

The Pottery from Moss Street Depot, York (YMD'03)

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Excavations at Moss Street Depot, York, by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd revealed a sequence of activity which probably started in the 2nd to early 3rd century with the possible dumping of refuse on the site (much of which is found in later deposits) but few features (Period 1). In Period 2, two parallel ditches were dug in the NW corner of the site. These are interpreted as an intra-cemetery trackway. The backfill of these ditches includes material which has a funerary context, such as complete horses, beads, high quality glass, and a lead model of part of a cart.

After the backfilling of the Period 2 ditches burials (F49 followed by triple burial F4) cut through its fill (Period 3). Elsewhere, a curvilinear ditch and two pits which cut Period 2 deposits are assigned to this period.

There is little evidence for activity on the site in the Anglo-Saxon period but in the medieval period (Period 4) linear plots were established, associated with ploughing.

A few post-medieval (Period 5) and modern (Period 6) features were present (Fig 1).

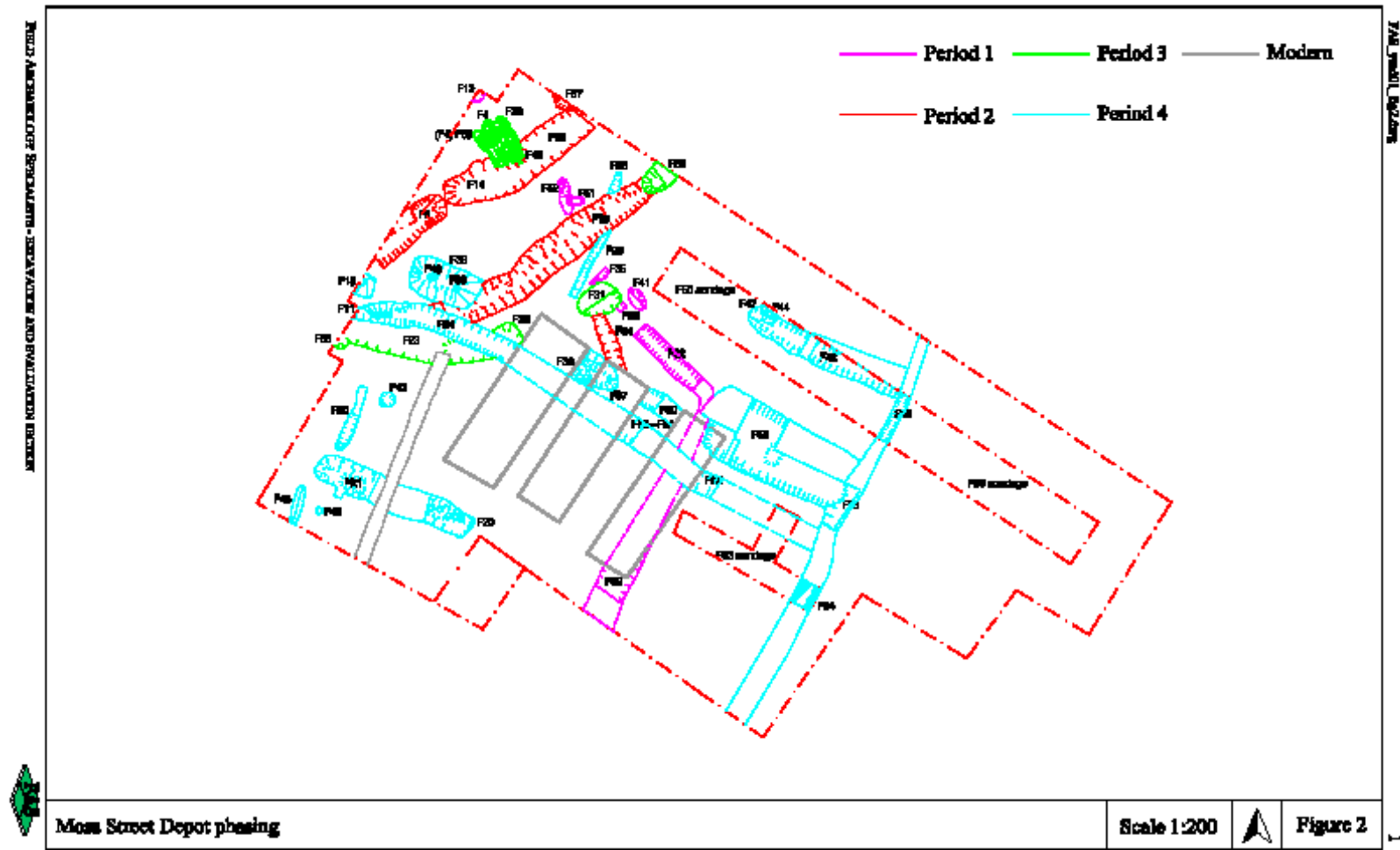


Figure 1 Plan showing major features © FAS Ltd

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The pottery was quantified by sherd count, the maximum number of vessels and by weight in grams (Table 1). A study of Table 1 shows that the majority of the pottery comes from medieval deposits, although much of that pottery is of Roman date and of similar character to that from the stratified Roman deposits.

Table 1

period	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
-	20	17	339
1	54	50	1341
2	487	413	8934
3	166	166	2324
4	919	839	17590
5	0	1	0
6	59	53	797
Grand Total	1705	1539	31325

The pottery was assigned to ware types based on the schema used by Monaghan for the Roman period and Holdsworth, Brooks and Mainman for the Anglo-Scandinavian and later (Holdsworth 1997; Brooks 1987; Mainman 1990 and 1993a;1993b).

Traces of use, such as sooting and other deposits, were recorded as was the condition of the sherds. Over a third of the pottery was either abraded or very abraded.

The Roman Pottery

[insert Fig 00 here (DR5, DR6 and DR7)]

