

Middle-Late Iron Age East Yorkshire. They contain the methodology and results of the use of a large dataset in order to begin answering the question ‘what did pattern do?’. Data on over 4600 Iron Age objects from a sample of 30 sites in East Yorkshire has been compiled using museum databases, and both published and unpublished literature. Objects from the Portable Antiquities Scheme database are also included. The resulting dataset has then been augmented to include specific information on whether each object is plain or patterned, and the styles of pattern present in the latter case. Each object has also been placed into one of two time periods: 400–100BC and 100BC–AD100, allowing for the consideration of temporal change. Chapter 5 answers questions about how many objects are patterned; the types of objects these are; the materials they are made from; and the types of archaeological contexts from which they have been recovered. It reveals complex relationships between pattern, materiality, object type and depositional context. Chapter 6 looks more closely at the meaning of purpose in the dataset, augmenting Fox’s ideas about purpose (1958) to include the purposeful deposition of objects in particular contexts. It analyses data on the relationship between pattern and purpose, showing that certain patterns were useful for certain purposes, and that the purposes of patterns changed over time.

The conclusion of chapter 6 makes it clear that consideration of the changing purposes of patterned and plain objects over time is key in answering the question ‘what did pattern do?’. With this in mind, chapter 7 comprises an in-depth study of a sample of 145 objects from the dataset, examining evidence for use-wear, damage, repair and modification. The chapter focuses on three groups of objects: chariot fittings, sword scabbards and bone or antler objects, also touching on ceramic vessels. It takes an assemblage-based approach to the examination of these objects as an alternative to the use of object biographies, allowing for a fresh perspective on the complex processes some of the objects have been through. The findings presented suggest that objects from all groups seem to have been well-used, regardless of plainness or pattern. In the cases of composite objects, the practices of modification, repair, fragmentation and reassembly are common and have been made deliberately visible on some objects. The chapter concludes that the accumulation of visible histories on objects was important in Iron Age East Yorkshire, adding value and significance to objects that were already cherished. It is argued that pattern played an important role in this accumulation, making the varying origins of individual components visible.

Chapter 8 is the final chapter of this book and presents the answer to the research question: what did pattern do in Iron Age East Yorkshire? It is argued that the processes of design and decoration produced significant effects. They seemingly involved conspicuous experimentation with materials and pattern, and the simultaneous functioning of craftspeople within particular design frameworks. While pattern was produced for specific intended purposes, the curation and modification of some objects over long

periods suggests that these purposes may have changed over time. Pattern became important in the accumulation of visible patinas of age and use, and finally in the act of deposition.