The Perils of Periodization:
Roman Ceramics in Britain after 400 CE

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Abstract: The post-Roman Britons of the fifth century are a good example of people invisible to archaeologists and historians, who have not recognized a distinctive material culture for them. We propose that this material does indeed exist, but has been wrongly characterized as ‘Late Roman’ or, worse, “Anglo-Saxon.” This pottery copied late-Roman forms, often poorly or in miniature, and these pots became increasingly odd over time; local production took over, often by poorly trained potters. Occasionally, potters made pots of “Anglo-Saxon” form using techniques inherited from Romano-British traditions. It is the effect of labeling the material “Anglo-Saxon” that has rendered it, its makers, and its users invisible.

Key words: pottery, Romano-British, early medieval, fifth-century, sub-Roman

Archaeologists rely on the well-dated, durable material culture of past populations to “see” them. When a society exists without such a material culture or when no artifacts are dateable to a period, its population effectively vanishes. This is what happens to the indigenous people of fifth-century, lowland Britain.1 Previously detectable through their buildings, metalwork, coinage, and especially their ceramics, these people disappear from the archaeological record c. 400 CE. Historians, for their part, depend on texts to see people in the past. Unfortunately, the texts describing Britain in the fifth-century were largely written two, three, or even four hundred years after the fact. Most recount a version of history that was fashioned at newly forming royal courts in the later sixth and seventh centuries, which describes how Britain’s native population was driven out or put to the sword by Anglo-Saxon conquerors.2 This retrospective narrative has, in turn, been used to explain the disappearance, in the fifth century, of indigenous material culture and the people who made and used it.3 Clearly, archaeologists and historians share a problem, made worse by the methodological and evidentiary shortcomings of both the period and our disciplines’ approaches to it.
Problems of evidence and visibility are compounded by our two fields’ shared bad habit of labeling lowland Britain’s post-400 material culture “Anglo-Saxon.” This practice has especially serious consequences when applied to the period’s pottery, one of the few durable artifacts that enables us to see the people living in this period. Before 400, Romano-British industries had supplied much of the population of the Roman diocese of Britannia. The conventional view is that these industries did not long survive the collapse of Roman rule. It is also generally held that new style ceramics, taking hold in lowland Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, were based solely on the household-centered craft traditions of Germanic settlers. Thus, pottery dating to the fifth and early sixth centuries is routinely described as “Anglo-Saxon” by both archaeologists and historians, and in the process, the people using it become “Anglo-Saxons” as well. As a result, several million British people disappear from history. It is our contention, however, that the period’s ceramics preserve evidence for both the survival of Roman potting traditions and for indigenous communities. We also argue that imposing ethnic labels like “Roman” and “Anglo-Saxon” on pots forecloses the very real possibility that the pottery developing over the course of the fifth and sixth centuries was the handiwork of both indigenous and immigrant potters, adopting and adapting one another’s ways of making and doing. Here, we present a corpus of very late fourth- through early sixth-century ceramics that helps bring these people back into view. We are not proposing a return to Myres’s concept of “Romano-Saxon” pottery, a product supposedly made by Romano-British potters for fourth-century “Saxon” settlers. By the end of the 1970s, it had been shown that the material was made for consumption by the Romano-British population. It is evident that Myres saw the decorative elements employed on these vessels, especially the prominent bosses, as ugly and un-Roman, and could not believe that the Romanized people of Eastern Britain would be happy with such barbarous wares. What is now clear to us is that the Late-Roman pottery industry was both dynamic and experimental, with manufacturers striving to produce innovative products that catered to and, perhaps, shaped changing tastes. “Romano-Saxon” pottery is thus a symptom of changes that continued into the fifth century, as we shall see in the discussion of individual vessels.

Before we can turn to the pots themselves, though, we need to outline the problems associated with dating and characterizing this material. In the late-third and early fourth centuries a number of loosely organized pottery-production centers supplied a wide variety of site types across lowland Britain with huge quantities of ceramics. This same period also witnessed an explosion in the use of low-value coins—again, across site-types—and new issues were regularly minted throughout the period. Because of these twin developments, we have a relatively clear under-
standing of the evolution and chronology of the period’s ceramics, since we can date the pottery through the coins. But in the decade after 400, the imperial government ceased supplying coins to Britain, and many pottery production centers went into terminal decline. Unfortunately, we cannot establish a close chronology for the collapse of either the money economy or the Romano-British pottery industry, because we do not know how long people used Roman coins after the imperial government ceased to supply Britain with new coinage. As a result, we cannot say whether pottery found in conjunction with coins issued at the end of the fourth century was used and disposed of in the same years as the coins were minted, or whether that pottery had actually been produced and/or disposed of years, or even decades, after the issuing of the latest coins. And when new types of pottery appear after the end of coin use, there is nothing but stratigraphy, relative chronologies based on artifact types, and the occasional woefully broad radiocarbon date-range to date them.

It is equally difficult to characterize post-Roman ceramics, although it is clear that the amount and the range of pottery available in lowland Britain narrowed dramatically. Basic potting technologies—in particular the potter’s wheel and the kiln—were also lost in the post-Roman period. In recent years, Henrietta Quinnell, Mark Whyman, James Gerrard, Malcolm Lyne, Paul Bidwell, Stephen Speak, as well as a recent special issue of Internet Archaeology, make the case that a handful of Romano-British production centers continued to manufacture their wares on some scale after c. 400. Building on this work, we argue that it is possible to identify vessels, likely made in the late- and post-Roman periods, which look similar to, but are not the same as, standard late-Roman wares. It is also our contention that these vessels were likely the handiwork of local potters still operating in a Romano-British potting milieu, who were attempting to make up local shortfalls of long-favored forms that had traditionally been supplied by more distant producers. These industries had either failed or were no longer able to distribute their wares as widely as they once had. We will then show that as we move into the middle decades of the fifth century and beyond, fewer and fewer elements of the Roman-British potting tradition survive, including form, manufacturing techniques, and tempers, but that subtle references to Roman-period ceramics continued to be found on a few post-Roman pots.

In the essay that follows, we present four categories of very late-Roman/early post-Roman pots that preserve surviving Romano-British potting traditions and that enable us both to see indigenous post-Roman communities (Map 1) and the survival of some of their lifeways. In the course of the paper we discuss pots that are Roman in form and manufacturing technique, but which are “slightly odd”; hand-built pots that referenced Roman wheel-thrown forms; “Anglo-Saxon” pots made in traditional
Map 1: Sites where the pots discussed in this paper were found.

Key

- Triangles: Pots discussed in this article that were made in the very late-Roman or early post-Roman period.
- Squares: Pots discussed in this article that were probably made after c. 430–450.

Regions where ceramics were commonly used during the Roman period. Unshaded areas represent the regions where ceramics were used sparingly or not at all before c. 400. (Based on Jeremy Evans, “Balancing the Scales: Roman-British Pottery in Early Late Antiquity,” in Local Economies? Production and Exchange of Inland Regions in Late Antiquity, ed. L. Lavan (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 425–450, at 47–9 and Fig. 1.)

