

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN  
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME XLVI  
JANUARY 1952 TO DECEMBER 1952

CAMBRIDGE  
BOWES AND BOWES  
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## SOME FURTHER EXAMPLES OF SGRAFFITO WARE FROM CAMBRIDGE

G. H. S. BUSHNELL, M.A., PH.D., F.S.A. AND J. G. HURST, B.A.

As stated in the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, vol. XLIV (1950), p. 49, some further fragments of sgraffito ware from Cambridge have come to light in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. These consist of fragments of a number of jugs and of a vessel of unusual shape; they appear to have a considerable range in date.

In every case the vessels are of hard red ware partly covered by a buff slip through which the designs are incised. This was subsequently covered by a clear yellowish glaze, which is sometimes flecked with green, and which generally does not cover the whole vessel. The red body of these vessels when glazed becomes brown in certain cases (Z 14789; Z 14788A, King's College; Z 14809, Market Place) but a more vivid red in others (Z 14860, unprovenanced jug; 37.39, Burwell Castle; Bird Bolt; Z 14788C/Z 14807, King's College).

The first (Z 14789) from an unspecified locality in Cambridge (Fig. 1) has a closely similar rim form to that of the jug from Trinity College (49.164) already described, and cannot differ very much from it in age. It has a strap-handle with a deep central groove and a pinched-out lip; the surviving ornament consists of rather angular foliage generally similar in execution to that on the Trinity College jug. A second fragment, from King's College (Z 14788A), apparently comes from a jug of similar form, which is consistent with an East Anglian origin. There are at least three sherds, one from the Market Place, Cambridge (Z 14809; Fig. 2) and two from Burwell Castle (37.39; Fig. 3), which seem to come from similar jugs. Green flecks, if present at all, are very sparse in these examples.

Of uncertain age, and similar material to the last, is a jug from King's College (Z 14788B; Plate II, and Fig. 4), which has a crudely drawn grotesque face on the front, with foliage at the side. The glaze is almost colourless, with green mottling. There is a similar fragment of a side of a jug from the Bird Bolt Hotel, illustrated in Fig. 5 and in the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, Vol. xi (1906), p. 440, fig. 47.

Very similar to one another are two jugs, a complete example unprovenanced (Z 14860; Plates III and IV) and a neck from King's College (Z 14788C; Fig. 6). The ware of these cannot really be differentiated from the previous examples, but they are thicker and the red colour is more vivid. The rims are coarse and rounded without much form, both have pinched-out lips and strap-handles with a central groove as on Z 14789. The unprovenanced jug is that already described by Mr Dunning

(*Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, Vol. XLIV, 1950, p. 49). The design is freer and coarser in execution than that on the larger jugs already mentioned. The foot is splayed and worked into a cable-pattern, perhaps by thumbing. The neck of

