

PREHISTORIC POTTERY FROM PERRY OAKS

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Introduction

The prehistoric pottery assemblage comprises a total of 9332 sherds (74,749 g). The assemblage consisted of material recovered from four sites: Perry Oaks evaluation (POK 96), Western Perimeter Road (WPR 98), Northern Taxi Way (GAI 99), and Grass Area 21 (GAA 00), the majority recovered from WPR 98 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Prehistoric pottery totals by site

SITE CODE AND NAME	NO. SHERDS	WEIGHT
POK 96 Perry Oaks evaluation	961	4188 g
WPR 98 Western Perimeter Road	7104	54,314 g
GAI 99 Northern Taxi Way	647	10,234 g
GAA 00 Grass Area 21	160	910 g
TOTAL	8872	69,646 g

In date range the material spans the early Neolithic to the late Iron Age. There are significant assemblages of middle Bronze Age, late Bronze Age and middle Iron Age date; ceramic evidence prior to the middle Bronze Age is sporadic. For the later prehistoric period at least, the ceramic sequence for the region is relatively well understood, and the material from Perry Oaks finds ready parallels amongst other site assemblages from the west London area and the surrounding region, both published and unpublished. The late Neolithic ceramics of the London area have recently been reviewed (Cotton 2004), while Barrett's work on the Deverel Rimbury and post-Deverel Rimbury ceramic traditions of the middle Bronze Age to early Iron Age has not yet been superseded (1976; 1980).

There are, however, parts of the ceramic sequence for which evidence is as yet scarce in the area, for example the early Neolithic period and the early Bronze Age; in addition, the sequence of middle to late Iron Age is still somewhat obscure. For the early Neolithic and the Iron Age, the assemblage from Perry Oaks has the potential to contribute to an overall understanding of the ceramic sequence for the region, although the lacuna of the early Bronze Age cannot be adequately filled here.

Dating

Viewed in isolation, the pottery assemblage itself has limitations for dating purposes, due in large part to the longevity of both flint-tempered and sandy ceramic traditions throughout much of the prehistoric period, and the relative scarcity at Perry Oaks of clearly diagnostic material. It can be difficult, for example, to distinguish examples of middle Bronze Age Deverel Rimbury sherds from later, post-Deverel Rimbury flint-tempered wares, and the distinction between both these types and early/middle Neolithic ceramics remains problematic.

In an attempt to refine the ceramic sequence, therefore, and to provide independent dating, samples were submitted for a series of radiocarbon dates, selected initially from those features which were perceived to contain well stratified ceramic groups or sequences. This has proved only partially successful, since the best stratified groups did not produce sufficient samples suitable for dating. In the event 11 dates were obtained for contexts containing stratified pottery groups (Table 2). The radiocarbon dates obtained, however, do not consistently accord with the pottery dating, and this issue is explored elsewhere.

Table 2: Radiocarbon dating from stratified contexts dated by pottery

Context/Feature	Context sampled	Sample	Description	C14 date	Associated pottery
pit 216009	216011	9377	cereal grain	AD 1160 – 1400	Grooved Ware
waterhole 135071	135040	14903	wood from socketed axe	1438 – 1132 BC	Deverel Rimbury FL2; FL3
waterhole 135071	135040	10030		1530 – 1310 BC	Deverel Rimbury FL2; FL3
waterhole 135071	135040	10035		1420 – 1120 BC	Deverel Rimbury FL2; FL3
waterhole 135071	135040	9374	waterlogged seeds	1260 – 910 BC	Deverel Rimbury
pit 178108	178123	10032		1450 – 1210 BC	Deverel Rimbury FL2
waterhole 141024	121047	9371	wood	1380 – 930 BC	Post-Dev Rim
pit 136194	136193	9375	waterlogged seeds	1630 – 1320 BC	Post-Dev Rim (cups + bowl)
waterhole 156031	156020	9376	waterlogged seeds	1420 – 1100 BC	Post-Dev Rim
pit 125233	125228	9373	charcoal	850 – 410 BC	Post-Dev Rim
pit 129112	129113	9367	animal bone	170 BC – AD 190	LIA / ERB

Methods

Material was subjected to detailed fabric and form analysis, with a selection of other variables also being recorded (eg surface treatment, decoration, evidence of use), following nationally recommended guidelines for the recording of prehistoric pottery (PCRG 1997). Fabrics were defined and described using a X20 microscope. All data have been entered onto the Framework Access database.

The analysis is designed to enable comment on the assemblage at several levels. Fabric analysis can highlight the level of pottery production and the sources of supply, while analysis of form can inform on aspects of vessel function (actual or symbolic), leading to comment on consumption and foodways. The picture throughout the prehistoric period is one of localised production; with one notable exception, regional wares do not appear until the late Iron Age. In terms of vessel form, evidence is more scanty, but sufficient data have been recorded to allow the characterisation of assemblages within several ceramic traditions throughout the overall prehistoric sequence. The possibility that vessel form cannot be simply linked to vessel function must be considered, and there is potential evidence here for the symbolic use of certain vessel forms.

In addition, recording within the Framework database enables a detailed consideration of the contextual evidence and spatial distribution, through which the mechanisms whereby pottery was incorporated within the various elements of the humanly-modified landscape can be investigated. This might include, for example, the examination of evidence for differential deposition, placed deposits and the possible non-domestic use of vessels, alongside more standard processes of dispersal of domestic refuse.

Condition

Condition of sherds was assessed on the basis of the degree of abrasion of edges and surfaces, and recorded as good (36 sherds; 1%), moderate (7550 sherds; 85%), poor (875 sherds; 10%) or very poor (371 sherds; 4%). Other recorded conditions are related to pre- and post-depositional processes: burnt residue (providing information on food and type of vessel), burning (either pre- or post-deposition), sooting and other (eg gravel concretions).

Context

The prehistoric pottery derived from a total of 858 contexts, of which 56 contexts contained more than 30 sherds (two contexts, both from GAI99, each comprise sherds of a single middle Bronze Age vessel, and 12 other contexts from WPR98 contained complete or near complete vessels of various dates); 522 contexts produced less than five sherds. As might be expected from these figures, dating of contexts on the basis of pottery has proved difficult. A further 30 contexts have between 20 and 30 sherds, 93 with between 10 and 20 sherds, 157 between 5 and 10 sherds.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the earlier prehistoric material has a markedly lower mean sherd weight than the later material (see Table 3).

Pottery by chronological period

A total of 32 fabric types were identified, which have been grouped for the purposes of discussion into eight chronological periods; quantified data for all fabric types are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pottery fabric totals by chronological period

<i>Date</i>	<i>Fabric Type</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>ASW (g)</i>
EARLY NEOLITHIC	FL4	769	2216	
	FL8	1	15	
	QU13	17	119	
	subtotal EN	787	2350	3.0
LATE NEOLITHIC	GR2	62	184	3.0
EARLY BRONZE AGE	GR1	32	75	2.3

<i>Date</i>	<i>Fabric Type</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>ASW (g)</i>
MIDDLE BRONZE AGE	FL2	1150	8918	
	FL3	291	864	
	FL10	142	6499	
	subtotal MBA	1583	16,281	10.3
L BRONZE AGE / E IRON AGE	FL1	1022	6066	
	FL5	260	3153	
	FL9	159	898	
	FL11	31	368	
	FL12	62	264	
	FL13	1057	13,308	
	QU8	13	256	
	QU12	1	7	
	QU15	1	10	
	subtotal LBA	2606	24,330	9.3
MIDDLE IRON AGE	FL6	12	94	
	QU1	1653	9965	
	QU2	677	5806	
	QU3	46	239	
	QU4	6	19	
	QU5	192	1134	
	QU7	340	4082	
	QU9	360	457	
	subtotal MIA	3286	21,796	6.6
LATE IRON AGE	QU6	123	1007	
	QU10	6	67	
	QU11	42	508	
	QU14	23	440	
	QU16	3	26	
	SH1	165	1508	
	FL7	3	45	
	GR3	598	6017	
	GR4	13	115	
	subtotal LIA	976	9733	10.0
	TOTAL			

Early Neolithic

A total of 787 sherds (2350g) was identified as early Neolithic, but this may be an underestimate due to the difficulty of distinguishing plain body sherds from middle and late Bronze Age flint-tempered wares, and some residual material may therefore have been overlooked. Indeed, approximately 15% of this group (by number of sherds) was identified subsequent to the initial fabric analysis, when a re-examination was made of all pottery recovered from the cursus, and from selected contexts (mainly tree throws) associated with Neolithic flintwork. This led to the redating of one specific fabric type hitherto regarded as late Bronze Age, and subsequently assimilated within the predominant early Neolithic fabric. It is worth emphasising this uncertainty here, since it is possible that other pottery of this date from the area may

have been overlooked in the past, in the absence of clearly diagnostic material, for similar reasons.

Three fabrics were identified, two flint-tempered (FL4 and FL8) and one sandy (QU13). Flint-tempered fabric FL8 also contains a possible gabbroic inclusion. Otherwise there is nothing to suggest anything other than local manufacture for the early Neolithic assemblage, which is a pattern well documented for other earlier Neolithic assemblages in the Thames Valley, such as Staines (Robertson-Mackay 1987, 67) and Runnymede Bridge (Kinnes 1991, 158)

The assemblage includes 37 rim sherds, which derive from a maximum of 21 vessels (a maximum of 12 from tree throw 156191, and three from ditch 961508). Using the rim typology devised for the assemblage from the Staines causewayed enclosure (Robertson-Mackay 1987, fig. 37), five different rim forms were identified:

1. externally thickened (6 examples, eg **ILLS. 3, 7, 9, 10**)
2. expanded (5 examples, eg **ILLS. 1, 4, 11**)
3. rolled over (2 examples, eg **ILL. 2**)
4. angular (1 example, **ILL. 8**)
5. T-sectioned (5 examples, eg **ILL. 6**)

Most of these are too small to ascertain overall vessel profile, or even rim orientation, and it is not therefore possible to place the vessels in any classificatory scheme such as Cleal's (1992). However, most if not all appear to derive from open or neutral forms, and at least one vessel is carinated (**ILL. 8**). One vessel is decorated, with impressed dots (**ILL. 10**), and three have pre-firing perforations just below the rim, which may also be considered as decorative (**ILLS. 5 and 11**).

Distribution

A large proportion of this group derived from a single context (tree throw 156191: 541 sherds; 1444g), with a smaller group from a second context (residual in Bronze Age field system ditch 961508: 80 sherds; 301g). In general the condition of this material is poor; sherds are small and moderately to heavily abraded. However the fabrics (in particularly the flint-tempered fabrics) tend to be extremely friable, and a high degree of fragmentation does not necessarily reflect a commensurate level of post-deposition movement; the main group (in tree throw 156191) seems to have been deposited as a single event, while the group within ditch 961508, while obviously residual, is likely to have been redeposited from a disturbed deposit nearby. The original deposition of the two groups could have taken place on occasions which were widely separated chronologically, although the homogeneity of the fabrics between the groups, and the comparability of the rim forms, suggests that they are stylistically very similar.

The overall distribution of early Neolithic pottery (**Figs. 1 and 2**) extends across most of the site, including occurrences at Northern Taxiway (five sherds from ditch 218042), although the complete absence of sherds west of the cursus is noticeable. Indeed, with the exception of two sherds from the western ditch, no sherds were identified beyond the eastern cursus ditch. A loose clustering of findspots can be discerned in the eastern part of POK96, where pottery was found in the fills of the eastern cursus ditch (nearly all of the 31 sherds from the cursus are concentrated in

this area) and within the fills of the Bronze Age field system (including the large group from ditch 961508). The identification of early Neolithic pottery within the cursus ditches does of course have considerable implications for their dating; most of the sherds came from secondary fills, but two sherds were recovered from a primary fill (SG 961501).

Other sherds came from scattered tree throws (including the largest group from 156191, on the southern edge of Bed A), pits and other features. Tree throw 156191 is the only one of these features where an *in situ* deposit can be postulated, perhaps resulting from deliberate middening. Other sherd occurrences are sporadic and are more likely to be residual.

Discussion

Early Neolithic pottery is scarce within the West London area, and parallels for the fabrics and forms found within the assemblage from Perry Oaks can be more readily found within other assemblages from a wider area within the Thames Valley, such as Staines and Runnymede Bridge (Robertson-Mackay 1987; Kinnes 1991). However, the lack of decoration within the Perry Oaks assemblage can be contrasted with these sites. In this respect the assemblage is closer to those from Cippenham, Slough, Manor Farm, Horton and Charvil, east Berkshire (Raymond 2003a, 2003b; Lovell and Mephram forthcoming). This might be considered anomalous within an area which falls within Whittle's decorated style zone (1977), but the legitimacy of such stylistic categorisation has been more recently questioned (eg Cleal 1992). The relative lack of decoration within the Perry Oaks and Cippenham assemblages may be a chronological indicator, suggesting that these assemblages fall earlier within the early Neolithic than Staines or Runnymede. It is, however, equally possible that it reflects a conscious choice on the part of those using (and depositing) these vessels, in order to distinguish the activities involved on these sites (which may well have been sporadic and relatively isolated) from those which took place at, for example, causewayed enclosures such as Staines, where a larger scale and more extended period of activity is indicated. The structured deposition of assemblages is well known, for example, in causewayed enclosure ditches, but there is no definitive evidence for such ritualised deposition here, although the largest group could be seen as deliberate middening within a tree throw.

Whether the Perry Oaks assemblage can be regarded as purely domestic in origin is debatable, not least on the grounds that the boundaries between the ritual and the everyday are unlikely to be clear-cut in this context. The two largest groups (indeed, the whole assemblage) are too fragmentary to reconstruct the full range of vessel forms (or even their approximate size), so any attempt to postulate the remains of 'feasting sets' (cf Cleal 1990; Woodward 1998-9) is rendered void here.