Map by Christie Bertoglio
Roman fabrics, that is, made with the same clays and tempering agents used in the Roman period; and finally handmade early medieval ceramics that were being used alongside what looks to be traditional, late-Roman pottery. We will take each of our four categories in turn, always beginning with pottery found in and around Baldock (see appendix), in northern Hertfordshire, a Roman “small town” blessed with an extraordinary range of fifth-century material and some excellent stratigraphy, and then widen our discussion to similar ceramics found elsewhere in lowland Britain.

“Slightly Odd Pots”

We begin with what we call “slightly odd pots.” A number are from two late-/post-Roman cemeteries at Baldock, one known as California (named after the nearest street), and the other called Icknield Way East. The communities burying there participated in a constellation of late-Roman mortuary practices, such as post-mortem decapitation, pronation, the re-use of graves with the bones of the previous occupant reinterred around the secondary occupant, and the inclusion of whole domestic fowl and hobnailed footwear. A number of the burials also contained “slightly odd pots.” Take California burial 1413(1425), a grave badly truncated by a sewer trench in 1980, and surviving only as the lower half and a short section of the topmost end of the grave. The body in the grave rested in a nailed wooden coffin in a supine position, with its head towards the northwest end of the grave. Grave gifts sat within the coffin at the feet of the corpse. The remains of a nailed shoe lay near, but not on, the left foot. Next to the shoe was a small one-handled cup, made in a fabric resembling, but not identical to Oxfordshire red-slipped ware. It is a hard, fine red ware, covered with a thin, polished, brown slip, and smoke has discolored the pot along its rim and maximum girth. The vessel appears to be an Oxford or Much Hadham product, but of an otherwise unknown type. Another slightly larger vessel sat in the opposite corner of the coffin. It is a small, single-handled jug, made in a fabric once again resembling, but not, Oxfordshire red-slipped ware. It is a fine, red ware, covered with a thin, polished brown slip, smoke-discolored on one side from spout to base. The two vessels appear to form a “matched set” (Figure 1). This is a unique set, recognizably Romano-British—wheel-thrown in a Roman fabric, slip-coated, and kiln fired. But the pair does not belong to any known category of Oxford or Much Hadham ware.

In another coffined burial, California 1125(1327), mourners placed a long-necked beaker of late fourth-century type midway along the northern side of the coffin: perhaps the vessel had originally rested on its lid. It was very worn at the time of deposition, suggesting that it was old when placed in the ground. The beaker is a fine, micaceous red and grey Much Hadham ware, smoke discolored over its maximum girth and with
rouletted bands on its shoulder, and the body of the pot is unusually squat. Once again we find a not-quite-right pot.

California grave 1367(1446), the burial of a woman who died sometime between her seventeenth and her thirty-fifth year, contained two pottery vessels—one old and one contemporary—as well as a whetstone and a coin. The older pot perhaps dates to the third-century. The younger pot <7915> was placed inside the coffin by the side of the woman’s right foot. It is a bright orange-red ware with traces of surface polishing that survives in patches, and it is “slightly odd.” It is possibly late in date and possibly wheel made, and looks like a miniature copy of a Much Hadham carinated jar (i.e., a jar with a sharply angled waist), which was common in Baldock in the late-Roman period. Although this may well be post-Roman, the grave itself is culturally Romano-British. Like hundreds of late-Roman graves, this one contained a supine, decapitated body oriented southeast, although the head had been placed between the dead woman’s ankles, looking back up the grave to the head end of the burial. The body lay
within a nailed wooden coffin with space where the head should have been, perhaps indicating that the removal of the head had taken place when the corpse was already in the coffin.

Another unparalleled pot accompanied a cremation burial at Icknield Way East, an interesting late-/post-Roman mixed-rite cemetery only partly investigated during construction work in 1988. Cremation burial 7012(7013) was of an unsexed mature or older adult and contained two vessels. The cinerary urn was a large Much Hadham jar of late fourth-century type, with a partially detached rim. The second vessel is a very unusual folded beaker with a pedestal and a wide-mouthed, trumpet neck.²⁴ Like the matched miniature cup and jug, this beaker has no close parallel, but is reminiscent of a Lower Nene Valley type 52 vessel, produced in the late-fourth century.²⁵

“Slightly odd pots” are also found in the settlement of Baldock. One comes from a late- or post-Roman structured closure deposit from one of Baldock’s wells.²⁶ This pot, <746>, which was placed whole in the well, is not quite typical. Its fabric is a fine, sandy red ware and is probably a Much Hadham copy of Oxfordshire red-slipped ware, finished with a mottled, red-brown, metallic slip. On top of the red-brown slip, white slip was used to decorate the bowl’s flange. Although it references standard, late-Roman pots, it has no exact parallel, and it may represent the attempt of a local potter to copy an Oxfordshire-ware pot after traditional pottery supply systems had begun to unravel.²⁷

Baldock’s hinterland is also rich with sites that were occupied in the late-fourth century and beyond, and which have produced “slightly odd pots.” In 1879, at Pegsdon Common, twelve km west of Baldock, the local antiquary William Ransom excavated what he believed to be a sixth-century grave.²⁸ He described the grave’s occupant as “sitting,” by which he seems to be describing a crouched burial. The body was accompanied by several artifacts, including a small pot (Figure 2). The vessel is similar in style to the necked jars of the late-first century CE. However, these earlier vessels are always made in a grog-tempered fabric typical of wheel-made “Belgic” wares, unlike the jar from Pegsdon, which was fashioned from a sandy fabric similar to other very late wares identified at Baldock.²⁹ Although the vessel’s form is puzzling, its fabric as well as its context suggests that it is post-Roman and indigenous. Excavations at 33 Queen Street in Hitchin, eight km west of Baldock, have revealed intensive late- and perhaps post-Roman occupation.³⁰ The material identified as late Roman here includes Alice Holt/Farnham ware (here dated 390–420), including an open form (perhaps a bowl) in a “slightly odd” style.³¹ In summary, what we find among our “slightly odd pots” in Baldock and its hinterland are novel varieties of miniature pots, atypical slips or decorations, less well-finished final products, and eccentric vessel forms.
Figure 2. A shouldered jar of first century CE form, from the grave of a sixth-century “Saxon” warrior from Pegsdon Heath (Bedfordshire). Published with kind permission of the North Hertfordshire Museum.