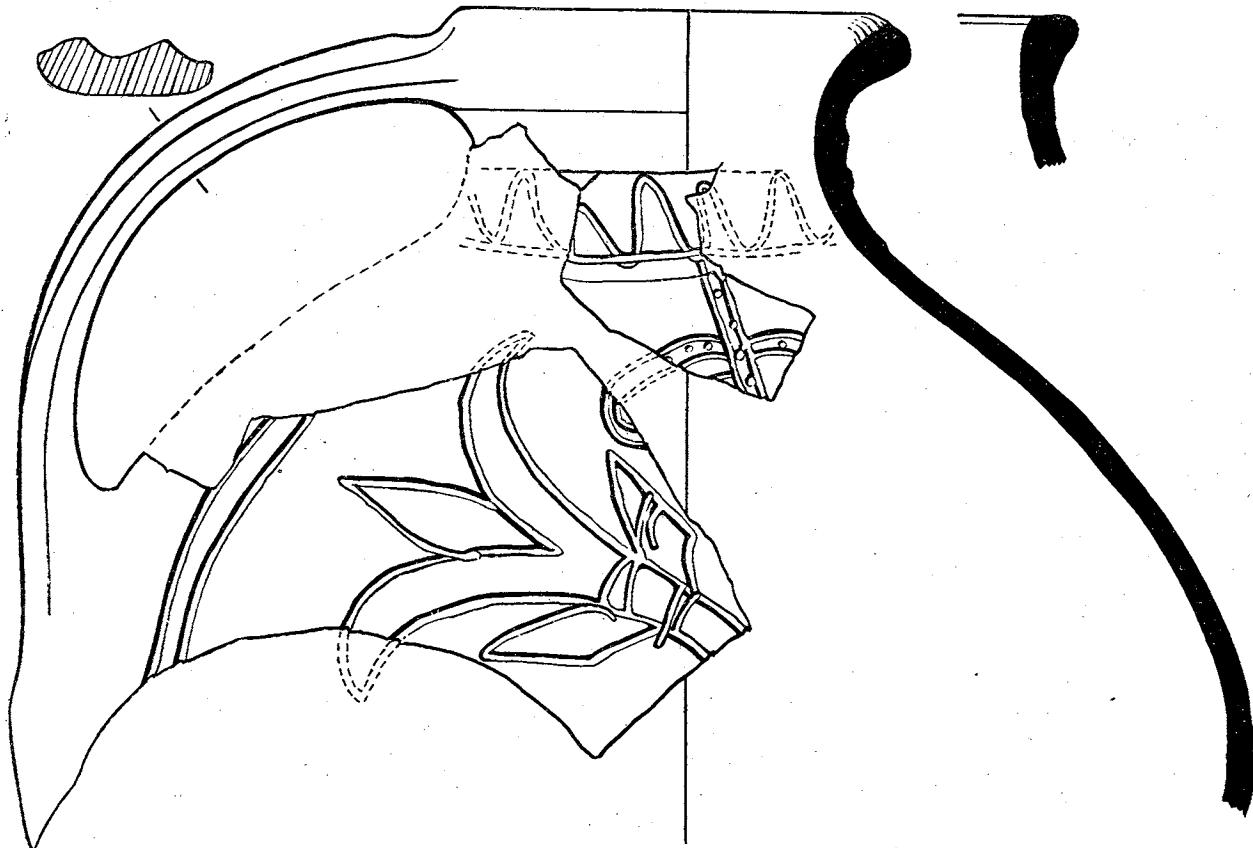


Fig. 1.

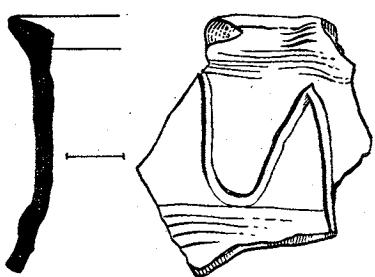


Fig. 2.

The above figures are half natural size.

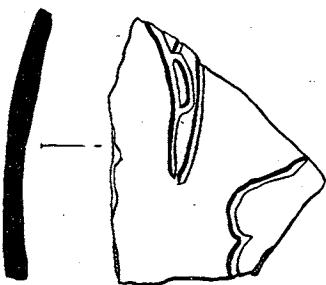


Fig. 3.

the jug from King's College (Fig. 6) has a design on an apron of slip on the side of the jug, instead of the front. It consists of a row of five narrow loops, of which only the top remains.

The next example, (Z 14807) from King's College, is part of a small narrow-necked carinated jug with tubular spout, which is apparently influenced by metal proto-



(Natural size)

PLATE III



(*Three-quarters natural size*)

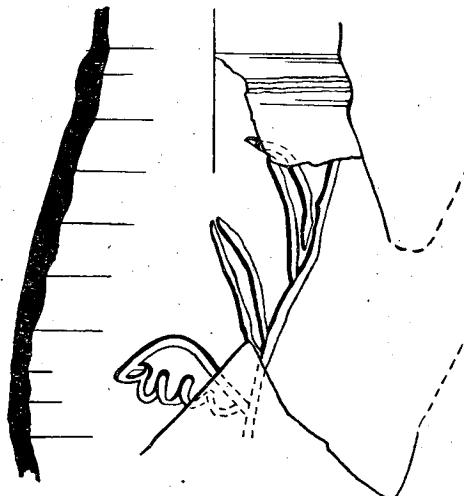


Fig. 4.

