

A Post-Excavation Assessment of the Romano-British pottery from the 2018 excavation at The Hagg, Swaledale, North Yorkshire for the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group (SWAAG)

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Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. (PCA) was commissioned by the SWAAG to carry out the post-excavation assessment of the Romano-British pottery found during the 2018 community excavations of The Hagg, Swaledale. The following report presents the results of the identification, quantification, and dating of the assemblage.

Methodology

All fragments were fully quantified using the standard measures of sherd count, weight, and Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVEs) in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Study Group of Roman Pottery (MPRG 2016) and standards used by PCA specialists. All data has been recorded in a relational database based on the template used by PCA specialists, which is ultimately based on that of Museum of London Archaeology Services (Symonds 2002).

Sherds were examined by hand lens under 10x magnification and fabrics have been identified and recorded with the help of the *National Roman Fabric Reference Collection* (Tomber and Dore 1998), the fabric type series established for the Catterick pottery assemblages (Bell and Evans 2002), and the pottery report of previous seasons (Gerrard 2014, Hudak 2018). Forms have been recorded with the help of the Catterick type series (Bell and Evans 2002).

Fabrics

DOR BB1:

Dorset Black Burnished Ware 1 – for details see Tomber and Dore (1998)

IMIT BB1:

Imitation Black Burnished Ware – for details see Gerrard (2014)

MAH WH:

Mancetter Hartshill White Ware – for details see Tomber and Dore (1998)

CRA PA:

Crambeck Parchment Ware – for details see Tomber and Dore (1998)

CRA RE:

Crambeck Reduced Ware – for details see Tomber and Dore (1998)

CTR WS:

Catterick Vicinity White-slipped Ware – for details see Tomber and Dore (1998)

SAMCG:

Central Gaulish Samian – for details see Webster (1996) and Tomber and Dore (1998)

SAMEG:

East Gaulish Samian – for details see Webster (1996) and Tomber and Dore (1998)

The range of sandy grey and oxidised wares, and calcite gritted wares in the assemblages compare well to a range of fabrics present and described in the type series for the Catterick CfA excavations (Bell and Evans 2002).

O3A, O3C, O4A, and O10: sandy oxidised fabrics – for more details see Bell and Evans 2002: 353

R1 and R1C: sandy reduced fabrics, R1 including Dales-type ware – for more details see Bell and Evans 2002: 353

R4: This fabric is the East Yorkshire Calcite Gritted ware at Catterick (Bell and Evans 2002: 354), which is the same as the Knapton and the Huntcliff types (also *cf.* HUN CG in Tomber and Dore 1998, and Late Gritty Wares in Gerrard 2014). Updated dating of forms was available from Bidwell and Croom 2010.

R4A: Dales Ware (Bell and Evans 2002: 354), which is the same as DAL SH in Tomber and Dore 1998.

Assemblage composition and dating

The 2018 season yielded a total of 261 sherds weighing 2.962 kg and representing 3.57 Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVEs). The pottery survived in a variety of states, but fragments were mostly abraded suggesting a degree of redeposition had taken place. This is also supported by the relatively low mean sherd weight of 11.35 g, which indicates a higher degree of fragmentation and abrasion.

There is a rather limited range of fabrics present in this assemblage with 16 different types identified (Table 1, Figure 1), which include most of those identified in the 2016 and 2017 season assemblages (Hudak 2018): East Yorkshire Calcite Gritted wares (R4), Dales and Dales-type wares, Crambeck wares, Mancetter-Hartshill white ware, Dorset and imitation Black-Burnished wares, Terra Sigillata, and a variety of reduced and oxidised sandy greywares. The overall date of the assemblage falls to the late 3rd to 4th centuries based on the abundance of typical late Roman fabrics characteristic of the area.

The most commonly occurring fabrics in the assemblage are R4 and reduced sandy ware fabrics R1 and R1C combined. R4 comprise over 44% of sherd count, but only 25% of weight; while reduced sandy fabrics R1 and R1C account for over 46% of the assemblage by weight, but only 29% of sherd count. R4 includes several rim fragments of Huntcliff-type jars dated to AD360-400+ (J6.3 and J6.7, or Gillam 162-3) of a minimum of five different vessels. R1 and R1C include both the very distinctive Dales-type Gillam 157 jars (J12.2) dated to AD270-375/400+ with a minimum of five different vessels, and a single example of each of the following forms: beaker (BE9.3), plain-rim dish (D2.4), flat-rimmed jar (J10.2), BB-derived jar (J14.4), and a constricted-necked jar (CJ2.4).

