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**The Anglo-Saxon pottery from Cuxton Cemetery,
Kent (ARC CXT 98)**

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1 INTRODUCTION

The pottery assemblage comprised three near-complete accessory vessels from graves.

2 VESSELS

Context 246: Wheel-turned 'Merovingian' bottle, 7th century

It has a uniform light grey fabric with slightly darker, smooth surfaces. The inclusions are sparse sub-angular quartz up to 0.5 mm. The vessel is decorated with three horizontal rows of rouletting around just above the waist, and has turning grooves on and below the neck. The rouletted decoration is quite typical, with the roller reversed on the lower of the topmost two rows, to give the impression of interlace. There are burnishing strokes on most of the surface, vertical above the waist and horizontal below it. The rim of the pot is entirely chipped away, with most of the damage appearing to have been done in antiquity.

Imported bottles such as these, which appear likely to have been made in northern France (Evison 1987, 94), are well-attested from Anglo-Saxon sites in Kent, where they occur mainly but not exclusively as accessory vessels in graves, and have been the subject of an extensive study by Evison (1979). They are rare finds at English sites outside Kent, and tend to occur singly, as at the barrow burial at Asthall in Oxfordshire (Evison 1974). For example, seven imported pots were noted at the Dover Buckland cemetery (Evison 1987, 94), six of which were bottles, and three of them were associated with objects of 7th-century date (one is dated after AD 650), the usual date for such pots. All were buried with children or juveniles.

Context 380: High-necked, hand-built jar, probably of 7th-century date

Dark reddish-brown fabric with dark brown to black surfaces. Dense chaff temper, with voids up to 5 mm. The whole of the outer surface apart from the base is lightly and evenly burnished. A small, broadly circular patch of surface of the pot on the girth has the surface worn away, possibly due to rubbing during transportation. The vessel is very finely potted, with a raised collar just below the neck. High-necked, relatively slender hand-built vessels such as these tend to be of 7th-century date (Myres 1977, 7-8 and figs 56-8). This vessel, in form terms, is very typical of late hand-built pots, but the raised collar is rather unusual. None of the high-necked vessels in the Myres corpus (ibid) have such decoration, although raised collars, often with slashing, are known on earlier Anglo-Saxon vessels (eg ibid. fig 221 no. 1592).

Context 381: Small jar, early-middle Saxon

Uniform black fabric with dark grey-brown, evenly burnished outer surface. Chaff-tempered, with moderate to dense organic voids up to 5 mm. The rim was largely damaged in antiquity.

The missing flakes from the outer surface of the body may have spalled during firing. The fabric and finish of this vessel are remarkably similar to those of the vessel from context 380, to the extent that they could easily have been made from the same batch of clay.

Plain jars such as this are notoriously difficult to date, lacking any distinctive form or decorative traits, and the vessel could have been made at any time during the 5th–7th centuries, though the similarities to the vessel from context 380 might suggest a similar date, in the 7th century.

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