

Flemingate House, Beverley: The Pottery

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The Pottery

Quantification and condition

825 sherds of pottery were recorded from the Flemingate House site, representing no more than 768 vessels and weighing 9.707 Kg. Seventeen sherds were notably abraded, consistent with the intermittent use of the site for agriculture/horticulture. Two post-medieval sherds were possibly wasters (one was spalled and the other an evident second), hinting at the deposition of potting waste on the site in the later 16th century or later or perhaps just the use of less than perfect pottery.

Wares

The pottery is all of types known from other sites in Beverley (Watkins 1987 and Didsbury and Watkins 1992). A list of wares present is given in Table 00. One type, recognised on other sites in Beverley but whose source was questionable, Beverley Fabric X, was well-represented on the site and samples were taken for thin section and chemical analysis (Vince 2006). On the basis of these studies, the ware has been identified as a Beverley product with affinities to Beverley 1 ware.

Forms

The medieval pottery from the site consists mostly of sherds from jugs and jars. Omitting clearly residual sherds in post-medieval deposits, there are 293 sherds of medieval pottery identifiable to form. Of these, just over half (58%) are from jars and 40% are from jugs. The remaining 2% consist of sherds of curfew, ladle, small drinking jugs, pipkins, frying pans and cups. There is no sign of a trend in the relative proportions of these forms in the first four phases of occupation on the site (12th to 14th/15th century).

A change in the composition of the assemblages takes place in Phase 6 (phase 5 produced too few contemporary sherds for analysis). Bowls are the most common form, followed by small drinking vessels, jugs and jars. In Phase 7 plates become one of the three most common forms, alongside bowls and cups. Other post-medieval forms found were dishes, posset pots, cauldrons, pancheons, a miniature cup, drinking jugs, and a possible chafing dish. A single candlestick of post-medieval type was found, intrusive in a medieval deposit.

These trends are typical of the general pattern of pottery use in medieval and post-medieval Britain and there are no signs of any deviations from the norm.

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Function

Evidence for the use of vessels, in the form of deposits such as soot or burnt contents, wear or reuse was sought. All the traces found consists of sooting and deposits. Sooting was found on 84 sherds from medieval deposits. Most of these were jars but also include the Paffrath-type ladle and three jug sherds. In the latter cases the vessels might have contained warmed alcoholic beverages or perhaps were reused for boiling food.

Internal deposits of various colours and characters were present on 42 sherds. Without analysis, it is impossible to say whether they differences in colour are significant nor what the contents of the vessels might have been.

Only one sherd of definitely post-medieval pottery had traces of use, a glazed red earthenware bowl with soot on the exterior. Two sherds of Dutch Red Earthenware from post-medieval deposits also had traces of sooting but could well be residual and of late medieval date.

By and large, therefore, vessels other than pottery seem to have been used for cooking in the post-medieval period.

Stratification

The stratified pottery was examined trench by trench and dates were assigned to the various phases of activity recognised on each trench. On the basis of these detailed studies, the stratigraphy from the four trenches was correlated and seven phases of activity defined across the site.

Phase 1

Twenty three sherds of pottery were recovered from Phase 1 deposits. The latest types present were Beverley 2 jugs with suspension glazes (BEVO2B) which were introduced in the late 12th century. However, one of these vessels had a collar-rim, normally a mid 12th century feature.

In addition to local wares, the assemblage included sherds with sparse oolitic limestone temper, from the scarp slope of the Wolds (QC), including sherds from a curfew, together with a shelly ware vessel from the Lincoln area (LFS) and a sherd from a Rhenish blue-grey ware (Paffrath) ladle. Such vessels are particularly common in late 11th to 12th-century contexts in eastern England and Scotland but examples are known from northern Ireland in early Anglo-Norman contexts and the type was therefore still in use in the 1170s.

Table 1

Context group	BEVO1X	BEVO2B	BEVOA	BEVOB	BLGR	LFS	QC	STAXT	Grand Total
F1091	2	4	1	1	1		3	1	13
F3063		1		1				1	3
F3065				1					1
F3067				1				2	3
F3072			1			1		1	3
Grand Total	2	5	2	4	1	1	3	5	23

Phase 2

The Phase 1 occupation deposits were subjected to cultivation in Phase 2, followed by the construction of a ditch and bank, which in places sealed areas of cultivated soil. All the pottery types sealed by the bank were already present in Phase 1 but in the bank and subsequent ploughing a sherd of Beverley sandy ware and three sherds of York glazed ware were recovered. The Beverley glazed wares from this phase included sherds from vessels with a white slip, an inturned jug rim, a bridge spout, pellet decoration in which the pellets contain hammerscale, rod handles, diagonal applied strips, a red slip, and a thumbled base. Several of these features were introduced in the late 12th century but are typical of early 13th-century Beverley wares.

