

Assessment of the pottery from a gypsum burial at 89, The Mount, York

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Small groups of pottery were recovered from a sarcophagus excavated at 89, The Mount. They came from two contexts, one surrounding the body below a layer of gypsum and the other in the backfill over the gypsum.

Both contained Roman pottery of later 3rd-century date but the backfill above the gypsum also produced a sherd of medieval pottery and a sherd of Anglo-Scandinavian pottery.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

An unidentified fragment of ceramic building material was recovered from context 5074.

Pottery

Roman

Seventeen sherds of Roman pottery were present (Table 1). They have been classified using Monaghan's fabric series (Monaghan 1997). The most common ware present is Nene Valley colour-coated ware. This was present in York from the later 2nd century but the collection includes an indented beaker decorated with barbotine scales, a later 3rd-century type. Other types present include burnished greywares (B3) with lattice decoration which is either acute or orthogonal. The latter is a 3rd-century motif. The remaining types have wider date ranges and without typological features no close dating is possible. They include Dorset Black Burnished ware (B1), Moselle colour-coated ware (C24), dating to the later 2nd to mid 3rd century; Eboracum ware (E1) which was produced from the later 1st century to the mid 3rd century and an unidentified whiteware (W1). As a group, these sherds probably date to the mid 3rd century.

Cname	Sum of Nosh	Sum of NoV	Sum of Weight
B1	1	1	2
B3	4	3	23
C1	5	5	5
C24	1	1	1
C3	4	4	7
E1	1	1	1
W1	1	1	1
Grand Total	17	16	40

Anglo-Scandinavian

The Alan Vince Archaeology Consultancy, 25 West Parade, Lincoln, LN1 1NW
<http://www.postex.demon.co.uk/index.html>
A copy of this report is archived online at
<http://www.avac.uklinux.net/potcat/pdfs/avac2008059.pdf>

A single sherd of Torksey ware jar was present. This ware is found in York from the later 9th to the mid 11th centuries, but is most common in later 10th to mid 11th-century deposits. Production seems to have ceased at the Norman Conquest (Young and Vince 2005).

Medieval

A single sherd of York Gritty ware was present. This ware was produced in West Yorkshire from the mid 11th to the mid 13th centuries (1978; Holdsworth 1995; Vince and Young 2007).

Assessment

The pottery from the fill surrounding the body (context 5076) was probably present in the soil into which the sarcophagus was inserted. All the sherds are small with very few from the same vessels so there is no possibility that they were remains of grave goods nor, given their size, is it likely that they were included deliberately to represent symbolically the complete vessels from which they came. Therefore, they probably only provide a terminus post quem for the date of the burial.

The pottery from the fill overlying the gypsum fill is mostly of identical character and date but includes two later sherds. These must indicate some disturbance of the fill in the medieval period, perhaps through burrowing animals or tree roots.

Further work

No further work is recommended at this stage although the position of the Roman pottery within the site sequence will clearly be defined more closely once post-excavation analysis of the material from the 2005 and 2006 excavations is undertaken.

Retention

All of the finds should be retained for re-examination.

Bibliography

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Appendix 1

Context	class	Cname	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Use
5074	POTTERY	C3		BEAKER	R	1	1	1	
5074	POTTERY	TORK		JAR	BS	1	1	14	
5074	POTTERY	B1		JAR	BS	1	1	2	
5074	POTTERY	W1		FLAGON	BS	1	1	1	
5074	POTTERY	B3	ACUTE LATTICE	JAR	BS	2	1	9	
5074	POTTERY	B3		JAR	BS	1	1	5	
5074	POTTERY	YG		JAR	BS	1	1	3	SOOTED EXT
5074	POTTERY	C3		BEAKER	BS	2	2	5	
5076	POTTERY	C1	BARBOTINE DEC	BEAKER	BS	1	1	1	
5074	POTTERY	C24	ROULETTED FOLDED BEAKER	BEAKER	BS	1	1	1	
5074	CBM	CBM	FRAG	CBM	BS	1	1	5	
5076	POTTERY	B3	ACUTE LATTICE	JAR	BS	1	1	9	
5076	POTTERY	E1		JAR	BS	1	1	1	
5076	POTTERY	C3		BEAKER	BS	1	1	1	
5076	POTTERY	C1	FOLDED BEAKER WITH SCALES	BEAKER	BS	1	1	3	
5074	POTTERY	C1		BEAKER	BS	3	3	1	