

Pottery and ceramic building material from Elmbank Hotel, York

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Summary

A small assemblage of mid to late 2nd-century pottery was recovered from the fill of a ditch found at the Elmbank Hotel site (YORYM:1998.13). The pottery is all of similar date and indicates Romanised occupation in the area.

Aims and Objectives

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined to establish the date-range and nature of the human activity on the site and the archaeological potential of the remaining archaeological deposits there.

Description

Pottery and ceramic building material was recovered from three contexts, [2009], [2014] and [2015]. That from [2014] and [2015] consists mainly of mid/late 2nd-century pottery together with a single fragment of a late medieval or later redware jug and three scraps of ?medieval roof tile. The two potsherds from [2015] join with vessels (a samian ware cup and bowl) from [2014].

The range of wares present is in the main identical to that described in 1997 by Monaghan for York in the mid to late 2nd century (1997). The exception is a rim sherd from what is tentatively identified as a North African amphora. Only 70 sherds of this type were known from York in 1997 and Monaghan illustrates none of them (implying that they were featureless body sherds). The pottery spans a wide range of functions: wine storage, serving of liquids, drinking, display and feasting and cooking. It is most likely that such a range represents high status domestic occupation rather than activity associated with burial (grave-goods or ritual feasting) from which we would expect a more restricted range of vessel types. Whether the ditch containing this assemblage should be dated by these Roman finds or is actually a medieval feature (to account for the potsherd and tile fragments) in which a residual assemblage of Roman pottery was deposited is a question that can only be addressed by those responsible for excavating the feature.

Context [2009] produced two sherds from a 19th-century transfer-printed ware perforated stand (?plate warmer).

Table 1: List of pottery wares found at Elmbank Hotel, York

cname	full name	Period	Earliest date	latest date
BB1	Dorset Black Burnished ware	Roman	120	410
CC	Colour-coated ware	Roman	40	400
GAU4	Gauloise 4	Roman	50	250
GREY	Greyware	Roman	40	400
LMED	Unidentified late medieval wares	Lmed	1350	1550
MTILE	Unidentified medieval roof tile	Med	1150	1550
NAAM	North African amphora	Roman	150	410
OXWS	Oxidised white-slipped wares	Roman	40	400
SAMCG	Central Gaulish Samian Ware	Roman	40	250
SHEL	Romano-British shelly wares	Roman	40	400
TPW	Transfer printed ware	Emod	1770	1900

Recommendations

The North African amphora rim and two local wares (CALG and GREY) should be illustrated. The pottery indicates the existence nearby of high status, Romanised occupation and any further disturbance to these archaeological deposits should endeavour to establish the nature of this occupation.

Bibliography

Monaghan, J. (1997) *Roman Pottery from York*, Council for British Archaeology, York.

Catalogue

Context	cname	Form	Sherds	drawing no	Description
2009	TPW	PERFORATED STAND	1	0	Rectangular stand
2014	BB1	CP	2	0	ACUTE LATTICE
2014	CC	BKCOR	1	0	RIM;EBOR CC?
2014	GAU4	AMPH	1	0	
2014	GREY	BCAR	2	2	ACUTE LATTICE;CF MONAGHAN 1997 NO.3941
2014	GREY	JAR	2	0	
2014	GREY	JAR	1	0	RUSTICATED
2014	LMED	JUG	1	0	
2014	MTILE	FLAT	2	0	scraps
2014	NAAM	AMPH	1	1	RIM; ID SHOULD BE CHECKED BY THIN-SECTION
2014	OXWS	FLAG	2	0	
2014	SAMCG	CUP	1	0	BURNT
2014	SAMCG	DR27	1	0	SHL=2015
2014	SAMCG	DR31	9	0	SHL=2015
2014	CALG	CP	2	3	
2015	MTILE	FLAT	1	0	scrap
2015	SAMCG	DR27	1	0	SHL=1014
2015	SAMCG	DR31	1	0	SHL=2014