The only other fabrics present as more than 5% of sherd count are oxidised sandy fabric OA3 and DOR BB 1 with 11.5% and 5.4% respectively. OA3 is represented by body sherds only, but DOR BB 1 includes fragments of a plain-rim dish (D2.4) and an everted-rim jar (J13.7). Unsourced, possibly local, imitations of Black-Burnished Wares (IMIT BB) comprise only four fragments, but include flanged bowls (B17, B17.3) dated to after AD250, and an everted-rim jar (J13.4). Crambeck products are poorly represented with only three fragments of parchment ware mortaria, and seven fragments of reduced wares three of which belong to the same flanged bowl (B17.4) dated to after AD270.

There is a meagre amount of mid-2nd-3rd century pottery in the assemblage including three sherds of Terra Sigillata, two certainly from the East Gaulish potteries (AD150-300) and a third unsourced

fragment of possibly a Dragendorff 37 type bowl; two fragments of MAH WH mortaria which, based on the type of trituration grits only, could not be dated any more closely than AD200-400; and a rim fragment of a CTR WS reeded-rim mortarium (M36) dated to the 3rd century AD.

Fabric	SC	%SC	Wt(g)	%Wt	EVEs
CRA PA	3	1.15%	27	0.91%	
CRA RE	7	2.68%	154	5.20%	0.34
CTR WS	1	0.38%	30	1.01%	0.06
DOR BB 1	14	5.36%	129	4.36%	0.22
IMIT BB	4	1.53%	206	6.95%	0.33
MAH WH	2	0.77%	30	1.01%	
O10	1	0.38%	3	0.10%	
O3A	30	11.49%	203	6.85%	
O3C	2	0.77%	5	0.17%	
O4A	1	0.38%	14	0.47%	
R1	66	25.29%	1042	35.18%	1.53
R1C	10	3.83%	328	11.07%	0.3
R4	116	44.44%	760	25.66%	0.73
R4A	1	0.38%	24	0.81%	
SAM	1	0.38%	3	0.10%	0.06
SAMEG	2	0.77%	4	0.14%	
TOTAL	261	100.00%	2962	100.00%	3.57

Table 1 – Quantification of the assemblage by sherd count, weight, and EVEs

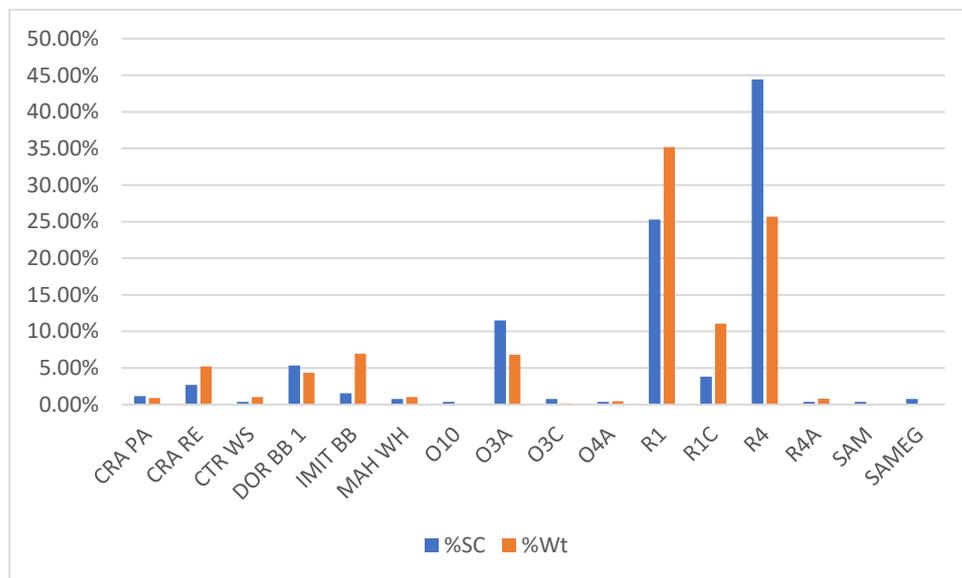


Figure 1 – Quantification of the assemblage by proportions of sherd count and weight

