

Pottery from St Aldates, Oxford (OXSTAD16EX)

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Analytical Methodology

The pottery was initially bulk-sorted and recorded on a computer using DBase IV software. The material from each context was recorded by number and weight of sherds per fabric type, with featureless body sherds of the same fabric counted, weighed and recorded as one database entry. Feature sherds such as rims, bases and lugs were individually recorded, with individual codes used for the various types. Decorated sherds were similarly treated. In the case of the rimsherds, the form, diameter in mm and the percentage remaining of the original complete circumference was all recorded. This figure was summed for each fabric type to obtain the estimated vessel equivalent (EVE).

The terminology used is that defined by the Medieval Pottery Research Group's Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms (MPRG 1998) and to the minimum standards laid out in the Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of post-Roman Ceramics (MPRG2001). All the statistical analyses were carried out using a DBase package written by the author, which interrogated the original or subsidiary databases, with some of the final calculations made with an electronic calculator. Any statistical analyses were carried out to the minimum standards suggested by Orton (1998-9, 135-7).

Fabrics

The pottery assemblage comprised 2028 sherds with a total weight of 38767g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 24.57. It was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAC:	Cotswold-type Ware , AD975-1350. 268 sherds, 4861g, EVE = 2.78.
OXAG:	Abingdon Ware , late 11 th – 14 th C. 3 sherds, 94g, EVE = 0.19.
OXAM:	Brill/Boarstall Ware , AD1200 – 1600. 225 sherds, 3717g, EVE = 1.88.
OXAW:	Early Brill Coarseware , AD1180-1250. 83 sherds, 2371g, EVE = 1.71
OXB:	Late Saxon Oxford Shelly Ware , late 8 th – early 11 th century. 121 sherds, 2381g, EVE = 1.09.
OXBB:	Minety-type Ware , early 13 th –16 th century. 4 sherds, 95g, EVE = 0.05.
OXBFB:	North-East Wiltshire Ware , AD1050–1400. 34 sherds, 798g, EVE = 0.19.
OXBK:	Medieval Shelly Coarseware , AD1100-1350. 5 sherds, 79g, EVE = 0.
OXBN:	Tudor Green Ware , late 14 th – 16 th century. 2 sherds, 6g, EVE = 0.
OXBS:	Beauvais-type Ware , 9 th -11 th century. 6 sherds, 186g, EVE = 0.
OXBX:	Late Medieval Brill/Boarstall Ware , 15 th – early 17 th century. 29 sherds, 947g, EVE = 1.00
OXCL:	Cistercian Ware ,AD1470 – 1600. 10 sherds, 84g, EVE = 0.07..
OXR:	St. Neots Ware , AD850-1200. 43 sherds, 571g, EVE = 0.68.
OXY:	Medieval Oxford Ware , AD1075–1350. 1065 sherds, 17138g, EVE = 12.57.
OXZ:	Stamford Ware , AD850-1150. 7 sherds, 55g, EVE = 0.30.

The post-medieval wares were recorded using the conventions of the Museum of London Type-Series (eg. Vince 1985), as follows:

BORDB:	Brown-glazed Border Ware , 1600-1700. 2 sherds, 6g.
BORDG:	Green-glazed Border Ware , 1550 - 1700. 3 sherds, 44g.
BORDY:	Yellow-glazed Border Ware , 1550-1700. 55 sherds, 557g.
CREA:	Creamware , 1740-1830. 1 sherd, 6g.
DERBS:	Derby Stoneware , 1700-1900. 10 sherds, 17g.
FREC:	Frechen Stoneware , 1550-1750. 13 sherds, 553g.
LONS:	London Stoneware . 1680+. 6 sherds, 118g.
METS:	Metropolitan-type Slipware , 1480 – 1900. 2 sherds, 34g.
MLOJ:	Montelupo Oil Jar , 1750 – 1900. 1 sherd, 246g
PMBL:	Post-medieval Black-glazed Redware , late 16 th –17 th century. 1 sherd, 14g.
PMR:	Post-medieval Redware , 1550+. 28 sherds, 1852g.
RAER:	Raeren Stoneware , 1480 – 1600. 8 sherds, 992g, EVE = 1.82.
REFW:	Refined Whiteware , 1800-1900. 21 sherds, 219g.
STSL:	Staffordshire Slipware , 1650 – 1800. 1 sherd, 4g.
SWSG:	Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware , 1720–1800. 1 sherd, 2g.
TGW:	English Tin-Glazed Ware , 1600-1800. 3 sherds, 23g.

