

Assessment of the Pottery and Ceramic Building Material from Driffield Terrace, York (YDT 04)

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An archaeological evaluation at Driffield Terrace, York, was carried out by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd. It consisted of four test pits, TP1 to TP4. These produced 52 finds which were submitted for identification and assessment (Table 1). The finds came from two deposits. A layer producing Roman finds which was cut by two Roman burials (recorded in test pits 1, 2 and 4) and a thick layer which overlay this Roman layer and which was interpreted as being of horticultural origin (observed in test pits 2, 3 and 4).

The finds suggest that the Roman layer contains mainly 2nd to early 3rd century material and that the horticultural layer is derived from the reworking of this layer, probably during the past 150 years.

Table 1

trench	CBM	POTTERY	Grand Total
TP1		3	3
TP2	2	22	24
TP3		8	8
TP4	1	16	17
Grand Total	3	49	52

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Two fragments of Roman tile were recovered. One of these was a curved *imbrex* tile, used alongside *tegula* tiles to form a roof. The other could not be identified.

A fragment of medieval flat roof tile was also recovered. Such tiles were used from the middle of the 12th century onwards.

Pottery

Roman

Forty-nine sherds of pottery of Roman date were recovered (Table 2). Most of these sherds are of types produced in York (Local burnished ware, B00; Eboracum ware, E01; local greyware, G03; local mortaria, M08). Wares from other parts of the British province were also present in small quantities (Dorset Black Burnished ware, B01; Nene Valley Colour-Coated ware, C01). Finally, there were sherds present from other parts of the Empire. These

include Samian vessels from southern and central Gaul (S01 and S02) and sherds of amphora. The amphora include 7 sherds of Dressel 20, the standard globular form from the Guadalquivir valley (AP25), 2 sherds of Gauloise amphora (AP27) and 9 sherds, possibly from a single vessel, of an unknown type. The distinguishing features of the fabric of this vessel are the presence of large flakes of golden mica and small fragments of limestone.

Table 2

cname	full name	Total
AA	Unidentified Amphora	9
AP25	DR20	7
AP27	Peacock & Williams Type 27 amphora	2
B00	Misc Burn	1
B01	Black Burnished ware 1	2
B03	Grey B3	2
C01	NVCC	3
E01	Ebor 1	9
G03	Local Greyware	9
M08	Eboracum and local mortaria	2
S01	SGS	2
S02	LMDV	1
Grand Total		49

The range of vessel forms present is wide (Table 3) but dominated by the sherds of amphora, followed by a typical range of forms, of which jars are the most common.

Table 3

Form	Total
AMPH	18
JAR	12
FLAG	3
BEAK	2
DR33	2
JAR/FLAG	2
MORT	2
	1
BOWL	1
BOWL, FLANGED	1
DR35	1
FLAG?	1
JUG	1

SJ	1
TAZZA	1
Grand Total	49

Early Modern

Five sherds of early modern date were present. They consist of two sherds of black-glazed coarseware (BL), a sherd from a porcelain lid with light blue sprigged decoration (ENPO), and two sherds of unglazed flowerpot (LPMLOC).

The black-glazed wares are of types produced over a long period of time, from the late 16th to the 20th centuries, the flowerpots are probably of later 18th century or later date and the porcelain lid appears to be of mid 19th-century date, by analogy with the use of this light blue sprigging on tea cups and saucers of this date.

Assessment

Stratigraphy

The finds come from two deposits observed in each of four test pits. The earlier deposit is dated to the Roman period since it is cut by two burials and contains abundant finds of Roman date (together with some intrusive material of later date).

The later deposit is of horticultural origin, probably the result of gardening of the earlier deposit and the addition of night soil and other domestic refuse. The majority of the finds submitted for assessment from this deposit were identical in character to those from the earlier soil, i.e. predominantly of Roman date with a few much later pieces.

The date of the post-Roman finds suggests that this horticultural phase is quite late in date, perhaps in the 19th century.

The nature of the Roman activity is of more interest. The finds include seven sherds from the same unusual amphora type and this suggests, firstly, that a single smashed vessel is involved and, secondly, that they derive from activity close to the site, rather than being carted out of the colonia or fortress as refuse to spread on the fields. If that were the origin of the material it is likely that the numerous steps involved would have led to the dispersal of the sherds from a single vessel. There is evidence for vertical distribution of these sherds (from context 1014 to 1013) and possibly for horizontal distribution (the sherd from context 1008 in TP2 may be from the same vessel as those in TP4).

Date Range

The Roman pottery includes no sherds of types which are only of late 1st-century/early 2nd-century date (such as Rustic ware jars) and are more typical of assemblages of 2nd century

date, including types which first appeared in the second quarter of the 2nd century. Much of the pottery found is likely to be of York origin and this supports a date range up to the early 3rd century. There are few examples of definite late 3rd or 4th-century date although a sherd of Dorset BB1 flanged bowl is likely to be of this date. Therefore, a broad date range of early 2nd to early 3rd century is likely for much of the pottery. This corresponds to the period of greatest extent of the settlement at York.

