

Pottery and Other Finds from Hill Crest Avenue, Castleford (OSA07 WB11)

Alan Vince

A small number of finds was recovered from an archaeological watching brief carried out by On-Site Archaeology Ltd at Hill Crest Avenue, Castleford. The finds include a single sherd early prehistoric pottery (probably early to mid Bronze Age), four sherds of Iron Age shell-tempered ware, two sherds of Romano-British pottery and a scrap of fired clay.

Fired Clay

A small scrap of fired clay, weighing 2gm, was recovered from context 127.

Pottery

Earlier Prehistoric by Carol Allen

Context - Sherd came from context (144) the fill of a post hole.

Description - One sherd weighing 15g, wall thickness 10mm, unabraded, probable base sherd, undecorated. Slight finger tip impression on base sherd, orange exterior, interior and core black.

Fabric – tempered with grog, mudstone and sparse rounded quartz. The tempering is probably not local, from thin section and ICPS results from A Vince (below), suggesting the pottery was made elsewhere.

Interpretation - This is probably a flat base sherd from a middle Bronze Age bucket urn. Similar pottery is known elsewhere in the region for example from Melton (Allen in preparation) and Catfoss (McInnes 1968) in Yorkshire. Grog tempering is common on this type of pot (Allen and Hopkins 2000, fig. 8) in this period.

Thin Section and Chemical Analysis by Alan Vince

Thin section and chemical analysis (ICP-AES) was carried out on the sherd (sample V4511) which indicated that the clay was not obtained locally, since it contains rounded quartz grains of Permian or, more likely, Triassic, origin. Very similar fabrics, both in petrological characteristics and in chemical composition, have been noted in East Yorkshire, at Melton, where, by contrast, they appear to have been locally-produced. Factor analysis of the ICPS data together with that from grog-tempered wares from Melton in East Yorkshire and a range of West Yorkshire wares of known origin indicates that the Castleford sample is similar to the Melton samples, and to samples from Pontefract and Mirfield and, to a lesser degree,

Swillington and Otley. By contrast, samples from Baildon, Follifoot, Boston Spa, Thorner and Winksley are distinguishable (Fig 1).

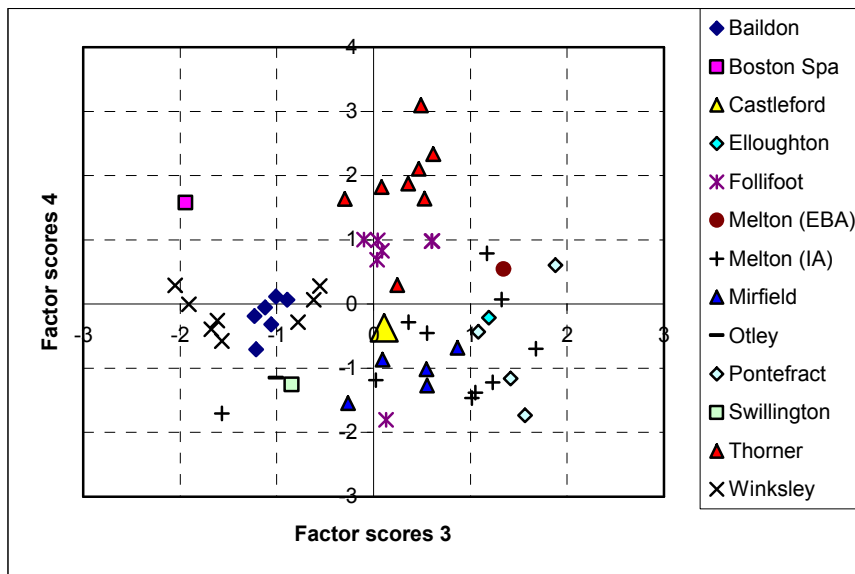


Figure 1

This result is consistent with either a local or non-local origin.