Late Neolithic

Pottery of late Neolithic date comprises a small group of 62 sherds (184g), all of which has been identified as Grooved Ware, with varying degrees of confidence. Identification has been made primarily on the basis of characteristic decoration and, where this is absent, on the similarity of fabric type. In all cases fabric type is grog-tempered, and is so homogeneous throughout that a single fabric type has taken to encompass all (GR2).

The majority of sherds came from a single feature at GAI99 (pit 216009/216118; respective secondary fills 216011 and 216120; 41 sherds: 134g); other sherds derived in small quantities from six stratified contexts at WPR98, one from GAA00, and two from POK96. Condition varies from moderate to poor; sherds from 216011 were noticeably more abraded than those from 216120, which almost certainly derived from the same vessel. Sherds from the smaller groups are all small and abraded.

The sherds from the pit at GAI99 may represent a single vessel; diagnostic sherds include part of the rim with horizontal grooved decoration below (**ILL. 12**). This appears to be a relatively thin-walled, bucket-shaped vessel, with a simple rounded rim. Form and decoration are sufficient to assign this vessel to the Durrington Walls sub-style. A further 10 sherds from other contexts with grooved decoration (pits 127022, 141228, 170007; ditches 146205 and 961747) are also probably of the same sub-style, although too small to make a definitive identification. The remaining sherds are plain and undiagnostic.

Discussion

This small group is significant, given the general paucity of Grooved Ware in the west London area, although a substantial assemblage (more than 500 sherds, representing approximately 12 vessels in Durrington Walls sub-style) has been recovered in Harmondsworth (Field and Cotton 1987), and more recent fieldwork in Harmondsworth has added to this with a further four vessels in the same sub-style from Prospect Park (Laidlaw and Mephram 1996), and a substantial assemblage from Holloway Lane (c.9.5 kg, unpublished data, MoLAS site code HL80; cf Merriman 1990, 24-5). At the latter site one, and possibly two sherds of Peterborough Ware were found in association with the Grooved Ware, but at Perry Oaks Peterborough Ware is notable by its absence, despite its recovery in some quantity during previous work at Heathrow (Grimes 1961).

Grooved Ware has a strong association with henge monuments; on other sites sherds frequently occur in isolated pits. The sherds within pit 216009/216118 could be regarded as such a deposit, within an isolated shallow feature; alternatively, the fair to heavy abrasion on the sherds could be indicative of some post-depositional movement, the fragmented vessel(s) perhaps entering the pit as a result of erosion into the pit of the surrounding topsoil. Other sherds came from features widely dispersed across all of the excavated areas, with no apparent clustering, and in these features can be considered as residual finds.

A radiocarbon sample from pit 216009 produced a completely anomalous date in the medieval period (sample 9377).

Early Bronze Age

Early Bronze Age pottery has proved relatively elusive at Perry Oaks – only 32 sherds (75g) have been tentatively assigned to this period, in nearly every case on the grounds of fabric alone. As for the late Neolithic, all sherds are grog-tempered, and all have been assigned to a single fabric type (GR1). While the fabric itself is visually very similar to the Grooved Ware fabric GR2, sherds in GR1 are invariably oxidised, at least externally, a trait which is more characteristic of early Bronze Age ceramic traditions. There is only one diagnostic sherd amongst this group – a comb-impressed

body sherd probably from a Beaker vessel. The remaining sherds are all plain body sherds, and could derive either from Beaker vessels or Collared Urns.

Sherds came from 15 separate contexts (ten from WPR 98, two from GAI 99, three from POK 96). Condition overall is poor; sherds are very small and abraded (mean sherd weight 2.3g); no context produced more than 22g of pottery. The diagnostic Beaker sherd came from a primary ditch fill (ditch recut 105009). The overall distribution is quite dispersed across the excavated areas, although some loose clustering can be observed on the southern edge of POK 96 (ditches 961009 and 962366; pit 961024), and to the north in Bed B (secondary fill of eastern cursus ditch; ditch recut 105009; ditch 107029, 129006). In all these contexts, with the possible exception of ditch recut 105009, sherds can be regarded as residual finds.

Discussion

Little can be made of such a small assemblage, which would appear to be largely if not totally residual, but the dearth of data from this period is consistent with the wider pattern in west London, where early Bronze Age ceramics are noticeably absent, although a miniature Collared Urn was recovered from a funerary context at Imperial College Sports Ground, Harlington (Wessex Archaeology 2000).

Middle Bronze Age

A fairly substantial middle Bronze Age assemblage was recovered (1583 sherds; 16,281g), comprising typical Deverel Rimbury coarsewares (bucket-shaped vessels) with a smaller proportion of finewares (Globular Urns). The other major Deverel Rimbury coarseware form, the Barrel Urn, does not appear to be represented here, which would fit the general pattern in the lower Thames valley. This appears to be a purely domestic assemblage, with no evidence here for use in a funerary context.

Fabrics are exclusively flint-tempered, and three types were identified (FL2, FL3 and FL10), with the coarser variants (FL2, FL10) used for the bucket-shaped forms and the finer variant (FL3) for the Globular Urns. The latter are also distinguished by an overall higher investment of labour in temper preparation, vessel forming and surface treatment – these are thinner-walled vessels in a better sorted fabric, with a smoothed or burnished surface finish. Two Globular Urns have lug handles (one illustrated: **ILL. 16**). The coarsewares are invariably thick-walled vessels with rounded or flattened rims (eg. **ILL. 14**), and with surfaces which are roughly smoothed or wiped; they frequently display the ‘gritty bottoms’ so often associated with these vessels and which presumably result from the drying of these vessels on surfaces covered with crushed, calcined flint. Both coarsewares and finewares are decorated, the former with finger- (or fingernail-) impressed rims and/or cordons, applied around the shoulder and occasionally in ‘horseshoe’ arcs below the rim (eg **ILL. 13**). Only two Globular Urns are decorated, one with tooled decoration and one incised (**ILL. 15**).

Distribution

Middle Bronze Age pottery was recovered from a wide variety of feature types, but mostly from ditches, postholes, pits and wells/waterholes. When examined in detail, however, the distribution of the bucket-shaped vessels and Globular Urns shows some evidence of differential deposition in and around the settlement(s) and into the surrounding field system (**Fig. 3**), although this evidence is less obvious than has been observed elsewhere. Patterning in middle Bronze Age pottery (and other artefact)

distributions is well documented on other settlement sites in southern England, including the apparent deliberate deposition of complete or near complete Globular Urns, for example at Thorny Down, Wiltshire (Ellison 1987), which Woodward now prefers to see as symbolic ‘sealing deposits’ made as the settlement was abandoned (Woodward 1998-99).

Table 4 gives the mean sherd weight of the two pottery types by feature type for the whole of the excavated areas (note that for this period sherds can be assigned to vessel type on the basis of fabric as well as on diagnostic form).

*Table 4: MBA vessel types by feature type (no. sherds / weight in grammes)
Mean sherd size is given in italics*

Vessel Type	Feature date	Ditch/Gully	Pit	Posthole	Well/ Water-hole	Other features	TOTAL
Globular Urn	MBA features	142/315 <i>2.2g</i>	38/184 <i>4.8g</i>	1/3 <i>3g</i>	2/12 <i>6.0g</i>	-	183/514 <i>2.8g</i>
	Later features	48/95 <i>2.0g</i>	22/275 <i>12.5g</i>	12/15 <i>1.3g</i>	-	1/1 <i>1.0g</i>	83/186 <i>2.2g</i>
Bucket Urn	MBA features	359/2374 <i>6.6g</i>	136/1429 <i>10.5g</i>	276/8074 <i>29.3g</i>	38/540 <i>14.2g</i>	-	809/12,417 <i>15.3g</i>
	Later features	279/1188 <i>4.3g</i>	77/991 <i>12.9g</i>	71/187 <i>2.6g</i>	17/293 <i>17.2g</i>	19/215 <i>11.3g</i>	463/2874 <i>6.2g</i>
	TOTAL	828/3972	273/2679	360/8279	57/845	20/216	1538/15991

In terms of overall quantities, Globular Urns are found most commonly in ditches (although this is biased by 53 sherds of a single vessel from ditch 218038 at Northern Taxiway), with a smaller quantity in pits and very little in postholes and wells/waterholes; this pattern holds for both features of middle Bronze Age date and for later contexts. Bucket-shaped vessels follow a similar pattern, with most sherds deriving from ditches, but sherds from wells and waterholes are relatively more common than those of Globular Urns. The total from middle Bronze Age postholes is biased by sherds of at least two bucket-shaped vessels (one found *in situ*) respectively within two such features (210026, 221005) at Northern Taxiway. The vessel in 210026 appeared to have been deliberately placed in an upright position within the posthole – only the lower part of the vessel survived through subsequent truncation. Sherds in nearby posthole 221005 are less easily recognised as belonging to a single vessel, but could represent a similar deposit.

Mean sherd size indicates that the Globular Urns deposited in middle Bronze Age ditches are more fragmentary and therefore more likely to represent secondary refuse, while sherds from pits and wells/waterholes of the same date could represent primary refuse, although this evidence is tenuous. For bucket-shaped vessels, sherds from postholes have the largest mean sherd size, suggesting primary refuse (although again the bias of the posthole from GAI99 should be noted), and sherds from pits and wells/waterholes might also be counted in this category, while sherds from other features are on average less than half the size, suggesting secondary refuse. In other words, both types (although more commonly coarsewares) are deposited as primary refuse in settlement features at POK96, and both are incorporated in the ditches of the surrounding field system as secondary refuse (**Figs 3 and 6**). Within the settlement at

GAI99 the evidence for differential deposition of the two types is clearer, with bucket-shaped vessels confined to pits and postholes, and Globular Urns found almost exclusively in ditches (**Fig. 4**).

Looking at the overall distribution of middle Bronze Age pottery across the site, some obvious concentrations can be observed, notably at GAI99 within the identified settlement area (occurring in both structural elements – pits and postholes – and surrounding ditches), and within POK96, in an area of presumed settlement (in ditches and pits). A looser cluster surrounds the unexcavated Two Rivers transect within WPR98 (within ditches, pits and wells/waterholes), and this is less easily interpreted, although the pits and wells/waterholes could be seen as marginal features around another, heavily truncated, area of settlement. A smaller cluster is visible to the south-east at GAA00, and there are scattered features containing middle Bronze Age pottery across the eastern parts of WPR98. The three main clusters (GAI99, POK96 and Two Rivers) are discernible not just in the crude terms of the density of features containing middle Bronze Age pottery, but also in terms of overall quantities of pottery (all include contexts producing more than 60 sherds, and these contexts are restricted to these three areas: **Fig. 5**). In addition, these are apparently the only areas in which Globular Urns were deposited, although the coarsewares had a wider distribution.

Discussion

The range of fabrics and forms is typical of Deverel Rimbury assemblages of the middle and lower Thames, and there are numerous parallels in the west London area and beyond. In the Heathrow area, for example, assemblages have been recovered from Imperial College Sports Ground, Harlington and Prospect Park, Harmondsworth (Wessex Archaeology 2000; Laidlaw and Mephram 1996), although these assemblages are largely funerary, relating to cremation cemeteries, as are others within the west London area (Gardner 1924; Barrett 1973). There is nothing to suggest that the Perry Oaks assemblage has anything other than a domestic origin, although its deposition reveals more complex patterning than might be expected from standard domestic discard (see below). Domestic assemblages in the area are less common, but have been identified, for example, at Staines, Sipson and Osterley (Barrett 1984; Cotton *et al.* 1986; Cotton 1981). Globular Urns are less common in these domestic assemblages than in those from cemeteries (although they are present at Sipson: Cotton *et al.* 1986. fig. 29), and the small group from Perry Oaks is therefore significant. The apparent paucity of settlement assemblages in the area may be due more to the ephemeral nature of such settlements than any real absence; at Perry Oaks, for example, the evidence indicates that any settlement traces in the main excavated area (WPR98) have been heavily truncated, leaving only the deeper features such as the pits.

Radiocarbon samples were taken from two features dated by pottery to the middle Bronze Age (Table 2: waterhole 135071, pit 178108). The resulting dates range from early 16th to late 12th century BC, and therefore overlap with the radiocarbon date of c.1140 BC from Wall Garden Farm, Sipson (*WLG assessment, sub-section 4.2.4.1*), but their wide range does not help to refine the dating for this part of the Perry Oaks assemblage within the middle Bronze Age.

Late Bronze Age

Late Bronze Age ceramic traditions mark a continuation of those of the middle Bronze Age, developing further into the early Iron Age. This broad period is characterised in the middle and lower Thames valley by a ceramic sequence of plainware assemblages gradually superseded by decorated wares, and currently subsumed under the unwieldy label of ‘post-Deverel Rimbury’ (Barrett 1980). The assemblage defined here as post-Deverel Rimbury appears to have an emphasis on the early part of the period, within the late Bronze Age, with an apparent hiatus or at least a decline in the ceramic sequence in the early Iron Age, although the question of continuity or discontinuity from the preceding middle Bronze Age period is more ambiguous.