Table 2

context group	BEVO SANDY	BEVO1B	BEVO1X	BEVO2 SANDY	BEVO2A	BEVO2B	BEVOA	BEVOB	LFS	QC	STAXT	YORK	Grand Total
Sealed makeup (Tr3)		1				1		1					3
(Tr4)	1			1	1	14	1	23	1	3	8		53
Grand Total	1		4			10	2	8			3	3	31
Grand Total	2	1	4	1	1	25	3	32	1	3	11	3	87

Phase 3

Phase 3 deposits produced 88 sherds of pottery (Table 00). These come from occupation deposits and make-up in Trenches 1 and 3. Most of the pottery types present were also represented in earlier phases but sherds of Humberware, Dutch Red Earthenware, Brandsby-type ware, Rouen glazed ware and a York Gritty jar were also present. These were the only non-local sherds in the assemblage. The Humberware and Dutch Red Earthenwares are of late 14th-century or later date and both come from ploughsoil in Trench 1. They are probably intrusive from Phase 4. The Brandsby-type ware sherds came from earlier deposits and probably date deposition to the mid 13th century or later.

Table 3

context group	BEVO SANDY	BEVO1B	BEVO1X	BEVO2B	BEVOA	BEVOB	HUM	LFS	QC	STAXT	YORK	BRAN	DUTR	ROUE	YG	Grand Total
F1040				2		1										3
F1059				2		2			1							5
F1070		1		1		2		1		3						8
F1072				6		8										14
F3048						1				1						2
F3050	3			7						1						11
F3053						2				1						3
F3057				1						1						2
F3061						1				3						4
Chalk blocks 3074	1									1						2
ploughsoil (tr1)		1		14		7			2	9	1		1	1	1	37
ploughsoil (tr2)				1		1				1						3
Surface 3054				4		3				1						8
Make-up (Tr1)			1	2	2	4				2		1				12
FLOOR 1049				5								1				6
FLOOR 1056							1			4						5
Grand Total	4	2	1	45	2	32	1	1	3	28	1	2	1	1	1	125

Phase 4

Sixty-six sherds of pottery were recovered from Phase 4 deposits. They are a mixture of mid 14th-century or earlier Beverley wares and mid 14th century and later Humberware, Langewehe stoneware and late 15th-century or later Raeren stoneware. All the pottery came from horizontal deposits, either interpreted as ploughsoils or make-up deposits.

Table 4

Context group	BEVO2B	BEVOB	HUM	STAXT	LANG	RAER	Grand Total
ploughsoil (Tr1)	5	6		7			18
ploughsoil (Tr3)	18	6	1	6			31
Make-up (Tr4)	4	4	4		1	1	14
Post-dating bank (Tr4)	2			1			3
Grand Total	29	16	5	14	1	1	66

Phase 5

Twenty-five sherds of pottery were recorded from Phase 5 deposits (Table 5). Most of the sherds are of mid 14th-century or earlier Beverley wares and the remainder consist of two sherds of later 14th to early 16th-century Humberware and sherds of Brownware and glazed red earthenware sherds, both of later 16th century or later date. These presumably provide a terminus post quest for the filling of features 3027 and 1053.

Table 5

context group	BEVO1B	BEVO2B	BEVOB	HUM	STAXT	BERTH	GRE	Grand Total
F1041			1					1
F1053	1	1	1	1	1		4	9
F3027			1	1	2	1		5
F3029			2					2
F3038		1	4					7
F3044		1						1
Grand Total	1	3	9	2	3	1	4	22

Phase 6

Two hundred and twelve sherds were recorded from Phase 6 deposits (Table 6). They were recovered from a series of deposits, starting with make-up or cultivation deposits in Trenches 1 and 3, dating to the 15th century or later followed by pits in Trench 1, further cultivation deposits in Trenches 1, 2 and 4, building levels in Trench 1, further make-up or cultivation deposits in all four trenches followed by a mid 17th-century or later pit in Trench 1.

Much of the pottery from these deposits is clearly residual and of medieval date, leaving 54 sherds of later medieval and post-medieval date. None of the deposits produced contemporary assemblages and a date for deposition can only be roughly given by the date of the latest types present. Several of the types present were current in the late 16th century and could therefore be residual from Phase 5. These include Cistercian-type ware; Dutch Red Earthenware (which could also be residual and of late medieval date); glazed red earthenware; late Humberware; Midlands Yellow wares; Raeren stoneware; Ryedale ware; and Tudor Green ware. The remaining types are tin-glazed ware and Staffordshire Mottled ware and yellow-glazed slipware. The tin-glazed vessel is represented by a sherd weighing 1gm and impossible to identify closely. The Staffordshire slipware sherds all come from a single cup with overall black slip and a band of combed slip between vertical white slip lines. This reverse slipware style is typical of the last decade of the 17th century (for example, examples were associated with the rebuilding of Port Royal after the 1692 earthquake (Mayes 1972) although a slightly earlier date, in the 1670s or 1680s, cannot be ruled out. The Staffordshire mottled ware sherd comes from a plate, an unusual form for this style of

decoration. Mottled ware was in production by the 1680s (1686) and vessels are known from archaeological deposits dating to c.1710 (Vince 1983).