Iron Age

Four sherds of shell-tempered ware were recovered from contexts 117, 133, 134 and 138. In total these sherds weigh only 8 gm and exhibit no typological features. A sample (from context 134, V4509) was taken for analysis by thin section and Inductively-Coupled Plasma Spectroscopy. The thin section revealed that the shell inclusions are fragments of a fossiliferous limestone composed of bivalve shell, echinoid shell and well-sorted subangular quartz, c.0.15mm across, in a groundmass of ferroan calcite. The groundmass contains few visible inclusions apart from rounded specks of dark brown to opaque material. These features indicate that the vessel was made from a Jurassic clay with a Jurassic limestone temper. No Jurassic strata which might be the source of this vessel occur within the Castleford area and the nearest possible source is the area immediately to the south and west of the Wolds (Fig 1). Jurassic strata outcropping in and around the North Yorkshire moors have a different lithology from those outcropping south of Market Weighton and can be discounted as possible sources for this fabric. The closest outcrop would be in the vicinity of Market Weighton, 60 km (37 miles) to the west.

The chemical composition of the Castleford sample was compared with that of Iron Age shell-tempered wares from Ferrybridge, Elloughton, Malton, Collingham and Stainton and with samples of Iron Age shell-tempered ware from sites in northwest Cambridgeshire. Factor analysis of this data indicates that the Castleford sample is most similar to samples of East Yorkshire origin from Ferrybridge and Melton (Fig 2). The closest parallels come from

Ferrybridge and this suggests that the pottery may have been transported up the River Aire from a source at the southern end of the Wolds.

