

Assessment of the Finds from Joseph Rowntree School, New Earswick (OSA07 WB09)

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A small collection of finds, consisting of pottery and ceramic building material, was submitted for identification and assessment.

The finds suggest that there was activity on the site in the Roman period followed by sparse activity in the medieval and later periods, probably agriculture.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Five fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. One of these from the subsoil on Trench 3 is probably from a curved imbrex tile of Roman date although it is rather thin and might be a medieval or post-medieval unglazed ridge tile or an early modern U-shaped field drain. Another possible Roman imbrex tile comes from the same deposit.

A small fragment of ceramic building material came from the fill of ditch 1003. Given the Roman date of the other finds from this deposit, this fragment is either a Roman tile or an intrusive fragment of later date.

Fragments of flat roof tile from the subsoil on Trenches 2 and 10 are of medieval or post-medieval date. One has salt-surfacing, suggesting that it was produced from a marine or estuarine clay, perhaps from Cawood or Beverley.

Pottery

Iron Age to Roman

Sixty-one sherds of pottery of Iron Age or Roman date were recovered. These come from no more than 22 vessels (Table 1).

Forty-four sherds were from handmade vessels in a fabric containing voids where fragments of sparry calcite had leached out. No more than 13 vessels were represented. This calcite-tempered fabric was produced mainly in the Vale of Pickering, utilising sparry calcite veins from the chalk. Two everted, flat-topped rim sherds from a single vessel were present. This precise rim form is not present in the Iron Age calcite-tempered ware published by Rigby from various sites in and around the Wolds (2004). Neither, however, is this rim form present in Roman deposits in York (Monaghan 1997). In York, calcite-tempered ware is present in the earliest levels and then, in much larger quantities, in the later 3rd and 4th centuries.

Ten sherds were from handmade vessels tempered with sandstone-derived quartzose sand. No more than 5 vessels were represented. This fabric was used in the pre-Roman Iron Age in the Vale of York but is only found in York in the earliest levels.

Seven sherds of wheelthrown Romanised wares were recovered. Five were probably of York manufacture (YATG1, Monaghan 1997, E1). One of these was from an Ebor ware jar (YATE1, Monaghan 1997, E1). The fifth sherd is a fragment of greyware tempered with a well-sorted fine quartz sand in which the quartz grains are overgrown. This may be derived from either Carboniferous or Jurassic sandstones, both of which outcrop locally. None of these sherds have any typological features which might help to date them closely and could therefore of any date from the later 1st century onwards.

Table 1

trench	context group	Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	ASW
10	DITCH 1003	1002	IASST	JAR	8	4	66	29
			YATG1	JAR	3	1	36	12
10	DITCH 1005	1004	IASST	JAR	2	1	11	6
			YATG0	JAR	1	1	5	5
			YATG1	JAR	2	1	91	46
3	SUBSOIL	301	YATE1	JAR	1	1	11	11
4	TOPSOIL	400	YATK0	JAR	43	12	113	21
9	DITCH 903	902	YATK0	JAR	1	1	1	1
Grand Total					61	22	334	130

Medieval

A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered, the rim of a York Gritty ware (YG) jar. These vessels were used between the mid 11th and mid 13th centuries.

Post-Medieval

Two sherds of glazed red earthenware (GRE) were recovered. This ware was produced from the later 16th to the 19th centuries.

Early Modern

A sherd of flowerpot of local unglazed red earthenware (LPMLoc) was recovered. It is likely to date to the late 18th century or later.

Assessment

Trench 2

Finds were recovered from two contexts in trench 2, the fill of drain 203 (202), which produced a sherd of post-medieval pottery, and the subsoil (201) which produced a sherd of flowerpot and a fragment of flat roof tile.

Trench 3

Finds were recovered from the subsoil (301) in Trench 3. They consist of a sherd of Roman pottery and two fragments of Roman tile.

Trench 4

Finds were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 4 (400). They consist of a collection of twenty-one calcite-gritted sherds, representing no more than 12 vessels.

Trench 9

A single sherd of calcite-gritted ware was recovered from the fill of ditch 903 (902).

Trench 10

Finds were recovered from three contexts in Trench 10, subsoil 1001 and the fills of ditches 1003 (1002) and 1005 (1004). These ditches are part of the same system. The ditch fills both contain a mixture of Iron Age sandstone-tempered ware (IASST) and Roman greywares (YATG0 and YATG1). Ditch 1003 also produced a small fragment of ceramic building material. The subsoil produced a sherd of post-medieval pottery and a fragment of flat roof tile of medieval or later date.

