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**Garden Lane  
Sherburn in Elmet  
North Yorkshire**

**Archaeological Excavations**

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February 1997  
MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd

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North Yorkshire  
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**Garden Lane  
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**Introduction**

From 25th November to 2nd December 1996 Map Archaeological Consultancy Ltd were requested by Fulford Builders (Northem) Ltd to carry out archaeological excavation and recording on the Green Lane development site, Sherburn in Elmet, North Yorkshire (SE 4895 3330 Fig 1)

Initially the work involved the excavation, recording and removal of badly disturbed burial and associated stone coffin (sarcophagus) which was unearthed whilst preparing the ground for the drains of the new access road. A burial licence was applied for and granted to carry out the work. None of the previous work on the site was monitored as there were no archaeological constraints on the area of the development. It is not known if any deposits of archaeological importance were disturbed during the development of the area of the site, to the east of the burial, which was carried out prior to the acquisition of the land by the present developer.

All archaeological work undertaken could not have been possible without the prompt action of Fulford Builders (Northem) Ltd in reporting the find and giving full co-operation and assistance during the excavation. This work was funded by Fulford Builders (Northem) Ltd.

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**Historical Background**

The town of Sherburn in Elmet, named from 'the Shire - bum', dates from at least the 9th century. The name itself means 'bright clear stream' and was recorded as 'Scirebum' in the Domesday Book. Both documentary and archaeological evidence suggest that it was the capital of the eastern frontier of the Kingdom of Elmet.

The village has links with Christianity dating back to the 11th century with the manor in 1030 A.D. controlling a large area in the kingdom of Elmet. However, it is thought that the church is

10th century in origin as recorded by Bogg who states that the list of the 'Utensilia' dating to around 900 mentions a peal of six bells and four hanging bells relating to Sherburn. Nearly every vestige of the pre-conquest church has disappeared and the present church is a Norman rebuild of the 12th century with 13th and 14th century alterations.

The main historical evidence relates to Sherburn being the site of King Athelstan's palace, a site referred to as Hall Garth (Fig 2.6). Earth works show that it was a rectangular building, approximately 44m north-south and 17.5m east-west. A deep dry moat to the east of the site continues up to the hill on top of which was the house. At that point the moat was filled by churchyard debris. Within the moat were service buildings and a dovecote which were spoken of as 'below' manor. The moat may have run around the original house, however we cannot be certain as its possible course lies underneath a road. Le Patourel suggests that Hall Garth was a moated site, this may be true as Bogg records it saying 'the site is to be seen on the north slope of the hill, with part of the moat which enclosed it on the west and north'. If this is the case it would suggest that the earth works were later in origin than Bogg suggests (Le Patourel 1973 and Bogg 1987).

In celebration of the victory at Brunanburgh in 937, it is said that Athelstan presented the palace to the see of York, and it remained as an archbishops' palace for over 300 years. In 1361 John Thoresby - the archbishop - decided that 'the old hall and chambers of the archbishops manor at Shireburn should be demolished' (Bogg 1987). The palace was moved to Cawood and the material from the manor at Sherburn was dispersed, some may have been re-used during the akeration of York Minster.

There were several skirmishes during the first civil war near to Sherburn, records suggest that those slain in action were interred at Milford, c. half a mile from the parish church at Sherburn. In 1322, the archbishop in a letter dated at Cawood wrote to the rural dean of Sherburn that whereas many of his tenants had been slain in battle, the dean was to take care and have their effects properly administered to.

In the 1980's investigations took place to determine the question as to whether Bishops Dyke was built as a canal to transport stone from Huddleston Quarry, which stands c. 1.6 km to the west of Sherburn, to Cawood and then on to York (Miller 1983). Bishops Dyke is an artificial channel which runs from the banks of the River Ouse to Sherburn in Elmet. Evidence suggested that the dyke had been used for land drainage and to create a water supply for the

moats and towns which it passes by. The scale of the engineering work which must have taken place to create such a huge structure and therefore it can only be assumed that an engineering project on this scale must have been planned in connection with Huddleston Quarry and the Fabric roles of the Mmster. Although there is evidence that the road between Cawood and Sherburn was repaired in 1457, there is evidence from 1498 that stone was moved from the quay at Cawood to a boat. This suggests that the fact the stone was being moved within Cawood meant that stone was being transported by water into Cawood itself.

