Gentility in the dining and tea service practices of early colonial Melbourne's 'established middle class'

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Social mobility led to rapid changes in the class structure of early colonial Melbourne as the settlement increasingly came to incorporate many people from different backgrounds. In order to examine the influence of this on Melbourne society through historical archaeology it is useful to conceptualise immigrants to Melbourne as comprising different groups and examine whether these groups have distinctive material cultural patterns. This paper will examine the potential of this approach by focusing on the dining and tea service assemblage of one family who belonged to one of the earliest groups in the colony. By doing so, it will show that indicators of gentility in the assemblage such as matching sets, variety of vessel forms, consistency in goods for both public and private use, and keeping up with fashion can be used to interpret how this group was using gentility to define and maintain its class position.

INTRODUCTION

In early colonial Melbourne, society was subject to rapid change as a result of great social mobility. As the settlement progressed towards its status as a bustling city by the 1880s, it increasingly incorporated many people from various class backgrounds with different aspirations. In order to examine the distinctive class structure that resulted through historical archaeology, it is useful to conceptualise immigrants to Melbourne as comprising different groups. It is anticipated that these different groups will have distinctive material cultural patterns and that this can be used to interpret class structure and negotiation in the colony, particularly the formation of the large and diverse middle class. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the composition of Melbourne's class structure as a whole. The focus will instead be on one of the earliest groups of settlers in Melbourne with a view to further research. This group, the 'established middle class', were from wealthy British middle-class backgrounds, arrived in the earliest years of the colony, were successful in the pursuit of wealth and frequently held vast pastoral properties. Their class background distinguished them from other groups including the newly rich who arrived from elsewhere in Australia, those of working-class backgrounds who successfully sought entry to the middle class in the colony, and those of working-class backgrounds who did not change class position, among others. The Martin family, who lived at Viewbank homestead from 1844 to 1874, were typical of the 'established middle class' and will provide a useful case study for this paper.

This paper provides an opportunity to test the idea that different groups of immigrants in early colonial Melbourne have distinctive material culture patterns, and to explore how this can be viewed in a ceramic dining and tea service assemblage. It also proposes links between material culture and gentility upon which interpretations of class and social mobility in early colonial Melbourne can be based, while acknowledging that more comprehensive interpretations require further comparative studies. Further, it provides a detailed analysis of middle-class material culture that can be used to contextualise previous historical archaeological research on Melbourne's working class and future comparative research on the diverse middle class.

After providing historical and theoretical context, the paper goes on to discuss the ceramic dining and tea service assemblage of the Martin family in order to characterise the assemblage and examine how gentility can be viewed in an assemblage. The discussion then addresses how gentility, as viewed through material culture, can be used to interpret how the 'established middle class' were negotiating and maintaining their class position in the colony.

EARLY COLONIAL MELBOURNE

By the 1830s, opportunities for gaining good land in the existing Australian colonies of New South Wales and Tasmania were diminishing. However, from 1835 a fresh opportunity for gaining access to land was becoming available in Port Phillip (later Victoria). Squatters began making the voyage across Bass Strait from Tasmania and the long and hazardous trip overland from New South Wales, often very shortly after arriving in Australia (Broome 1984:20-21). From 1851, this land rush was outstripped by the gold rush and a substantial influx of migrants arrived in Port Phillip. The population of the colony grew from 29,000 in 1850 to 125,000 ten years later (Davison 1978:6). This brought dramatic changes to the colony and ultimately established Melbourne as a bustling, viable city.

In early colonial Melbourne, these vast numbers of immigrants were negotiating their position in the new colony. From the time of the earliest settlers until after the gold rush, the influx of people had to navigate their way through changing social structures in order to succeed and establish their position in the new colony. Class in Australia was not a fixed structure, but was flexible and did not necessarily adhere to the norms of British society, with which the majority of immigrants were familiar (Russell 2010:114, 126). Social mobility was possible in the colonies, and indeed was one of the drawcards for people immigrating to Australia (Fitzgerald 1987). The impact of this on class structure has been much debated by historians (Connell and Irving 1980; Davison 1978; Hirst 1988; Neale 1972; Russell 2010; Thompson 1994; Young 2003) and is an important question for historical archaeology.

CLASS, MATERIAL CULTURE AND GENTILITY IN HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

To date, historical archaeologies examining class have predominantly viewed class as a graduated scale through which people and their lifestyles can be described, rather than

as a relation or formation that can be used to explain society (Lawrence and Davies 2011:252-253 Wurst 2006:191, 197; Wurst and Fitts 1999:1). The use of class as a concept in order to explain such issues as social formation and social change has great potential in explaining society, but has received far less attention. Class is a key concept in the social sciences for good reason: it attempts to explain social change and stability as experienced by people in everyday life in the past and is central in historical archaeology (Paynter 1999:184-185). It is particularly pertinent to the study of the colonial world where ideologies and social structures were being adapted to new environments, and is vital to understanding social relations in the past and ultimately society today.

The interest in class as a theme in historical archaeology has been growing since the 1990s. Internationally, a number of studies have addressed class from the vantage point of capitalism (eg Johnson 1996; Leone 1999; Leone and Potter 1999; Mrozowski 2006 Paynter 1988;), ideology (eg Burke 1999; Leone 2005), domination and resistance (eg Beaudry *et al*. 1991; Miller *et al*. 1995), power (eg Lucas 2006), manners (eg Goodwin 1999), improvement (Tarlow 2007), gender (eg Hardesty 1994; Wall 1994; Rotman 2005; 2009), identity (Reckner and Brighton 1999; Griffin and Casella 2010; Brighton 2011) or working-class living conditions and slums (eg Mrozowski *et al*. 1996; Yamin 1998; Mayne and Murray 2001b). However, in these studies class often takes a secondary position to the theme being discussed (Wurst and Fitts 1999:1-2), and few focus explicitly on class relations.

