

Assessment of the Pottery from Union Terrace, York (YNT'06)

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A small collection of pottery and clay tobacco pipes from an archaeological evaluation at Union Terrace, York, conducted by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd was submitted for identification and assessment.

The finds include Roman pottery, of 2nd to 3rd century date, medieval pottery, dating between the late 11th/12th century and the 14th/15th centuries, post-medieval pottery and early modern pottery.

Description

Clay Tobacco Pipes

Seven fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recorded. Five of these were undecorated stem fragments with bore diameters typical of 18th/19th-century pipes. One is a spurred pipe with moulded decoration on the body, consisting of floral decoration on the seams and bowls containing the Prince of Wales' feathers on both sides. This is a stock 19th-century pattern dated c.1840-60 (e.g. Mann 1977No.227). A second decorated pipe is represented by a stem with moulded foliage on the stem.

Pottery

Roman Pottery

Thirty-four sherds of Roman pottery were recorded (Table 1). Most of the types present are common finds in York and present in Monaghan's corpus (Monaghan 1997). However, one sherd is the base of a large amphora with a raised foot ring. Such footrings are characteristic of Gaulish amphorae (such as Cam 188 aka Pelichet 47 aka Gauloise 4, Peacock and Williams 1986Class 27). However, visually the fabric does not fit the published descriptions of these types. Thin section and chemical analysis is recommended to try and source this vessel.

No types characteristic of late 1st/early 2nd century date were present, although several of the types present are found in such early contexts. The presence of York-made vessels (E1 and G1) indicates activity before the mid 3rd century whilst the presence of a sherd from a Nene valley colour-coated indented beaker with a funnel neck and barbotine scale decoration. This type (Monaghan 1997, Form KF1) occurs in York in the later 3rd century.

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Table 1

YAT code	?	AMPH	BEAKER	BOWL	JAR	LID	Grand Total
AA00		2					2
AP25		2					2
C3			5				5
E1					15		15
G1					4	1	5
S0	2			3			5
Grand Total	2	4	5	3	19	1	34

Medieval Pottery

No pottery dating between the 4th and the mid 11th century was present.

Thirty-five sherds of medieval pottery were present. These include 23 sherds of York Gritty ware (YG). This ware was in use in York by the 1080s, since it is the main type present in construction levels for the Norman minster (Holdsworth 1995). It is now known to have been produced using Coal Measures white-firing clay in West Yorkshire (Vince 2004; Alan Vince 2004). However, it continued in use into the 13th century and the first definite evidence for activity at Union Terrace is a sherd of splashed ware with a gritty white body similar to YG. This type was current in the early to mid 12th century. The majority of the sherds present are of York Glazed ware (YORK), which was current between the later 12th and the mid 13th century, and there is one sherd of later 13th century to 14th-century date (Scarborough ware, SCAR) and three sherds of later medieval date (Brandsby-type ware - BRAN, Dutch Red Earthenware – DUTR, and Humberware – HUM, all described by Brooks, Holdsworth and Jennings, amongst others (Brooks 1987, 1978, Jennings 1992). The latter may be of York origin (Walmgate ware) or from a source in the Humber wetlands (Hayfield 1992).

Table 2

Cname	BOWL	JAR	JUG	JUG/JAR	PIPKIN	Grand Total
BRAN				1		1
DUTR		1				1
HUM					1	1
MEDLOC				1		1
SCAR				1		1
YG			6			6
YORK			5	17	1	23
YSP				1		1
Grand Total	1		11	21	1	35

Post-medieval Pottery

Only four sherds of possible post-medieval date were present. Of these, one is of blackware, which continued to be produced in Yorkshire throughout the 19th century. The others are of Ryedale ware (RYEDALE), Chinese export porcelain (CHPO) and Tin-glazed ware (TGW). The former was produced on sites around the fringes of the North Yorkshire Moors between the late 15th and the 17th centuries and the latter is a fragment of plate of probable late 17th to mid 18th-century date.

Early Modern Pottery

Eleven sherds of late 18th century or later date were present. All are mass-produced types made in more than one centre. They include black basalt ware (BBAS); Creamware (CREA); English stoneware (ENGs); Buffware (NCBW); Nottingham Stoneware (NOTS); Local red earthenware (LPMLOC) and Transfer-printed ware (TPW). Some of these sherds are of types which were not produced until the 19th century and the English stoneware appears to be from a sink or toilet bowl and is likely to be of late 19th-century or later date.

