

Assessment of Ceramic Building Material and plaster from Bondgate, Otley, West Yorkshire (BGO 08)

Alan Vince and Kate Steane

A small collection of ceramic building material was recovered from an archaeological excavation at Bondgate, Otley, carried out by West Yorkshire Archaeology Service (site code: BGO 08). The collection includes three probable fragments of Roman date and the remainder is probably recent.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Roman

A fragment of *tegula* of Roman date was recovered from context 6022. The tile has been slipped on all original surfaces with a dark red slip, suggesting that the tilers were attempting to produce darker coloured tiles than the available clay would allow. The clay was examined at x20 magnification and contains sparse well-rounded grains of fine-grained sandstones, some with a dark red cement (Fig 2) and others with little visible cement, and angular ironstone fragments, some showing signs of bedding. The groundmass is a pink colour with few visible inclusions and contains sparse lenses of white-firing clay (Fig 1).



Figure 1 width of field of view c.3.4mm



Figure 2 width of field of view c.3.4mm

The tegula itself has one surviving flange and a corner cut-out.

Two fragments from context 2052 are probably also of Roman date, since they have a similar fabric, but their form cannot be determined.

Post-medieval and Modern

Three fragments of brick, probably of post-medieval or later date, were recovered from context 1028. One of these, 106mm wide and 48mm thick, has straw impressions on the base, a feature of late medieval and early post-medieval bricks.

Three fragments of refined whiteware glazed wall tiles were recovered, from context 6001. These are probably of later 19th or 20th-century date.

A small fragment of field drain from context 2051 is probably of mid 19th century or later date.

Plaster

A single fragment of plaster was recovered. It appears to be of modern date, to judge by its condition.

Assessment

Further Work

The only object which would repay further study in this collection is the *tegula* fragment. The tile should be drawn, to record the flange profile and the cut-out type and the fabric should be characterised using thin section and chemical analysis, since the characteristics of the fabric by eye appear to point to a Coal Measures source for the clay whereas Otley itself is located on the earlier Namurian strata, the Millstone Grit.

Costing

It is assumed that the *tegula* could be drawn by in-house staff at WYAS and no cost is therefore given for this. The thin section and chemical analysis, plus report, could be provided for £52.00 plus VAT (April '08 to March '09 rates).

Retention

The Roman CBM fragments should definitely be retained but if their context suggests a modern date, then the remaining material could be discarded since it is not worth studying recent CBM unless it can be given a clear social and chronological context.

Appendix 1

Context:	Cname:	Description:	Form:	PART:	Nosh:	NoV:	Weight:	Breadth:	Thickness:
1000	MOD	LIME BASED WALL PLASTER WITH TRACES PAINT/WHITEWASH	PLASTER	FRAG	1	1	38		
1028	PMTIL/MOD		BRICK	FRAG	1	1	80		
1028	PMTIL/MOD		BRICK	FRAG	1	1	293		
1028	PMTIL/MOD	STRAW MARKS ON BASE	BRICK	PART	1	1	999	106	48
2051	MOD		FIELD DRAIN	FRAG	1	1	7		
2052	RTIL		CBM	FRAGS	2	2	38		
6001	MOD	CLEAR GLAZE	WALT	FRAGS	2	1	16		10
6001	MOD	HONEY GLAZE	WALT	FRAG	1	1	30		8
6022	RTIL	RED SLIP	TEG	PART	1	1	427		20-25