The village itself is surrounded by old field boundaries and earth works, however, very little work has been carried out on them and therefore dating them without some investigation is problematical. Bogg records that the line of forts and earthworks dating to the Roman invasion extended as far east as Sherburn (Bogg 1987).

#### **Previous Archaeological Work.**

Very little archaeological work has taken place within Sherburn in Ebneth and the surrounding area. Spot Finds within 1km of the site at Garden Lane, Sherburn include an early Bronze Age axe hammer (Moorhouse 1972, p. 218 Fig. 2.1), a Roman coin found in 1965 (Fig. 2.2) and a fragment of a 9th or 10th century stone cross found in 1948 (Fig. 2.5).

A villa, dating to the Roman period, was found in the eighteenth century at Grimston Park and its remains are located 7.5km north of Sherburn (Fig. 2.3). The villa has been partially excavated in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries and a mosaic was uncovered (Ramm 1976).

Excavations have also taken place at Hall Garth in Sherburn, the site has been equated with Athelstan's Palace. This rescue excavation was undertaken in the 1960's by the Ministry of Works.

#### **Excavation Methods**

An archive was maintained throughout the excavation in the form of drawn plans and sections at a scale of 1:20 with monochrome, colour print and colour slide film.

The significance of the find was not recognised by the contractors until the sarcophagus, (1007 Fig. 4), and its contents had been removed and subsequently shattered by the J.C.B.

After the importance of the find was realised the bones were then re - buried with quarry waste, and the sarcophagus remained where it had been dragged by machine, causing further dismption (Although badly broken some of the remainng fragments were large enough to be partially reconstmcted to gain an idea as to the original dimensions The lid (1005), and skeleton (1006), were too badly damaged to be reconstmcted on site) Owing to the discovery of the first burial a watchmg brief was mounted to observe the machine carrying out the continumg ground works This subsequently resulted in the discovery of a second intact sarcophagus (1014 Fig 5), approximately 6m to the south and slightly west of the first, with in - situ hd (1011), and undisturbed skeleton (1012)

### **Excavation Results**

Two inhumations withm sarcophagi were observed and recorded Both burials will be discussed below in chronological order

#### **Burial 1**

The grave cut (context 1008) was orientated north - south was rectilinear in shape with steep sides and a flat base (Figs 3 and 4) It was badly truncated by machine, almost all of the eastern edge and possibly up to 0.50m of the western edge was removed The western edge survived to a greater height due to the grave being cut into a slope falling from west to east Originally the cut appeared to have been circa 0.97m deep

Associated with the burial was a stone sarcophagus (context 1007 Fig 4 Pl 1) The sarcophagus was recovered, but was very badly broken It was found in at least twenty fragments, the three largest pieces could be reassembled, but much of the upper parts and sides were missing or in fragments with only one fragment surviving to its full height (Fig 4)

The dimensions of the sarcophagus were approximately 2.05m long, 0.75m wide and 0.53m deep with 0.14 - 0.20m thick sides and an internal depth of approximately 0.40 - 0.44m and length of 1.72m The internal face at the southern (foot) end was square, and at the northern (head) end it was slightly rounded

The lid of the stone coffin (context 1005) was too badly fragmented to be reconstmcted, however there were fragments up to 0.15m thick

The surviving fragments of the sarcophagus had been finely carved from Millstone grit

Although there are no known Roman millstone grit quarries within Yorkshire, the nearest source for this type of stone is found in outcrops at Brainham Park, 11.30km to the north-west, and in the Wharfedale and Airedale areas. Outcrops occur closer to navigable rivers. A more likely source is a possible Roman Quarry, which is situated on the Millstone Grit crags between Leeds and Wetherby at Hetchell Woods - Pomfocall - situated close by the Roman road leading west from Tadcaster enabling easier transportation (G Gaunt, pers comm Fig 6)

The Skeleton (context 1006) although originally articulated was badly disturbed by the machine with less than 50% of bone recovered. The remaining bone, although in fair condition, was unable to be pieced back together on site. Two site workers had remarked that originally the skeleton had been complete, with the skull to the north, and that the skeleton had a limey material (plaster?), with it.

#### **Burial 2**

The grave cut (context 1015) was orientated north-south and was rectangular in shape (Figs 3 and 5). The top edge of the grave cut broke sharply from the surface and fell steeply to a sharp bottom edge leading to a flat, even base with the exception of the south-west corner, where there was a flat stepped area half way down the side of the cut. The shape of the base of the cut reflected that of the sarcophagus, the northern end being wider than the south.

