

Assessment of the Pottery from Byland Abbey, North Yorkshire (BLA'06)

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A small collection of medieval and post-medieval pottery and clay tobacco pipe was recovered from archaeological investigations undertaken at Byland Abbey, North Yorkshire, by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd on behalf of English Heritage. The material ranges in date from the late 12th to the 19th century and includes a number of sherds of glazed medieval pottery which are either wasters or poorly finished seconds.

Description

Clay Tobacco Pipe

Nine fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recovered. They have a total weight of 22gm and probably come from 9 separate pipes. All are plain stem fragments whose bore diameters suggest range from the early to mid 17th century (3 frags) to the 19th century (2 frags).

Pottery

Roman

Two abraded sherds of Roman pottery were recovered (Table 1). One is from a greyware jar and the other from a possible oxidized ware jar. Both have a similar appearance to products of the York potteries (Monaghan 1977, G3 and E1 respectively). If York products they would date between the late 1st and mid 3rd centuries.

Table 1

class	Cname	NoSH	NoV	Wt (gm)
POTTERY	GREY	1	1	5
	OXID?	1	1	3

Medieval

One hundred and twenty-six sherds of medieval pottery, representing no more than 100 vessels and weighing in total 2.190Kg was recovered (Table 1).

The earliest ware present is an unglazed gritty ware, probably an early product of the North Yorkshire Whiteware industries and here coded as York Glazed ware with a subfabric of LEP1, after the site of Leppington where this ware was recently defined and distinguished from the contemporary York Gritty ware (YG), which is not present in this collection. At Leppington, a mid to late 12th-century date for this fabric was suggested, based on

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associated wares and stratigraphy. Four sherds of this type, all from wheelthrown unglazed jars, were present.



Figure 1

Two sherds from a coarse-gritted splash-glazed redware bowl rim (Fig 1) are probably of a type known in York and elsewhere in the Vale of York (described at Leppington, subfabric LEP2). Associations suggest a mid/late 12th-century date for this ware also.

Table 2

Cname	Name	NoSH	NoV	Wt (gm)
BEVO2B	Beverley-type glazed ware with a fine fabric and suspension glaze	1	1	45
BRAN	Brandsby-type ware	41	30	584
HAMBLETON	Hambleton ware	2	2	164
HUM	Humberware	2	2	37
MEDLOC	Local Medieval	2	1	13
SCAR	Scarborough ware	1	1	1
TUDG	Tudor Green ware	1	1	1
YORK	York Glazed ware	76	62	1345



Figure 2



Figure 3

The most common type present is York Glazed ware (YORK). Most of these sherds come from jugs but a number of other vessel forms were represented, including a straight circular-cross-sectioned handle and small fragment of rim, suggested to come from a frying pan and worthy of illustration (Figs 2 and 3).



Figure 4



Figure 5

A small fragment which might come from a highly decorated jug or an aquamanile or piece of roof furniture (Figs 4 and 5) is also worthy of illustration, without which it is impossible to adequately describe. Many of the jug sherds come from decorated vessels with decoration including roller stamping; applied strips; applied pellets containing hammerscale fragments; and polychrome vessels with a red slip and iron-rich pellets (as above). Fragments of two rod handles and one strap handle and a jug rim with a pulled spout were present. Several of these vessels can be paralleled in the Yorkshire Museum (Jennings 1992).



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Seven sherds, all from jugs, have faults in the glaze which are typical of glazed wasters (vesicular glaze or glaze with clay flecks included in the clay, Figs 6 to 9). None have glaze over cracks or broken edges and none are warped, over-fired or under-fired. Nevertheless, these sherds are unusual in domestic assemblages and suggest that either Byland Abbey was purchasing poor quality seconds or that these sherds are wasters. The possible wasters include all three handle fragments; one of the iron-rich pellet-decorated vessels and sherds from plain and copper-green glazed jugs.

Table 3

Form	NoSH	NoV	Wt (gm)
?	1	1	21
BOWL	1	1	24
FRYP	1	1	181
JAR	9	9	132
JUG	56	44	849
JUG/JAR	3	1	26
PIPKIN	1	1	65
Grand Total	72	58	1298

A single sherd of possible Beverley-type glazed ware was present. This ware is found at York where chemical analysis of the fabric suggests that it might be a product of a daughter industry, located in the Humber wetlands but closer to York.

