

Pottery from Boroughbridge: Draft Publication Report

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25 West Parade, Lincoln LN1 1NW. Tel: 01522 589992**

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Introduction

The excavation produced sherds of medieval and later pottery. The pottery can be divided into three groups, based on date and, partly, stratigraphy. The earliest pottery found is of late 11th or 12th-century date and is mainly from the fill of a single ditch. The next assemblage found is of 14th-century date, possibly dating towards the middle of the century. This material too came from a ditch fill, forming a moderately large assemblage. Finally, there is a small quantity of post-medieval and early modern pottery, none of which is well stratified.

Description

All items were recorded to common name and form level and any significant details of manufacture, decoration or use were recorded as comments. Quantification was by sherd/fragment count alone and the data was entered into a MS Access 7 database.

Medieval

Late 11th/12th century

Only one context produced solely pottery of this date: 3020. The deposit produced nine unabraded sherds which probably date between the late 11th and late 12th centuries.

Wares. Only one ware was present, a white-firing, coarse-gritted wheelthrown ware. Pottery of this type has been given a number of names, one of the earliest being Northern Gritty ware. In York it is termed Gritty Ware and in East Yorkshire is termed Pimply Ware. At York, the ware is present at the Minster by the time the Norman church was being built in the 1080s (Holdsworth 199*, 00). However, it is not present in the mid-11th century at Coppergate (Mainman ~~1990~~1990, Period 5c). It therefore seems to be a conquest period or slightly later introduction. A slightly later introduction date was suggested by Le Patourel based on evidence from Kirkstall Abbey and Pontefract Priory.

The Boroughbridge sherds all have a similar fabric with the following characteristics:

- Fragments of coarse-grained sandstone with light iron-staining on the grains, which are otherwise only loosely cemented.
- Fragments of white and red-firing laminated clay, some (of both colours) highly micaceous. The muscovite flakes are sometimes up to 1.0mm across, although mainly much smaller.
- Variagated clay with lenses of both redder and whiter clay.
- Sparse rounded fragments of ferruginous sandstone with grains up to 0.3mm across and a microcrystalline haematite cement.

Forms. The vessels are all jars, used for cooking. All sherds have some evidence for external sooting. The vessel shape is probably cylindrical with a slight constriction at the rim. All the rims are squared.

Mid 14th century

The medieval pottery in contexts 3002, 3017, 3018, 3027 and 3033 is probably all of the same date and contains a similar range of wares. Dating is provided by a number of types which are likely to be of late 13th to 14th-century date together with a smaller number of types which have a mid 14th to 15th-century date range. If this assemblage represents material used over a short period of time, rather than representing a longer occupation span, then it must date to the middle of the 14th century, when 'late medieval' types such as Humber Ware and forms such as Low Countries style 'cauldrons' and unglazed 'drinking jugs' were starting to be used whilst wares such as Scarborough ware and Brandsby ware were still in use.

Wares. These deposits produced a few sherds of gritty ware, similar to those found in the earlier ditch but with some having a redder colour and thicker walls. The most common fabric, however, was a fine whiteware, usually with a copper-stained glaze (NYWWF). Sandy, green-glazed whitewares were the

next most common type (NYWWS). Gritty whitewares, similar in texture to the earlier gritty wares, were also present (NYWWG).

Humber wares (HUM), with a fine sand temper were the next more common ware. These could be divided into two groups - those with oxidized fabrics and those with reduced fabrics (some of which had a light grey or oxidized outer margin and surface).

A coarse textured glazed ware, not recognised previous by the author, contained rounded fragments of a medium-grained sandstone and fragments of coal (MISC SXXW). The body is red-firing but all the examples present had reduced cores.

Finally, a few examples of regional imports were present: East Yorkshire Orangeware, probably produced at Beverley (EYO); Midlands Purple ware (MP) and Scarborough ware (SCAR).

Forms.

