

Assessment of the Medieval and later Pottery from Sherburn-in-Elmet, North Yorkshire

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A small collection of medieval and later pottery was recovered from an archaeological watching brief at Sherburn-in-Elmet, North Yorkshire. The pottery is mostly of medieval date and probably dates to the 13th or 14th centuries with a small quantity of post-medieval or later pottery.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

A single fragment of flat roof tile was recovered. Given the proximity of Sherburn to Cawood (6 miles to the east), the site of a medieval tile industry known both through documentary sources and through archaeology, it is likely that this is the source of the tile.

Pottery

Medieval

Sixty-one sherds of medieval pottery were recovered, representing no more than 10 vessels and weighing 1.678 Kg in total (Table 1). Three wares were identified of which the earliest is York Gritty ware (YG). This ware was produced in West Yorkshire, probably at Potterton, which is documented through its placename as being a production site in the later 11th century. The ware is common in York from the mid 11th to the mid 13th centuries (Holdsworth 1995; Mainman 1990). The most common ware is Northern Gritty ware, which has a similar fabric to YG but is often slightly redder in colour and glazed. Vessels were often overfired, as is the case here, but this appears to be a standard feature of the ware rather than evidence for production nearby. Thin section and chemical analysis of a series of samples from Ingmanthorpe Manor, Wetherby, suggests that the ware was produced to the northwest of that site, perhaps close to Harrogate or Knaresborough (Vince 2004). Most of the sherds at Sherburn come from a glazed jug with a sagging base. A complete profile could probably be reconstructed and this should be illustrated. The third ware is represented by a single sherd from a glazed jug of Beverley-type ware. This fine orange-firing wheelthrown glazed ware is found extensively in the Vale of York and probably includes vessels produced at Beverley itself, 47 miles down river from Sherburn. However, analysis of samples from York suggests that there may have been daughter industries in the Vale of York, perhaps in the vicinity of York itself.

Table 1

CNAME	NoSH	NoV	Weight
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BEVO2B	1	1	1
NGR	56	5	1665
YG	4	4	12
Grand Total	61	10	1678

Post-medieval or later

A single sherd of blackware of later 16th to 19th century date, was recovered. This ware type was produced in numerous centres throughout Yorkshire and the source of this example is unknown (Brears 1971).

Assessment

The finds were recovered from three contexts. Those from 1001 and 1003 could date from the later 12th to mid 14th centuries (there are no examples of Humberware from the site, which would undoubtedly have been present if activity had continued into the second half of the 14th century). The blackware sherd comes from context 1006.

Further work

The Northern Gritty ware vessel from context 1003 should be reconstructed, illustrated and perhaps photographed because of its intrinsic interest.

Bibliography

Brears, P (1971) The English Country Pottery: its History and Techniques. Newton Abbot, David & Charles

Holdsworth, J. (1995) "6.2 Post-Roman pottery ." in D. Phillips and B. Heywood, eds., Excavations at York Minster, HMSO, London,

Mainman, A J (1990) Anglo-Scandinavian Pottery from 16-22 Coppergate. The Archaeology of York 16/5 London, Council British Archaeol

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Appendix 1

REFNO	Action	Context	class	Cname	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Use
2		1001	CBM	MTIL	FLAT	BS	1	1	22	
3		1001	POTTERY	NGR	JAR	BS	2	2	34	
7		1006	POTTERY	BL	PANC	R	1	1	29	WORN INT
6		1003	POTTERY	NGR	JUG	BS	1	1	2	
6		1003	POTTERY	YG	JAR	BS	3	3	5	SOOTED EXT
6		1003	POTTERY	YG	JAR	B	1	1	7	SOOTED EXT

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6		1003	POTTERY	BEVO2B	JUG	BS	1	1	1	
5	DR	1003	POTTERY	NGR	JUG	BS	52	1	1591	
6		1003	POTTERY	NGR	JAR	BS	1	1	38	WORN EXT