

Assessment of the Pottery from Swinton, North Yorkshire (OSA05 WB04)

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A sherd of late medieval pottery was recovered from a watching brief at Swinton, North Yorkshire. The sherd probably dates between the later 14th and the early 16th centuries.

Description

Medieval Pottery

A single sherd of Humberware was recovered from context 1004. The sherd comes from a large jug or jar and has an external red slip with spots of external glaze. The vessel has a reduced core and interior and an oxidized outer margin.

The sherd was examined at x20 magnification and sparse rounded white grains, probably Rhaxella chert, were seen, ranging up to 2.0mm across. The groundmass contains no visible inclusions. The Rhaxella chert derives from the Middle Jurassic strata which outcrop on the northern side of the Vale of Pickering, whilst the fine-textured groundmass is finer than local boulder clay but is similar to the Oxford Clay and the Speeton Clay (although the latter usually contains glauconite, which would probably have been visible at x20 magnification). Therefore, a source in the Vale of Pickering, perhaps utilising an outcrop of Oxford Clay, is possible. Pottery production is known at Helmsley (documentary evidence) and at Castle Howard (archaeological evidence for the production of Hambleton ware, a 15th-century whiteware).

Assessment

The sherd is large and fresh and probably indicates activity in the later medieval or early post-medieval period on the site. It provides the first archaeological evidence, albeit indirect, for the production of Humberware in the Vale of Pickering.

Appendix 1

Context	TSNO	REFN O	Action	class	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Part	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight
1004				POTTERY	HUM	FINE GROUNDMASS;R CHERT <1.0MM	JUG	BS	EXT RED SLIP	1	1	27