Later 13th-century to 15th-century wares consist mainly of Brandsby-type ware (Jennings 1992, 00); Hambleton ware (Jennings 1992, 00); Scarborough ware (Farmer 1979; Farmer and Farmer 1982; Herteig 1982; Murray 1982; Pearson 1982; Watkins 1982), Humberware (Hayfield 1992; Vince and Steane 2005) and Tudor Green ware (Pearce and Vince 1988; Pearce 1992). These wares include some which are of 15th or early 16th-century date and it is likely that these sherds span the entire high to late medieval period.

As in the earlier period, jugs are the most common form found (Table 4) with all other forms accounting for only a small proportion of the assemblage (at most 10 sherds, possibly only 7 sherds). These include two cups, one locally-made and the other an import from the Surrey/Hampshire border area.

Table 4

Form	Cname	NoSH	NoV	Wt (gm)
CUP	TUDG	1	1	1
JAR	BRAN	3	3	95
	HAMBLETON	2	2	164
JUG	BRAN	36	25	469
	SCAR	1	1	1
JUG/JAR	BRAN	1	1	15
	HUM	2	2	37
LOBED CUP	BRAN	1	1	5

Post-medieval

Thirty-three sherds of post-medieval pottery were found. These range in date from types which could pre-date the dissolution (Ryedale ware and Cistercian ware) to late 17th to mid 18th-century wares (Staffordshire press-moulded combed slipware, Staffordshire mottled ware and Staffordshire slipware). Most of these sherds come from bowls, presumably used in food preparation and serving. Cups, dishes, jars and jugs were also represented. The combed slipware dish is of a type which is probably mid to late 18th century in date.

Table 5

Cname	Name	NoSH	NoV	Wt (gm)
BERTH	Brown-glazed earthenware	2	1	20
BL	Blackware	1	1	99
CSTN	Cistercian ware	4	3	69
GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	4	3	40
RYEDALE	Ryedale ware	17	15	466
SLIP	Misc Slipware	2	2	19
STCO	Staffordshire Press-moulded Combed slipware	1	1	13
STMO	Staffordshire mottled ware	1	1	1
STSL	Staffordshire slipware	1	1	1
Grand Total		33	28	728

Early Modern

Twelve sherds of early modern date (i.e. later than the introduction of creamware in c.1765) were present (Table 6). The collection includes no types which need be later than the mid 19th century and several which were current in the late 18th century.

Table 6

Cname	Name	NoSH	NoV	Wt (gm)
CREA	Creamware	1	1	1
ENPO	English Porcelain	1	1	1
NOTS	Nottingham stoneware	4	4	21
PEAR	Pearlware	2	2	4
PMLOC	Local earthenware	1	1	9
REFR	Refined Redware	2	2	6
TPW	Transfer-printed ware	1	1	6
Grand Total		12	12	48

Assessment

Stratigraphic context

Roman

The two sherds of Roman pottery indicate activity in the area but not necessarily in the immediate vicinity of the Byland Abbey site. Neither is stratified in a pre-medieval context but are likely to have been disturbed from earlier contexts during abbey construction works.

Late 12th to early 13th century

Twelve deposits produced pottery of the late 12th to early 13th century and no later types (Table 7). The sherds include highly-decorated York Glazed ware which are conventionally dated to the early 13th century (although highly-decorated York Glazed ware was present at Lurk Lane, Beverley, in deposits associated with a late 12th-century fire, Watkins 1991). Sherds of late 12th century type were present in contexts 1013, 1023, and 1049.

Table 7

trench	Context	context group	BEVO2B	GREY	YORK	Grand Total
6	1024	F3			1	1
	1022	LAYER	1		1	2
8	1029	F1		1	1	2
9	1040	F4			1	1
	1049, 1055	LAYER			4	4
11	1129	F20			1	1
12	1103, 1105, 1113	SILTY CLAY			4	4
14	1097	CHARCOAL RICH LAYER			2	2
16	1148	SST SLABS			14	14

Later 13th to 14th centuries

Eight deposits produced sherds of mid 13th century or later date and no later types (Table 8). One of these sherds, from context 1077 is a possible York Glazed ware waster.

Table 8

trench	Context	context group	BRAN	YORK	Grand Total
2	1012	COMPACT SST	1		1
3	1039	SANDY CLAY	2	1	3
10	1072	RUBBLE	1		1
	1128	RUBBLE (CONSTRUCTION)	1		1
12	1077	RUBBLE	5	1	6
13	1123	F16	1	1	2
16	1149, 1150	GREY SILTY CLAY	1	6	7

Later 14th to early 16th centuries

Eight deposits produced sherds of later medieval date and no later (Table 9). Two contexts produced sherds of possible York Glazed ware wasters (1038 and 1014).

