

## THE POTTERY

By John Allan and Graham Langman

### *Summary of Pottery and Other Dating Evidence*

A total of 52 foundry contexts from the excavations of 1978, 1984 and 1999 contained pottery. The contexts are in many cases unrelated stratigraphically to one another, and each contains only a small group of sherds (on average four per context). Most of the finds are local coarsewares of South Somerset, Coarse Sandy Ware and North Devon coarseware types, only broadly datable to *c.* 1500-1650, but the imports, especially the stonewares, allow closer dating. There are eight Raeren drinking jugs, the most common import of the early 16th century. These vessels were quite rapidly supplanted by Frechen imports in the period *c.* 1550-70; taken with the plain Cologne drinking jug in context 422 & 1607 (ECS 78 & 99), these indicate that the foundry was operating in the period *c.* 1500-50, but do not allow closer dating within that period. A little later in date is the mix of plain Frechen and Raeren drinking jugs in context 119 (ECS 78), datable to *c.* 1550-80, when Raeren falls out of the English market; there follow plain Frechen jugs in context 75 (ECS 78), the ribbed neck of a Raeren jug of *c.* 1575-1600 in context 1527 (ECS 99), (*cf.* e.g. Hurst *et al.* 1986, Nos 313-15 and 317) and a plain Frechen jug with an early 17th century Westerwald example of *c.* 1600+ in context 69 (ECS 78). There are sherds of the South Somerset 16th-century (pre *c.* 1580) types in contexts 75 and 24 (ECS 78). Taken together these firmly indicate production from the early 16th century until after 1600. The two clay pipe bowls (Fig. 54 Nos 161-2) from contexts 1534 and 1653 (ECS 99) help refine the closing date. David Higgins has discussed similar pipes from the Kitto Institute, Plymouth (Higgins 1992). He points out that broadly they could lie anywhere in the period 1620-50, but they are measurably larger than the group from the massacre levels of Martins Hundred, Virginia, of 1622. The Kitto Institute group must date fairly soon after that and is most probably in the bracket 1625-35; the Cowick Street pipes could just fall within the life of the foundry closing in 1624.

### *Discussion*

Two aspects of this little collection deserve comment. First, the period of the foundry (before *c.* 1550 to *c.* 1625) is comparatively poorly represented in the published series of ceramics from Exeter, so even a modest collection of this period offers some points of interest. The coarsewares from the excavation are perhaps unremarkable, although we have selected for illustration some individual sherds which extend the range of known forms from the city. Among the imports the predominance of stonewares is

unsurprising but the late 16th century Raeren jugs are especially well represented here. The national pattern of Raeren imports is of the importation of large numbers of Raeren drinking jugs in the early and mid 16th century, but imports of their plain late 16th century successors are virtually unknown (Hurst *et al.* 1986, 194). Two examples of these rare late 16th-century jugs have been published from the city (Allan 1984a, Nos 1851 & 1964); the Cowick Street excavation adds one more. Even the better-known highly decorated panel jugs and biconical jugs of the last quarter of the 16th century are generally rare on English sites (Hurst *et al.* 1986, 194), although there are several examples from Totnes (e.g. Allan 1984b, 86) and Plymouth, so the presence of two of these is also notable.

A second interesting aspect of this collection is the fact that it comes from a household whose occupants are identifiable and about whose status something is known. Almost all of the city collection, in common with the great majority of finds elsewhere, comes from contexts in which the users of excavated objects are unknown. The impression of the family's modest prosperity adduced by Stuart Blaylock (above) is perhaps to be seen in the ceramics. The percentage of imports in the foundry deposits - 18 per cent - is a little above the average figure of 13 per cent among the samples already published from the city (Allan 1984a, 101-4). Extravagant claims of exalted status are sometimes made by archaeologists when even single examples of Montelupo maiolica and Spanish lustrewares such as those at Cowick Street are found. They must at least have been small luxuries and the presence of two further unstratified Montelupo dishes, broadly of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, on the site suggests that there were other examples of these imports among their household goods. On the other hand there is no concentration of tin-glazed wares, and perhaps more telling, none of the imported glass or porcelain which mark out the richest groups from the centre of the city.

#### MEDIEVAL FLOOR TILES

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Five fragments of inlaid floor tiles of Exeter series 1, datable to the early and mid 14th century (Allan & Keen 1984), were excavated in foundry deposits. Four of the fragments, from context 1661, are of *ibid* pattern 46, reproduced here, Fig. 53, No 160; the design of the other, from context 1663, is unidentifiable. The exciting aspect of these sherds is that they are probably wasters, suggesting that the tile factory which supplied many Exeter sites in the 14th century may have been somewhere close to the site, and would presumably also have used the alluvial clays employed by the bell foundry. One

tile fragment is heavily over-fired and reduced, with the glaze running a little into a break. The other four are all in very fresh condition; the glaze on each survives unworn. Two of three show glaze dribbles to a maximum of 2mm into the cracks in the fabric. The most convincing evidence that these are wasters is the fact that the broken edges of one fragment are fired to the same colour as the original straight cut edge of the tile, contrasting with the body colour within. This fragment therefore appears to have been broken before the final stage of kiln firing.