

The Pottery from Fishergate House and Blue Bridge Lane, Fishergate, York: Period 5

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Sixteen features excavated by Field Archaeology Specialists Ltd at Fishergate House and Blue Bridge Lane, Fishergate, York, were assigned by the excavators to Period 5. Of these, six were on the Fishergate House site and ten on the Blue Bridge Lane site.

In total, 150 sherds, representing no more than 115 vessels and weighing 1.385 Kg were recovered. Of these, 23 were of Roman date, 3 of Anglian date, 3 of Anglo-Scandinavian date (Torksey ware), 12 of late medieval or post-medieval date and presumed to be intrusive and the remainder were probably of late 11th to late 12th century date.

Catalogue

Roman pottery

Twenty-three sherds of Roman pottery were present in Period 5 feature fills. Most of these are small sherds of later 1st to early 3rd-century types, mainly Eboracum wares.

Anglian pottery

Three sherds of Northern Maxey-type ware were recovered from Period 5 deposits. They all come from the fill of YBB F272.

Residual Anglo-Scandinavian Wares

Three sherds of Torksey ware were recovered from Period 5 deposits. Since this ware ceased production in the mid 11th century and were in one case associated with splash-glazed ware of later 11th-century or later date they are treated here as being residual from Period 4 deposits.

Lincoln Fine-Shelled Ware (LFS)

Four sherds of shell-tempered ware from Period 5 deposits were identified by Jane Young as Lincoln Fine-Shelled ware (forthcoming). This ware is handmade and finer textured than Northern Maxey ware but is similar in texture and petrology to Early Lincoln Fine-Shelled ware, present in Period 3. It was probably produced somewhere close to the Jurassic ridge in central Lincolnshire.

In Lincoln, LFS first appears in the later 10th century but increases in frequency considerably in the later 11th century, following the demise of the Torksey and local Lincoln industries. The

LFS industry continued into the 13th century but was at its height in the late 11th and 12th centuries.

Stamford Ware (ST)

There are seven sherds of Stamford ware from Period 5 deposits, all of them from unglazed jars. This form is particularly common in York in the mid 11th century, prior to the growth of York Gritty industry (1990).

Staxton-type Ware (STAX)

There are four sherds of Staxton-type ware from Period 5 deposits. This ware is named after the production site at Staxton in the Vale of Pickering, although similar wares were produced in or close to Beverley and at various unknown sites in Cleveland. Without further analysis it is not possible to say what the source of these York finds might be. A distinctive feature of Staxton-type ware is that the vessels were made by hand but then finished off on a turntable. The vessels typically have an oxidized firing, usually with a dark grey core.

York Gritty Ware (YG)

Seventy-eight sherds of York Gritty ware were found in Period 5 deposits. This ware was first produced in the West Yorkshire area in the mid 11th century and by the late 11th century had become the only ware used any quantity in York or its environs (Holdsworth 1995). The sherds all come from unglazed, wheelthrown jars, often with sooting on the exterior. The jar forms are mostly cylindrical with collar rims, a form which suggests either Low Countries or Northern French influence, suggesting a post-conquest date.

York Glazed Ware (YORK)

A single sherd of York Glazed ware was found in a Period 5 deposit. This ware was probably produced in the Hambleton Hills area to the north of York and has a light-coloured, often silty and micaceous body with a well-sorted fine sand temper. A York Glazed ware vessel was present in the 1180 fire deposit at Lurk Lane, Beverley, and the typology of the vessels and their decoration suggests a late 12th and early 13th-century date range (Watkins in 1991).

York Splash-glazed Wares (YSP)

Thirteen sherds of York splashed wares were found in Period 5 deposits. This group includes a range of fabrics, which are in the process of being studied at present (2005) and therefore these sherds cannot yet be assigned to the new groups. Four of these sherds have a light-coloured body with some coarse angular quartzose inclusions, probably in the main derived from Carboniferous sandstones. These sherds are probably in the main from

sources in West Yorkshire. Two of the sherds have a fine red earthenware body, similar to those produced from boulder clay in the York area.

Intrusive Pottery

A sherd of post-medieval glazed red earthenware (GRE) and eleven sherds of Humberware (HUM) were recovered from Period 5 deposits. Both types are clearly intrusive, assuming that the deposits concerned have not been mis-phased.

Stratigraphy

Fishergate House(YFH00)

Six features at Fishergate House, Period 5, produced pottery (Table 1).

Table 1

context group	GRE	RPOT	ST	TORK	YG	YORK	YSP	YSP?	Grand Total
F214	1	6	2	2	35		1		47
F215		2	2		8		4	1	17
F227		2							2
F228					1				1
F241			1		4		6		11
F242			1		8	1	1		11
Total	1	10	6	2	56	1	12	1	89

F214

This assemblage can be dated to the early 12th century or later on the basis of the York Splashed ware sherd.

F215

This assemblage can be dated to the early 12th century or later on the basis of the York Splashed ware sherd.

F227

This assemblage is entirely residual.

F228

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 11th century or later on the basis of the single York Gritty ware sherd.

F241

This assemblage can be dated to the early 12th century or later on the basis of the York Splashed ware sherd.

F242

This assemblage can be dated to the later 12th century or later on the basis of the York Glazed ware sherd. If that sherd is intrusive, then the feature fill can be dated to the early 12th century or later.

Blue Bridge Lane (YBB01)

Ten features at Blue Bridge Lane, Period 5, produced pottery (Table 2).

Table 2

context group	HUM	LFS	MAX	NYG	RPOT	ST	STAX	TORK	YG	YSP	Grand Total
F163							1				1
F216		1		1	1		1		4		8
F255					1				1		2
F265								1	2		3
F266		1			6				2	1	10
F272			3		3	1	1				8
F281		1			2				10		13
F296	11	1					1				13
F304									2		2
F338									1		1
Total	11	4	3	1	13	1	4	1	22	1	61

F163

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 12th century or later.

F216

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 12th century or later.

F255

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 11th century or later.

F265

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 11th century or later.

F266

This feature fill can be dated to the early 12th century or later.

F272

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 12th century or later.

F281

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 11th century or later.

F296

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 12th century or later.

F304

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 11th century or later.

F338

This feature fill can be dated to the mid 11th century or later.

Discussion

As in Period 4, the individual assemblages are too small to give anything other than a *terminus post quem* date. However, comparing the two sites indicates a difference in composition. The Fishergate House features produced more sherds of Stamford ware and York Splashed ware whereas the Blue Bridge Lane features produced sherds of Lincoln Fine-shelled ware and Staxton ware absent from Fishergate House. These differences might be chronological, in which case the more southerly site would be the earlier of the two. or they may simply indicate differences in supply. In either case, they suggest that there is a barrier between the two sites at this period, perhaps indicating that Blue Bridge Lane was in existence by this date. If we ignore the single sherd of York Glazed ware, the Period 5 features probably date from the later 11th to the mid 12th centuries.

Bibliography

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