

# **The Ceramic Building Material, Fired Clay, Mortar and Plaster from Hallgate, Doncaster, 2004 (HDO 04)**

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A small collection of ceramic building material dating to the Roman, medieval, post-medieval and modern periods was collected from the 2004 excavations at Hallgate, Doncaster, undertaken by Archaeological Services WYAS.

Those fragments whose form could be identified were examined at x20 magnification and their fabric described. The material was recorded by fragment count, the maximum number of objects represented in the context and by weight in grams.

## **Description**

### **Ceramic Building Material**

#### **Undated**

Thirty-five fragments could not be identified. They represent no more than 34 objects and weigh in total 189gm, giving an average fragment weight of 5.32gm.

#### **Roman**

Twelve definite and one possible fragment of Romano-British ceramic building material were recorded. They represent no more than 12 objects and weigh 1.566 Kg in total, giving an average fragment weight of 130.5 gm.

Three fabric groups were defined:

Fabric 1. Mainly oxidized throughout but sometimes with a dark grey core. Yellowish Red (Munsell 5YR 5/6). Abundant subangular and sparse rounded quartz up to 0.5mm; sparse subangular red clay/iron fragments with quartz inclusions; rare lenses of lighter coloured clay.

Fabric 2. Oxidized red (Munsell 2.5YR 5/6) with a brown core (Munsell 7.5YR 5/4). Abundant well-rounded quartz grains up to 1.0mm across; sparse subangular white flint up to 1.0mm across

Fabric 3. As Fabric 1 but with a reddish yellow colour (Munsell 5YR 6/6) and moderate lighter-coloured clay lenses.

Six of the fragments were definitely from *tegulae* and had traces of flanges and, in one case, a knife-cut cut-out at the corner and a paw print on the upper surface. The remaining tiles included one curved tile which could have been from an *imbrex* but might have been from a

medieval or later curved or ridge tile and the remainder were indeterminate. One tile, almost certainly an *imbrex* to judge by the thickness, has a stamp (Fig.00 No.1).

The Roman tile provides evidence for the presence nearby of a structure with a tile roof but there is no evidence for the use of a hypocaust system or for the architectural use of tile in walling.

### Medieval

A single fragment of flat roof tile was recorded. The fabric is oxidized throughout, light red (Munsell 2.5YR 6/8) and contains moderate ill-sorted subangular quartz grains and sandstone fragments up to 1.0mm across and sparse dark red mudstone/clay pellets up to 4.0mm across. The tile was laid on a bed of organic material during manufacture. This may have been sawdust. The fabric has a general similarity to some of the products of the Hallgate pottery industry, which dates to the later 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Buckland and Magilton 1979).

### Post-medieval and Modern

Twenty-four fragments of post-medieval or modern ceramic building material were recorded. They represent no more than 22 objects and weigh in total 1.082 Kg with an average fragment weight of 35.42 gm.

One fragment is too small to determine its form and the remainder are either bricks or probable pantiles (although some of the latter may actually be fragments of flat roof tile).

Given the late date of the associated finds and degree of residuality in these late levels this material was not described in detail.

### Fired Clay

Twelve fragments of fired clay were recorded, representing no more than 3 objects and weighing 257gm in total. The average fragment weight is 21.42gm.

The fabric is oxidized and contains abundant well-rounded quartz grains, ranging up to 10mm across. Sparse subangular quartz grains up to 1.0mm across derived from a sandstone with overgrown quartz grains are also present. Sparse voids which originally contained organic inclusions, up to 2.0mm long, and moderate irregular voids which one contained calcareous inclusions up to 2.0mm across are present. The latter are surrounded by a light coloured reaction rim.

Several fragments have flat surfaces with no signs of smoothing or any subsequent coating. The only signs of backing material, such as wattles, was a single wattle impression. The fragments therefore definitely include debris from a wattle and daub structure although mud bricks might also be represented.

## **Plaster and Mortar**

Six fragments of mortar, all from one context, and one fragment of plaster, were recorded.