Jugs were the most common form present. Three sizes of vessel were present; large jugs, represented mainly by their large strap handles (in Humber ware and sandy whiteware); medium-sized jugs were the most common jug form, although very few occurred as large enough fragments to determine their precise form. Decoration consisted of horizontal grooved lines, horizontal combed lines, horizontal wavy lines and horizontal roller-stamping (four examples, all in sandy green-glazed whiteware). Only one example of applied decoration was present, an iron-rich pellet on a fine whiteware fabric. One of the Humber ware vessels was covered externally with a white slip under a green glaze. Small, unglazed 'drinking jugs' were present in Humber ware and Midlands Purple ware.

Jars, nearly all with traces of use in cooking in the form of soot or internal deposits, were found in three fabrics: gritty ware, fine whiteware and the coarse-textured glazed ware. A body sherd of sandy whiteware was identified as coming from a bowl, but might have been from the lower part of an internally-glazed jar. All but two of the coarse-textured glazed ware sherds probably came from two-handled cooking pots or cauldrons, copying the Low Countries Redware form.

Post-medieval

Post-medieval pottery was present in contexts 3000 and 3005. A brown-glazed tobacco pipe tip was present in context 1007. Only six sherds were recovered from these deposits and a further post-medieval sherd was unstratified. The stratified material is likely to be of 19th-century date, based on the refined whiteware but could be 18th century if this sherd was intrusive or has been mis-identified.

Wares Three wares were present: Black-glazed ware, a red earthenware (unstratified) and a refined whiteware.

The black-glazed ware consists of five sherds varying considerably in colour and texture. All, however, were produced using Coal Measure clays, in which light-firing and red-firing clays were poorly mixed. The glaze colour seems to have been achieved by applying a plain lead glaze over a thin red, iron-rich slip. Dribbles on some vessels show that this slip was applied as a liquid.

Vessels of this type were produced in Staffordshire and Derbyshire (Ticknall) but the source of these Boroughbridge examples is probably somewhere in West Yorkshire. Black-glazed wares of this type were produced throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, probably continuing into the 19th century.

The red earthenware has a silty textured fabric, akin to Ryedale ware, but with a redder colour. The vessel has a copper-stained green glaze which is poorly applied. It is possible that the vessel comes from the Hambleton Hills area, which produced redwares as well as whitewares. Its appearance suggests a 16th or 17th-century date.

The refined whiteware has a similar fabric to Creamware and Pearl ware but its glaze lacks the slight iron staining of Creamware and the cobalt blue tinge of Pearl ware. It is therefore likely to be a 19th-century white ware.

Forms Four forms are present. Large pancheons and cylindrical 'butter pots' (black-glazed ware), a deep bowl (red earthenware) and a closed form, perhaps a chamber pot (whiteware).

Acknowledgments

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Bibliography

Holdsworth

[Mainman 1990 Anglo-Scandinavian Pottery from Coppergate The Archaeology of York 16/5](#)

Appendix One: List of Fabric Codes used in catalogue

cname	full name	period	Vessels
BL	Black-glazed wares	pmed	5
CMW	Coal Measures whiteware	med	1
EYO	East Yorkshire Orngewares	med	3
HUM	Humberware	med	15
MISC SXXKW	Unknown sandstone and coal-tempered glazed ware	nk	7
MP	Midlands Purple ware	pmed	1
NYWWF	North Yorkshire Whiteware - fine	med	22
NYWWG	North Yorkshire Whiteware - gritty	med	9
NYWWS	North Yorkshire Whiteware - calcareous inclusions	med	20
PMR	London Post-medieval Redware	pmed	1
SCAR	Scarborough ware	med	1
WHITE	Modern whiteware	emod	1
YG	Yorkshire gritty ware	sn-emed	20

