

Assessment of the Finds from 44 Clarence Street York (ADA06001)

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A small quantity of finds, mainly ceramic building material and pottery, was recovered from an archaeological watching brief and excavation at 44 Clarence Street, York. The finds indicate activity in the early Roman period (i.e. before the mid 3rd century) followed by a lack of activity until the late medieval period, when a short-lived period of occupation is indicated, followed by abandonment until modern times.

Description

Animal Bone

Five fragments of animal bone were recorded. None appear to be worked and all are therefore probably food debris.

Ceramic Building Material

Thirty-three fragments of ceramic building material were recorded. To aid dating, they were classified into six fabric groups. One of these is probably of Roman date (Fabric 6) and the others of medieval or later date (Fabrics 1 to 5).

Roman

Ten fragments of probably Roman ceramic building material were recorded. Five of these were too small or abraded to identify; two were possible brick fragments and one a definite brick fragment; one was a fragment of tegula and one a fragment of box tile. Fabric 6 is similar in colour and texture to Eboracum ware and was probably produced in the York area (tile was produced in the Peasholme Green area in the 1st to 3rd centuries).

Medieval/Post-medieval

Twenty-three fragments of medieval or later ceramic building material were recorded. These consist of thirteen fragments of flat roof tile; seven fragments of brick and three fragments of unidentifiable form, identified by fabric only.

Glass

Three fragments of glass were recorded. All are probably of recent date. They consist of one fragment of brown glass, probably from a beer bottle of late 19th or 20th-century date; one fragment of colourless glass bottle of similar date and one fragment of dark green bottle

which might be of earlier date but has no typological features which would allow a closer date.

Pottery

Roman

Six fragments of Roman pottery were recorded (Table 1). All were identified and coded using Monaghan's corpus of Roman pottery in York (Monaghan 1997). With the exception of a small scrap of samian ware of unidentifiable fabric and form (S0) all the pottery was of types produced in the outskirts of the fortress at York: Eboracum ware (E0); sandy Eboracum ware (E7); grey ware (G1) and a mortarium (M4). The York pottery industry was founded soon after the construction of the fortress and ceased operation in the mid 3rd century.

Table 1

cname	BOWL	JAR	MORT	Grand Total
E1		1		1
E7		1		1
G1		2		2
M4			1	1
S0	1			1
Grand Total	1	4	1	6

Medieval

Fourteen fragments of medieval pottery were recorded (Table 2). The earliest of these was York Gritty ware (YG), produced in West Yorkshire between the mid 11th and the early 13th centuries, followed by York glazed ware (YORK), which was produced in the Hambleton Hills area in the later 12th and early 13th centuries (wasters have recently been noted at Byland Abbey, where they were present in make-up deposits laid down prior to the construction of abbey buildings in the late 12th or early 13th centuries, Vince 2006). Brandsby-type ware, produced in the same area of the Hambleton Hills was represented by a single jug sherd and Hambleton ware, which confusingly has recently been found to have been produced in the Howardian Hills (Vince 2002, was represented by two jug sherds (Jennings 1992). Finally, three sherds of Humberware, probably produced in the suburbs of York (where it is known as Walmgate ware, Brooks 1987) were recorded. One of these sherds has a purple glaze, the result of overfiring of a red-slipped, lead-glazed vessel, and this type is thought to be typical of the later 15th and 16th centuries.

Table 2

cname	BOWL	DJ	JAR	JUG	JUG/JAR	PIPKIN	Grand Total
BRAN				1			1
HAMB	1			2			3
HUM		1		1	1		3
YG			2				2
YORK				4		1	5
Grand Total	1	1	2	8	1	1	14

Post-medieval

Three sherds of post-medieval pottery were recorded (Table 3). None is closely-dated, although the Cistercian ware dates to the earlier part of the post-medieval period (late 15th to early 17th centuries) and both of the other sherds could be of similar date.

