

## FF/C-2 area description

### Phase 3

The earliest deposits identified in FF/C-2 were two orange basal clays which may have been imported to terrace the site prior to construction during the eighth century. 5722 was a clean clay of unknown depth, which may represent the equivalent of 5924 in the corridor FF/F. 5722 was excavated on the western side of later wall 5089. The same deposit on the eastern side of the wall was excavated as 5506.

### Phase 3b/4a

In the early phase of the Temporary workshops, relating to the tile kiln in FF/H and the bronze kilns in FF/G, the only activity in this area was 3 posthole cuts, a pit and a shallow gully. Two substantial postholes were found cutting the clay layers - 5715 which measured 0.45 by 0.4m by 0.33m deep and contained 5716 a dark brown clay fill containing a little glass, crucible and slag and 5720 which measured 0.55m by 0.55m by 0.15m deep containing 5721, a similar fill. The third posthole; 5497, with fill 5498, cut the large posthole 5720. A shallow linear gully was also identified at this level, cutting into the clay. 5663, which extended below later wall 4614 was at least 1.10m in length, 0.3m wide and 0.2m deep. Finally a shallow square pit, 5664 was excavated and found to measure 0.5m by 0.35m by 0.12m deep. All the above features, located on the eastern side of the room, were covered by a significant yellow-brown clay levelling layer 5442 which contained a mixture of finds all of small quantities: 0.5kg of bell-mould, 1 pot, 40 bone, 3 glass, and 8 nails. Also included however, were 1.2kg of mostly, bronze crucible and small finds 0503, 0504 and 1373, a fragment of mother of pearl, an onyx ring setting and a strip of copper alloy. The equivalent layer 5491 was found on the western side of wall 5089 and contained a very similar assemblage of finds although it included 638g of Cu crucible, 0.15g of bell-mould and sfs 1400 a flint flake, 1427, a flint point, 1454 a flint denticulate and 1455 a piece of volcanic quernstone. This concentration of lithic finds may represent discarded tools from the tile and bronze kiln activities. The same layer containing similar finds including flints and gems was identified in B-corridor as 5194/5196/5199 and in room B as 5352 (547.76-95). (Still to check)

### Phase 4b

Cutting into the layer 5491 on the western side of the room was a fairly shallow linear gully 5461, running north-south and under the later stair-block 4650. This gully was possibly a drainage ditch of sorts, perhaps preparing the area for the basilica construction.

On the eastern side of the area a second, browner clay 5503 was deposited above 5442. A series of postholes and features were found cut into this which must relate to some kind of construction, perhaps the construction of the atrium wall 4610, or more likely the construction of the wall 5089 and the bell kilns. Seven postholes, 5590/5591;

5592/5593-with bell-mould; 5594/5595 -with non-local stone; 5596/5597; 5598/5599; 5628/5629 and 5633/5634 comprised an obviously associated set of primarily, oval postholes. The depth of the features ranged from 0.05m to 0.25m. All the postholes contained mortary clay fills with charcoal and tile.

Cutting into the clay deposits at the same level as the postholes and across the earlier ditch 5461 was another ditch 5489/5505, which ran east-west across the southern side of the area. This ditch may have been another drainage ditch and appeared to continue to the east under later wall 4614. This ditch was cut by the construction cut for wall 5089 (5507). Probably contemporary with this was the construction of the wall 5568 0.5m high, built of travertine blocks and grey-brown mortar. 5630 was a v-shaped, linear cut, 0.15m wide, which extended around the walls 5089 and 5568, which ran east-west below wall 5136. This cut may have been related to the construction of these walls.

All the features were sealed by another layer of clay, this time 5562 - a dark brown clay, 0.25m deep containing frequent charcoal, tile and ash together with pot, bone, cu, fe, 18 pieces of soapstone, kiln tiles, 323g of bell-mould and 16 pottery fragments. A near complete bronze-working crucible (415g) was also included in the fill -SF 1412. This layer may mark the end of the Temporary workshops and may relate to the builders yard found also in FF/F used during the construction of the main basilica, or it may be the working surface for the bell kilns, that continued in use through-out the building of the atrium. Level though is 547.47, bronze kilns in FF/F are 1m higher? These are earlier though so is this down to terracing? If so, the fact that 5547 wall (under 4610) is cut from level 548.30, 0.83m higher than 5562 and the bell kilns could mean still that the atrium wall is put in then but terracing means its at different levels on each side? As the construction trench for the atrium wall in FF/G was cut through the levelling deposits that were full of bell mould its more likely that the atrium wall was built after the bell kilns had gone out of use. (Update May ' 07.)