The following, not included in the Oxford type-series, were also noted:

F1:	Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon Organic-tempered Ware , 1 sherd, 15g, EVE = 0.
F102:	Thetford-type Ware (Rogerson and Dallas 1984). 2 sherds, 48g, EVE = 0.06.
F104:	Flemish/Rhenish Greyware , 11 th – 12 th century. 5 sherds, 138g, EVE = 0.
F401:	Spanish Tin-glazed Ware , late 14 th – 16 th century. 1 sherd, 15g, EVE = 0.11.
F1001:	All Romano-British . 5 sherds, 96g.
F1002:	Iron Age . 4 sherds, 159g, EVE = 0.07.

Chronology and Pottery Occurrence

Each stratified, context-specific pottery assemblage has been given a ceramic phase ('CP') date based on the range of ware and vessel types present, and adjusted according to the stratigraphic matrix. The chronology, defining wares and the amount of pottery per phase is shown in Table X1. The occurrence of the major fabrics per ceramic phase by weight is shown in Table X2. The vessel occurrence per phase by vessel type in EVE is shown in Table X3.

Table X1: Ceramic Phase Chronology, Occurrence and Defining Wares

Phase	Defining wares	Date	No Sherds	Wt. Sherds	Mean Sherd Wt
RB	All Roman	1 st – 4 th C	2	39	19.5g
MSAX	OXB	E8 th – 9 th C	31	741	23.9g
LSAX	OXBS, OXR, OXZ	10 th -early 11 th C	8	60	7.5g
SN	OXAC, OXBF	E - L 11 th C	80	1844	23.1g
M1	OXY	L 11 th – 12 th C	837	12924	15.4g
M2	OXAM	13 th – 14 th C	823	15415	18.7g
M3	OXBX, OXBN	E-L 15 th C	24	851	35.5g
M4	OXCL, RAER	L15 th – M 16 th C	45	1760	39.9g

Phase	Defining wares	Date	No Sherds	Wt. Sherds	Mean Sherd Wt
PM1	PMR, FREC, BORDY, BORDG	M-L 16 th C	35	1502	42.9g
PM2	TGW, WEST, PMBL	E-M 17 th C	31	1659	53.5g
PM3	TGW*	M-L 17 th C	0	0	0
PM4	LONS	L17 th – E18 th C	7	500	71.4g
PM5	DERBS, MLOJ, SWSG	18 th C	13	270	20.7g
MOD	WHEW	19 th C	92	1202	13.1g
		Total	2028	38767	

Table X2: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase by fabric type, expressed as a percentage of the total wt per phase, major fabrics only

Fabric	MSAX	LSAX	SN	M1	M2	M3	M4	PM1	PM2	PM4	PM5	MOD
OXB	100%	0	55.7%	3.4%	0.9%	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3%
OXR	-	90.0%	5.4%	2.0%	1.0%	1.3%	0	0	0	0	0	0
OXZ	-	0	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4%
OXBS	-	10.0%	8.4%	0.2%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OXAC	-	-	22.4%	22.9%	8.3%	11.2%	0	4.5%	0.4%	0	0	1.4%
OXBF	-	-	2.6%	1.1%	2.2%	0	0	17.3%	0	0	0	0
OXY	-	-	-	67.1%	52.0%	18.7%	6.8%	0.9%	0.9%	8.0%	0	7.1%
OXAW	-	-	-	-	15.5%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OXAM	-	-	-	-	17.9%	37.4%	5.9%	1.5%	0	10.8%	0.4%	29.7%
OXBX	-	-	-	-	-	31.1%	29.4%	4.4%	1.7%	0	0	5.8%
OXCL	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.6%	2.4%	1.2%	0	0	0
RAER	-	-	-	-	-	-	56.3%	0	0	0	0	0
PMR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58.2%	20.8%	80.6%	0	19.1%
FREC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.0%	25.0%	0	0	2.7%
BORDY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5%	43.8%	0	0	0
BORDG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	2.6%	0	0	0
TGW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.8%	0	0	0.7%
PMBL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.8%	0	0	0
LONS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.6%	0	9.6%
DERBS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.3%	0
MLOJ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	91.1%	0
WHEW	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18.2%
Total	741	60	1844	12924	15415	851	1757	1502	1659	500	270	1202