Most of the pottery found is of types described in detail by Monaghan. Exceptions include sherds of amphora (YATAA), which have been examined in thin section and using chemical analysis. These analyses suggest that several sherds come from a globular amphora, similar in size and shape to Dressel 20, but whose fabric suggests a south-eastern English or north-eastern Gaulish origin. Although no direct comparison has been made, the fabric is consistent with an origin in the Colchester area, where amphorae are known to have been produced. The other amphora type studied is probably a Chalk 6 amphora, also known as Peacock and Williams Class 50 and Augst class 53 (Tomber & Dore 1998, P&W AM 50).

Very little of the Samian ware was identified to even broad source groups.

Types datable to the early 2nd century were present. Most of the diagnostic pieces were Samian vessels (Dr 18/31; Dr 27 and Dr 67) which fell from popularity in the mid 2nd century.

Most of the Roman pottery, however, is of types typical of the later 2nd and early 3rd centuries and most of this pottery is of types produced at York itself (Eboracum ware – YATE1, YATE7 and YATW1, mortaria (YATM3 and YATM4); local greyware – YATG1, and local burnished greyware – B3). These vessels include a few of types which are thought to show North

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African influence and are consequently dated to the early 3rd century (platters and head pots).

Non-local and imported pottery of later 2nd to 3rd century date includes Brockley Hill and Verulamium-region mortaria (YATM15); Northern French mortaria (YATM11-12); Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria (YATM14), Dressel 20 amphorae (including one with a fine textured fabric characteristics of the latest products) and some Nene Valley colour-coated wares (YATC1 to C3) and Dorset Black-Burnished wares (YATB1) as well as a range of Samian ware vessels (Dr 31; Dr 32; Dr 33; Dr 37; Dr 45; Dr 68; Dr 72; and Curle 23).

Mid to late 3rd century pottery is represented by Dales-type shelly ware (YATH1) but only five sherds of this fabric were recorded, of which only one is definitely from a Dales ware jar. However, Nene Valley folded beakers with scale decoration, which are at least partly contemporary with Dales shelly ware, were common. Six sherds of Knapton jars in calcite-tempered ware fabric were present. This is a later 3rd-century to early 4th-century type. This seems to suggest that there was a hiatus in pottery deposition during the mid 3rd century.

