

12. PROBABLE 13TH-CENTURY KILN-SITE AT PERTH.

Over many years the late Mr Robert G. Thomson collected sherds of medieval pottery from his garden at Wellbank, Kinnoull (Nat. Grid ref. 37/123233), just across the river from Perth, almost opposite the end of Canal Street. He generously fell in with the suggestion that the collection should be given to the National Museum, and so it is available for study. There is also a representative selection in Perth Museum.

Though there are three distinct types of fabric, some kinds of rims, bases and decoration are common to all (fig. 16), and all must belong to one probably short period. A few fragments that may be "wasters" suggest a kiln site. This is borne out by many bits of fired clay containing impressions of grass and twigs, of which 8½ lbs. were collected: they could be from the domes of kilns. A third of a mile to the N. the name Potterhill occurs on the map.

The commonest form of rim is sharply profiled, and differs from almost all those found at Bothwell Castle and Melrose Abbey published by S. H. Cruden (*P.S.A.S.*, 1951-2 and 1952-3). But it resembles that of cooking-pots and jugs found at Carlisle, dated by E. M. Jope to the first half of the 13th century (*T. C. and W. A. S.*, 1955); he contrasts the north-east English 12th-century cooking-pot tradition in which this rim form was at home, with the Nottingham tradition

¹ Apart from the facts that the inscription is probably too late for such a form as *Maqqa*, and that in any case the correct reading may well be MAQQA AHALL.

² This is suggested by the spelling *meqq* in some inscriptions; the *maq* of others may be genitive or nominative.

that, he thinks, played an important part in the 13th–14th-century development in northern England and southern Scotland.

Description.—Of the considerable quantity of sherds recovered from the site the great majority are very small, and it has not been possible to reconstruct whole vessels. It is evident that the usual form is jugs, but cooking-pots are also present. There are three distinct wares. Firstly, “A-ware” is a hard, pink-buff ware,

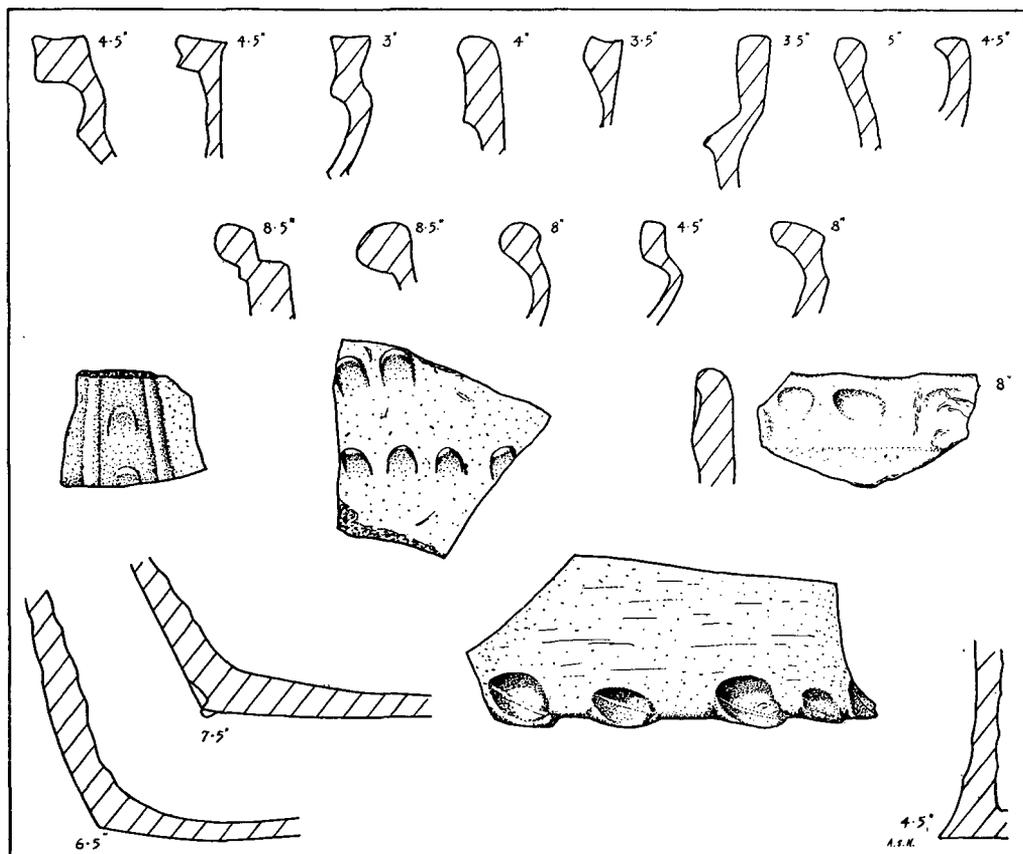


Fig. 16.

often with green speckles of glaze and including some wall sherds from jugs fully glazed with dull olive-green glaze. Some sherds, apparently variations of this ware, are harder and have a deep-red surface where there is no glaze and the ware is orange coloured, this difference possibly being due to different conditions in firing. “B-ware” has a white or pink slip on a buff or orange-coloured ware and is often rather chalky in texture, and unglazed. The third ware, “C”, is hard, thin, and full of tiny angular grits, with no slip and seldom glazed. It is usually pale grey or creamy in colour.

A-ware is by far the commonest. Amongst the rims the proportion of wares is about 50 A-ware: 23 B-ware: 14 C-ware. The wall sherds show a still higher

proportion of A-ware to the other two wares. There are a number of strap-handles of A-ware including one which still retains a portion of the jug rim, its upper surface flush with the rim edge, and there are two round-sectioned handles. There is only one strap-handle of B-ware and none of C-ware. Most of the base sherds are A-ware, the majority from vessels with sagging bases. Rather less than half of these have thumbing round the outside of the basal angle. There are also a number of sherds from jugs with small diameters and vertical walls which are thickened at the base into a sharp projecting angle for stability. There are a very few B- and C-ware bases and all of these are sagging.

Many of the jug rims are angular, square in section and jutting out from the neck. On a few of which rather more survives there is a sharp moulding about 1 in. below the rim. A common feature is a slightly concavity in the top surface of the rim. There are five of these rims with small, weakly pinched spouts. Some of the jug rims, on the other hand, have a more rounded profile. Cooking-pots are rather less common. Some of the rims are angular and some are thickened and rounded, one or two obviously everted to hold a lid. One sherd only had a row of finger and thumb impressions running along the outer and inner surface just below the rim. The main rim forms recur in all three wares: of the pottery illustrated all are A-ware except the extreme right section in the top row, and the two right-hand sections in the next row which are B-ware.

Decoration is relatively rare, and mostly on A-ware. There are a few sherds with horizontal rows of applied "petals," apparently from round the shoulder of a jug, and on five of these sherds the petals appear to have been stained darker. Two sherds bear a vertical row of petals between two raised ribs, again from the shoulder of the vessel. Six unglazed sherds of chalky pink ware and two of B-ware have petals and ribs, but not enough survives to distinguish the design. Two tiny sherds of A-ware appear to have narrow applied pinched strips. One sherd with petals is thickened and retains part of a perforation, evidently from the base of a tubular spout.

A number of sherds have been overfired or refired producing a very hard black or dark-grey ware. Other manufacturing faults are indicated by a very few sherds with a broken edge partially glazed showing that the crack had developed before firing, one jug neck had been distorted before firing, and one rim had an untidy smudge of clay fired on to it.

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