

# The Medieval and Later Pottery from York Minster Library (YML97)

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## Contents

Background .....	1
The Pottery .....	1
Fabrics .....	1
Forms .....	3
Stratigraphy .....	4
Medieval .....	4
Post-medieval .....	5
Modern .....	6
Assessment of Potential .....	6
Proposed methodology .....	6
Resources .....	7
Costing .....	7
Bibliography .....	7
Appendix One: Catalogue of Pottery .....	8

## Background

The pottery found in the York Minster Library excavations in 1997 was mainly of Roman date. Consequently only those pieces thought to be of later date were examined by the author. All the pottery submitted was identified and recorded in an Access 97 database.

Wares were identified wherever possible using the terminology and classification published by York Archaeological Trust (Brooks 1987; Mainman 1990; Mainman 1993).

Forms were identified using the MPRG Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms (MPRG 1998).

The pottery was quantified by sherd count and minimum vessel count (per context) and notes made of elements with typological potential (rims, bases, handles, decoration) and any evidence for use/reuse.

A provisional date was assigned to each assemblage and this, together with the provisional period assigned to the contexts by FAS are used to assess the stratigraphic potential of the material.

## The Pottery

### Fabrics

Thirty eight different codes were used in the recording, although some of these were used to record the presence of Roman pottery, or wares which might have been Roman or later in date. Questionable identifications were noted in the description field using the code "ID?".

**Table 1**

CODE	Name	Sherds	Vessels
ANGLIAN COARSE SST	Anglian coarse sandstone sand tempered	1	1

BRANDSBY	Brandsby-type	55	55
BRANDSBY/RYEDALE	Brandsby or Ryedale	1	1
C19 REDWARE	Nineteenth-century red earthenware	3	3
C19 REDWARE OR R	Nineteenth-century red earthenware or Roman	1	1
CBM	Building material	3	3
CREA	Cream ware	3	3
CSTN	Cistercian	11	11
CTP	Clay tobacco pipe	6	6
DEVS	Developed Stamford	3	3
DUTR	Dutch Redware	3	3
ENGS	Misc English stoneware	2	2
FREC	Frechen stoneware	1	1
HAMBLETON	Hambleton-type	4	4
HUMB	Humber	116	116
LANG	Langewehe	4	4
MISC	Miscellaneous	10	10
MISC SW	Miscellaneous sand-tempered wheelthrown	1	1
MY	Midlands Yellow	1	1
NCBW	Nineteenth-century buff-bodied	6	1
NOTS	Nottingham Stoneware	2	2
ORANGE	Orangewares	19	18
R	Roman	250	250
R OR STAM	Roman or Stamford	1	1
R OR YORK	Roman or York	1	1
RAER	Raeren stoneware	3	3
RYEDALE	Ryedale	53	30
SAIU	Saintonge unglazed	1	1
SIEG	Siegburg stoneware	4	4
STAM	Stamford	10	10
STCO	Staffordshire press-moulded	1	1
SUND	Sunderland coarseware	1	1
TPW	Transfer-printed ware	21	10
WHITE	Nineteenth or twentieth-century whiteware	1	1
YG	Gritty	49	44
YORK	York	8	8
YW	York white	29	29

In the main, the range of fabrics found is typical of any medieval site in York. Of note, perhaps, is the one sherd of Anglian date (paralleled at Fishergate in 8<sup>th</sup>-century contexts but probably also present in the early Anglo-Saxon period) and, with this exception, the virtual absence of pre-Conquest pottery. Also of note is the quantity of late medieval imported wares, and the absence of similar wares of earlier date, despite the presence of pottery of this date.

Further work, using a binocular microscope, is required to adequately classify the late medieval wares, in particular the orangewares, Humber-type wares and North Yorkshire whitewares, but there is no obvious requirement for petrological or chemical analysis.

## Forms

Twenty-four codes were used to classify the forms. Roman material was ignored, except in the case of one amphora sherd which might be a post-medieval vessel if not Roman. Most are self-evident or described by MPRG. The exception is *Pegau*, a French term used to describe a distinctive globular jug with large parrot beak spout and three wide strap handles.