Trench 12

A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the subsoil, 1200, in Trench 12.

Interpretation

The pottery assemblages from ditches 1003 and 1005 are extremely similar, confirming the excavators interpretation that these two ditches are actually the same feature. The combined assemblage consists mainly of sherds of handmade sandstone-sand tempered vessels of iron Age or early Roman date with just six sherds of wheelthrown greyware, representing no more than 3 vessels. The lack of oxidized Ebor ware may be significant but at least two of the vessels appear similar to York-made greywares. A date in the late 1st century seems likely although an early 2nd century date is also possible. In either case, it is unlikely that this activity would have been associated with structures with tile roofs or brick coursing. The small fragment of ceramic building material therefore seems to be intrusive. The other Roman activity, in trenches 3, 4 and 9, appears to be later and in two cases is associated

with calcite-tempered wares. The two sherds of Roman tile from Trench 3 cannot be said to be stratigraphically associated with the pottery from that trench but it does seem likely that these finds come from a later phase of activity. The everted calcite-gritted rim from Trench 4 appears to pre-date the elaborately moulded jar rims found on Knapton and Huntcliffe jars in the later 3rd and 4th centuries and a 2nd to early 3rd century date is possible for this activity. It should be noted, however, that in York itself calcite-gritted ware is very rare at this period and if this is the date of the material from trenches 3, 4 and 9 then the settlement was not solely reliant on York for its pottery supply.

The remaining finds are of medieval and later date and presumably indicate the agricultural use of this site rather than nearby occupation.

Retention

All of the finds should be retained for future study.

Further Work

The material from ditches 1003 and 1005 forms a small but interesting assemblage but the small size and lack of featured sherds limits the potential for publication or further analysis. Should further work take place on the site, however, then this material should be reviewed.

Bibliography

Monaghan, Jason (1997) *Roman Pottery from York*. The Archaeology of York 16/8 York,
Council for British Archaeology

Rigby, V. (2004) *Pots in Pits*, East Riding Archaeological Society,

Appendix 1

trench	context group	Context	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
2	SUBSOIL	201	MTIL		FLAT		BS	1	1	34		
2	SUBSOIL	201	LPMLOC		FLP		BS	1	1	2		
2	DRAIN 203	202	GRE		BOWL		BS	1	1	6		
3	SUBSOIL	301	YATE1		JAR		BS	1	1	11	ABRA	
3	SUBSOIL	301	RTIL		IMBEX?		BS	1	1	49	ABRA	
3	SUBSOIL	301	RTIL		IMBEX		BS	1	1	107		
4	TOPSOIL	400	YATK0		JAR	MANY TINY FRAGS	BS	1	1	7		
4	TOPSOIL	400	YATK0		JAR	POSS SAME VESSEL	BS	19	1	31	LEACHED	HEAVILY SOOTED EXT
4	TOPSOIL	400	YATK0		JAR		R	2	1	13	LEACHED	
4	TOPSOIL	400	YATK0		JAR		BS	8	8	18		
4	TOPSOIL	400	YATK0		JAR	POSS SAME VESSEL	BS	13	1	44	LEACHED	SOOTED EXT
9	DITCH 903	902	YATK0		JAR		BS	1	1	1	LEACHED	
10	SUBSOIL	1001	GRE		BOWL		B	1	1	35	GLAZE	
10	SUBSOIL	1001	MTIL		FLAT		BS	1	1	187	SOME SALT SURFACING	
10	DITCH 1003	1002	IASST		JAR		BS	1	1	1	LOST EXT SURFACE	

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AVAC Report 2007/96

trench	context group	Context	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
10	DITCH 1003	1002	IASST		JAR		BS	1	1	5	LOST EXT SURFACE	BLACK DEP INT
10	DITCH 1003	1002	IASST		JAR		BS	4	1	27	VABRA; NO SURFACES	
10	DITCH 1003	1002	IASST		JAR		BS	2	1	33	LOST EXT SURFACE	THICK BLACK DEP INT
10	DITCH 1003	1002	RTIL		CBM	FRAG	BS	1	1	1		
10	DITCH 1003	1002	YATG1		JAR		B	3	1	36	VABRA	
10	DITCH 1005	1004	IASST	WITH VOIDS	JAR		BS	2	1	11	ABRA; LEACHED	
10	DITCH 1005	1004	YATG1		JAR		BS	2	1	91		
10	DITCH 1005	1004	YATG0		JAR		BS	1	1	5		SOOTED EXT; BLACK DEP INT
12	SUBSOIL	1200	YG		JAR		R	1	1	10		