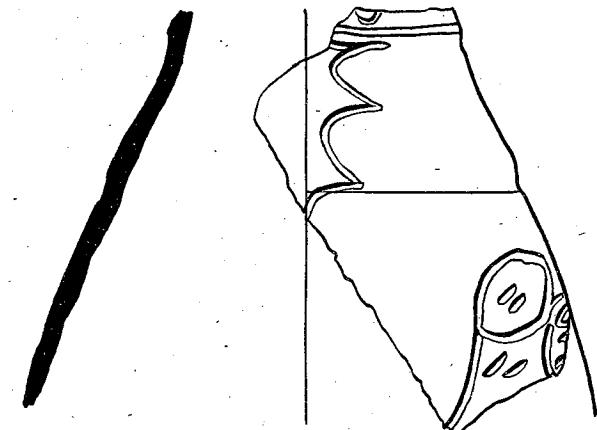


Fig. 5.

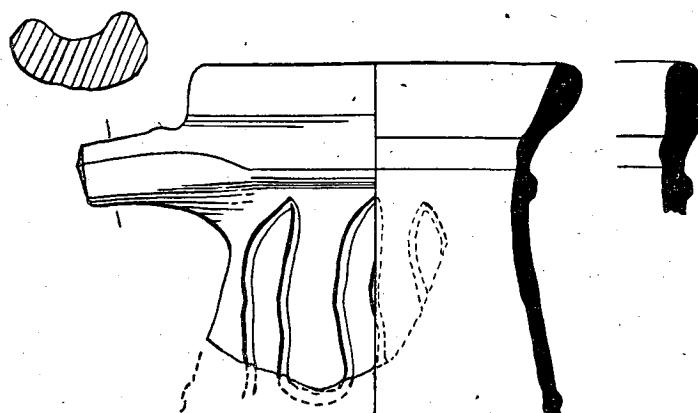


Fig. 6.

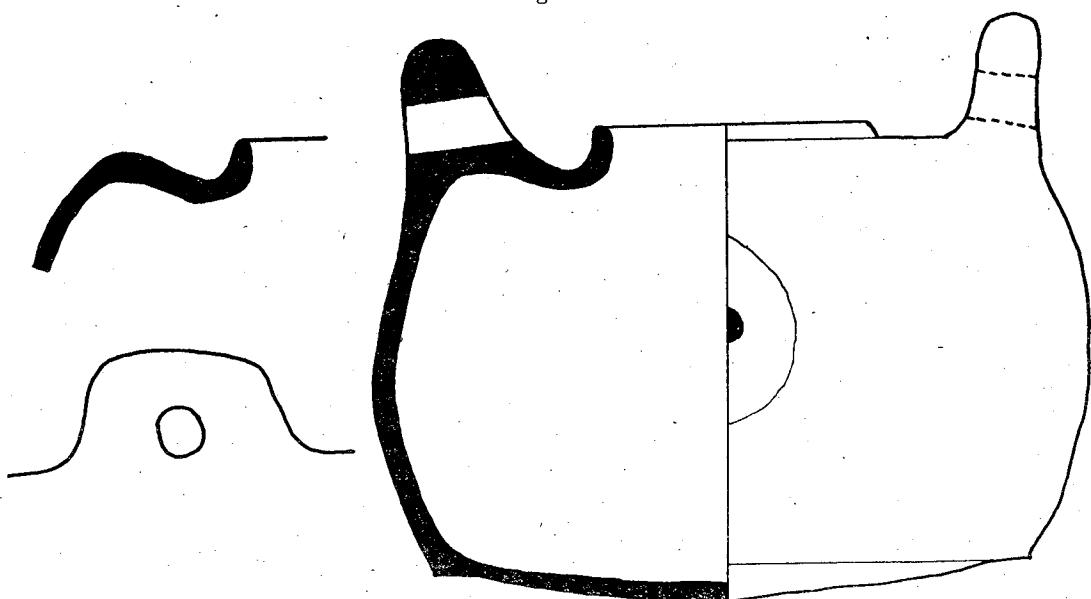


Fig. 7.