**Table 2**

CODE	Name	Sherds	Vessels
	Not recorded (mainly Roman)	325	325
AMPH	Amphora	1	1
BALUSTER JUG	Baluster jug	1	1
BOT	Bottle	1	1
BOWL	Bowl	11	6
CAUL	Cauldron	6	6
CHP	Chamber pot	1	1
CIST	Cistern	10	10
CRUC	Crucible	1	1
CUP	Cup	12	12
DISH	Dish	1	1
DJ	Drinking jug	11	11
DRIP	Dripping pan	3	3
GARDEN URN	Garden urn	1	1
JAR	Jar	62	57
JUG	Jug	205	181
LARGE JUG	Large jug	1	1
LID	Lid	1	1
PEGAU	Pegau	1	1
PIP	Pipkin	6	6
PLATE	Plate	19	8
PTCH	Pitcher	6	6
RECT DISH	Rectangular dish	1	1
SJ	Storage jar	2	2
WALL TILE	Wall tile	1	1

The range of forms found is unexceptional. Most of the medieval pottery was either multi-purpose jars (many of which had traces of sooting from their use in cooking) or jugs. The range of vessels widens in the late and post-medieval periods, with the presence of handled cooking pots (pipkins) and cisterns, perhaps used for serving beer. Tablewares, such as dishes, plates and some of the bowls, are mostly of post-medieval or early modern date.

None of the pottery appears to be worthy of illustration solely on the grounds of its form, but it is likely that some of the vessels will not be paralleled in detail in print and to adequately record the collection for archive it may be necessary to illustrate a proportion of these.

## Stratigraphy

### Medieval

Table 3

CNAME	1030	1050	1100	1130	1150	1250	1300	1500
STAM	3	3	1					1
YG		5	3	3	1		7	14
MISC		1					1	6
YORK		1				1	2	2
NOTS			1					
YW			1	2	3		14	2
BRANDBY						4	23	13
BRANDBY/RYEDALE							1	
CBM							2	
CSTN								3
DEVS				1		1	1	
DUTR							2	
HAMBLETON							4	
HUMB						1	41	20
HUMB?							1	
ORANGE				2		2	3	9
R OR STAM							1	
RYEDALE							9	25
SAIU								1
SIEG								1

Twenty-one contexts were phased as MEDIEVAL by FAS and produced sherds of medieval (and later) pottery). The earliest, potentially, is [1104] which contains a sherd which might either be York ware or Roman. This was followed by context 1086, which contained three sherds of Stamford ware. Stamford ware is particularly common north of the Humber in the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, following the collapse of the Torksey-type industry and before the start of the gritty ware industries. However, an assemblage of three sherds is not sufficient to show that this is indeed a context of this date and Stamford wares continued to be common in York in the later 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries alongside gritty wares.

Five contexts contained gritty ware, sometimes alongside Stamford ware, but no later types. These are likely to be of late 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>-century date, although again none of the assemblages was sufficiently large to demonstrate that the sherds were not residual in later deposits or of later 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century date, at which time gritty wares were in use in York alongside York white (aka York glazed) ware. Four contexts contained this glazed ware, some alongside other 12<sup>th</sup>-century glazed wares such as Developed Stamford ware or Beverley orange ware (a sherd from context 1040 is typologically one of the earliest vessels produced at Beverley, provisionally dated to the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century).

There is very little from the site which need date to the later 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Context 1080 was provisionally dated to this period because of the high quantity of Brandsby-type ware present, but this assemblage also contained Humber ware and earlier types and cannot really be dated as a contemporary

assemblage. A number of contexts were datable to the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, containing Humber ware, Brandsby-type ware, and some late medieval imports (Siegburg stoneware and Langewehe stoneware).

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Context	Provisional date
1104	R OR 9/10
1086	M/L11
1017	L11/12
1087	L11/12
1098	L11/12
1106	L11/12
1179	L11/12
1061	12 (+1 L18/19)
1040	M12
1058	L12/13
1069	L12/13
1080	L13/14
1026	14/15
1038	14/15
1077	14/15
1096	14/15
1041	14/15 OR 16
1079	14/15? OR L12/13
1039	16
1076	16
1078	16

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### Post-medieval

Eight contexts phased as POST-MEDIEVAL by FAS produced 16<sup>th</sup>-century or later pottery. The range of types present in the four 16<sup>th</sup>-century assemblages (1006, 1027, 1035 and 1036) is similar to that in the those assemblages from MEDIEVAL deposits (1039, 1076 and 1078) with the addition of Raeren stoneware.

