

Excavations at Lochore Castle 2015

The ceramics

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Body and neck sherd from a storage jar? In a distinctive Whiteware fabric with large red inclusions (Context 209 Trench C)

Introduction

This assemblage of 87 sherds was examined by eye and X10 hand lens and where possible has been spot dated and assigned to a recognised fabric name. It has been catalogued, assessed and spot dated and in this short report is discussed by trench.

Trench A (Illus 2 and 3)

This trench produced 19 sherds of pottery ranging in date from the 13th/14th centuries to the 17th/18th centuries. Apart from a single rimsherd of North European Earthenware of 17th/18th century date from an Unstratified context all the material is of Scottish origin and includes sherds of Scottish White Gritty Ware, Scottish Redware and Scottish Post Medieval Oxidised and Reduced Wares which are all from jugs (Lindsay 1983, 566-573; Jones et al 2006; Haggarty, Hall and Chenery 2011). The vast bulk of this assemblage is of 15th/16th century date.

Trench B (Illus 1, 5 and 6)

This trench produced 21 sherds of pottery ranging in date from the 12th/13th centuries to the 15th/16th centuries. Five of the sherds from contexts 104 and 105 are in Whiteware fabrics which are apparently not of Scottish origin and are possibly from Yorkshire Ware Type vessels of 13th/14th century date (Jennings 1992). The remainder of the sherds are in Scottish White Gritty Ware, Scottish Redware, Scottish Post Medieval Oxidised ware and Unidentified fabrics. One of the Scottish White Gritty wares from Context 113 (FN116) appears to be from a handled cooking vessel which has been previously identified as a Fife vessel type and is of 12th/13th century date (Jones et al 2006, 54 Type 8). This assemblage is of an earlier date than Trench A dating as it does to the 13th/14th centuries.

Trench C (Illus 7)

This trench produced 47 sherds of pottery ranging in date from the 13th/14th centuries to the 16th/17th centuries. The assemblage includes unusual Whiteware fabrics from Context 202 (FN201) and Context 209 (FN237). The sherd from 202 is from a vessel manufactured from a very pure Whiteware fabric with few inclusions, it is unprovenanced. The sherd from 209 is in a distinctive Whiteware fabric with large red haematite inclusions (Illus 7). This is very similar to a fabric that has previously been identified from excavations in Leith and Ayr as being of an unknown French origin and is possibly of 16th/17th century date (Haggarty 2011, File 35). Chemical sourcing of both sherds would be the only method of confirming their origin. There is single sherd from a Raeren Stoneware vessel of 15th/16th century date from Context 202 (FN220) (Hurst et al 1986, 194-207). The remainder of the assemblage comprises a single sherd of Yorkshire Type Ware (Context 203 FN230) and sherds of Scottish White Gritty Ware and Scottish Redware and dates to around the 13th/14th centuries.

Discussion and Recommendations

This small group of pottery from Lochore Castle is dominated by sherds of what are probably locally manufactured Scottish fabrics but does include sherds of possible Yorkshire Type Wares and a sherd of Raeren Stoneware. The possible Scottish Whiteware fabrics present are reminiscent of those that have been previously identified from excavations in Dunfermline and may suggest that they have come from that area of Fife (Jones et al 2006, 63; Hall 1998, 88). There are hardly any rims, base or handle sherds present and it is not possible to reconstruct any of the vessel profiles. A group of the local wares and the potential English and unidentified imports could usefully be chemically sourced (using ICPS) to confirm their provenance. A list of potential ICPS samples and a list of suggested illustrations are identified in the accompanying spreadsheet. An illustration catalogue is listed below.

References

Haggarty, G 2006 'A gazetteer and summary of French pottery imported into Scotland c 1150 to c 1650 a ceramic contribution to Scotland's Economic History' *Tayside Archaeol J* Volume 12 (CD rom in back) also available as free PDF download at National Museums Scotland Research Repository <http://repository.nms.ac.uk/>

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Hurst, J G, Neal, D S and van Beuningen, H J E 1986 **Pottery produced and traded in north-west Europe 1350-1650**, Rotterdam Papers VI

Jennings, S 1992 **Medieval Pottery in the Yorkshire Museum**

Jones, R, Will, R, Haggarty, G and Hall, D W 2006 'Sourcing Scottish White Gritty Wares', *Medieval Ceramics* Volume 26-27, 45-84

Lindsay, W J 1983 'Appendix 1: The Pottery' in Hall, D and Lindsay, W J 'Excavations at Scalloway Castle, 1979 and 1980', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot* (113), 566-573

Illustration Catalogue

Scottish Post Medieval Oxidised Ware

1. Rim and handle junction from vessel internally glazed green Trench B Context 104 FN117

Scottish Redware

2. Bodysherd from neck junction of green glazed jug with traces of a cordon and incised decoration Trench A Context 005 FN011
3. Bodysherd from green glazed jug decorated with vertical thumbbed strip Trench A Context 009 FN21
4. Bodysherd and base of handle junction from green glazed jug Trench C Context 202 FN229

Scottish White Gritty Ware

5. Rimsherd from unglazed jug Trench A Context 104 FN122
6. Bodysherd and handle junction from unglazed and slightly smoke blackened jar Trench A Context 116 FN113

Unidentified Whiteware with large red inclusions (Possibly French)

7. Bodysherd from junction of bowl and pedestal of Chafing dish or storage jar Trench C Context 209 FN237