*All figures on this page are half natural size.*

types (Plates V and VI). At the top of the strap-handle there is a pair of flat projections similar to those to which the top of a tankard may be hinged. The spout is connected to the neck by a septum pierced with two or more holes. The upper part of this vessel is covered by a buff slip through which the design is scratched, and the whole of the surviving portion is glazed. The design on the body is divided into three zones consisting of waves, arcs and foliage while the handle is decorated with an angular wavy line filled with dots on one side.

Another fragment, (Z 14795) from Trinity Hall (Plate VII), comes from the upper part of a vessel of the same form as one from Trinity College (Z 14794; Fig. 7). The

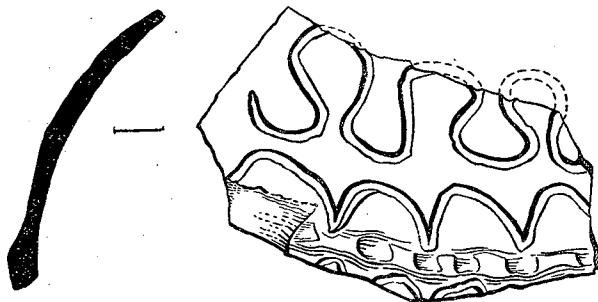


Fig. 8.

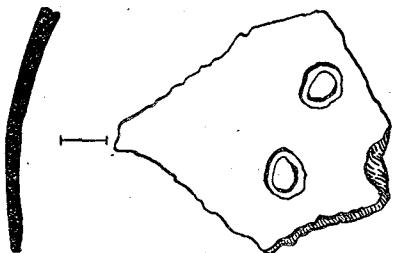


Fig. 9.

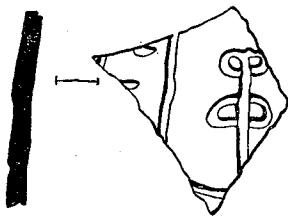


Fig. 10.

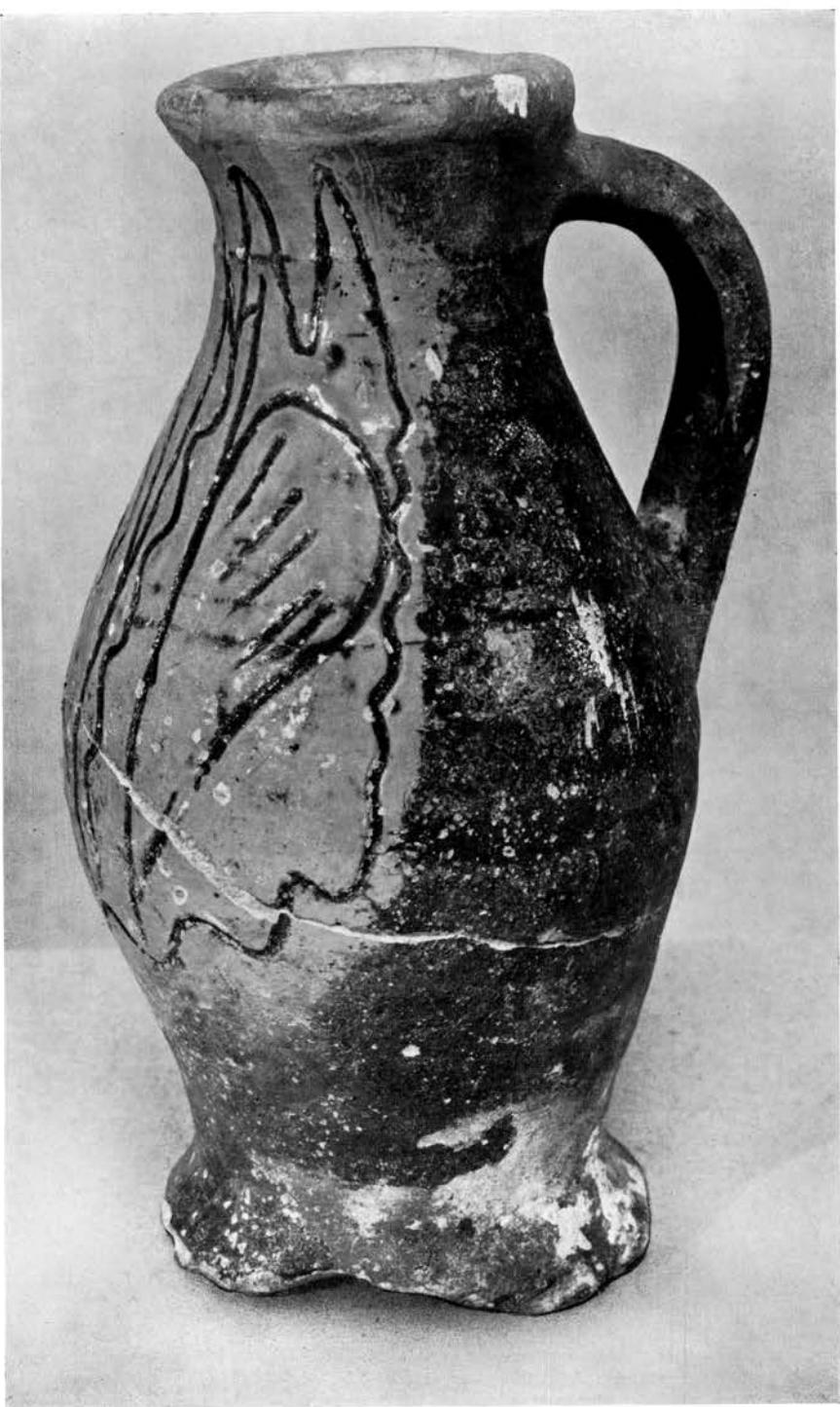
*The above figures are half natural size.*

