

Documentary Evidence and the Medieval Pottery Industry

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EARLY in my study of the medieval pottery industry it became clear to me that, contrary to general belief, a reasonable body of documentary evidence bearing on the industry had survived, but that it would take some years to assemble and interpret. There is no corpus of documents from which to begin, for surviving evidence is not only scattered in a very wide variety of documents, but is also dispersed geographically in a number of local record repositories. It might seem sensible to delay publication until a larger proportion of this evidence has been studied, or at least to avoid analysis and generalization at this stage; but pottery and potters are of interest to archaeologists here and now, and there is nothing written on the industry save assemblages of unrelated facts, often strung together from widely different periods. An effort has, therefore, been made to assemble the material so far available into a coherent pattern. Since this is the first time that this has been done, the result will probably require drastic modification in a few years' time. If the interim report here presented stimulates others to prove it wrong, this paper will have achieved at least one of its purposes.¹

NOMENCLATURE

THE first difficulty encountered in the documentary evidence is one of nomenclature. During the middle ages pots were made of a number of substances: wood, clay, leather, precious and base metal. At different times and in different places the proportion of one material to another varied. Wood, probably the most commonly used material at all times, seems also to have been the substance in which plates were most frequently made before the 16th century. Metal increased in popularity and common use from about the middle of the 13th century. The very wealthy, like the king, might have 'deep silver dishes, after the fashion of wooden dishes, to hold fowls',² and the drinking vessels of the nobility were normally also of precious metal. The common man, if he could afford a metal pot at all, had to content himself with brass, copper or pewter. The spread of such metal cooking-pots among the peasantry during the course of the 14th century can be traced by their increasing use as heriots and as pledges for appearance in court. Priced entirely by weight, they were mended again and again even in the greater households. By 1301, chattels valued for lay subsidy in Colchester show that 44 per cent. of the taxable population owned one or more.³

¹ I am greatly indebted to Mr. J. G. Hurst for constant help with the archaeological problems raised by this paper and to Mr. D. W. Crossley for many helpful suggestions.

² *Cal. Liberate Rolls*, III, 6.

³ *Rot. Parl.*, I, 243 ff.

These were brass pots, but at the same time pewter, too, was, coming into more general use. In 1336 the bursar of Durham Cathedral Priory bought eighty clay pitchers for the feast of St. Cuthbert, but two years later pitchers bought there for the same feast were of pewter.⁴ By 1377 a fair stock of pewter vessels was held by a free tenant at Hatton⁵ though they were not yet among chattels listed for customary tenants there. Variety of material used for making pots is as evident in the early period, when sites, particularly in the west country, often lack any clay pottery at all, as it was at the end of the middle ages, when the yeoman of the royal pitcher house had in his keeping 'pootes and cuppis of silver, pottes of leather, tankards of yerthe, ashin cups . . . and all the stuff of the office'.⁶

Unfortunately the terms to describe this diverse table and kitchen ware were common to all materials, and the words used for the various craftsmen making them can be equally ambiguous, though *discus*, *perapsis* and *salsarius* or *salsata* seem seldom to have been made from clay, unless the fact is stated. The turner or maker of wooden vessels is distinguishable by name but his products are not. The words *crocker* and *figulus* or *figulator* seem to be restricted to the clay potter, but these forms are less common than *pottarius*, *ollarius* or *ollator*, which are applied alike to metal and to clay potters. Even a bell-founder, since his metal consists of much the same mixture as that used for metal pots, may be termed a potter, as in 14th-century Nottingham or 15th-century York.⁷ Although this verbal ambiguity is tiresome, it can often be overcome by context: a metal-worker does not need an annual licence to take clay and sand, though he could require both for the occasional process of bell-founding.⁸ Sometimes the words are qualified, as *olla lutea* or *picherii lutei*; occasionally the man himself is called an earth potter. Experience suggests that in a town a potter must be considered to be a metal-worker unless there is proof to the contrary, while in a village he can be assumed to be a clay-worker in the absence of other evidence.

PERSONAL AND PLACE-NAMES

The next question is the extent to which the surname Potter, or le Potter, found in a document, can be taken to indicate the presence of a clay-potting industry in a given vicinity. To some extent the answer depends on the period at which the name occurs, and on whether it is found in town or village. Up to the end of the 12th century the surname is still an occupational name and indicates a working potter. In the following century, though there are occasional exceptions,⁹ the name usually indicates that the bearer is a full- or part-time potter, but in the course of this century he is increasingly joined by other potters who do not bear

⁴ J. T. Fowler (ed.), *Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham*, I (Surtees Soc., c, 1898), 533. The clay pitchers cost 3s., the price of the pewter ones is worn away.

⁵ W. F. Mumford, 'Terciars on the estates of Wenlock Priory', *Trans. Shropshire Archaeol. Soc.*, LVIII (1965), 73.

⁶ A. R. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV* (1959), p. 183.

⁷ F. Collins (ed.), *Freemen of York* (Surtees Soc., xcvi, 1896), p. 218.

⁸ John de Housom of York (see below, p. 112) may have been a bell-founder (*V.C.H., Yorks.*, III (1913), 292).

⁹ E.g., Simon Pottere of Bessington (Wilts.) was a butcher in 1242.

the craft surname. By the middle of the 14th century these incomers heavily outnumber the descendants of the old potters. But because the industry tends always to have a strong hereditary element, the surname is still found among working potters even at the end of the 15th century. Its presence in taxation rolls as late as the end of the 14th century has, in practice, proved a useful clue to the existence of a local industry, later verified by field-work or by evidence from further documents.