Table 9

Trench	context group	Context	BRAN	HAMBLETON	HUM	RYEDALE	SCAR	TUDG	YORK	Grand Total
3	SILTY CLAY	1038	1		2				1	4
8	LEVELLING	1002		2						2
9	RUBBLE SPREAD	1014	7						8	15
		1026	14			1			3	18
13	RUBBLE	1078	1							1
	SILTY CLAY	1090						1		1
16	CHARCOAL	1147	1						9	10

RICH										
COMPACT	1146	1				1		15		17
SST										

Post-medieval

Six deposits produced sherds of post-medieval date and no later. Most of these are deposits of rubble or topsoil.

Table 10

trench	context group	Context	BRAN	CSTN	GRE	PIPECLAY	RYEDALE	STCO	YORK	Grand Total
3	RUBBLE	1023				1			1	2
5	RUBBLE	1019						1		1
8	BURIED SOIL	1003				2				2
9	LEVELLING/TOPSOIL	1001	4	2	3		4			13
11	LAYER	1073		1	1		2			4
	RUBBLE	1074					1			1

Early Modern

Six deposits produced sherds of early modern date (Table 11). Most are either topsoil or rubble, but include one feature fill, F2 in Trench 3.

Table 11

trench	context group	Context	BERTH	BL	CREA	CSTN	ENPO	NOTS	OXID?	PEAR	PIPECLAY	PMLOC	REFR	RYEDALE	SLIP	STMO	STSL	TPW	YORK	Grand Total
1	BURIED SOIL	1010		1														1		2
3	F2	1027											1							1
3-9	TOPSOIL	1000						3	1		4	1		7					1	17
12	TOPSOIL	1068	2		1		1			1	2		1	2	2	1	1		1	15
14	RUBBLE	1095				1				1										2
15	LEVELLING	1107						1												1

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Further Work

The Byland Abbey pottery provides two useful pieces of information: the site was first occupied by the Abbey in 1177 and sherds of 12th-century character from the site are most probably of that date or later. From this site we can say that the early white gritty ware, LEP1, and a coarse gritted red earthenware, MEDLOC LEP2, were both still in use in the late 1170s. It would be useful to confirm the identification of these two types through thin section and chemical analysis.

Secondly, the presence of sherds of wasters or seconds of York Glazed ware is useful confirmation that this ware was indeed produced in the same general area as Brandsby-type ware and can be thought of as the predecessor (if not partial contemporary) of that ware. Here again, it would be useful to establish for certain that the sherds are of the same fabric as those identified as York Glazed ware in York, samples of which have been analyzed by the author. The stratigraphic context of the waster sherds suggests that they are mostly redeposited in later 13th century or later contexts, but whether they reflect the presence of a pottery in the Byland area or come from a nearby secular settlement, remains to be seen. In addition to these possible wasters, two York Glazed ware vessels require illustration. None of the other pottery or clay tobacco pipes requires any further work.

Retention

All of the finds come from stratified deposits and should be retained for potential future study.

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Appendix 1

Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
1000	POTTERY	NOTS		JAR		BS	3	3	17		
1000	POTTERY	OXID?		JAR		BS	1	1	3	ABRA	
1000	PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAY PIPE	17TH CENTURY BORE	BS	3	3	10		
1000	PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAY PIPE	18TH CENTURY BORE	BS	1	1	1		
1000	POTTERY	PMLOC		FLP		R	1	1	9		
1000	POTTERY	RYEDALE		JUG	CUGL; STRAP HANDLE 44 ACROSS, 4 GROOVES	R;H	1	1	205		
1000	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL	PLGL	B;BS	4	3	53		
1000	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL	DEC EXT	R	1	1	20		
1000	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	6		
1000	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	UNFIRED GL	BS	1	1	14	WASTER?	
1001	POTTERY	BRAN	REDUCED CORE	JUG		BS	4	4	28		
1001	POTTERY	CSTN		CUP		B	2	1	60		
1001	POTTERY	GRE		BOWL		BS	1	1	7		
1001	POTTERY	GRE		BOWL		R;BS	2	1	22		BURNT EXT
1001	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	3	3	17		
1001	POTTERY	RYEDALE	REDUCED CORE	JUG		BS	1	1	31		
1002	POTTERY	HAMBLETON	REDUCED CORE	JAR	LARGE JAR; PLGL	BS	1	1	71		
1002	POTTERY	HAMBLETON	REDUCED CORE	JAR	LARGE JAR; CUGL	B	1	1	93		
1003	PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	18TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	2	2	3		
1010	POTTERY	BL		BOWL		R	1	1	99		WORN GL
1010	POTTERY	TPW		PLATE		B	1	1	6		
1012	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	WAVY COMBING; CUGL	BS	1	1	37		
1014	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL	BS	3	2	34		
1014	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	PLGL; 4 HORIZ GROOVES ON	BS	1	1	29		