In Australian historical archaeology, studies of class are invariably driven by discussions of respectability and gentility. The majority focus on the working-class and view respectability as a unique and defining characteristic of that group (eg Lydon 1993; Karskens 1999; Lawrence 2000; Lampard 2004). Other studies have focused on gentility as operating separately from class as a tool for social mobility (eg Mayne and Murray 2001a; Crook *et al*. 2005), or as a social strategy for negotiating gender, class and social power (Quirk 2008).

The assumption that class manifests in material culture is a basic premise of historical archaeological discourse (De Cunzo and Herman 1996; Leone 1999; Mayne and Murray 2001b; Mrozowski 2006) and of this study. This idea is grounded in the structuralist search for meaning embedded in artefacts (Deetz 1977; Glassie 1975; 1982) and agency theory (Bourdieu 1977; 1984; Giddens 1984). When the focus is on identity or individual consumer choice, such manifestations can be complex to decipher and distinguish from other factors such as gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status (Casella and Croucher 2010:2-3; Rotman 2009:1; Shackel 2010:58-60; Wurst and McGuire 1999). However, a number of studies have successfully shown the valuable ways in which material culture can be interpreted in order to understand the distinctions between groups of people.

In particular, such studies are those that draw on French cultural theorist Bourdieu's (1977; 1984) theory of practice (eg Lawrence 1998:8; Mayne and Lawrence 1998; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001; Rotman 2009; Russell 2003; Shackel 2000:233; Wall 1992; Young 2004). Bourdieu's idea that goods actively pass on and structure culture has an obvious appeal and application in interpreting artefacts. Bourdieu suggests that a pivotal determining factor in an individual's judgement of their class is cultural capital which can be defined as 'a form of values associated with culturally authorised tastes, consumption patterns, attributes, skills and awards' (Webb *et al*. 2002:x). Class distinction is thus 'most marked in the ordinary choices of everyday existence, such as furniture, clothing or cooking …' (Bourdieu 1984:77). Bourdieu (1977) argues that *habitus* is the deliberate and

subconscious understanding of the behaviours and practices appropriate to ones' place in society. It is not imposed, but is continually changing depending on the values and opinions of self and others. With the idea of cultural capital, Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* is a useful tool for archaeologists seeking to understand the material cultural pattern of a particular group. These ideas of practice and interaction allow interpretations to be made on how people negotiated, changed and maintained their position in society (Casella and Croucher 2010:2).

A number of researchers have usefully linked gentility with Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:647; Russell 2003:168; Young 2004). Gentility was a popular concept in the nineteenth century which emerged as a result of the industrial revolution, expansion of the middle classes, growth of evangelical churches and espousal of ideas of dignity, restraint and strict moral standards espoused by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (Howe 1975:513; Mitchell 2009:11, 256). The associated ideals included refinement, good taste, manners, morality, religious observance, avoidance of idleness, constructive leisure and domesticity (Marsden 1998:2; Mitchell 2009:261-266; Russell 1994:60). Young (2003:4-5) has argued that it became a vitally important social construction in the nineteenth century; a system of values and behaviour closely tied to, and in many ways defining, the middle class in the nineteenth century in both Britain and its colonies. The nature of gentility is such that it leaves its mark in the archaeological record. Despite the fact that the actual practice of genteel behaviour is not represented in the archaeological record, it is influenced by the beliefs and values associated with gentility. As such, the material culture can reveal something of the customs, manners and behaviours associated with gentility (Ames 1978; Goodwin 1999).

GENTILITY AND THE 'ESTABLISHED MIDDLE CLASS': A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

Approaching questions of class and social mobility using historical archaeology raises certain challenges. In archaeology, the starting point is often a single household, or group of households (Bairstow 1991; Murray and Crook 2005:90-91) which dictates that interpretations about society are drawn from interpretations of individual lives (Lawrence 1998:8). The scope of this paper dictates a focus on one household (Viewbank homestead) and one historical family (the Martins) as being representative of the 'established middle class'. While individual stories do not add up to represent the sum of colonial history, they can help us to understand it better (Russell 2010:14). In turn, when combined with the material record, such stories can help to explore the changing nature of class in society (Mrozowski 2006:1).

The interpretations made in this paper are based on material cultural evidence woven together with historical records, neither source being comprehensive or infallible. It is important to acknowledge that these interpretations are qualitative and contingent. Material culture can be interpreted in many different ways and there is no single obtainable truth or proper meaning that can be confirmed beyond doubt through archaeology (Brighton 2011:45; Mullins 1999:30; Orser 1996:117). However, archaeology offers a distinctive perspective and while it may not provide definitive answers it can contribute to knowledge on historical questions.

In order to make interpretations in this paper, class will be treated as an arbitrary category that can be usefully applied to make sense of society in the past. The emphasis will be on the

examination of the distinctiveness of the lifestyles of people using the idea of class (see Bourdieu 1977; Foucault 1973; Giddens 1973). Bourdieu's (1977; 1984) concept of cultural capital will be treated as a metaphor imposed by the researcher (Skeggs 1997:10), useful for identifying the roles particular groups played in class formation. Class, as it is used here, refers back to the traditional nineteenth-century British class model and the definitions are based primarily on profession. Middle class describes business and professional men with no ruling or establishment background who could be the sole income earner for the family and often employing servants, while working class describes those men employed in manual work often with other members of the household (women and children) also employed (Davidoff and Hall 2002:20; Flanders 2003:93; Hayes 2008:24-25; Lawrence and Davies 2011:272; Young 2003:54-55). This model is a useful tool for researchers in querying past social structures when treated as inherently arbitrary and artificial; not a real construction of the past. Class then, can be used as a concept through which differences and social formations can be examined.

Drawing on the theory of gentility as cultural capital discussed above, it is argued here that distinctive lifestyles depending on the class backgrounds of different groups of immigrants to Melbourne would be reflected in their material culture. When considering gentility as an analytical tool for research, it is useful to view it as operating separately to class, as a cultural capital that could be adopted, appropriated or adapted by different groups in different ways for different purposes. While gentility may have sometimes served as a tool in social mobility, it may not have done so in other cases (Casella 2005:167-168; Karskens 2001:77; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:647). For example, it has been argued that respectability was a separate defining value of the working class not operating for emulation or social mobility (Karskens 2001:77). It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the relationship between gentility and respectability, however, the framework presented here would allow for such an investigation in future research.