## **Discussion**

### **Source**

The three Roman CBM fabrics have similarities which suggest that they may have been the products of a single industry. This is particularly true of Fabrics 1 and 3. Assuming that the material was produced somewhere in South Yorkshire, the light-firing clay is probably derived from the Coal Measures which outcrop to the south of Doncaster. However, the sand includes both well-rounded grains which were probably derived from Triassic sandstones and sands, which outcrop widely in the Doncaster area, but also flint and water-polished quartz grains, which must have been derived from the Yorkshire wolds. This suggests that the sand came from a fluvio-glacial deposit.

The medieval tile, by contrast, appears to be very similar to material produced in Doncaster itself and the sand inclusions were probably derived from the Coal Measures, through which the Don travels on its way to Doncaster.

The fired clay has a similar, but coarser fabric, to that of the medieval tile and is probably made from locally-available materials.

## **Stratigraphic context**

### **Roman**

Nineteen fragments of ceramic building material and four fragments of fired clay were recorded from Roman deposits in Trenches 2, 3 and 4.

In Trench 2, the earliest fragments came from context 176, which dates to the later 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century or earlier. These fragments include examples of Fabrics 1 and 3. Fragments from later deposits, 188 and 194, were too small to identify.

In Trench 3, the earliest stratified ceramic building material from the northern slot came from context 252, which produced later 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery. A cobble surface, 245, which sealed layer 252 produced a fragment of Fabric 1 tile together with Roman and medieval pottery. In the southerly slot, ceramic building material came from the fill of pit 268, which produced late 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>-century pottery. A later deposit which produced pottery of similar date and a fragment of Fabric 3 tile also produced fragments of fired clay. This may be significant, in that this deposit and the underlying deposits 271 and 272 show a vertical interface which may imply the existence of a partition.

In Trench 4 a fragment of Fabric 2 tile was recovered from context 216, a sandy silt overlying natural.

### Medieval

Eight fragments of ceramic building material and eight fragments of fired clay were recovered from medieval deposits. However, most of these are likely to be of Roman date and residual in these deposits. The exception is the flat roof tile from context 161 in Trench 2 and three fragments of modern brick from context 258 in Trench 3. The fired clay was recorded from contexts in Trench 3 (the fills of postholes 257 and 261). From the incidence of residual material it seems that the Roman deposits were heavily disturbed during the medieval period.

### Post-medieval and Modern

Forty-six fragments of ceramic building material, the mortar and the plaster were recorded from deposits dated to the post-medieval period in Trenches 2, 3 and 4. Only three residual Roman fragments were recovered and the remainder were either too small to identify or of post-medieval or modern date. It seems that by and large the late deposits did not disturb the Roman or medieval strata.

## Bibliography

Buckland, P C Dolby M J Hayfield C and Magilton, J R (1979) *The medieval pottery industry at Hallgate, Doncaster.* The Archaeology of Doncaster 2/1

## Appendix 1

Context	trench	context group	period	cname	Form	subfabric	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	L	B	TH
111	TR 2	PH 110	PM	PMTIL	PMTIL			BS	1	1	3					
114	TR 2	CONTEXT 114	M	CBM	CBM			BS	2	2	13					
121	TR 2	PIT 120	PM	PMTIL	BRICK			BS	3	3	61					
121	TR 2	PIT 120	PM	CBM	CBM			BS	9	9	58					
121	TR 2	PIT 120	PM	CBM	CBM			BS	3	3	43		MORTAR ON SURFACE			
121	TR 2	PIT 120	PM	PMTIL	PANT			BS	5	5	650					
121	TR 2	PIT 120	PM	PMTIL	PANT?			BS	4	4	68					
124	TR 2	PH/PIT 123	PM	CBM	CBM			BS	5	5	26					
126	TR 2	PH 125	PM	PMTIL	BRICK			BS	1	1	33					
126	TR 2	PH 125	PM	CBM	CBM			BS	2	2	2					
126	TR 2	PH 125	PM	PMTIL	PANT			BS	1	1	22					
128	TR 2	PH127	PM	CBM	CBM			BS	1	1	1					
132	TR 2	PH 131	PM	PLASTER	PLASTER		PLASTER PASTED ONTO REEDS; SURFACE WHITEWASHED	BS	1	1	113					
140	TR 2	PH 139	PM	PMTIL	PANT?			BS	1	1	8					
155	TR 2	COBBLE SURFACE	RB	GEO	GEO	MERCIAN MUDSTONE		BS	1	1	35					
160	TR 2	PH 159	PM	CBM	CBM			BS	1	1	3					
160	TR 2	PH 159	PM	M/PMTIL	FLAT/PANT			BS	3	3	25					
161	TR 2	DEPOSIT 161	M	MTIL	FLAT			BS	1	1	271					14
172	TR 2	DEPOSIT 172	M	RTIL	TEG/BRICK	FABRIC 1		BS	1	1	94					32

