

Assessment of pottery from Clifton Garage, 84 Clifton, York (OSA03 EV04)

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One hundred and eighteen finds from the archaeological evaluation carried out at Clifton Garage, York, were submitted for identification and assessment. They include a collection of abraded Romano-British pottery and, probably, tile, medieval pottery, probably dating from the later 12th century through to the later medieval period, post-medieval pottery of 16th and 17th century date, post-medieval window glass and undatable copper alloy and iron artefacts.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Twenty nine fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. Most of these were extremely abraded and their similarity in condition to the Romano-British pottery from the evaluation suggests that they are mainly of Roman date. A single definite example, from a tegula, was recovered from context 1001.

One definite fragment of medieval flat roof tile was recovered, from context 3005.

A fragment of floor tile decorated with a line-impressed design over a thinly applied white slip was found in context 3000. The fabric is unusual and it is likely to be of late medieval date and may be a Flemish import. The source could be confirmed by chemical analysis, by comparison with a large body of chemical data collected from various sites in England and Flanders.

Copper Alloy

A small scrap of sheet copper was recovered from context 2011. material of Roman and medieval date was recovered from the same deposit and it is not possible to determine the date of this scrap.

Glass

A fragment of light green coloured window glass was recovered from context 2003. It is likely to be of later 16th or 17th-century date.

Iron

A corroded iron lump was recovered from context 2011. It cannot be assessed until x-radiography has been carried out.

Pottery

Roman pottery

Thirty nine sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. Most of these are definitely residual in medieval contexts. The exceptions being an unidentified scrap from a post-hole (1002) and a collection from context 3007. However, even the latter assemblage is small and abraded and it is quite possible that all of the Roman pot is in secondary contexts. The pottery is all very abraded, which is consistent with a residual context.

Most of the sherds found are oxidized body sherds, probably of Eboracum ware. Greywares, of unidentified types, Nene Valley colour-coated wares, Dressel 20 amphora sherds and single sherds of Dorset BB1 and Central Gaulish Samian ware complete the assemblage. The lack of definite 1st-century material might be a reflection on the poor condition of the sherds but the lack of Crambeck grey and white wares and of calcite tempered wares is conclusive evidence that the collection does not extend into the 4th century.

There is little evidence for the form of the vessels, although many of the Eboracum ware sherds seem to come from flagons and the Nene Valley colour coated sherds are all from beakers. Thus, there appears to be a bias towards vessels used in drinking rather than dining or food preparation. However, in a group of less than 40 sherds no strong conclusions can be drawn.

Medieval pottery

Forty four sherds of medieval pottery were recovered (Table 1). The earliest definite evidence for activity dates to the later 12th century (a splash glazed sherd from context 2013) although it is possible that some of the York Gritty ware sherds present may be of later 11th to mid 12th century date (Table 1. YG). There is pottery of late 12th/early 13th-century (York glazed ware, Sandy redware), 13th/14th (Brandsby-type ware) and late 14th/15th century date (Humber ware and Walmgate ware) present but all of the assemblages appear to be mixed.

The collection contains no vessel types which suggest anything other than a mixed range of domestic activities.

Table 1

Context	BRANDSBYHUM	MEDX	MISC	SANDY RED	WALMGATEYG	YORK	YSPL	Grand Total		
1001	2		1		1	1	4	9		
2002	3	5				1	2	11		
2003	1	5				1	1	8		
2004		1					1	2		
2009							1	1		
2011		1				3	1	5		
2013					1	1		1	3	
3000		3		1		1		5		
Grand Total	6	15	1	1	1	1	8	10	1	44

Post-medieval pottery

Fifteen sherds of post-medieval pottery were present (Table 2). They include 16th-century wares (Cistercian ware, Ryedale ware) as well as undated post-medieval wares (PMLOC) and late 17th century finewares (Staffordshire slipware and tin-glazed earthenware).