latter is a green glazed pot with sagging base, a constricted mouth, a pair of pierced lugs on the shoulder for suspension and a tubular spout which has been lost. The Trinity Hall example consists of part of the shoulder, and a hollow internal flange which narrows the mouth. A pierced lug, on both sides of which is a crudely incised face, rises from the shoulder. The design on the flange consists of a series of loops forming the beard of the inner face and another group of loops.

A fragment from the Market Place (Z 14809; Fig. 8), possibly from a large jug, has a decoration of wavy lines, one engrailed and the other nebully. It has a cordon, shallowly notched and slipped only in the hollows. There are six other fragments from the Market Place (Z 14809), too small to group with any of the others, decorated with small circles and wavy lines (Figs. 9 and 10). The ware is fired to a blacker colour and the glazed slip has a greenish tinge.

The dating of these jugs is hard to fix exactly. It was suggested in the previous publication that some examples might be as early as the fourteenth century and this

PLATE IV



(*Three-quarters natural size*)

PLATE V



(Natural size)

PLATE VI



(Natural size)

PLATE VII



(Natural size)



(Natural size)

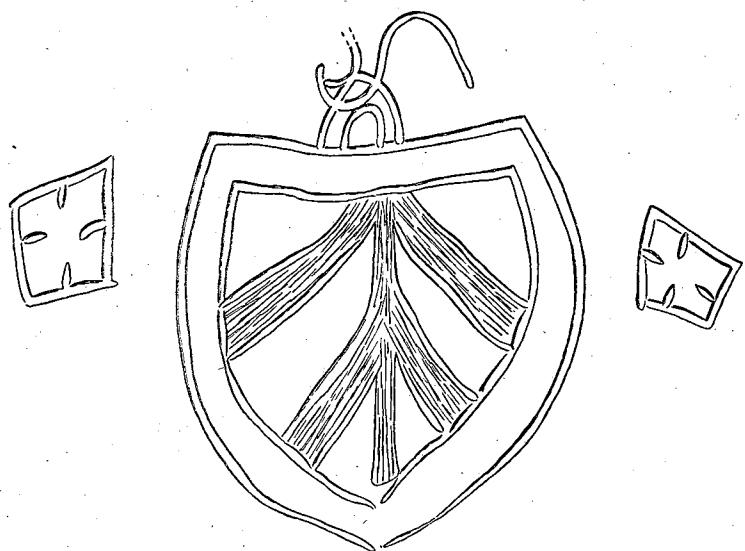


Fig. 11a.