Shaded cells = residual material

Table X3: Vessel occurrence per ceramic phase by EVE, expressed as a percentage of the total per phase

Vessel	MSAX	LSAX	SN	M1	M2	M3	M4
Jar	100%	0	85.2%	83.1%	62.8%	15.3%	1.9%
Bowl	0	0	14.8%	3.4%	5.3%	84.7%	0
Jug	0	0	0	3.9%	30.6%	0	31.6%
Lamp	0	0	0	1.1%	0	0	0
Crucible	0	0	0	8.4%	1.3%	0	0
Lid	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.6%
Cup/mug	0	0	0	0	0	0	59.8%
Total EVE	0.14	0	1.08	9.64	8.90	1.24	3.16
Dripping Dish*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

The Pottery

CP MSAX: Early 8th –9th century. 31 sherds, 741g, EVE = 0.14

No complete vessels or full profiles were noted, indicating that all the pottery is the product of secondary disposition. All the material from this phase is Oxford Shelly Ware (fabric OXB). A single rimsherd was present, a large fragment of a jar. Most of the pottery of this date came from Area 1, with the only other part of the site to produce groups of this date being Area 3, where three features produced three sherds each, with a total weight of 180g.

CP LSAX: 10th – early 11th century. 8 sherds, 60g, EVE = 0.

The small assemblage of pottery dating to this CP was dominated by St Neots Ware, which made up 90% of the material, with the rest being a single small Beauvais Ware sherd (6g). Just four contexts produced pottery of this date, with three of them, all from Area 1, only yielding a single sherd, and so could be later than the bare pottery date suggests. The rest of the assemblage, five sherds weighing 34g, came from context 3039 in Area 3. The entire CP assemblage consisted of plain bodysherds, other than the Beauvais sherd, which had red-painted decoration typical of the tradition.

CP SN: Early – late 11th century. 80 sherds, 1844g, EVE = 1.08

No complete vessels or full profiles were noted, indicating that all the pottery is the product of secondary disposition. The major ware in this CP is Oxford Shelly Ware (OXB), which makes up over 55% of the assemblage. OXAC comprises 22.4% of the assemblage, with the rest being OXR (5.4%), OXBF (2.6%) and Stamford Ware (fabric OXZ; 0.5%), along with four fairly large sherds of red-painted Beauvais Ware (8.4%). The only other pottery present was three sherds of Rhenish Grey ware (weight = 76g; 4.1%) and a single sherd of residual early/middle Anglo-Saxon hand-built ware (15g).

The rim assemblage consisted mostly of jars (85.2% by EVE), along with a few bowls (14.8%). Ten jar rims were present, of which eight were OXB (EVE = 0.76) and two were St Neots Ware (EVE = 0.16). Two bowl rims were noted, one in OXAC (EVE = 0.11) and the other in OXR (EVE = 0.05). No decorated sherds were present, other than the red-painted Beauvais examples.

Most of the groups of this date came from Areas 1 and 3, with the former producing eighteen sherds weighing 575g (EVE = 0.27) and the latter 59 sherds weighing 1210g (EVE = 0.81). The only other groups of this date were a single context producing one sherd in area 13, and another from Area 10 in which two sherds occurred.

