

Assessment of the pottery from Hob Moor School, York (OSA02 EV13)

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Sixty three sherds of pottery were recorded from the archaeological evaluation at Hob Moor School, York (OSA02 EV13). They represent at most 60 vessels. The earliest material is of late 11th to early 13th century date, but the earliest definite date is of the late 12th/early 13th century. The medieval pottery also includes some later medieval types (ie post 1350), although nothing closely datable. All of the medieval pottery is highly abraded, evidence of acidic soil conditions. Post-medieval pottery is also present. The earlier wares are abraded in the same manner as the medieval pottery but there are also fresh sherds of 18th, 19th and 20th-century material. These suggest a change in site function or conditions during the 18th century.

Description

Medieval pottery

There are seven sherds of Yorkshire Gritty ware, from five contexts. These include a rim (3011) and a base sherd with a black to dark brown core and a brown external margin. This is very unusual and the sherd may be of some other type. It is tempered with a coarse sand composed mainly of disaggregated Millstone Grit, as is the standard fabric. This ware was first produced in the later 11th century but continued in production throughout the 12th and into the 13th centuries.

Thirty-nine sherds are of definite late 12th or early 13th-century date. They consist mainly of sherds of York glazed ware (18 sherds) with minor quantities of Beverley ware (BEVO, 5 definite sherds and one possible), and unsourced splashed ware (YSPL, 1 sherd). In addition there were 6 sherds of Staxton-type ware, probably all from jars used in cooking although the soot traces which would have confirmed this have not survived.

Later medieval sherds are less numerous and consist of 8 sherds which might be Brandsby or York ware, three sherds of Humber ware and a possible Humber ware sherd. These wares might date to any period between the later 14th and the 16th century.

Post-medieval pottery

Three sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered. One is an abraded sherd of slipware made from a Coal Measures whiteware clay. It might either be a Staffordshire or West Yorkshire product and might date to the later 17th or 18th centuries. The remaining two sherds are not abraded and are both press-moulded slipware dish fragments. One has feathering/combing cutting through a layer of off-white slip, which is an early to mid 18th-century type, whilst the other was decorated with slip-trailed lines in light and dark brown slips. This is more of a mid to late 18th-century type.

Early Modern and later pottery

There are nine sherds of late 18th-century or later pottery, representing six vessels. They include two lead-glazed earthenwares: a redware bowl (PMLOC) and a black-glazed bowl (BL). Both are of types which were produced from the 18th-century onwards. A sherd from a white saltglazed stoneware chamber pot probably dates to the mid 18th century (and is not abraded). There is a single fragment of transfer printed ware plate, of 19th-century date, a fragment of a refined redware teapot with a brown glaze and 'chattered' decoration and the substantial remains of a stoneware jar with an external feldspathic glaze. The latter is probably late 19th or 20th century.

Assessment

Pottery was recovered from seven trenches.

Trench 1

Twenty sherds of pottery came from Trench 1. They ranged in date from the later 12th/early 13th century to the mid/late 18th century.

Context 1002 produced a collection of small, abraded medieval sherds and a fragment of mid 18th-century white saltglazed stoneware.

Context 1007 produced two sherds of fresh 18th-century pottery and an abraded late medieval sherd.

Trench 2

Trench 2 produced three sherds of pottery, all medieval and abraded.

Contexts 2007 and 2013 are dated to the later 12th / early 13th century or later.

Context 2016 is dated to the late 11th to early 13th century.

Trench 3

Trench 3 produced 21 sherds of pottery, all of types current in the later 12th to early 13th centuries but all abraded.

The pottery came from three deposits, 3005, 3009 and 3011, and there is little difference in composition between the three assemblages.

Trench 4

Seven sherds of pottery were recovered from Trench 4. All are abraded sherds of later 12th to early 13th century date. The identify of the single sherd from context 4008 is doubtful, since if it is indeed York glazed ware it has lost all the glaze.

Trench 5

Two sherds of pottery were recovered from Trench 5. Context 5004 produced a late 11th to early 13th-century sherd whilst context 5006 produced a sherd of 19th-century date (the refined redware teapot).

Trench 9

Sherds from two pottery vessels were recovered from context 9001 in Trench 9. All the sherds are fresh and include the substantial part of a stoneware jar, of the type used to contain preserves, such as marmalade. This jar is likely to be of later 19th century or later date.

Trench 10

Four sherds of pottery were recovered from Trench 10. That from context 10007 is of 19th-century date whilst the three sherds from context 10009 are of later 12th or early 13th-century date.

Discussion

The site was clearly either occupied or used for the dumping of refuse in the later 12th to early 13th centuries. The possibility of earlier activity is present, but in most cases these potentially earlier sherds are associated with later pottery. Furthermore, there are relatively few sherds of jars in the 12th/13th-century assemblage unless one includes the Yorkshire Gritty examples. The high proportion of jugs to jars (even allowing for the YG sherds being all of late 12th/early 13th century date) is more typical of urban tenements than rural settlements but it is not known whether this is due to a lower number of jugs being used on these rural sites or the replacement of ceramic cooking pots by metal vessels in the towns. The frequency of Staxton-type sherds is higher than that found in contemporary assemblages in York itself and this implies that the households which gave rise to this pottery were obtaining at least some of it from other markets than those in the city.

