

Two Medieval Pots

From Friday Street

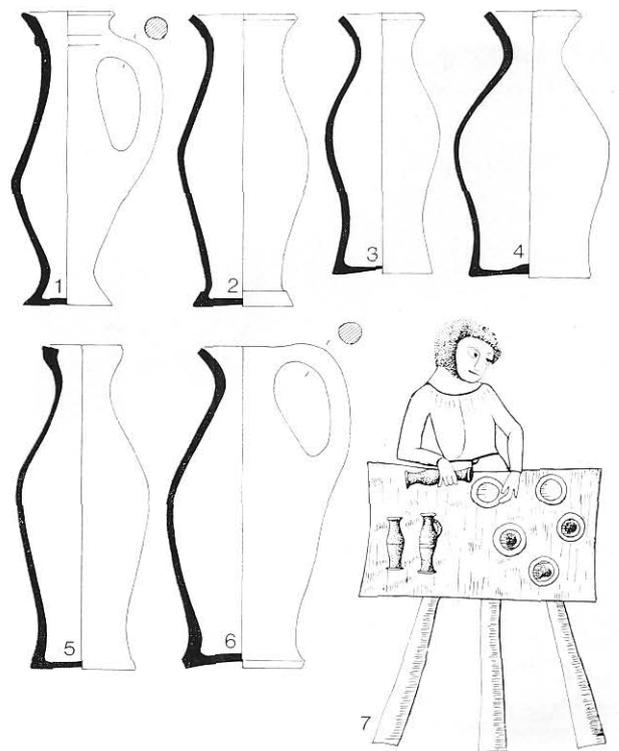
JAMES C. THORN

ACCORDING to C. Roach Smith, in 1845 adjoining St. Matthew's Church, Friday Street, medieval "coins of the early Edwards and of Henry III were found during the excavations together with earthen cups and other articles of the same period."¹ In 1856 the British Museum purchased the Roach Smith Collection which included a biconical jug and bottle (Nos. 1 and 2) which are labelled with a description of their location, the latter more adequately, stating that they were "found 12ft. deep in Friday Street among chalk walls, with it coins of Henry 3 and St. Edward III."² In Roach Smith's catalogue of his Collection published in 1854 the jug and bottle are described as being "found at the depth of thirteen feet, on the north side of Friday Street with pennies of Henry III and Edward I."³ In 1907 R. L. Hobson mentions that these pennies were not available with their items and considers the last description acceptable.⁴

Archaeological evidence of other jugs and bottles of the same size and type found in London are unmatched for the jug, although there was a squat example found in Southwark.⁵ In the Guildhall Museum there are examples of bottles found at 40 Basinghall Street (E.R. 799), London Wall No. 3 (M.IX.150), two unprovenanced examples Nos. 4

and 5 (M.IX.266? and 110) and another example with a rod handle in the London Museum Collection No. 6 (A.5115). In 1838 near the extreme boundary walls of Trinity College, Oxford, two bottles similar in shape to No. 5 and two large baluster jugs, one of which contained a coin of Henry III were found, but the original description is dubious and lacks detail.⁶ The bakehouse at Clarendon Palace contained examples similar in

1. C. Roach Smith, *Archaeol. J.* (1845) 253.
2. R. L. Hobson *British Museum Cat. English Pottery* (1903) items B11 and 12.
3. C. Roach Smith, *Catalogue of the Museum of London Antiquities* (1854) 114 nos. 583 and 4.
4. R. L. Hobson, "Medieval Pottery Found in England," *Archaeol. J.* 59 (1902) 7.
5. P. Norman and F. W. Reader, "Further Discoveries relating to Roman London," *Archaeologia* 63 (1912) pl. 67.
6. R. L. S. Bruce Mitford, "The Archaeology of the Bodleian Library," *Oxoniensia* 4 (1939) 122.



Jugs (4). Cook taken from Luttrell Psalter c. 1340.

size and shape to No. 5 found in a 14th century undisturbed stratum.⁷

In illuminated manuscripts similar jugs and bottles are shown in use, for example in the Luttrell Psalter, painted c.1340, depicting the preparation of food in the kitchen (No. 7) where the jug and bottle are considered by some to represent a cruet.

To consider the numismatic implication of the Friday Street coins — pennies issued by Henry III were of the "short cross" series before 1247, after which they were replaced by the "long cross" pennies. In the early years of Edward I's reign between 1272 and 1278, pennies were still issued with a HENRICUS legend. After 1279 a new style of coinage was issued by Edward I, which was adopted by later monarchs. The continuous reigns of Edwards I-III produced a large series of pennies which only differ by slight variations of the king's portrait, his crown and the lettering used. Roach Smith's descriptions of the pennies only indicate their reigns, rather than their time in circulation. This may be indicated only by coin hoards found in the British Isles.⁸ Henry III pennies of the "long

7. T. Borenius and J. Charlton, "Clarendon Palace: an interim report," *Antiq. J.* 16 (1936) 76-7 fig. 5.

cross" series were found associated with pennies of Edward I and II at Boyton, Carsphairn, Newport and York in hoards deposited after 1307 and between the years c. 1320-30. It is also associated with pennies of Edwards I-III in the Beaumont hoard deposited c. 1360 and in the Montrave hoard deposited c. 1356, which contained Henry III pennies of the "short cross" series. The HENRICUS pennies produced by Edward I are as yet not represented in coin hoards but Edward I-III pennies are found with coins of Henry VI in the Diss, Dungarvan, Forgandenny, Guisborough and Hampshire coin hoards, deposited c. 1428 until after 1471?

To form a conclusion, the numismatic evidence suggests that the Friday Street jug and bottle have a date margin of 1279-1360. This is based on the last date of circulation of Henry III pennies and the first minting of Edward I's new style of coinage.

Acknowledgements are due to John Cherry, British Museum, Ralph Merrifield, Guildhall Museum and Brian Spencer, London Museum for putting objects in their collections at my disposal.

8. J. D. A. Thompson, *Inventory of British Coin Hoards* (1956).

Excavations at Christ Church, Newgate

THE EXCAVATIONS were recently undertaken inside the shell of Wren's church of Christ Church, Newgate Street, gutted in the blitz, to uncover something of its complex history before the eastern end is demolished to make way for a new road. Wren's building replaced the great church erected under royal patronage in the early 14th century by the Franciscans, or Grey Friars; after Henry VIII dissolved the friary, the church was used as a warehouse for several years before being reinstated in 1547, robbed of its fine monuments, to serve as a parish church, until it was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666.

The excavations, directed by Tony Johnson for Guildhall Museum, have shown that Wren economised by using the foundations of the medieval church to support the rather smaller new building and employing in his own work a great deal of stone salvaged from the ruins.

Wren's rebuilding, during which the floor-level was raised considerably, was not the first alteration; the original floor had been torn up and replaced with plain tiles in the early 17th century, while crude arches had been inserted between the great octagonal foundations of the medieval columns, perhaps to support the base of the gallery added in 1628.

Gone also were the medieval tombs, which would have included that of Queen Margaret — wife of Edward I—who in about 1301 bought this land, part of which, the excavation showed, was occupied at the time by a heap of rubbish 8-10 feet high, and presented it to the Friars to build their church on.

The excavation has now ended, having been confined to the area and depth directly affected by road development, for the Open Space planned for the rest of the area will preserve not only the remains of Wren's church above ground, but those of the Grey Friars' church below ground.