Function

The Romano-British ceramic building material includes a fragment of an imbrex tile, indicating the existence of a structure with a tiled roof. However, this structure need not have been located close to the site. The Roman pottery assemblage is dominated by sherds of amphora (18 out of 49 sherds). They form a much higher proportion of the assemblage than is typical in York and its environs. Furthermore, the amphora sherds are not solely of Dressel 20 (AP25), the most common amphora found in Roman Britain, and include Gaulish types and those of unknown origin. The remaining sherds, however, form a typical domestic assemblage, with a mixture of cooking, storage, tableware, drinking, food preparation, and religious functions (the latter being a *tazza* used, it is surmised, for incense burning).

Retention

The collection should be retained for future study.

Further study or treatment

The unidentified amphora sherds could be sent to a specialist in Roman amphora for identification. A thin section might then be required to aid the study. Cost: £25.00 plus VAT for specialist study. £22.50 plus VAT for thin section.

Appendix 1

REFNO	trench	context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition
1	TP1	1003	POTTERY	BL		BOWL		1	1	31	
1	TP1	1003	POTTERY	ENPO		LID	MOULDED;LIGHT BLUE SPRIGS	1	1	2	
1	TP1	1003	POTTERY	LPMLOC		FLP		1	1	6	
1	TP1	1003	POTTERY	YATAP25		AMPH		1	1	77	
1	TP1	1003	POTTERY	YATE01		JAR	RED-SLIPPED	1	1	8	
1	TP1	1003	POTTERY	YATS01		DR33		1	1	7	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	BL		BOWL		1	1	1	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATAP25	FINER THAN NORMAL	AMPH		3	1	6	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATAP25		AMPH		1	1	57	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATC01		BEAK		1	1	7	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATE01		JAR		1	1	22	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATE01		FLAG	WHITE SLIPPED EXT	2	2	33	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATE01		SJ		1	1	29	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATM08	BLACK SLAG TRITS	MORT		2	1	69	
2	TP2	1007	POTTERY	YATS02		DR33		1	1	3	
3	TP2	1008	CBM	RTIL				2	2	5	MORTARED
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATAA	LIMESTONE;GOLDEN MICA	AMPH		1	1	5	
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATAP27		AMPH		2	1	11	
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATB00		JAR	EVERTED RIM	1	1	4	

REFNO	trench	context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATC01		BEAK	ROULETTED	1	1	7	
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATC01		JUG	NARROW NECK;GLOB BODY	1	1	10	
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATE01		FLAG	WHITE SLIPPED	1	1	13	
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATE01		JAR/FLAG	WHTe SLIPPED	2	2	3	
3	TP2	1008	POTTERY	YATG01				1	1	6	
4	TP3	1010	POTTERY		A SAQ <0.2MM;M FE/GLAUC?;A MUSC	DISH	BURNISHED GROOVE BELOW RIM	1	1	9	
4	TP4	1013	POTTERY	LPMLOC		FLP	ID?	1	1	29	
4	TP4	1013	CBM	MTIL		FLAT		1	1	34	
4	TP4	1013	CBM	RTIL		IMBR		1	1	103	
4	TP3	1010	POTTERY	YATAA	BLACK SAND	AMPH		2	2	76	
4	TP4	1013	POTTERY	YATAA	LIMESTONE;GOLDEN MICA;MUSCOVITE;BROWN CALCAREOUS MATRIX	AMPH		3	1	83	
4	TP3	1010	POTTERY	YATAP25		AMPH		1	1	50	
4	TP4	1013	POTTERY	YATAP25		AMPH		1	1	19	
4	TP3	1010	POTTERY	YATB01		JAR		1	1	16	
4	TP3	1010	POTTERY	YATB01		BOWL, FLANGED		1	1	21	
4	TP3	1010	POTTERY	YATB03		JAR	ACUTE LATTICE BURNISHING	2	2	58	
4	TP3	1010	POTTERY	YATG01		JAR	TURNED BASE	1	1	39	

REFNO	trench	context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition
4	TP4	1013	POTTERY	YATG01		JAR		2	2	39	
6	TP4	1014	POTTERY	YATAA	LIMESTONE;GOLDEN MICA;MUSCOVITE;BROWN CALCAREOUS MATRIX	AMPH		3	1	92	
6	TP4	1014	POTTERY	YATE01		TAZZA	WHITE SLIPPED	1	1	18	
6	TP4	1014	POTTERY	YATG01		JAR		2	2	22	
6	TP4	1014	POTTERY	YATG01		BOWL	BEAD RIM	1	1	11	
6	TP4	1014	POTTERY	YATG01		JAR	SMALL TURNED BASE	1	1	42	
6	TP4	1014	POTTERY	YATG01		FLAG?	HANDLE	1	1	7	
6	TP4	1014	POTTERY	YATS01		DR35		1	1	3	