NE Research Framework for the Historic Environment: The Late Medieval Assessment

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Data Organisation:

To make consideration of the research framework manageable, the later medieval section has been broken down into the following sub-headings:

- Power and prestige;
- Rural settlement and society;
- Urban life;
- Ritual and religion;
- Innovation and industry.
National Overviews:

‘The Bible’:

Christopher Gerrard and Alejandra Gutiérrez (eds) (2018)
The Oxford Handbook of Later Medieval Archaeology in Britain
(Oxford Handbooks)
National Overviews: Power and Prestige

O. Creighton (2009). Designs upon the land: elite landscapes of the Middle Ages

G. Foard, and R. Morris (2012). The Archaeology of English Battlefields
National Overviews: Rural Settlement and Society

N. Christie and P. Stamper (2012). *Medieval Rural Settlement of Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600*

D. Hall (2014). *The Open Fields of England*
National Overviews: Urban Life

National Overviews: Ritual and Religion


D. O’ Sullivan (2013). *In the Company of the Preachers. The Archaeology of Medieval Friaries in England and Wales*
National Overviews: Innovation and Industry

Relevant Research Assessments and Agendas Developed Since NERFF I:

National


Regional

Altogether Archaeology (2019). North Pennines Archaeological Research Framework. Part One, Resource Assessment


Graves, P. and Heslop, D. (2013). Newcastle upon Tyne the Eye of the North. An Archaeological Assessment
New Techniques, Methods and Resources:

Later medieval archaeology is taught at most, if not all, UK universities and widely across Europe and the world. Its teachers may not be as numerous as prehistorians or Romanists but there is no lack of interest in undergraduate and postgraduate courses, topics for doctoral students or volunteers for medieval excavations. At the outset of a Handbook like this one, it may be useful to rehearse the reasons why this should be so:

- later medieval archaeology makes full use of all the modern archaeological techniques available to study the past. Most practitioners lie at different points within a triangle drawn between the complementary archaeologies of the humanities, sciences, and professional practice. Fieldwork, excavation, data collection, and synthesis lie at the heart of the subject and post-exavcation should embrace, for example, the study of environmental and biomolecular archaeology, just as it does for other periods. There are, however, some important differences to note with archaeologists of other periods. Even relatively modern maps, such as nineteenth-century tithe maps, can be of use for the information they provide on field boundaries and field-names, and the later medieval archaeologist may be as much at home in the Record Office as in the field. Some dating techniques are also preferred over others, such as dendrochronology (and now dendro-provenancing), whereas radiocarbon dating has traditionally been less commonly applied because it is considered imprecise. AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) and Bayesian statistics are reducing this range of error but later medieval archaeologists prefer to work at a higher chronological resolution than their counterparts in other periods;
Previous Research Themes:

• Development of a large-scale (parish or above) landscape archaeology project exploring the long-term development of a rural region in the North East;

• A better understanding of the development of small towns and market centres;

• Research into medieval pottery assemblages, with particular attention given to tying in assemblages; from small towns and rural sites to types series developed for large urban centres;

• Develop further our understanding of medieval vernacular architecture, with attention given to the chronological development of building types and evidence for the origins of building forms;

• Renewed research into the development and chronology of church architecture in the North East;

• Use archaeology to improve our understanding of the fishing industry.
The North East: Power and Prestige


Rennie C 2014, Flodden 500 Project Wark Castle: Geophysical Survey. GUARD Archaeology unpublished report

Top left: Westgate Castle, part of community archaeology project for Altogether Archaeology; Right: J Ashbee and L Luxford’s Book on Art and Architecture in Newcastle and Northumberland; Below: Report of the excavations at Barnard Castle from 1974-81. It does not just look at the castle, but places it in its landscape setting
The North East: Rural Settlement and Society


Ainsworth S. 2015, Shedding Light on the North Pennines. The Allen Valleys and Hexhamshire Lidar Landscape Survey. Altogether Archaeology unpub rep


Carlton R. 2017b, Excavation of an enclosure at Common Slap, Fenham Moor. In Peregrini Lindisfarne Landscape Partnership Scheme, *Peregrini Lindisfarne an Anthology*

Davies A.L. and Dixon P. 2007, Reading the pastoral landscape: palynological and historical evidence for the impacts of long-term grazing on Whether Hill, Ingram, Northumberland, *Landscape History* 29.1, 35-45

Dixon P. 2014, *Survey and excavations at Alnhamshelles deserted medieval village, on the Rowhope Burn, Alnham Moor, Northumberland, AA* 43,169-220

Green M. 2017, Well Head Deserted Settlement, Holwick, Teesdale. Project Design for 2018 (2nd Season) and Interim Report on 2017 Excavation, Altogether Archaeology unpub rep

Roberts B.K. 2006, Hartside, Northumberland and Cockfield, County Durham: specific cases, settlement systems and time trajectories, *Landscapes* 7.2, 70-89


Wrathmell S. and Young R. 2012, Northern England: exploring the character of medieval rural settlements, in Christie and Stamper (eds), *Medieval Rural Settlement. Britain and Ireland, AD 800-1600*
In contrast to the medieval urban archaeology, this theme has been dominated by research and community-led projects. Work ranges from small-scale survey and excavation by community groups, through detailed township-scale survey and excavation to landscape-scale survey.