Table 3

cname	BOWL	CUP	TANK	Grand Total
BL			1	1
CSTN		1		1
RYEDALE	1			1
Grand Total	1	1	1	3

Early Modern

Five sherds of late 18th century or later date were recorded (Table 4). All could be of mid 19th century or later date although the Sunderland coarseware (SUND) is present from the late 18th century.

Table 4

cname	BOWL	JAR	PLATE	Grand Total
NCBW	1			1
SUND		1		1
TPW	1			1
WHITE			2	2
Grand Total	2	1	2	5

Stone

A single fragment of unworked stone, mistaken on site for a potsherd, was submitted and discarded after identification.

Assessment

The Northwest part of the Site

Roman pottery and ceramic building material was recorded from the fills of three features: ditch 114; gully 108 and posthole 116 and from a make-up deposit, 110. These finds probably indicate occupation outside the fortress at some point in the late 1st to early 3rd century. The presence of ceramic building material may indicate the existence of Romanised buildings in the area, and includes the fragment of box tile, which would have been used in a building with under-floor heating.

A layer of make-up, 111, produced a mixture of Roman pottery, medieval pottery and post-medieval pottery.

Layer 111 was cut by two features: ditch 102 and pit 118, which produced a mixture of medieval and post-medieval sherds.

Recent overburden (contexts 100 and 112) produced a mixture of medieval, post-medieval and early modern pottery.

The Southwest part of the Site

The earliest observed deposit in this part of the site was a layer of make-up, 126, which produced a substantial fragment of a pipkin. The fabric of this vessel, York Glazed ware, is typical of the later 12th and earlier 13th centuries but the form of the pipkin is similar to that of Low Countries vessels of 15th century date. This layer was cut by ditch 123 which produced a fragment of medieval or later ceramic building material.

Another ditch or gully, 125, produced a fragment of brick, suggesting a later medieval or post-medieval date, and a fragment of dark green bottle glass. At the earliest, this is likely to be of mid 17th century date and could be much later.

Finally, pottery, glass and ceramic building material including later 19th-century or later types were recovered from modern overburden.

Summary of stratigraphic evidence

To summarise the stratigraphic evidence, the pottery indicates occupation on the site in the earlier part of the Roman period, after which there is no sign of activity until the medieval period. No deposits of medieval date were found, however, and the pottery may have been imported to the site in the post-medieval period with make-up. Alternatively, the site may have been under the plough at this time and the pottery brought to the site with night soil and other manure. Post-medieval activity, probably of earlier post-medieval date, was present in both areas of the site and consists of ditches and a pit. The nature of this activity cannot be determined from the pottery finds and might be agricultural or occupation. This activity seems to have continued into the mid 17th century (ditch/gully 125) or later.

Further Work

The pipkin from context 126 is unusual and should be drawn and thin-section and chemical analysis undertaken to test the suggested identification.

No other work is recommended.

Retention

All of the stratified finds should be retained. However, those from the recent overburden could be discarded.

Bibliography

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Context	Action	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	ASW	Condition	Use	L	B	TH
101		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	380	380	HEAVY SALT SURFACING ALLOVER	MORTAR ON BASE			
101	FAB1	M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	355	355	LIGHT SALT SURFACING ON BASE				
101		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	186	186	LIGHT SALT SURFACING ON BASE				
101		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	47	47	LIGHT SALT SURFACING ALLOVER	MORTAR ON UPPER			
101		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	177	177		MORTAR ON BASE			
101	FAB2	M/PMTIL	FAB2	BRICK		BS	1	1	178	178	LIGHT SALT SURFACING ON TOP AND BOTTOM				39
101		M/PMTIL	FAB2	BRICK		BS	1	1	280	280					38
101		M/PMTIL	FAB2	BRICK		BS	1	1	472	472		MORTAR BASE AND SIDES			41
101		M/PMTIL	FAB2	BRICK		BS	1	1	52	52		MORTAR SURFACE/BREAKS			
101		M/PMTIL	FAB2	BRICK		BS	1	1	8	8					
110		E1		JAR		BS	1	1	23	23	ABRA				
110		M4		MORT		SPOUT	1	1	110	110	ABRA				
110		RTIL	FAB6	BOXTILE		BS	1	1	49	49					
110		RTIL	FAB6	BRICK?		BS	2	2	76	38	ABRA				
110	FAB6	RTIL	FAB6	BRICK		BS	1	1	62	62	ABRA				44
111		RTIL	FAB6	?		BS	2	2	25	12.5	ABRA				
111	FAB3	RTIL	FAB3	TEG		BS	1	1	95	95					