Similar “slightly odd pots” are found outside northern Hertfordshire. The best known of these is the post-Roman mortarium from Orton Hall Farm. Mortaria are shallow, flanged bowls with grit embedded on their inner surfaces. They were ubiquitous in the Roman period across site types. The one found at Orton Hall comes from a post-Roman context and was made in a non-Roman fabric. The change in fabric may reflect the fact that mechanisms standing behind traditional clay supplies had been disrupted or that local potters were making mortaria for the first time, because industrial-scale producers outside the neighborhood were no longer supplying the area. Less well known are the possibly post-
Roman Crambeck-ware mortaria found at Carlisle, which unlike earlier Crambeck mortaria, are painted and have profiles that are distinct from other Roman-period Crambeck mortaria. Many other “slightly odd pots” can be added to these mortaria. One of the most interesting is a pot recovered from one of the latest graves in the late-Roman cemetery at Radley, Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire. The Radley vessel is similar to other late-Roman Oxfordshire color-coated beakers. The slip, though, is a darker brown and the vessel is less well made than the standard Oxfordshire product. More curious, the vessel has been stamped with a single bone stamp, which the potter used to create a random pattern of decoration across the beaker’s waist. The stamp does not resemble ones sometimes used on late-Roman color-coated vessels, but is, rather, akin to those found on “Anglo-Saxon” pots. A pot recovered in Dorchester from the rubble of a building modified after 388 looks like a BB1 bowl. Unlike its Roman-period inspirations, however, which were made by hand, this one had been thrown on a wheel. Another “slightly odd” pot comes from the site of a post-Roman beach market at Bantham, in Devon, which has produced impressive amounts of fifth-century pottery from the eastern Mediterranean. Only one late Romano-British type vessel, found in a fifth-century context, was recovered. It looks like an Oxfordshire parchment bowl. Its form is related to a Young Type P24, but its walls are thinner, its rim is simpler, and the rim top has been painted with stripes—not something done on fourth-century Oxfordshire parchment bowls. Although its excavators argue that this was a curated fourth-century antique when it was deposited, it may be a late- or post-Roman local copy, made after Oxfordshire products were no longer available in Devon.

Other “slightly odd pots” are made in standard late-Roman forms, but not in typical Roman fabrics. One, from Silchester, is a wheel-thrown coarseware pot in an otherwise unknown fabric, found in association with a coin of the House of Theodosius and other, more conventional late-Roman wares. A number of pedestal-base beakers—recovered from both a fifth-century midden and from two culturally Romano-British graves at Wayside Farm, Devizes, Wiltshire, likely dating to the post-Roman period—were fabricated, very unusually, in a coarseware rather than a fine ware fabric. Similarly, the late assemblage of pottery recovered from a well at Chichester included what look like local wheel-thrown copies of late-Roman finewares, but made in a coarseware fabric tempered with grog, sand, and chalk. Odd, late-dated miniature vessels are also found outside northern Hertfordshire. In the later-fourth century, someone built a corn dryer into the floor of a long deserted villa building at Thurnham, in Kent. Eighty-eight potsherds were recovered from the backfill of the oven, most belong-
ing to late-Roman vessels dating after 370 and produced at workshops across southern England. But there were also sherds from three “slightly odd pots.” Two are poorly finished, miniature, convex-sided dishes in two different local grog-tempered fabrics, and the third is a very small, hook-rimmed jar in an Alice Holt fabric. All three pots, like the miniatures found in our California grave, probably date to the fifth century. A dozen other wheel-made miniature vessels, most “slightly odd,” were carefully placed in a circular pit at Kingsley, Bordon, Hampshire, probably as part of a closure deposit marking the end of a set of Alice Holt pottery kilns that functioned until the very end of the Roman period or beyond. Another “slightly odd” miniature was found at the Romano-British shrine excavated at the Cotswolds Water Park. It seems, since several coins of Arcadius (388–402) were recovered there, that activity around the shrine continued into the post-Roman period. Found among an assemblage of late fourth-century sherds in the shrine itself was a whole pot, which had been placed in a hollow between three large cobbles. It is a lopsided, miniature color-coated beaker. It is similar in shape to the small, bulbous beakers produced by the Oxfordshire kilns in the fourth century, but this vessel is not an exact parallel. The excavator thinks it may have been produced in a local, North Wiltshire kiln. If this pot was used in a closure deposit for the shrine, as whole pots often were, it may date to the fifth century.

One last category of “slightly odd pots” is shoddily made pots from known Romano-British production centers. They come from contexts that are culturally Romano-British and likely date to the decade or two on either side of 400. A domestic building at 1 Poultry in London, for example, which was modified at the very end of the Roman period, has not only produced a coin of the House of Theodosius (379–402), but also the remains of high-status dining. A large storage jar was found in the same part of the building as the coin and food remains. The jar is a grog-tempered pot made from a fabric not identified elsewhere, and it was very poorly executed and finished, suggesting that at the time of its making, pottery producers were having difficulties maintaining and preparing their traditional clay supplies and finding and/or training sufficiently skilled potters. Not far east of this site, just outside London’s walls at Shadwell, the demolition layer of another late-Roman building contained sherds from a Palestinian amphora dated 400–600, making it clear that activity at the site continued into the post-Roman period. The remains of a few extremely homely pots date to this phase. These include a poorly finished Alice Holt/Farnham greyware cooking pot, an Overwey/Portchester jar, and an Alice Holt beaded-and-flanged dish type 6C.2, made in a decidedly untraditional, rough sand-, grog-, and flint-tempered ware. All three may have been made in the fifth century. Yet another badly produced Alice
Holt bowl was found in a well deposit at Chichester.\textsuperscript{47} Last but not least, an interesting collection of poorly crafted vessels were recovered in situ from a group of kilns at Bestwall Quarry, in Dorset, which were producing wheel-thrown ceramics into the early post-Roman period. Some of the latest vessels here were fashioned from poorly prepared clay and others were badly fired,\textsuperscript{48} and the clay lining found in the latest operating kilns had been ineptly applied.\textsuperscript{49} All in all, the site’s fifth-century evidence argues that skilled labor, traditional raw materials, and craft knowledge were disappearing in the generation after 400.

The vessels we have described were made to resemble Romano-British forms that had been widely available before the precipitous decline of the pottery industry, and which owed much to Roman manufacturing techniques. The potters who created these vessels were familiar with the repertoire of late-Roman forms, continued to slip-coat pots, and possessed at least some of the equipment used by Roman-period potters; indeed, many continued to use both potters wheels and kilns. They made their wares with varying degrees of success, yet all somehow failed, by the standards of the mid-fourth century, to get their pots “right.”

One of the striking differences between these pots and their earlier fourth-century progenitors is the fabrics in which they were made. In some places this may reflect the fact that the raw materials long favored by potters were no longer available. Elsewhere potters may have employed atypical fabrics because people were now relying on locally made copies of forms that had formerly been traded in their communities from now defunct potting centers further afield.\textsuperscript{50} It is noticeable, for instance, that the shell-tempered wares from north Bedfordshire that formed a major component of fourth-century assemblages in Baldock seem to be absent in fifth-century assemblages. This argues that the pots we have described from fifth-century contexts in Baldock were not simply curated pieces: if this had been the case, we would expect to find a number of shelly ware vessels among them. If manufacturers were no longer able to operate at the scales of mass production seen earlier in the Roman period, then their networks of distribution likely shrank or became limited to small numbers of products trading at higher prices. And because the quality had declined, producers might not have been able to command the prices they once did. At some point, the cost of transport, the diminished scale of production, and the lowering of quality would have made the trading of low-value pottery economically unviable.