A very high correlation is found between the presence of the Potter surname in taxation returns or other records and the existence of field-names containing the potter or crocker elements (potterkeld, pottersgarth, crokkerfurlong, etc.) either in antiquity or as survivals on the modern map. Where the two classes of evidence coincide, they form a useful indication to the field-worker, and may give a fair idea of the distribution of the medieval industry, but they share the disadvantage that they demonstrate nothing more than the bare fact that potters once worked in a given neighbourhood. To establish when, for how long, in what circumstances, and in what numbers, a different kind of documentary evidence is necessary, and it is this that tends to be both scattered and fragmentary. That the evidence should be so dispersed is partly due to the lack of organization within the medieval industry, and partly to the relative poverty and insignificance of its individual members. Although it is true that only printed records have been consulted for the larger towns, no potters' guilds have been found that have not, on investigation, proved to be composed of metal-workers; nor have any clay potters been found among municipal office-holders. It is significant that in the late 14th-century poll-tax returns, where a large number of trades are given, not only has the clay potter not appeared as such in the three counties so far examined (FIGS. 25-7), but potters whose names are known from other documents have been found assessed at the lowest rate for man and wife, the fourpence paid by the mass of the peasantry, rather than at the sixpenny rate paid by most small craftsmen. From the economic obscurity implicit in this low rating stem most of the difficulties of the subject.

THE PRE-CONQUEST AND EARLY NORMAN INDUSTRY

The further back in time, the smaller the proportion of potteries that it has been possible to identify. Place-names apart, and even these are few, no documentary evidence whatsoever has been found for the pre-conquest industry in this country; yet a number of pre-conquest kilns have been excavated¹⁰ and the evidence of pottery-types and their distribution shows that many more must have existed than have been found, particularly in eastern England. If, however, the few scraps of evidence in Domesday Book are considered in the light of later documentary evidence, and in the light of our archaeological knowledge of pottery in the late 11th and early 12th centuries, it is possible to deduce, even if very tentatively, some idea of what was happening in the Saxo-Norman period.

¹⁰ These are Torksey, Lincs. (M. W. Barley in *Antiq. J.*, XLIV, 1964, 175 ff.), Thetford, Norf. (excavated in the Saxon town by G. M. Knocker and by B. K. Davison) and Stamford. The pre-conquest kilns in Ipswich of middle Saxon date lie outside the scope of this article, but kilns making Thetford ware have also been found in the town.

The archaeological picture is of wheel-made pottery, ultimately of continental origin, over much of eastern England, spreading gradually, if somewhat unevenly, westwards. Though wheel-thrown pottery had reached both Chester and Hereford well before the conquest, clay pottery did not, apparently, come into use in any form at all in inland Wales or in upland Devonshire much before the 12th century. Pottery made on a slow wheel was found at Cheddar, but elsewhere in the west country coarse, hand-made pottery was the rule.¹¹ It is suggested however, in view of the 1085 return for Hasfield (Glos.) discussed below, that the manufacture of even this hand-made pottery had reached a certain stage of industrial development, in that it was no longer a non-specialist occupation. In eastern England pre-conquest kilns have been excavated in Thetford (Norf.), Torksey and Stamford (Lincs.) and Ipswich (Suff.). Though the kilns found in any one town are not necessarily contemporary, the amount of pottery in circulation suggests that more than one potter was at work in each case. It is clear too that by the 11th century several traditions of manufacture were already developed, differing not only in the type of clay in use, but involving also a use of fabrics diverging more fundamentally from one to another than would be necessitated by local differences in clay. For this activity in eastern England there is hardly a shred of documentary evidence for periods earlier than the 12th century.

Farther west there is a curious inversion of this position. No kiln has been excavated or located, yet there is documentary evidence of thriving little industrial communities soon after the conquest as far west as Gloucester. There are three Domesday manors for which potters are returned, Bladon (Oxon.), Hasfield (Glos.) and Westbury (Wilts.).¹² The fact that there are only three such returns need be due to nothing more than the capriciousness of the survey, for potters are ignored altogether in eastern England in places where kilns have been excavated, and in areas like Hampshire and Yorkshire, where the existence of good wheel-thrown pottery of a suitable date renders their presence likely. The three Domesday returns all show potters at work in groups and imply some form of elementary organization, for they are block payments and in two cases the number of potters is not even indicated. Though this sort of arrangement is more common on the continent, there are two later English examples both of which have features which suggest a possible early origin. A group at Nether Stowey (Somerset)¹³ paid 20s. in 1275 for the right to make pot as they had done *ab antiquo*, and at Midhurst (Suss.)¹⁴ the burgesses made a joint payment of *potteresgavel*, where the Saxon word-form used may again imply an early industry. At Bladon, the most easterly of the Domesday entries, the *ollaria* or *pottaria* paid 10s. a year, that is something over 8 per cent. of the total value of the manor (two mills, for comparison, were worth 14s.). At Hasfield five potters paid 3s. 8d., or about 8½d. a head, while at Westbury the potters paid the very large sum of 20s. a year.

It is suggested that a reasonable interpretation of these remarkably high

¹¹ I owe the information in this summary largely to Mr. J. G. Hurst.

¹² *Domesday Book*, Bladon f. 156, Hasfield f. 168, Westbury f. 65.

¹³ *Rot. Hundred.*, II (Record Comm.), 127.

¹⁴ *V.C.H., Sussex*, II (1907), 251.

figures may be arrived at by examining the arrangements in a semi-industrialized hamlet in Longbridge Deverill (Wilts.)¹⁵ on the estates of the abbot of Glastonbury (Poteria in a survey of 1234, Crockerton thirty years later). It is true that the rents known for this pottery are of considerably later date, and that in 1234 they were spoken of as *de novo constituti*,¹⁶ but it is well known that such phrases tend to persist in medieval documents for very long periods, and the presence among the half-virgate holders of a Richard 'Pottarius', whose land was acquired before 1192, suggests that the industry was already in existence by the second half of the 12th century at least. There were twenty-five tenements in Poteria, all cotsetlands of four acres or less (TABLE I, p. 123). The holders owed boon works and various small services, but no week works, and there was a different group of cottars on the manor, separately listed, from among whom were drawn the herds, smiths, haywards and foresters.¹⁷ Of the Poteria tenants, two were millers, and the remaining twenty-three were entitled to make pot if they so wished. If they made pots for a full year, they were to pay 7d., if for half a year, 3½d. Although in two instances the figures do not quite tally, a comparison between the names and payments of those listed as taking wood in that year and those paying for the right to make pots suggests that this tax was, in fact, a payment for fuel. In addition to the 7d. payment, whatever it covered, the cottars had to pay 4d. for clay, if they took it from the lord's land, and 2d., if they took it from their own. If the Poteria tenants were to work the full year, and all to take clay from the lord's land, the payment per head would amount to 11d. and the sum of their payments to 21s. 3d., which is of the same order as the Domesday payment at Westbury, some six miles to the north in the same county.