The sarcophagus (context 1014) was orientated north-south, and was carved from a single block of Millstone grit (Fig 5). It was rectangular in shape, complete and in very good condition. The south, west and east sides were all vertical, but at the north end (head) the lower half tapered slightly towards south. All the corners were slightly rounded. The overall finish was very good with no evident chisel marks on any surface. All sides had consistent, regular faces with the exception of the internal base which was slightly bowed in places and had an irregular, uneven finish.

The dimensions of the sarcophagus were approximately 2.06m long, 0.77m wide and 0.50m deep with 0.12 - 0.15m thick sides and an internal depth of approximately 0.40m and length of 1.74m.

The lid (context 1011) was rectangular in shape, 2.04m long, 0.68m wide 0.19m thick, at north end, tapering to 0.06m at south end (Fig 5). A diagonal break had occurred in antiquity,

0.80m from northern end. The western edge was flush with the side of the sarcophagus, with a slight ledge on eastern side. The inner face had a finer surface than the outer which was much rougher, with several parallel south - west, north - east aligned shallow, rounded ridges to the south - east corner.

The skeleton (context 1012) was supine and fully extended, orientated north-south with the head to the north (Fig 5 Pl 3). It was also fully articulated with both hands over pelvis and knees and feet close together (indicative of shroud burial). All the bone, with the exception of the skull, was in good complete condition. There were possible signs of trauma to the lower legs, just above ankle, with a bony growth fusing the tibia and fibula on the right leg (plate 5), with a large spur of bone on the left fibula (plate 6). The left ulna was slightly displaced and has a post mortem break just above the wrist. The broken blackened ends of the bone were most likely to have been the result of water running into the sarcophagus due to a break in the lid, directly above the break in the ulna. The good condition of the remaining bone may be attributed to the fact that the shroud and body were originally covered in a lime or gypsum plaster.

Fragments of off - white plaster (context 1013) were seen to be covering the skeleton, the largest of these, 0.50m x 0.15m, covered the left femur, with smaller fragments above the pelvis, right femur and adjacent to the left and right clavicles. Upon removal the larger fragments bore the unprint of fabric on the inner face (body side), and had preserved the contours of the body, in the form of a cast, before putrefaction had set in. Elsewhere the plaster had decayed, surviving as a friable off white silky material, leaving behind the footprint of the shroud in the base of the sarcophagus (Fig 5). There were no folds or seams apparent in the unprint of the shroud and therefore it was assumed that this was a simple wrapping for the body rather than a garment worn in life. In comparison with other burials such as late Roman Gypsum burials from York, the linen associated with the Sherburn burials was rather coarse with no patterning. The sharp delineating edge to this deposit and the fact that it was restricted to the area occupied by the body, with none encroaching on the sides of the sarcophagus, suggested that the body had been shrouded and coated with plaster prior to being placed in the coffin. If the body had been in the sarcophagus prior to the plaster being applied the footprint would have taken on a more amorphous outline and most likely would have covered the full extent of the base of the sarcophagus.

The term "plaster" is used to describe the lime or gypsum plaster concretions found within the

sarcophagus as it is not possible to distinguish between the above, with certainty, without chemical analysis of the mineral elements J Spriggs pers comm

## 6 DISCUSSION

Although no dating evidence in the form of pottery or artefacts were recovered during the excavation, the materials used and the form of the two sarcophagi strongly suggests that they were of a Roman date. The stone used, a millstone grit, was preferred for the carving of grave furniture and funerary monuments of this period. The use of plaster in Burial 2 and possibly Burial 1 used in the treatment of the body, is seen as an indicator of high status. The majority of plaster burials occur in stone or lead coffins, the earliest securely dated examples in Britain are 3rd century with stone coffins becoming more common in the 4th century. Statistically the chances of plaster burials being 4th century is high.

Plaster and gypsum have highly absorbent qualities and would have performed a dual function, to absorb the liquids produced by the putrefaction of the corpse (reducing the odours), and to prevent moisture coming into contact with the body. Because of this the use of plaster in burials is usually interpreted as an attempt to preserve the corpse. This also frequently preserved a cast of the cloth shroud, or fragments of the cloth used itself. The preferred material used for this purpose appears to have been linen.

