

Assessment of the pottery and ceramic building material from Prudential House, Blossom Street, York (OSA04 WB35)

Alan Vince

A small collection of pottery and a single fragment of ceramic building material were recovered from a watching brief at Prudential House, Blossom Street, York, carried out by On Site Archaeology (Site Code: OSA04 WB35). The finds date to the 2nd/3rd centuries and to the 13th/14th centuries and in the case of the Roman material are sufficiently unabraded to suggest activity on the site.

Description

Fourteen fragments of pottery and one piece of ceramic building material were recovered, from three contexts (Table 1).

Table 1

Data	Context	CBM	MPOT	RPOT	Grand Total
Nosh	2003		4	5	9
	2004		1		1
	2008	1		4	5
NoV	2003		4	4	8
	2004		1		1
	2008	1		4	5
Weight	2003		43	152	195
	2004		9		9
	2008	3		11	14
Total Nosh		1	5	9	15
Total NoV		1	5	8	14
Total Weight		3	52	163	218

Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

A single fragment of a tile with a curved surface was recovered from context 2008. This is likely to have been an *imbrex* tile, indicating the presence nearby of a Roman structure with a tiled roof.

Pottery

Roman (RPOT in table 1)

Nine sherds of Roman pottery were recovered and have been identified according to the classification used by Monaghan (Monaghan 1997 #113). They come from two contexts,

2008 and 2003 (Table 2). The wares represented include burnished greywares (YORKB3), Nene Valley colour-coated wares, with light-firing and more orange-firing fabrics (YORKC1, YORKC3), Central Gaulish Samian ware (YORKS3) and East Gaulish Samian ware (YORKS4). The B3 sherds all come from jars, three of which have acute-angled burnished lattice decoration. This indicates that they post-date the widespread use of Dorset Black Burnished ware which was responsible for the spread of this decoration soon after 120 AD. The pottery from context 2003 is associated with medieval sherds and is therefore clearly in a secondary context. As a group, however, the sherds probably date to the 3rd century, since if they were any later the Samian vessels would probably not have still been current whilst if they were any earlier the Nene Valley colour-coated wares would have been absent. It is, of course, quite possible that this is a fortuitous association derived from mixed deposits in which case the Nene Valley sherds could easily date to the 4th century.

Table 2

Context	Form	Data	YORKB03	YORKC01	YORKC03	YORKS03	YORKS04	Grand Total
2003	B	Nosh		1	1	2		4
		NoV		1	1	1		3
		Weight		1	3	2		6
	DR45	Nosh					1	1
		NoV					1	1
		Weight					146	146
2008	J	Nosh	4					4
		NoV	4					4
		Weight	11					11
2008		Nosh	4				4	
2008		NoV	4				4	
2008		Weight	11				11	

Medieval (MPOT in table 1)

Sherds of York glazed ware (YORK) and Brandsby-type ware (BRANDBY) were recovered. The former dates to the later 12th and earlier 13th centuries whilst the latter dates to the mid 13th to the 15th centuries, although one of the Brandsby-type sherds comes from a highly decorated jug, a type which is likely to date to the mid 13th to mid 14th century.

Table 3

Context	Form	Data	BRANDBY	YORK	Grand Total
2003	JAR	Nosh		1	1
		NoV		1	1
		Weight		26	26
	JUG	Nosh	3		3

	NoV	3	3
	Weight	17	17
2004 JUG	Nosh	1	1
	NoV	1	1
	Weight	9	9

Discussion

The terminus post quem of the three contexts is:

2008 – early 2nd century (post-120)

2004 – late 12th century

2003 – mid 13th century

The pottery from context 2008 consists of small but fresh-looking sherds and it is likely that the deposition date of the assemblage is in the 2nd century. For the medieval wares, the condition of the sherds is worse and this means that they are likely to have been redeposited, or subjected to weathering through agriculture, horticulture or being within an active soil horizon. An unknown period of time must therefore be added to the *tpq* to arrive at an actual terminal date for the deposits they were found within. The Roman pottery in context 2003 is later in date than that in context 2008 and its condition suggests that a 3rd-century deposit had been disturbed.

Assessment

None of the finds is of intrinsic interest and they do not require any further recording or analysis. They may, however, be of some use in future city-wide studies of pottery distribution and should be retained for future study.

Appendix

Context	REFNO	Cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Part	Description	Use
2003	MPOT	BRANDSBY	JUG	1	1	3	BS	APPLIED PELLET WITH FE INCLUSIONS;CUGL;CURVILINEAR COMBING	
2003	MPOT	BRANDSBY	JUG	1	1	3	BS		
2003	MPOT	BRANDSBY	JUG	1	1	11	R		
2003	MPOT	YORK	JAR	1	1	26	R		SOOTED EXT
2003	RPOT	YORKC03	B	1	1	3	BS		
2003	RPOT	YORKC01	B	1	1	1	BS		
2003	RPOT	YORKS03	B	2	1	2	BS		
2003	RPOT	YORKS04	DR45	1	1	146	B		HEAVILY WORN INT
2004	MPOT	YORK	JUG	1	1	9	BS		
2008	CBM	RTIL	IMBR?	1	1	3	BS		
2008	RPOT	YORKB03	J	4	4	11	BS	ACUTE LATTICE BURNISHING	