

Assessment of the Pottery from the 2005 excavations at Dunnington, North Yorkshire (Dunnington through the Ages Project)

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Excavations at Dunnington, directed by D Stirk for the “Dunnington Through the Ages” project, produced a small quantity of pottery. This pottery was identified and assessed by the authors and was found to include finds of later prehistoric and Roman date, the latest of which is probably early 2nd century or later. There is also a small quantity of late 18th-century or later material.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Four fragments of ceramic building material were recorded. One of these was too small and abraded to be identified, but since it comes from a feature which produced only sherds of Iron Age to Early Roman date, it is probably a fragment of Roman tile. Another fragment of probable Roman tile was recorded but was too small for its form to be determined. The other two fragments consist of a fragment of field drain, probably of late 18th, 19th or 20th century date and a fragment of flat roof tile, which could be of any date from the mid 12th-century onwards, but which is probably of post-medieval or early modern date.

Table 1

Form	Data	CBM	MOD	PMTIL	RTIL	Grand Total
	Sum of Nosh	1			1	2
	Sum of NoV	1			1	2
	Sum of Weight	1			17	18
FIELD DRAIN	Sum of Nosh		1			1
	Sum of NoV		1			1
	Sum of Weight		19			19
FLAT	Sum of Nosh			1		1
	Sum of NoV			1		1
	Sum of Weight			32		32

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Total Sum of Nosh	1	1	1	1	4
Total Sum of NoV	1	1	1	1	4
Total Sum of Weight	1	19	32	17	69

Fired Clay

A single fragment of fired clay was recorded. It appears to have an impression from a wattle, in which case it is evidence for the use of daub-covered wattle walled structures on the site, presumably in the Iron Age/early Roman period.

Glass

A fragment of a clear glass moulded bottle was recorded. It is of late 19th or 20th-century date.

Pottery

The prehistoric pottery was classified using a system based on the British Museum's Pots and Pits project (Rigby 2004), with additions based on the assessment of the A64 Melton interchange, East Yorkshire pottery (Vince & Steane 2005 #46273).

The Roman pottery was recorded using the classification employed by York Archaeological Trust (Monaghan 1997 #113).

The early modern pottery was recorded using the classification employed at AVAC. All the ware codes used are listed in Appendix 1.

Pottery

Later Prehistoric to early Roman

Sixty-three sherds of later prehistoric to early Roman pottery were recorded. In the hand, they appear to belong to four fabric groups (Table 1). Of these, the most common is IASST, which contains coarse angular fragments of sandstone and quartz, probably in the main derived from the Millstone Grit. This rock outcrops to the west and northwest of Dunnington but is the main constituent of local sands and gravels. The second most common fabric is IAERR, tempered with angular fragments of igneous rock. Such rock fragments occur, alongside others in glacial tills but it is likely that they were deliberately selected by the potters and added to the clay before working. By eye it is difficult to identify these rocks with any confidence. However, thin section analysis of early Anglo-Saxon pottery from Yorkshire has shown that there are differences in the character of the rocks found in clays and sands to

the east of the Wolds and those found in the Vale of York. It would therefore be possible to determine whether the Dunnington examples were made locally or traded from the east. A small number of sherds contained large angular fragments of white flint. This is the main component of gravels deposited along the western fringe of the Wolds but is rare or absent in gravels from the centre of the Vale of York. It is therefore likely that this fabric was traded from a source or sources to the east of Dunnington. Finally, IACALC is tempered with fragments of sparry calcite. Thin section analysis shows that these came from veins of calcite cutting through the chalk whilst the parent clay often contains glauconite, which is only found locally in the Speeton clay, which outcrops on the southeast side of the Vale of Pickering. This ware was produced from the Bronze Age to the early Anglo-Saxon period (Rigby 2004; Vince forthcoming) and there are differences in the petrology and chemical composition of the Iron Age and Early Anglo-Saxon examples. In the Vale of York around York the ware is present in the Iron Age and perhaps throughout the earlier part of the Roman period in small quantities (Monaghan 1997 states that it is the most common intrusive fabric in early to mid Roman assemblages in York) but becomes common in the later 3rd and 4th centuries. There are no differences in the way in which the pots were made, and only slight differences in vessel shape and rim form. At present, no comparative chemical data exists for the Iron Age and it is therefore not possible to say for certain that sherds of this fabric are of Iron Age or Roman date unless they are found in stratified deposits. The lack of other late Roman pottery from Dunnington, and the fact that five of the seven sherds were found in assemblages with other, definite, Iron Age to Early Roman sherds, indicates that the Dunnington sherds are almost certainly Iron Age.