Although it is tempting to think of these pots only as evidence for the story of the decline from the high standards of mass production enjoyed in the fourth century, it is also possible to view at least some of them as inventive. Not only were potters in this period having to change their manufacturing techniques, but they were also creating stylistically in-
novative pots. Some of the changes we see in pottery might have also come about in response to changing consumer tastes. Immigrants from the continent, after all, were settling in some parts of Britain as early as the 420s. But British people’s ideas about what made a pot a pot were also likely evolving, reflecting social changes brought about by religious innovation, economic collapse, and Britain’s new and increasing isolation from the Western Roman Empire. Thus, in spite of the numerous serious challenges facing potters in the very late fourth- and early fifth-centuries and their much smaller scale of production, some were able to rise to the challenge and make products that found takers.

**Hand-Built Pots of Roman Type**

The “slightly odd pots” just discussed were closely related to late-Roman ceramics, not only in their forms, but also in their manufacturing techniques. At some point, however, perhaps in the 420s or 430s, pots like these became rare, and handmade, clamp- or bonfire-fired pots took their place. Although this latter group of pots is habitually referred to as “Anglo Saxon,” we argue that some are related to earlier wheel-made, kiln-fired pottery. A number of the common features of Romano-British pots were the result of the techniques and technologies used to make them. Thickened, everted rims (that is, rims that turn abruptly outwards and upwards from the body of pots), foot rings, flat bases attached to relatively straight-sided bodies, and slip-coats were, in part, the consequences of manufacturing practices rather than conscious design choices on the part of potters. These features, nonetheless, continued to appear on some post-Roman vessels, after potters ceased using the wheel. So, too, did other Roman features, like flanges and seated lids, which were easily made using the potter’s wheel, but more difficult to fashion by hand. This latter group of attributes were not so much a by-product of manufacturing practices, as they were necessary for the maintenance of traditional foodways. The continuing use of mortaria into the fifth century is also a strong indication that Romano-British food preparation techniques were being maintained.

We have identified a number of such pots at Baldock. One is a miniature jar, <7753>, which someone placed in the nailed coffin of an older man, burial 1041(1049) in the California cemetery, along with a pair of hobnailed shoes, all of which suggests that in spite of its handmade pot, we should consider this grave and its contents culturally Romano-British. It is a handmade vessel in Oxfordshire red-slipped ware that copies an uncommon form, Young type C101, mass produced in the late-third or fourth century only by potters at Sandford (Oxon). It is a slightly micaceous red ware, covered in a thin, matt, brown slip. It is not a completely successful pot, and had this been made in the Romano-British period, it may well have
been regarded as a “second”; however, it was clearly not made with the usual manufacturing techniques of a fast potter’s wheel. Instead, it was a hand-built facsimile and was thus not a failure of mass-production.

Another California burial, 3630(3633), contained the remains of an infant laid to rest in a nailed wooden coffin and accompanied by three ceramic grave gifts. The first of these pots, <8872>, was a color-coated beaker of Lower Nene Valley type 54, a white ware vessel covered in a matt brown slip and decorated with *en barbotine* scrolls. The vessel is much worn, and the neck and rim were smashed at time of burial. It likely dates to the fourth century. The second vessel was a Samian dish <8871> of Ludowici type Td, with a “4 leaved” stamp, usually dated around 90–150 CE. It was very old when placed in this grave, but is not particularly worn. It had perhaps been scavenged from a long-abandoned cremation cemetery only a few hundred meters away, a cemetery where many cremations were accompanied by similar dishes. Bowl <8873>, a patently handmade pot in a fabric resembling Oxfordshire red-slipped ware, is, for our purposes, the most interesting of the grave’s pots. It is a handmade miniature version of a Hadham-ware bowl-jar, a ceramic type that had been locally mass-produced c. 340–400, complete with a footring and a thickened, turned rim. It is in a fine soft buff ware, with traces of a thick red slip surviving on its worn surfaces.

California burial 1187(1194) was that of an adult female, who was laid flexed, with a bowl at her feet. Her chest and spine were absent, although the burial had not been disturbed by later activity, suggesting that quick-lime had been sprinkled over her chest, as done elsewhere in this cemetery, and thus shows the continuation of a Romano-British burial rite by the post-Roman Baldock community. The grave contained yet another hand-built pot of Roman type, a miniature bowl, <7758>, which copied a fourth-century Lower Nene Valley color-coated vessel. The underlying fabric is a creamy white, completely covered with a badly worn, matt black slip, and the bowl is distorted. This is not a firing accident, but is the result of the fact that it was made by hand rather than on a wheel.

Sites in Baldock’s hinterland have also produced handmade versions of otherwise standard late-Roman forms. A small late- to post-Roman cemetery at nearby Welwyn Hall resembles the larger California cemetery at Baldock. Grave F1152 contained three ceramic grave gifts, including two Roman-period oxidized Much Hadham ware vessels (a necked bowl and a narrow-necked jar) and a very worn flanged bowl <70>. The bowl is an exact parallel of California vessel <7758> just discussed, with an identical creamy white fabric and a dark slip, much worn, especially on the outside of the vessel, and it is flanged and handmade. Presumably, both vessels were the product of a single workshop, perhaps even the same potter.
The pottery found at Boxfield Farm (Chells Manor), Stevenage, eight km south of Baldock, has been studied and dated by Karen Waugh to 350/360–400+ CE. This dating, however, is likely too early, since Alice Holt/Farnham Wares, which only arrived in North Hertfordshire c. 390, were introduced in this phase. Waugh’s Fabric 40, which she attributes to Much Hadham producers, appears to be identical to Baldock Fabric 54, which dates to the fifth century. She notes that there are no diagnostic forms in this ware, which may be because the vessels produced in this fabric copied basic late-Roman forms. Waugh dates another late fabric, Fabric 50, a thin-walled, hard-fired dark reddish-brown coarse sandy ware with black surfaces, to the fourth century, but this date, too, is probably too early.

A settlement at Dane Field in Pirton, eleven km west of Baldock, was partly investigated during the construction of an oil pipeline in 1990. Discoveries since then indicate that the settlement was originally extensive, perhaps as large as some “small towns.” An unworn coin of Theodosius (388–395 CE) from a gully fill provides the terminus post quem for a later occupation surface that sealed it. Fragments of color-coated wares and Much Hadham “Romano-Saxon” pottery were found incorporated into the surface. Nearby, a deep pit truncated earlier Romano-British features and contained fragments of hand-made thumb-impressed grey ware within its primary fill. The fabric is identical to post-Roman material from Baldock. Similar grey-ware sherds were also found in the upper fill of a roadside ditch. This activity can hardly be dated before 400. Although the stratigraphic sequence ends with this early fifth-century material, there is later artifactual evidence here. Close to the deep pit containing the post-Roman grey-ware sherds, the upcast from the machine digging of the pipeline trench was found to contain two adjoining sherds of a globular jar. This was a coarse, sand-tempered, hard-fired, handmade vessel in an otherwise unknown fabric. The potter had attempted to produce an out-turned rim that was evidently impossible to create with the heavily sand-tempered clay he used and which seems to have spalled off during firing. The decoration consists of two horizontal grooves below the rim, a band of almost vertical slashes just above the waist and paired oblique scratches around the waist. No parallels have been found for the vessel, although the general shape resembles fifth- to sixth-century “Anglo-Saxon” globular jars, while the decoration combines both “Anglo-Saxon” and late pre-Roman Iron Age idioms.