There are three principal types of plaster burial. The first, a complete cast formed by pouring liquid plaster over, round and beneath the body, half filling the coffin, the second, a partial cast of plaster held in place with gravel, and finally, a thin casing of plaster held in place round the body by a shroud.

The major distribution of plaster burials is mostly urban in context with the majority concentrated at Dorchester, London, Colchester and York. The main exception to the urban location is where the 40 known examples from York, (RCHM 1962, passim) are complemented by a concentration in the rural hinterland restricted to an area of West Yorkshire, with smaller groups in North and South Yorkshire, a distribution pattern into which the Sherburn in Elmet burials easily fit.

Burial 1 at Castle Yard, York had fragments of linen adhering to the outside of the gypsum, suggesting that the shroud had been wrapped around the cast, reducing the amount of plaster needed (Ramm 1957, 401). A similar technique may have been used at Trentholme Drive, York.

where the cast appeared to have been smoothed, leaving a gap of 10cm between the cast and the sides of the coffin. The excavator (Wenham 1968, 41), suggested that the body had been placed in a 'mould' of wood or canvas and encased in gypsum prior to being placed in the coffin.

The foot print of the plaster in Burial 2 (Fig 5), where the plaster does not encroach on the side of the sarcophagus and is restricted to the outline of the body, suggested that a similar method may have been employed.

Plaster burials are known to be pagan in origin and were recorded, by Herodotus, in North Africa from as early as the 5th century BC. Plaster burial may have been introduced into the area by the African Emperor Septimius Severus (by the establishment of the imperial court at York), in the first decade of the 3rd century providing a historical context for the presence of high status Africans using this type of burial. Undoubtedly the ritual was taken up by Christians where the reputed preservative properties of plaster were used to conserve the body for the expected physical resurrection, a powerful element of the faith. The north - south alignment of burial 1 and 2, (Figs 2, 3), suggests that they had been followers of a pagan religion rather than Christian where the burial is almost exclusively found aligned east - west with the head to the west.

Very little Roman evidence has been recovered from Sherburn in Elmet, this may be due to the fact that very little archaeological excavation has taken place in the area, with the exception of Athenian's palace. Two Roman milestones were found at Castleford of which the southern most, found c. 0.7 km south of the Roman Fort, gave the distance from York as 22 miles. Following the known route from Castleford to York the distance is far too long. However, using a suggested route by Ramm cutting across country rather than going through Tadcaster would give a distance of 21 miles. This would approach York along the existing Bishopthorpe Road and would therefore help to explain the Roman burials extending out that way. This suggested route would also mean that the road would have run near to Sherburn and therefore aided Roman settlement in the area with which the burials may be associated. No evidence for this road has been discovered, and it may be that the milestone was not found in situ, it may have moved or may not even have been placed in the location for which it was intended. However there has been so little archaeological work carried out in the area that theories should not be dismissed. In the valley of the Aire and Wharfedale there is evidence of Roman built dykes and drains to improve the marshy and boggy area. In the area surrounding Sherburn

there are many dykes and ditches such as Ash Row Dyke and Stream Dyke and it may be possible that this may be a Roman drainage system

### Conclusions

The importance of high status burials of this nature cannot be stressed too highly especially in an area where very few finds of the Roman period, with the exception of a coin, (a dupondius of Emperor Vespasian, AD 69 - 79, found approximately 900m north - east of site), have been recorded

The high status afforded to this type of burial infers that somewhere in the vicinity there may be a Romano British structure (Villa ?), or settlement of sufficient wealth to afford a funerary rite of this type This is further enhanced by the fact that the costs incurred (both in wealth and labour), for the quarrying, carving and transportation of the sarcophagi from a distance of at least 11km to the north- west (Bramham Park), or possibly even further, would have been high

It is crucial that any future work carried out in or around the vicinity of Sherburn in Elmet is closely monitored to prevent the destruction of, potentially, further burials and the possible remains of important buildings

Part of this monitoring should include a geophysical survey of the areas that are to be developed with the intention of locating any buried structures or features that may be at risk These, if any, should then be subjected to trial excavation in an attempt to identify their form, function and date thus providing a better understanding of the archaeology and considerably reducing the risk of potentially costly delays for the developer once building has commenced

