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Environmental evidence from 26-34 Skeldergate A4 (YAT/Yorkshire Museum sitecode: 1991.1)

by

J. B. Carrott, A. R. Hall and H. K. Kenward

Summary

Analysis of two samples for invertebrate and plant microfossils was undertaken and one 'spot' sample was examined.

No invertebrate or plant microfossils were recovered from any of the samples.

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Introduction

This report discusses the results of analyses of invertebrate animal and plant remains from deposits excavated from the 26-34 Skeldergate site (YAT/Yorkshire Museum sitecode: 1991.1).

Methods

Subsamples of raw sediment were examined in the laboratory for plant and invertebrate animal remains. One of the samples was a 'spot' sample for identification which contained no organic material; its sedimentary characteristics were recorded, and no further action was taken. A 'rapid assessment' was carried out on two of the samples. 'Test' subsamples (Kenward *et al.* 1986) of 1 kg were taken and processed by paraffin flotation (Kenward *et al.* 1980) to extract insect remains. Plant remains were recorded from the flots from paraffin flotation and from the residues or washovers of the residues.

The samples and results of the analyses

The analyses carried out on each sample, and the remains recovered, are described below, together with a laboratory description of the sediment. A brief archaeological description and/or interpretation of the context is given in brackets where available. The samples are presented in context order.

Context 2015 [Levelling/dump within a late-medieval building. Sample taken to ascertain the level of organic preservation in this type of deposit]

Sample 1: Mid brown, moist, crumbly, to plastic, sandy, clay, silt with abundant, millimetre scale, darker mottling (?charcoal). Pieces of mortar were abundant in the sample and fragments of brick/tile and coal were common.

A 1 kg 'test' subsample (/T) was processed by paraffin flotation to extract insect remains. There were no invertebrate or plant remains present in the tiny flot which consisted entirely of fine coal and other carbonaceous material.

The small residue was examined wet and was mostly coal (to 25 mm) and charcoal with some small stones, gravel, sand, cinder, mortar (to 25 mm), fragments of small bone and rotted shellfish.

Context 2019 [Very probable occupation deposit. Sample taken for the same reason as sample 1]

Sample 2: Mid to dark grey-brown, moist, crumbly, with a soft texture, slightly sandy, silt with abundant, millimetre scale, paler mottling. Fragments of charcoal, coal, brick/tile, mortar, shellfish and pot were present in the sample.

A 1 kg 'test' subsample (/T) was processed by paraffin flotation to extract insect remains. The tiny flot contained only fine coal and other carbonaceous material.

The small residue was examined wet and was mostly fine coal (with some larger pieces to 10 mm) and charcoal with small stones (to 10 mm) and some gravel, sand, fragments of brick/tile, mortar, small bone and shellfish.

Context 2025 [Spot sample from a late-medieval dump layer. Sample taken for identification]

Sample 3: This sample consisted of fine charcoal and probable ash.

This sample was judged to be unworthy of any action beyond that of describing the sediment.

References

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