It is not suggested that Domesday Westbury and early 13th-century Poteria necessarily had the same sort of organization, but rather that the 11th-century rents at both Bladon and Westbury can best be explained as the sum of a considerable number of small rents after the later fashion, an interpretation that is supported by the nature of the contemporary Hasfield return (TABLE II, p. 123). Similar groups of early potters may perhaps be inferred from place-name evidence at Potterton (Yorks., W.R.) and Potterne (Wilts.), both so called in 1085, and at Marchington (Staffs.) where there is an early *pottereslege*.¹⁸ There is no evidence to show whether it was wheel-made or hand-made pottery, or both, that each of these early groups produced. Pre-conquest wheel-thrown pot seems largely to have been a town product, since all the kilns so far found have been associated with towns, while hand-made pottery, particularly in the west, seems to have been made by groups working in the countryside or in woodland. Potterton, which was never more than a hamlet, could be an exception to this pattern, but it may have acquired its name at an earlier period, when hand-made pot was current in Yorkshire. The wheel-thrown pottery known as northern

¹⁵ C. J. Elton (ed.), *Rentalia et Custumaria Michaelis de Ambresbury* (Somerset Rec. Soc., v, 1891), p. 141.

¹⁶ B.M. Add. MS. 17450 shows that the *dovo* of the published version is a misprint. The original presents no difficulty.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.* in note 15, pp. 138-40.

¹⁸ W. de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonum*, III (1893), no. 890 (A.D. 951). It should not be impossible to locate this pottery, which occupied a clearing in Nedewood, from the boundaries given in the charter. Professor G. Barrow has drawn my attention to a large order of pots from Staffordshire in 1204 (*Pipe Roll 7 John*, 160); at 1s. 2d. per hundred these might be either wood or clay.

Stamford ware¹⁹ would also require explanation, since the only town which coincides with an outcrop of the Upper Estuarine clay from which it was made is Lincoln, and there the later pottery is in a quite different fabric. The early wheel-thrown pottery of Hampshire might be expected to fall into the eastern group associated with town rather than countryside, but no evidence relating to its manufacture has yet been found.²⁰

Towards the end of the 12th century individual potters begin to be identifiable: men such as Siward of Glentworth (Lincs.),²¹ whose services were granted to the Gilbertines of Cantley in 1172, Alexander of Navestock,²² whose holding is described early in the 13th century as *de vetero assarto*, John the Pottere of Chingford (Essex),²³ or the potter of Bentley (Derbys.),²⁴ who held two acres near Duffield late in the 12th century. Evidence for these comes, as might be expected at this date, entirely from monastic records. A novel type of small industrial community can be seen in Worcester city about the year 1187.²⁵ Six tenants of the bishop owed 8d. each for potting clay and two pots each week for the use of the bishop—some 600 pots a year. Such a payment, partly in kind, is the first to be recognized among potters in this country, though it was a not-infrequent arrangement in France at a somewhat later date,²⁶ and has been reported as far afield as Poland in the later middle ages.²⁷ The nature of the industry in Worcester implies full-time potting, and if this is possible in Worcester at such a date, it must certainly have been possible in the more highly-developed eastern half of the country. It is important, because such a pottery, under direct episcopal patronage, suggests one of the means whereby industrial processes may have moved westwards.

ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EARLY POTTER

Though some of the potters who can be identified before the end of the 13th century held only a messuage and a curtilage, the majority were cottagers with from 1½ to 5 acres of land, owing only light labour services, which would leave them free to engage in part-time, or even full-time, work. Early rentals or custumals of appropriate date are rare, and the appearance of potters in them is even more rare, but the bones of the early potter settlements may be seen through later accretions in manorial surveys as late as the 14th or 15th centuries. An example from Harlow (Essex) will serve as demonstration. William Clerk and John Hubbard, potters there in a survey of 1431, held respectively 33½ and 23½ acres.²⁸

¹⁹ Northern Stamford ware echoes the shapes of pottery from the Stamford region. For a discussion of its place of origin see G. C. Dunning in D. B. Harden (ed.), *Dark-Age Britain: Studies presented to E. T. Leeds* (1956), p. 230.

²⁰ Winchester ware, identified by M. Biddle; see note by J. G. Hurst in *Archaeol. J.*, cxiix (1962), 187–90.

²¹ F. M. Stenton (ed.), *Charters relating to Gilbertine Houses* (Lincs. Rec. Soc., xviii, 1922), p. 85.

²² W. H. Hale (ed.), *Domesday Book of St. Pauls* (Camden Soc., lxxix, 1858), p. 78.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²⁴ R. R. Darlington (ed.), *The Cartulary of Darley Abbey* (1945), I, 229.

²⁵ M. Hollins (ed.), *The Red Book of Worcester* (Worcs. Historical Soc., 1934), pp. 37–8.

²⁶ E.g., *Annuaire des cinq départements de la Normandie* (1952), p. 48.

²⁷ E. B. Fryde in *Engl. Historical Rev.*, lxxii (1957), 527.

²⁸ Essex Record Office (henceforward cited as E.R.O.), D/DES, M. 67.