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## APPENDIX I

### Context Listing

- 1001 - 10 YR 2/1 clayey sdt deposit - topsoil
- 1002 - 7 5 YR 4/4 clayey fine sand / silt - subsoil
- 1003 - 7 5 YR 4/4 clayey fine sand / silt - natural?
- 1004 - 7 5 YR 4/2 clayey fine sand / silt - backfill of grave
- 1005 - millstone grit - sarcophagus
- 1006 - skeleton
- 1007 - millstone grit - sarcophagus
- 1008 - grave cut
- 1009 - bedrock - natural
- 1010 - 7 5 YR 4/2 slightly clayey sand - grave backfill
- 1011 - millstone grit - sarcophagus lid
- 1012 - skeleton
- 1013 - plaster around skeleton
- 1014 - millstone grit - sarcophagus
- 1015 - grave cut

## APPENDIX II

### Archive Listing

Plan 1 - Sarcophagus fragments 1 20

Plan 2 - Machme cuts and unpression of Sarcophagus after removal by machme 1 20

Plan 3 - Grave cut - burial 1 1 20

Plan 4 - Sarcophagus lid - burial 2 1 20

Plan 5 - Plan showmg skeleton - burial 2 1 20

Plan 6 - Plan showing dimensions of sarcophagus burial 2 1 20

Plan 7 - Plan showmg sarcophagus and grave cut burial 2 1 20

Plan 8 - Elevations from east, west, north, south burial 2 1 20

Plan 9 - Grave cut - burial 2 1 20

## APPENDIX III

### Photographic Catalogue

#### Colour Film

- 1 Burial 1 Sarcophagus
- 2 Burial 1 Sarcophagus
- 3 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 4 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 5 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 6 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 7 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 8 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 9 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 10 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 11 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 12 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 13 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012 and Plaster 1013
- 14 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012 and Plaster 1013
- 15 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012
- 16 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012
- 17 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012
- 18 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012
- 19 Burial 2 Sarcophagus 1014
- 20 Burial 2 Sarcophagus 1014
- 21 Burial 2 Sarcophagus 1014
- 22 Burial 2 Sarcophagus 1014
- 23 Burial 2 Sarcophagus 1014
- 24 Burial 2 Sarcophagus 1014
- 25 Burial 2 Bones
- 26 Burial 2 Bones
- 27 Burial 2 Bones
- 28 Burial 2 Bones
- 29 Burial 2 Bones
- 30 Burial 2 Bones
- 31 Burial 2 Bones
- 32 Burial 2 Bones

#### Monochrome Film

- 1 Burial 1 Sarcophagus
- 2 Burial 1 Sarcophagus
- 3 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 4 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 5 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 6 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 7 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 8 Burial 1 Grave Cut 1008
- 9 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 10 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 11 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 12 Burial 2 Sarcophagus Lid 1011
- 13 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012 and Plaster 1013
- 14 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012 and Plaster 1013
- 15 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012
- 16 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012

- 17 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012
- 18 Burial 2 Skeleton 1012
- 19 Burial 2 Sarcochagus 1014
- 20 Burial 2 Sarcochagus 1014
- 21 Burial 2 Sarcochagus 1014
- 22 Burial 2 Sarcochagus 1014
- 23 Burial 2 Sarcochagus 1014
- 24 Burial 2 Sarcochagus 1014
- 25 Burial 2 Bones
- 26 Burial 2 Bones
- 27 Burial 2 Bones
- 28 Burial 2 Bones
- 29 Burial 2 Bones
- 30 Burial 2 Bones
- 31 Burial 2 Bones
- 32 Burial 2 Bones

## APPENDIX IV

### Textile Remains in a Late Roman Stone Coffin, Sherburn - in - Elmet, Yorkshire

Penelope Walton Rogers  
Textile Research Associates

Imprints of textile were found throughout the white mineral fill of the coffin. Although it is now in fragments, it is clear that the textile originally ran in smooth curves, following the outline of the body, from the sides of the head down to the ankles, it passed around the arms and was present on the front and back of the body. There were no folds, gathers or seams and it must be assumed that this was a simple wrapping for the body, rather than a garment worn in life.

The textile was woven in tabby weave (syn plam weave) and the thread - count was mostly 12 x 10 threads per cm, although in places it was almost ribbed, with a thread count of 16 x 10 per cm. A gradual change from plam to ribbed could sometimes be seen within one fragment and this must therefore be regarded as an irregularity in the weaving, rather than a border or decorative band. The yarn was Z-spun both warp and weft. The fibre could not be identified, as the textile was present only as an imprint, or sometimes as a hollow cast which powdered as soon as touched.