Table 2

Context	CSTN	PMLOC	RYEDALE	STSL	TGW	Grand Total	
2002	1			1	3	1	6
2003	2			4			6
2004				1			1
2008	1						1
2011			1				1
Grand Total	4	1	1	6	3	1	15

The collection contains no vessel types which suggest anything other than a mixed range of domestic activities.

Assessment

Dating and interpretation of stratigraphy

Trench 1

The earliest stratified pottery from this trench is a tiny scrap from posthole fill, 1002. It is probably of Roman date but is so small that it gives no real indication of the date of backfilling of the posthole.

The silt deposit which overlies this feature produced a mixed pottery assemblage ranging in date from the Roman period to the late 14th century. This is interpreted as a medieval ploughsoil and if so the sherds may have been brought onto the site with night soil used to manure the fields. The latest sherd present is of late medieval date, suggesting that ploughing may have ceased during the late medieval period.

Trench 2

The earliest pottery from this trench is of later 12th century or later date and comes from context 2013, interpreted as being a ploughsoil. This is consistent with the evidence from Trench 1.

Pottery was also recovered from feature 2012, which cuts through this ploughsoil. The pottery found in the filling of this feature is mainly similar to that from the ploughsoils but also includes early 16th-century sherds. Similar sherds were also recovered from the rubbish pit, 2007 (fills 2004 and 2003) which cut through the backfilled ditch. Feature 2016, which cut this pit, contains sherds, the latest of which were of late 17th century date. The pottery from pit 2010 would support an early 16th century for its backfill and suggest that it was actually cut by feature 2016 rather than *vice versa*.

Trench 3

The earliest pottery from Trench 3 consists of a small group of 2nd/3rd century pottery from ditch 3012 (fill 3007). The silty clay deposit which overlay the ditch (3005) contains a mixed assemblage of similar date and character to those found in the Trench 1 and 2 ploughsoils although it contains a higher quantity of residual Roman pottery.

Deposit 3005 was cut by three pits, two of which produced pottery (fills 3001 and 3003). The latest sherds in these pits are of late 12th to mid 13th century date. They are interpreted as the post holes of a structure. If so, then the potsherds would indicate that the structure was demolished at this date or later. However, if so then the pottery from 3005 must be intrusive.

Most of the finds recorded as context 3000 probably come from the plough soil, 3011, which overlay these pits. The ploughing therefore cannot have begun until the later 12th century and most of the finds are of similar date and character to those found in the plough soils in Trenches 1 and 2.

In addition, however, there is a floor tile from this context which appears to be of late 15th or 16th-century date, to judge solely by its design. This tile would probably belong more happily in the post-medieval phase of activity.

Overall assessment**Table 3**

Phase	Context	2/3	11.2	12.2	13.2	14.2	15.2	16.1	16.2	17.2	18.2nd	Total	
1 roman ditch fill	3007	4										4	
2 post-roman silt	3005	31	4	1	1	1					1	39	
3 med occupation	3001	1		2								3	
	3003	3	1									4	
4 ploughsoil	1001	2	1	5	2	1						11	
	2013	3	1	2								6	
	3000		1			3	1					6	
5 ditch backfill	2011	7	3	1		1		1				15	
	2020	2										2	
6 pmed pits	2002		1	2	3	5		2		4		17	
	2003		1	1	1	5		6	1			15	
	2004	1		1		1		1				4	
	2008							1				1	
	2009	1		1								2	
Grand Total		55	13	16	7	17	1	11	1	4	1	3	129

The Roman pottery is mainly extremely abraded and is consistent with it having been in a soil horizon exposed to weathering. The sherds from context 3007 indicate that the pottery probably originated on the site rather than being brought onto the site during the medieval period. It may be significant that the highest quantity of York Gritty sherds come from contexts with high Roman pottery. If so then this phase of low activity/flooding may have extended into the post-Conquest period.