CP MI: Late 11th – 12th century. 837 sherds, 12924g, EVE = 9.64

Three full profiles were noted, from a jar, a bowl and a crucible, but no complete vessels, indicating that all the pottery is the product of secondary disposition. This CP assemblage is one of the two largest from the site. Over three-quarters of the material

(622 sherds, 8541g, EVE = 7.80) came from Area 1, with much of the rest from Area 4 (102 sherds, 2635g, EVE = 1.07) and Area 10 (52 sherds, 882g, EVE = 0.32). Residuality was very low, with just 3.5% of the assemblage being redeposited earlier material. The assemblage was dominated by Oxford Ware (fabric OXY; 67.1% by weight), with one jar surviving to a full profile. OXAC was also common (22.9%). The rest of the assemblage was made up of small quantities of OXR (2.0%), OXBF (1.1%) and Stamford Ware (0.2%), along with two sherds (20g) of OXBK, single sherds of Thetford Ware (14g) and OXAG (17g), and two sherds (62g) of Rhenish Greyware. One of the latter, from context 1267, is a bodysherd from a so-called "Paffrath Ladle" (actually a specialist cooking vessel; Vince and Jenner 1991, 103). Another vessel of this type was noted at previous excavations at St. Aldates (Haldon 1977, fig. 21 no. 21), in a context dating to the late 12th early 13th century.

The rimsherd assemblage is dominated by jars (83.1% by EVE) as is typical of groups of this date, with the rest being bowls (3.4%), jugs (3.9%) and a lamp (1.1%), along with an unusually large proportion of crucibles (8.4%), many of which shows signs of having been used.

A total of 85 jar rimsherds were noted, dominated by OXY types (52 examples, EVE = 5.92), with most of the rest being OXAC types (25 examples, EVE = 1.73). Two of the OXY examples had thumbled, "piecrust" rims which are typical of the late 12th – early 13th century in Oxford (Mellor 1994, Fig. 18). The only other jar rims present were two in OXR (EVE = 0.13) and a single OXBF type (EVE = 0.04), with the rest being residual OXB examples. Five bowl rims were present, three in OXAC (EVE = 0.19), including one which survived to a full profile (Fig, SA4), and two in OXY (EVE = 0.14). Three jug/pitcher rims were noted, two being glazed OXY types (EVE = 0.32) and the other a probably residual Thetford Ware type (EVE = 0.06). Three feet from the bases of OXY tripod pitchers, a typical product of the industry at this time, were also noted. A single lamp rim was the only other type present, in OXY.

A total of five crucible rims were noted (eg. Figs SA7 – SA10), all in OXY (EVE = 0.63) other than a single Stamford Ware example (EVE = 0.18). Two bodysherds from crucibles also occurred. None showed any signs of having been heated to any great degree.

Non-rim sherds from a number of less common vessels were also noted, most notably a fragment of a curfew (fire-cover) in OXAC. Two handles from OXY jugs/pitchers were noted, including one with an inlaid plait in the thumb-groove, a typical late 12th – early 13th century type. Decorated sherds were generally scarce. A bodysherd of a glazed OXY jug also had an incised wavy line, with three sherds of OXAC from a single vessel having a wavy line and stabbed decoration. An OXAC jar had stabbed decoration on the rim, and two bodysherds in the same fabric had incised cordons. Three glazed OXY sherds had applied strip decoration, as did the OXAC curfew fragment.

Cross-fitting sherds were noted, with joining fragments of an OXY jar occurring in contexts 1124 and 1145, both layers in Area 1. The curfew fragment from 1035 joined another from an CP M2 context, 1024.

CP M2: 13th – 14th century. 823 sherds, 15415g, EVE = 8.90

This was the largest CP assemblage. Just two near-complete profiles were noted, a miniature jar and a tripod pitcher (Figs SA12 and SA13), indicating that nearly all the pottery is the product of secondary disposition. Over 57% of the pottery of this date by weight came from Area 4 (630 sherds, 8845g), with much of the rest (153 sherds, 5578g, 36.1%) coming from Area 1

Residuality is still low (2.0%), with OXY again the major ware, but with a reduced proportion (52.0%), and the data doubtless distorted by the presence of the near-complete OXY tripod pitcher, which weighs 1960g, and has an EVE of 1.00. This represents over 12% of all the pottery from the CP assemblage by weight, and a similar quantity by EVE. The newly introduced Brill Boarstall Wares, OXAW and OXAM, were well-represented, making up 15.5% and 17.9% respectively. The amount of OXAC present was greatly reduced (8.3%), with OXBF slightly more common (2.2%). Some of the OXAC assemblage is certainly residual, as a fragment of a curfew from context 1024, joins another from CP M1 context 1035. The only other non-residual pottery present was the sherd of Spanish Tin-glazed Ware, four sherds (55g) of Minety-type Ware (fabric OXBB), two sherds of OXAG (77g) and a single sherd (40g) of OXBK. The residual pottery included a sherd of Thetford Ware from a jug or storage jar with thumbled applied strips. This is illustrated, despite being residual, due to the rarity of such pottery in Oxford.

