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BLACK-BURNISHED POTTERY FROM DORCHESTER

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Sample sherds from four black-burnished ware category 1 (BB1) vessels were submitted for heavy mineral separation and study under the petrological microscope. Details of the four vessels are as follows:

1. 165 (context 407). Flanged bowl, undecorated.
2. 159 (context 450). Cooking-pot with a herringbone pattern round the unburnished girth of the vessel (for similar schemes of decoration on BB1 cooking-pots see Williams, 1977, 193).
3. 154 (context 713). Cooking-pot with obtuse-angled decoration round the unburnished girth of the vessel.
4. 142 (context 608). Straight-sided dish with unburnished bands running round the outside surface of the vessel. This form of decoration has not previously been seen by the writer on BB1 vessels of this form from the Wareham-Poole Harbour production area.

A heavy mineral separation on all four samples produced assemblages with a high tenor of tourmaline for sherds 1, 2 and 3. A tourmaline-rich assemblage has been shown to be characteristic of BB1 made in the Wareham-Poole Harbour area of Dorset (Williams, 1977, Group 1), and a similar origin is suggested for these three vessels. The suite of heavy minerals obtained from sample 4 was quite

different to that of the other three sherds. In this case the non-opaque residue was dominated by grains of zircon, together with lesser amounts of kyanite, tourmaline and rutile. A different source is clearly indicated but as these minerals are all fairly common it is difficult to suggest a likely area of origin. A local origin is possible but equally well a source further afield cannot be ruled out.

Williams, D.F. (1977) 'The Romano-British black-burnished industry: an essay on characterization by heavy mineral analysis', in Peacock, D.P.S. (ed.) Pottery and Early Commerce (London, 1977), 163-220.