When viewed as cultural capital, expressions of gentility in the material culture of different groups can be interpreted in relation to class structures and social mobility in early colonial Melbourne. Conceptually, immigrants to Melbourne are divided into artificial groups in order to identify the role of each of the groups in formulating class structure in the colony. The groups are determined by similarities in their British class backgrounds, generation, time of arrival in the colony and lifestyle once in the colony, rather than adhering to points on an Australian middle class/working class hierarchy.

The group that is the focus of this paper is the 'established middle class', defined as early settlers and colonists of British middle-class backgrounds who brought their gentility and privilege with them to the new colony. This group includes middle-class men, particularly those who were not in line for an inheritance, or were driven by the boredom of Victorian Britain and often their stifling families to seek adventure and their own independent livelihoods in the colonies (Broome 1984:23; McCrae 1978). Many of the first wave of arrivals in this group included doctors, lawyers, clergy or ex-military men from 'good' families. Most of these immigrants were English or Scottish, with smaller numbers of Irish. Many of these men established significant wealth through business or vast pastoral properties, which brought corresponding economic and political power. Women of middle-class backgrounds emigrated to the colonies with their families or husbands, or as single women in a bid to improve their prospects for marriage or employment (Hammerton 1979: 11-12). Many of the families in this group became dynasties that endured throughout the century (Broome 1984:23, 39). The 'established middle class' had a firm position of authority in the colony, but were challenged to define their position by other groups of immigrants from working-class backgrounds who were seeking entry to the middle class (Russell 1994:15; 2010:113; Young 2010:136).

VIEWBANK HOMESTEAD

The Martin family is typical of the group of immigrants that formed Melbourne's 'established middle class' and represents this group for the purposes of this discussion. Dr Robert Martin and Lucy Gear married in England and initially lived in London where they had the first three of their five children. The family arrived in Sydney, and travelled overland to Melbourne in 1839 (letter from Charles Wedge, 10 September 1853 in Bride 1969:87). Though the Scottish born Dr Martin was trained as a physician, once in Australia he became a successful and wealthy pastoralist with a number of large pastoral properties across Victoria (Billis and Kenyon 1932:95, 145, 227; Kerr 1841; PROV, VPRS 7591/P2, Unit 17, File 12-586, 11 February 1875). Dr Martin was influential in the new colony of Victoria: he was a member of the Melbourne Club from 1840 (De Serville 1980:193) and held a number of high profile public positions. At the time of Dr Martin's death in 1874, his total estate was valued at £43,073.6.3 (PROV, VPRS 7591/P2, Unit 17, File 12-586, 15 July 1874). Mrs Lucy Martin was English and from a similar middle-class background to Dr Martin. Her parents were Robert Gear Esq. of Sussex and Lucy de Guzman who claimed to be a distant relative of Emperor Napoleon III of France (De Serville 1980:205; Genealogical Society of Victoria 1970:105). Viewbank homestead, on the outer fringes of Melbourne (Figure 1), was the town residence of the Martin family from 1844 to 1874.

Viewbank homestead was a spacious twelve-room house on 195 acres of land with vistas over the Yarra River (PROV, VPRS 7591/P2, Unit 87, File 26-805, 11 January 1884) and was also home and workplace to a large contingent of servants. After Dr Martin's death, the family moved away from Viewbank. After a few short years of tenancy the house became run-down and was demolished in the 1920s (Peters 1996:12).

The excavation of Viewbank homestead was conducted by Heritage Victoria between 1996 and 1999 and focused on the
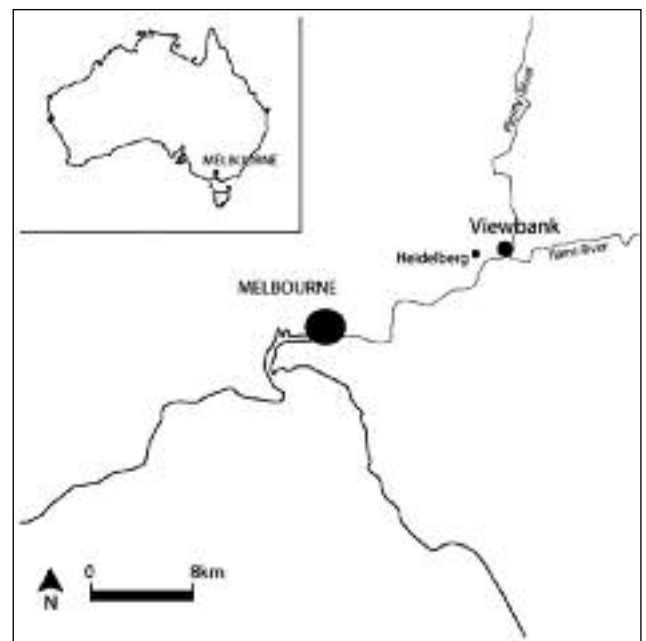

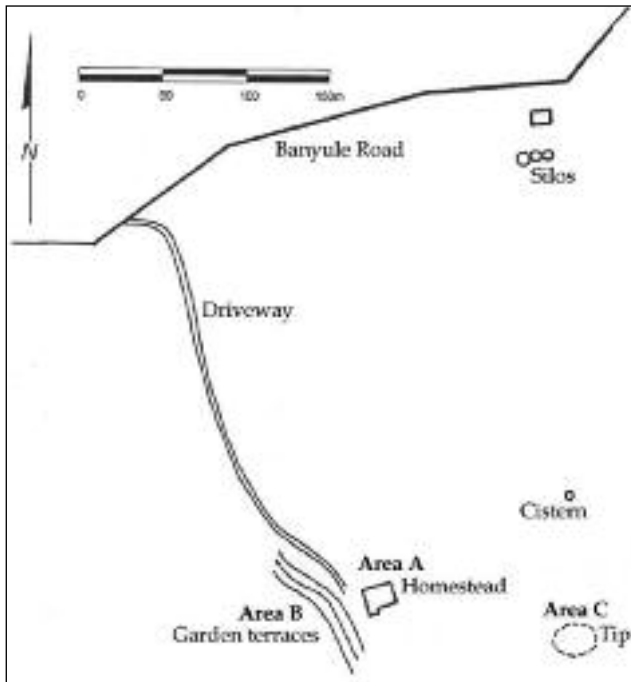*Figure 1: Location of Viewbank homestead.*

