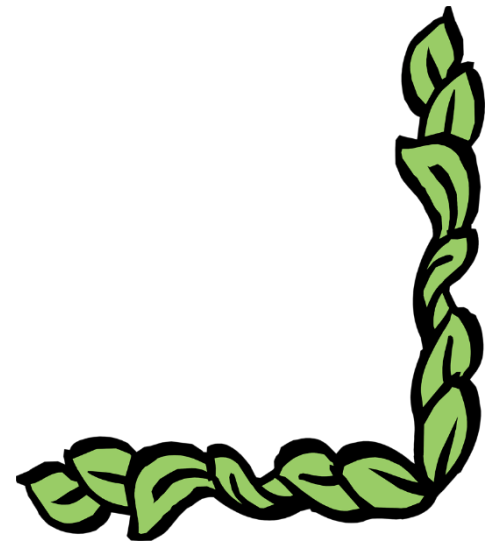
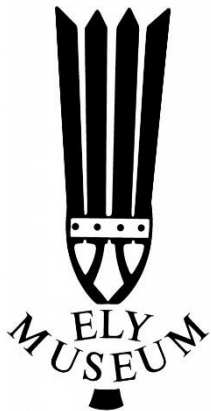





Learn About Roman Pots!

One of the most common finds by archaeologists on a Roman site is pottery. Use our flash cards to learn how to identify different types of pottery archaeologists can find and have a go at identifying some finds for yourself.





Grey Ware

How was it used?

A grey/black coarse ware for cooking, food preparation or storage. What do you think they might have stored inside them?

How to identify

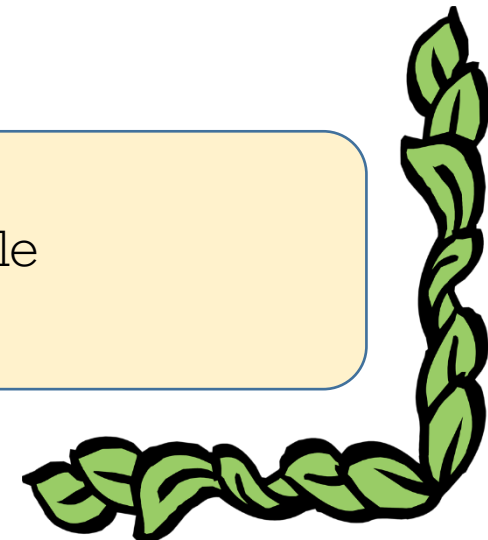


A grey or black pottery that keeps its colour all the way through.

Often undecorated or decorated with a simple line pattern.



image courtesy of the Portable Antiquities Scheme





Samian Ware



image courtesy of the Portable Antiquities Scheme

How was it used?

A glossy brick-red tableware which was primarily used for displaying and serving food. This was usually their best plates and bowls.

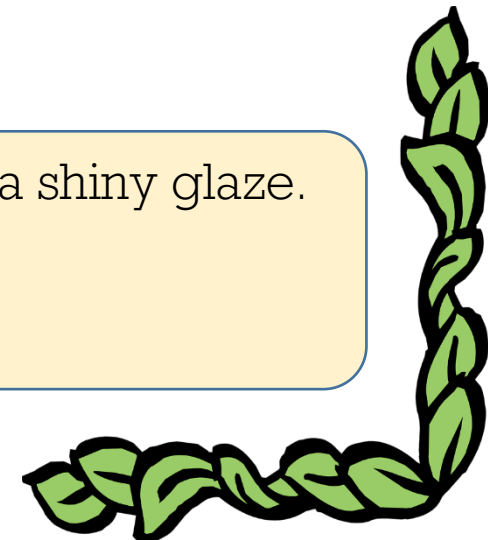
How to identify



Often decorated with complex designs.

Often stamped on the bottom with a maker's mark.

Covered in a shiny glaze.





White Ware



How was it used?

A white/muddy white ware often used to make drinking cups, flagons, or jugs.

How to identify



A white pottery that keeps its colour all the way through.

Look out for familiar shapes like handles and spouts





Mortarium



image courtesy of the
Portable Antiquities Scheme

How was it used?

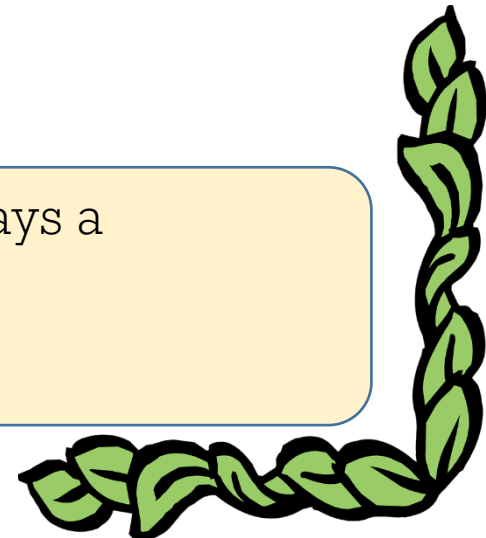
Bowl-shaped vessels for grinding spices and sauces


How to identify



Small rocks and shells were added to the inside of the bowl to improve the grinding surface.