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Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
					SHOULDER						
1014	POTTERY	BRAN	REDUCED CORE	JUG	PLGL	BS	3	3	69		
1014	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL; HIGHLY DEC	BS	1	1	8		
1014	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL; PULLED LIP	SPOUT	1	1	7		
1014	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	R	2	1	21		
1014	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	BS	2	2	57		
1014	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	B	1	1	39		
1014	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL	R	1	1	22	WASTER? CLAY FLECKS ADHERING TO RIM	
1018	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	STRAP HANDLE 22 ACROSS; UNFIRED GLAZE	H	1	1	28	WASTER?	
1019	POTTERY	STCO		DISH	M-L 18TH CENTURY DEC	BS	1	1	13		
1022	POTTERY	BEVO2B		JUG	ROD HANDLE 23 ACROSS; WHITE SLIP UNDER CUGL	H	1	1	45		
1022	POTTERY	YORK		JUG		BS	1	1	10		
1023	PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	17-18TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	1	1	3		
1023	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL; ROD HANDLE 21 DIA	H	1	1	51		
1024	POTTERY	YORK	LEP1	JAR		B	1	1	11		SOOTED EXT
1026	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL	BS	1	1	2		BLACK DEP INT
1026	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL	BS	8	1	51	MORTARY DEP EXT	
1026	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL; SQUASHED ROD 29 ACROSS	H	1	1	21		
1026	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	PLGL	BS	2	2	11		
1026	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL	BS	2	2	17		
1026	POTTERY	RYEDALE	REDUCED CORE	BOWL	PLGL	BS	1	1	5		
1026	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	POLYCHROME; RED SLIP WITH IRON RICH PELLETS	BS	1	1	5	BURNT	
1026	POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	1	1	11		SOOTED EXT

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Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
1026	POTTERY	YORK	LEP1	JAR		BS	1	1	5		SOOTED EXT
1027	POTTERY	REFR		TPOT		BS	1	1	2		
1029	POTTERY	GREY		JAR		BS	1	1	5		
1029	POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	1	1	12		
1038	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL	BS	1	1	7		
1038	POTTERY	HUM		JUG/JAR	PLGL	BS	2	2	37		
1038	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CLEAR GLAZE; ROD HANDLE 20 ACROSS	H	1	1	30	BITS OF CLAY IN GLAZE; WASTER?	
1039	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL	BS	1	1	5		
1039	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	CUGL	R	1	1	3		
1039	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL	R	1	1	15		
1040	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	KNIFE TRIMMED	B	1	1	20		
1049	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	HIGHLY DEC; CUGL	BS	1	1	2		
1049	POTTERY	YORK	LEP1	JAR		BS	1	1	17		
1055	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL WITH IRON STAINED PELLETS	BS	1	1	12		
1055	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL INT/EXT	BS	1	1	7		
1068	POTTERY	BERTH	REDUCED CORE	JAR		BS	2	1	20		
1068	POTTERY	CREA		PLATE		BS	1	1	1		
1068	POTTERY	ENPO		CUP		BS	1	1	1		
1068	POTTERY	PEAR		BOWL	HAND DECORATED	BS	1	1	1		
1068	PIPECLAY	PIPECLAY		CLAYPIPE	19TH CENTURY BORE	STEM	2	2	5		
1068	POTTERY	REFR		TPOT		BS	1	1	4		
1068	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL		BS	1	1	12		
1068	POTTERY	RYEDALE	REDUCED CORE	BOWL	PLGL	BS	1	1	27		
1068	POTTERY	SLIP		BOWL		BS	1	1	9		
1068	POTTERY	SLIP	REDUCED CORE	BOWL		BS	1	1	10	BURNT	
1068	POTTERY	STMO		JAR		BS	1	1	1		
1068	POTTERY	STSL		JAR		BS	1	1	1		