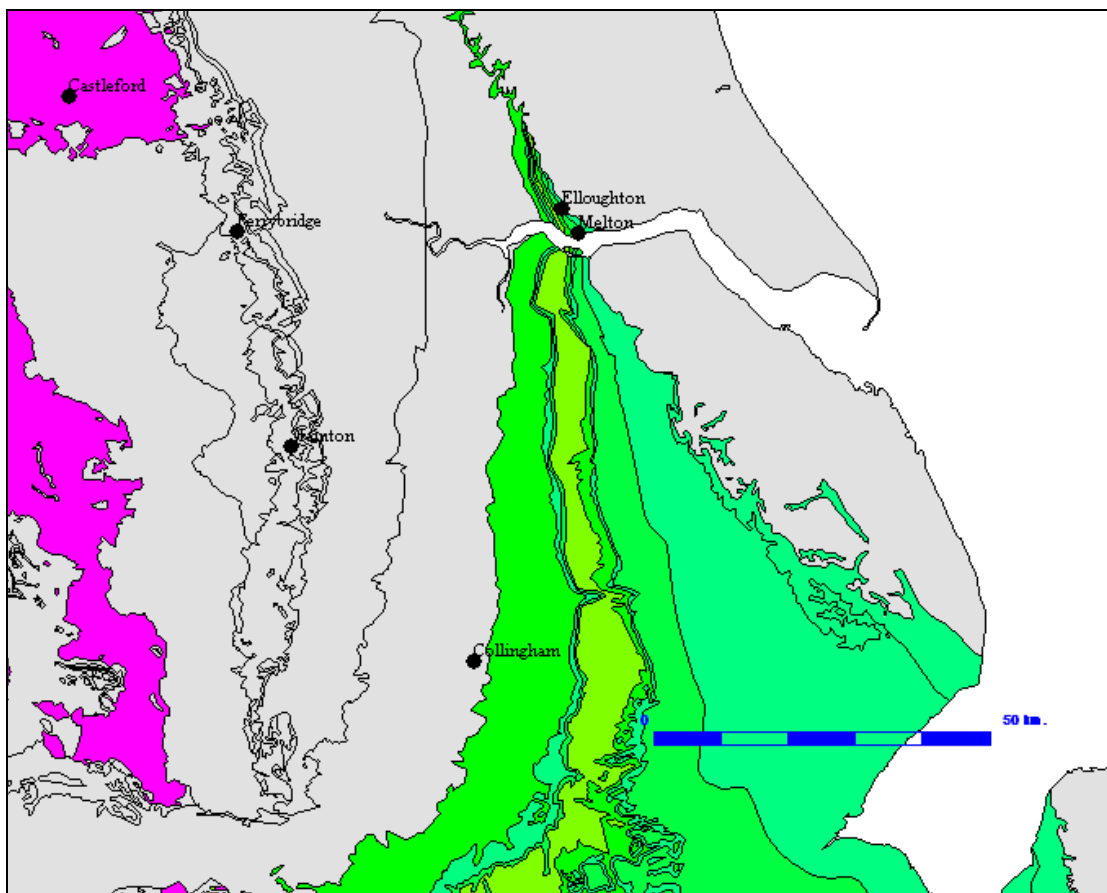


Figure 2 Location of Site producing sampled Iron Age shell-tempered ware. Namurian strata shown in pink and Jurassic strata including fossiliferous limestones in green.

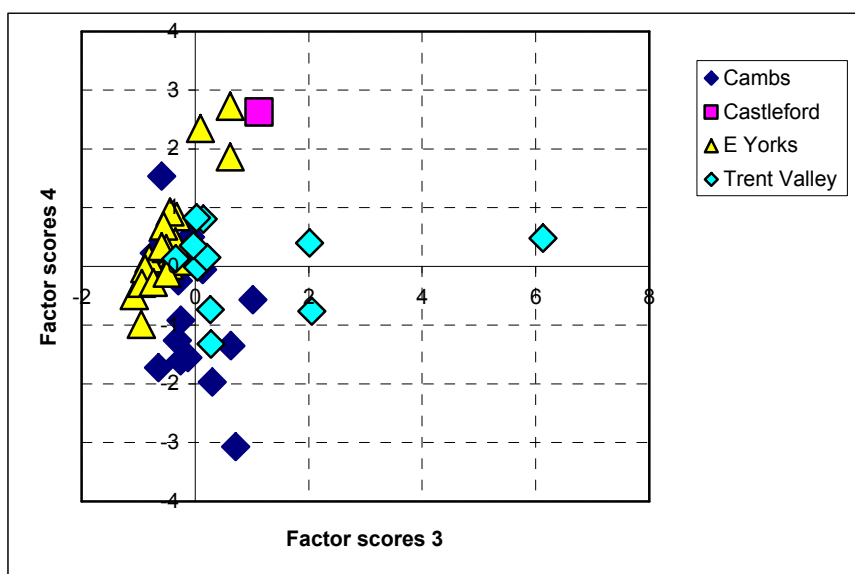


Figure 3

Iron Age pottery appears to be rare in West and South Yorkshire and the small quantity from this site, coming from several different contexts, may actually reflect significant activity in the Iron Age.

Roman

Two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. A small abraded sherd of Samian ware from context 152 and an abraded sherd of colour-coated ware (unidentifiable source) from context 157.

Bibliography

- Allen, C. and Hopkins, D. (2000) Bronze Age Accessory Cups from Lincolnshire: Early Bronze Age Pot?", *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 66, 297-317
- Allen, C. (in preparation) "Earlier Prehistoric Pottery." in C. Fenton-Thomas, ed., *Excavations at Melton, East Yorkshire*
- McInnes, I. J. (1968) The excavation of a Bronze Age cemetery at Catfoss, East Yorkshire," *East Riding Archaeologist*, 1:1, 1-10

Appendix 1

TSNO	class	Context	Subfabric	Cname	Action	Weight	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Condition	Use
	GEO	116	SHELLY LIMESTONE	GEO		14	GEO		BS	1	1		
	POTTERY	117		IASH		2	JAR		BS	2	1		BLACK DEP INT
	POTTERY	127		FCLAY		2	FCLAY		BS	1	1		
	POTTERY	133		IASH		1	JAR		BS	1	1		
V4509	POTTERY	134		IASH	TS;ICPS	5	JAR		BS	1	1		BLACK DEP INT
	POTTERY	138		IASH		1	JAR		BS	1	1		BLACK DEP INT
V4511	POTTERY	144		MBAGROG	TS;ICPS	14	JAR		BS	1	1		SOOTED EXT
	POTTERY	152		SO		7	18/31		BS	1	1		
	POTTERY	157		CC		10	JAR	HORIZ GROOVES	BS	1	1	ABRA	