The four remaining contexts all contain late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>-century material. That from context 1105 is a primary refuse deposit, consisting of fragments of smashed vessels and no residual pottery. Contexts 1013 and 1050 likewise contain only late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century pot, but little of it in either case.

There are no deposits, therefore, dating to the later 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> or early to mid 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Pottery dating to this period is present in later deposits, but is rare (for example, a single sherd of Frechen stoneware drinking jug, of late 16<sup>th</sup> to mid 17<sup>th</sup> century date).

**Table 4**

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cname	1006	1027	1035	1036	1013	1016	1050	1105
misc				1				
humb	1		3	11		5		

lang			2	
sieg			1	
dutr			1	
raer			1	1
cstn	1	3	1	3
ryedale		1	6	
frec				1
my				1
crea			2	1
c19 redware				2
ncbw				6
engs				1
tpw			1	16

## Modern

Context 1007 is phased as MODERN but only produced a single 16<sup>th</sup>-century sherd. Contexts 1005 and 1012 both contained mixed assemblages in which the latest sherds are of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>-century date.

## Assessment of Potential

This quick survey suggests that the post-Roman pottery from York Minster Library consists of four discrete groups:

- late 11<sup>th</sup> to late 12<sup>th</sup> century
- 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century
- early 16<sup>th</sup> century
- 19<sup>th</sup> century

Within these groups, it is possible that the first two might be subdivided following more detailed study of the pottery, and its stratigraphic context. It is likely that they reflect the sequence of building and robbing activity, and/or earth movement, in this part of the minster site. Certainly, if the finds were entirely brought onto the site through earthmoving there might be expected to be a wider range of types present, covering a wider date range.

More detailed recording of the first three groups is required to test this model. In addition, it was noted during recording that some sherds from separate contexts appear to be from the same vessel. The presence of these cross-fits may help to interpret the sequence and nature of the site stratigraphy.

None of the assemblages is large; there are only 390 post-Roman sherds from the site in total, and therefore little potential for further quantified study of the pottery as stratified assemblages.

## Proposed methodology

- 1) the 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>-century pottery from YML97 should be recorded in detail using the following schema:  
context, ware, fabric, form, decoration, no of sherds, no of vessels, sherd family (for cross-fits), drawing number, use, other comments  
AGV 4 hours
- 2) The data recorded in (1) should be examined to test the model that there are breaks in the deposition of 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>-century pottery.  
AGV 2 hours

- 3) The data should be examined with the site stratigrapher to arrive at an agreed sequence and chronology for the post-Roman activity on the site  
AGV 2 hours
- 4) Selected sherds should be illustrated and a catalogue prepared. It is difficult to give a precise figure for this task until task (1) is completed.  
AGV 1 hour - catalogue  
Illustrator 8 hours
- 5) A report should be prepared for inclusion in the excavation report placing the YML97 data into the context of other work in the Minster and in York in general.  
AGV 8 hours

## Resources

**Alan Vince** (AGV) is a medieval and post-medieval pottery specialist with over 20 years experience of pottery analysis and publication. He is co-author with Clive Orton and Paul Tyers of the CUP manual on *Pottery in Archaeology*. Since October 1998 he has been part-time Managing Editor of *Internet Archaeology* and part-time freelance archaeological consultant.

## Costing

Task	Resource	Time	Day Rate	Cost
1	AGV	4hr	£20 per hour	£80
2	AGV	2hr	£20 per hour	£40
3	AGV	2hr	£20 per hour	£40
4	AGV	1hr	£20 per hour	£20
	Illustrator	8hr	£12 per hour	£96
5	AGV	8hr	£20 per hour	£160
Total				£436

## Bibliography

- Brooks, Catherine M 1987 *Medieval and Later Pottery from Aldwark and Other Sites* (Archaeology of York 16/3) CBA
- Mainman, A J 1990 *Anglo-Scandinavian Pottery from Coppergate* (Archaeology of York 16/5) CBA
- Mainman, A J 1993 *Pottery from 46-54 Fishergate* (Archaeology of York 16/6) CBA
- MPRG 1998 *A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms* Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 1