Fourth century pottery consisted of Crambeck greyware (YATB12) and the remaining Calcite-tempered ware (YATK0), including a late 4th-century Huntcliffe jar.

The range of forms present includes vessels used for food preparation and cooking, drinking, and dining. In addition, a number of amphora sherds were present. Most of the sherds are of Dressel 20 globular amphora, produced in the Guadalquivir valley and used mainly as containers for olive oil, and Gauloise amphora (YATAP27-30) produced in northern Gaul and probably used mainly as wine containers. However, the collection also contained single examples of Peacock and Williams Classes 13 and 50 amphora (Peacock & Williams 1986) also known as Liparian amphora and Richborough 527; three sherds of a single Chalk 6 type; a coarse Baetican cylindrical amphora; vessels with black sand inclusions (probably from central Italy) and a group of 16 sherds of an unidentified amphora type, noted above (YATAA), shown by thin section and chemical analysis to be of south-eastern English or northwestern Gaulish origin. These sherds might come from a single vessel, although no joining sherds were found despite being searched for. The fabric is a red-firing calcareous clay, with a salt surface and contains sparse rounded polished quartz grains. The vessel, or vessels, was globular and similar in thickness, manufacture and surface treatment to Dressel 20 globular amphorae but no featured sherds were present.

A wide range of forms were represented in the collection (Table 3). Where these could be assigned a specific Monaghan form code these have been used but in the main the sherds could only be broadly identified to a form class. Although it is difficult to separate all of the pottery into chronological groups (and there is a huge amount of mixing and residuality, so this cannot be done stratigraphically) there is a clear difference in the character of the 2nd/early 3rd century and the later 3rd century pottery. The former consists of a range of vessel types whilst the latter consists mainly of beakers and jars. To some extent, this followed the

general pattern of pottery use in York, but it seems that there is indeed an over-representation of beakers on the site. Given that the area was used for burial it is possible that this concentration is related to rituals such as funeral feasts and the giving of libations to the dead.

Table 2

cname	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
YATAA	44	30	1278
YATAP13	1	1	6
YATAP25	88	68	5261
YATAP27-30	31	25	1110
YATAP50	3	1	171
YATB01	69	67	1164
YATB02	1	1	27
YATB03	83	72	1607
YATB07	5	5	44
YATB12	18	18	344
YATB15	10	10	351
YATC01	90	82	559
YATC02	21	13	284
YATC03	156	129	930
YATC24	14	14	18
YATE01	169	162	2834
YATE07	17	16	235
YATG01	181	177	2938
YATG08	3	2	58
YATH01	6	6	32
YATK00	51	36	1196
YATM02	1	1	26
YATM03	5	5	176
YATM04	1	1	64
YATM11-12	1	1	70
YATM12	1	1	42
YATM14	28	22	1293
YATM15	4	4	484
YATP00	32	32	561
YATP08	1	1	11
YATS00	164	146	1991
YATS04	1	1	6
YATW01	11	10	146
Grand Total	1311	1160	25317

Table 3

Form	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
Not Identifiable	17	17	28
18/31	20	18	333
27	2	2	11
31	1	1	62
32	1	1	4
33	5	5	52