All the sherds probably come from jars with flat bases, a straight lower half of the body and a variety of shapes in the upper half and rim (discussed in detail by Rigby 2004). Two IACALC and two IASST vessels have rims which would repay drawing and typological study.

Four sherds show signs of use: one sherd of IACALC and one sherd of IASST have a black deposit on the interior and two sherds of IASST have sooting on the exterior. The latter vessels were therefore used to boil water or some other drink or heat a liquid food such as a soup or stew.

Table 2

Context	Data	IACALC	IAERR	IAFLINT	IASST	Grand Total
5000	Sum of Nosh	3	1	1	1	6
	Sum of NoV	3	1	1	1	6
	Sum of Weight	17	40	28	12	97
5002	Sum of Nosh		1			1
	Sum of NoV		1			1
	Sum of Weight		24			24
5003	Sum of Nosh	1	1		13	15
	Sum of NoV	1	1		7	9
	Sum of Weight	13	12		560	585
5004	Sum of Nosh		3		4	7
	Sum of NoV		2		1	3
	Sum of Weight		50		19	69
5006	Sum of Nosh	1			9	10
	Sum of NoV	1			1	2
	Sum of Weight	15			80	95
5009	Sum of Nosh			2	1	3
	Sum of NoV			2	1	3
	Sum of Weight			6	2	8
5012	Sum of Nosh				1	1
	Sum of NoV				1	1
	Sum of Weight				240	240
5013	Sum of Nosh			1		1
	Sum of NoV			1		1
	Sum of Weight			1		1
5014	Sum of Nosh	1				1
	Sum of NoV	1				1
	Sum of Weight	34				34
5025	Sum of Nosh				1	1
	Sum of NoV				1	1
	Sum of Weight				22	22
5026	Sum of Nosh				1	1
	Sum of NoV				1	1
	Sum of Weight				43	43
5034	Sum of Nosh				2	2
	Sum of NoV				1	1
	Sum of Weight				2	2
5040	Sum of Nosh		1			1
	Sum of NoV		1			1
	Sum of Weight		10			10
5055	Sum of Nosh	1	5		4	10
	Sum of NoV	1	1		1	3
	Sum of Weight	2	123		24	149
5072	Sum of Nosh				2	2
	Sum of NoV				1	1
	Sum of Weight				2	2
5088	Sum of Nosh				1	1
	Sum of NoV				1	1
	Sum of Weight				12	12
Total Sum of Nosh		7	12	4	40	63
Total Sum of NoV		7	7	4	18	36

Total Sum of Weight 81 259 35 1018 1393

Roman

Fifteen sherds of Roman pottery were recorded (Table 2). With the exception of a sherd of Samian ware, too abraded to identify more closely, the sherds are of types produced in York between the later 1st and the mid 3rd centuries. Most are of types which were current throughout that period but one, a rustic jar (YATR02), is of a type that is only found in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries and two came from burnished vessels which probably date to the early 2nd century or later (YATB3).

The form of all but two of the sherds could be identified and of these 11 were jars, one was a dish or platter whilst the Samian ware sherd was from a bowl.

The sherds are smaller and have a much lower mean weight than the Iron Age types but do include large sherds which, if in a ploughsoil would have broken into smaller pieces within a short period of time. It is therefore likely that they are debris from occupation on the site rather than rubbish from occupation nearby discarded with manure onto fields.

Table 3

Context	Data	YATB03	YATE01	YATG01	YATR02	YATS00	YATW01	Grand Total
5000	Sum of NoV	1	1	3				5
	Sum of Nosh	1	1	3				5
	Sum of Weight	25	17	40				82
5001	Sum of NoV	1		1				2
	Sum of Nosh	1		1				2
	Sum of Weight	17		1				18
5002	Sum of NoV		1		1			2
	Sum of Nosh		1		1			2
	Sum of Weight		1		11			12
5005	Sum of NoV					1	1	2
	Sum of Nosh					1	1	2
	Sum of Weight					1	5	6
5013	Sum of NoV			1				1
	Sum of Nosh			1				1
	Sum of Weight			2				2
5020	Sum of NoV			1				1
	Sum of Nosh			1				1
	Sum of Weight			10				10
5027	Sum of NoV			1				1
	Sum of Nosh			1				1
	Sum of Weight			13				13
5064	Sum of NoV			1				1
	Sum of Nosh			1				1
	Sum of Weight			9				9

Late Medieval and Early Modern

Nine sherds of post-Roman date were recorded (Table 3). One of these is a possible sherd of Humberware, but is too small and abraded to be identified with any certainty. The remainder are of late 18th-century or later date and are likely to have been deposited on the site with farmyard manure or night soil.