Muggleswick Grange, an Altogether Archaeology project, involved standing building survey, geophysical survey and excavation. Excavation revealed well-preserved remains of the medieval grange.

Available as an unpublished report from the Altogether Archaeology website.

Above right: Upstanding remains of an early range, and projected lines of walls
Below right: Excavated entrance
The North East: Rural Settlement and Society

One of the most detailed reports of excavation and survey is Piers Dixon’s 2014 report on AlnhamSheles, Northumberland, which looks at the deserted settlement in its landscape using a range of techniques.

Nevertheless, it is the presentation of work undertaken between 1979 and 1983, as part of Dixon’s PhD research.
The North East: Rural Settlement and Society

A landscape-scale project involving non-intrusive techniques and employing new techniques is the Allen Valleys and Hexhamshire Lidar survey. First envisaged as a community landscape identification survey, volunteers were encouraged to look at a landscape using a range of newly available resources such as lidar. 1,027 new archaeological sites (990 in Northumberland and 37 in Durham) were identified and recorded.

Images from Ainsworth 2015
Right: location plan
Left: Distribution of sites identified and validated
The North East: Rural Settlement and Society

David Astbury, PhD research: *Long-Term Landscape Development in Northern England between Late Prehistory and the later Middle-Ages*
Uses a new GIS-based dataset and methodology to understand how people encountered and shaped their landscapes over the long-term. Analyses medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow, along with existing and deserted settlements, and compares them with orientations of earlier features and boundaries on the 1st edition OS maps.
The North East: Urban Life


Brogan, G. 2010, Excavations and building recording at 44 to 48 High Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 39, 329-74


Carey C. 2007, An Archaeological Investigation at Clayport Street, Alnwick. Archaeological Research Services unpub rep

Daniels R. 2010, *Hartlepool: an Archaeology of the medieval Town*, Hartlepool: Tees Arch Mono Ser 4


Jackson D. in press, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne: archaeological investigations at the former Parcels Office, *AA*

Liddell T. 2007, Archaeological Watching Brief and Excavation of Land at the Angel of Corbridge, Main Street, Corbridge, Northumberland. North Pennines Archaeology unpub rep


Swann N. 2013, *Excavations within the grounds of Newcastle University, Percy Street, Newcastle upon Tyne*, *AA* 42, 207-34

The North East: Urban Life


- Multi-period
- Covers power and prestige as well as urban life
- Two sections on the medieval Newcastle: the town and material culture
- It is a synthesis of the known archaeology of the historic core and suburbs
- Intended to be a starting point for future research

Subsequent excavations in Percy Street (Swann 2013), The Close (Platell 2013) and on Westgate Street (Jackson in press, photo left). All revealed aspects of the medieval town, but also industrial processes.
The North East: Urban Life

**Hartlepool**: Many years of archaeological excavations on the medieval town were brought together and published in a monograph (Daniels 2010). Includes work on the town’s defences (top right, part of the excavated town wall taken from [http://www.teesarchaeology.com](http://www.teesarchaeology.com))

** Gateshead**: Less work of a significant scale has taken place here in comparison to Newcastle, but includes work at Oakwellgate, in advance of the construction of The Sage. Found evidence of a medieval burgage plot (below right, plan of medieval features)

**Sunderland**: Very little work indeed here on the medieval town, but a recent Historic Area Assessment highlighted the potential for surviving deposits (Buschmann *et al* forthcoming)
The North East: Urban Life (Small Towns)

**Alnwick:**
Found evidence for substantial 12\textsuperscript{th} & 13\textsuperscript{th} century structures of the town probably related to its early development. Only available as grey literature (Carey 2007). Top right: Medieval stone-lined pit (photo from Carey 2007)

**Berwick:**
Evidence of medieval occupation, including corn drying, up to 13\textsuperscript{th}/14\textsuperscript{th} century
Centre right: plan of medieval phase (from Hindmarch 2011)

**Corbridge:**
Substantial evidence for the medieval town, including two burials, buildings and industrial activity. Available only as grey literature (Lidell 2007). Below right: one of the buildings with stone hearth, from Liddell T 2007)

There is a lack of synthetic analysis, though the potential is highlighted in Tait’s (2011) article on burgage patterns in Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Cockermouth
The North East: Ritual and Religion


Armstrong J. and Claydon M. (2016), St Botolph’s Chapel, Frosterley, County Durham. Archaeological Post-Excavation Analysis. Archaeological Services Durham University unpub rep


Carlton R. and Ryder P.F. (2014), On Archaeological investigations at the Church of St Lawrence, Warkworth, AA 43, 141-168

Clark J.E. 2010, Hexham Abbey: the various movements of the fittings since the Dissolution, AA 39, 375–400
The North East: Ritual and Religion

Development-led investigations, ahead of various works at the Church of St Lawrence, Warkworth, including strengthening buttresses. Has demonstrated the church’s importance as a parish church in Northumberland.

