Trench MF31 narrative

Trevor Greer

Introduction

Trench 31 was opened in 2006 to further investigate the path from the eastern entrance through the *temenos* wall into the temple precinct. This added to the evidence and understanding of the path that was gained through the excavations in Trench 26. Trench 31 was sited approximately in the centre of the path and about a third of the way along the path toward the temple. The line and approximate width of the path was determined through the excavations in Trenches 15 and 32 that investigated the buildings each side of the *temenos* entrance that helped define the width and direction of the path. Trench 31 was a large trench that measured 2.2m in width and 15m in length positioned on a north/south axis. The purpose of the trench was to examine the landscape of the *temenos* precinct and the path. The northern end of the trench was positioned approximately 1m north of the perceived path boundary. The section of the trench from the southern edge of the path to the southernmost boundary of the trench, approximately 12m, proved to be totally featureless, with very little more than 30cm of soil over bedrock. A section drawing was made of the east facing trench baulk that showed the only feature to be the construction of the cobbled path (31003). This feature measured 80cm in width and 20cm at its deepest point and had been cut [31007] into the bedrock. The path was constructed of small limestone pieces with mortar set directly onto bedrock and measured 60cm at its widest point.

There were a number of small finds recovered within which were many Copper-alloy coins. These were primarily dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries. Within this group were four radiates, four minimissimus, six minims, two denarius (including one silver) were identified.

Cuts

[31007] Cut. Cut for the path into bedrock forming a shallow basin shape within which the stone and mortar path was laid.

Layers

(31003) Layer. Stone/cobble path with mortar.

(31002)
(31004) Layers. Subsoil layers above the path.
(31005)

Small finds

In total there were 81 small finds recovered from this trench, which came from three contexts, topsoil (31000) and subsoil contexts (31002) and (31004). It is doubtful if any of these finds were in their place on deposition as this area was heavily ploughed. As discussed above a very large number of coins were recovered totalling 47. Of note, there were eight small iron objects, eight flint tools or flint flakes, six pieces of copper alloy, three pieces of jewellery (a Copper-alloy finger ring, a bracelet fragment and a glass bead) and three gaming counters.

Pottery Finds

In total 504 pieces of pottery were recovered. This group was made up of 13 sherds of PCW (Iron Age Coarse Ware), and 491 sherds of Roman pottery. The make up the Roman pottery

group very much reflected the cross section of pottery types found elsewhere on the site. Significant among this Roman pottery group were four pottery types that made up the bulk of total:

RCWR Roman Coarse Ware Reduced (grey to black).	229 sherds.
RCWO Roman Coarse Ware Oxidised. (orange/red/buff).	75 sherds.
RFWOX Roman Fine Ware Oxidised. (orange/ red).	52 sherds.
RFWR Roman Fine ware Reduced (grey to black).	49 sherds.