Table 4

Context	Data	BL	CREA	HUM?	TPW	Grand Total
5000	Sum of NoV	4	1		1	6
	Sum of Nosh	4	1		1	6
	Sum of Weight	132	9		1	142
5000? Jessica Howden	Sum of NoV			1	1	2
	Sum of Nosh			1	1	2
	Sum of Weight			3	2	5
5038	Sum of NoV		1			1
	Sum of Nosh		6			6
	Sum of Weight		9			9

Stone

Forty-seven fragments of stone were recorded. Of these, twenty-one showed no evidence of human use and are probably simply pebbles from the local Quaternary gravel.

Burnt stones

Sixteen fragments, however, show signs of burning and were probably used in the Iron Age/Early Roman period. These stones appear to be rounded pebbles of sandstone which have been burnt grey and have subsequently cracked. Since there is no sign of a clay matrix, nor any evidence for a gradient in temperature or firing conditions, it is unlikely that the stones were used as hearth bases. It is therefore probable that they were heated and then used either to produce steam by being splashed with water, as in a modern sauna, or were used to heat water by being thrown into a trough of water whilst still hot. Such water could then either have been used for bathing or for boiling food. Mounds of burnt stones are a feature of the Bronze Age in England and opinion varies about their interpretation. Such mounds usually occur next to a source of water, such as a river, lake, pond or stream.

Coal

Fifteen fragments of coal or organic shale were found. Only two of these were burnt, both fragments of shale, from contexts 5038 and 5072. The first of these contexts also produced a sherd of Creamware, and it is therefore likely that the shale came from a recent coal fire. However, the second piece came from a context which produced a sherd of Iron Age/Early Roman pot. Similarly, the unburnt coal fragments mostly come from deposits containing recent finds, but include fragments from contexts 5001, 5020, and 5078. All are small fragments and it is more likely that they came onto the site in recent times than that coal was being burnt on the site in the Iron Age/Early Roman period.

Assessment

Stratigraphy

The earliest possible date for the filling of the various features which produced these finds, its *tpq* (terminus post quem, or “date after which”), is given in Table 4. The number of finds from any context is low and in most cases there is no evidence to indicate that the finds were deposited directly into the feature. Therefore, the actual date of the deposits might be considerably later than the *tpq*. The material is very similar in character to that from the previous Dunnington site, where careful examination of the finds from a series of sections across a ditched feature indicated that it was probable that the “Iron Age” pottery was in use at the same time as Roman pottery found with it. The few rim sherds found in the 2005 season are consistent with such a late date, but it is always possible that some features are much earlier.

Table 5

Context	TPQ
5000	L18TH +
5000? Jessica Howden	L18TH +
5001	E2ND+
5002	L1+
5003	IA
5004	IA
5005	L1+
5006	IA
5009	IA

5012	IA
5013	L1+
5014	IA?
5017	PREH?
5020	L1+
5025	IA
5026	IA
5027	L1+
5034	L1+
5038	L18+
5040	IA
5043	L1+
5055	IA
5064	L1+
5072	IA
5078	ND
5088	L1+
5089	ND

Further Work

As noted above, four of the Iron Age to early Roman sherds should be illustrated and compared with vessels from local sites where the date of deposition is clearer. It would also be interesting to find out whether the IAERR sherds were made locally or are imported from east Yorkshire and to test the identification of the IACALC vessels. Both of these tasks would require thin section and chemical analysis.

Retention

All of the material from stratified deposits should be retained for future study. The early modern pottery could be discarded.