Jars are still the main vessel type, but with a reduced proportion (62.8%), with jugs much more common (30.6%), presumably due to the introduction of OXAW and OXAM but also, as noted, due to the near-complete OXY vessel, a few bowls (5.3%) and a single crucible (1.3%). Non-rimsherds were noted from two curfews (Figs SA16 and SA17), a candlestick, a bottle and a skillet. A single foot from an OXY tripod pitcher also occurred. One of the curfews is in OXY, and is an extremely unusual vessel type in this fabric (Mellor 1994, 64). A total of 57 jar rims were noted (EVE = 5.59), of which 42 were OXY types (EVE = 3.32). The rest of the jar rim assemblage comprised seven OXAC examples (EVE = 0.45), three OXAW (EVE = 1.25), one each in OXBF (EVE = 0.11) and OXBB (EVE = 0.05), with the other three being residual. Thirteen jug rims were noted. The majority were in OXY (six examples, EVE = 1.67), with four OXAM (EVE = 0.39) and one each in OXAG (EVE = 0.19), OXAW (EVE = 0.36) and F401, the Spanish Tin-glazed ware (EVE = 0.11). The OXY tripod pitcher is very typical of the tradition, although it has a pulled lip rather than a short tubular spout as the pouring mechanism.

Decoration was rare on the unglazed pottery, other than the OXAC curfew fragment noted above. Three fragments of OXBF, including a bowl rim which is very similar to a late 12th – mid 13th century example from Cheap Street, Newbury (Mephram 1997, fig. 65 no. 31) had incised wavy lines, and such decoration was also noted on a sherd of OXAC. Another sherd in the latter fabric had fingertip decoration on the shoulder. Applied decoration was also very rare other than on the glazed Oxford Ware jugs. Thumbled applied strips were noted on one of the OXBF sherds with incised wavy lines and the residual sherd of Thetford Ware.

CP M3: E-L 15th century. 24 sherds, 851g, EVE = 1.24

Very little pottery dates to this CP, suggesting very strongly that there was an hiatus in activity at the site during this period. Much of the pottery came from a two features (10006 and 10011) in Area 10 (13 sherds, 330g and two sherds weighing 426g respectively), with the rest of the material coming from a further four features, one each in Areas 1, 9, 10, and 11. The two sherds from 10011 are a complete small bowl in OXAM and a large fragment of the base a small jug in OXBX. The bowl is very similar to an example from The Hamel in Oxford and dated to the early-mid 16th century (Mellor 1994, fig. 53 no. 5), although similar examples dating to the late 14th century are also known from the city (ibid. no. 6). The jug is typical of the late medieval products of the industry (eg. ibid. fig. 62). These aside, the rest of the assemblage largely consisted of small sherds which are certainly the product of secondary deposition, and quite possibly residual.

Brill/Boarstall products are the most common types (OXAM 37.4%; OXBX 31.1%), mainly due to the two well-represented vessels discussed above, with the rest of the pottery being residual other than a single small sherd of “Tudor Green” Ware (fabric OXBN; weight = 3g). The complete bowl aside (EVE = 1.00), all the other rimsherds were residual jars and bowls in OXAC and OXY.

CP M4: Late 15th – mid 16th century. 45 sherds, 1760g, EVE = 3.16

As with the pottery from the previous CP, the assemblage is quite small, and the data is distorted by a few well-represented vessels. The vast majority of the pottery of this date is from just three features in Area 1, 1007 (27 sherds, 254g), 1014 (6 sherds, 93g) and 1069 (9 sherds, 1404g). The rest of the assemblage is small, single sherds from contexts 1391, 1395 and 4044.