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Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
1068	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL	BS	1	1	11		
1072	POTTERY	BRAN		JAR	SPOTS OF PLGL	BS	1	1	11		SOOTED EXT
1073	POTTERY	CSTN		CUP		BS	1	1	7		
1073	POTTERY	GRE		BOWL		R	1	1	11		
1073	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL		B	1	1	52		
1073	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL	SHL=1074; LARGE FLANGED BOWL	R	1	1	12		
1074	POTTERY	RYEDALE		BOWL	SHL=1073	R	1	0	26		
1077	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	KNIFE TRIMMED BASE; PLGL	B	4	1	125		
1077	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	PLGL	BS	1	1	15		
1077	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	UNFIRED GLAZE	BS	1	1	25	WASTER?	
1078	POTTERY	BRAN	REDUCED CORE	JUG		BS	1	1	7		
1090	POTTERY	TUDG		CUP		BS	1	1	1		
1095	POTTERY	CSTN		CUP		BS	1	1	2		
1095	POTTERY	PEAR		CUP	HAND PAINTED DEC	R	1	1	3		
1097	POTTERY	YORK		PIPKIN	PLGL; REDUCING ROD, 38 DIA WHERE BROKEN	H	1	1	65		
1097	POTTERY	YORK		?	CUGL; DECORATIVE ATTACHENT	BS	1	1	21		
1103	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	BS	1	1	6		
1105	POTTERY	YORK		BOWL	SPOTS OF PLGL	R	1	1	24		
1107	POTTERY	NOTS		BOWL		R	1	1	4		
1113	POTTERY	MEDLOC	LEP2	BOWL	SMALL BOWL (ROUGHLY MADE)	R;BS	2	1	13		
1123	POTTERY	BRAN		JUG	PLGL	BS	1	1	8		
1123	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PATCH OF PLGL	BS	1	1	14		
1128	POTTERY	BRAN		JAR	SPOTS OF GLAZE	BS	1	1	12		SOOTED EXT; BLACK DEP INT
1129	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	KNIFE TRIMMED BASE	B	1	1	49		
1146	POTTERY	BRAN	REDUCED CORE	JUG/JAR	SPOTS GL	BS	1	1	15		

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Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
1146	POTTERY	SCAR		JUG		BS	1	1	1		
1146	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	BS	4	1	8		
1146	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	BS	1	1	20		
1146	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL INT	BS	4	1	19		
1146	POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	2	2	9		SOOTED EXT
1146	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL	BS	3	3	5		
1146	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL; ROD HANDLE 20 DIA	H	1	1	39		
1147	POTTERY	BRAN	REDUCED CORE	JAR	LID-SEATED	R	1	1	72		SOOTED UNDER AND ON RIM
1147	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL	BS	2	2	14		
1147	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	BS	2	1	22		
1147	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL; RECT RST	BS	1	1	7		
1147	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL; THUMBED	B	1	1	12		
1147	POTTERY	YORK		JAR	KNIFE TRIMMED BASE	B	1	1	49		BLACK DEP INT
1147	POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	1	1	20		
1147	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	ROD HANDLE 21 DIA	H	1	1	30		
1148	CBM	MTIL		FLAT		BS	1	1	6		
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	BS	2	1	32		
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL INT	BS	1	1	3		
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	BS	1	1	15	BURNT; BLACK DEP OVER BREAK	
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JUG/JAR	CUGL INT	BS	3	1	26		SOOTED EXT; BLACK DEP INT
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	1	1	7		
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JAR		BS	2	2	24		SOOTED EXT
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	PLGL	BS	1	1	8		
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL	R	2	1	29		
1148	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	CUGL; KNIFE TRIMMING	BS	1	1	38		
1149	POTTERY	BRAN		LOBED CUP	GLAZED PLGL INT/EXT	R	1	1	5		

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Context	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Description	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
1149	POTTERY	YORK		JUG	HORIZ GROOVES; PLGL	BS	1	1	12		
1149	POTTERY	YORK	LEP1; REDUCED CORE	JAR	SPOTS OF GLAZE	BS	1	1	14		
1150	POTTERY	YORK		JUG		B;BS	3	1	83		
1150	POTTERY	YORK		FRYP	PLGL; ROD HANDLE 35 DIA	R;H	1	1	181		

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