide sufficient data to enable a reasoned assessment of potential. Some indication of quantity is essential, and weight or number of trays or boxes (specifying the dimensions) would also be sufficient.

## **7 THE SITE ARCHIVE: 2: The Ceramic Archive**

It has been suggested that some sites of obvious importance should skip the Ceramic Archive stage during which the sole minimum measure is sherd count and proceed directly to the RESEARCH ARCHIVE, incorporating full quantification of estimated vessel equivalents (EVEs) and weight from the beginning. This is an understandable response wishing to avoid getting the pottery out and sorted twice,

particularly bearing in mind that this work is the most time consuming part of any record, whether a basic archive or a full quantification.

There are several problems with such a procedure. The importance of the assessment phase, which integrates the pottery with the stratigraphy and other finds, is to identify those assemblages within a site worthy of future work. Such integration would be impossible during an excavation, and the implication is that the entire pottery assemblage, irrespective of ceramic or stratigraphic value, is to be fully quantified. This goes against the accepted view of MAP2 and most pottery specialists that resources should be targeted to achieve the maximum information for the least cost. If the site was so exceptional in its character or chronological span and full quantification was felt to be worthwhile, this should be identified at the project design stage. For any site so treated, it would be necessary to create an archive data file compatible with other excavations (i.e., extracted from the quantified data file) to enable the site to be used for any spatial analysis or survey.

It is feasible that there should be a practical alternative open to negotiation in exceptional circumstances. Dependent upon a rapid decision on the advisability of further work, and bearing in mind the time consuming sorting and laying out work, important contexts obviously requiring quantification could be sorted into stackable trays, and stacked ready for quantification once the ceramic archive has been completed. Once the assessment, based on the ceramic archive, has been completed and decisions taken, the reserved material either proceeds to full quantification or is boxed. If the former, clearly costs have been reduced; if the latter, there has been merely the problem of temporary storage and a delay in boxing.

The upgrading of the Ceramic Archive should be considered from the outset. It is essential that it is feasible to extract such basic data as is required for contexts to be quantified to a separate database with extended fields to accommodate the new information. Depending upon the coding system adopted, this should encompass not only new fields for EVEs and weight (if not already in the Ceramic Archive database), but also fields for any detailed definition deemed necessary for fabrics and vessel types.

An important feature of the Ceramic Archive easily overlooked is that it covers ALL sites, irrespective of value, at a consistent level. The original archive file should be retained with any basic corrections necessary so that the data is still available for any spatial analysis across areas, regions or urban areas. It is important that additional information is added to separate databases. It may be considered useful to add a field to the Ceramic Archive to cover samian dates, but to retain the original consistency between sites which receive further work and those that do not, such changes should be kept to a minimum that will not interfere with the basic data and complicate its interrogation.

Similarly to produce a comprehensive archive of specialist wares, particularly samian, the basic Ceramic archive data should be transferable to a specialist database with extended fields to cover such information as potter's name, die number, specialist date, source (as Rheinzabern, Trier etc. expanding on East Gaul). Similar databases enable area or city-wide surveys of mortaria, amphorae etc. which may require the recording of the more detailed information received from specialists.

## **8 The contents of the Ceramic Archive**

### **8.1 Record of wares or fabrics**

**REASONS:** Overall to investigate trade, influences from neighbouring areas, status, the inter-relationships between different potteries. For assessment purposes as a dating indicator, to check for anomalies and residuality in the content of groups, as for instance high percentages of amphorae in later Roman contexts, or quantities of earlier fabrics occurring late, and as status indicators.

### **8.2 Record of vessel classes/forms and/or vessel types.**

**REASONS:** Overall the possibility of investigating differences between assemblages or sites based on vessel form. arid use of the archive to define closer dates for types based on their dated occurrence. For assessment purposes as a closer dating tool, vessel types being a finer indicator than fabrics alone, and to search for any anomalies indicative of high residuality. groups contain tug mixed date pottery of debatable value for further work. If the codes are hierarchical. extracts may be useful to examine any spatial differences across the site which may aid Interpretation.

### **8.3 Record of quantities.**

**REASONS:** To establish the content of the assemblage and the relative occurrence of different fabrics and vessel types. For assessment purposes, the relative occurrence of fabrics and types can aid dating and the identification of any high residuality.

### **8.4 Measures**

Sherd count is not only the fastest measure but also essential 1 fragmentation or brokenness is to be examined during further work, If data on fragmentation beyond that recorded under 8.7 is considered desirable to aid site Interpretation, every effort should be made to limit weighing to those groups requiring such data. Overall context weights could equally be recorded in the *PRIMARY SITE DATA* as a measure of quantity (6.2.i).