The major ware type, somewhat unusually for Oxford, is imported Raeren Stoneware (fabric RAER; 56.3% by weight), mainly due to a collection of five well-represented mugs from context 1069 (eg. Figs. SA22, SA23, and SA24). One of the mugs had a large fragment of kiln waste adhering to the underside of the base, but was obviously still considered suitable for sale and use. Late Brill/Boarstall Ware was also made up a significant proportion of the assemblage (29.4%), mostly due to the near-complete drinking jug from context 1069. The only other pottery present was a small amount of OXAM (5.9%), at least some of which is likely to be residual, and a few sherds of Cistercian Ware (1.6%), which is in the form of cups/tygs. The rest of the pottery was residual.

The dump of drinking pottery from context 1069 means that the rim assemblage is dominated by mugs, cups and tygs (59.8%; EVE = 1.89). Jugs make up nearly a third of the assemblage (31.6%), but this is again due to the complete OXBX drinking jug (EVE = 1.00), with the only other types present being a rather unusual OXAM lid and a small fragment of a dripping dish in the same fabric. The single jar rim is residual. The drinking jug is largely undecorated except for a “bib of thin glaze on the front of the vessel. This is very typical of Brill/Boarstall vessels of this type from the late medieval period (Mellor 1994, 132)

CP PM1: Mid-late 16th century. 35 sherds, 1502g.

This assemblage is again rather small. It is dominated by utilitarian Glazed Red Earthenwares (fabric PMR; 58.2%), but this is due to a single large fragment of a bowl from context 1375. The rest of the assemblage is a typical mixture of early post-medieval pottery from Oxford, consisting of Frechen/Cologne Stoneware (7.0%), OXBX (4.4%), yellow-glazed Border Ware (BORDY; 3.5%) and Cistercian Ware (2.4%). The only other non-residual pottery type present was a small sherd of “Tudor Green” ware.

The range of vessel types is a typical mixture of tablewares and more utilitarian vessels, and the latter mainly drinking pottery in the form of cups, jugs and bottles. One of the fragments of Border Ware, from context 4102, joins a near-complete chamber-pot from context 4067, which dates to CP PM2 (see below).

CP PM2: Early-mid 17th century. 31 sherds, 1659g.

Just six contexts produced pottery of this date, and once again it is a small group of material dominated by a few well-represented vessels, *ie* a chamber-pot in BORDY, and some large fragments of FREC and PMR. The chamber-pot is a Holling Type 1 (Pearce 1988, figs 38-40), which are generally of mid-late 17th century date in London, where they are common (*ibid.* 34). Their presence undoubtedly skews the data, as BORDY is the main fabric type (43.8%) despite there being only one other sherd present, with FREC (25.0%) and PMR (20.8%) also being well-represented. The rest of the assemblage is made up of small quantities of green-glazed Border Ware, (2.6%), Tin-glazed Earthenware (fabric TGW; 0.8%) and Midland Blackware (fabric PMBL; 0.8%), along with a single sherd (13g) of Metropolitan-type Slipware (fabric METS). The rest of the material is residual

This again appears to be a purely domestic assemblage, made up entirely, the chamber-pot aside, of fragments of vessels associated with eating and drinking.

CP PM4: Late 17th – early 18th century. 7 sherds, 500g.

Pottery of this date occurred in just three contexts, with the bulk of it represented by a single large sherd (386g) of a PMR vessel with a late, manganese-flecked glaze, from context 1414. Only two other sherds of PMR were noted, but the fabric makes up 80.6% of the assemblage by weight, with the only other contemporary pottery present being a single small (3g) sherd of LONS.

CP PM5: 18th century. 13 sherds, 270g.

The assemblage from this CP is very small, with pottery of this date occurring in just two contexts. It is dominated by a large sherd from a large Montelupo Oil jar (246g) from context 4047, with the only other contemporary pottery present being ten small sherds (17g) from a DERBS mug and a small (6g) piece of Creamware (fabric CREA).

CP MOD: 19th century. 92 sherds, 1202g.

The bulk of the pottery from this CP is residual, with the only contemporary material present being 21 sherds (219g; 18.2%) of mass-produced refined whitewares (REFW) and a few fragments of contemporary stonewares (six sherds, 118g; 9.6%). Much of the residual material comprises Saxon and earlier medieval material, including a fragment from the body of a bottle in OXAM.