AVAC Report 2005/25

37	13	12	125
44	1	1	6
45	9	7	232
67	1	1	15
68	1	1	16
72	1	1	1
AMPH	144	103	5199
BEAKER	275	234	1734
BEAKER?	2	2	10
BOWL	159	145	2831
BOWL/JAR	1	1	12
BOWL/PLATTER	1	1	26
BOWL?	1	1	12
CASTOR BOX	3	1	92
CURLE 23	1	1	78
DISH	40	38	700
DISH?	1	1	13
FACE POT	2	2	24
FIGU	1	1	0
FLAG	6	6	147
FLAG/JAR	8	8	105
FLAG?	6	6	100
FLAGON	6	5	140
FLAGON?	1	1	10
FLANGED BOWL	1	1	11
FLANGED DISH	3	1	96
GLOB AMPH	13	13	1680
GLOBULAR AMPH	10	9	947
HEADPOT	2	2	18
JAR	471	439	6470
JAR/BOWL	1	1	74
JAR/FLAG	8	8	77
JAR/FLAG?	2	2	3
JAR/FLAGON	1	1	42
JAR;FLAG	1	1	74
JAR?	5	5	30
JD	1	1	18
JH3	1	1	85
JK	6	6	438
JUG	1	1	12
LAMP-CHIMNEY	2	1	67
LID/DISH	1	1	8
MINIATURE JAR	1	1	25
MORT	40	34	2154
MORT?	1	1	1
OBJECT	5	2	625
PLATTER	2	2	25
TAZZA	2	2	219
Grand Total	1311	1160	25317

Anglo-Scandinavian

Two sherds of Anglo-Scandinavian York ware (YORKA) were recorded. Recent thin section and chemical analysis of vessels from Fishergate shows that it was produced in West Yorkshire, including Thorer (Vince 2004). Both sherds come from jars. This ware was produced in the late 9th and early 10th centuries but was in decline in York, if indeed it was still being used, in the mid/late 10th century. Both were unstratified (C1100) and there is therefore a possibility that they were brought onto the site as a result of earthmoving activities at a much later period. However, a similar small collection of late 9th.early 10th-century wares was noted by the authors on another recent site in the Mount area.

Medieval

[insert Fig 00 here, DR1]]

Three hundred and eleven sherds of medieval pottery, representing no more than two hundred and sixty-one vessels were recorded (Table 2). The most common type was York Gritty ware, which was current between the mid 11th and the mid 13th centuries. However, in most contexts where this ware was found there were also sherds of York Splashed ware (YSP), and York Glazed ware (YORK) mostly from jugs. This suggests that most occupation actually took place in the later 12th century (splashed ware was not used in the 13th century).

Later 13th- to 15th-century wares were rare (BRAN, HUM). Northern Gritty ware and Red Sandy ware were also identified, but neither type is capable of close dating at present.

Table 4 Maximum vessel count for medieval pottery

Cname	JUG	UNID	JAR	CUP	PIPKIN	Grand Total
BEVO2B	1					1
BRAN	6		1			7
HUM	4		1			5
HUM?				1		1
NGR			1			1
RED SANDY	1					1
YG			135			135
YORK	22		26			48
YSP	57	1	2		2	62
Grand Total	91	1	166	1	2	261

Post-Medieval

Seventeen sherds of post-medieval pottery were recorded (Table 3). The cannot be closely dated, although the Martincamp flask is of a type which is only found in the later 16th to mid 17th centuries and a similar date is likely for the Brown-glazed earthenware (BERTH) and

Ryedale ware. The sherd of Staffordshire slipware posset pot (STSL POSS) is of later 17th to mid 18th-century date.

Table 5

Cname	JUG	BOWL	JAR	FLASK	PANC	POSS	Grand Total
BERTH			1		1		2
BL					7		7
GRE		5					5
LHUM	1						1
MART				1			1
RYEDALE					1		1
STSL						1	1
Grand Total	1	5	1	1	9	1	18

Early Modern

Twenty-two sherds of later 18th or 19th-century date were recorded (Table 4). The most common type is the unglazed flower pot (LPMLOC FLP). The miscellaneous refined whitewares and the salt-glazed stoneware drainpipe are likely to be of later 19th century or later date (WHITE and ENGS).

Table 6

cname	JUG	BOWL	JAR	DRAIN	FLP	PLATE	Grand Total
ENGS			2	1			3
LPMLOC					10		10
NOTS			1				1
PEAR	1		1				2
SUND		1					1
WHITE		1				4	5
Grand Total	1	2	4	1	10	4	22

Period 1

Fifty one sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from Period 1 deposits (Table 7). Datable types present include indented Nene Valley ware beakers; a Dr 44 bowl in East Gaulish samian ware and a small fragment of a Dr 72 jar in an unidentified Samian ware fabric. Taken as a whole, the Period 1 assemblage probably dates to later than 150AD and contains no types which are certainly of early 3rd century or later date. The range of forms found is broad and there is no obvious imbalance in the assemblage, which could therefore be domestic debris similar to that found on sites throughout York and its suburbs.