Four sunken-featured buildings (SFBs) and a number of unusual post-built structures were discovered at Foxholes Farm, Hertford, 23 km south of Baldock, and within them was a small assemblage of vegetable-tempered, hand-built wares. Vegetable tempers were never used in the Roman period. Included in this assemblage were sherds of a hand-built,
lid-seated jar rim <12> and of a partly burnished, hand-built, flanged bowl <13>, both very common Romano-British forms. According to Clive Partridge, three other vessels found at this site “seem to be much better finished” but their forms—slack-profiled jars—are not Roman. The dating of this phase of activity is unclear and is placed by the excavator in the broad period 400–800. However, the SFB containing the lid-seated jar sherd also contained a small iron knife blade of undiagnostic form, <71>, similar to an example from Boxfield Farm, where it was dated fourth century or later, and a copper alloy finger ring, <3>, also of undiagnostic form, but plausibly Roman. It is highly unlikely that the flanged bowl and lid-seated jar found here could date later than the fifth century. The pottery from this site, instead, appears to be transitional between late-Roman forms and those commonly dated to the sixth century.

Barely two km to the northeast of Foxholes Farm, a post-Roman sequence has also been recognized at the Romano-British “small town” of Ware. Here, vegetable-tempered pottery resembling that from Foxholes was found in association with late-Roman forms at the Library site. They include a necked vessel with slack profile in vegetable-tempered ware, a color-coated flanged bowl resembling the California and Welwyn Hall bowls, and an Oxfordshire flanged bowl with painted decoration on the rim, similar to Baldock.

A number of sites elsewhere in Britain have also produced handmade pots that reference Romano-British wheel-thrown pottery. Two flanged bowls and two jars—all handmade in coarse fabric, but all clearly of Roman type—were found in a pit cutting through the demolition layer of a late-Roman building in Canterbury, alongside a small assemblage of late-Roman wheel-thrown wares from the Oxfordshire potteries. Another hand-made flanged bowl, this one a late and local copy of a common fourth-century black burnished type, was recovered at Dyer Court, Cirencester. Archaeologists have also recovered a hand-made copy of a late-Roman “pie-dish” at Shakenoak, in Oxfordshire, and two of the pots excavated at the early medieval cemetery at Caistor-by-Norwich, in Norfolk, look like handmade versions of fourth-century mass-produced wares. And a small post-Roman biconical jar found at Greetwell Fields villa, in Lincolnshire, must have been made, as J. N. L. Myres observed long ago, by someone “familiar with Romano-British wheel-turned wares.” It looks as if a number of potters in the south of England also continued, after 400, to produce convex-sided, embossed dishes. They were quite widely distributed, and Malcolm Lyne has identified them at Dorchester-upon-Thames, Portchester, Farnham, Winchester, and at a beach-market emporium at Wootton on the Isle of Wight. Spectacularly unsuccessful copies of late-Roman wares are also found from time to time. One of the most remarkable is a beaker recovered from one of the earli-
Figure 3. A post-Roman attempt at a folded beaker from Alton (Hampshire). Published with kind permission of the Hampshire Cultural Trust.
est burials in the post-Roman cemetery at Alton, in Hampshire (Figure 3).\textsuperscript{81} It is a post-Roman attempt at a late-Roman folded beaker, made by someone who did not know much about potting.\textsuperscript{82}

The ghosts of Roman potting traditions also haunt ceramic forms further north. For example, a crouched burial found in the ruins of a bath in the Roman fort at Binchester, and which dates to the late fifth or early sixth century,\textsuperscript{83} included a bowl fashioned from heavily gritted fabric of a kind common in the north in the late-Roman period. It is flat-based and shares some of the characteristics of Roman-period coarse-ware bowls.\textsuperscript{84} Another example came from one of two post-Roman burials dug into the abandoned remains of a Crambeck-ware kiln at Castle Howard, in Yorkshire, a kiln that had operated very late in the Roman period.\textsuperscript{85} Both graves were elaborately constructed cists, a burial structure favored by indigenous communities in post-Roman Britain, and both included pots.

Figure 4. A tumbler-shaped, miniature pot from Castle Howard (Yorkshire). Published with kind permission of the Malton Museum.
One grave contained a small pot, similar in both form and fabric to pots made on the site during the late-Roman period. The second cist contained two pots. The first again had close parallels to the region’s late-Roman period ceramics. The second pot is downright bizarre (Figure 4). It is a straight-sided, tumbler-shaped pot, embellished with a series of parallel grooves around its girth, and it has strange concentric grooving on its base. Although its straight, even sides and flat base owe something to Romano-British pottery, it actually looks more like a clay version of a Roman bronze *situla*. Indeed, its parallel-line decorations as well as the mysterious concentric pattern on its base are skeuomorphs, relics of Roman-metalworking techniques, which often included lathe-turned finishes on bronze vessels.

Footring bases on hand-built, post-Roman pots may also be skeuomorphs. One of the “Anglo-Saxon” pots recovered at Orton Hall Farm was fashioned from a Roman fabric and has a footring, but it was not made on a potter’s wheel. Another handmade pot, this one in white pipe clay and found in a post-Roman occupation layer at *Verulamium*, has a lopsided, asymmetrical footing. A similar familiarity with old Roman forms may explain the footring on a hand-built, sand-tempered cooking pot that was deposited whole, almost certainly after 400, in a well or waterhole at the villa at Rivenhall, in Essex. It has a globular, not un-Roman profile, as well as a footring and a thickened, turned rim, attributes of many Roman-period, wheel-thrown pots. But the pot also, interestingly, has lugs, a feature of early “Anglo-Saxon” pottery. Given the context of this pot, a culturally Romano-British closure deposit, we should perhaps reevaluate the other lugged vessels with footings, six from Essex and one from Norfolk, all of which have been described as “Anglo-Saxon.”

Footrings also make the occasional appearance on cremation urns excavated from England’s Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. They are, for example, on twenty-two of the pots used as cremation urns at Mucking, in Essex, about 6 percent of the urns found there. The size, shape, and decorative schemes on the Mucking pots have very close parallels to those found on cremation urns used in cemeteries between the Elbe and the Weser and in Schleswig-Holstein. Nonetheless, a few potters in eastern England added footrings to their pots, perhaps because some of them carried the unconscious notion that footrings made pots look like proper pots. Although the idea that there are Roman forms lurking behind some of the Mucking cremation vessels might seem far-fetched, the oddest of Mucking’s footringed pots—the one used in Cremation 201, a globular jar with a series of extravagant hollow cups or spouts built into the neck of the pot—suggests otherwise. This pot’s closest contemporary parallel is one used in Cremation 919 at the early medieval cemetery at Cleatham, in Lincolnshire. Both these early medieval pots, however, are likely re-
lated to spouted Romano-British funerary pots, examples of which have been found in Roman cemeteries in both Colchester and York.\textsuperscript{96} Another pot from Mucking, this one used as a grave gift in an inhumation burial (G854), although clearly related to continental pots, also shares something with indigenous pots. It is a little stamped pot, the form of which harkens back to the pre-Roman Iron Age. One of the stamped decorative schemes used on the pot is identical to one often used on the roulette-stamped Oxfordshire ware of the late fourth century.\textsuperscript{97}

The handmade pots of Roman form produced in the fifth and early sixth centuries argue that the potting traditions of some communities continued, probably unconsciously, to make and use pots that were related to those long used in Britain. Generally, the manufacturing techniques standing behind these post-Roman ceramics were poor, and in an earlier age, they would have ended up on the waster dump. Much as Kevin Leahy has dryly remarked about contemporary pots made by people who were continental immigrants to Britain, many of our pots “seem to have been made with more enthusiasm than expertise.”\textsuperscript{98} What we are seeing here is not just the end of a technology that allowed for mass production of a wide variety of standard forms, but the deskilling of potters: this was as much a crisis of training as it was an economic crisis. Clear evidence of migrants from the Continent, who brought with them their own pottery traditions, should remind us that this was a period of rapid material change and material accommodation as well. Local families, whose grandparents had grown up with mass-produced, Roman-style pots, kept some of those ceramics’ features alive, as they and their immigrant neighbors together created new forms of material culture, including new-style pottery.