The sequence of activity in Trench 3 suggests that there may have been a phase of occupation on the site in the late 12th century or later. If so, then the pottery of this date found in the ploughsoils across the site may be disturbed occupation debris rather than manuring. It is difficult to see any sharp break in the ceramic sequence which might indicate when the site went out of use and reverted to agriculture. Excluding context 3000, there is only one sherd of late medieval pottery from the ploughsoil and this, like the sherds from context 3005, may be intrusive. However, there is late medieval pottery from the rubbish pit fills, such as 2002 and 2003 although there seems no doubt that they were backfilled in the early 16th century.

There are therefore several distinct phases in the sites history revealed through excavation but because of the small size of the pottery collection and the fact that some sherds are clearly intrusive into earlier deposits it is not possible to adequately correlate these phases with the pottery finds, and thus provide a chronology for them. It seems most likely that the site was sparsely occupied, if at all until the late 12th

century and that this occupation may have continued into the later 13th/early 14th century. However, the date of the ploughing episode is uncertain. The presence of late medieval potsherds in the early post-medieval pit fills and their paucity in the ploughsoil might suggest that the ploughing took ceased before the end of the later medieval period. It was certain over before the early 16th century.

The pottery from this evaluation therefore indicates that an interesting sequence of activity took place on the site but fails to securely date it. This failure could be rectified by further excavation.

The one find worthy of further study is the floor tile which should be illustrated. Scientific analysis of the fabric would probably identify its source.

Costing

Illustration of floor tile £15 plus VAT

Chemical analysis of floor tile (including report) £25 plus VAT

Total £40 plus VAT

Appendix One: List of submitted finds

Context class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	PartREFNO
1001	mpot BRANDSBY	13.2		JUG	1	1	CUGL	BS
1001	mpot BRANDSBY	13.2		JUG	1	1	OVAL HANDLE;FOUR VERT GROOVES DOWN 1BACK;CUGL	BS
1001	mpot MEDX	12.2	ROUNDED RED FE;S RQ;SST>2.0MM	JUG	1	1	1THUMBED BASE;CUGL SPOTS	B
1001	CBM RTIL	rom		TEG	1	1		BS
1001	mpot WALMGATE	14.2		JUG	1	1	CUGL	BS
1001	mpot YG	11.2		JAR	1	1		BS
1001	mpot YORK	12.2		JAR	1	1		BS
1001	mpot YORK	12.2		JAR	1	1	1EVERTED FLAT-TOPPED RIM	BS
1001	mpot YORK	12.2		JUG	1	1	1CUGL;VERT COMBED LINES	BS
1001	mpot YORK	12.2		JUG	1	1		BS
2002	mpot BRANDSBY	13.2	BLACK INT	CIST	1	1	1BUNG HOLE;EXT PLAIN GL	BS
2002	mpot BRANDSBY	13.2		CIST	1	1	STRAP HANDLE TWO THUMB IMPRESSIONS AT 1B/H JOIN;PLAIN EXT GL	BS
2002	mpot BRANDSBY	13.2		JUG	1	1	CUGL	BS
2002	ppot CSTN	16.1		CUP	1	1	1APPLIED WHITE LINES; ROLLER STAMPED	BS
2002	mpot HUM	14.2		JAR	1	1	1INT AND EXT PLAIN GL	BS
2002	mpot HUM	14.2			1	1	1UNGLAZED	BS
2002	mpot HUM	14.2	BLACK INT	JUG/JAR	1	1		BS

Context class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	PartREFNO
2002	mpot HUM	14.2		BOWL	2	2		BS
2002	ppot RYEDALE	16.1		BOWL	1	1	INT CUGL	BS
2002	ppot STSL	17.2		POSS	3	3		BS
2002	ppot TGW	17.2			1	1	BLUE DEC	BS
2002	mpot YG	11.2		JAR	1	1		BS
2002	mpot YORK	12.2		JAR	1	1		BS
2002	mpot YORK	12.2		JAR	1	1		BS
2003	PMGLPMGL	16.2	LTGR	WIND	1	1		BS 3
2003	mpot BRANDSBY	13.2		JUG	1	1	CUGL	BS
2003	ppot CSTN	16.1		CUP	1	1		BS
2003	ppot CSTN	16.1		CUP	1	1		BS
2003	mpot HUM	14.2		CAUL	1	1	DUTR-STYLE FOOT;EXT BROWN SLIP;INT PLAIN 1GL	BS
2003	mpot HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1	1	EXT BROWN SLIP	BS
2003	mpot HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1	1	HORIZ GROOVES ON SHOULDER;WHITE 1SLIPPED EXT	BS
2003	mpot HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1	1	UNGLAZED	BS
2003	mpot HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1	1		BS
2003	ppot RYEDALE	16.1			1	1	INT CUGL;OVAL SECTIONED HANDLE	BS
2003	ppot RYEDALE	16.1		BOWL	3	3	INT PLAIN GL	BS
2003	mpot YG	11.2		JAR	1	1		R