The constitution of these lands is given in detail. There is no nucleus of virgate or half-virgate, but both tenancies consist of agglomerations of small parcels of land, often lying in Potterstreet, a hamlet of Harlow. Among William's holdings were $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres, for which three successive tenancies were given and of which two are explicitly described as potters' tenancies. Another of his acres once belonged to William Bretagne, potter. John Hubbard had a messuage and $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres in Potterstreet which he had acquired from Hubert Herde, potter, who had it from Richard Lok, potter, and a further 2 acres lately belonged to Maurice Potter; and so it goes on, small holding after small holding, in the area whose name suggests that it was originally a small community of the type of the Crockerton hamlet. The process of accumulating these small potterlands into larger tenancies can be seen in the *admissions* in the Harlow court rolls of the later 14th century.²⁹ The potters, it would seem, though initially holding only a cottage and a few acres, were favourably placed to take advantage of an easy land market.

A further example comes from Codicote (Herts.),³⁰ where Pottercroft and its adjacent Wellcroft were to be found among the *coumbelands*, three- to five-acre plots held freely for a small money rent. In 1284 Robert the Potter held one of these, and Stephen the Potter a messuage and an acre in the same vicinity.³¹ By 1332 the men with the potter surname had moved elsewhere in the village, but the character of their holdings suggests that they were still potters. Possibly the clay of the original assarts was by that time worked out. In Cowick (Yorks., W. R.) $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of sandland and an acre of clayland, which changed hands several times among the 14th-century potters, may have had a similar origin;³² from the first, Cowick potters paid for taking both clay and sand.

Although the potter of the earlier middle ages is characteristically a cottager with a few acres of land (TABLE III, p. 123), exceptions can be found at least as early as the beginning of the 13th century. By 1279 the potters of New Woodstock had amassed a fair amount of property in the borough, and have every appearance of modest prosperity. If the 400 cups bought when the king was there in 1267 are of clay,³³ and the price makes this just possible, then they had a ready market in the adjacent royal palace. At Longbridge Deverill (Wilts.) in 1234 two of the potter cotsetlands were held by Seilde and Goldeneke, who were also virgate holders. Neither appears among those taking clay in the year of the survey, and the cotsetlands may have been let to sub-tenants. But the possibility cannot be ruled out that even by that date prosperous potters may have begun to invest their profits in land, perhaps to abandon the industry, as Cowick potters were to do at a much later date.

THE INDUSTRY AFTER 1250

By the middle of the 13th century there is a change in the character of medieval pottery. Although most pots were still plain and utilitarian, the ability to

²⁹ *Ibid.*, m. 1 and m. 4.

³⁰ A. E. Levett, *Studies in Manorial History* (1938), p. 346.

³¹ B.M. Cotton MS. Tiberius E. vi; Codicote Court Book, 12 Edw. I.

³² Sheffield City Lib., SCR. 28, 7 Ric. II.

³³ *Cal. Lib. Rolls*, v, 256. The cups cost 4s. 6d., and at 1s. $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per hundred may have been of wood.

produce highly decorated, glazed wares became general over England for the following hundred years or so. To summarize the facts very briefly, it may be said that most excavated kilns, whether in town or country, have produced some highly decorated pots during this period. The proportion of these, like the artistic and technical standard attained, vary from kiln to kiln. Though a few decorative motifs are confined to a single region, most are found over the whole country, but with more or less marked regional variations on the common themes.³⁴ At the same time there is a multiplication of the types of pot and of the range of fabrics in use. The question that must concern us is the extent to which, if at all, this change in the characteristics of the pottery is to be ascribed to changes in the scale, organization or personnel of the industry as it appears in the documents.

It must be said at once that not enough of the very scattered evidence has been examined for any decisive answer to be possible. Though changes can be observed, it is far from certain that these are general. The first impression is that the scale of the industry has increased; that there are groups of potters working in more places than had been the case earlier and that there were a great many more potters working either singly or in pairs in places where there had previously been no potters. But it is also true that survival of manorial documents—accounts, court rolls or surveys—are more frequent from the late 13th century onwards. It is impossible therefore not to suspect that the apparent rise in numbers is in some measure due to the fact that potteries become easier to locate. Yet some increase there must have been. The general rise in population in the course of the 12th and 13th centuries meant both larger markets and more working potters, though it would not necessarily increase the number of pots used by any one family. That there was, indeed, some extension of the industry at this time can be demonstrated by the occurrence of one type of place-name change, the addition of the prefix 'Potter' to an existing village name (TABLE IV, p. 124). It must be remembered that there were many other places, Harlow (Essex), Cowick (Yorks., W.R.), Brill (Bucks.) or Ringmer (Suss.), to give a few examples, where half a dozen or more potters were working during this period, yet the village never acquired the potter prefix. Nor would it be expected in the many villages up and down the country where there were normally only one or two potters.

DURATION OF THE INDUSTRY

Once an industry was established, it tended to last a very long time in the same place (TABLE VI, p. 124), sometimes for several centuries or more. There were, of course, exceptions to this tendency. A community of potters thirteen strong was wiped out by the Black Death at Hanley (Worcs.).³⁵ Although subsequent surveys have survived for Hanley, there was no revival of the payment for potterclay, and no sign that the industry was ever restarted. This contrasts with the pottery at Ringmer (Suss.),³⁶ where pestilence killed off the potters on

³⁴ The regional variations of one type of anthropomorphic decoration are discussed in *Med. Archaeol.*, x (1966), 160-2.

³⁵ *Cal. Inq. Post Mortem*, ix, 330.

