

Context references in Lethbridge excavations 1947-1949 (mainly based on the notebook)

The initial system (day 1, 5th Jan 1947) was simple numbers **1 to 16** (but the plan shows two of 16 and lacks a 15) The text says 20 cremations were excavated that day, but one was too fragmentary to be collected and one cremation was not in a pot (but on a layer of blackened clay 10 inches in diameter).

Following this a group in the final plough furrow are listed as **1A to 9A** – however in the 1951 publication some of these are definitely reversed to **A1** etc. One in the ploughed field is given as 1X, again this group is **X1** when published. From here on the system is alphabetic groups plus numbers, except for **49 A5 to 49 A29** – these were dug separately in 1949. These also continue the practice of grouping superimposed pots with an ...A+ suffix, eg **49 A24 A** and **49 A24 B**.

It seems that the site was split into letter-identified blocks but the lack of an overall plan means that the extent of these and their interrelationships is lost, though the sketch plans do show some adjoining chunks (as included below).

An entry dated 13 Jan 1947 has a sketch plan for **M1 to M4. F., G. and H.** are referred to in subsequent pages. Contexts seem to be **F1 to F 40, G1-G20, H1-H17**. Other single letter groups seem to be **J1-J18, Q20, S13-21, T1**.

There are then two letter codes and longer, starting with **HB ()**, **HG, FGT, MA, MH** (adjacent to the undug portion of FG), **TD, TDY, TDX, UDY, WDY** (WDY etc in relation to 1947 trench on p 49).

Ranges: **HB 1 to HB 15** (? Or 10A, HB 15 uncertain)

HG 1 to HG 16; FGT 1 to FGT 4; MA 1 to MA 4; MH1 to MH 10; TD 3 to TD 5

TDY 1 to TDY 44; UDY 1 to UDY 82; WDY 10 to WDY 69/?WDY 78

Dated May 8 1948 is **BENI**, the only 4-letter group, which is followed by the **49 A** group in 1949 (probably beside BENI).

BENI 1 to BENI 18

Additional codes:

CUMAA:

GC B to GC G, and also GC D1, GC E2, GC E3 (probably not GCE), also GCE 1 in Sue's – see fig 13 GC.E.1 suggests the group code is GC tho Fig 32 could be GCE.

HGS 1 to HGS 3 (assuming H6S 3 = HGS 3 as Sue corrected).

HDY 17 - ? (Z 16999)

HM 1 (Z 19354) prev double acc no 1950.190 (2) (Sue)

HOP 1 (1950.53) Also Sue 1950.183

HS 4, 7, 28, 40. All also have TDY/UDY/WDY alternatives (with duplication) and all are Z accession numbers so seem unlikely

JB 2 to JB 22

TDX 3, TDX A (?)

Sue has:

UD 76A (1949.28) should be UDY 76A

10AJB = Cumaa JB 10A

AC 10 (1950.79 has 10 AC)

HC 1 (1950.57) ?HG 1 but definitely looks like HC in fig 23

[NB the CUMAA museum year referencing system includes 1948, 1949 and 1950 but these bear no relation to the excavation dates or sequence. The 1949 excavation group was mostly accessed in 1950]

An attempt to reconstruct context groups on the plan (from a little good evidence)

See GIS layers LethbridgeContextAreas and LethbridgeUrns

The first area (5 Jan 1947) can be fairly certainly located as Area 1 with pots 1 to 16 (notebook pp 4-5). This shows that the main activity in 1947 is in the west half of the overall plan as published. As well as the initial area they collected some more scattered items from the ploughed field – eg X 1 (or 1 X in original) – which is unlocated but must be to the south of the excavation.

Pots 1A, 2A, 3A (later referred to as A1 etc) were plotted (p5) in the final plough furrow. On 13 Jan 1947 (p6) pots 4A to 9A in the furrow are described in relation to a grid point A. Only seven spots on the plan in the area south of the edge of plough, and it may be that the ones marked as 1A – 3A are wrong but all nine are likely to derive from this area.

Two plans on p8 are difficult: that to the left is a general view of site with plough furrow edge to the south and trees to the north but what is the rectangle.. and the area GF and GC to the north are only represented by contexts GC A etc (see above) with no GF contexts. That to the right seems to be a set of trenches, dated 12.1.47, which can plot onto the west part of the site immediately north of Area 1. Presumably these relate to the single letter contexts (F, G, H, J and maybe Q, S T).

Area M is shown on p9 and fits as the northern part of the area, dated 13.1.47, with a measurement back to the south edge of the area.

P11 refers to two more 'furrow' finds, 13A and 14A, 14 A being measured east from a grid point (there seems to have been a key measuring point in the undug rectangle west of Area 1) and 1 ft north of the furrow, so potentially immediately south of Area 1.

Pots numbered F, G, H and J are discussed without any indication of location. We may suppose that these were in the three trenches, and intervening areas, on the west side of the main area north of Area 1.

Two-letter code HB first appears on p13, with G, FGT and HG mixed on subsequent pages

NB On p14 the first of the square Roman features was examined (measured with Grahame Clark) on 23.1.47.

FGT 1 – 3 are listed on p15 as being 2ft to 3ft6in from the S end of baulk – so probably somewhere in the south of the site, perhaps the group just east of Area 1?? There is also an FGT 4.

My assumption is that the main two-letter codes lay on the east side of the initial large area, ie east of the single letter codes. There are plans showing MA 1-4 (adjacent to HG) on p19 and MH 1-10 with a distance to corner of HG on p23; these seem to fit more or less in the areas plotted on the plan (but note MH should be slightly smaller than the area plotted) – and would place HG to the south of MA. This leaves JB and maybe HB in the area south of MH?

A plan on p25 supposedly locates the second Roman square structure, as this is in the publication and doesn't clearly link to the rest it has not been used.

TD 1-6 are plotted on p26, the location is not clear but seems to fit the area on the north side of the undug rectangle with measuring point.

Three letter code TDY begins on p 28 and resumes on p 30 where a plan of TDX (probably a single context, TDX A) is dated Sep 14 1947. The TDX plan (and another on p31) is on a line that is measured off the fence – the distances suggest that the fence (assuming there was only one fence....) lay to the north of the site. The only fence shown in the 1951 site plan runs NW-SE (along the east side of the new plantation) which is not at right angles to the excavation alignment. TDY is also shown on p31 with TDY 20, 21 and 22 plotted off a line to the fence. This line is probably along an edge of the second main area, but nothing has fixed it. Descriptions of TDY pots are followed on p35 by UDY and on p43 by WDY (with a feature initially thought to be a burial described as 5ft in at 45 ft). There is much description and depiction of inter-related groups of pots but no broader locational evidence, until p49 where "WDY etc" is plotted in relation to the '1947 trench' ie the first main area. This provides a base line, west of which I assume also lie TDY and UDY.

The next area is BENI, with a date of May 8 1948 on p 50 where BENI 1 is said to be 'E edge, 35ft from furrow'. The 35 ft puts it in the north part of the presumed BENI area, but is it E of what went before or of the final BENI area?

The final area was in 1949: contexts 49 A1 etc plotted in two diagrams on p55 and with description of the location related to the furrow and to BENI (this is part of the evidence for locating BENI, also that a four letter system was likely to lie east of the three-letter ones). The two plan diagrams of the individual pots have to be superimposed but can be fairly well correlated with the published plan of the area north of BENI and east of WDY etc.

Overall just 75 contexts have been individually identified with the published plan, but there is a broad indication about where a majority of contexts lie within the site.

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