Appendix One: Catalogue of Pottery

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
1005						
brandsby	jug	1	1			
humb	jug	1	1	ID?		
humb	pip	1	1	handle	ID?	
r	2	2				
r	21	21				
r	1	1				
r	amph	1	1	might be pmed import?		
raer	dj	1	1			
sund	bowl	1	1	white slipped int		
tpw	plate	1	1			
yg	jar	4	4			
35	35					
1006						
cstn	cup	1	1	Wrenthorpe?		
humb	jug	1	1			
r	1	1				
yw	jug	1	1			
4	4					
1007						
ryedale	jug	1	1			
1	1					
1008						
stam	ptch	1	1			
1	1					
1012						
c19 redware	bowl	1	1	white slipped int		
c19 redware or r	jar	1	1			
ctp	2	2	stem			
humb	1	1				
misc	jug	1	1	splash glazed gritty fabric; chalk		
nots	bowl	1	1			
r	1	1	calcite tempered			
r	6	6				



Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
r or york	jar	1	1	base	kt	
stco	dish	1	1	slip trailed and feathered		
tpw	2	2				
tpw	plate	1	1	central black transfer with dec in relief		
white	wall tile	1	1			
yw	jug	2	2			
22	22					
1013						
anglian coarse	jar	1	1			
crea	1	1				
crea	chp	1	1			
r	2	2				
yg	jar	1	1	rim	sooted	
6	6					
1016						
c19 redware	1	1				
c19 redware	garden urn	1	1			
cstn	cup	3	3			
ctp	1	1	stem			
ctp	1	1	bowl	17th C		
frec	dj	1	1			
humb	jug	5	5			
my	jar	1	1			
r	3	3				
r	10	10				
raer	dj	1	1			
tpw	plate	1	1			
yw	jug	1	1	base	raised foot	
30	30					
1017						
r	2	2				
r	21	21				
stam	jar	1	1	soot		
yg	jar	1	1			
25	25					
1019						
r	1	1				
1	1					

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
1022						
r	1	1				
1	1					
1026						
brandsby	jug	1	1			
humb	2	2				
humb	pip	1	1	FORM?		
r	5	5				
yw	11	11				
20	20					
1027						
ryedale	large jug	1	1			
yw	jug	1	1	handle	cugl	
yw	jug	1	1	cugl		
3	3					
1034						
brandsby	jug	1	1			
humb	jug	1	1			
yg	jug	1	1	splash glaze		
3	3					
1035						
cstn	cup	1	1	rim		
cstn	cup	2	2			
humb	jug	3	3	white paint traces		
orange	dj	2	2	HOSM type		
yg	jar	1	1	rim	sooted	
york	jar	2	2	sooted		
11	11					
1036						
brandsby	jug	5	5			
cstn	cup	1	1	handle	burnt	
dutr	caul	1	1	handle		
humb	jug	11	11			
lang	dj	1	1			
lang	sj	1	1			
misc	cruc	1	1	lmed cruc of brass-melting		
raer	sj	1	1			

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
ryedale	caul	1	1	rim		
ryedale	caul	3	3	FORM?		
ryedale	jug	2	2			
sieg	cup	1	1			
29	29					
1038						
brandsby	jug	4	4			
devs	jug	1	1	handle		
humb	jug	9	9			
misc	jug	1	1	early yw? Splash glazed		
orange	dj	1	1	HOSM type		
r	4	4				
york	jar	1	1	sooted		
21	21					
1039						
brandsby	jug	2	2			
brandsby	jug	8	8			
cstn	cup	3	3			
humb	7	7				
humb	jug	6	6			
humb	pip	1	1	foot	round foot	
orange	jug	9	9	white slipped		
sieg	dj	1	1			
stam	ptch	1	1			
38	38					
1040						
devs	jug	1	1			
orange	jug	1	1	white slipped		
orange	jug	1	1	rim/handle	handle joins at top of rim M12?	
r	3	3				
yg	jar	1	1			
yg	jar	2	2	sooted		
yw	jug	2	2			
11	11					
1041						
brandsby	jug	14	14			
brandsby	jug	4	4			
brandsby/ryedale	pip	1	1			