Overview and Discussion

The general range of pottery types is fairly typical of sites in Oxford, albeit with some *exotica* in the form of late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval imports. This is a pattern that has been noted in the past at other excavations in the St Aldates area of the city. The excavations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, centred around 79-87 St Aldates, produced an assemblage similar to this one (Haldon 1977). The mid-late Anglo-Saxon assemblage was dominated by OXB, with St Neots Ware (OXR) a relatively minor ware, and a number of mainly Saxo-Norman continental imported types, such as Andenne, North French and Rhenish/Flemish Grey Wares (ibid. table 1), also present. Here, pottery from France (Beauvais Ware) and the Low Countries/Germany (Flemish/Rhenish Greyware) is present. Such pottery is not common in Oxford, but similar types were also noted at excavations at nearby excavations in St Aldates (Haldon 1977, table 1) and Queen Street and All Saints Church (eg. Mellor 2003, table 6.7). In most cases, OXB was also the dominant mid-late Saxon pottery type. The sherds of Beauvais Ware do not re-fit, but appear to be mostly, if not entirely from the same vessel, a red-painted, fairly large jar or pitcher, a typical product of the tradition. The inner surface is somewhat degraded, which is typical of pottery that was used to store slightly acidic liquids (Perry 2011), so the vessel may have been used for transporting wine.

The single sherd of early/middle Anglo-Saxon hand-built pottery is a rare find in the city, although one of the very few relatively large assemblages from Oxford occurred at nearby 31-4 Church St (Mellor 1989, 198). Thetford Ware, represented here by two sherds from pitchers or storage jars, is also an uncommon occurrence in Oxford, although some sites have produced one or two sherds, such as Lincoln College (Blinkhorn 2002, 232). It is likely that these pots were arriving as containers for traded goods rather than as desirable goods in their own right.

Surprisingly, given the amount of well-documented late Saxon activity within the immediate vicinity of these excavations, stratified late Saxon pottery is very scarce, with just eight sherds noted, although it is possible that some of the groups which only contained OXB date to this time. As noted above, OXR is rare in this area of the town, with OXB seeming to have continued to be the dominant ware in the late Saxon period, possibly reflecting the ethnic identities of populations of differing backgrounds living in the city at that time (Blinkhorn 2013). Thus, some of the contexts which produced only OXB and are dated to CP MSAX, may be of late Saxon (LSAX) date.

The bulk of the Saxo-Norman (CP SN) material consists of OXB (55.4% of the CP assemblage by weight). It is possible that it could all be residual, and that there was considerable disturbance of late Saxon strata during CP SN, but many of the OXB sherds are large and fresh, suggesting that this was not the case. Another possibility is

that OXB may have carried on in use for a little longer than its traditional dating suggests, or, alternatively, that some of the OXAC from the site is earlier than is usual for sites in Oxford, and that contexts containing just OXB and OXAC are late Saxon rather than Saxo-Norman. While OXAC is not normally found in quantity in Oxford before the 11th century, earlier groups are known; for example, a vessel was found in a secure early 10th century context at Trill Mill (Mellor 1994, 51).

The Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery is much more typical of other sites of the period in the town, being dominated first by OXAC, then OXY, and finally with Brill/Boarstall Wares (OXAW, OXAM and OXBX) common from the 13th century onwards. The largest assemblages, as is often the case in Oxford, date to the late 11th – 14th century, with deposition dropping off quite sharply after that time. The late medieval and post-medieval assemblages mostly comprise small groups of mainly residual material with a few large fragments of well-represented contemporary pottery.