### **8.5 Record of decoration, surface treatments, stamps.**

**REASONS:** Overall to facilitate further work on stamps, graffiti, and for decoration or surface treatment, to aid identification of datable decoration to extend use for dating, and any relationships between industries. For assessment purposes, a further indicator for dating in some instances, plus for specialist wares with name stamps, an indicator of the quantity requiring specialist attention.

## **8.6 Record of obvious sherd links between contexts.**

**REASONS:** Primary data for the assessment phase to aid stratigraphic work, and the identification of obviously residual sherds disturbed from earlier contexts.

## **8.7 Record of condition of group**

**REASONS:** To aid understanding of the deposition of the context, plus assessments of the potential value of the pottery. Particularly valuable to the

assessment phase; high levels of fragmentation or conversely freshness would be recorded here; also notably burnt or mortar encrusted pottery etc.

## **8.8 Indication of likely illustration requirements**

**REASONS:** To facilitate estimates for future work. Particularly useful if graded between vessels needing illustration for their own intrinsic value as new types or better examples, and those necessary to substantiate the dating and interpretation

## **8.9 Date**

**REASONS:** To revise, if necessary, the dating contained in the *PRIMARY SITE DATA FOR POTTERY*.

## **8.10 Future potential**

**REASONS:** To provide guidance as to the value of the pottery for future research, particularly in relation to decisions on dispersal or retention. For assessment purposes, the future potential should be part of the assessment document, based on information extracted during the assessment process.

## **9 Computer use**

9. 1 It cannot be stressed too strongly that computerisation of the archive enables it to be used to the fullest extent. Computers provide the technology to enable the fullest possible integration of pottery, finds and site data to the benefit of all. The advantages to be derived from this, and developments in computer soft and hardware likely to enhance the retrieval and use of evidence are part and parcel of the modern archaeologists concern. Even a low power PC can extract primary data more efficiently and cost-effectively, and enables its integration with other data from the site or from comparative sites. Use of electronic data in the dissemination of information will undoubtedly be a further development.

Computerised data is particularly valuable in the early post-excavation stages when provisional phasing is subject to change. Such changes can be easily made and their effect assessed. The data can also be more easily interrogated to assess the potential of the pottery for future work.

A paper archive is cumbersome and often unusable without considerable expense. A properly curated computerised archive provides instant access.

9.3 A paper copy of the complete archive and if felt necessary, extracts of data, should be deposited with the pottery, and an additional copy kept to safeguard against loss of electronic data. All primary paper records should also be kept.



## **GLOSSARY**

Terminology is problematical, but the following should amplify precisely what is meant in this document.

### **Ware**

A term used in two senses: vessels from the same production centre (e.g. New Forest ware), or vessels having the same basic characteristics in technique (e.g. colour-coated ware).

### **Fabric**

A term used to describe the paste of a finished vessel, including texture, colour and nature of both paste and surface.

### **Paste**

The prepared clay from which pots are thrown. In the finished vessel the term is often applied to the body of a vessel, as distinct from the outer surface.

### **Class**

Vessels are said to belong to the same class if they are of the same general form and usable for the same purpose. irrespective of date, fabric, and details of form. This term appears to be interchangeable with “form” in common usage.

### **Type**

Vessels are said to be of the same type if they are identical in all significant features, and not merely similar in general appearance. *The Romano-British coarse pottery: a student's guide* specified type as vessels identical in all features of form and fabric. Modern usage concentrates on the detail of the vessel form, which facilitates comparison of different production centres.

### **Group**

This is a vague term but where used in this document is usually in the sense of a group of pottery from a context.

### **Assemblage**

This term is more usually taken to mean larger groupings, as with Contexts sharing close stratigraphic associations. or pottery from discrete phases of a site, or even the

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Fulford, M G and Huddleston, K 1991 *The current state of Romano-British pottery studies*,

English Heritage Occas. Pap. 1

Frere, S S (ed). 1975 *Principles of Publication in Rescue Archaeology*. DAMHB.

MAP2 English Heritage. 1991 *The Management of Archaeology Projects*.

Webster, U (ed). 1975 *Romano-British coarse pottery: a student's guide*. CBA Res Rep. 6.

Young C J (ed). 1980 *Guidelines for the processing and publication of Roman pottery from excavations*. DAMHB. Occas Pap. 4.