

VESSEL

Unique ID: YORYM-20B68C

Object type certainty: Certain

Workflow status: Published

An incomplete copper alloy enamelled vessel of Roman date, c.AD43-150.

Eight fragments including a handle, base, and six body pieces were found. A further two copper alloy fragments, also possible body pieces, were found in close proximity though are undecorated and cannot be definitively linked to the patera.

The handle is sub-ovate and elaborately decorated, flaring out to either end. The terminal is a rounded trefoil from which a roughly even-sided stem extends. The opposite end of the handle flares again into two wide, integral semi-circular arms which would have joined to the body of the vessel proper. The inner edge of the arms is smoothly rounded while the exterior is curvilinear with short, scrollwork projections to either side of the junction between the stem and arms. The centre of the handle bears an engraved inscription which reads: "VTERE FELIX" meaning "Use in happiness". The letters retain alternating blue and red enamel, though the "L" and "I" of "FELIX" are joined and both contain red enamel. Two recessed crescent cells are present with the "V"; one in the depression between the arms of the letter and one outside, to the lower left. Both retain traces of red enamel. Two curvilinear cells extend from the end of the inscription into the central arch of the terminal trefoil. The inscription is framed above and below by two elongated knop-ended tendrils. The tendrils extend into the arms of the handle and into the two outer lobes of the trefoil terminal. Each tendril retains faint traces of blue enamel. The reverse of the handle is flat and undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 22.9g; Length: 95.9mm; Width: 69.5mm; Thickness: 3.3mm.

The base fragment is circular with worn outer edges and shallow concentric rings, possibly suggesting lathe turning. It is slightly concave with traces of silvering in a ring close to the edges on the lower surface.

Dimensions: Weight: 7.9g; Diameter: 50mm; Thickness: 0.79mm.

Body piece 1 is sub-rectangular and curved, from the upper portion of the dish. The curve has been exaggerated due to deposition. All edges are broken and worn with only a short, 20.2mm section of the original curved rim remaining. The outer surface is decorated with three parallel rows of evenly spaced recessed square cells. The cells are filled with repeating groups of four coloured enamels: yellow, red, blue, green. The groups are staggered by one from the bottom row to the top. Many of the cells no longer retain their enamel though enough remains to be confident of this design. The reverse of the fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 24.5g; Length: 65.4mm; Width: 32.5mm; Thickness: 2.5mm.

Body piece 2 is sub-rectangular and curved, though distorted due to deposition, from the upper portion of the dish. All edges are broken and worn. The outer surface is decorated with three parallel rows of evenly spaced recessed square cells. Very little of the enamelling remains on this fragment though it is likely to continue the pattern discerned in body piece 1. The reverse of the fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 8.1g; Length: 50.6mm; Width: 18.6mm; Thickness: 2.1mm.

Body piece 3 is sub-rectangular and curved, from the lower portion of the dish. All edges are broken and worn. The outer surface is decorated with two parallel rows of evenly spaced recessed square cells. The remains of a third row can be determined though is mostly lost to the breaks. The alternating pattern of coloured enamel is continued from body sherd 1. The reverse of the fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 6.4g; Length: 42.3mm; Width: 21.9mm; Thickness: 2.6mm.

Body piece 4 is sub-triangular, from the upper portion of the dish. All edges are broken and worn. The outer surface is decorated with three parallel rows of evenly spaced recessed square cells. Very little of the enamelling remains on this fragment though it is likely to continue the pattern discerned in body piece 1. The reverse of the fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 6g; Length: 49.3mm; Width: 28.5mm; Thickness: 3.7mm.

Body piece 5 is sub-rectangular and curved, from the lower portion of the dish. The upper edge and two sides are broken and worn. The lower edge retains a rounded ridge. The remains of a row of recessed square cells can be determined to the upper edge though is mostly lost to the breaks. The reverse of the fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 5.5g; Length: 46.1mm; Width: 15.5mm; Thickness: 2.1mm.

Body piece 6 is sub-rectangular and curved, from an uncertain portion of the dish. All edges are broken and worn. The remains of a row of recessed square cells can be determined to the one edge though is mostly lost to the breaks. The reverse of the fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 1.9g; Length: 27.9mm; Width: 11.9mm; Thickness: 1.8mm.

Possibly associated fragment 1 is sub-rectangular and curved. All edges are broken and worn. The fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 5.9g; Length: 38.6mm; Width: 16.1mm; Thickness: 2.3mm.

Possibly associated fragment 1 is sub-rectangular and curved. All edges are broken and worn. The fragment is undecorated.

Dimensions: Weight: 2.8g; Length: 26.8mm; Width: 19mm; Thickness: 1.5mm.

Discussion

The object:

A wide variety of copper alloy vessels were available in the Roman period, of which the patera is just one example. Patera could however perform a number of functions. Some patera are shallow, circular vessels, used to contain liquids for ceremonial, sacrificial or domestic purposes (Mills 2000). Very elaborate vessels such as the Staffordshire Pan (WMID-3FE965) were non-functional and are likely to have been souvenirs of Hadrian's Wall or commemorative issues awarded to an individual. On the other hand, simpler forms were carried by roman soldiers as part of their standard kit and used as general cooking and eating utensils. These examples tended to have pronounced concentric rings on the base which may have added heating and the handles had perforations at the terminal end for suspension.

Similar vessels and fragments have also been recorded as GLO-048BB1 from Wrington, Somerset; LVPL-39BCF5 from Malpas Area, Cheshire; DENO-8E0669 from Rufford, Nottinghamshire; and SWYOR-05A592 from Stockton-on-the-Forest, York. NLM-F50443 from Winterton, North Lincolnshire is similarly decorated with recessed square enamelled cells.

The inscription:

The current example is also similar to the Staffordshire Pan as it contains an inscription. The Staffordshire Pan however bears a Latin inscription which runs around the pan in an unbroken sequence. This inscription lists four forts located at the western end of Hadrian's Wall; Bowness, Drumburgh, Stanwix and Castlesteads. It also incorporates the name of an individual, AELIVS DRACO and a further place-name, RIGOREVALI.

"VTERE FELIX" is an inscription used for the invocation of good luck and featured on a variety of Roman object types. Two finger rings bearing the "VTERE FELIX" inscriptions have also been recorded with PAS: DOR-8F5E8E from Gussage St Michael, Dorset and BH-C3A8E7 from Hockliffe, Bedfordshire. LIN-C355C3 from North Kesteven, Lincolnshire is a brooch fragment with the same inscription.

Such inscriptions also featured in military dress, such as belt plates as discussed by Stefanie Hoss in which it is also stated that "mottos were a fashion not confined to waistbelts, as the shoulder-belts or baldrics of the same period also had metal plates often bearing mottos in openwork, both belts being most likely conceived as a set. In addition to that, similar mottos were also common on other objects of daily use such as rings, fibulae, spoons and drinking vessels, to name a few" (https://www.academia.edu/212354/The_Roman_Military_Belt; p.37-8).

Find of note status

This has been noted as an interesting find by the recorder.

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Returned to finder

Chronology

Broad period: ROMAN

Period from: ROMAN

Period to: ROMAN

Date from: Circa AD 43

Date to: Circa AD 150

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 10

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: YMT : E04913

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy

Secondary material: Iron

Completeness: Fragment

Spatial metadata

Region: [Yorkshire and the Humber](#) (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: [East Riding of Yorkshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

District: [East Riding of Yorkshire](#) (Unitary Authority)

To be known as: Eastrington

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: GPS (from the finder)

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

General landuse: Cultivated land

Specific landuse: Character undetermined