³⁶ In 1457 no clay payment was made because the potters were dead (Lambeth Palace Estate Documents, 1302) but in 1485 there were again seven working (*ibid.*, 1311).

more than one occasion, but in a few years others are found paying the clay rent for pot-making. A small pottery at Thorner (Yorks., W.R.) ceased in 1358,³⁷ when a 6d. payment for clay lapsed, because, as the account roll says, 'nobody wants it'. The name of the potter who had paid for clay was never given, so that it is impossible to say whether the Potters and Potemen, families which survived in the village for at least another hundred years, were involved in the industry in the mid 14th century. The payment ceased at a time when land was readily available, and the potter may simply have abandoned what can only have been a small-scale industry in favour of acquiring good agricultural land.³⁸ There are indications in several places that an adequate holding of land was preferred to the hazards of potting at any date before the 15th century. An example from Longbridge Deverill is that of Richard 'Pottarius', a half-virgate holder in the 1234 survey. He inherited the land some time before 1192 *de jure antecessorum suorum*.³⁹ He was presumably not a direct heir, for he is the only villager of whom this formula is used, and he took the trouble to obtain a charter of confirmation. With this name at such a date he had almost certainly been a working potter, but he did not continue in the trade, for his name does not appear among the tenants of Poteria, or among those taking wood or clay.

In spite of the long life of most potteries, it has proved difficult to bridge the gap between the early potting communities and those of the later 13th and 14th centuries, save possibly at Bladon. Here, it will be remembered, 10s. was paid in 1085, which it has been suggested probably indicates some dozen potters. The area produced good clay, for there was a possible early kiln at Cassington to the south,⁴⁰ and another, probably of medieval date, some four miles to the west, in the forest of Wychwood; but the Bladon industry is more likely to have been the predecessor of the pottery at New Woodstock. It is said in the Hundred Rolls⁴¹ that Henry II founded the town on waste ground outside the park, a credible position for the early potters. In 1279 there were four possible potters in Woodstock: Agnes Siber, who rented a kiln for a penny a year, William le Pottare, who had a cottage for a halfpenny, but who might be merely a descendant of the earlier potters, Adam Beneyth, who rented not only a kiln, but two workshops, two stalls or shops and a number of small parcels of land in the borough, and Richard Mahurdin, whose messuage is described as next to the workshop. In Adam's workshops and stalls there was room for several assistants, and he must have worked on a fair scale, with a ready market, both in the new borough and in the adjacent royal residence. The number of small tenancies held by both Adam and Richard looks like an anticipation of the accumulation of potters' lands into the hands of a few prospering workers that has been shown at Harlow a century later. However that may be, a comparison between the two columns in TABLE III (p. 123) suggests that there was no great change in the sort of men who were making pottery in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, and those who were making

³⁷ Leeds City Lib., Mexborough Collection, 32 Edw. III.

³⁸ I owe this suggestion to Mr. D. W. Crossley.

³⁹ *Op. cit.* in note 15, p. 134.

⁴⁰ *Med. Archaeol.*, VI-VII (1962-3), 1 ff.

⁴¹ *Rot. Hund.*, II, 839. The rental is given *ibid.*, 841.

highly decorated pottery in the following hundred years. The samples are small, largely because it is difficult to get precise information about the circumstances of the innumerable small potters like the forest potters of Brill (Bucks.) or Knaresborough (Yorks., W.R.), or those working on small assarts or marginal land like the potters of Baildon (Yorks., W.R.) or of Upper Heaton (Yorks., W.R.). Often they are sub-tenants, and manorial records therefore disregard them; most of them, too, either escape taxation altogether, or, if they no longer bear the trade surname, are hidden among the mass of the undifferentiated peasantry.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE LATER FOURTEENTH CENTURY

After about 1350 pottery tended to become plainer and more standardized. Not only are the highly decorated jugs no longer made but there is a noticeable and fairly general decline in technical ability for the century or so preceding the advent of Cistercian ware and other Tudor pottery. At Cowick (Yorks., W.R.), an excavated kiln was, by remanent magnetism, dated mid 14th century. The potters firing this kiln had made highly decorated pottery including anthropomorphic forms. The kiln was one of a superimposed series and came at the very end of the period of highly decorated wares;⁴² the levels above it produced much plainer pottery. This particular industry is important because an intermittent series of court rolls and reeve's accounts survive for Cowick for the 14th and 15th centuries. The potters had suffered from the Black Death, for a return of 1356 records a decrease in the clay rent, although the 26s. 8d. paid then represents a substantial advance on the 6s. 8d. paid by three potters in 1327—the latest of the earlier surviving accounts. But the real boom period at Cowick did not begin until twenty years later, when, throughout the last quarter of the century, five potters were each paying 20s. a head annually, the highest payment yet found in England. But they were working when the period of highly decorated pottery was over in the country in general and also at Cowick, as can be shown by the upper levels of this series of kilns. It is important to emphasize this because it can be shown at Cowick that at this time the potters can only have been part-time workers, giving their main attention to their agricultural land. The same is true at Harlow (Essex), and it may be possible to show that there is the same shift in interest among the potters of 15th-century Toynton (Lincs.).

At Harlow, where the accumulation of land by the potters during the later 14th and the early 15th centuries has already been mentioned, the kind of offences for which they came into the manorial court were overwhelmingly agricultural: cattle and pigs loose in the lord's woods, fencing of the common field neglected, sheep and cattle in the common fields and so on. The interests of a man like Thomas Hubbard, with his accumulation of small parcels of land, who more than doubled his holdings of arable and pasture in 1440,⁴³ when he bought thirty-two acres from a fellow customary tenant, must have been primarily agricultural. Yet he

⁴² Excavated by P. Mayes; report forthcoming. The date suggested by archaeomagnetic sampling of the level producing highly decorated pottery was *c.* 1350.

⁴³ E.R.O., D/D_{ES}, M.4.

was still described as a potter and for several years held the office of woodward, an obligation not without its compensations in an area of wood-burning kilns. The potters of Cowick, though their precise holdings are unknown, were clearly peasants of substance in the boom period of the village pottery, acting as *constabularius*, serving on peasant juries, employing servants, renting extra assarts and turbaries in the marshland area to the south and east of the village. Like their fellows at Harlow they are amerced in the court rolls for agricultural offences, and, in the poll-tax return of 1379, the three who can be identified by name were assessed at the agricultural rate of 4d., rather than at the 6d. rate paid by smiths, tailors and other small craftsmen in the villages. This is of particular interest, since at this time the Cowick potters were paying the highest clay rent in England,⁴⁴ and, if the excavated kiln is representative, the pottery they were making was plain and coarse.

