

Assessment of the Pottery from Old Sidmouth Road, Colyton, Devon

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A small collection of pottery was recovered from archaeological evaluation at Colyton, near Axminster, Devon, undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd. The collection ranges in date from the Roman period to the 18th or 19th centuries but the majority dates to the later 16th and 17th centuries.

Description

Ceramic Building Material

A fragment of brick was recovered. It cannot be closely dated but is probably of post-medieval or later date.

An abraded fragment of glazed ridge tile has a fabric in which abundant quartz silt, muscovite and moderate rounded black grains can be seen at x20 magnification. This indicates the probable use of Gault clay and, since the Gault outcrops locally, this might be a local product. Glazed ridge tiles were used from the 13th to the 17th centuries.

Pottery

Twenty-three sherds of pottery were recovered. Most were heavily abraded, the only exceptions being two sherds from III (52) and the South Netherlands Maiolica vase from Trench 4 subsoil, where the glaze seems to have protected the body except where it was flaked off (Fig 1, bottom).

Roman

A single sherd of greyware jar was recovered from the Trench 5 subsoil. Examination at x20 magnification indicates that the fabric contains abundant, well-sorted angular quartz sand, sparse muscovite laths and sparse rounded black iron-rich grains. These probably indicate a Lower Cretaceous source, utilising Gault clay (Dewey 1948, Fig 19). The vessel might therefore be locally produced.

Medieval

A single body sherd from a jar was recovered from the Trench 4 subsoil. Examination at x20 magnification indicates the presence of abundant angular quartz (slightly coarser than in the Roman greyware) and sparse angular flint fragments, polished rounded quartz grains and chert. These features are found in medieval and late medieval wares from south Somerset, including the Donyatt kilns (Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988). The fine angular quartz

sand, however, distinguishes this fabric from the earlier medieval chert-tempered ware (Allan 1984).

Post-medieval

Nineteen sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered. All but one were of South Somerset ware (Allan 1984). Most of these were featureless body sherds which could not be closely dated, but two examples of sgraffito-decorated vessels were present. In both cases the design was cut by a wide tool rather than the fingers. This type is probably of later 17th or early 18th-century date.

Two of the sherds have distinctive light brown fabric and numerous iron spots in the glaze, caused by iron-rich inclusions bleeding into the glaze. They probably come from a later 18th or 19th-century vessel (Fig 1).

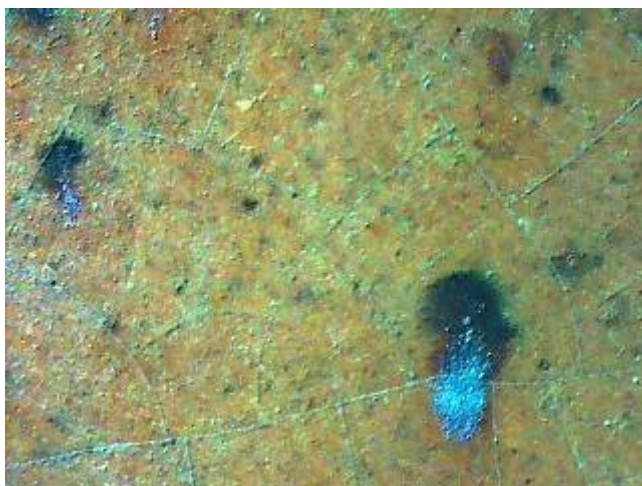


Figure 1 South Somerset ware jar from III (52). (Top) general view, (bottom) close-up of iron-rich spots in glaze (field of view 6.5 by 4mm).

The remaining sherd was a South Netherlands Maiolica altar vase body sherd (Fig 2). This type was produced at Antwerp in the 16th century (Gaimster 1999; Hurst, Neal, and van

Beuning 1986). The sherd includes part of the circlet surrounding a monograph and a stylized floral design which fills the spandrels.



Figure 2 South Netherlands Maiolica vase (top) exterior (bottom) interior

Assessment

Apart from the sherds from III (52) all of the pottery comes from subsoil or topsoil and its condition is consistent with finds from ploughsoil or garden soil. The finds indicate the presence of Roman, medieval and post-medieval activity in the area with an increase in activity in the late 16th or early 17th century. None of the abraded sherds need be later than c.1700 whilst the sherds from III (52) are probably a century later and probably do reflect activity on the site itself.

Further work

No further work is recommended.

Retention

All of the finds should be retained for future re-examination.

Bibliography

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Appendix 1

Trench	Context	class	Cname	Subfabric	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
6	TOPSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			BOWL	BS	2	2	20		
2	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			JUG	BS	1	1	7		
3	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			BOWL	B	1	1	25	ABRA; FLAKED GLAZE	
4	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			BOWL	R	2	1	17	ABRA	
4	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	MEDLOC	A FINE AQ;S ANG FLINT		BOWL	BS	1	1	9		SOOTED EXT
4	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM		FLANGED; SGRAFFITO DEC	BOWL	BS	1	1	7	ABRA; FLAKED GLAZE; BONFIRE BLACKENED	
4	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SNTG			VASE	BS	1	1	4		
	52	POTTERY	SSOM		LOOKS 18TH/19TH	BOWL	BS	2	1	26	FRESH	
7	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			BOWL	BS	1	1	3	FLAKED GLAZE	
6	TOPSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			?	BS	1	1	4	ABRA	
8	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM		INT GL	JAR	B	1	1	11	FLAKED GLAZE	
8	SUBSOIL	CBM	MTIL	MICACEOUS SILTY ROUNDED BLACK FE	PLAIN GL	RIDGE	BS	1	1	5		
1	TOPSOIL	CBM	PMTIL	SAQ		BRICK	BS	1	1	7		
1	TOPSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			BOWL	BS	1	1	1		
6	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM			BOWL	R	2	1	14	ABRA; FLAKED GLAZE	
6	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM		LID SEATED BOWL	BOWL	R	1	1	9		
6	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	SSOM		SGRAFFITO DEC THROUGH WHITE SLIP	BOWL	BS	2	1	30	FLAKED GLAZE, EXCEPT IN GROOVES	
5	SUBSOIL	POTTERY	GREY			JAR	BS	1	1	4	ABRA	

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