Fabrics

Nine fabric types have been defined, six flint-tempered (FL1, FL5, FL9, FL11, FL12, FL13) and three sandy (QU8, QU12, QU15). Within the flint-tempered/flint-gritted group there is a wide range of variation in coarseness, and a definite distinction between ‘finewares’ (FL5, FL11, FL12) and ‘coarsewares’ (FL1, FL9, FL13) can be discerned, although FL13 is used for both coarse- and finewares. All sandy wares can be defined here as finewares. Finewares are defined here on the basis of a combination of fabric type (FL5 has finer, better sorted inclusions), surface treatment (eg smoothing, burnishing, coating with surface slip or slurry to disguise inclusions) and the presence of decoration (which is rare). The range of inclusion types would be consistent with a local source of raw materials, although some variation in the presence and frequency of naturally occurring inclusions such as iron oxides suggests that different clay sources were exploited within this local area. It should be noted that in some cases the distinction between fabric FL1 and the middle Bronze Age fabric FL2 is not always clearcut.

Vessel Forms

A range of vessel forms can be identified, including jars, bowls and cups; both coarseware and fineware forms are represented, covering all of Barrett’s five vessel classes (1980, 302-3). The correlation of vessel form to fabric type is given in Table 5.

JARS

1. Jar (unspecified form; **ILL. 19**)
2. **[sbj]**Bucket-shaped jar (Barrett’s Class I; **ILL. 27**)
3. **[hrj]**Hooked rim jar (Class I)
4. **[shj]**Short-necked, shouldered jar of medium to large size; occasionally decorated with finger impressions on rims and/or shoulders (Class I/II: **ILLS. 20, 28, 31-3, 38**)
5. **[lnj]**Long-necked, shouldered jar of medium to large size; occasionally decorated with finger impressions on rims and/or shoulders (Class I/II)

BOWLS

1. Bowl (unspecified form)
2. **[flb]**Flared bowl (Class III)
3. **[fbu]**Fineware bowl, profile uncertain (Class IV; **ILL. 17**)
4. **[nbl]**Rounded fineware bowl (Class IV; **ILL. 29, 30**)
5. **[car/fbc]**Carinated fineware bowl, short-necked (Class IV: **ILL. 18, 25, 26, 35**)
6. **[fbr]**Shouldered fineware bowl, short-necked (Class IV: **ILLS. 22-4**)
7. **[fbl]**Long-necked fineware bowl (Class IV: **ILL. 34**)

CUPS

1. Carinated cup (Class V: **ILLS. 36, 37**)

Table 5: Late Bronze Age vessel forms by fabric (based on numbers of rim sherds)

Vessel type	FL1	FL5	FL9	FL12	FL13	QU8	QU15
JARS							
jar (unspecified form)	2				1	2	
bucket-shaped jar			1				
hooked rim jar	2						
short-necked jar, profile uncertain	6	3	2		2		
short-necked, shouldered jar	2	1			6		
long-necked, shouldered jar	1				2		
BOWLS							
bowl (unspecified form)	3						1
flared bowl (coarseware)			1				
fineware bowl, profile uncertain		5		1	2		
rounded fineware bowl nbl		2					
carinated fineware bowl, short neck		5			4		
shouldered fineware bowl, short neck		5			3		
long-necked fineware bowl		1					
CUPS							
carinated cup		2					
TOTAL	16	24	4	1	20	2	1

There are few reconstructable jar profiles but forms are likely to have been mainly bipartite. One complete profile came from the base of a pit (**ILL. 38**); this is a large but relatively thin-walled, bipartite jar with a plain rim, shallow finger impressions on the exterior, possibly the remnants of coil-pinch thumbing, and an external burnt residue around the upper part of the vessel, particularly around the rim and neck. Less common are jars of similar form but with longer necks (3 examples), and jars with inturned or ‘hooked’ rims (2 examples); again, these are likely to have been bipartite. There is one example of a medium-sized, bucket-shaped vessel (**ILL. 27**), although there is a possibility that this might be a residual middle Bronze Age form. These jars do not invariably occur in ‘coarseware’ fabrics (FL1, FL9, ie Barrett’s Class I) – they are also found in ‘fineware’ fabrics (FL5; Class II), while examples in FL13 fall between the two.

Alongside these coarseware jars are a range of fineware bowls (Barrett’s Class IV) with short upright or everted rims and rounded or carinated shoulders, in finer fabrics (FL5, FL11, finer examples of FL13) and with well finished surfaces. One group of such vessels came from an apparently isolated pit in Bed A (146048; **ILLS. 22-25**), associated with jars in the same fineware fabrics (FL5, FL13), some with finger-impressed shoulders (**ILL. 33**); the significance of this group, which included a significant proportion of burnt/overfired sherds, will be discussed further below. One carinated bowl formed part of a deliberate deposit at the base of a waterhole (136194; **ILL. 35**) together with two carinated drinking vessels (Barrett’s Class V; **ILLS. 36 & 37**). The latter have no known direct parallels in Thames Valley assemblages, although the profile of the form echoes exactly that of the accompanying bowl form – both forms have convex neck profiles and omphalos bases, and these three vessels were almost certainly made at the same time as a ‘matching set’. The two drinking

vessels both have simple linear decoration around neck and carination. All three of the vessels within this deposit and been partially burnt, with localised ‘blistering’ and refiring of exterior surfaces in each case, and the bowl has what appears to be a large post-firing perforation in the base (perhaps a deliberate ‘killing’ of the vessel?). While nearly all the fineware bowls have the short necks typical of the Late Bronze Age, there is at least one example of a long-necked form, which potentially has a slightly later (early Iron Age) date; this example is decorated with incised motifs (**ILL. 34**).

The incidence of decoration is very low (77 sherds; 3.0% of the total by number), and is restricted largely to fingertip or fingernail impression on jar rims and shoulders (**ILLS. 20, 28, 32, 33**). One coarseware vessel has multiple finger impressions, probably on the shoulder of the vessel (**ILL. 21**). The fineware bowls occasionally have tooled or incised lines around neck or shoulder (eg. **ILL. 26**, and also including the two drinking vessels from waterhole 136194), but are otherwise plain; there are only two examples of bowls with more elaborate decoration, of which one is a long-necked form (see above: **ILL. 34**).

Distribution

Post-Deverel Rimbury pottery was recovered from a wide variety of feature types - ditches, pits, wells/waterholes, postholes, ring ditches, with a distribution extending across the excavated area, but clustering around the unexcavated Two Rivers transect (**Figs. 7 and 8**). Table 6 gives a breakdown of the overall quantities of pottery, and the numbers of diagnostic vessel forms, by feature type.

Table 6: PDR vessel types by feature type (based on nos. rim sherds)

Vessel Type	Ditch	Pit	Well/ W'hole	Ring ditch	Other features
jar, unspecified form		3		2	
hooked rim jar	2	1			
shouldered jar		5	4		
short-necked jar	4	6	2		1
long-necked jar		3			
bowl, unspecified form		3			1
fineware bowl, profile uncertain	1	5	1		1
rounded fineware bowl		2			
carinated fineware bowl		7	1		
shouldered fineware bowl		7	1		
long-necked bowl		1			1
cup		2			
TOTAL	7	45	9	2	4
Total no. sherds/weight	593/2605	1532/15,091	245/5329	72/492	129/617
<i>Coarsewares*</i>	<i>543/2399</i>	<i>1320/12,354</i>	<i>158/4513</i>	<i>56/203</i>	<i>127/609</i>
<i>Finewares</i>	<i>50/206</i>	<i>212/2737</i>	<i>87/816</i>	<i>16/289</i>	<i>2/8</i>

* FL13 here classed as coarseware

Given the possibility that amongst the PDR pottery there are some undiagnostic and therefore unrecognised Neolithic sherds (see above), the distribution shown in **Fig. 7** may not be entirely reliable. Of particular concern is the small-scale cluster in POK96, coinciding with the presumed area of middle Bronze Age settlement, but also adjacent to the cursus. A more accurate idea of the PDR distribution, therefore, might be

gained from identifiable vessel forms, as plotted in **Fig. 8**. This clearly highlights the concentration around the Two Rivers transect (a concentration which includes significant deposits in pits and waterholes, some of which are discussed in more detail below), but picks up no identifiable vessel forms in POK96.

In this period pottery is found widely in the field system ditches, with an eastwards expansion from the earlier (middle Bronze Age) distribution (**Fig. 9**). However, no ditches produced late Bronze Age pottery from primary fills. Most came from secondary ditch fills (398 sherds), in other words entering the ditches after the initial period of silting. Deposition within field system ditches tails off within the tertiary fills (104 sherds), presumably as the ditches silted up and/or activity declined or moved elsewhere. The mean sherd weight for post-Deverel Rimbury pottery from ditches is 4.4g, ie fairly well abraded, and unlikely to have been incorporated as primary refuse.

The largest proportion of the post-Deverel Rimbury pottery, however, derived from pits (62% of the total by weight of sherds). As for the ditches, distribution extends across the excavated area, but is more restricted when only features containing ten or more sherds are included (**Fig. 10**). Mean sherd weight for pottery from pits is 9.8g, which more or less accords with the overall mean weight (9.3g). These sherds are more likely to have been incorporated in pits as primary refuse and, as we shall see, there are examples here of deliberate deposition of whole pots.

Finewares are found in all feature types, but the assemblage from wells and waterholes contained the highest proportion (36% by number of sherds). This group of features also contained pottery with the highest mean sherd weight (21.8g), although this may be biased by sherds of a single large vessel from a single waterhole (103038: see below).

Significant deposits

Deliberate and structured deposition is exhibited most obviously in two contexts – the careful placing of a ‘matching set’ of carinated bowl and two carinated cups, all finewares, at the base of a pit cut into the top of a waterhole (136194; **ILLS. 35-7**); and the deposition of a complete coarseware bipartite jar at the base of a nearby waterhole (103038; **ILL. 38**). In these instances, pots can be seen as symbolic ‘foundation deposits’ made at the beginning of the life of these features, as opposed to the ‘sealing deposits’ comprising wooden and other artefacts in other waterholes; the latter do not include whole vessels although occasional sherds are included, perhaps incidentally. All three fineware vessels, prior to their final deposition, had been subjected to high temperatures to produce slight localised burning, such as might result from being placed close to a bonfire, and the bowl had apparently been deliberately pierced through the base. The coarseware jar appears to show evidence of use prior to deposition, in the form of an external burnt residue over the rim and upper part of the vessel.

There may in fact be a further link between these two deposits. Woodward (1998-99) has highlighted the deposition of communal ‘feasting sets’ from the Neolithic onwards. For the late Bronze Age, she defines these ‘sets’ as consisting of a single large, often thin-walled, vessel, one or more medium-sized jars, and one or more

drinking vessels. If the two adjacent pit/waterhole deposits are combined the four vessels could conceivably be seen as one such ‘set’.

A third feature which warrants comment is pit (146048), which contained a substantial ceramic assemblage (927 sherds; 9841g) consisting largely of fineware bowls (maximum of 13 vessels; **ILLS. 22-5**), with a smaller number of medium-sized coarseware jars (maximum seven vessels; **ILL. 33**). All sherds are flint-tempered, and the finewares show sufficient similarity in the size and frequency of the flint inclusions to be variants of a single fabric type (the distinction between fabrics FL5 and FL13 was in this instance not always clear cut). A significant proportion of the assemblage shows clear signs of having been burnt or overfired to varying degrees (but generally to a higher degree than the whole vessels from waterhole 136194, see above) – sherds have a friable, powdery texture and have frequently (re)fired to a pale grey colour. Some examples have slightly blistered surfaces, and some show evidence of surface spalling. Taking together, the similarity in fabric type, the limited range of vessel forms represented, and the possible signs of overfiring, are suggestive of a group of waster material from pottery production. Such evidence is extremely rare for the prehistoric period, when any physical traces of pottery production (in bonfire or simple clamp kilns) would necessarily have been quite ephemeral. There is no evidence for *in situ* firing, and if these are wasters, they appear to have been dumped into the pit from some nearby source. Alternatively it is possible that this group represents the results of, for example, a house fire, such as was suggested for a similar group of fineware vessels from Longbridge Deverill Cow Down (Hawkes 1994), but the pit is not located in or close to any obvious settlement features. Indeed, its location (on the far eastern edge of the excavated area, WPR98 Bed A) is markedly separate from the main distribution of post-Deverel Rimbury pottery.

Discussion

As for the middle Bronze Age, parallels for the post-Deverel Rimbury assemblage from Perry Oaks are numerous within the west London area, but there are also interesting contrasts with other assemblages. That from nearby Prospect Park, Harmondsworth, includes a higher proportion of decorated vessels (Laidlaw and Mephram 1996), as does that from Runnymede Bridge (Longley 1991). These two sites contain largely flint-tempered fabrics, while the assemblage from Petters Sports Field, Egham, contained a higher proportion of sandy wares, considered to be a later development within the PDR sequence (O’Connell 1986).

Within Barrett’s sequence for the post-Deverel Rimbury ceramic tradition (1980), simple, largely undecorated jars and bowls, developing directly from Deverel Rimbury forms at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, are succeeded by ‘plainware’ assemblages with a greater variety of forms, and finally, around the 8th or 7th century BC, by ‘decorated’ assemblages. The evidence from Perry Oaks suggests that this assemblage falls somewhere in the middle of this sequence. This is a plainware assemblage, with a limited range of vessel forms (medium to large coarseware jars, fineware bowls, waisted drinking vessels). Does this therefore indicate a hiatus in the ceramic sequence at the beginning of the late Bronze Age? Such a conclusion is possible from the ceramic evidence but is difficult to justify, largely because of the continuity of flint-tempered ceramic traditions from middle to late Bronze Age – this makes any real discontinuity difficult to demonstrate. Moreover, the vessel forms from the earliest part of the late Bronze Age are equally difficult to identify from the

small sherd material which constitutes the bulk of the Perry Oaks assemblage. All that can be said is that these forms cannot be definitively identified here, although the presence of a single medium-sized bucket-shaped vessel (**ILL. 27**) may be noted.