Appendix Two: Catalogue of ceramic finds

Context	cname	Form	Sherds	Vessels	Action	Description
1007	CTP	TIP	1	1		BROWN GLAZED
3000	BL	BOWL	3	3		
3002	HUM	DJ	3	1		UNGLAZED BALUSTER BASE;CF HOLME-ON-
3002	HUM	JUG	1	1		COPPER GLAZE?
3002	HUM	JUG	14	1		SAGGING BASE;COPPER GLAZED
3002	HUM	JUG	2	1		SAGGING BASE;PLAIN GLAZED
3002	HUM	JUG	1	1		WHITE SLIPPED EXT;COPPER GLAZE; HORIZ
3002	MP	DJ	2	1		GREY SURFACE;OXID CORE;VARIAGATED
3002	NYWWF	JUG	2	2		COPPER GLAZED
3002	NYWWG	JUG	2	2		COPPER GLAZED
3002	NYWWS	JUG	1	1		
3002	NYWWS	JUG	2	2		COPPER GLAZED
3002	NYWWS	JUG	1	1		RIBBED STRAP;COPPER GLAZED
3002	NYWWS	JUG	1	1		RSD;COPPER GLAZED
3002	SCAR	JUG	1	1		NARROW-NECKED VESSEL WITH THUMBING
3002	YG	JAR	2	2		
3002	YG	JAR	2	1		SANDY TEXTURE;GLOBULAR FORM
3002	YG	JAR	1	1		SOOTED
3005	BL	BOWL	1	1		
3005	BL	BUTT	1	1		
3005	WHITE	CHP?	1	1		
3017	EYO	JUG	1	1		
3017	NYWWG	JUG	1	1		
3018	MISC	JAR	1	1		
3018	NYWWG	JUG	1	1		
3020	YG	JAR	6	6		SOOTED
3020	YG	JAR	3	3	DR	SQUARED RIM
3027	EYO	JUG	1	1		WAVY COMBING
3027	HUM	DJ	1	1		ROD;THUMBING EITHER SIDE OF R/H
3027	HUM	JUG	2	2		
3027	HUM	JUG	2	1		COPPER GLAZE
3027	HUM	JUG	10	1		FLAT TOPPED RIM;PULLED SPOUT;RIBBED
3027	HUM	JUG	1	1		OVA;L/STRAP HANDLE
3027	HUM	JUG	1	1		RIBBED STRAP HANDLE
3027	HUM	JUG	1	1		SAGGING
3027	MISC	CAUL	5	5		
3027	NYWWF	JAR	1	1		COPPER GLAZED INT;SOOTED
3027	NYWWF	JAR	1	1		SOOTED
3027	NYWWF	JUG	13	13		COPPER GLAZED
3027	NYWWF	JUG	1	1		COPPER GLAZED;COMBED HORIZ

3027	NYWWG	JUG	2	2	COPPER GLAZED
3027	NYWWG	JUG	1	1	SPLASH GLAZED
3027	NYWWS	JUG	3	3	COPPER GLAZED
3027	NYWWS	JUG	3	3	PLAIN GLAZED
3027	NYWWS	JUG	1	1	RIBBED ROD;COPPER GLAZED
3027	NYWWS	JUG	3	1	ROD B/H JOIN;COPPER GLAZED
3027	NYWWS	JUG	1	1	ROD;CENTRAL GROOVED;COPPER GLAZED
3027	NYWWS	JUG	3	3	RSD;COPPER GLAZED
3027	NYWWS	JUG	1	1	SQUARED RIM;RIBBED NECK
3027	YG	JAR	1	1	INT DEPO;SOOTED
3027	YG	JAR	2	2	SOOTED;REDDISH FABRIC
3033	EYO	JUG	1	1	
3033	MISC	JUG	2	1	THUMBED
3033	MISC	CAUL	3	1	
3033	MISC	JUG	1	1	
3033	NYWWF	JUG	3	3	COPPER GLAZE
3033	NYWWF	JUG	1	1	PLAIN GLAZE;FE PELLETT
3033	NYWWG	JUG	2	1	
3033	NYWWG	JUG	1	1	COPPER GLAZE
3033	NYWWS	BOWL	1	1	COPPER GLAZE;SOOTED EXT
3033	NYWWS	JUG	1	1	THUMBED;COPPER GLAZE
3033	YG	JAR	1	1	REDDISH FABRIC
U/S	CMW	JUG	1	1	SMALL RIBBED ROD HANDLE;COPPER GLAZE
U/S	HUM	JUG	1	1	
U/S	HUM	JUG	1	1	WAVY HORIZ LINE
U/S	PMR	DEEP	1	1	COPPER GLAZED INT
U/S	YG	JAR	1	1	REDDISH FABRIC;WHITE SLIPPED INT;SOOTED
U/S	YG	JAR	3	2	SOOTED