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
CBM	2	2	for SGN			
dutr	caul	1	1	handle		
dutr	jug	1	1	ID?		
hambleton	jug	3	3			
humb	10	10				
humb	drip	3	3			
humb	jug	11	11			
humb	jug	1	1			
orange	jug	1	1	unglazed HOSM?		
r	2	2				
r or stam	jar	1	1	rim		
ryedale	cist	9	9			
yg	7	7				
york	jar	1	1	rim		
yw	baluster jug	1	1	base	cf LOND EAS so perhaps late 12th	
73	73					
1045						
CBM	1	1	for SGN			
r	1	1				
2	2					
1046						
r	2	2				
yg	jar	6	1			
8	3					
1047						
orange	jug	1	1	white slipped;wavy combed dec		
r	1	1				
sieg	1	1				
sieg	dj	1	1	rim	Jacobekanne	
4	4					
1050						
crea	plate	1	1			
ctp	2	2	stem			
engs	bot	1	1	bristol glazed		
yw	jug	1	1	cugl		
5	5					

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
1058						
r	1	1				
yg	jar	1	1	sooted		
yw	jug	1	1	plain gl		
3	3					
1061						
nots	1	1				
r	24	24				
stam	jar	1	1	unglze		
yg	jar	2	2			
yg	jar	1	1	rim	sooted	
yw	jug	1	1	base		
30	30					
1067						
engs	1	1	ID?			
humb	jug	3	3			
lang	dj	2	2			
6	6					
1069						
r	1	1	ID?			
r	4	4				
yw	jug	2	2			
7	7					
1076						
brandsby	jug	3	3			
humb	jug	4	4			
misc	jug	4	4			
r	3	3				
ryedale	jug	1	1			
yg	2	2				
york	jar	1	1	base		
18	18					
1077						
hambleton	jug	1	1			
humb	jug	3	3			
orange	jar	1	1	rim	sooted	
r	1	1				

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
6	6					
1078						
humb	1	1				
humb	jug	1	1			
misc	jar	1	1	chalk inclusions		
misc	jug	1	1	applied strip	white clay thumbed applied strip	
r	5	5				
ryedale	jug	24	1			
saiu	pegau	1	1	handle	large strap handle	
yg	jar	4	4	rim		
yg	jar	8	8			
york	jar	1	1			
yw	2	2	splash glaze			
49	26					
1079						
humb	1	1	ID?			
yw	jar	1	1	rim	int splash cugl	
yw	jug	1	1	base	cf DEVS in form so 112th?	
3	3					
1080						
brandsby	jug	4	4			
devs	jug	1	1			
humb	jug	1	1			
orange	jug	2	1	base	thumbed	
r	1	1				
york	jar	1	1	ID?		
10	9					
1086						
r	22	22				
stam	jar	1	1	sooted		
stam	ptch	1	1	rim		
stam	ptch	1	1			
25	25					
1087						
yg	jar	1	1	sooted		

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
1	1					
1096						
humb?	jug	1	1	chalk? Inclusions		
r	2	2				
3	3					
1098						
misc	jug	1	1	red-firing splash glaze		
r	6	6				
yg	jar	1	1	sooted		
york	jar	1	1	base	sagging base;ID?	
9	9					
1104						
misc sw	jar	1	1	base	greyware sooted KT;York ware?	
r	4	4				
5	5					
1105						
ncbw	bowl	6	1			
tpw	plate	3	1	willow pattern		
tpw	plate	12	3	all three vessels of the same		
tpw	rect dish	1	1	traces of makers mark		
22	6					
1106						
r	17	17				
stam	ptch	1	1	glze		
18	18					
1109						
r	2	2				
2	2					
1132						
r	8	8				
8	8					

Context	cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Part	Description
1134						
r	39	39				
39	39					
1179						
r	13	13				
stam	ptch	1	1			
yg	jar	1	1			
yg	jar	1	1	rim	sooted	
16	16					
not recorded 1						
brandsby	jug	6	6			
humb	bowl	1	1			
humb	jar	1	1			
humb	jug	9	9			
ryedale	bowl	1	1			
ryedale	cist	1	1			
ryedale	jar	1	1			
ryedale	jug	5	5			
ryedale	lid	1	1			
ryedale	pip	2	2			
28	28					
not recorded 2						
brandsby	jug	2	2			
humb	16	16				
r	6	6				
stam	jar	1	1	rim	unglze	
yg	jar	1	1			
yg	jar	1	1	splash glaze		
yg	jar	1	1	rim		
28	28					
Grand Total	Grand Total	690	645			