Looking at the distributions of middle Bronze Age and PDR pottery, it is evident that to a certain extent they coincide, for example at Northern Taxiway and Grass Area 21, and around the Two Rivers Transect – in these areas some continuity (albeit on a smaller scale) is likely. The area of potential settlement in POK96 is more problematic (see above), but the absence of identifiable PDR vessel forms from this area could be indicative of an abandonment of the settlement here.

The Perry Oaks assemblage in fact finds its closest local parallels within one previously recovered from Heathrow (Caesar's Camp), which has a similar emphasis on coarseware jars and short-necked fineware bowls (Grimes and Close-Brooks 1993), but can be contrasted with the assemblage from the west end of Runway 1 (site K), which contains similar jars, but accompanied by fineware bowls with consistently tall necks (Canham 1978). While the Caesar's Camp assemblage has been considered as early post-Deverel Rimbury in range (9th to 8th centuries BC), that from site K as been placed, on typological grounds, later in the PDR sequence, perhaps 7th/6th centuries BC (Grimes and Close-Brooks 1993, 355). Radiocarbon dating and associated metalwork place the assemblages of Runnymede Bridge and Petters Sports Field within the range of 10th to 7th centuries BC. Discontinuity (or at least a decline in pottery deposition) round about the 7th or 6th century BC, then, is easier to demonstrate at Perry Oaks, with the apparent absence of distinctive later PDR forms (such as the long-necked jars and bowls seen at Heathrow site K), sandy wares (1.1% of the assemblage by weight), and decorated wares.

The distinctive group of vessels from pit 136194 are likely to fall at the end of the Perry Oaks sequence. Indeed, a larger group of fineware vessels, including some direct parallels for the two cups and bowl, were recovered from a fire-destroyed roundhouse at Longbridge Deverill Cow Down, and dated to the end of the 6th century BC (Hawkes 1994, fig. 5). From a layer above the three complete vessels came the single example of a long-necked fineware bowl, with incised decoration (**ILL. 34**). Radiocarbon dates were obtained from four features (Table 2: waterholes 141024 and 156031, pits 136194 and 125233).

What is apparent from the evidence of these post-Deverel Rimbury sites, and others within the area dated to the same period, is that there is a wide range of variation in the range of vessel forms and proportion of decoration between sites which cannot be entirely explained by chronological factors. Each assemblage appears to have a different 'character' or 'specialisation', reinforced by the evidence for local production (it is likely that each settlement produced its own pottery). Runnymede Bridge has a high proportion of decorated wares (and a much wider range of forms than most other sites); Caesar's Camp has a predominance of specific coarseware jar and fineware bowl forms; St Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, includes an unusual number of handled jars (Adkins and Needham 1985), while a small assemblage from Coombe Warren, Kingston Hill comprises a range of noticeably small vessels (Field and Needham 1986). Explanations for such variation should be sought not only in a consideration of vessel (and therefore site) function but also at a more complex level in the way in which social patterning might be embodied in, and reinforced by, the use

and deposition of specific vessel forms. The possibility that this may have included the use (and subsequent deposition) of ceramic vessels in communal feasting episodes is explored further below.

Middle Iron Age

Whether or not ceramic discontinuity or decline took place around the 7th or 6th century BC, a substantial middle Iron Age assemblage attests to renewed (or continued) activity on the site at this period. Eight fabrics were identified, one flint-tempered (FL6) and seven sandy (QU1, QU2, QU3, QU4, QU5, QU7, QU9).

Vessel forms consist mainly of a range of small to medium jars and bowls. Table 7 correlates vessel form and fabric type.

1. Jar, uncertain form
2. Shouldered jar (residual Early Iron Age form?)
3. Rounded jar with short everted or upright rim (**ILLS. 44, 45, 49**)
4. As above, but miniature form (**ILLS. 41, 48**)
5. Slack-shouldered vessel with short everted or upright rim
6. Rounded jar with 'proto-bead' rim (**ILL. 43**)
7. Convex jar with thickened and flattened rim (**ILL. 46**)
8. Bowl (or saucepan pot), uncertain form
9. Saucepan pot (**ILLS. 40, 42, 47, 50**)
10. Shallow dish or lid

Table 7: MIA vessel forms by fabric type (number of rim sherds)

Vessel form	FL6	QU1	QU2	QU5	QU7	QU9
Jar, uncertain form		12		1	2	
Shouldered jar		1		1	1	
Rounded jar		9	2	1	2	2
Miniature jar		2				
Slack-shouldered jar		1		1	1	
Proto-bead rim jar		2	3	4	2	
Convex jar, thickened rim		0		2		
Saucepan pot		2	1		1	
Bowl	1	4	2			
Dish/lid		1				
TOTAL	1	34	8	10	9	2

Amongst the jar forms are a handful of shouldered forms which appear to represent a continuation of the early Iron Age tradition, although in middle Iron Age fabrics. Otherwise the vessel forms seen here have rounded or convex profiles which mark a distinct development from the earlier, more angular profiles. There is one handle fragment, from a vessel of uncertain form (**ILL. 39**). Bases are generally simple, but the presence of one pedestal base (fabric QU1), one well finished footring base (fabric QU1) and three bases which are close to footring forms (fabrics QU1 and QU7) may be noted.

Surfaces can be wiped, smoothed or burnished. Decoration is extremely scarce and is largely confined to simple horizontal tooling and grooving. This is used below the rims of saucepan pots, and in a few cases above bases or on shoulder/neck zones,

giving an effect close to the late Iron Age cordoned forms. Impressed decoration (fingertip or –nail) is still occasionally found on rims and shoulders (seven examples).

Distribution

Middle Iron Age pottery recovered from a wide range of feature types - from ditches, pits, postholes, roundhouse ring ditches/ring gullies, wells/waterholes (Table 8).

Table 8: Middle Iron Age pottery by feature type

Vessel Type	Ditch / Gully	Pit	Posthole	Ring Ditch	Well/ Waterhole	Other features
jar, uncertain form	5	4		5		
shouldered jar	1					
rounded jar	2	8		6		
miniature vessel		2				
slack shouldered jar	1	1		1		
proto bead rim	3	3		4		
convex jar		1		1		
saucepan pot	1	1		2		
bowl, uncertain form	3	1		1		2
lid				1		
TOTAL	16	21	0	21	0	1
Total no. sherds/weight	649/4087	1367/7706	147/788	956/6870	43/232	48/214
Mean sherd weight	6.3g	5.6g	5.4g	7.2	5.4g	4.5g

Middle Iron Age pottery was concentrated in features within the central excavated area (ie marking a shift eastwards from the previous period: **Figs. 11** and **12**). Within this area, pottery was deposited mainly structural elements (ring gullies), with much less finding its way into ditches – by this period pottery was not being deposited in the field system ditches, either because of changing patterns of refuse discard or because those ditches had by this period largely silted up and gone out of use. Ring gullies which appear to have been constructed during this period include 107097 (MIA Ring Gully 5), 107100/107101 (MIA Ring Gully 12), 108014 (MIA Ring Gully 3), 128138 (MIA Ring Gully 10), 128352, 134170 (MIA Ring Gully 11), 140112, 146272 (MIA Ring Gully 4), 155095 (MIA Ring Gully 15), 158143 (MIA Ring Gully 16), 158163 (MIA Ring Gully 17), 166101/166112, 167037 and 172032 (MIA Ring Gully 9). The large irregular enclosure to the south (119259; MIA Ditch 27) produced a handful of sherds, as did the smaller enclosures to the north-east of this (107097; MIA Gully 5 and 107102; MIA Gully 7).

In terms of quantities, only 15 features produced more than ten sherds (**Fig. 12**). To this can be added the ditches of the Romano-British ‘ladder system’, which contained a significant quantity of residual middle Iron Age pottery, presumably resulting from the reworking of earlier deposits in this area. Of these 15 features, five are ring gullies (107100/107101, 128352, 140112, 155095 and 166101/166112). In all instances pottery was concentrated within one of the gully terminals, either north or south, a depositional pattern well known from later prehistoric roundhouses (and indeed other structures). Only one ring gully (155095) produced more than 30 sherds. Ring gully 166101 was located just to the south of three pits (141138: >10 sherds; 141212: >20 sherds; and 141216: >50 sherds). Three other pits contained between 10 and 20 sherds

– 137114 (sherds residual within Romano-British pit), 178015, and 163005 (outlying pit to the east). Amongst the ring gullies in the central area is 113117, the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age ring ditch extensively remodelled during the middle Iron Age; this produced between 60 and 70 sherds. The largest deposits of middle Iron Age pottery, however, came from two pits, each containing more than 100 sherds – 161089 and 148303 (outlying pit to the west, in Bed B).

Discussion

The range of fabrics and forms from Perry Oaks is closely paralleled by the assemblage from Caesar's Camp, which is dated *c* 400-100/50 BC on typological grounds (Grimes and Close Brooks 1993). Also broadly comparable is the 'Iron Age B' assemblage from Brooklands, Weybridge (Hanworth and Tomalin 1977), and the more recently excavated assemblage from the same site (SCAU; Phil Jones info). The substantial unpublished assemblage from Stockley Park, Dawley, largely dating to the early part of the middle Iron Age, is also likely to yield comparable material (WLG *assessment report subsection 4.3.2.3*).

The Perry Oaks assemblage, however, like that from Caesar's Camp, lacks the distinctive features which might place it more closely within the regional ceramic sequence. Here are none of the decorated wares typical of the ceramic styles of the Middle Thames or Wessex, nor the well finished saucepan pots of the Hampshire/Berkshire area, for which production and distribution on a regional scale has been suggested (eg Morris 1994). Heathrow lies at the edge of Cunliffe's 'saucepan pot continuum' (1991, fig. 4.6); a few examples were recorded from Imperial College Sports Ground, Harlington (Wessex Archaeology 2000), and from Brooklands, Weybridge (Close-Brooks 1977, 41), but otherwise examples from Surrey are uncommon. At Caesar's Camp one such vessel is suggested as a possible import to the site (Grimes and Close-Brooks 1993, 356), although the fabric, described as 'flint-gritted' need not necessarily be the distinctive, well sorted variant used for the Hampshire/Berkshire vessels. The Perry Oaks examples are all in the sandy fabrics, presumably locally produced, which are also used for the more common jar forms. The presence of saucepan pots at Caesar's Camp is used to support a date for at least some of the occupation later in the middle Iron Age sequence, following the radiocarbon dated ceramic sequence from Danebury (*ibid.*, 356-7). If the Perry Oaks saucepan pots can be similarly dated this could push the sequence as late as the turn of the 1st century BC, but the evidence is extremely slight, and there is still no certainty as to whether the Middle Iron Age sequence is continuous, intermittent or short-lived, or whether a continuation beyond *c* 100 BC can be demonstrated. The absence of decorated wares, noted above, could also have some chronological significance. Decorated bowls in fine sandy fabrics were found at Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth and Wall Garden Farm, Sipson, where they seem to be slightly earlier in date than the grog-tempered wares of late Iron Age character (WLG *assessment subsection 4.3.2.3*).

Late Iron Age

The definition of a distinct pre-Roman late Iron Age ceramic horizon at Perry Oaks has proved problematic. Part of the ambiguity arises from the lack of a well defined middle to late Iron Age ceramic sequence for the lower Thames Valley – it is uncertain, for example, for how long middle Iron Age ceramic styles continued in use (see above), and whether they lasted into the late Iron Age, although recent sites in

West London, such as Stockley Park, Dawley, Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth, and Wall Garden Farm, Sipson have produced overlapping ceramic sequences from MIA to RB, and could potentially give a good sequence (*WLG assessment report, sub-section 4.3.2.4*). To compound this problem, ceramic traditions which can be identified as late Iron Age in origin (eg the grog-tempered wares, frequently wheelthrown, which include those types defined as ‘Belgic’) generally span the conquest period and can continue as late as the early 2nd century AD.

For the purposes of this discussion, therefore, a somewhat arbitrary distinction has been made on the basis of a combination of fabric and form, and a group has been defined which appears to mark a perceptible development from the middle Iron Age ceramic traditions, but which may include wares that were still in use after the Roman conquest. Nine fabrics were identified, five sandy (QU6, QU10, QU11, QU14, QU16), one flint-tempered (FL7), two grog-tempered (GR3, GR4) and one shelly (SH1); the assemblage is dominated by the grog-tempered wares. Material of this type is well recorded within the study area, and most of the Perry Oaks material is likely to have been locally made.

With the exception of a single vessel, all vessel forms are handmade. Eight different forms were identified. The correlation of vessel form to fabric type is given in Table 9.

1. Jar, unspecified
2. Bead rim vessel (**ILLS. 52-4**)
3. High-shouldered or necked jar (**ILL. 55, 56**)
4. Storage jar
5. Everted rim jar
6. Jar/bowl unspecified
7. Bowl, unspecified
8. Lid

In addition, part of one unusual vessel is present (fabric QU14), a closed globular form with an upstanding ?lug handle (**ILL. 51**). No direct parallel is known for this form.

Table 9: Late Iron Age vessel forms by fabric (number of rim sherds)

Vessel Type	GR3	GR4	QU6	QU10	QU11	QU14	QU16	SH1
jar, unspecified	17		3		1	1	1	2
bead rim vessel	25	1	1		1			7
high-shouldered / necked jar	5			1	1	1		
storage jar	1							
everted rim jar			3					
jar/bowl unspecified	2							
bowl, unspecified	2		3		1	1		1
lid	1							
TOTAL	53	1	10	1	4	3	1	10

Distribution

Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from a restricted range of feature types - ditches, pits, and wells/waterholes, with just a handful of sherds from other features (ring ditches, postholes and a beamslot) (Table 10).