Table 7

cname	Form	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
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YATAA	AMPH	2	1	156
YATAP25	AMPH	8	4	347
	GLOBULAR AMPH	2	2	66
YATB03	DISH?	1	1	13
	JAR	1	1	31
YATC01	BEAKER	3	3	15
YATC02	BEAKER	7	2	157
YATE01	JAR	6	6	90
	JAR?	1	1	2
	MINIATURE JAR	1	1	25
YATG01		1	1	2
	JAR	5	5	179
YATM04	MORT	1	1	64
YATM14	MORT	1	1	132
YATS00	18/31	1	1	6
	72	1	1	1
	BOWL	7	7	37
	BOWL/JAR	1	1	12
YATS04	44	1	1	6
Grand Total		51	41	1341

Period 2

Period 2 deposits produced 456 sherds of Roman pottery (together with a few later sherds, interpreted as being intrusive). Much of this pottery appears to be exactly the same in character and the range of wares present to that found in Period 1. It includes a single sherd of the same or similar south-east English/NW Gaulish amphora. The presence of a Knpton jar and 26 other sherds of calcite-tempered ware, together with the absence of Dales-type shelly ware, suggests a late 3rd or early 4th-century date for the backfilling of both of the parallel ditches, in which case a large proportion of the assemblage is probably residual from Period 1. Nene Valley colour-coated wares are the most common type present in the assemblage (109 sherds) and consist of indented beakers with rouletting, inverted scale decoration and white barbotine.

Table 8

Cname	Form	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
YATAA	AMPH	1	1	42
YATAA Total		1	1	42
YATAP13	AMPH	1	1	6
YATAP13 Total		1	1	6
YATAP25	AMPH	10	9	946
	GLOB AMPH	2	2	132
	GLOBULAR AMPH	1	1	108
YATAP25 Total		13	12	1186
YATAP27-30	AMPH	21	17	839
YATAP27-30 Total		21	17	839
YATAP50	AMPH	3	1	171
YATAP50 Total		3	1	171
YATB01	?	1	1	2
	BOWL	1	1	74

AVAC Report 2005/25

	DISH	9	9	139
	JAR	12	12	177
YATB01 Total		23	23	392
YATB03	BEAKER	1	1	40
	BOWL	13	13	494
	DISH	4	4	48
	FLANGED DISH	3	1	96
	JAR	31	25	458
YATB03 Total		52	44	1136
YATB07	JAR	3	3	18
YATB07 Total		3	3	18
YATB12	BOWL	1	1	14
	JAR	2	2	25
YATB12 Total		3	3	39
YATC01	BEAKER	24	21	180
	CASTOR BOX	3	1	92
YATC01 Total		27	22	272
YATC02	BEAKER	7	4	35
YATC02 Total		7	4	35
YATC03	BEAKER	75	51	551
YATC03 Total		75	51	551
YATC24	BEAKER	4	4	9
YATC24 Total		4	4	9
YATE01	BOWL	2	2	14
	FLAG	1	1	16
	JAR	47	47	491
	OBJECT	1	1	413
	PLATTER	1	1	20
	TAZZA	1	1	24
YATE01 Total		53	53	978
YATE07	JAR	3	3	96
YATE07 Total		3	3	96
YATG01	BEAKER	1	1	12
	BOWL	3	3	56
	DISH	1	1	13
	FLAG	1	1	13
	JAR	54	53	911
	JAR/FLAG?	1	1	1
YATG01 Total		61	60	1006
YATG08	JAR	2	1	45
YATG08 Total		2	1	45
YATK00	BOWL	1	1	12
	JAR	25	11	517
	JK	1	1	32
YATK00 Total		27	13	561
YATM14	MORT	7	6	122
YATM14 Total		7	6	122
YATM15	MORT	2	2	97
YATM15 Total		2	2	97
YATP00	BEAKER?	1	1	2
	FLAG	1	1	4
	FLAG/JAR	5	5	49
	FLAGON	1	1	63
	JAR	3	3	14