Later medieval activity is certainly attested but is clearly on a lesser scale than before. It is also unclear whether this later activity is the tail end of 12th/13th-century activity (ie later 14th century) or intermittent and later (ie 15th/16th century). The collection is much too small to make any further statements.

There is a clear difference in the nature of site deposition in the 18th century. The one late 17th/early 18th century sherd is abraded but the mid 18th century and later sherds are not. This is unlikely to be due to differences in the texture and hardness of the later sherds, although this may have accentuated the pattern. Here too, there is insufficient pottery present to justify further interpretation.

Appendix

Context	Description	Trench	Cname	Form	Nosh	NoV	Subfabric	Part	Use	Condition
1002		1	SWSG	CHP	1	1		R		
1002	CUGL;CORDONED NECK;SQUARED RIM	1	YORK	JUG	1	1		R		VABR
1002	BROWN SLIPPED INT AND EXT	1	STSL	POSS	1	1		BS		ABR
1002	COMBED SLIP	1	STCO	DISH	1	1		BS		SMALL CHIP
1002		1	YORK/BRANDSBY		6	6		BS		VABR
1002		1	STAXT	JAR	3	3		BS		VABR
1002	EXT PLAIN GL	1	BEVO	JUG	1	1		BS		
1002	UNGLAZED THIN-WALLED	1			1	1		BS		ABR;CHIP
1002	INT POOL OF BROWN GL	1	HUM	JAR	1	1		BS		
1002	RIM SCAR ON BASE	1	HUM	JUG/JAR	1	1		BS		ABR
1002		1	HUM	JUG/JAR	1	1		BS		ABR
1007	LTBROWN AND DKBR SLIP TRAILING	1	STCO	DISH	1	1		R		
1007	REDUCED PLAIN GLAZE INT AND EXT	1	PMLOC	BOWL	1	1	OXID SANDY	BS		
1007		1	HUM?	JUG	1	1		BS		VABR
2007	EXT PLAIN GL	2	YORK	JUG	1	1		BS		VABR
2013	INT CLEAR GL	2	YORK	JAR	1	1		BS		VABR
2016		2	YG	JAR	1	1		BS		VABR
3005		3	BEVO	JAR/JUG	1	1		BS		VABR
3005	KT EXT;PLAIN GL INT;GLAZE APPEARS TO BE SUSPENSION RATHER THAN SPLASHED	3	BEVO?	BOWL	1	1		BS		FRESH

3005	3 YORK	JUG/JAR	1	1	BS	VABR
3005 EXT PLAIN GL	3 YORK	JUG	1	1	BS	VABR
3009	3 STAXT	JAR	1	1	R	VABR
3009	3 STAXT	JAR	1	1	BS	VABR
3009	3 YG	JAR	1	1	BS	VABR
3009 PLAIN GL;WIDELY-SPACED THUMBING	3 YORK	JUG	1	1	B	VABR
3009 EXT PLAIN GL	3 YORK	JUG	1	1	BS	VABR
3009	3 YORK	JUG/JAR	1	1	BS	VABR
3011 EXT GL	3 BEVO	JAR	1	1	BS	ABR
3011	3 STAXT	JAR	1	1	B	SOOTED EXT ABR
3011	3 YG	JAR	1	1	R	SOOTED EXT ABR
3011	3 YG	JAR	1	1	BS	SOOTED EXT ABR
3011	3 YG	JAR	1	1	BS	ABR
3011 EXT CUGL	3 YORK	JUG	2	2	BS	ABR
3011 POSS EXT GL	3 YORK	JUG/JAR	1	1	BS	ABR
3011	3 YORK	JAR	2	2	BS	ABR
3011	3 YORK	JAR	1	1	B	ABR
4008 ID?	4 YORK	JUG/JAR	1	1	BS	VABR
4012	4 YORK/BRANDSBY	JUG	2	2	BS	VABR
4012	4 BEVO	JUG/JAR	1	1	BS	VABR
4012	4 BEVO	JUG/JAR	1	1	BS	VABR

4012	4 YG	JAR	1	1 DARK CORE;BROWN EXT MARGIN (IE HIGHER IRON THAN NORMAL)	B	ABR
4012 RECT RSD;CUGL	4 YORK	JUG	1	1	BS	VABR
5004	5 YG	JAR	1	1	BS	VABR
5006 JUDDERED DEC EXT;BROWN GL INT AND EXT	5 REFR	TPOT	1	1	BS	
9001 TURNED BASE;CLEAR BRISTOL GLAZED EXT	9 ENGS	JAR	4	1 BUFF STONEWARE (?CMW BODY?)	PROF	
9001 BLACK-GLAZED INT	9 BL	BOWL	1	1	R	
10007	10 TPW	PLATE	1	1	BS	
10009	10 YORK	JAR	1	1	BS	ABR
10009 CUGL EXT	10 YORK	JUG	1	1	BS	ABR
10009 PLAIN GL EXT	10 YSPL	JUG	1	1 REDUCED SANDY	BS	ABR
10009 L12/E13TH C	10 ZDATE		0	0	BS	