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Context	trench	context group	period	cname	Form	subfabric	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	L	B	TH
176	TR 2	DEPOSIT BELOW 174	RB	RTIL	RTIL	FABRIC 1		BS	1	1	13	SALT SURFACING				
176	TR 2	DEPOSIT BELOW 174	RB	RTIL	TEG	FABRIC 1		BS	1	1	566					40
176	TR 2	DEPOSIT BELOW 174	RB	RTIL	TEG/BRICK	FABRIC 3	KNIFE TRIMMING	BS	1	1	11					
188	TR 2	DEPOSIT BELOW 187	RB	CBM	CBM			BS	2	1	16					
194	TR 2	PH 193	RB	CBM	CBM			BS	2	2	4					
214	TR 4	DEPOSIT ABOVE 213	RB-PM	CBM	CBM			BS	1	1	9					
214	TR 4	DEPOSIT ABOVE 213	RB-PM	MOTAR	MORTAR			BS	6	1	504					
216	TR 4	DEPOSIT BELOW 213	RB	RTIL?	IMBEX;RIDGE;CURVED	FABRIC 2		BS	1	1	75					17
227	TR 3	DRAINAGE PIPE 231	PM	PMTIL	PANT			BS	1	1	102					
233	TR 3	DEPOSIT ABOVE 234	RB-M	M/PMTIL	BRICK			BS	1	1	14					
233	TR 3	DEPOSIT ABOVE 234	RB-M	GEO	GEO			BS	1	1	36					
234	TR 3	DEPOSIT BELOW 233	RB-M	RTIL	RTIL	FABRIC 3	KNIFE TRIMMING	BS	1	1	9					
234	TR 3	DEPOSIT BELOW 233	RB-M	RTIL	TEG	FABRIC 3		BS	1	1	77					
234	TR 3	DEPOSIT BELOW 233	RB-M	RTIL	TEG/IMBEX	FABRIC 2		BS	1	1	16					
245	TR 3	STONY DEPOSIT/SURFACE	RB	RTIL	TEG	FABRIC 1	STAMP 'IIII'; KNIFE TRIMMED BASE	BS	1	1	112					21
252	TR 3	DEPOSIT	RB	RTIL	RTIL	FABRIC 1		BS	1	1	16					
252	TR 3	DEPOSIT	RB	RTIL	TEG	FABRIC 1		BS	1	1	32					

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Context	trench	context group	period	cname	Form	subfabric	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use	L	B	TH
256	TR 3	DEPOSIT	RB	FCLAY	FCLAY			BS	4	1	90					
256	TR 3	DEPOSIT	RB	RTIL	TEG	FABRIC 3	KNIFE TRIMMED END/BASE	BS	1	1	179					26
258	TR 3	PH 257	M	MOD	BRICK		FROGGED	BS	3	1	96					
258	TR 3	PH 257	M	FCLAY	FCLAY			BS	4	1	122					
258	TR 3	PH 257	M	RTIL	TEG	FABRIC 3	KNIFE TRIMMED BASE; PIECE CUT AWAY; FINGER PRINTS ON TOP	BS	1	1	441					26
262	TR 3	PH 261	M	FCLAY	FCLAY			BS	4	1	45					
269	TR 3	PIT 268	RB	CBM	CBM			BS	7	7	14					