\textit{Pots of Early Medieval Form but in “Roman” Fabrics}

No unequivocally “Anglo-Saxon” pots have been found at Baldock.\textsuperscript{99} Outside the town, though, the picture is different. The unusual globular jar from Dane Field, Pirton, has already been discussed, but further examples of this class of Germanic-style pot, made in a Roman-British fabric, have been found at Hitchin. A bizarre vessel was discovered there in 1939 in a garden at Gaping Lane, west of the town center (Figure 5).\textsuperscript{100} It is a globular cup with a semi-circular handle (broken off before the cup’s discovery), a style of vessel dated to the late fifth-century and found mostly in East Anglia.\textsuperscript{101} Its fabric, however, is very different from other pots of this type: it is highly micaceous with abundant sand temper and numerous flakes of mica (<1 mm square) on its surface, which were apparently added after shaping but before firing. Mica dusting is a Romano-British technique, although during the Roman period, mica was normally powdered before an unfired vessel was dipped into it. This vessel had also been fired in a reducing atmosphere and the end result had an oxidized surface, so the
pot is likely to have been kiln fired. Like the well-made slack-profiled vessels from Foxholes Farm, discussed above, the form of the pot appears “Anglo-Saxon,” but the technology that stands behind its production was Roman, albeit an impoverished version of that technology.
A bag-shaped jar was found south of Hitchin, at Gosmore (in St Ippolyts) in the Vicar’s Grove sandpit. J. N. L. Myres dates this form to the late sixth and seventh centuries, although the fabric of this vessel is a hard sandy type, more common in the early post-Roman period. Myres explains the fabric by suggesting Frankish influence, but it seems equally plausible that this pot is earlier, and represents the continuation of Roman production techniques and fabric in the post-Roman period. A number of other bag-shaped jars, these with thumb marks around their waists, were found in an eclectic assemblage from a garden at Springhead in Ashwell, some 6 km to the northeast of Baldock, a site with evidence for ritual activity around the adjacent springs, which were sources for the River Cam. Their bag-shaped form is a classic “Anglo-Saxon” form, although thumb impressions are not generally regarded as an “Anglo-Saxon” decorative element. The fabric of these pots, though, is more Roman than “Anglo-Saxon”—it is a highly micaceous and grog-tempered ware with burnished surfaces and sooting.

The continued use of Roman fabrics is also found outside of Baldock and its hinterland. Some of the pots we have discussed from burials at Castle Howard and Binchester were made from the same heavily-gritted fabric from which much late-Roman pottery in Yorkshire had been fashioned. The early medieval settlement at West Heslerton and some of the post-Roman contexts at Piercebridge have also produced pottery that cannot, because of its form or fabric, be distinguished from local pottery dating to the Roman period. A hand-built pot dating to the post-Roman period from Dalton Parlours, in West Yorkshire, is embellished around its neck with a slashed herringbone decoration that is not out of line with what we think of as “Anglo-Saxon,” but its straight sides and its fabric are more akin to fourth-century Yorkshire pottery. One of the cremation urns at Caistor-by-Norwich was made from a Roman coarse ware fabric, and a pot from Preston-near-Wingham, Kent, is made in a grog-tempered fabric, typical of this region, and might have been finished on a wheel. The pot, however, was not shaped like late-Roman Kentish grog-tempered ware, so it may be yet another example of a potter drawing from both indigenous and Continental craft traditions. A poorly-made pot excavated at Bullock Down, Eastbourne, East Sussex, made from a grit-and-grog tempered fabric commonly found in late-Roman handmade wares from the area, was decorated with wyrm stamps, again evidence that some potters were combining Roman fabrics and tempers with continental decorative schemes. And the continued practice of mica-dusting is suggested by the “Anglo-Saxon” mica-dusted sherds found in the fill of a post-Roman SFB at Orpington, in Kent.
Simultaneous Use of Roman-Period, Mass-Produced Wares and Hand-Built Pots

Across lowland Britain we find evidence that local people in the fifth century sometimes continued to use either old household stocks of mass-produced Roman pottery after it had ceased being made or “slightly odd” post-Roman versions of these pots. Now, however, they were using them alongside contemporary, handmade wares. Evidence for the contemporaneous use of Romano-British or Roman-type pots and the new handmade wares is surprisingly widespread, often found in sealed contexts that can be dated to the post-Roman period. A number of the Baldock examples discussed above allow us to see the ways in which older, carefully curated, mass-produced Romano-British pots were used alongside “slightly odd” substitutes and the new-style, hand-built wares coming to dominate lowland Britain. At Dane Field in Pirton, as we have seen, color-coated wares and Much Hadham pottery were being used and disposed of alongside handmade grey ware. And California’s infant burial, with its mix of first-century Samian ware, a fourth-century color-coated beaker, and a post-Roman handmade bowl, makes clear that people in post-Roman Baldock had a mix of old Romano-British and post-Roman pots at their disposal.

The simultaneous use of old and new pots is found at a number of post-Roman villa sites outside of Hertfordshire. People residing on villa sites in the immediate post-Roman period were living in much reduced circumstances—often using only a few rundown rooms of once grand, but now failing, structures. At other places they were residing in new timber structures constructed atop rubble platforms or in SFBs, built next to abandoned or demolished Roman-period masonry buildings. There is a long, but now thankfully fading tradition of characterizing such post-Roman inhabitants as “squatters,” and often Anglo-Saxon “squatters” at that. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that many villas’ fifth-century inhabitants were culturally Romano-British.