Right: Location plan of interventions (Carlton and Ryder 2014)
The North East: Ritual and Religion

At Frosterley, Co Durham, work was undertaken by ASDU as part of an Altogether Archaeology community project, excavating the site of St Botolph’s Chapel.

As well as evidence for early medieval origins, later medieval phases were identified, including a fragment of font made from Frosterley marble.

Right: Later medieval phase of the chapel (Armstrong and Claydon 2016)

A research project by Durham University, with fieldwork carried out by ASDU, is ongoing at Auckland Castle, formerly home of the Bishops of Durham, and forming part of the Auckland Project.

Work, including excavation (image right from the Research projects page of Dept. of Archaeology) has revealed previously unknown building ranges and has helped highlight research questions.
The North East: Ritual and Religion

The work undertaken by Historic England (then English Heritage) at Egglestone Abbey, took a landscape approach involving topographic survey followed by geophysical survey. The results of the fieldwork were then published as a multi-period analysis to provide greater insights into the character and development of the monastic site.

Right: Interpretative plan of the earthwork features around Egglestone Abbey (taken from the published report by Branse-Instone and Dunn 2015)

Figure 4 An interpretative diagram of Egglestone Abbey showing the precinct boundary, water supply and approaches. © Historic England
The North East: Industry and Innovation

Brogan, G. 2010, Excavations and building recording at 44 to 48 High Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, AA, 39, 329-74
Carlton R. and Jones D. 2014, A medieval fulling mill at Barrowburn on the River Coquet: evidence and context, AA 43, 221-239
Daniels R. 2010, Hartlepool: an Archaeology of the medieval Town, Hartlepool: Tees Arch Mono Ser 4
Graves P. and Heslop D. 2013, Newcastle Upon Tyne the Eye of the North. An Archaeological Assessment
Hindmarch E. 2011 Excavations at 119-125 Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed, AA 40, 199–222
Jackson D. in press, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne: archaeological investigations at the former Parcels Office, AA
Liddell T. 2007, Archaeological Watching Brief and Excavation of Land at the Angel of Corbridge, Main Street, Corbridge, Northumberland. North Pennines Archaeology unpub rep
Platell A.C. 2013, Excavations at 46-54 The Close, Newcastle upon Tyne, AA 42, 181-206
Swann N. 2013, Excavations within the grounds of Newcastle University, Percy Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, AA 42, 207-34
The North East: Industry and Innovation

Excavations in Newcastle have revealed evidence for:
• tanning (The Close and Westgate St);
• blacksmith’s workshop (Percy Street);
• charcoal burning (High Bridge).

Left: tanning pit from Westgate St; above: industrial phase from Percy Street
The North East: Industry and Innovation

Evidence for iron and bronze metalworking in the 12th to 13th centuries was found during excavations at The Angel, Corbridge.

Evidence for later medieval bronze working is rare, with other northern examples known from York and Carlisle.

Despite the importance of this industrial site, it has yet to be published and the results are only available as an unpublished client report, downloadable from ADS.

Above: Building 3, probably constructed in the 12th to 13th century, it appears to have been a workshop for iron and bronze working, with a hearth, flagged floor, sweeping area and a stone bench.
Left: The hearth in Building 3
The North East: Industry and Innovation

The Coquetdale Community Archaeology Group were involved in the excavation of Barrowburn fulling mill, a rural industrial site from 2010 to 2014.

An initial paper has been published on the background to the mill, setting out the evidence and context for it (Carlton and Jones 2014), but the results of the excavation are still awaited.

Information can be found on the Community’s Facebook page, but its website is no longer available.

Images are taken from the 2013 season of work, both from the Community’s FB page with, above, a drain and, below, a preserved timber near the wheel pit.
Some Concluding Thoughts....
Have We Met any of These Research Themes?

• Development of a large-scale (parish or above) landscape archaeology project exploring the long-term development of a rural region in the North East;
• A better understanding of the development of small towns and market centres;
• Research into medieval pottery assemblages, with particular attention given to tying in assemblages; from small towns and rural sites to types series developed for large urban centres;
• Develop further our understanding of medieval vernacular architecture, with attention given to the chronological development of building types and evidence for the origins of building forms;
• Renewed research into the development and chronology of church architecture in the North East;
• Use archaeology to improve our understanding of the fishing industry.

What Now?