Table 10: Late Iron Age pottery by feature type

Vessel Type	Ditch Gully	/ Pit	Well/ Waterhole	Other features
jar, unspecified	12	6	4	2
bead rim vessel	23	4	5	
high-shouldered / necked jar	4	2		1
storage jar				
everted rim jar	1			1
jar/bowl unspecified				
bowl, unspecified	5	2		3
lid	1			
TOTAL	46	14	9	7
Total no. sherds/weight	218/1895	107/2011	31/622	8/105
Mean sherd weight	8.7g	18.8g	20.1g	13.1g

The distribution is concentrated in the central excavated area (**Fig. 14**), covering a similar, but more restricted, area to that of the middle Iron Age pottery (see **Figs. 11** and **12**). Within this area pottery came from some of the middle Iron Age roundhouse ring gullies (108014, 128139, 134170, 155095, 166101/166112, 167037), marking a continuation of occupation into the later period, and also from a few miscellaneous enclosure ditches (eg. 108027, 108028, 147237). The large enclosure 119259 (MIA Ditch 27) produced no late Iron Age pottery and had presumably silted up by this time; the smaller middle Iron Age enclosures 107097 (MIA Gully 5) and 107102 (MIA Gully 7) likewise contained no pottery of this date.

The majority of the late Iron Age pottery, however, came from pits (notably pits 130212, 137114 and 167119, the only such features to produce more than 20 sherds), and from the large rectangular late Iron Age enclosure. A small number of contexts contained this early material with early Roman wares such as Verulamium and some unsourced (including possible early Alice Holt) sandy wares (RCP2 [AD43-120]). As for earlier periods, mean sherd size is markedly greater for pottery from pits and wells/waterholes than for pottery from ditches (Table 10), indicating differential deposition of primary and secondary refuse.

Discussion

Ceramic developments within the late Iron Age can be seen within the wider context of the late Iron Age ceramic sequence for southern England. The introduction of wheelthrown ‘Belgic’ wares in necked and shouldered jar forms, and their handmade imitations, is generally dated no earlier than the second quarter of the 1st century BC. It is likely that there was some period of overlap between these wares and the preceding middle Iron Age traditions, although the isolation of well stratified early groups containing both types has not proved possible at Perry Oaks.

Within the immediate area there is little in the way of comparative material. Caesar's Camp produced a very small quantity of late Iron Age pottery, and in the absence of any 'Romanised' wares this is dated to the 1st century BC (Grimes and Close-Brooks 1993, 357). A similarly small quantity came from the runway extension to the west, consisting of handmade, bead-rimmed or everted rim forms; fabrics are not defined but appear to include both shelly and grog-tempered wares (Canham 1978, figs. 19-20).

A larger assemblage was recovered from Imperial College Sports Ground, Harlington, including again both grog-tempered and shelly wares; these occur both unaccompanied, in contexts which are assumed to be pre-conquest, and also in contexts associated with 'Romanised' wares (Wessex Archaeology 2000).

List of illustrated vessels

Early Neolithic

1. Expanded rim; fabric FL4. PRN [Pottery Record Number] 1740, WPR 98, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
2. Expanded rim; fabric FL4. PRN 3135, WPR 98, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
3. Expanded rim; fabric FL4. PRN 3136, WPR 98, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
4. Expanded rim; fabric FL4. PRN 3137, WPR 98, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
5. Body sherd from just below rim, with pre-firing perforation; fabric FL4. PRN 1753, WPR 98, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
6. Angular rim; fabric FL4. PRN 3138, context WPR 98, 148109, tree throw 156191.
7. Externally thickened rim; fabric FL4. PRN 3139, WPR 98, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
8. Expanded rim; fabric FL4. PRN 3140, WPR 98, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
9. Externally thickened rim; fabric FL4. PRN 1769, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
10. Externally thickened rim; impressed decoration; fabric FL4. PRN 1766, context 148109, tree throw 156191.
11. Expanded rim with pre-firing perforations; fabric FL4. PRN 2927, POK 96, context 961734, ditch 961508 (secondary fill).

Late Neolithic

12. Grooved Ware rim; fabric GR2. PRN 2709, GAI 99, context 216120, pit 216009/216118.

Middle Bronze Age

13. Rim from bucket urn with part of applied horseshoe cordon; fabric FL2. PRNs 509/510, WPR 98, context 103016, ditch 103024 (secondary fill).
14. Rim of bucket urn; fabric FL2. PRN 1207, WPR 98, context 155027, waterhole 135071 (secondary fill).
15. Rim of globular urn with horizontal band of tooled decoration; fabric FL3. PRN 1493, WPR 98, context 178111, pit 178108 (secondary fill).
16. Lug handle from globular urn; fabric FL3. PRN 471, WPR 98, context 135040, water hole 135071 (secondary fill).

Late Bronze Age

17. Rim of fineware bowl, unknown form; fabric FL5. PRN 1861, context 156017, well 156031 (secondary fill).
18. Partial profile of carinated fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 1856, context 156017, well 156031 (secondary fill).
19. Rim of jar, unknown form; fabric FL1. PRN 582, WPR98, context 125228, pit 125233.
20. Rim/shoulder of short-necked jar with finger-impressed shoulder; fabric FL1. PRNs 585/577, context 125228, pit 125233.
21. Body sherd with multiple impressed circles; fabric FL13. PRN 963, Obj No 2431, WPR 98, context 141150, pit 141151.
22. Partial profile of shouldered fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 1441, WPR 98, context 146053, pit 146048 (secondary fill).
23. Partial profile of shouldered fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 1430, WPR 98, context 146053, pit 146048 (secondary fill).
24. Partial profile of shouldered fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 1481, WPR 98, context 146053, pit 146048 (secondary fill).
25. Rim of carinated fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 1461, WPR 98, context 146053, pit 146048 (secondary fill).
26. Partial profile of carinated fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRNs 2123, WPR 98, context 155193, well 156031 (secondary fill).
27. Rim of short-necked, weak shouldered jar; fabric FL9. PRN 1483, WPR 98, context 178111, pit 178108 (secondary fill).
28. Rim of short-necked jar with finger-impressed decoration on rim; fabric FL1. PRN 1491, WPR 98, context 178140, pit 178139 (secondary fill).
29. Partial profile of rounded fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 581, WPR 98, context 125228, pit 125233.
30. Rim of rounded fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 553, WPR 98, context 125228, pit 125233.
31. Rim of short-necked jar; fabric FL1. PRN 584, WPR 98, context 125228, pit 125233.

32. Rim of short-necked jar, finger-impressed; fabric FL9. PRN 468, context 136185, feature unknown.
33. Rim of shouldered jar with finger-impressed shoulder; fabric FL5. PRN 1442, WPR 98, context 146053, pit 146048 (secondary fill).
34. Rim of long-necked fineware bowl with incised decoration; fabric FL5. PRN 464, WPR 98, context 136188, pit 136194 (secondary fill).
35. Carinated fineware bowl; fabric FL5. PRN 709, Obj No 460, WPR 98, context 136190, pit 136194 (placed deposit).
36. Fineware carinated cup; fabric FL5. PRN 1070, Obj No 459, WPR 98, context 136189, pit 136194 (placed deposit).
37. Fineware carinated cup; fabric FL5. PRN 1071, Obj No 3090, WPR 98, context 136189, pit 136194 (placed deposit).
38. Partial profile of large, thin-walled, short-necked jar with finger-pinched coil marks; fabric FL13. PRN 2769, Obj No 2422, WPR 98, context 112062, water hole 103038 (primary fill).

Middle Iron Age

39. Handle; fabric QU2. PRN 2051, context 185054, feature unknown.
40. Rim of saucepan pot; fabric QU1. PRN 1845, context 156074, ring ditch 155095 (MIA Ring Gully 15, secondary fill).
41. Partial profile of small jar; fabric QU1. PRN 1033, context 141127, pit 141128.
42. Rim of saucepan pot; fabric QU7. PRN 737, context 137099, ring ditch 155095 (MIA Ring Gully 15, secondary fill).
43. Partial profile of large jar with proto-bead rim; fabric QU5. PRN 410, context 130087, ditch 130106 (MIA Ditch 11, secondary fill).
44. Rim of rounded jar; fabric QU1. PRN 1096, context 148298, pit 148303 (tertiary fill).
45. Rim of rounded jar; fabric QU6. PRN 352, Obj No 2788, context 126178, ring ditch 113114 (MIA Ring Gully 8, secondary fill).
46. Rim of rounded jar with thickened rim; fabric QU5. PRN 328, Obj No 2577, context 126178, ring ditch 113114 (MIA Ring Gully 8, secondary fill).
47. Rim of saucepan pot; fabric QU7. PRN 1069, context 141133, pit 141212 (deliberate backfill).
48. Miniature vessel; fabric QU1. PRN 1073, Obj No 175, context 141175, pit 141202.
49. Rim of rounded jar; fabric QU5. PRN 617, Obj No 1161, context 125129, ring ditch 113114 (MIA Ring Gully 8, secondary fill).
50. Small saucepan pot; fabric QU2. PRN 474, Obj No 1, context 136005, ditch 136046 (secondary fill).

Late Iron Age

51. Vessel of unknown form with inturned rim and upstanding ?lug handle; fabric QU14. PRNs 1984-6, Obj No 160, context 166053, gully 166101 (secondary fill).
52. Bead rim vessel; fabric GR3. PRN 2330, context 129117, pit 129112.
53. Bead rim vessel; fabric GR3. PRN 1921, context 133072, waterhole 133198 (secondary fill).
54. Large bead rim vessel; fabric GR3. PRN 2187, context 138122, ditch 156046 (secondary fill).
55. Necked jar; fabric QU14. PRN 2102, Obj. No. 2951, context 188003, ring ditch 108008 9MIA Ring Gully 3, secondary fill).
56. Necked jar; fabric QU11. PRN 1506, context 108109, feature unknown.
57. Cordoned vessel; fabric GR3. PRN 2195, context 138131, ditch 155062 (secondary fill).

Archive: Fabric Descriptions

- QU1 rounded quartz with sparse large, subangular flint (Burnt), fine fabric and occasional large flint with sparse linear voids. Very rare medium iron oxides. Often well finished.
- QU2 quartz with iron oxides, fine flint and rare subangular flint, with clay pellets. Sparse organic, not always well finished.
- QU3 Frequent flint flint, mica and Iron oxides, well finished.
- QU4 Mica, quartz and Iron oxides with voids, very light fabric and not well finished (very similar to QU5 – same fabric?).
- QU5 Sparse quartz with clay pellets in fine alluvial clay (fine white plate-like matrix with no HCL reaction) very light fabric and similar to QU4.
- QU6 Abundant quartz, sparse mica and occasional large flint.
- QU7 Abundant rounded quartz, sparse mica, rare large flint and sparse fine flint and organic.
- QU8 Frequent Fine flint, medium mica, iron oxides, organic and sparse large flint.
- QU9 Quartz, organic, mica and rare small flint (similar to QU4 and QU5).
- QU10 Frequent organic, mica and sparse flint flint
- QU11 Quartz with frequent mica and sparse iron oxides
- QU12 Sparse quartz with clay pellets in fine alluvial clay (fine white plate-like matrix with no HCL reaction) very light fabric. Similar to QU4 and QU5 but with sparse calcined flint (similar to Eaton fabric)
- QU13 Sparse quartz, mica and organic with rare large flint ***looks horribly like an EIA/MIA fabric, but dated on association with FL4 sherds from 148109***
- QU14 Quartz with sparse mica and frequent clay pellets
- QU15 Abundant quartz, organic and sparse medium flint
- FL1 coarse moderate fine flint with sparse fine quartz, mica and rare unidentified rock fragments
- FL2 coarse frequent flint, sparse quartz and mica
- FL3 Fine frequent flint with sparse mica, well finished
- FL4 coarse flint, sparse mica, organic and quartz
- FL5 moderately fine flint with sparse organic, mica and rare quartz, rare iron pellets
- FL6 frequent flint, sparse quartz and mica
- FL7 frequent coarse-moderate flint, frequent organic and sparse mica
- FL8 coarse flint, sparse mica, organic and quartz with rare large Gabbro fragments
- FL9 coarse-moderate flint, poorly sorted mica, sparse quartz
- FL10 coarse flint – need more!
- FL11 frequent fine flint, sparse mica and iron oxides, well finished

- GR1 frequent grog, fairly frequent quartz and mica, sparse small flint
- GR2 frequent grog, sparse mica, quartz, organic and rare flint
- GR3 Coarse, frequent grog, sparse quartz, mica and iron oxides with rare flint
- SH1 frequent mica, quartz and clay pellets, with frequent plate-like voids

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PERRY OAKS PREHISTORIC POTTERY: FIGURES

Fig. 1: Early Neolithic pottery distribution (number of sherds)