Bancroft villa, in Buckinghamshire, is one such place. The villa had been lavishly refurbished in the last couple of decades of the fourth century, and it continued, in the early fifth century, to serve as the quite dilapidated home to people who were burying in Romano-British ways and participating in traditional Romano-British ritual practices. They were also using a mix of late-Roman pottery, in particular Oxfordshire wares, along with handmade sand- and mineral-tempered pots. Similarly, at the villa site at Beddington in Surrey, hand-built pedestal vessels (which are described in the excavation report as “Saxon”), were being used in conjunction with very late-Roman Pevensey ware. People living, in the fifth century, at the villa sites at Eastington and Frocester, both in Gloucestershire; Little Oakley, in Essex; Redlands Farm, Stanwick, Northamptonshire; and Shakenoak, in Oxfordshire, were also using late-
Roman pottery alongside hand-built sand- or vegetable-tempered wares. The contemporaneous use of late-Roman pottery and handmade wares could also be found in the immediate post-Roman period at rural shrines like Uley, in Gloucestershire; dying urban/administrative settlements like Alchester, in Oxfordshire; Heybridge, in Essex; and Pevensey, in Sussex and in the countryside at still-running corn driers and low-status settlement sites like those at Burgess Hill, in West Sussex; High Post, near Salisbury, in Wiltshire; Crossgates and Wykeham, in Yorkshire; Lodge Field in Billingford, Norfolk; Orpington and Thurnham, in Kent; and Mucking, in Essex. The fact that in some places late-Roman or “slightly odd” pots were being used at the same time as handmade pots argues that there were plenty of late-Roman vessels available in the immediate post-Roman period upon which contemporary potters could model their wares, and that many culturally British groups were using (and doubtless making) handmade ceramics. In short, not all handmade pots in the period are “Anglo-Saxon.”

Concluding Remarks

Archaeologists and historians have together created problems of interpretation for themselves, and they need to work together to undo them. Practitioners in both disciplines have an interest in defining a body of contemporary evidence for the elusive period of transformation between Roman and early medieval. This paper contributes to other recent work, in identifying evidence that both archaeologists and historians can use to construct a history of nearly invisible indigenous communities living in Britain in the post-Roman period. We have also written a cautionary tale, drawing attention to the fatal problem of labeling all wheel-thrown wares “Roman,” and dating them pre-400, and all post-400 handmade ceramics “Anglo-Saxon.” Such a rigid application of terminology, derived from flawed written sources, effectively erases British populations living in fifth-century lowland Britain, and turns what little fifth-century material we have into the handiwork of either late-Roman potters or England’s new Continental immigrants.

Our work also shows how problematic the binary periodization scheme of Roman period/Anglo-Saxon period is because it suggests a clean break and brand-new material world, which few of our pot makers and pot users would have recognized. Indeed, the evolution of pottery in this period suggests that people long used to Romano-British pottery forms, together with their immigrant neighbors, who had their own ideas about what made a pot a pot, stand behind the pottery we see developing across many parts of lowland Britain by the beginning of the sixth century. This piece also contributes to a view of the “End of Roman Britain” as a long drawn-out process, characterized by the failure of established industries to adapt to the changing economic situation. A generation grew up remem-
bering the mass-produced pottery of its childhood, attempting to recreate it with inadequate facilities and minimal training. The material world of Romano-British consumer goods gradually gave way to an era of small-scale localized production and the increasing influence of Germanic styles. Historians, rightly accustomed to skeptical views of the sources used to construct narratives of fifth-century Britain, have not engaged properly with the material evidence, which often remains poorly published in specialist sections buried within archaeological site reports, if it has been selected for publication at all. Archaeologists, in contrast, remain largely unaffected by historians’ debates about the written sources and their problematical nature, and have tended to rely on broad period categories, failing to recognize their fuzzy boundaries. The invisibility of the fifth-century Britons is thus a direct consequence of labeling, period specialization, the reliance of archaeologists on written sources of dubious value and historians’ unwillingness to engage with the period’s material evidence.

We suspect that the problems of periodization and terminology, which so dog archaeologists and historians working in the late-Roman and early-medieval periods, also plague specialists working in other disciplines and in other times and places. Historical periods and breaks are constructs rather than historical facts. The chronological lines our disciplines draw, though, have the nasty habit of transforming themselves (with our helpful complicity) into both “reality” and unbridgeable gulfs. They also create separate communities of specialists, who work on one side of the boundary but not the other. One of the results of this is the production of mountains of scholarship that deepen the chasms of periodization, and make them seem more real than they actually were. So, this article has not only been an experiment in seeing what happens when scholars from two different disciplines work on questions of interest to both their fields, but what happens when, instead of working on one side of a great historical divide but not the other, we make the decades of rupture the center of a different period—one that takes into account both the before and the after.

Notes


5. Myres, English Settlements, 63–73.


12. Some time in the early decades of the fifth century, the traditional distinctions between coarseware and fine ware, and tableware and utilitarian ware, disappeared, and potters ceased making large pots. And although the late-Roman period had witnessed the growing dominance of bowls and jars, these two forms, for all intents and purposes, become the only forms after the end of imperial administration (H. E. M. Cool, Eating and Drinking in Roman Britain [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], chap. 16), although, as Rob Collins and Lindsay Allason-Jones point out, in places like Britain’s northern frontier, mortaria, beakers, and cups were still common in the very late-Roman period (R. Collins and L. Allason-Jones, “Material Culture and the End of Empire,” in Finds from the Frontiers: Material Culture in the


14. Tempers are substances added to clay—things like sand, chaff, bits of finely broken pottery, crushed rock, or crushed shell that keep clay pots from shrinking or cracking while they are being dried or fired, and which make them more resistant to thermal shock.


16. All pots from this cemetery are housed at the North Hertfordshire Museum, and are identified by grave number in Fitzpatrick-Matthews, Draft Catalogue of Burials in the California Late-Roman Cemetery (unpublished archive report).

17. N. Cooke, The Definition and Interpretation of Late Roman Burial Rites in the Western Empire (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 1998); Richard John Hunter


20. The grave itself was sub rectangular, with a 20 cm gap around the coffin; a number of coffin nails were recovered but only a small quantity of human bone survived later disturbance.

21. The whetstone was found by the left knee, whereas the coin, a bronze of Constantine II, was positioned on the left of the woman’s wrist.

22. It is a dish in Lower Nene Valley red-slipped ware <7916> and was located outside the coffin, midway along the side of the grave. It is a fine white ware, completely covered in patchy dark brown and orange metallic slip.


27. Stead and Rigby, *Baldock*, 370–71, and fig. 155.746. A few more pots of this fabric have been found at Baldock, all of which are wheel thrown, in various standard Oxfordshire forms. (See pots described and illustrated in Stead and Rigby, *Baldock*, 377, and fig. 158.823–5; 367 and fig. 154.713).


30. This occupation apparently began in the late second or third century. All the material of this date was residual, though, and the stratified sequence seems to begin late in the third century.


35. R. Chambers and E. McAdam, *Excavations at Barrow Hills, Radley, Oxfordshire, 1983–5. vol. 2: The Romano-British Cemetery and Anglo-Saxon Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford Archaeological Unit, 2007), 31 and 52. It is similar to a Young C31 or C108. The beaker is illustrated in fig. 2.4, and comes from grave 1049.


41. According to the excavator, “such small poorly finished vessels are often noted elsewhere as being characteristic of the latest RB pots” (S. Lawrence, “The Iron Age Settlement and Roman Villa at Thurnham, Kent,” ed. P. Booth [unpublished report: CTRL Integrated Site Report Series, 2006], 107–08.)