Much of the earlier medieval material is the product of secondary deposition, as is often the case, with the pottery presumably having been first deposited in domestic middens or the like before being utilized as back-fill for earth-cut features such as pits, etc. The CP M1 material is largely typical of domestic assemblages of the period in the city, other than the fact that there are a relatively large number of crucible fragments present, with such vessels making up 8.4% of the rim assemblage (five examples) and bodysherds from another two noted, suggesting that metalworking or the like was taking place at the site. However, the crucible assemblage all appears to have not been subjected to intense heat for prolonged periods. One or two of them show very slight vitrification on the outer surface, and others appear to have oxidized, but none of them had any visible residues on either surface, and either they were not used, or they were used in relatively low temperature environments, probably below 900 degrees Centigrade, the temperature at which earthenware begins to vitrify (Rice 1987, 5). All the crucible fragments except one came from Area 1, with the other occurring in Area 4. It is perhaps significant that the lamp rim also came from this area of the site. Recent work (Blinkhorn et al 2017) has suggested that lamps were often used as illumination in relation to craft-work in some areas of the country, particularly to the west of Oxford. Relatively large groups of crucible fragments are not common from Oxford sites of this date. For example, none were noted from amongst the large assemblage of late Saxon and Saxo-Norman pottery from Lincoln College (Blinkhorn 2002). Industrial activity dating to the late 11th – mid 12th century was noted at 79-80 St Aldates (Durham 1977, 100), but crucibles were not amongst the finds from there (Haldon 1977, 132), although a number were noted at 31-4 Church St, probably of late 11th – 12th century date (Mellor 1989, 201; *ibid.* fig. 45 no. 4). One or two fragments of crucibles were also noted in the Saxo-Norman levels at All Saints Church (Mellor 2003, 338).

The CP M2 (13th – 14th century) assemblage is large and entirely typical of the period in Oxford, and appears to be of a domestic nature, with vessels associated with eating, drinking, cooking and lighting noted. A single crucible rim was noted, but it is of Stamford type, and thus very likely to be residual, and presumably contemporary with those noted in the previous phase. One rarity is a fragment of a rimsherd in Spanish tin-glazed ware. Such pottery is a very rare find in Oxford and, assuming it is not intrusive, it is likely to be a fragment of early Malagan or Valencian Lustreware of

13th – 14th century date (Gutierrez, 1997). Such pottery has become reasonably well-recognised in England in the past couple of decades, and while it occurs at high-status “magnate” residences, it is also found at urban sites away from the coast (ibid. fig. 3). Its presence here may be an indication that people of greater than normal wealth and/or status lived at the site in the 14th century or thereabouts (ibid. 79), so the site may have been the residence of a merchant at this time. Given that such pottery often had Muslim or, later, Christian themes or motifs (ibid. 73-4), it seems unlikely to have been used by members of the Jewish community in Oxford, which corresponds with the sites being known to be owned by Christians in the 14th century.

Pottery deposition at the site drops off very rapidly after this time. The pottery assemblages dating to the early-late 15th century and late 15th – mid 16th century (CP M3 and M4) weighed just c 2.5kg in total, much of which was residual, with most of the rest made up of a handful of well-represented vessels. The CP M4 assemblage is made up almost entirely of drinking vessels. Given the dearth of pottery of this date, it may be that the site was undergoing a period of reorganization and consolidation, and that most of the pottery was deposited by labourers, although the presence of an inn cannot be discounted. Other sites of the late medieval period have shown a correlation between industrial activity and large quantities of drinking pottery (eg Shaw 1996). Previous excavations in St Aldates have shown a similar picture, with relatively little 15th – 16th century pottery occurring (Haldon 1977, 135 and 137).

The entire post-medieval and modern assemblages totalled around 6kg of pottery, with the CP assemblages showing a similar pattern to those of the late medieval period, being groups of small and mostly residual sherds along with a few large fragments of individual vessels, such as the near-complete BORDY chamber-pot from CP PM2. Perhaps the most notable was the large sherd from an 18th-century context of a Montelupo Oil-jar. Such pots, used for transporting Italian olive oil, were extremely large, with a capacity of around 20 gallons not unusual, and are known from many 18th – 19th century sites in Britain, Europe and North America, and once empty, were often used as shop signs or garden ornaments (Ashdown 1972). The oil-jar aside, the post-medieval material appears entirely of a domestic nature.

Overall, the assemblage has many parallels with material from previous excavations in the St Aldates area of Oxford, showing that, in the Saxo-Norman and earlier medieval periods in particular, the area was a thriving centre, with the presence of imported pottery and crucibles, particularly in the late 11th – 12th century showing that there industrial activity and trade, and suggesting that the area was an area of economic importance in the city. By the 13th – 14th century, the pottery assemblages have a much more domestic nature with a sharp drop-off in pottery deposition from the 15th century onwards.

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