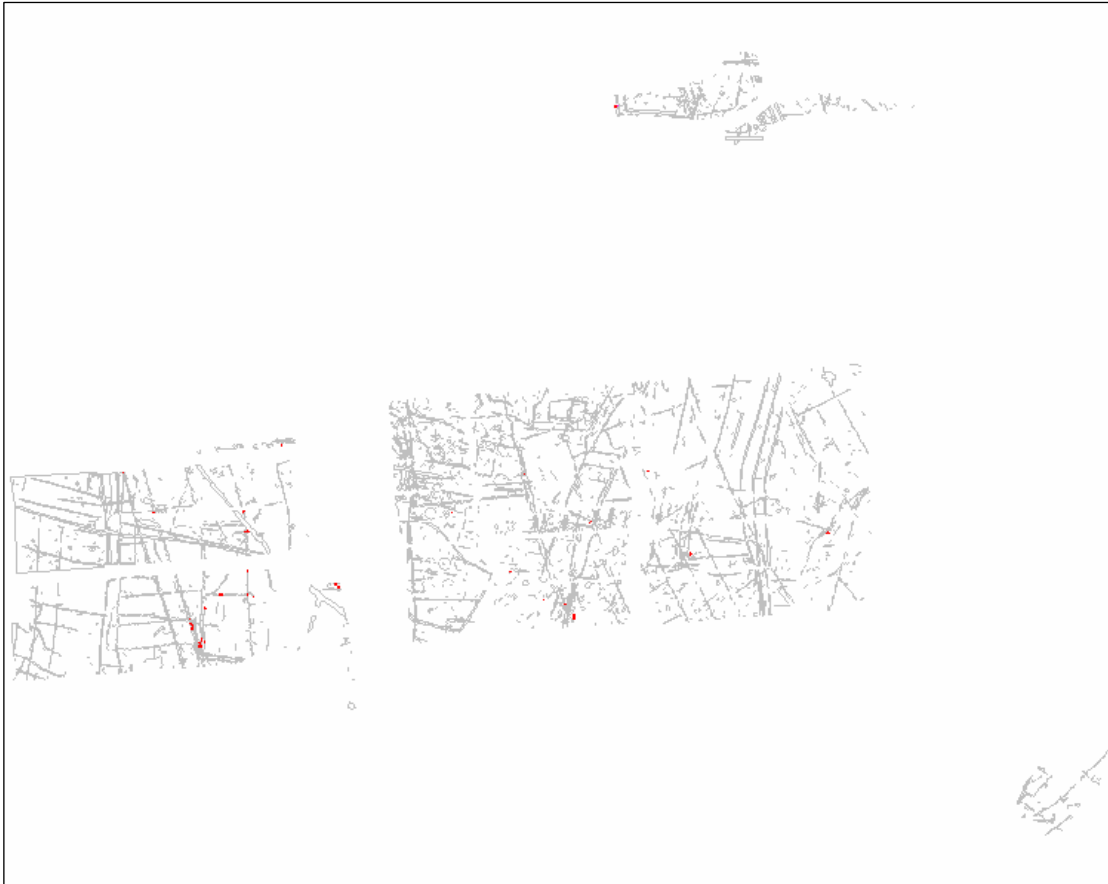


Fig. 2: Early Neolithic pottery distribution in Bed B (number of sherds)

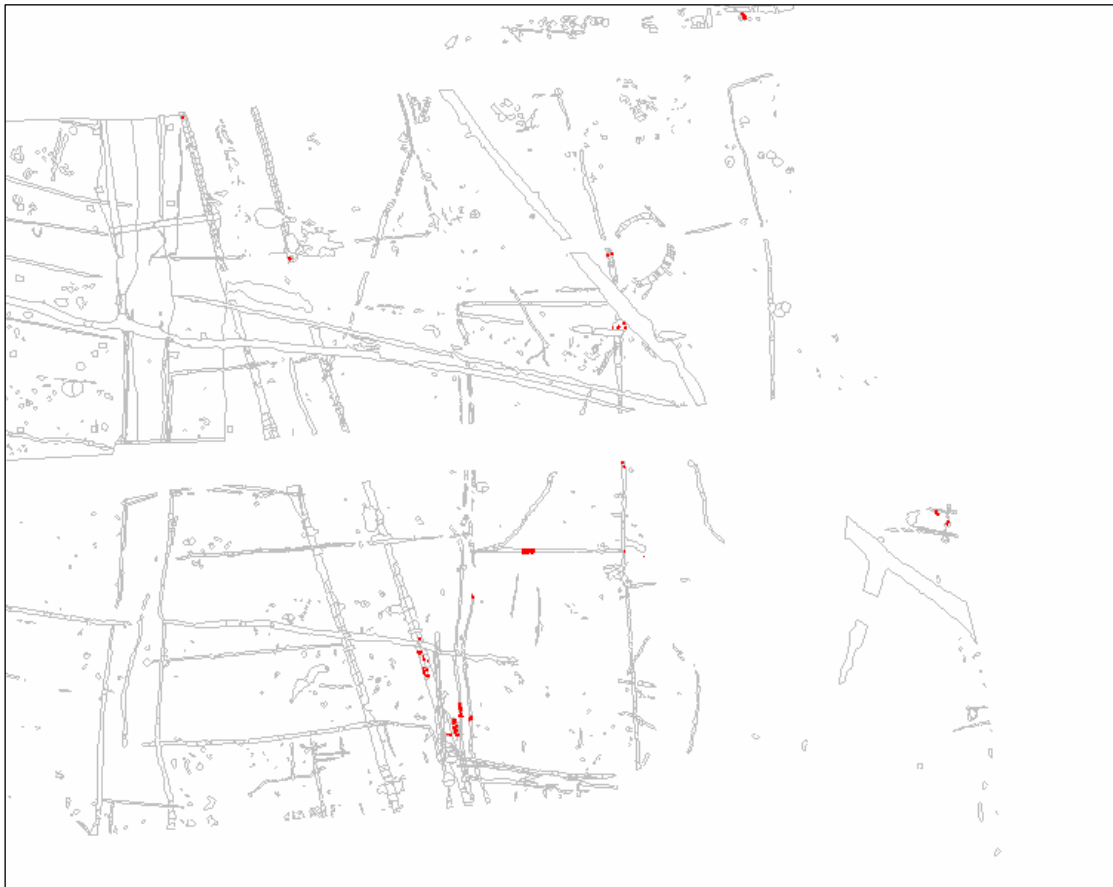


Fig. 3: Middle Bronze Age pottery distribution (number of sherds; Bucket Urn = blue; Globular Urn = red)

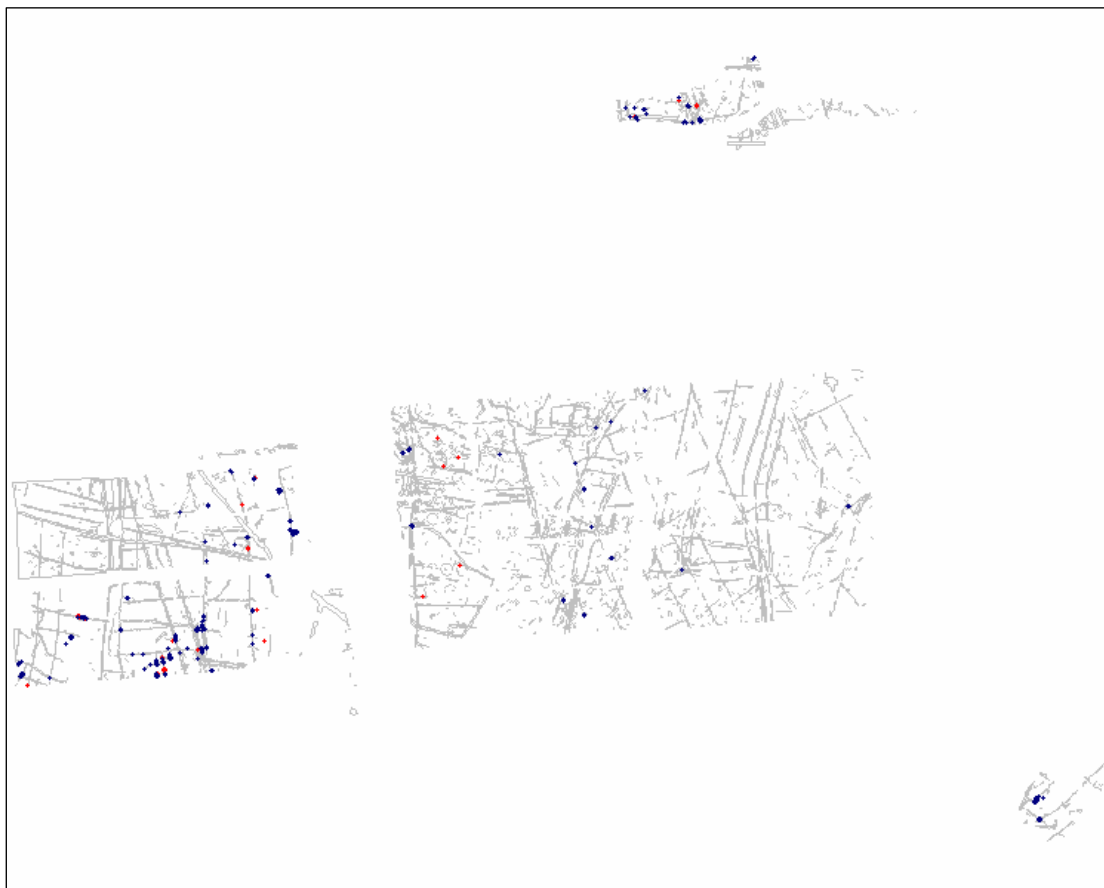


Fig. 4: MBA pottery distribution from GAI 00 (key as for Fig. 1)

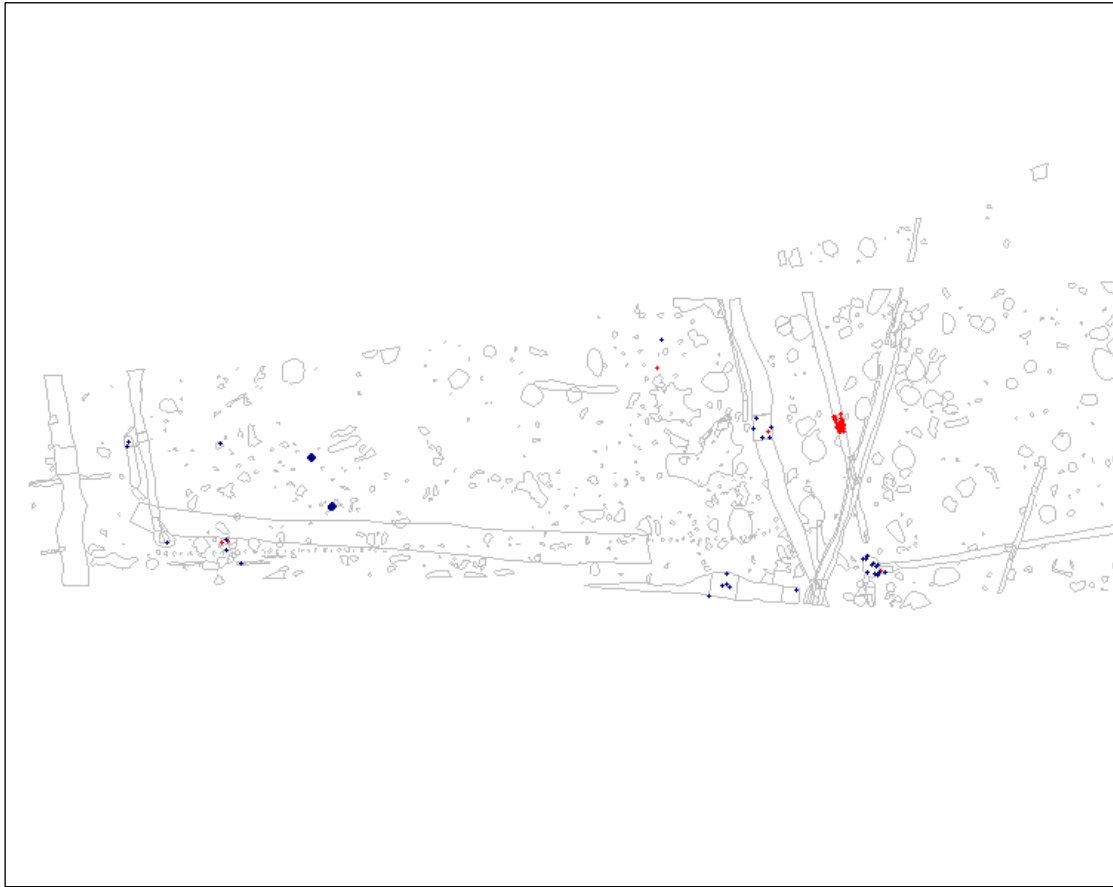


Fig. 5: MBA pottery distribution (all types; each symbol = >60 sherds)

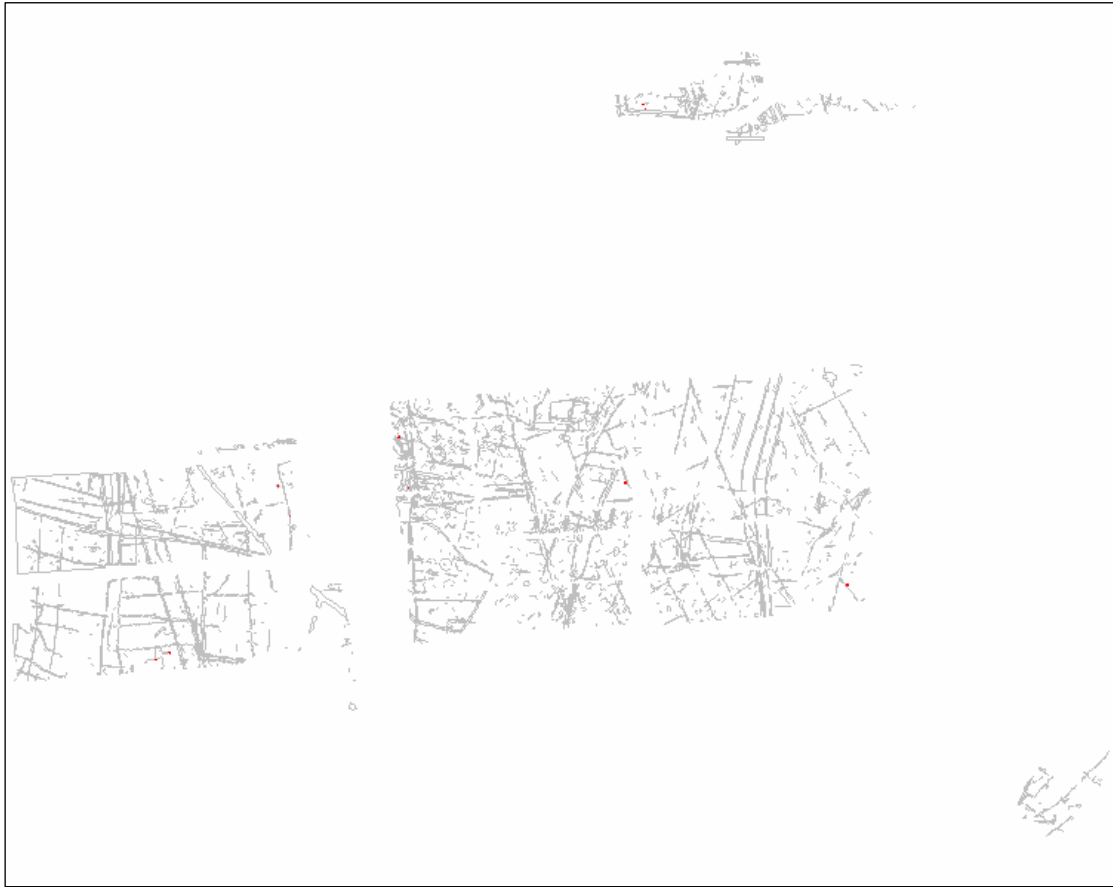


Fig. 6: MBA pottery distribution from POK 96 (Bucket / Globular percentages by sherd count; Bucket = green; Globular = red)