50. This is also suggested by a number of late vessels found at the Beecches, Cirencester, which are local copies of Oxfordshire color-coated wares (A. McWhirr, J. Bayley, and N. Griffiths, *Houses in Roman Cirencester* [Cirencester: Corinium Museum, 1986], 174–75).
52. For an interesting discussion of flanges and their disappearance in the post-Roman period, see P. Bidwell, “Fifth-Century Pottery in Devon and North East Cornwall,” *Internet Archaeology* 41 (2016): http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.41.1.
53. Besides hobnails and a coffin, there were also bird bones in this grave.
54. Young, *Roman Pottery Industry*, 127. This is an interesting example of a handmade vessel that has been slip-coated.
55. For a detailed discussion of this grave and its pots, see R. Fleming, “Four Communities of Pot and Glass Recyclers in Early Post Roman Britain,” in *Transformations of Romanness*, ed. W. Pohl (Turnhout: Brepols, in press). In the center of the grave was a patch of stained soil, thought to be an organic residue, possibly from decayed clothing.
57. Burleigh and Fitzpatrick-Matthews, *Excavations at Baldock*, vol. 3. The use of Samian as a grave gift may be seen as an archaising feature that harks back to the heyday of this distinctive ware’s use, the later first and second centuries CE. A potential parallel use of very old, scavenged pottery for use in early post-Roman graves may also be found is Southwark (J. Gerrard and M. Lyne, “The Romano-British Pottery,” in V. Ridgeway, K. Leary, and B. Sudds, *Roman Burials in Southwark: Excavations at 52–56 Lant Street and 56 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1* [London: Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2013], 31–36, at 36.). It should be noted, though, that there is no evidence from the earlier cemeteries here of the systematic grave robbing to scavenge gifts for re-use.
59. A picture of this pot is published in Fleming, “Struggling,” fig. 12.4.
60. It was excavated in 1995. In all, 23 graves were recognized, apparently laid out in approximate rows to the north of an enclosed grave, F1152, which appears to have been the primary burial (T. McDonald and A. Pearson, *Excavations at Welwyn Hall, Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Research Archive Report* [unpublished report: Archaeological Solutions, 2012], 15). This was likely the cemetery where workers on the late-Roman villa estate at Dicket Mead were buried (T. McDonald, “Welwyn Hall, Welwyn, Hertfordshire: an Archaeological Excavation” [unpublished report no. 138: Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust, 1995], 14, 28–29).
61. A picture of this pot is published in Fleming, “Struggling,” fig. 12.5.
63. A. Fawcett and M. Lyne, “Roman Pottery.”
64. Waugh, “Roman Coarse Pottery,” 94.
65. A corn drier, [GF], and a pit, [HB], both appear to belong to this poorly dated late phase (Waugh, “Roman Coarse Pottery,” 130).


69. It is now also recognized that vegetable tempers only came to dominate in England from the early sixth century on (H. Hamerow, Y. Hollevoet, and A. Vince, “Migration Period Settlement and ‘Anglo-Saxon’ Pottery from Flanders,” Medieval Archaeology 38 [1993]: 1–18).

70. Partridge, Foxholes Farm, 176, and nos. 8–10.

71. Partridge, Foxholes Farm, 22. The author’s attempt to link the site to the Synod of Hertford on 26 September 672 is unconvincing. The post-Roman character of some of the artifacts makes a date as late as the seventh century impossible.


73. See the recent summary in C. Partridge, “Hertford and Ware: Archaeological Perspectives from Birth to Middle Age,” in A County of Small Towns: the Development of Hertfordshire’s Urban Landscape to 1800, ed. T. Slater and N. Goose (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2008), 127–58, at 138–39. Unpublished excavations since 2005 suggest continuity between the Roman and early medieval towns, with the focus of the settlement slowly moving eastwards towards the crossing of the River Lea.


81. Myres attempted, not very successfully, to use this pot as evidence for Jutish settlement in Hampshire.


83. The dating of the grave is based on a series of radiocarbon dates from the skeleton and antler objects found in the grave, and on a reversed S-shaped brooch with birds’ head


88. Mackreth, *Orton Hall Farm*, 207 and fig. 118.1.


95. Hirst and Clark, *Excavations at Mucking*, vol. 3, part 1, 156 and fig. 81. A picture of this pot on the British Museum web site erroneously lists this as being from Grave 851: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1661359&partId=1&searchText=mucking+grave+851&images=true&page=1 (accessed 5/7/2015). This stamp is G 2a ii, and is found on a total of four pots at Mucking (Data Table 41: http://
archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-1005-1/dissemination/pdf/data_tables/Data_Table_41.pdf [accessed 5/7/2015], and there are a total of 59 examples in the Archive of Anglo-Saxon Stamps (D. C. Briscoe, “Anglo-Saxon Pottery Descriptions, Distribution of the Total Anglo-Saxon Assemblage; Anglo-Saxon Stamps,” Albion Archaeology (2013): 8 La Grava The Archaeology and History of a Royal Manor and Alien Priory of Fontevrault [data-set] (unpublished report, York: Archaeology Data Service [distributor]: (doi: 10.5284/1020234). There are two known examples of this stamp from Lower Saxony (ibid.), but many dozens are known from Romano-British pots.


99. A vegetable-tempered sherd associated with an SFB at Blackhorse Farm, one kilometer north of the town, was initially said to be “Anglo-Saxon.” P. Fenton, A505 Baldock Bypass: an Archaeological Evaluation of a Scheduled Ancient Monument at Blackhorse Farm, Baldock, Hertfordshire (unpublished report no. 23: North Hertfordshire District Council Museums Field Archaeology Section, 1994), 16; M. Phillips and H. Duncan, “Blackhorse Farm, Baldock: Summary of Trial Trenching,” in Four Millennia of Human Activity along the A505 Baldock Bypass, Hertfordshire, ed. M. Phillips, East Anglian Archaeology, 128 (Bedford: Albion Archaeology, 2009), 157–60, at 159. However, re-examination has shown it to be in one of the post-Roman fabrics identified at Baldock (Fitzpatrick-Matthews, “Defining Fifth-Century Ceramics in North Hertfordshire”).


101. Myres, Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery, 9; nos. 1079, 1801, 2822, 2919 and 3016.

102. Although the context of its deposition is unknown, its completeness suggests that it may have accompanied a burial (K. Rutherford Davis, Britons and Saxons: The Chiltern Region, 400–700 [Chichester: Phillimore, 1982], 143).

103. Myres, Corpus, 353 and no. 2374.

104. Ibid., p. 64.


108. Myres and Green, Caistor-by-Norwich, 54.

109. This pot is particularly interesting because grog-tempering disappears in Kent as a tempering agent early in the post-Roman period (R. J. Pollard, The Roman Pottery of Kent [Maidstone: Kent Archaeological Society, 1988], 160–61).

110. Lyne, “Pottery Supply to Roman Sussex,” 149.


112. For the reuse of Roman-period pots in post-Roman Britain, see Fleming, “Four Communities of Pot and Glass Recyclers.”

114. See the mortarium from Orton Hall Farm, above.

115. They buried their dead, for example, in coffins or cists, and a closure deposit made when the SFB was taken down included an articulated yearling deer, something not uncommon in the late-Roman period.