	JAR/FLAG	1	1	3
YATP00 Total		12	12	135
YATS00	?	1	1	1
	18/31	11	11	228
	31	1	1	62
	33	3	3	40
	37	3	3	39
	45	3	2	68
	BOWL	28	19	193
	CURLE 23	1	1	78
	JUG	1	1	12
YATS00 Total		52	42	721
YATW01	FLAG?	2	2	4
	JAR	2	1	29
YATW01 Total		4	3	33
Grand Total		456	381	8490

Period 3

Period 3 deposits produced 156 sherds of Roman pottery (Table 9) together with a small quantity of intrusive medieval and later sherds.

The assemblage includes several types which are likely to be residual from Period 1 or 2 deposits, including a further three sherds from the unusual amphora (YATAA) and a sherd from a face pot decorated with stamping (Fig 00, DR6). There are few types present in this period which are not present earlier, and those which do occur are likely to be residual (such as a single Dales-type shelly ware jar).

Table 9

cname	Form	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
YATAA	AMPH	3	3	223
YATAP25	AMPH	9	8	360
YATB01	BOWL	4	4	107
	DISH	3	3	34
	JAR	8	8	32
YATB03	BOWL	5	4	89
	DISH	1	1	42
	JAR	5	5	29
YATB12	DISH	1	1	17
	JAR	2	2	5
YATC01	BEAKER	13	13	77
YATC02	BEAKER	4	4	19
YATC03	BEAKER	30	28	120
YATC24	BEAKER	3	3	3
YATE01	FACE POT	1	1	0
	JAR	15	15	101
YATG01	BEAKER?	1	1	8
	BOWL	4	4	79
	JAR	24	24	211
YATH01	JD	1	1	18
YATK00	JAR	3	3	30
	JK	1	1	97

YATM03	MORT	1	1	23
YATM14	MORT	5	4	202
	MORT?	1	1	1
YATM15	MORT	1	1	329
YATP00	JAR/FLAG?	1	1	2
YATS00	?	1	1	1
	BOWL	5	5	13
Grand Total		156	151	2272

Period 4

Eight hundred and ninety-seven sherds of pottery were recovered from Period 4 deposits. However, 586 of these are of Roman date and interpreted as being residual, 19 are of post-medieval date and 16 are of late 18th-century or later date and are interpreted as being intrusive. The residual Roman pottery includes a fragment of a lamp-chimney (Fig 00, DR7) and a fragment from a pipeclay figurine (Fig 00, DR5). The latter is probably from the architectural surround of the figure. This leaves 276 sherds of medieval date (Table 10).

Table 10

cname	Sum of Nosh	Count of NoV	Sum of Weight
BEVO2B	1	1	1
BRAN	8	7	84
HUM	5	4	139
HUM?	1	1	7
NGR	1	1	6
YG	117	37	1290
YORK	57	33	1086
YORKA	2	2	52
YSP	84	35	1750
Grand Total	276	121	4415

The medieval sherds range in date from the Anglo-Scandinavian period (2 sherds) to the later 14th century or later (6 sherds of Humberware). By far the largest quantity, however, is of later 11th to early 13th century date. The later medieval sherds (Brandsby-type and Humberwares) come from a few features (Table 11, Features 42, 50 and 55) whilst most of the feature fills include glazed wares of later 12th-century date (BEVO2B, YORK, YSP). Two of the York Glazed ware sherds are of early 13th century type. Both have copper green glaze and one, from Pit 13, is from a jug with a thumbled base whilst the other, from the fill of ditch 17, is from a vessel with a cylindrical ribbed neck. If the excavators interpretation of this phase as being agricultural is correct, then it seems as though it was fairly short-lived, or that little manure was being added to the plots after c.1200. However, some of this late 12th-century pottery consists of smashed vessels, such as that of a splashed ware jug from the fill of F10 (Fig 00, DR1). This, presumably, indicates occupation on the site.

