

## **Assessment of the pottery from Babington House, Babington, Somerset (BHK03)**

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Eighty two sherds of pottery, representing no more than 71 vessels, and weighing 570gm were recovered from an archaeological evaluation at Babington House, Babington, carried out by Bath Archaeological Trust. The pottery probably dates between the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries but cannot be closely dated.

### **Description**

#### **Pottery**

The pottery is all abraded, leading to the loss of surfaces, internal and external deposits and glaze. The sherd size varies, however, being smallest in contexts 02, 03 and 07 and being largest in contexts 06, 09 and 11. The size of the latter sherds, and the presence of probable sherds from the same vessel indicates that the latter sherds are from primary refuse deposits, and imply that the settlement where the pottery was used was either on the excavated site or nearby.

Pottery of two fabrics was present. 54 sherds were of Bath Fabric A and 26 of Crockerton-type ware.

The former ware was produced between the 11<sup>th</sup> (or late 10<sup>th</sup>) century and the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, to judge from excavations in Bath and is characterised by the presence of rounded, polished quartz grains and angular fragments of chert, many with dark inclusions of glauconite or altered glauconite and quartz. The groundmass is opaque white silica. These inclusions occur in a silty, micaceous groundmass. The earliest stratified examples of this ware often have rounded voids, either from the presence of chalk fragments or, more likely, calcareous algae, but only one example of this subfabric was present at Babington. There are only three rim sherds in the collection, one of which was a simple everted rim with a flattened edge, another was an everted rim with thumbing along the edge and the third was everted with a flat top. The latter is a form found first in the later 12<sup>th</sup> century but the other two rim forms could be of 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Crockerton-type ware contains very few inclusions and under x20 magnification the groundmass is seen to contain abundant muscovite and rounded dark altered glauconite. Sherds of both jugs and jars were present as well as one group of sherds from a vessel with an internal plain lead glaze and an external applied, thumbled strip. This may have been a jar or a bowl.

Although pottery-making was probably practiced at Crockerton from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards this distinctive fine-textured fabric appears to be late medieval and early post-medieval in date, eventually being supplanted by south Somerset (Donyatt) ware.

## **Cement**

A single fragment of cement was found in context 03. The cement bears the impression of what might be a frogged brick and is of later 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

## **Glass**

A fragment from a clear glass moulded tumbler, partly melted, was recovered from context 03. Vessels of this type date to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **Assessment**

Although some of the sherds found might be as early as the late 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries it is more likely that the earliest pottery is of later 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Contexts 2, 6 and 9 produced only Bath Fabric A sherds and therefore have a late 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century *terminus post quem*. Contexts 7 contains a mixture of Bath A and Crockerton sherds and probably accumulated over a long period of time, whereas context 11 produced only one sherd of Bath A and 13 of Crockerton-type ware. It is probably of late or early post-medieval date.

Both fabrics were probably produced from Gault clay, although the difference in composition of the groundmass shows that they are not simply tempered and untempered products made from the same clay. They indicate that the inhabitants of Babington looked to the east for pottery supply.

## Appendix

Context	Cname	Form	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Subfabric	Part	Use	Condition	class
02	BATHA	JAR		1	1	5		BS		ABR	POTTERY
03	BATHA	JAR		16	16	128		BS		ABR	POTTERY
03	BATHA	JAR	GLOB BODY;EVERTED RIM THUMBED EDGE	3	1	37		R		ABR	POTTERY
03	CEMENT		IMPRESSIONS OF FROGGED BRICKS?	1	1	23		BS			CEMENT
03	CROCKERTONJUG		PLAIN GLAZE EXT MAINLY ABRADED;SAGGING BASE	1	1	16		BS		ABR	POTTERY
03	PMGL	BOWL		1	1	11	CLEAR	BS			MELTED PMGL
06	BATHA	JAR		2	2	10		BS	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
06	BATHA	JAR	EVERTED RIM	4	1	68	GSQ;ABUNDANT COARSE CHERT/GS >4.0MM	BS	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
07	BATHA	JAR	FLAT-TOPPED EVERTED RIM	1	1	6		R	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
07	BATHA	JAR		25	25	73		BS	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
07	CROCKERTONJAR			10	10	23		BS	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
07	CROCKERTONJAR		EVERTED RIM	2	1	15		R	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
09	BATHA	JAR		1	1	34	GSQ;CHERT;MUSC;SILTBS			ABR	POTTERY
11	BATHA	JAR		1	1	1		BS	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
11	CROCKERTONJAR			1	1	4	MICACEOUS	BS	SOOTED EXT	ABR	POTTERY
11	CROCKERTONJAR/BOW	EXT	PLAIN INT GL;APPLIED THUMBED STRIP	6	1	74		BS		ABR	POTTERY
11	CROCKERTONJUG		LUTED B/H JOIN	6	6	42		BS		ABR	POTTERY