Table 3

Cname	BOWL	FLP	JAR	PLATE	SANITARY WARE	Grand Total
BBAS			1			1
CREA				1		1
ENGs					1	1
NCBW	1					1
NOTS	1					1
LPMLOC		1				1
TPW	2			3		5
Grand Total	5	1	1	4	1	11

Assessment

Intervention 1

Three deposits in Intervention 1 produced finds. Two, 1058 and 1062, both of which were silty clay layers, contained Roman pottery of later 1st to early 3rd century date. The third consisted of the backfill of the construction trench for Brick Wall 1 (context 1057). The assemblage is mixed but includes two sherds of late 18th century or later date.

Intervention 2

Five deposits in Intervention 2 produced finds. One of these, a silty clay layer, 1070, produced the unknown amphora base sherd. A layer of buried soil, 1016, is dated to the later 14th century or later by a sherd of Humberware. Clay layer 1017 is dated to c.1840 or later by one of the three clay pipe fragments found within it. Two fills of the brick culvert 7, 1015 and 1044, produced finds but only one of these was of late date, a sherd of black basalt ware. This sherd is unglazed and has rouletted decoration. Such vessels were first produced in quantity in the mid 18th century.

Intervention 3

Three deposits in Intervention 3 produced finds. Two layers of silty clay (1039 and 1053), produced sherds of York glazed ware (15 in total).

The third deposit was a black soil, 1027. The latest types present were two clay pipe stems, neither closely datable, and three sherds of Transfer-printed ware. This layer could therefore have been deposited at any time after c.1770.

Intervention 4

Six deposits in Intervention 4 produced finds. Of these, five came from clay layers whose finds range in date from the Roman period to the 19th century (contexts 1037, 1040, 1041, 1042, and 1043). The sixth deposit is a black soil layer which produced the fragment of stoneware sanitary ware.

Interpretation

The finds from the silty clay layers in Interventions 1 and 2 contain only Roman finds and do not contain any types later than the early 3rd century.

The later 3rd-century colour-coated sherds come from a clay deposit in Intervention 4 and are associated only with other Roman sherds.

Silty clay in intervention 3, however, produced only sherds of York Glazed ware and appears to be securely dated to the late 12th to mid 13th century.

The buried soil, 1016, from Intervention 2, can be dated to the later medieval period or later.

All other medieval and post-medieval pottery finds come from contexts in all four Interventions which also produced late 18th century or later types. They may therefore represent activity on the site in the medieval and post-medieval period for which no stratigraphic evidence survives, or they may have been brought onto the site in the 19th century as part of the construction of terraced housing.

Retention

All of the finds come from stratified deposits and therefore they should be retained for future study.

Further Work

Thin section and chemical analysis of the amphora base from Intervention 2 is recommended for further study using thin section and chemical analysis (ICP-AES).

Costing

One thin section and chemical analysis, plus technical report - £48.00 plus VAT.

Bibliography

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Appendix 1

Context	REFNO	Action	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Conditi
1015	1		POTTERY	G1		LID		TOP	1	1	46	
1015	1		POTTERY	G1		JAR		BS	1	1	18	ABRA
1015	1		POTTERY	YORK		JUG		BS	2	2	22	
1015	1		POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	1	1	4	
1015	1		POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	5	
1015	1		POTTERY	SCAR		JUG	VERT STRIPS - GREEN AND BROWN	BS	1	1	7	
1015	1		POTTERY	YG		JAR		BS	1	1	5	
1015	1		POTTERY	YSP	YG	JUG		BS	1	1	3	
1015	1		POTTERY	S0		BOWL		R	1	1	1	
1015	1		POTTERY	E1		JAR		BS	4	3	27	
1015	1		POTTERY	AP25		AMPH		BS	1	1	8	
1015	1		POTTERY	AP25		AMPH		BS	1	1	3	
1015	1		POTTERY	BBAS		JAR	SHOULDER OF JAR WITH ROULETTING	BS	1	1	15	
1016	2		CBM	RTIL?		?		BS	2	2	14	ABRA
1016	2		POTTERY	DUTR		BOWL	WHITE SLIP TRAILING	BS	1	1	4	
1016	2		POTTERY	E1		JAR		BS	1	1	2	
1017	3		POTTERY	YG		JAR		B	1	1	17	
1017	3		POTTERY	S0		BOWL		R	1	1	1	ABRA