At Toynton (Lincs.) there are indications of many kilns in and around the village, of which three have been excavated, a late 15th-century kiln of predominantly plain pottery, and two late 13th-century kilns of the period of highly decorated wares.⁴⁵ At this latter time the local industry must already have been thriving, for in 1311 the earliest surviving court roll shows a Toynton potter sued for non-delivery of a hundred packs of pot⁴⁶—no inconsiderable order. The Toynton court rolls have produced useful information on the industrial activities of local potters, but have been less enlightening on their numbers and circumstances. At least seven were working soon after the mid 14th century and most of these were employing either male or female labour. Richard Potter (the craft name is still borne here by several potters until the 15th century) died in 1364. He had two sons, both potters. The elder, described somewhat curiously as 'John de Grimston son of Richard Potter' thereupon did fealty for the five selions that had been held by his father; the younger, William, at the same court, rented Wellcroft, with its buildings. Neither John nor William, nor any of the other potters, with one possible exception, were among the customary tenants who were tallaged in 1364 on the advent of a new lord.⁴⁷ Presumably all were either sub-tenants, or, like John Potter, cottagers owing services. The 15th-century rolls have not been studied fully enough to know whether this pattern changed at a later date, as it did at slightly different periods at both Cowick and Harlow. Certainly both bailiff and rent-collector were drawn from among the potters before 1430, and the names of neither of these is to be found among those of the earlier potters. The court rolls suggest a greater preoccupation with making and selling pot in Toynton than is found in contemporary Harlow or Cowick, and we hear more often of their selions as sources of potting clay than as crop-growing land, though there were certainly some among them who held arable land. The balance of their interests was towards industry. Many more villages with communities of potters will have to be studied in detail before it is possible to say whether the Toynton pattern or the Cowick pattern is the more usual during the later middle ages.

⁴⁴ P.R.O., DL. 29, 507/8227.

⁴⁵ The earlier kilns were excavated in 1958 and 1967, the later in 1967.

⁴⁶ Lincs. Record Office (henceforward cited as L.R.O.), Anc. 1, 18/1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 18/26.

POTTERY-MAKING IN THE TOWN

Little has been said of the town potter, though it seems clear that early wheel-made pottery is more often associated with town than with manor. Presumably the comparative freedom of the town was more favourable for early industrial development, though it has been shown that hand-made pottery, too, was made by small semi-industrial communities at least as early as the conquest. In large towns it has been difficult to find evidence for more than the bare fact of the potter's existence, and not always that. The clay potter seldom figures in municipal records. Evidence, where obtainable, tends rather to come from land grants, either to religious houses or as property leases or exchanges between the townspeople. An early example is that of the three houses granted to St. Ouen in Rouen in 1063, in the street by the Seine *ubi manent figuli*.⁴⁸ The potters of the town records, like a late 13th-century group in London,⁴⁹ the potters' guild of 14th-century York,⁵⁰ or the men who gave their name to Potter street in Nottingham⁵¹ were all metal-workers. Clay potters are not found in the York freemen's rolls until the mid 15th century, a time when pottery had become standardized, and to some extent specialized. Yet the evidence is mounting that every sizable town had a pottery either within its walls, or just outside the town. The evidence for potters in London is slim, though a list of trades in 1422 included both potters and pot-makers,⁵² one of which may have been concerned with clay. H. T. Riley suggested that potters' earth was taken into London in carts, but the evidence does not seem to be conclusive. By contrast, Paris in the late 13th century had no less than fifty clay potters as well as the more usual metal-workers.⁵³ The evidence for York is indeterminate. The guild was one of metal-workers and John de Housom, potter, who in 1378 was fined ten marks for taking clay from the close of the Carmelite friary, could have been a bell-founder; his fine is out of all proportion to the sixpence or shilling usually exacted for such an offence. But he is only fifty years removed from the first recorded freeman earthenpotter, and it seems likely that the industry would be on a considerable scale and well established by the time that Richard Beverley entered the rather exclusive ranks of the 15th-century freemen. Whatever the case of York may be, Scarborough, Exeter, Nottingham, Lincoln and Chester have their excavated kilns, in spite of complete lack of documentary evidence in those towns.

It is from the smaller towns, and from the manorial boroughs that evidence is more readily obtainable, and when it is found it sheds some light on the reasons for the silence of the records in the larger towns. In Linton (Kent)⁵⁴ two potters of the later 13th century held stalls in the market, for which they paid 4d. and 6d. respectively; the price range of the stalls was from 4d. to 1s., so that the potters were at the cheaper end. A kiln excavated in Doncaster produced highly decorated

⁴⁸ M. Fauroux (ed.), *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie* (1961), pp. 343-4.

⁴⁹ *Rot. Hund.*, I, 420 and 423.

⁵⁰ M. Sellers (ed.), *York Memorandum Book* (Surtees Soc., cxx, 1912), pp. 150-1.

⁵¹ A. Parker, 'Nottingham pottery', *Trans. Thoroton Soc.*, xxvi (1932), 79.

⁵² G. Unwin, *The Guilds of London* (1925), pp. 370-1.

⁵³ G. Fagniez, *L'Industrie à Paris* (1877), p. 18.