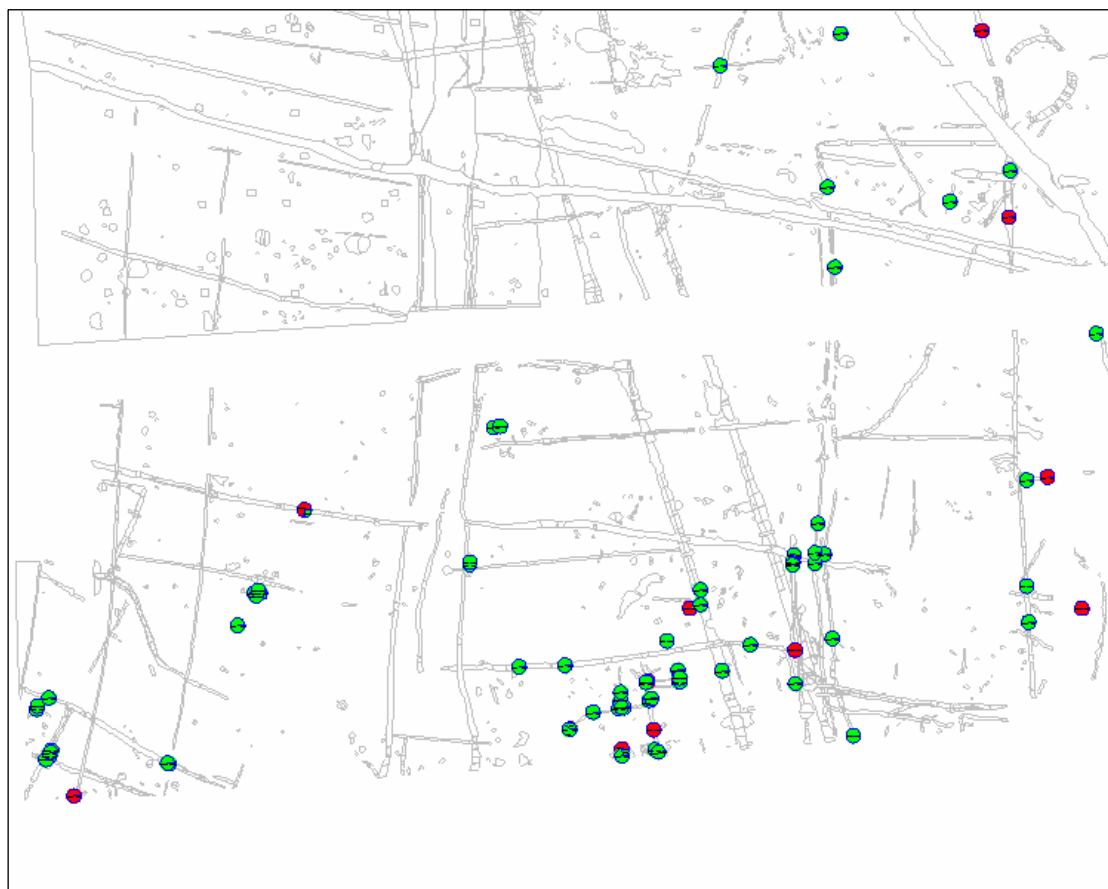


Fig. 7: PDR pottery distribution (number of sherds)

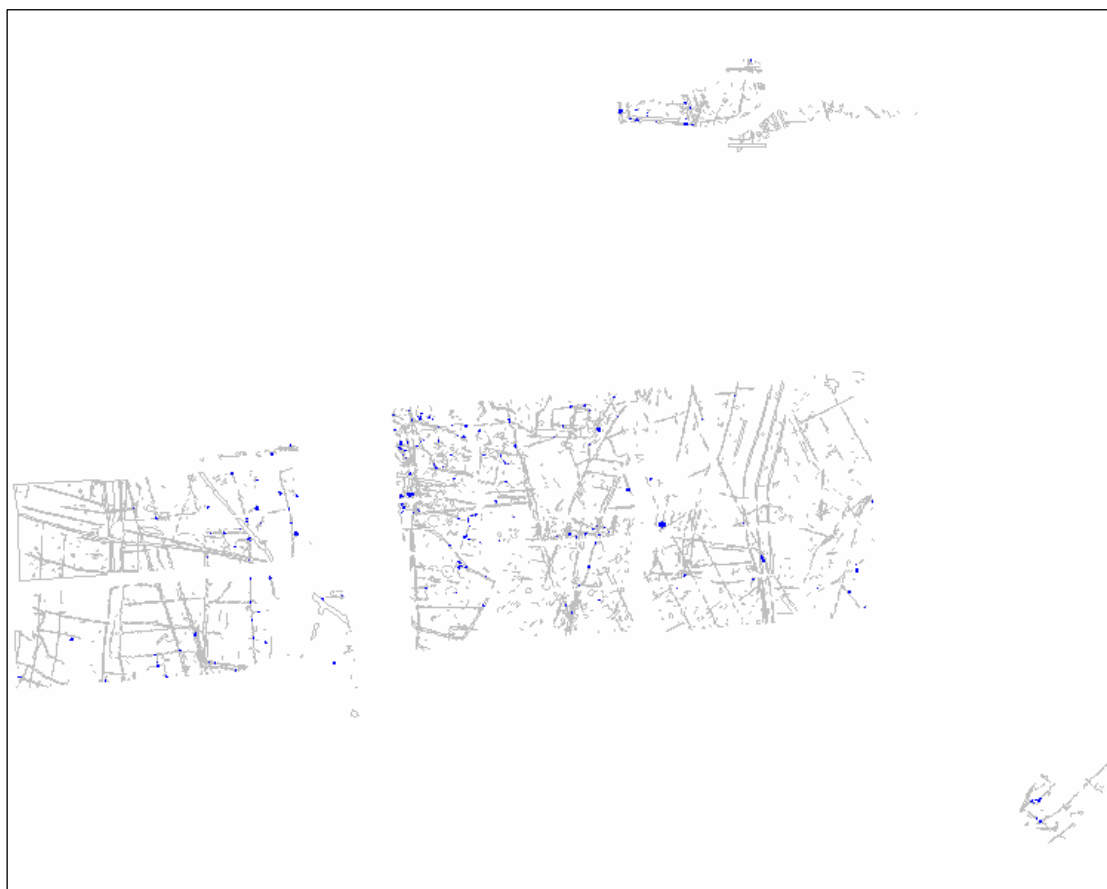


Fig. 8: PDR vessel form distribution (number of rim sherds)

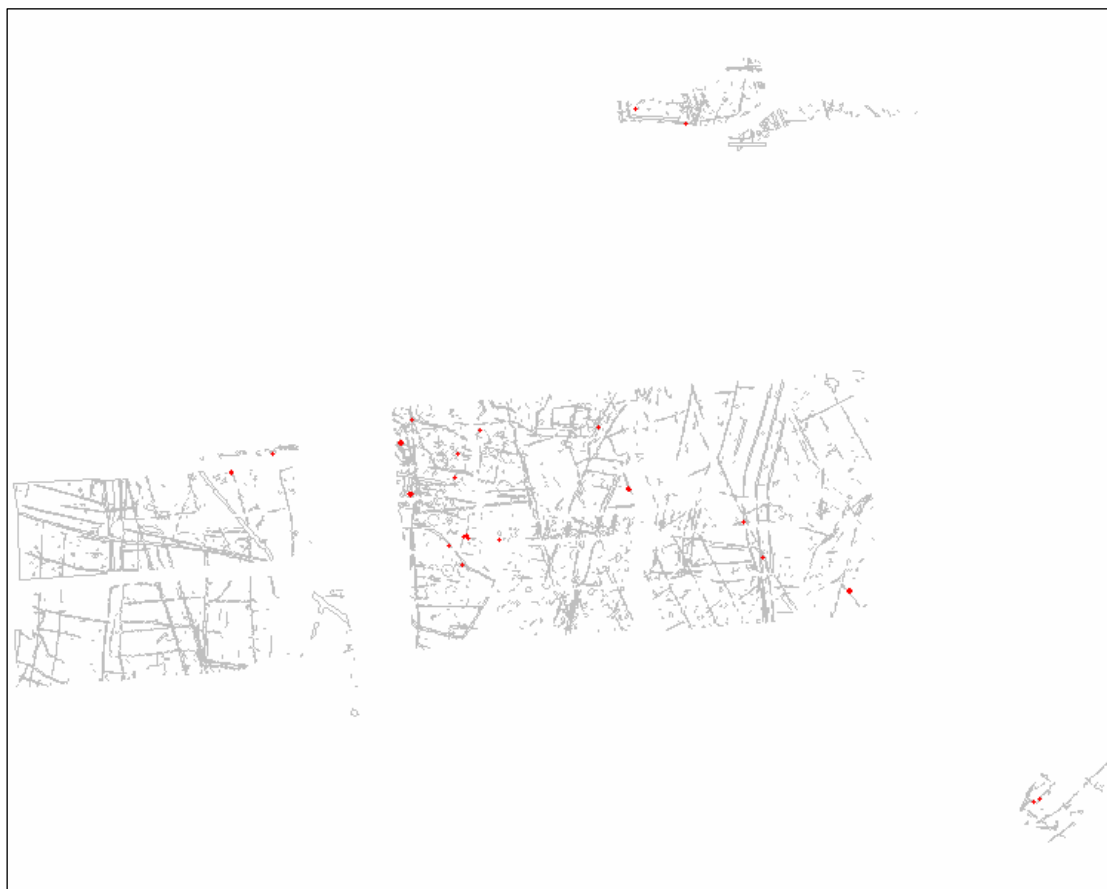


Fig. 9: PDR pottery from ditches (number of sherds)

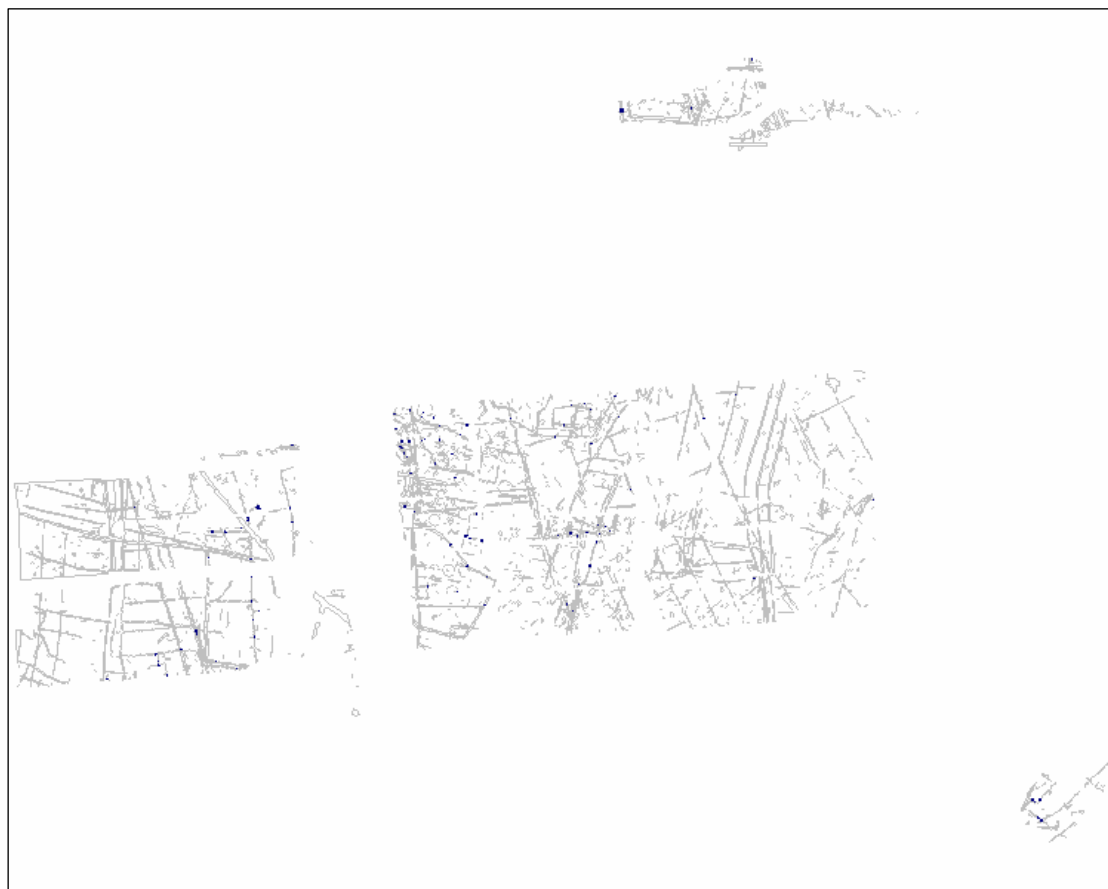


Fig. 10: PDR pottery from pits (>10 sherds)