Contextual analysis

The assemblage was recovered from ten individually numbered contexts, and a total of 60 sherds (1.013 kg, 1.85 EVEs) were unstratified in Overburden 1 to the east and Overburden 2 to the west sides of the excavation area (Table 2). Rubble areas overlying the site to the east (49) and west (48) of wall F18 and the south west area of the trench (84) yielded more than half of the site assemblage by both sherd count and weight. Context (48) had the highest concentration of pottery of the site with 108 fragments (1.217 kg) including the flanged bowl B17.4 in CRA RE, the M36 CTR WS mortarium, a minimum of two Dales-type jars R1 and another two Huntcliff-type jars in R4.

The rest of the assemblage was recovered from features F13, F17, F19, F24, and F25. Apart from feature F25, all features yielded less than ten fragments and are very similarly dated by the presence of fabric R4. F25, identified as a dump area with a deep circular pit (80), produced an assemblage of 48 fragments weighing 0.367 kg, mostly from the pit itself. Forty-one fragments of the pit assemblage are in fabric R4 and seem to be freshly broken sherds of the same Huntcliff-type jar (AD360-400+), however, still a small proportion of this vessel is present. The fresh breaks could be the result of either post-depositional or post-recovery damage – either way it seems rather unlikely that the vessel was deposited complete. The rest of the feature assemblage include sherds of MAH WH, SAMEG, DOR BB 1, and R1, but no diagnostic sherds of these are present.

Trench/Structure	Context	SC	Wt(g)	EVEs
OB1	0	34	506	0.78
OB2	0	26	507	1.07
West of F18	48	108	1217	1.25
East of F18	49	7	48	
S West Rubble	84	23	241	0.23
F13	74, 88	5	31	
F17	87	1	6	
F19	51	8	37	0.08
F24	67	1	2	
F25	73	5	94	
F25 (pit)	80	43	273	0.16
TOTAL		261	2962	3.57

Table 2 – Distribution of the pottery across the excavation area

Discussion

Overall, the assemblage compares well to those of the previous two seasons (WHF16, HFS17 - Hudak 2018) as well as to the West Hagg excavation material (Gerrard 2014), however, there are some notable differences. There is a strong 4th century component in this assemblage, but this is almost exclusively represented by the East Yorkshire Calcite Gritted Wares. Crambeck products do not form a significant proportion of the assemblage with less than 4% of sherd count, while they were present in greater quantities in the HFS17 assemblage (16%, Hudak 2018). Dales-type wares (R1, J12.2), however, are more common in the 2018 season assemblage with nine fragments of a minimum of five different vessels as well as a fragment of Dales Shelly ware (R4A), while in HFS17 there was only a single fragment of the Gillam 157 form – although both assemblages are too small to attach any quantitative significance to this. The presence of all of these fabrics is known from the area, and East Yorkshire Calcite Gritted Wares are typical of the latest deposits in the North (Bidwell and Croom 2010) – and as it was discussed in the 2017 season report, the presence and absence as well as ratios

of the latest fabrics could refine the dating of the site further, the size of the assemblage is too small to produce statistically valid and meaningful results.

The small size and abraded nature of the assemblage limit the discussion beyond dating, however, the assemblage compares well to those of previous seasons and reinforces the late date of the site, as well as the possibility of links to Roman Catterick acting as a supply base. The site also contributes to the growing dataset of late Roman rural sites in the North East of England, which are still rather rare. The notable concentration of pottery finds in the south-western area of the excavation indicates a small focus of past activity on the site and suggests that future excavation should be targeted and extended towards this area of the site.

Recommendations

All pottery has been examined and requires no further analysis. A pottery report should be included in any publication of the site. All vessels could be classified with the help of typologies and corpora, which should minimize the need for illustrations.

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