⁵⁴ *Rot. Hund.*, II, 417.

pottery;⁵⁵ in 1379 John Potter and his wife paid poll-tax there at the lowest rate. In 1321 Nicholas Potter and William de Lethely paid 1s. 8d. at Conisbrough (Yorks., W.R.)⁵⁶ to dig potting clay; the payment continued, where documents are available, throughout the century, and in 1379 Robert Potter paid at the same 4d. poll-tax rate. In the very full Colchester return for the subsidy of 1301⁵⁷ Hugh Porter had possessions valued at 6s. 9½d. (the name is assumed to be a mistake for Potter since he is the only man whose clay pots were valued at all: they are too cheap for normal fiscal consideration). His *olla lutea* were valued at 1s., some three dozen at the most, though they may have been undervalued; he owned also a hook for wood, a calf and a lamb. He paid 5½d. tax, which put him among the lowest fifty-four members of the taxable population, or the bottom 11 per cent. If this sort of picture proves to be representative, there is probably not much difference between the circumstances of potters in town and countryside, and the absence of guild organization or of clay potters among municipal office-holders becomes understandable. But there are a few facts to put on the other side of the scale: the probability of an industry in York even earlier than 1427 when there were substantial citizens at its head; a potter (*figulus*) in Skelton (Yorks., N.R.) assessed for tax at 1s. 8d. in 1301, just above the halfway line among the taxpayers, and Adam Beneyth of New Woodstock (Oxon.), who, if he could not be described as substantial in 1278, was well on the way to prosperity with his workshops and stalls and plots of land.

THE CLAY RENT

In so far as they are concerned with the potter at all, manorial documents are interested in him as a consumer of clay. Seigneurial rights over minerals seem early to have been extended to anything that came out of the ground, and it is on the raw material of the industry that the lord, for the most part, made his profit.

The potter had to pay for licence to dig clay, and he had to pay whether he took clay from the lord's land, which in practice meant moor, waste or common, or if he took it from his own land. The differential payment demanded in the two circumstances at Crockerton will have been noticed. At Harlow, where the clay payment was always small, it was normally dug on the peasants' own holding. Clay was extensively used there, not only for potting, but for the building and repair of houses, and an inquisition taken to determine whether payment was due for its use decided that the 3d. tax was due only from the potters.⁵⁸ A similar clay farm is found in many parts of western France, sometimes as a simple money rent, sometimes, as at Worcester in this country, as a payment partly in kind. Whether there were circumstances in which no clay payment was demanded is uncertain. There is some slight evidence that pottery continued to be made in

⁵⁵ Excavated in 1962 by Doncaster City Museum; report forthcoming. See *Med. Archaeol.*, x (1966), 162 and 218.

⁵⁶ *Cal. Inq. Post Mortem*, ix, 48, and P.R.O., sc 6, 1077/33.

⁵⁷ *Rot. Parl.*, I, 265. Thomas le Poter is recorded in Kingswood outside the town in 1273.

⁵⁸ E.R.O., D/DES, M. 1.

Crockerton after the payment had lapsed, but it is not conclusive. In general, it would be exceptional, it seems, for the potter to be free of some such due.

There are indications that clay-pits were originally on the peasants' crofts, whence the *Pottercrofts* and *Wellcrofts* that survive as place-names in so many parts of England. But the potters' holdings in the earlier middle ages were small, and as the potter was seldom a complete specialist, some part of the croft would be needed for his other activities. The better clay on many crofts must have been worked out at a fairly early date. Possibly it was at this stage, when alternative sources of supply were needed, that the payment became general. Certainly at Cowick, when the cost of a licence rose sharply in the 2nd half of the 14th century, the increase is associated with a new formula specifying that the payment was for clay and sand taken in the moor, whereas previously the farm had been in the form of a simple licence to dig clay. Frequently efforts were made to prevent potters from taking clay on the common. It was forbidden at Harlow, though ineffectually, and pits dug there were followed by a small fine in the manor court. If the crofts were worked out and taking clay on the commons was barred or expensive, the remaining possibilities were to buy clay or to take it from the potters' own strips in the common fields. Examples of both practices can be found, and of sale both by the lord and by fellow tenants.

Harlow clay-pits, rented for a term of years along with the peasant holding, were of two kinds. A frequent description is of 'wells' four feet square. Other cuttings, again of frequent occurrence, were long, narrow ditches from two to four feet wide, sometimes up to four perches long, following, it must be supposed, a seam of good surface clay. At Toynton, pits of up to twenty feet square are recorded, sometimes on selions in the open fields. The common fields of Heworth (co. Durham) were also used for taking clay, but the pits had to be filled in when the field lay fallow, at which time they would have constituted a danger to grazing animals.⁵⁹ Such pits were bought and sold among the Toynton potters in the 14th and 15th centuries for an average price of 10s., but the transaction had to be licensed by the lord (at a cost of 1s.), otherwise the purchase price was forfeit. An example of the sale of clay by a tenant may be cited from Toynton. In 1364 Juliana Tagg⁶⁰ took two crofts from the lord, Pottercroft and Wellcroft, for a term of years, during which time 'neither the lord nor his heirs shall disturb the said Juliana from digging and selling clay in the said croft *pro ollis faciendis* to whomsoever she pleases'. On the Templars' manor of Chilvers Coton (Warws.), clay-pits and the sale of clay were kept in the lord's hands.⁶¹ Unfortunately nothing has been found to show how purchase of clay compared in cost with an annual licence for self-service. Many more examples are needed also before it can be said that any one of the methods of obtaining clay is predominant, either universally, or at a given period, or in different parts of the country. It seems, however, from the increased use during the 14th and 15th centuries of clay-pits in the open fields,

⁵⁹ W. H. D. Longstaffe and J. Booth (ed.), *Halmota Prioratus Dunelmensis* (Surtees Soc., LXXXII, 1889), p. 127.

⁶⁰ L.R.O., Anc. 1, 18/26.

⁶¹ Information kindly supplied by Mrs. E. Gooder.

that potting could be more profitable than agriculture on clay soils when grain prices were low and land plentiful.

The payments for clay varied from as little as 3d. to as much as 20s. a head per year, but the size of the payment does not bear any necessary relationship to the number of potters working, or to their output. In 14th-century Harlow, where the payment was only 3d. a head, output must have been considerable, or at least profitable, for the potters can be shown to have made money, and to have continued to do so, since they doubled and redoubled their land holdings. It may be that the exceptionally high payment demanded at Cowick (20s. by 1373) tipped the economic scales against the potters, for though they rented extra land, it was never on the scale of the Harlow potters, and the 14th-century men left the industry, though not the village, early in the following century, to be succeeded by new men. The clay rent was then reduced, first temporarily then permanently.