Figure 2: Plan of Viewbank homestead showing the location of the tip (adapted from a plan prepared by Heritage Victoria).

homestead, rubbish tip and associated structures (McKenzie 1996; 1997). Of particular interest for this paper is the rubbish tip located 100 metres east of the house (Figure 2). A significant proportion, though not the entire rubbish tip, was excavated and yielded 20,266 artefact fragments. The tip was interpreted by the excavation director as being associated with the Martin family and almost certainly used solely by them (McKenzie 2005 pers. comm.). Artefact dates support this hypothesis with the majority (99.92 per cent) of the dateable artefacts recovered from the tip having date ranges that overlap with the Martin's occupation of the site. Only two artefacts pre-dated 1844 and two post-dated 1874.

The deposits in the tip were fairly homogeneous, with conjoining ceramics noted through all levels. Given the uniformity of the deposit, it is possible that the tip represents a rapid deposition of household refuse as part of a major cleaning or site abandonment event (McCarthy and Ward 2000:113). Large numbers of complete vessels can be expected in 'clean-out' deposits (Crook and Murray 2004:51). Over half of the ceramic tableware and teaware vessels found in the tip were part of matching sets, and many were near complete. The evidence for a clear out event at site abandonment is inconclusive; and the tip may also have been the result of a gradual accumulation of rubbish over a period of time. Food scraps and disposable containers are likely to be the result of week-to-week refuse disposal (Crook and Murray 2004:51). The presence of a large number of condiment bottles, beverage bottles and food-related faunal material in the Viewbank tip supports this pattern of disposal. It is therefore likely that the Viewbank tip was used for some week-to-week rubbish disposal while the Martin family occupied the site and also used in a site abandonment disposal event.

METHODS

While there are many possible artefact types that would allow for characterising the material culture of the 'established middle class' from architecture to complete assemblages, this

paper focuses on ceramic dining and tea service artefacts. There are three major advantages to ceramics: they last well in the archaeological record, there has been much previous research done in historical archaeology on this artefact type, and they were one of the most predominant arenas for expressions of gentility in the nineteenth century.

It is important to note that the artefacts recovered from the tip do not represent the entirety of what the Martin family owned and used for dining and tea service. Rather, the artefacts represent things that were broken, no longer needed or out of fashion, and subsequently discarded. Generally, expensive goods that retain their value would not be discarded (Spencer-Wood 1987:14). Best sets and silverware are unlikely to make it into the archaeological record: they would have been kept or sold second hand. Yet the artefacts do constitute a sample of what the Martin family used and discarded and what is present can be interpreted.

Artefacts were catalogued in two phases: accession and type series, thereby streamlining cataloguing and allowing for the separation of fundamental and interpretative attributes (Brooks 2005:16-18; Hayes 2007:90). Artefacts were grouped into types with matching material, form, processing, decoration and maker's mark or as many of these attributes as could be identified. Functional classification was included in the type series catalogue to facilitate analysis; however, it is acknowledged that the intended function of an object is not necessarily the actual function for which it was used and that one object may have different functions over time (Brooks 2005:18). In addition, identifications of form and function are interpretive and subjective.

In interpreting the assemblage, links are made between the artefacts, the reasons they were originally purchased and the ways they were used. While these links are based on likely associations and historical research, they cannot pretend to be foolproof or entirely accurate – they remain speculative. However, the objective here is not to accurately reconstruct the past, but rather examine the role of gentility in the purchase and use of goods to enable interpretations. Despite the fact that the actual practice of genteel behaviour is not represented in the archaeological record, the artefacts can be queried for evidence of gentility (eg Ames 1978; Goodwin 1999). Expected indicators of gentility in a dining and tea service assemblage include matching sets, a variety of sets for different purposes, purpose specific vessels, consistency across dining and tea service and fashionable patterns.

DINING AND TEA SERVICE AT VIEWBANK

Food and tea service provided an opportunity for the display of both wealth and the subtle range of behaviours associated with gentility (Fitts 1999; Young 2003:182). Each type of meal and each course within it required the table to be set in a genteel manner using the appropriate tableware. A well set table for genteel dining was orderly, aesthetic and fashionable and was one of the most significant platforms for displays of gentility. This section will examine the composition and genteel nature of the dining and tea assemblages excavated from Viewbank homestead. The assemblage recovered from the tip comprised a minimum number of 157 ceramic artefacts related to dining and 130 related to tea service. This section will focus on four key indicators of gentility in an assemblage: matching sets, variety of vessel forms, consistency in goods for both public and private use, and keeping up with fashions.

Perhaps the most important aspect of genteel dining was the use of matching sets to present an orderly meal (Fitts 1999; Wall 1994:147-158; Young 2003:182). Of the ceramic tableware vessels recovered from the tip, 38.6 per cent were part of a matching set and at least eleven individual sets of

tableware were represented (Table 1). Nine of the sets included both consuming and serving vessels, while the white granite 'Berlin Swirl' set was the only matching set with both table and teaware vessels. A further 23.4 per cent of the tableware vessels were possibly part of three complementary sets (Table 2). These vessels had decorations which were similar but not identical. Such vessels were likely to have been purchased on an ad hoc basis and may or may not have subsequently been used together as a set (Lawrence *et al*. 2009:75). There were also matching sets in the teaware, with 31.7 per cent of the teaware being part of at least nine matching sets (Table 3). An additional 41.3 per cent of the teaware vessels were possibly used in five complementary sets (Table 4).