Undecorated and always a simple bowl shape.





Tiles & Tesserae



How was it used?

Tesserae are small cubes of tile used to make mosaics. Red tiles were also used as floor and roof tiles.

How to identify

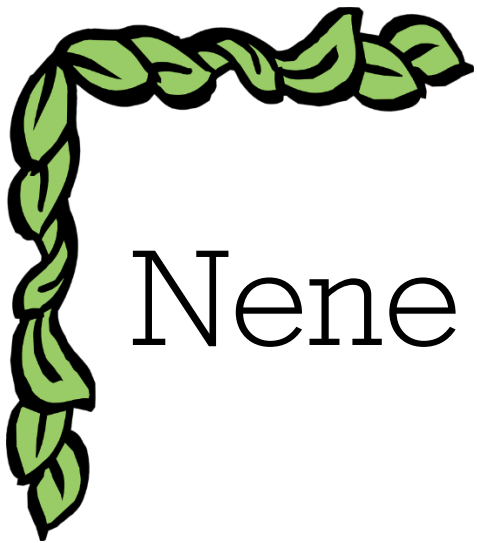


Tesserae are small red cubes

Roman tiles are often made of a thick red clay

Both are undecorated





Nene Valley ware



How was it used?

Nene Valley ware replaced Samian ware as the best quality dishes during the second century BCE. It was mainly used as tableware for eating food.

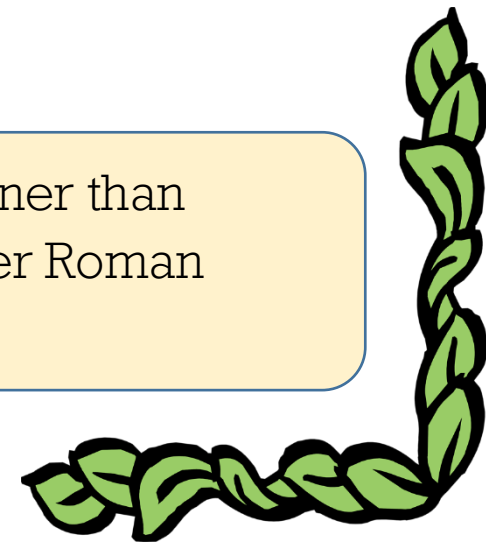
How to identify



A white interior with a black or dark outside.

Simple white line or dot patterns.

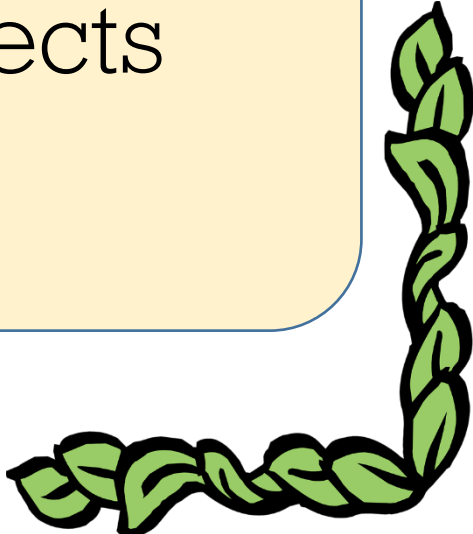
Often thinner than some other Roman pottery.





Other?

Not everything fits in the categories you have learned about. Some objects might not even be pottery.



Can you sort these 15 pieces into the 7 categories you have learned about?



Answers:

1. **Mortaria-** notice the black dots, it is rough to the touch it was used to grind up food to make meals.
2. **Tiles & Tesserae** – this is a tesserae part of mosaic. This style of tesserae was placed down and painted with a design.
3. **Samian ware-** this is the base of a pot you may be able to see part of a maker's mark.
4. **White ware-** this is part of the spout of a jug
5. **Other-** This is a sheep's tooth. The Romans kept sheep in this area for their wool and meat.
6. **Nene valley ware-** notice the white line pattern.
7. **Grey ware-** this is part of a handle for a jug or cup
8. **Samian ware-** this is another pot base you can make out the makers mark more clearly.

9. **Other-** This is an oyster shell. Oysters were a popular food in the Roman period.
10. **Grey ware-** notice the grey colour on the outside and inside of the pot.
11. **Mortaria-** you can make out the dark grit. This example is from the rim
12. **Nene Valley ware-** notice the white dot and line pattern.
13. **White ware-** this is a lip of a bottle or small jar
14. **Other-** This is a fossil the remains of a sea urchin
15. **Tiles & Tesserae-** this is a roof tile, Roman roof tiles came in two types a underside called a tegula and a cover called a imbrex. This is an example of a tegula.