

Assessment of the Finds from Heslington Hill, York (yhs '04)

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A small collection of pottery and ceramic building material from an archaeological evaluation, watching brief and mitigation strategy at the University of York Campus, conducted by Field Archaeology Specialists was submitted for identification and assessment. The finds consist of very abraded fragments of building material, probably of medieval date, and a collection of pottery ranging in date from the later Roman period to the late 18th or 19th centuries.

The condition of the pottery is consistent with it being present in ploughsoil and topsoil as a result of manuring.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

Thirty-four fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. All were heavily abraded and spalled, consistent with a long exposure to chemical and mechanical weathering. Most of the fragments appear to have come from flat roof tiles although one fragment came from a ridge tile. All had a similar oxidized sandy fabric. A broad date of mid 12th to 17th century is likely.

Pottery

Roman

A fragment of a Nene Valley colour-coated beaker with an orange tinge to the fabric (1997Fabric C3) was recovered together with a body sherd which might come from an Ebor Ware jar (Monaghan 1997, Fabric E1). Alternatively, the latter sherd could be an abraded fragment of Humberware. The former is a later 3rd- or 4th-century type and the latter dates to the later 1st to mid 3rd centuries (or the later 14th to 16th centuries).

Medieval

A sherd of York glazed ware probably dates to the later 12th or earlier 13th centuries. Four sherds of Humberware, including one with wavy combed decoration, probably date to the later 14th to early 16th centuries.

Early Modern

Fragments of Creamware and transfer-printed pearlware were recovered. Both probably date to the later 18th to early 19th centuries. The transfer-printed ware was spalled into three fragments, consistent with frost-shattering.

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<http://www.postex.demon.co.uk/index.html>

A copy of this report is archived online at

<http://www.avac.uklinux.net/potcat/pdfs/avac2006041.pdf>

Assessment

The finds come from four contexts. Context 1008, a layer of redeposited topsoil, produced the late 18th to early 19th-century pottery together with fragments of medieval ceramic building material. The remaining finds came from brown sandy silt, 1012, 1013 and 1014. The finds from these layers consisted of the Roman and late medieval pottery and medieval ceramic building material.

The character of the finds suggests that all were present in shallowly-buried ploughsoil or topsoil and are consistent in size and condition with finds included in night soil or farmyard manure. It is impossible to say whether this night soil/manure originated locally or was imported from the city of York itself since all the types present are common finds in York but include none of the imported types which tend to be more common in urban than rural deposits. The high ratio of ceramic building material to pottery in the collection might favour a farmyard origin and the higher degree of erosion seen on the ceramic building material may indicate that the ceramic building material was either fired at a lower temperature to the pottery or has been exposed to the elements for a longer period of time.

Retention

The Roman and medieval pottery and ceramic building material at least should be retained for future study (e.g. to check or refine identification).

Further work

No further work is recommended on the finds.

Appendix 1

Context	class	REFNO	Description	Cname	Form	Use	Condition	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
1008	CBM	F1		MTIL	RIDGE?		VABR	BS	1	1	15
1008	CBM	F1		MTIL	FLAT?		VABR	BS	3	3	9
1008	POTTERY	F1		TPW	CUP		SPALLED	BS	3	1	2
1008	POTTERY	F1		CREA	PLATE			BS	1	1	2
1008	CBM	F1		MTIL	FLAT?		VABR	BS	17	17	41
1013	POTTERY	F3		YORK	JUG			BS	1	1	3
1013	POTTERY	F3	WAVY COMBING EXT	HUM	JUG		ABR	BS	1	1	8
1013	POTTERY	F3		HUM	JUG		ABR	BS	2	2	3
1013	CBM	F3		MTIL	FLAT		ABR	BS	1	1	7
1013	POTTERY	F3		YATC03	BEAK		ABR	BS	1	1	2
1013	POTTERY	F3		YATE01	JAR		ABR	BS	1	1	26
1014	CBM	F3		MTIL	FLAT?		VABR	BS	12	12	61
1014	POTTERY	F3		HUM	JUG		ABR	BS	1	1	14

Bibliography

Monaghan, Jason (1997) *Roman Pottery from York*. The Archaeology of York 16/8 York, Council for British Archaeology.