Having the appropriate set for each type of meal was an important part of genteel dining. A middle-class family would have sets for everyday use, separate sets for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and best sets (Fitts 1999:52; Young 2003:182). Wealthy households would also have cheaper ceramics for use by servants (Spencer-Wood 1987:16). The use of different sets distinguished the level of importance of each meal, for example to contrast a Sunday dinner from a week day dinner (Wall 1994:146). While it is impossible to determine the exact type of meal a set was used for from the archaeological record,

it is possible to speculate on the use of each set in the assemblage in order to facilitate interpretation. To do so, it is useful to draw on historical accounts of what meals entailed.

In British culture, there were three major types of dinners: weeknight dinners, Sunday dinners and dinner parties (Mitchell 2009:126). On weeknights, adult members of the family generally dined alone in the dining room, children in the nursery and servants in the kitchen. Children and servants generally received simple meat and potato meals (Flanders 2003:225), while the adult family members' meals being more substantial and varied. The quantity and variety of matching sets recovered from Viewbank suggest that the Martins were indeed using different sets for different meals and possibly supplying servants with a separate set or sets.

A set such as the blue transfer print 'Queen's' pattern (Figure 3) or the Mason's Chinese pattern may have been used for the formal weekday dinners of the adult members of the family held in the dining room. Sunday dinners were comparatively more elaborate affairs and dinner parties more so again with the needs of all guests being accommodated by the service of numerous dishes (Flanders 2003:236). The larger and relatively more expensively decorated 'Summer Flowers' set was likely one of the Martins' best sets and may have been used for Sunday dinners or when receiving guests

Table 1: Matching sets of ceramic tableware.

Set Name	Type of Set	Type of Decoration	Form	Total Vessels (MNI)
Bagdad	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)	9-inch plates (3)	3
Clematis	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)	8-inch plates (2)	2
Floral	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)	8-inch plates (2)	2
Queen's (1851-1862)	Serving and Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)	side plate (1), plates (3), platters (2), ladle, serving dish, tureen, ui hollow	10
Berlin Swirl (1860-1871)	Serving and Consuming	Moulded (white granite)	10-inch plates (2), platters (4), ui flat	7
Girard Shape (1856-1858)	Serving and Consuming	Moulded (white granite)	plates (5), serving dish, soup plate	7
Banded	Serving	Moulded (white granite)	serving dish, platter	2
Asiatic Pheasants	Serving and Consuming	Moulded/transfer-printed (blue)	10-inch plate, platter, bowl	3
Masons Chinese (1820-1854)	Consuming	Moulded/transfer-printed (blue)	10-inch plates (2), 9-inch plate	3
Summer Flowers (1830-1859)	Serving and Consuming	Transfer-printed (black)/enamelled	10-inch plates (4), 9-inch plate, 7-inch plates (3), soup plate (2), plate, tureens (2), platter, ui hollow vessels (2).	16
Rhine (1869-1882)	Serving and Consuming	Transfer-printed (grey)	10-inch plate, 8-inch plate, soup plate, platter, ui hollow vessel, ui vessel	6
Total				**61**

Table 2: Complementary sets of ceramic tableware.

Set Name	Type of Set	Type of Decoration	Form	Total Vessels (MNI)
Banded	Serving and Consuming	Gilded (whiteware)	drainer, plate, ui vessel	3
		Gilded (bone china)	9-inch plates (2), plates (2), ui flat vessel (2)	6
		Gilded (porcelain)	10-inch plate, 9-inch plate, 8-inch plates (2), ui flat vessels (2)	6
		Moulded/gilded (whiteware)	plates (2), 10-inch plates (3), 9-inch plate, soup tureen	7
		Moulded/gilded (bone china)	plate	1
Willow	Serving and Consuming	Transfer-printed (blue)	9-inch plates (3), 8-inch plate, platter, serving dish, ui flat vessel	7
Undecorated	Serving and Consuming	(whiteware) (two variations)	plates (2), 9-inch plate, bowl, serving dishes (2)	6
		(bone china)	8-inch plate	1
Total				**37**

Table 3: Matching sets of ceramic teaware.

Set Name	Set Type	Type of Decoration	Form	Total Vessels (MNI)
Berlin Swirl	Consuming	Moulded	saucers (3), teacups (6)	9
Marble	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)	saucers (2), teacup	3
Marble	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed purple)	saucers (3), teacups (2)	5
Banded	Serving and Consuming	Gilded/enamelled (blue)	teacup, jug, ui flat vessels (3), ui hollow vessel	6
Geometric	Serving and Consuming	Transfer-printed (purple)	saucer, jug, serving dish, ui vessel, ui flat vessel	5
Sprigged	Consuming	Moulded (relief)	saucers (2), teacups (2)	4
Unidentified Floral	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)/ enamelled	saucers (2), teacup	3
Unidentified Transfer Print	Consuming	Transfer-printed (purple)	saucers (2), teacup	3
Florentine	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)	saucers (2)	2
Total				**40**

Table 4: Complementary sets of ceramic teaware.

Set Name		Type of Decoration	Form	Total Vessels (MNI)
Banded	Consuming	Gilded (bone china) (three variations)	teacups (14)	14
		Gilded (porcelain)	saucer, teacups (2)	3
		Gilded/Moulded (bone china) (three variations)	saucers (5), teacups (6)	11
		Gilded/Moulded (porcelain)	saucer	1
Tea leaf	Consuming	Gilded (bone china) (three variations)	saucer, teacups (6), ui vessels (6)	13
		Gilded/Moulded (panelled)	saucers (2)	2
Undecorated	Consuming	(white granite)	saucer, teacups (3)	4
Marble	Consuming	Flow (transfer-printed blue)	saucer, teacup	2
		Flow (transfer-printed black)	saucer	1
Sprigged	Consuming	Moulded (relief)/Panelled	teacup	1
Total				**52**

Figure 3: 'Queen's' pattern ladle (TS 750).

