

Assessment of the Pottery from 2-4 Millgate, Selby, North Yorkshire (SMG'07)

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A small collection of pottery from an archaeological watching brief carried out at the rear of 2-4 Millgate, Selby, was submitted for identification and assessment. The finds are of two dates: a later medieval group (later 14th century?) and a 19th-century group.

Description

Clay Tobacco Pipe

A single stem from a clay pipe was recovered. The bore diameter suggests a 17th-century date.

Pottery

Medieval

A sherd of a North Yorkshire whiteware jug, of Brandsby-type ware, was present (BRAN). This type was produced at centres in the Hambleton Hills from the later 13th to the 15th centuries.

Sherds of three Humberware jugs were present (HUM). Humberware was produced at several centres in the Humber basin, and in the Vale of York (Hayfield 1992). Centres are known at West Cowick (Alan Vince 2004), Holme-upon-Spalding Moor (Mayes and Hayfield 1980; Humber Archaeology Partnership 2001; Alan Vince 2004) and York (Vince and Steane 2005) and thin section and chemical analysis indicates production to the east of the Wolds, in the Beverley area and on the south side of the Humber, supplying Barton-upon-Humber (Alan Vince 2004; Vince 2005). Of these, West Cowick is the closest (8 miles to the south, compared with 18 miles to the northeast for Holme and 14 miles north for York). This would suggest a West Cowick source whilst the texture of the fabric is slightly finer to the touch than the York Humberware (aka Walmgate ware).

One had an inturned rim, a typologically early feature (ie. 14th rather than 15th/16th century) and all appear similar in fabric and treatment.

Early Modern

A body sherd from a Nottingham Stoneware jar (NOTS) and sherds of three buffware chamber pots and a plate or dish (NCBW) were recovered. The chamber pots were all decorated with wheel-applied slip bands of white, light blue or dark brown slip and all three have different patterns. One of the vessels has a complete profile and is decorated with six

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white lines bounded top and bottom by slightly wider light blue lines. The handle was either moulded or cast and has a foliage moulding at the body joins. Buffware chamberpots are, in the author's experience, rare. Examples have only been recorded at Hall Garth Fine, Birkin, and Tofts Green, York. Together with the Selby pieces, these account for only 1.63% of the 372 buffware vessels recorded by the author since 1997.

Assessment

Dating and Interpretation

The finds from layer 1015, a silty clay layer, consist of the medieval pottery and the clay pipe stem, which is thought to be intrusive. As a group, the pottery dates to the 14th century and the typologically early rim suggests that these vessels may belong to the early years of the West Cowick industry, which is mentioned in documentary sources from the 1320s onwards (Le Patourel 1979, 92).

The finds from layer 1016, dumping abutting an outhouse, date to the early 19th century or later. By the middle of the 19th century, however, transfer printed whiteware chamberpots are much more common than buffware vessels and this suggests the earlier date is close to the date of deposition. The predominance of chamber pots suggests that a midden was situated nearby.

Further Work

It would be possible to confirm or refute a West Cowick origin for the Humberware vessels though the use of chemical analysis.

The complete profile of the buffware chamberpot should be reconstructed, drawn and photographed since it is rare to find this form and to be able to assign a date to it.

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http://www.archaeologicalplanningconsultancy.co.uk/mono/001/rep_ceramics_humber.html

Appendix 1

Context	Cname	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight
C1015	HUM	6-GROOVE OVAL HANDLE	JUG	H	1	1	204
C1015	BRAN	STRAP HANDLE WITH THUMB IMPR AT B/H;EXT PLAIN REDUCED GL	JUG	H;BS	1	1	49
C1015	HUM	PLAIN EXT GL	JUG	BS	1	1	57
C1015	HUM	INTURNED RIM;RIBBED NECK;OVAL HANDLE WITH THUMB IMPR AT R/H; 3-GROOVE OVAL HANDLE;PLAIN EXT GL	JUG	R;H	2	1	258
C1015	PIPECLAY	C17TH BORE DIAM	PIPE	BS	1	1	5
C1016	NCBW	BAND OF SIX HORIZ WHITE LINES WITH LIGHT BLUE LINES ABOVE AND BELOW;MOULDED HANDLE	CHP	PROF	12	1	747
C1016	NCBW	RIM WITH BROWN LINE AROUND RIM AND THREE BROWN HORIZ LINES ON SHOULDER	CHP	R	1	1	76
C1016	NCBW	LOWER PART OF BODY WITH THREE WHITE SLIP HORIZ LINES WITH LIGHT BLUE LINE ABOVE	CHP?	BS	1	1	13
C1016	NCBW	WIDE BASE ANGLE POSSIBLY A DISH BUT TOO WIDE AN ANGLE FOR A BOWL	PLATE?	B	1	1	30
C1016	NOTS	CYLINDRICAL; LARGER THAN BLACKLEADING BOTTLE	JAR	BS	1	1	26

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