### **The bell kiln**

Evidence for bell-casting followed in the form of a large, rectangular pit 5531 which was cut into the preceding clay layers from the level of 5562. The pit, which measured 1.15m by 0.56m by 0.95m deep was lined with a clean, yellow clay 5540, which lipped over the upper edge of the pit and probably functioned as a water reservoir initially. The feature had been hastily back-filled with 5532 comprised of 80% stone and tile, mortar lumps, copper alloy, iron, 350g crucible, 1.7 kg of bell-mould, 1kg of pottery, bone and a non-local stone. The upper 30cm of 5532 contained charcoal. Above this, filling the mouth of the pit was a second fill 5527 which consisted of a 10cm deep, black and red deposit of charcoal, silt and burnt clay with 365g crucible, 2.1 kg of bell-mould, 280g pot, Cu, kiln tiles and soapstone. This in turn was covered by 5444, a grey, red and white burnt deposit containing ash and charcoal, 38g glass, pot, bone, soapstone, 6.1 kg of bell-mould and 750g of mostly, bronze crucible (some glass). This deliberate back-filling of the pit was probably so it could be used as the site of a crucible furnace. Large quantities of burnt tile, charcoal, bell-mould, burnt clay and

bronze crucible were recovered from the demolished kiln. On the western side of the room, a small concentration of tiles was found to be part of the cut of a large, oval pit (5677) almost certainly used for the casting of a bell, probably contemporarily with pit 5531. The majority of pit 5677 remains hidden beneath a large stair-block, although it was at least 1.5m in width and at least three metres in depth although the base was never found. The sides of the feature changed from a vertical to a sloping incline. The pit contained a complex series of fills, the earliest of which was a grey-green clay (5792) which had been used to line the sides of the pit, pieces of carbonised wood were visible, pressed into the lining. Around the sides of the pit, embedded into the clay were the remains of a second lining made of travertine and limestone and tile fragments (5793). A large number of tiles were concentrated around the upper edges of the pit lining. Part of the clay lining was found burnt and slumped on the south side of the feature (5701 containing SF 1435 an iron hook-like object), together with an upturned structure, 5702, made from imbrex tiles and clay. This feature possibly represented the remains of a vaulted flue channel, similar to the one excavated at SS. Trinita of Venosa (Vidale *et al*, 1992).

A clear succession of deposits then filled the pit: 5718 a mixed yellow silty clay with burnt tiles, stone, charcoal, pottery, 2 crucible frags, 2 bell-mould and 17g of bronze; 5725, a grey layer of burnt sand and charcoal containing 440g of bell-mould, bone, iron and bronze splashes; 5719 a silty brown sand containing stone, glass, 303g of Cu and glass crucible, bronze splashes, 302g of bell-mould and charcoal and also sf's 1438 and 1486, two pieces of bronze banding or strip; 5714, a mixed deposit of pink sand and clay with charcoal and Cu slag and finally, 5674 a brown silty sand containing tile fragments, copper alloy, crucible and 647g of bell-mould. The fills of the pit obviously represent the disuse and re-filling of the feature after the casting operation.