Appendix 1

cname	subfabric	Listed	full name	period	earliest date	latest date	Broad source	Narrow source	source	bibliography	Sherds	Vessels	Wt(gm)
BL		BL	Black-glazed wares	pmed	1500	1750	England	various	various		4	4	132
BONE		BONE		na	0	0					1	1	1
CBM		Cbm	Ceramic building material	na	0	0	na	na	na	na	1	1	1
COPP		COPP	Copper alloy	na	0	0					1	1	59
CREA		CREA	Creamware	emod	1765	1830	England	Staffordshire			7	2	18
FIREDCLAY		FIREDCLAY		na	0	0					1	1	16
GEO		GEO	Unworked stone	NA	0	0					26	26	112
GEO	BURNT SHALE	GEO	Unworked stone	NA	0	0					1	1	0
GEO	FLINT	GEO	Unworked stone	NA	0	0					3	3	2
GLASS	CLEAR	GLASS		na	0	0					1	1	1
HUM?		HUM?	Humber ware?	lmed	1250	1500	England	Humber Estuary	various	Mainman 1993, 590	1	1	3
IACALC		IACALC	Iron Age Calcite-Tempered Ware	ia	-800	40	England				7	7	81
IAERR		IAERR	Iron Age Erratic-Tempered ware	ia	-700	40	England				12	7	259
IAFLINT		IAFLINT	Iron Age flint-	ia	-800	100	England				4	4	35

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cname	subfabric	Listed	full name	period	earliest date	latest date	Broad source	Narrow source	source	bibliography	Sherds	Vessels	Wt(gm)
			tempered ware										
IASST		IASST	Iron Age Sandstone-tempered ware	ia	-800	100	England				40	18	1018
MOD		MOD	Modern	mod	1850	2000	British Isles	-			1	1	19
PMTIL		PMTIL	Post-medieval ceramic building material	pmed	0	0					1	1	32
RTIL		RTIL	Roman tile	rom	40	400	England	-			1	1	17
STONE		STONE	Stone	na	0	0					3	3	854
STONE	COAL	STONE	Stone	na	0	0					14	9	18
STONE	FLINT	STONE	Stone	na	0	0					1	1	5
TPW		TPW	Transfer printed ware	emod	1770	1900	England	Staffordshire	? numerous sources		2	2	3
YATB03		YATB03	Grey B3	rom	40	400				Monaghan 1997	2	2	42
YATE01		YATE01	Ebor 1	rom	40	400				Monaghan 1997	2	2	18
YATG01		YATG01	Dales-type greyware	rom	40	400				Monaghan 1997	8	8	75
YATR02		YATR02	Rustic 2	rom	40	400				Monaghan 1997	1	1	11
YATS00		YATS00	Samian	rom	40	400				Monaghan 1997	1	1	1
YATW01		YATW01	Ebor white	rom	40	400				Monaghan 1997	1	1	5
ZDATE		ZDATE	General context date	na	0	0	na	na	na		27	27	0

Appendix 2

Context	spotdate	comments	class	cname	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	earliest date
5001	E2ND+		POTTERY	YATB03	JAR		R	1	1	17	ABRA		40
5001	E2ND+		CBM	RTIL			BS	1	1	17	ABRA		40
5001	E2ND+		GEO	GEO			BS	8	8	16			0
5001	E2ND+		POTTERY	YATG01	JAR		BS	1	1	1			40
5001	E2ND+		STONE	STONE			BS	3	3	1	WASTE		0
5003	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		B;BS	6	6	29			-800
5003	IA		GEO	GEO			BS	3	3	4			0
5003	IA		POTTERY	IAERR	JAR		B	1	1	12			-700
5003	IA		POTTERY	IACALC	JAR		R	1	1	13			-800
5003	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR	SHL=5026; NO ACTUAL JOINS WITHIN CONTEXT, BUT SEEMS THE SAME	R;BS	7	1	531		SOOTED UNDER RIM	-800
5004	IA		POTTERY	IAERR	JAR		BS	3	2	50			-700
5004	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	4	1	19			-800
5006	IA		POTTERY	IACALC	JAR		R	1	1	15			-800
5006	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		R;BS	9	1	80		BLACK DEP INT	-800
5009	IA		POTTERY	IAFLINT	JAR		BS	2	2	6	ABRA		-800
5009	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	1	1	2	ABRA		-800
5012	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		B	1	1	240			-800
5025	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	1	1	22			-800
5026	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR	SHL=2003	BS	1	1	43		SOOTED EXT	-800
5040	IA		POTTERY	IAERR	JAR		BS	1	1	10	ABRA		-700