Table 6

context group	CIST	DUTR	GERW	GRE	LHUM	MY	RAER	RYEDAL E	STMO	STSL	TGW	TUDG	Grand Total
F1012							2	1					3
F1020		1											1
F1027							1						1
F1030												1	1
F4006						1							1
F4030		2		2						4	1		9
F4056		1		1									2
F4058	1						1						2
ploughsoil (tr2)				1									1
Make-up (Tr4)	6			2				1	1			1	11
garden soil (Tr1)	1		2		2			2					7
Ploughsoil (Tr4)	1			7	1			5					14
Dump (Tr4)				1									1
Grand Total	9	4	2	14	3	1	4	9	1	4	1	2	54

Phase 7

Forty-four sherds of pottery were recovered from Phase 7 deposits. Twenty-two of these are of types which might have been in use in the late 17th century or later although several are of types which were also current in Phase 6 or earlier. Sherds of late 18th-century or later Pearlware were present in Track 4004; Staffordshire press-moulded combed slipware was present in a make-up deposit in Trench 4. This type is present in deposits of early 18th century date and was still in production in the late 18th century. The Staffordshire slipware sherds include one from the Phase 6 vessel and two of types with a long lifespan, from c.1670 to c.1760. The White Saltglazed vessel is a miniature cup, probably a toy, of mid 18th century date. The tin-glazed ware sherds consist of two fragments of dish which together weigh one gram and are thus impossible to identify. The transfer-printed ware sherds are both from plates which could be of late 18th century or 19th-century date. Finally, the Westerwald stoneware vessel is a bulbous drinking jug with a body covered with circular sprigs made with a single mould, similar to one in the town museum in Cologne and ascribed there to the 18th century (Von Bock 1986, 350, No.560). However, similar vessels were being copied at Fulham in c.1672-5 (1999, Fig 80).

Table 7

context group	BERTH											Grand Total
	BL	GRE	LHUM	PEAR	STCO	STSL	SWSG	TGW	TPW	WEST		
F3026										1		1
F4002	1											1
F4011			1	2			1		2		1	7
ploughsoil (Tr3)		1								1		2
Make-up (Tr4)						1	3	1				5
Track 4004	4				2							6
Grand Total	5	1	1	2	2	1	4	1	2	2	1	22

Discussion

Earliest occupation

There is no pottery of definite late 11th to early 12th-century date from the site (such as Reduced Chalky ware) and this suggests that the few types found which were in use in that period but also continued later were, in this case, later than the early 12th century. Types typical of the mid 12th century are also rare on the site. These include Beverley glazed wares tempered with a mixed quartz/calcareous sand. Only 10 sherds of this fabric were found on the site, from Phases 1, 2, 3 and unstratified. Most were cooking vessels (jars and a pipkin) and a single jug, with an inturned rim and strap handle. The latter form, and the pipkin, are both late 12th century and later types and it is likely that they either indicate that the vessels date to the earlier part of their time range or that this calcareous fabric continued in use in small quantities into the later 12th century and later. Typological features of mid/late 12th century date were present on Beverley glazed ware jugs, such as combing, sometimes on a white-slipped body. However, all of these features continued in use into later periods.

On balance it seems that the pottery on the site is of late 12th century and later date and this is consistent with the date assigned to Phase 1.

Intensity of occupation and periods of disuse

There is clear evidence for the recycling of earlier pottery in later deposits throughout the sequence and thus the frequency of potsherds in a deposit cannot be immediately be transformed into a measure of the intensity of occupation. Furthermore, the main wares present, Beverley glazed wares and Humberware, both have long periods of use.

It is clear, however, that much of the pottery can be dated to the 13th- to early 14th century. This includes Beverley glazed wares decorated with applied strips and pellets as well as non-local wares. These types occur throughout the sequence from Phase 2 to Phase 6 but were obviously residual from at least Phase 4. Only three sherds of Beverley glazed ware with

early 14th century stamped bossed decoration were found, and these were all in post-medieval deposits (Phases 6 and 7).

On balance, it seems that the site was first occupied in the late 12th century and that occupation was at its most intense in the 13th century (Phases 2 and 3) and that subsequent activity consisted mainly of the cultivation of the site interleaved with sporadic occupation. Some activity took place in the mid to late 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries and there are 90 sherds which were current within this period from Phase 2 to 7. but only 13 of these occur in Phase 2 to 5 deposits, and some of these are clearly intrusive. Most come from Phase 6 deposits, where they are mixed with later 16th century material. It is possible that they represent material disturbed by ploughing from earlier occupation deposits but it is also possible that this pottery was dumped on the site at the start of Phase 6, which would explain why it includes early 14th-century stamped boss jugs not present in stratified medieval deposits.

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