Figure 4: 'Summer Flowers' pattern plate (TS 421).

(Figure 4). It is possible that other expensive sets were taken by Mrs Martin when she left Viewbank or given to the Martin children and are not present in the archaeological record.

Breakfast and lunch were less formal affairs but still required their own tablewares. In the Victorian era, breakfast was served early and usually included one hot meat dish and toast with tea (Flanders 2003:225). The 'Bagdad' [sic] (Figure 5) and 'Clematis' sets of plates may have been for breakfasts. Men would have lunch at the club or at work, while women and children would have a light cooked lunch at home often utilising leftovers (Flanders 2003:225; Mitchell 2009:126). The less expensive sets such as the 'Asiatic Pheasants' and 'Rhine' sets may have been used to serve lunches.

The possible complementary sets such as the Willow and gilt banded vessels may have been purchased for servants' use. In addition, quality ceramics may have been handed on to servants if damaged or no longer wanted (Connah 2007:259), but th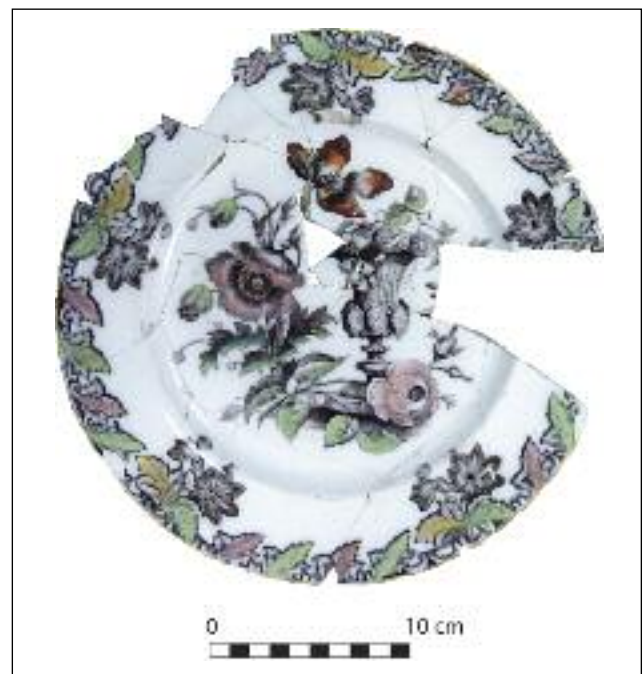is can be difficult to determine from the archaeological record (Brooks 2007:195). Other sets may have been multi-purpose. In her study of hierarchy at Government House in Sydney, Casey (2005:104) found evidence that simply decorated banded, moulded or plain vessels in tea and tableware forms were used as multipurpose sets not designated to lunch or dinner.
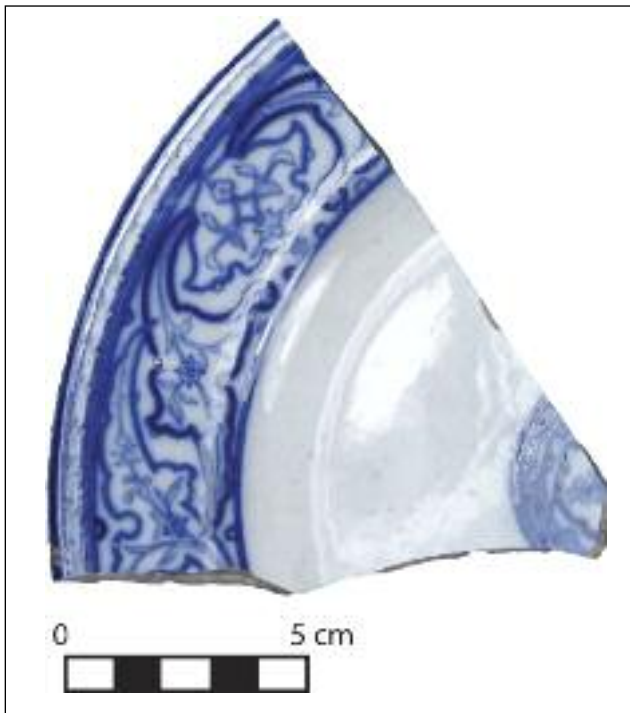
Figure 5: 'Bagdad' pattern plate (TS 798).

The number of tea sets also suggests their use for different purposes: when guests called, between meals and by servants. The sprigged and geometric transfer-printed sets may have been used for taking tea between meals. The gilt banded and tea leaf teawares had variations and were recorded as complementary sets, but may in fact represent either a series of larger sets or individually purchased vessels in these popular patterns. As with the tableware, the cheaper sets such as the 'Marble' pattern (Figure 6) and any complementary sets were likely to have been used by the servants.

Tea was also an important part of the ritual of paying calls: a female domain which was essential to the establishment and maintenance of networks in society. Imported from Britain, the system and etiquette of calls were rigid in Melbourne and important for the 'established middle class' including the Martins (Russell 1994:50). Calls were made out of courtesy to new acquaintances or in thanks for hospitality, congratulations upon a birth or marriage, or condolence upon the death of a family member. Tea would be served and calls would last from fifteen to thirty minutes (Mitchell 2009:151). The best matching sets of teaware, possibly the flow and enamelled
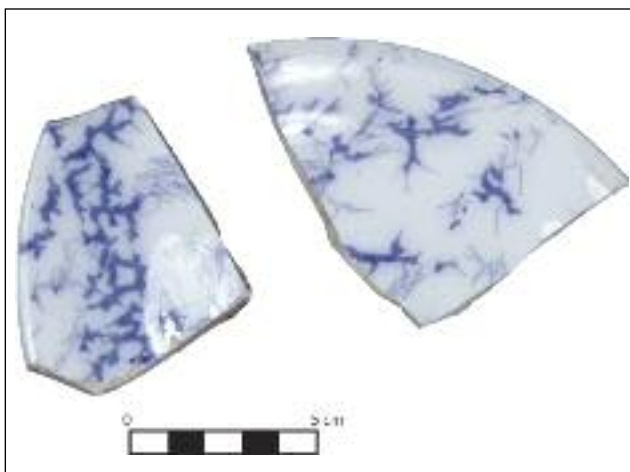
floral set or the 'Florentine' set, would have been used at Viewbank when receiving calls, and possibly a silver tea service.