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Context	spotdate	comments	class	cname	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	earliest date
5040	IA		GEO	GEO			BS	1	1	1			0
5055	IA		GEO	GEO			BS	1	1	16			0
5055	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	4	1	24	ABRA		-800
5055	IA		POTTERY	IAERR	JAR		BS	5	1	123	ABRA		-700
5055	IA		POTTERY	IACALC	JAR		BS	1	1	2			-800
5072	IA		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	2	1	2	VABRA		-800
5072	IA		POTTERY	BONE			BS	1	1	1			0
5072	IA		GEO	GEO			BS	1	1	0			0
5014	IA?		POTTERY	IACALC	JAR		BS	1	1	34		BLACK DEP INT	-800
5005	L1+		POTTERY	YATW01	JAR/FLAG		BS	1	1	5	VABRA		40
5005	L1+		POTTERY	YATS00	BOWL		BS	1	1	1	ABRA		40
5005	L1+		GEO	GEO			BS	2	2	27			0
5013	L1+		POTTERY	IAFLINT	JAR		BS	1	1	1	ABRA		-800
5013	L1+		POTTERY	YATG01	JAR	RED SLIP	BS	1	1	2	ABRA		40
5013	L1+		GEO	GEO			BS	1	1	1			0
5020	L1+		STONE	STONE			BS	1	1	1			0
5020	L1+		POTTERY	YATG01	JAR		BS	1	1	10	ABRA		40
5027	L1+		STONE	STONE			BS	2	2	763		BURNT	0
5027	L1+		POTTERY	YATG01	JAR		BS	1	1	13	ABRA		40
5034	L1+		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	2	1	2			-800
5043	L1+		GEO	GEO			BS	2	2	1			0
5043	L1+		POTTERY	CBM			BS	1	1	1			0
5064	L1+		POTTERY	YATG01			BS	1	1	9	ABRA		40
5088	L1+		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	1	1	12			-800
5038	L18+		POTTERY	CREA	PLATE		B;BS	6	1	9			1765

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Context	spotdate	comments	class	cname	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	earliest date
5038	L18+		STONE	STONE			BS	4	1	8	BURNT SHALE REMAINS	BURNT	0
5000	L18+		CBM	MOD	FIELD DRAIN		BS	1	1	19			1850
5000	L18+		POTTERY	YATE01	JAR		B	1	1	17	ABRA		40
5000	L18+		POTTERY	IASST	JAR		BS	1	1	12			-800
5000	L18+		POTTERY	IACALC	JAR		B;BS	3	3	17			-800
5000	L18+		POTTERY	IAFLINT	JAR		BS	1	1	28			-800
5000	L18+		STONE	STONE			BS	2	2	6	WASTE		0
5000	L18+		CBM	FIRED CLAY			BS	1	1	16			0
5000	L18+		POTTERY	YATG01	JAR		BS	3	3	40	ABRA; SOIL DEP		40
5000	L18+		POTTERY	YATB03	DISH		R	1	1	25			40
5000	L18+		POTTERY	IAERR	JAR		BS	1	1	40			-700
5000	L18+		GEO	GEO			BS	3	3	5			0
5000	L18+		GLASS	GLASS	MOULDED BOT		BS	1	1	1			0
5000	L18+		POTTERY	TPW	PLATE		BS	1	1	1			1770
5000	L18+		POTTERY	CREA	PLATE		R	1	1	9			1765
5000	L18+		CBM	PMTIL	FLAT		BS	1	1	32			0
5000	L18+		POTTERY	BL	PANC		R;B;BS	4	4	132			1500
5000	L18+		GEO	GEO			BS	2	2	27			0
5000? Jessica Howden	L18+		POTTERY	TPW	PLATE		BS	1	1	2			1770
5000? Jessica	L18+		GEO	GEO			BS	1	1	12			0

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Context	spotdate	comments	class	cname	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	earliest date
Howden													
5000? Jessica Howden	L18+		POTTERY	HUM?	JUG?	HANDLE?	BS	1	1	3	VABRA		1250
5000? Jessica Howden	L18+		STONE	STONE			BS	1	1	1			0
5002	L1+		POTTERY	YATR02	JAR		BS	1	1	11	ABRA		40
5002	L1+		POTTERY	IAERR	JAR		BS	1	1	24			-700
5002	L1+		POTTERY	YATE01	JAR		BS	1	1	1	VABRA		40
5078	ND		GEO	GEO			BS	5	5	4			0
5078	ND		STONE	STONE			BS	3	1	1			0
5017	PREH?		STONE	STONE			BS	1	1	91	RED FRAGMENT	BURNT	0