### **Phase 5a**

The first construction phase of the large stone stair-block which overlies the pit, takes place immediately after the in-filling of the bell-casting pits, cutting into the upper fills by 5700 a narrow cut filled by 5673 a silty clay containing sf 1399, a bronze coin, sf 1456 a copper alloy object, pottery and a little glass, crucible, iron, 0.3 kg of bell-mould, tile and marble. A large posthole (5712/3) was located immediately to the north of the block and probably relating to its' construction. A second, more substantial construction cut was then located around the block (5678/9). A layer of silty mortar (5672) was then used to level off the area around the block, covering the edges of the bell-pit at the new ground level of 547.55. A thin layer of dark brown clay (5458) containing a large quantity of bronze crucible (?) and 0.4kg of bell-mould was then spread over the area, perhaps to level off the room prior to the next phase. Small finds 1159, 1170 and 1269: worked bone, a fragment of bronze vessel and one of a bronze brooch were recovered. This stair-block was most likely built as part of the grand extension of the Eastworks, constructed by Abbott Epyphanus. In FF/G the vaulted undercroft would have been built by this time and with the construction of the walls 5136, closing off the undercroft, 4634 as the southern extent and 4614 as the eastern

extent, the southern tower of the Eastworks was complete, mirroring FF/H the Porters Lodge on the northern end of the undercroft.

A series of different mortar floor levels covered this area over the time, presumably showing new floors being laid as old ones wore away.

### **Phase 5c**

Covering these floor layers and butting up against the walls was a layer of destruction, with ash, charcoal and tile inclusions. These layers were excavated as 5393, near to wall 5136, and 5075 and 5007, a large burnt deposit with charcoal and fragments of burnt tile and pottery, taken in two contexts. It seems quite probable from the position of these layers in the matrix and the content of the burnt material that these layers represent the burnt destruction from the Saracen attack in 881AD.

### **Phase 6a**

Directly above these burnt layers were kiln cuts 5036 and 5004, backfilled with several burnt layers and tip deposits and the surrounding clay layers were burnt from the activity here. There is no indication now of what these kilns were for and it appears that there were no finds within the deposits to indicate the kiln use.

### **Phase 6b**

Initially the two kilns of phase 6a were covered with a layer of rubble 4700, which in turn was covered by a series of rubble tips; 4652, 4658 and 4679, showing the area was disused for some time, most likely abandoned after the Saracen attack with very little activity happening excepting the two kilns. Above these rubble layers was first one levelling layer, 4726, which had several postholes and features cut into it as well as kiln 5019. Presumably these features were associated with this kiln. This kiln takes the form of a pit, measuring c.1.5x1.5m across, with roughly hewn limestone blocks laid into the south west corner of the tower room formed by walls 4610 and 4634. A mortar floor 5008 is laid at the base of this kiln. It is unclear what this kiln was used for, the only find associated with this kiln, a flint blade (SF851) was found in the burnt backfill 4981. This kiln was levelled by layer 4644; the other features were levelled over by layer 4675. Above these layers another kiln 4670 was constructed, cut into the levels in a roughly rectangular form. The cut for this kiln was lined by stone blocks, 4636, which gave it a more regular shape and made the kiln quite a substantial structure, its base was also substantial, created by a thick preparation layer, 4671, covered with a mortar surface, 4669, of roughly 5cm depth. The contexts backfilling the kiln; 4665, 4649, 4647, 4645 and 4646, contained very few finds; one piece of slag and a few pottery sherds. It appears that the kiln was kept very clean and was not used for a process that involved large quantities of waste. Three postholes were also found at this level, most likely associated to the kiln activity. The kiln was finally demolished and along with the postholes covered over with a general silting layer 5163.

The final occupation of this area was represented by a pavement, 4655, laid over the silt and demolished kilns and two walls 4635 and 4651. These were two short walls

constructed between the stair-block and wall 4610. 4635 was constructed from roughly hewn limestones, bonded with a loose silty mortar while 4651 was more robust, constructed from larger placed blocks.

### **Phase 8**

The final phase in this area was simply general abandonment, with silt and rubble layers infilling the room. There was possibly one more wall built; 4911, constructed from the rubble before the whole area was finally covered over and left.

Considerations: The finds within 5442 include 4 flint tools and gemstones etc - the same kinds of finds as from phase 4b glass demolition deposits in the adjacent b-corridor. In addition, the fills of the bell-pit all contain glass (and need to check if there is glass crucible). All this suggests that the bell-casting activity is not contemporary with the bronze-working in the corridor, but that it is probably slightly later than the glass kiln. Wall 4610 does appear to have been built before the bell kilns, and as it also appears to have been constructed after the glass kilns had fallen out of use, this shows the sequence of the kilns quite clearly in the temporary workshops.