The relative absence of tea service vessels such as teapots and creamers in the assemblage may be explained by the use a silver tea service which would not be found in the archaeological record. As silver has an intrinsic value in spite of changing fashions it is likely that any silverware would have been retained by Mrs Martin or handed down to one of her children.

The Viewbank assemblage shows that genteel dining and tea service were part of everyday life, not just when receiving guests. Genteel performance and display were likely part of the rationale behind the acquisition of the goods; however, the genteel nature of the goods clearly extended beyond goods that would form public display. The Viewbank assemblage suggests that breakfasts, lunches and servants meals in the Martin household all bore the hallmark of gentility, but with a less elaborate air than when guests were in attendance.

The Viewbank dining and tea service assemblage is consistent with the use of a variety of different matching sets for different meals and occasions, but within sets genteel dining also required a wide range of vessels forms, many with specific uses (Fitts 1999:54; Lawrence *et al*. 2009:74; Shackel 1993:30-42). Different sized plates along with specialised serving vessels such as soup tureens and sauce boats can be associated with more elaborate table etiquette (Yentsch 1991:221). A standard dinner service could include 80 to 140 vessels and include a range of plate sizes, sauce tureens, soup tureens, platters, serving dishes, butter dishes, pitchers and gravy boats (Fitts 1999:182; Young 2003). A large variety of forms were recovered from the Viewbank tip.
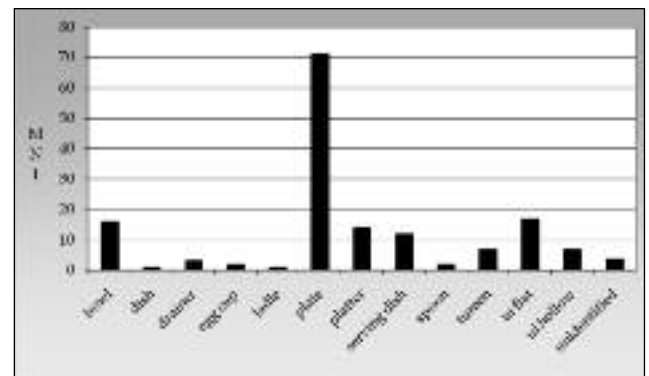

Figure 7: Summary of tableware vessel forms.

Of the eleven matching tableware sets, eight had more than one vessel form and of the three possible complementary sets all had multiple vessel forms. The 10-inch or table plate was the most common in the Viewbank assemblage, closely followed by the 9-inch supper plate and 8-inch twiffler. A smaller number of soup plates and 7-inch muffin plates were also represented. The larger plates would have been used for main courses while the smaller plates may have been used as side or dessert plates, or possibly breakfast or afternoon tea service. Single-function vessels included soup tureens, sauce tureens, ladles, drainers, serving dishes, platters and egg cups (Figure 7). Six vessel forms were identified in the tea service assemblage: teacup, saucer, mug, teapot, jug and serving dish (Figure 8). Overall, this represents a wide variety of vessel forms, many of which were purpose specific.

Figure 6: 'Marble' pattern saucer (TS 654).

Good taste and therefore fashion were important aspects of gentility and there is evidence in the Viewbank dining and tea service assemblages that the Martins were keeping up with
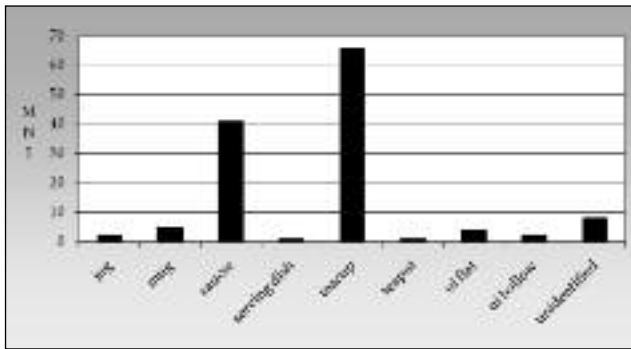
Figure 8: Summary of teaware vessel forms.

fashions. Archaeological evidence suggests that Australians preferred colourful table settings, particularly transfer-prints, in accordance with British and British colonial tastes (Brooks 2010; Lawrence 2003:25, 26) and this is reflected in the Viewbank assemblage. Of the dining assemblage, 58 per cent of the vessels with identifiable decorations were colourful including transfer-prints and flow transfer in blue, black, green, grey, purple and with additional colourful enamelled or gilt decoration. A further 26 per cent of the assemblage had gilt decoration and 23 per cent were plain, moulded and white granite vessels. A similar pattern was represented in the tea service vessels with 53 per cent having colourful decorations including transfer-prints, hand-painted vessels, flow transfers and multiple decorations. There was a higher percentage of gilt decorated vessels at 38 per cent, and a slightly lower number of plain and moulded vessels at 18 per cent. With regard to fashionable patterns, the 'Summer Flowers' set and other vessels with enamelled decoration were the height of Victorian fashion: busy and dark toned. A number of popular patterns such as Chinese scenes, classical scenes, 'Rhine', 'Asiatic Pheasants' and 'Willow' were also represented. Further, plain or simply decorated white granite was a relatively more expensive and highly fashionable ceramic type in the United States from the 1850s (Ewins 1997:46-47; Majewski and O'Brien 1987:120-124; Miller 1991:6). Its popularity was largely the result of its association with the sanctity of churches and contrast to capitalist markets (Wall 1992:72). However, it is not clear whether this association carried across to Australia. Many Staffordshire potteries made ceramics specifically for the United States market, and when the American Civil War commenced in 1861, had to find alternative markets for these wares (Brooks 2005:58-59). The white granite vessels in the Viewbank assemblage date tightly to the start of the Civil War. It is unclear whether white granite was marketed as the latest fashion in Australia or sold off cheaply after the United States market restricted. Without a comprehensive study for Australian preferences similar to those done by Samford (2000) or Majewski and Schiffer (2001) for the United States market, it is difficult to determine the changing fashion in patterns and wares over time (Brooks 2005:34).