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111		PMTIL	FAB4	?		BS	1	1	4	4	
111	FAB4	M/PMTIL	FAB4	FLAT		BS	1	1	36	36	
111		RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	32	32	
111		G1		JAR		BS	1	1	2	2	
111		YORK		JUG		BS	1	1	6	6	
100		HUM		DJ		BS	1	1	18	18	
100		YORK		JUG		BS	1	1	7	7	
100		YG		JAR		BS	2	2	17	8.5	
100		PMGL	BROWN	BEER BOTTLE	MOULDED	BS	1	1	15	15	
100		M/PMTIL	FAB4	FLAT		BS	1	1	33	33	
101		ANIMAL BONE				BS	2	2	50	25	
101		YORK		JUG		R	1	1	7	7	
101		YORK		JUG		BS	1	1	5	5	
101		BRAN		JUG		BS	1	1	4	4	
101		HUM		JUG/JAR		BS	1	1	33	33	
101		HUM	PURPLE	JUG	STRAP HANDLE 40 ACROSS, 4 GROOVES	H	1	1	81	81	
101		HAMB		BOWL		R	1	1	25	25	
101		PMTIL	FAB4	?		BS	1	1	5	5	LIGHT SALT SURFACING
120		PMGL	CLEAR	BOTTLE	MOULDED 'YORK' ON SIDE; 'Co L' ON BOTTOM	B	1	1	23	23	
105		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	98	98	HEAVY SALTSURFACING ALLOVER
121		SUND		JAR		R	1	1	12	12	

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121		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	96	96	
121		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	6	6	SALT SURFACING ON BASE
121		M/PMTIL	FAB4	FLAT		BS	1	1	11	11	
121		M/PMTIL	FAB4	?		BS	1	1	2	2	MORTAR
124	FAB5	PMTIL	FAB5	BRICK		BS	1	1	6	6	
124		PMGL	DKGR	BOTTLE		BS	1	1	1	1	
107		E7		JAR		R	1	1	20	20	ABRA
115		G1		JAR		B	1	1	35	35	
113		S0		BOWL		BS	1	1	3	3	ABRA
126	DR	YORK		PIPKIN	ROD HANDLE 21 ACROSS	R/H	1	1	204	204	
117		CSTN		CUP		BS	1	1	15	15	
122		M/PMTIL	FAB1	FLAT		BS	1	1	50	50	
122		HAMB		JUG	WAVY LINES	BS	2	1	51	25.5	
112		NCBW		BOWL	THIN BLUE AND WHITE INDUST SLIP HORIZ BANDS; BLUE MOCCA	BS	1	1	8	8	
112		TPW		BOWL		BS	1	1	3	3	
112		WHITE		PLATE		B;BS	2	2	7	3.5	
112		BL		TANK		B	1	1	33	33	
104		ANIMAL BONE				BS	3	3	31	10.33333333	
104		GEO		GEO		BS	1	1	14	14	
104		PMTIL	FAB5	BRICK		BS	1	1	21	21	
104		M/PMTIL	FAB4	FLAT		BS	1	1	5	5	
104		RTIL	FAB6	?		BS	3	3	11	3.666666667	ABRA