There are similar tabby - weave textiles in late Roman gypsum burials from York (Henshall 1962, 108 - 9) and Malton (Wild 1970, 93). These are all made from Z - spun yarn and have thread counts ranging from 14 x 7 - 10 to 48 x 22, which places the Sherburn example at the coarse end of the scale. Some of the York burials had complicated arrangements consisting of more than one textile, but an authority on Roman textiles, Dr J P Wild, has voiced his opinion that even the decorated examples were still burial wrappings, rather than garments (Wild op cit , 95 - 6).

During the Roman period, bodies might be wrapped for burial in wool or silk, but linen was probably the most common. It seems likely that, as was the case in the medieval period (Litten 1991), a sheet or similar fabric from the household linen chest was used for the purpose.

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## APPENDIX V

### Report on two human inhumations from Sherburn-in-Elmet, North Yorkshire (site code SH 96)

Cluny Johnstone and Keith Dobney

#### Summary

Two human skeletons found during excavations in Sherburn-in-Elmet were presented to the EAU for analysis. Both were interred in stone sarcophagi and were dated to the Roman period.

Skeleton 1006 represented a small, gracile female, between 17 and 25 years of age, showing limited signs of pathology and no evidence of the cause of death.

Skeleton 1012 represented a tall, robust male, between 25 and 35 years of age. Several pathological conditions in the upper chest and lower back more usually associated with aged individuals were noted. A well healed rib fracture and ossified areas in the lower legs indicated localised trauma. There was no evidence to suggest cause of death.

**Keywords** Sherburn-in-Elmet, N Yorks, Human remains, Inhumations, Roman, Pathology, Trauma

#### Introduction

Two human skeletons were found during a watching brief on a development site in Sherburn-in-Elmet in mid December 1996. Both skeletons were interred in stone sarcophagi and were dated to the Roman period. Details of the elements present are given in Table 1.

#### Results

##### Skeleton context 1006

This skeleton was apparently complete when discovered during mechanical excavation. However, prior to full excavation the sarcophagus was broken and removed and the skeleton disturbed and scattered. As a result many fresh breaks were present and less than half the skeleton was recovered. The skeleton was originally aligned N-S (with the head at the north) and lay in a supine position. The preservation of the surviving bone was moderate to good.

The subpubic angle and the sciatic notch were wide, the sacrum was wide and flat, the pelvic basin was oval in shape, the nuchal crest and mastoid processes were small and the zygomatic processes did not extend past the external auditory meatus, all indicating that this individual was female. All the epiphyses present were fused, indicating an adult. The left lower 3rd molar (M3) had erupted and the degree of attrition suggesting an age of between 17 and 25 years (after Brodie 1972).

From the overall size and robustness of the bones and muscle insertions, it is suggested that this individual was probably small and gracile. Only the right tibia could be accurately measured, giving a greatest length of 310 mm (equating to an estimated height of 151 cm, after Trotter and Gleser 1952, 1958). There was very little evidence of pathology on any of the bones, excepting that a moderate amount of calculus was noted on the teeth.

##### Skeleton context 1012

This was an almost complete skeleton lying in a supine position with the right hand crossed

over the left wrist and the legs straight. The body appears to have been covered in a shroud coated in 'gypsum', the unprint of which could be seen in the 'gypsum'. Bone preservation was variable, the skull (in particular the facial area) being very poorly preserved, possibly because it was not originally covered by the shroud and 'gypsum'. The vertebrae were also poorly preserved, but the appendicular skeleton showed a good state of preservation.

The subpubic angle was narrow with no subpubic concavity, the sciatic notch was narrow, the sacrum was narrow and curved, the pelvic basin was heart-shaped, the mastoid processes were large, the zygomatic processes extended past the external auditory meatus, the gonial angle was near to 90°, and the linear aspera and muscle insertions were well developed, indicating that this individual was male.

All epiphyses present were fused, indicating an adult. Both lower M3s and one upper M3 had erupted, and the degree of attrition on these indicated an age of between 25 and 35 years (after Brothwell 1972). The estimated stature of this individual was 169 cm, which was calculated from the combination of femur and tibia (right femur length = 457 mm, right tibia length = 354 mm).