Table 11

cname	10	11	13	17	20	21	24	28	36	40	42	50	54	55	63	64	65	Grand Total
BEVO2B									1									1

BRAN									1	4		1				6		
HUM										2		1				3		
NGR		1														1		
YG	4	3	3	15	14		10	1	3		1	15	3		1	73		
YORK				2	10	4		1		2	1	1	13	2	4	40		
YSP	29	1		3	10	1	5					3	4		5	1	1	63
Grand Total	33	5	5	28	28	1	16	1	6	1	6	38	2	14	1	1	1	187

About half of the medieval sherds from Period 4 come from jugs, the remainder coming from jars and one pipkin (represented by a single splash-glazed handle). This high jug proportion is consistent with a later 12th-century date and this suggests that there was little activity on the site before the middle of the 12th century. It is possible that the two sherds of Anglo-Scandinavian York A ware came onto the site in the 12th century and are evidence for the dumping of material on the site before the onset of ploughing rather than being evidence for activity on the site whose archaeological deposits were destroyed by the ploughing.

Period 5

No pottery was recovered from Period 5 features but a clay tobacco pipe bowl of early 17th-century type was recovered from ditch 3.

Period 6

Pottery was recovered from two Period 6 layers, 1002 and 1024. However, apart from two sherds of flowerpot, the pottery is residual and of Roman and medieval date.

Conclusions

The pottery suggests that the earliest activity on the site took place at some time between c.150 and c.250AD and that the majority of the pottery found during the excavation was deposited on the site during this period. Although some vessels have possibly religious associations (such as the pipeclay figuring, Fig 00, DR5, and the lamp-chimney, Fig 00 DR7) there is wide range of forms represented in this assemblage and it is more likely that the pottery is mostly domestic refuse, perhaps originating in the colonia and dumped on the site prior to the establishment of a cemetery in the area.

There is then an apparent gap in deposition, corresponding to the period of currency of Dales-type shelly ware, followed by the backfill of the Period 2 ditches during the later 3rd or early 4th centuries. Little pottery was deposited on the site during Period 4, when the site was used for inhumation burials.

With the exception of two sherds of later 9th to mid 10th-century York A ware, which were found in a residual context in Period 4, the next major phase of pottery deposition took place in the later 12th century, continuing into the early 13th century. This pottery is associated with ploughing but shows little sign of the heavy abrasion found in modern field scatters and includes some smashed vessels (Fig 00 DR1). It is likely therefore that this agricultural phase

was relatively short-lived. A small quantity of pottery was deposited on the site in pits and other features in the later 14th century or later but almost all the post-medieval and pottery from the excavation was found intruding into medieval and earlier deposits.

Table 12 shows the incidence, by percentage sherd count of Roman sherds recorded as being abraded, or very abraded compared with those for which no statement of condition was made (which as classed here as "fresh"). This shows no period in which the majority of the pottery is unabraded but a clear increase in very abraded sherds in medieval and modern deposits.

Table 12

period	ABRA	FRESH	VABR	Mean Wt
1	60.78%	37.25%	1.96%	22.55
2	46.27%	50.88%	2.85%	22.26
3	50.00%	49.36%	0.64%	17.28
4	52.39%	40.44%	7.17%	23.37
6	19.57%	56.52%	23.91%	12.80
Grand Total	49.11%	45.64%	5.25%	21.76

By contrast, the condition of the medieval pottery from the site (Table 13) shows that the majority of this pottery was unabraded, even in Period 6. However, a comparison of the mean weight of the Roman and medieval sherds shows little difference between the two.

Table 13

period	ABRA	FRESH	Mean Wt
2	5.00%	95.00%	24.09
3	0.00%	100.00%	10.25
4	4.35%	95.65%	16.04
6	0.00%	100.00%	22.83
Grand total	4.19%	95.81%	16.74

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