

# Identifying early medieval pottery 2

Some wheel-turned pottery made on the Continent was imported to Wales in the early medieval period, and by the 900s pottery made in Anglo-Saxon England was also starting to appear in Wales.

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## 'D Ware' / Derivées sigillées paléochrétienne Atlantique (DSPA)

Grey wheel-turned tableware or kitchenware with a dark (sometimes black) slip known was first called 'D ware' in Britain. It was made in France in the 500s into the 600s, probably near the Atlantic coast in the area of Bordeaux or the Loire Valley, and is now called *Derivées sigillées paléochrétienne Atlantique (DSPA)*. It reached Wales in the 500s.

## What was DSPA for?

This ware was used for serving and preparing food: plates, bowls, and *mortaria* to prepare vegetables and fruit. Coarse grits in the bottom of the *mortarium* above helped with grinding foodstuffs. The grey colour is the result of being fired in a reduced atmosphere, but when burnt they can revert to an oxidized buff colour (as at Hen Gastell near Swansea). Many examples were found at Dinas Powys near Cardiff, and it has also been found in Pembrokeshire.

## 'E ware'

A variety of wheel-turned jars, bowls and jugs coarse gritty ware was produced in France in the 500s and up to the late 600s. Known in Britain as 'E ware', it reached Ireland, south Wales and the west coast of Britain from the late 500s, though mainly in the early 600s.

## What does 'E ware' look like?

The fabric is a white gritty clay with pimply surface caused by large angular quartz grits protruding through the surface. The fabric colour is generally whitish, but can have orange and grey patches, and be discoloured by soil conditions. It can be confused with some Roman coarsewares and later medieval French wares from the Saintonge and Normandy.

## Stafford ware

This wheel-thrown ware was made near Stafford in the north-west area of the kingdom of Mercia during the 900s and 1000s CE. Its light yellowish-brown hard, rough fabric contains abundant quartz, some sandstone and mica. Its distribution is well known, mainly in west and north Mercia, with a few examples from the coast of north Wales.