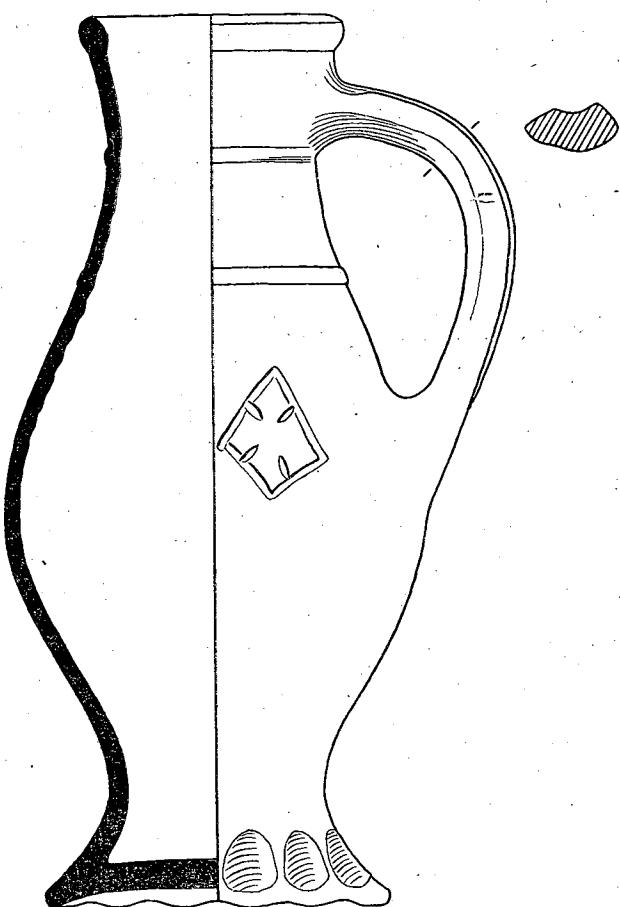


Fig. 11b.

might apply to the larger jugs (Z 14789 and Z 14788A). The ware, rim form and handles of these are very similar to those of a group of partly glazed red ware jugs of a well-defined East Anglian type, decorated with white painted foliage (Rackham, *English Medieval Pottery*, 1948, pl. 50). Sherds of this type of jug were found associated in the higher levels of Burwell Castle with sgraffito fragments and the rim of a late medieval bowl with everted rim in the same hard red ware (in the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology). This suggests a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century date for the group, which is also supported by the finding of a red ware jug with painted foliage together with a late medieval jug with expanded foot in a well at Fen Ditton in 1882 (Z 14857A, B); the latter is similar in shape to *London Museum Medieval Catalogue*, fig. 75-1.

There is also a striking similarity between these sgraffito and painted jugs and the typical late fourteenth- or fifteenth-century jugs in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, from local sites, with pedestal frilled bases (as *Lond. Mus. Med. Cat.* fig. 75-2). All have in common the hard red ware, deeply grooved handles, slight cordons and grooves round the neck and body, and a small offset at the junction of the shoulder and body.

Some of these features are also present on the metallic looking jug from King's College (Z 14807) which presumably belongs to the late fifteenth century. The curious pot from Trinity Hall (Z 14795) much resembles the fourteenth- or fifteenth-century type of cooking-pot with bifid rim (*Oxoniensia*, XIV, 1949, pp. 78-9).

The evidence at present available therefore suggests that the sgraffito jugs were being made during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The only other English example of this technique known outside Cambridgeshire is in the Canterbury Museum. Mr Dunning has kindly allowed us to publish his drawing and description of this jug (Fig. 11; see also Rackham, *op. cit.* p. 21 and pl. 59).

Royal Museum Canterbury no. 30. Fine hard light red ware jug, light red surface on handle side, buff slip on front. Shield and ornaments outlined in grooves cut through the buff slip, exposing the red ware. Mottled green glaze over design.

This jug shows all the usual features of the Cambridge examples. Its provenance is unknown, but it has been in the Canterbury collection for many years and is presumed to be a local find. It seems likely that this Canterbury jug was made in East Anglia and traded down to Kent. In earlier medieval times there is evidence that face-jugs were brought into Kent from East Anglia or the Midlands (at Stonar), while a few white painted East Anglian jugs of the type mentioned above are found in Kent. It is hoped to expand this question of trade at a later date.

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