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Context	REFNO	Action	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Conditi
1017	3		PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18-19 CENTURY BORE	STEMS	2	2	6	
1017	3		PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	1840-60; SIMILAR TO ONE SIDE MANN 227, BOWL WITH PRINCE OF WALES'S FEATHERS ON BOTH SIDES; PLANT LEAVES ON BOTH SEAMS, BLOB ON SPUR	BOWL, SPUR, STEM	1	1	11	
1027	4		POTTERY	NOTS		BOWL	ROULETTING EXT AND STAMPED DEC	BS	1	1	39	
1027	4		POTTERY	CHPO		BOWL		R	1	1	1	
1027	4		POTTERY	TPW		PLATE		R	3	2	27	
1027	4		POTTERY	BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	4	
1027	4		PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18-19 CENTURY BORE	STEMS	2	2	4	
1034	5		POTTERY	ENGs		SANITARY WARE	'GILLYGATE' 'H.BRA..' ' 'SANITARY..' '	BS	1	1	38	
1037	6		PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	FOLIAGE ALONG STEM; 19TH CENTURY TYPE DEC	STEM; PART BOWL; SPUR	1	1	3	
1037	6		POTTERY	YORK		PIPKIN	SQUASHED ROD HANDLE 18 ACROSS	H	1	1	19	
1039	7		POTTERY	YORK		JAR		B;BS	2	1	17	
1039	7		POTTERY	YORK		JUG		BS	6	5	22	
1040	8		POTTERY	E1		JAR		BS	1	1	39	SOIL DEPOS INT
1040	8		POTTERY	PMLOC		FLP		BS	1	1	7	

Context	REFNO	Action	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Conditi
1040	8		POTTERY	NCBW		BOWL		R	1	1	5	
1040	8		POTTERY	TPW		BOWL		BS	2	1	2	
1040	8		PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18-19 CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	2	BURNT
1041	9		POTTERY	YG		JAR		BS	2	1	11	
1041	9		POTTERY	YORK		JUG		BS	2	1	5	
1042	10		POTTERY	AM00	BLACK SAND	AMPH		BS	1	1	21	
1042	10		POTTERY	YORK		JUG		BS	2	2	5	
1042	10		POTTERY	YG		JAR		BS	1	1	3	
1043	11		POTTERY	C3		BEAKER		B;BS	4	1	25	
1043	11		POTTERY	C3		BEAKER	FUNNEL NECKED INDENTED BEAKER WITH INVERTED SCALES	BS	1	1	6	
1043	11		POTTERY	S0		?		BS	1	1	8	VABRA
1043	11		POTTERY	E1		JAR		B	1	1	39	ABRA
1043	11		POTTERY	E1		JAR		BS	1	1	8	ABRA
1043	11		POTTERY	G1		JAR		BS	2	1	29	ABRA
1044	12		POTTERY	E1		JAR		BS	1	1	9	ABRA
1053	13		POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	2	1	35	
1053	13		POTTERY	YORK		JUG		BS	5	3	19	
1057	14		POTTERY	BL		JAR		BS	1	1	20	
1057	14		POTTERY	TGW		PLATE	PALE BLUE GLAZE	BS	1	1	2	
1057	14		POTTERY	HUM		JUG/JAR		BS	1	1	16	

Context	REFNO	Action	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Conditi
1057	14		POTTERY	CREA		PLATE		R	1	1	5	
1057	14		POTTERY	MEDLOC		JUG		BS	1	1	1	
1057	14		POTTERY	YG		JAR		BS	1	1	3	
1058	15		POTTERY	S0		BOWL		BS	1	1	4	
1062	16		POTTERY	G1		JAR		B	1	1	45	
1062	16		POTTERY	E1		JAR		B	1	1	11	
1062	16		POTTERY	E1		JAR		BS	5	5	8	
1062	16		POTTERY	S0		?	RELIEF DEC	BS	1	1	1	
1070	17	TS;ICPS	POTTERY	AM00	GALLIC BUT NON- MICACEOUS	AMPH	FOOTRING	B	1	1	38	ABRA

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