Trench MF6 narrative

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Introduction

Trench 6 was positioned on the mid-point of the northern *temenos* wall, with the purpose of investigating and further understanding the *temenos* wall at this point. The trench lay directly north of Trench 7 (which investigated the temenos precinct between the central east west path and the north wall). Trench 6 consisted of a long slot trench measuring 2 m wide x 11.2 long. At its mid-point on the east side a small rectangular trench 1.8 m x1.2m was opened to investigate an area of small pebbles with mortar. The *temenos* wall [6012] was located at the southern end of the trench and measured approximately 1.2m at its widest point and 0.48m deep. This width was consistent with other excavated areas of the *temenos* wall. As elsewhere, the wall had been robbed out of its large stones leaving a fill of small limestones, mortar, rubble, some burnt stones and pieces of plaster, context (6005). From the mid-point of the trench northward a large area of stone and rubble was excavated that was interpreted as a possible cobbled path or pedestrian area (6002).

Cuts Structures and Layers

6001 Sub soil Reddish brown loam with flecks of charcoal and mortar. This layer overlay the cobbled area in the north of the trench with Roman pottery sherds, animal bone, flint and charcoal inclusions. Three small finds were recovered from this layer.

6002 Cobbles 6008 A possible cobbled path or pedestrian area situated in the north half of the trench. This cobbled area was constructed using mixed size pieces of bonded with mortar.

6003 Mortar A small patch of mortar 0.8m x 0.4m, possibly part of the cobbled area but with stone loss.

6004 Layers 6014 6015 An open area between the north side of the t*emenos* wall and the cobbled area. This shows the cobbled area to be approximately 4m north of the *temenos* wall. This layer consisted of mid brown sandy loam with Roman pottery sherds, animal bone and flint inclusions.

6005 Fill Fill of the robbed out temenos wall trench [6012].This fill was made up of rubble, mortar, burnt stone, plaster and pieces of flint. Some large pieces of limestone were found at the bottom of the trench that may have been the remains of the wall foundation.

6006 Layer This was a small layer on the south side of the temenos wall within the Temple precinct. This layer consisted of mid brown soil with a lens of sandy loam with Roman pottery sherds, animal bone, glass, mortar and flecks of charcoal.

6007 Layer This layer overlay part of the cobbled area and was made up of compacted light brown loam with small pieces of limestone with mortar. Included in this layer were Roman pottery sherds, animal bone, flint, burnt stone and plaster.

6012 Wall Cut for the temenos wall approximately 1.2m wide and 0.48m deep. This is consistent with the dimensions of the wall overall. The fill of the wall shows that the walled had been robbed of much of its stone with only a few blocks of foundation stone at the bottom of the trench.

6016 Layer A patch of orange-brown sandy loam with pieces of mortar, approximately 0.5m x 2.4m. Possibly part of the cobbled floor area or a deposit of material during the robbing phase. Included in this layer were Roman pottery sherds and pieces of animal bone.

Pottery Analysis
In total 117 sherds of pottery were recovered from Trench MF6. This group was made up of 32 sherds of Iron Age pottery, type PCW (Prehistoric Coarse Ware) at 27.3% and 85 Roman pottery sherds of mixed pottery types at 72.6% of the group.

It should be noted that the depth of soil over bedrock in this part of the site is particularly shallow, often less the 1m, therefore much of the site in this area was affected by modern ploughing. There are frequent records of ard marks being recorded in the trenches around the temenos wall area and temple precinct. This does have a significant impact on the movement of pottery finds from their original place of deposition.

Iron Age Pottery
The Iron Age pottery was seen as a low level of finds across the trench with four contexts providing much of the sample. Context (6001), a sub soil context yielded 12 sherds and context (6015), (6016) and (6017) yielding 18 sherds. This last group of three contexts were all recorded as occupation layers and were closely situated.

Roman Pottery
The Roman pottery assemblage of 85 sherds produced a range of pottery types that reflected the site as a whole in both variety and predominant types. Three contexts yielded much of the pottery, context (6000) topsoil, 25 sherds (29.4%), context (6001) sub soil 27 sherds (31.7%) and context (6007) occupation layer, 21 sherds (24.7%). Normally topsoil and subsoil contexts are not regarded as archaeologically significant due to the movement of pottery. However, these have been included in this narrative for completeness.

Overall, there were 13 pottery types recorded in the sample with three pottery types predominating, the remaining 10 pottery types ranged from one to six sherds per type.

1. RCWR (Roman Coarse Ware Reduced). 33 sherds. 38.8%
2. RCWO (Roman Coarse ware Oxidised). 12 sherds. 14.1%
3. RFWOX (Roman Fine Ware Oxidised). 8 sherds. 9.4%

Small finds
There were 20 small finds recovered from Trench MF6, nine of which were flint flakes regarded at the time of excavation as an exotic material as flint is not a naturally occurring material at Marcham. In addition there were four Copper-Alloy 3rd/4th century Roman coins, four iron objects, a Copper-Alloy Roman spatula or probe, a Copper-Alloy ear ring and a piece of glass.