Evidence of keeping up with fashion is however present in the dates of the tableware recovered from Viewbank, which indicate that they were updated regularly. Two sets may have been brought to Australia by the family or purchased in their early years in Victoria: the 'Summer Flowers' set which was manufactured between 1830 and 1859 and the Chinese transfer-printed Masons plates which were made in Staffordshire between 1820 and 1854. These two, slightly older sets, may have been discarded when the Martins left Viewbank rather than passed on to the Martin children. These were updated with 'Bagdad' pattern plates made between 1851 and 1862 and white granite vessels purchased in the early 1860s. A debt to John Stanway for crockery in 1874

indicates that they were still purchasing ceramics in their last years at Viewbank (PROV, VPRS 7591/P2, Unit 17, File 12-586, 11 February 1875). Perhaps one of their final purchases was a 'Rhine' plate which dated to after 1869. Only one maker was identified on the ceramic teawares, Liddle, Elliot and Son who manufactured ceramics between 1862 and 1871, so patterns of purchasing could not be determined in the same way as for the tableware. However, the decorative techniques and purchasing patterns for the ceramic tableware indicate the Martins' interest in keeping up with fashion.

A variety of matching sets with a range of vessel forms in good taste were necessary to meet the specific genteel requirements of each meal. It would appear that breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner were each catered for with the appropriate tableware at Viewbank. In the following section, observations on the nature of the dining and tea service assemblages will be made in order to interpret how the Martin family were using gentility to define their position in society.

DISCUSSION: GENTILITY AS INHERENT AND DISTANCING

As society in early colonial Melbourne came to incorporate more and more people over the nineteenth century, it became increasingly difficult to tell people apart and material culture became an important element in determining position (Cohen 2006:xi). The middle class became a large and diverse group incorporating many different people with different class backgrounds and lifestyles. Young argues that 'the range of internal variations set up hurdles of snobbery that generated a tension within the middle class in asserting and maintaining genteel status'(2010:136). For the 'established middle class' to maintain their position under the threat of social mobility, the cultural capital of gentility was a vital tool.

The four key indicators of gentility in the dining and tea service assemblages at Viewbank discussed above can be interpreted as characteristic of the assemblages of the 'established middle class'. In turn, this material cultural pattern can be interpreted as the result of the inherent nature of gentility for the 'established middle class' and the distancing function that this served for this group. As such, the 'established middle class' could display that they knew the protocols of dining seemingly without effort thereby delineating themselves from other groups in Melbourne society.

For the 'established middle class' maintaining their rightful position meant that gentility had to appear to be inherent, that is to come naturally and seemingly without effort (Russell 1994:60). The dining and tea service assemblage recovered from Viewbank indicates that the Martin's had the required equipment in the correct up to date fashions for this to be achieved. The Viewbank assemblage has a level of consistency with large numbers of matching sets and a wide variety of vessel forms across both dinner and tea services. This is not to say that there were not some cheaper goods, but rather that cheaper goods were purchased for a particular reason (ie for servants' use). Good taste and refinement was present across the assemblage not just for serving guests but also for private breakfasts, children's and servants' meals. With gentility pervading all aspects of their dining and tea taking practice, the Martins can be seen as truly genteel and holding a superior position within society. Gentility was manifest as inherent for the Martin family: it was a cultural capital with which they were seemingly born.

The material culture from Viewbank homestead also suggests that the inherent nature of gentility for the 'established middle class' can be seen as taking on a distanc-

ing aspect. Only the truly genteel could display the full repertoire of correct goods and behaviours. This allowed the 'established middle class' to be distinguished from socially mobile people of different class backgrounds. The Martin family, and others equal to their rank, could therefore claim a firm class position at the top of colonial society. For the 'established middle class' maintaining this position meant the display of gentility was all the more important, and it can be argued that maintaining delineation from those of lower class backgrounds became an activity with which this group had to become fully engaged (Russell 1994:14-15).

CONCLUSION

In setting out to test the idea that different groups of immigrants to early colonial Melbourne would have distinctive material cultural patterns, this paper has presented a detailed analysis of the dining and tea service assemblage of the 'established middle-class' Martin family. The evidence from the Viewbank assemblage suggests four unique characteristics of an 'established middle class' assemblage: large numbers of matching sets, a variety of vessel forms including purpose specific vessels, consistency in goods for both public and private use, and attempts to keep up with fashions.

Drawing on these findings, the paper has also proposed how gentility can be used in historical archaeology to make links between material culture and class. By doing so, it was possible to use the archaeological record to make interpretations on the unique way in which this group engaged with gentility as the cultural capital through which they could define and maintain their position in the face of social mobility. The characteristics of the Viewbank dining and tea service assemblage can be interpreted as the manifestation of the inherent nature of gentility for the 'established middle class' and also the distancing function it served to delineate this group from those seeking entry to their ranks.

This study suggests that by conceptualising Melbourne society as comprising distinct groups it will be possible to see distinctive material cultural patterns that are characteristic of each group. The concept of class can then be used to examine the distinctive lifestyles and differences between these groups. Such archaeological evidence has potential in interpreting the different positions, and ultimately class negotiations, of different groups of people in early colonial Melbourne thereby adding to the body of knowledge on class in this period. While it appears that gentility functioned in a unique way for the 'established middle class', this cannot be fully explained without comparison to assemblages from other groups within early colonial Melbourne in future research. Such comparative studies also have the potential to further examine the relationship between the concepts of respectability and gentility in explaining class and social mobility.

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