Fig. 11: Middle Iron Age pottery distribution (number of sherds)

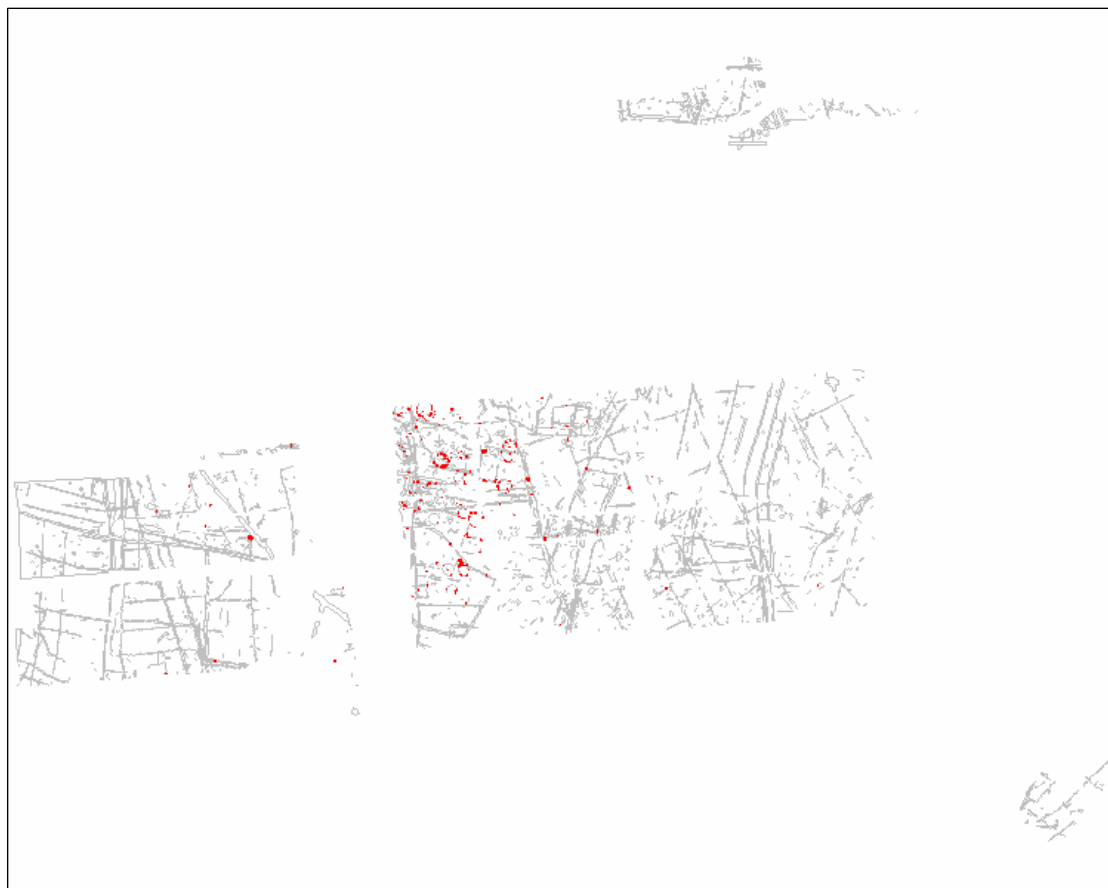


Fig. 12: Middle Iron Age pottery distribution: detail of central area

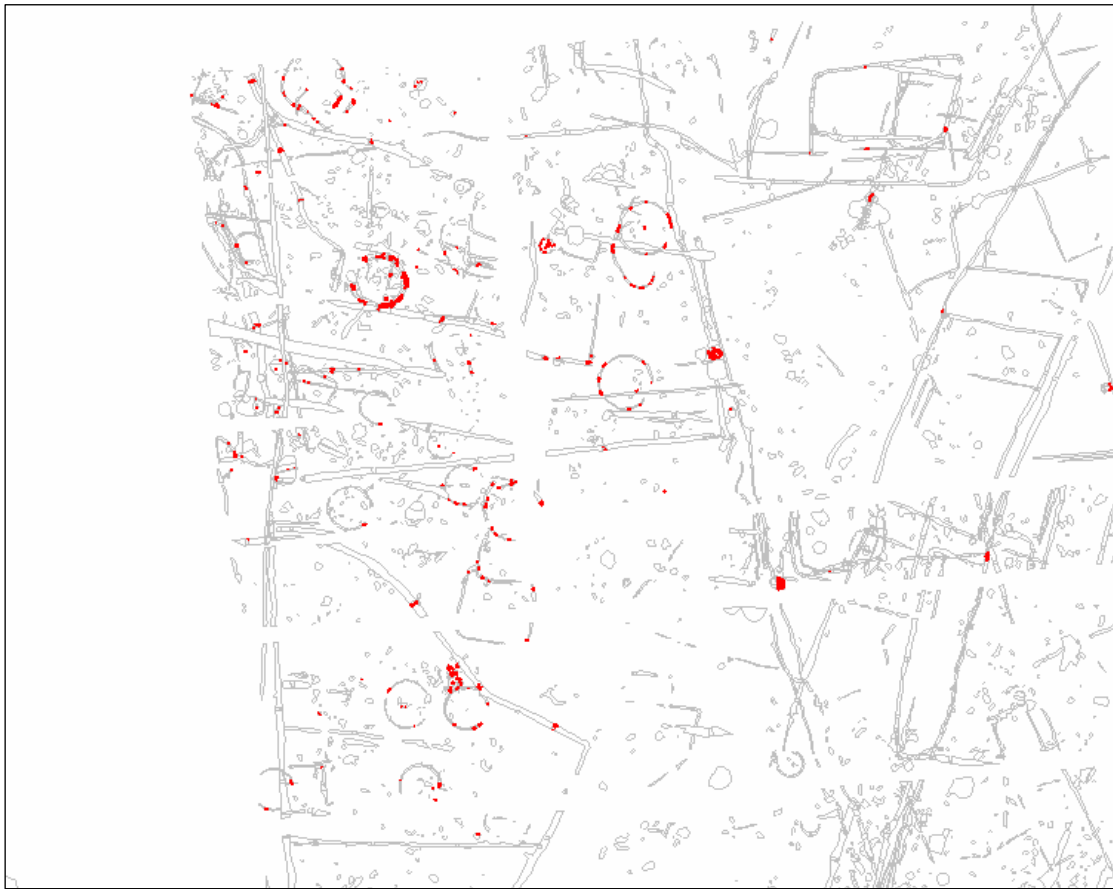


Fig. 13: Middle Iron Age pottery distribution (each symbol = >10 sherds)

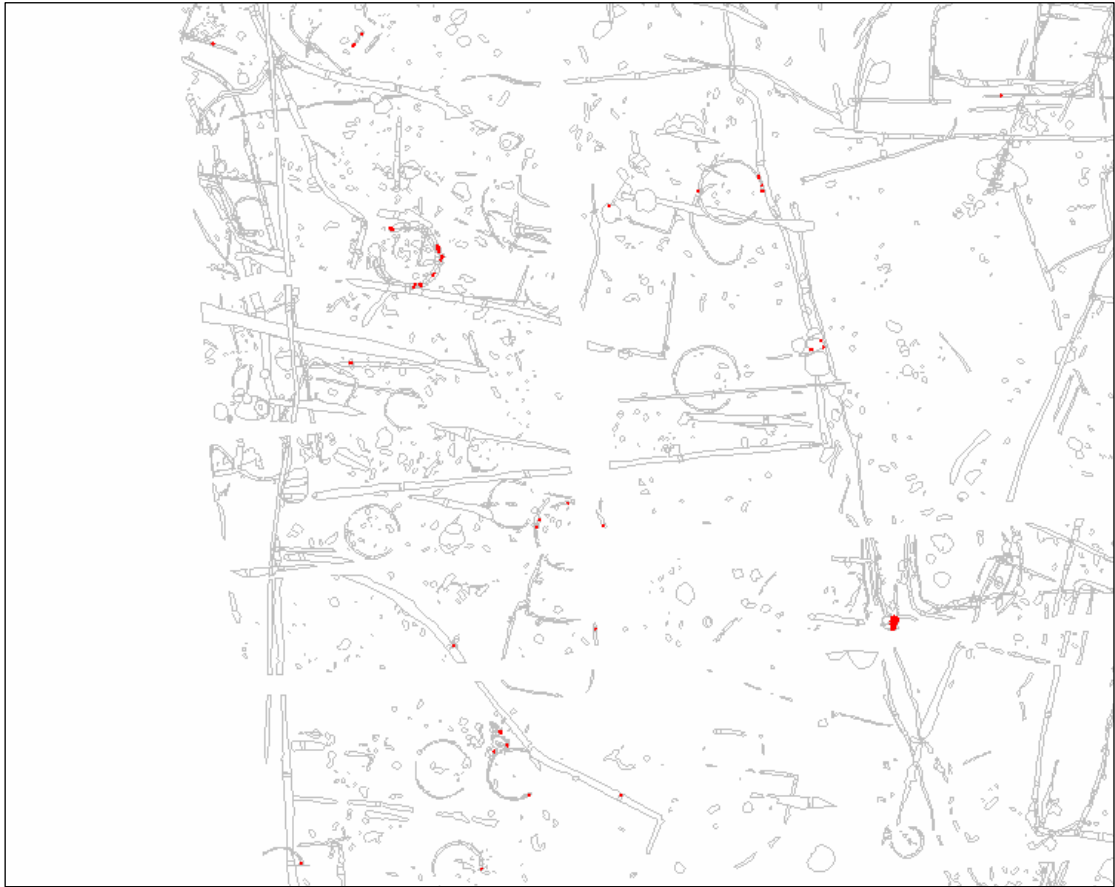


Fig. 14: Late Iron Age pottery distribution (number of sherds)

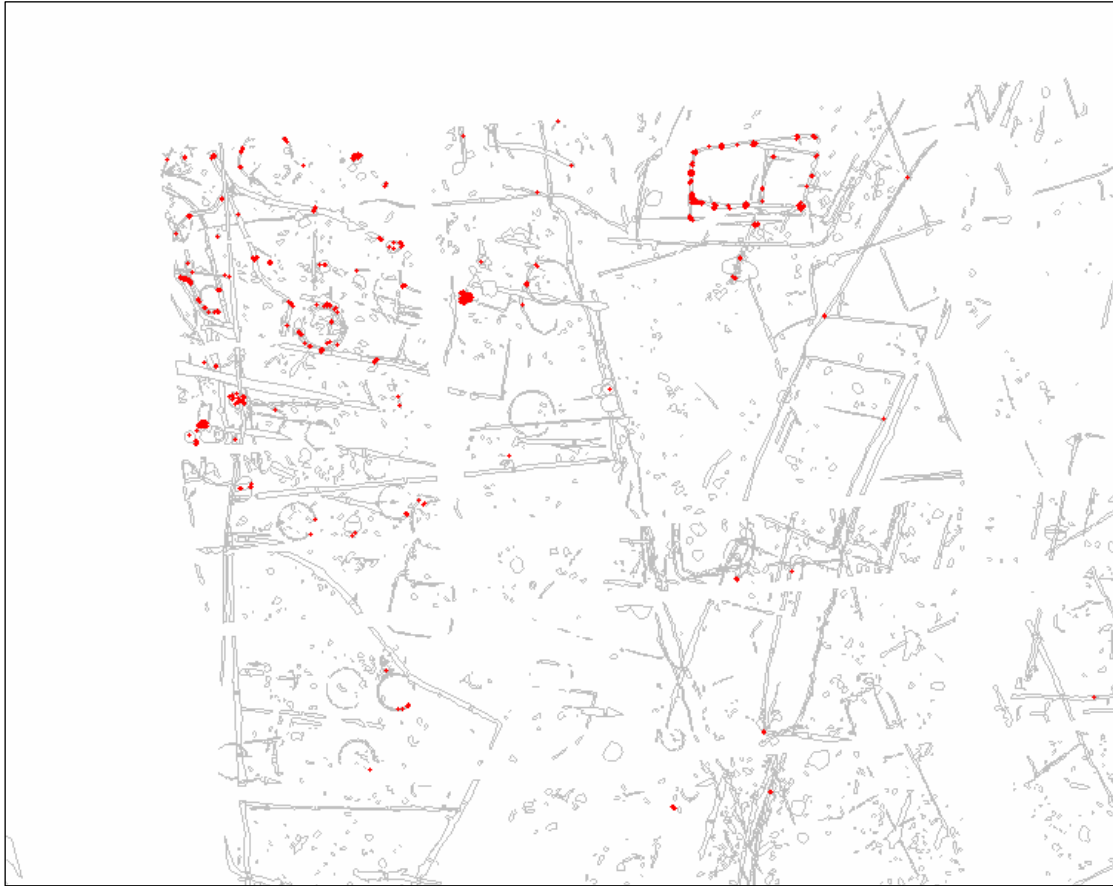


Fig. 15: Late Iron Age pottery distribution (each symbol = >20 sherds)