Context class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	Part	REFNO
2003	mpot YORK	12.2		JUG	1	1	CUGL	BS	
2004	mpot HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1	1	WHITE SLIPPED EXT;CUGL SPOTS	B	
2004	ppot RYEDALE	16.1		BOWL	1	1		BS	
2004	mpot YORK	12.2		JAR	1	1		BS	
2008	ppot CSTN	16.1	WRENTHORPE?	CUP	1	1	CLUSTER OF WHITE BLOBS ON GIRTH	BS	
2009	CBM CBM	rom			1	1	ABR SCRAP	BS	
2009	mpot YORK	12.2		JUG	1	1	CUGL	BS	
2011	COPPCOPP	nd		SHEET	1	1	THIN SHEET;ONE HOLE AND ONE ORIGINAL EDGE;BLACK COATING ON BOTH SIDES	BS	2
2011	IRON IRON	nd		OBJECT	1	1	POSSIBLY A TRAPEZOIDAL BUCKLE	BS	1
2011	CBM CBM	rom			1	1	SCRAP	BS	
2011	CBM CBM	rom			3	3	SCRAPS	BS	
2011	mpot HUM	14.2		JUG/JAR	1	1	WHITE SLIPPED EXT	BS	
2011	ppot PMLOC	16.1		BOWL	1	1	INT PLAIN GL	BS	
2011	mpot YG	11.2		JAR	1	1		BS	
2011	mpot YG	11.2		JAR	1	1		BS	
2011	mpot YG	11.2		JAR	1	1		BS	
2011	mpot YORK	12.2		JUG	1	1		R	
2013	mpot YG	11.2		JAR	1	1		BS	
2013	mpot YSPL	12.2	OFFWHITE	JUG	1	1		BS	

Context class	cname	date	subfabric	Form	Nosh	NoV	Description	PartREFNO
2020	CBM	CBM	rom		1	1		BS
3000	mpot	HUM	14.2	JUG/JAR	2	2		BS
3000	mpot	HUM	14.2	JUG	1	1		BS
3000	mpot	MISC	nd	JAR	1	1	LOWISH IRON;FINE Q SAND 1WHEELTHROWN	BS
3000	CBM	MTIL	15.2	FLOOR	1	1	VARIGATED;FINE SAND WITH CLEAN LENSES;R RED FE; R CALC (BURNT OUT) 1LINE IMPRESSED OVER WHITE SLIP	BS
3000	mpot	YG	11.2	JAR	1	1	REDDISH BODY;RED SST SAND;CARB CHERT	BS
3001	mpot	YORK	12.2	JUG	2	2		BS
3003	Mpot	YG	11.2	JAR	1	1		BS
3005	mpot	BRANDSBY	13.2	JUG	1	1		BS
3005	mpot	HUM	14.2	JUG/JAR	1	1		BS
3005	emod	LPMED	18.2	FLP	1	1		BS
3005	CBM	MTIL	12.2	FLAT	1	1		BS
3005	mpot	NLFS	11.2	JAR	1	1		BS
3005	CBM	RTIL	rom		9	9		BS
3005	mpot	YG	11.2	JAR	1	1		BS
3005	mpot	YG	11.2	JAR	1	1		BS
3005	mpot	YG	11.2	JAR	1	1		R