A range of pathology was noted on the bones of this skeleton. Slight calculus was noted on some lower molars, whilst arthropathy was noted on the thoracic vertebrae. Schmorl's nodes were noted on the cranial aspect of the 1st lumbar vertebra and the caudal aspect of a lower thoracic vertebra (which also displayed peripheral osteophytes). Osteophyte development was also observed on the right hand side of at least four other associated lower thoracic vertebrae. In addition, the sternal ends of the first ribs exhibited ossification of the cartilage. The sternal ends of the clavicles exhibited some osteophyte growth around the articular surface. The manubrium also had associated ossified cartilage around the articulations with the first ribs and clavicles.

These arthropathies are unusual for an individual not of advanced years. The tooth wear of this individual may not accurately reflect age at death since it is possible that individuals of high status ate more refined foodstuffs (Brothwell pers. comm.). Therefore this individual may be significantly older than tooth wear indicates.

One right rib exhibited a well healed fracture with no displacement of the broken ends. The mid shaft of the left fibula showed an ossified growth on the medial surface, probably of localised traumatic origin. The distal shafts of the right tibia and fibula also showed ossified growth (joining the two), also probably the result of localised trauma.

### **Recommendations**

The presence of two high status burials of the Roman period at the site suggests there is a high probability that further excavation may uncover more individuals. If this is the case then full provision should be made for their recovery, study and publication.

### **Archive**

All material is currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York, along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

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*Table 1 Skeletal elements present (complete and fragmented) for both skeletons  
 I = indeterminate L = left, R = right frags = fragments vert/s = vertebra/e,  
 phal/s = phalanx/phalanges, dist = distal prox = proximal*

Element	Skeleton 1006	Skeleton 1012
Cranium	occipital parietals temporals	frontal parietals temporals sphenoid. basilar occipital R maxilla. R zygomatic & I frags
Mandible	mental emmence left corpus	R & L ascending ramus part of body
Teeth	LL, LC, LM., LM <sub>3</sub> and RC	lower L I <sub>1</sub> , I <sub>2</sub> , C P <sub>3</sub> , P <sub>4</sub> , M <sub>3</sub> , M <sub>2</sub> , R I <sub>1</sub> , I <sub>2</sub> , C P <sub>3</sub> , P <sub>4</sub> , M <sub>3</sub> , M <sub>2</sub> , upper L C P <sub>3</sub> M <sub>1</sub> R M <sub>1</sub> I M <sub>1</sub>
Cervical verts	atlas axis	atlas axis 3rd to 7th
Thoracic verts	4 upper and 1 lower	1st to 9th & some of 12th
Lumbar verts	2 bodies	1st to 5th
Scapula	R glenoid cavity, axillary border part of some, 4 frags 1	R almost complete L blade more broken
Clavicle	L sternal end. R acromial end	R complete L 2 jommg frags
Stemum	manubrium	manubrium and body
Rib	7 L frags, 9 R frags, 12 I frags	L & R 1st ribs R 2nd. 9 left frags, 11 R frags
Humerus	R shaft	L & R complete
Radius	L prox end. R prox and dist ends	L & R complete
Ulna	R & L dist ends 2 shaft frags	R complete, L dist end & prox end with part of shaft
Carpals		L & R lunate hamate, capitate, greater multangular navicular triquetral
Metacarpal	L 4th and R 2nd to 5th	L & R 1st to 5th
Manual phalanges	R & L 1st phalanx thumb I other 1st phalanx	L & R 1st to 5th 1st phals, 2nd to 5th 2nd phals L 1st to 5th. R 1st & 5th terminal phals
Pelvis	R & L dia, R & L ischia	R & L pelvis complete
Sacrum	complete, 1st coccygeal vert fused to 5th sacral vert	mostly complete
Femur	R prox end. L dist end + shaft	L & R complete
Patella		L & R complete
Tibia	R complete, L dist end + shaft	L & R complete
Fibula	R & L dist ends	L & R complete
Tarsals	L & R talus calcaneum 1st cuneiform, R navicular	L all present R all present except 2nd cuneiform
Metatarsal	L 1st to 5th R 2nd to 5th	L & R 1st to 5th
Pedal phalanges	1 1st phalanx	L & R 1st to 5th 1st phals 1 2nd phal, L & R 1st terminal phals plus 2 others