There was, however, a general tendency for the clay rent to rise, and this in marked contrast to the general fall of prices and rents. At Conisbrough it rose from 10d. to 1s. 6d. between 1328 and 1348; at Burslem from 6d. to 1s. between 1348 and 1369; at Harlow (pott yerthe) from 3d. in 1391 to 9d. in 1436; at Cowick from 3s. 3d. in 1322, with several fluctuations, to 20s. in 1373. Only at Ringmer in Sussex, among places where such comparisons have been made, was there a stationary payment of 9d. per head over more than 200 years.

KILNS

While it is by no means impossible that a good deal of information on kiln-structure lies buried in manorial records, that found so far is fragmentary and requires some interpretation. Excavated kilns show a wide variety of structural detail. Equal variety is found among the words used for kilns in documents, but there is no evidence that any given word is to be related to one structural form rather than another. While *furnum* is the most usual term, *rogus*, *turrellum*, *hocum*, *domus ignea* and even kiln have all been found. *Hocum* (Chingford, 1222) is a word used for mounds associated with saltings in East Anglia, and may perhaps suggest one kiln form, while *domus ignea* (Harlow, 1399), if it is indeed a kiln (it certainly belonged to a potter), suggests a permanent structure. That the kiln was, at least in some cases, a permanent structure, is confirmed by the rent paid by ten Brill potters of 3d. each in 1255,⁶² though they claim that the payment should include wood. The Chingford potter paid an annual rent of ½d. for his *hocum*, and a permanent structure is certainly implied at Woodstock in 1729.⁶³

In the absence of direct archaeological evidence about the shape and size of kilns much above their foundations, at least in this country, some estimate of the size to be expected may be deduced from entries in the Toynton court rolls. Toynton is in the region where round, multi-flued kilns are frequent in the later middle ages, and one such, of the late 13th century, was excavated in 1957. The basal diameter was some six feet. In the early 15th century two spoilt kiln-loads

⁶² *Rot. Hund.*, I, 22.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, II, 841.

were valued at 10s. each in the village. These are not likely to be under-valuations, since damages were being claimed for the loss of the pottery. Although the range of prices varied somewhat at different places, the figures in TABLE V (p. 124) suggest that a maximum of about 500 pots might be expected in the large multi-flued kilns of NE. England. Although the damaged kiln-loads are of considerably later date than the excavated Toynton kiln, the evidence of excavated multi-flued kilns at Potterton, Follifoot, Cowick and Baildon (all in Yorks., W.R.) suggest that later kilns are not likely to vary significantly in size, though there is some tendency to enlargement in later years. If this reasoning is accepted, a kiln with three, or at most four layers of stacked pottery, and superstructure to match, is to be expected.

Salzman considered that pot- and tile-kilns were practically identical.⁶⁴ This has not proved to be so, save, perhaps, in Sussex. Nevertheless the drying-sheds and workshops of the tile industry had their counterpart in that of the potter. The most completely excavated of medieval kiln complexes, the late 13th-century kiln at Limpsfield (Surrey),⁶⁵ had its adjacent drying-shed and workshop as one structural unit with the kiln. This ties up in a remarkable fashion with the description in the Hundred Rolls⁶⁶ of a kiln complex of roughly similar date at New Woodstock (Oxon.) in 1279. The buildings held there by Adam BENEYTH were described as a tenement with a kiln and a garden, with two stalls and a workshop (*fabrica*) all joined together (*unanimitur adjunguntur*), with a small yard outside the workshop. In the Limpsfield workshop were four broken pivot-bases for potters' wheels. This may indicate that the workshop was in use over a fair period, or possibly that the potter was employing assistants. Only one potter, Geoffrey, is known to have paid rent on the Battle Abbey manor of Limpsfield in 1314,⁶⁷ but there is evidence of many kilns in the locality, though these are not necessarily contemporary. Possibly the industry was in decline by the time of Geoffrey the Potter, who held a messuage and three acres of land for which he owed 1s. rent, two boon works, merchet and heriot. The type of labour which such a man is likely to have employed may be inferred from near-contemporary potters elsewhere. In 1255 the Brill potters had 'their boys and others' who went through the forest collecting loppings for their kilns. These boys may have been their sons, or possibly apprentices. The 'others' presumably constituted hired labour. At Toynton such labour was both male and female, the latter often the wives of fellow potters. One such who sued for arrears of wages in 1368 specified that the 3s. 4d. owed was for work at the clay-pits and for piece work, and she claimed not only cash, but a hundred pots (perhaps a kiln-load?), so she may have been in business herself. A few years earlier Agnes Porrel had sued for 3s. 3d., described as her wages (*stipendium*) for the previous year. A somewhat later potter, suing for arrears, states that he is owed 13s. 4d. *pro labore suo in arte figuli*.⁶⁸ Since not only this debt

⁶⁴ L. F. Salzman, *English Industries of the Middle Ages* (2 ed., 1923), p. 173.

⁶⁵ Excavated by B. Hope-Taylor. Illustration in C. Singer, E. J. Holmyard, A. R. Hall and T. I. Williams, *A History of Technology*, II (1956), 285, fig. 266.

⁶⁶ See note 63. New Woodstock was in the parish of Bladon, and was founded on waste ground outside the park. It is possible that the Bladon potters of Domesday were in the immediate vicinity of the 12th-century new town.

⁶⁷ S. R. Scargill-Bird, *Customs of Battle Abbey* (Camden Soc., xli, 1887), p. 145.

⁶⁸ L. R. O., Anc. 1, 18/33, 18/27, 18/59.

but a similar one in the next year were allowed against William Katerinson, the potter concerned, William's business was in a somewhat unsatisfactory state. William Jackson, one of the Cowick potters, is shown in the 1379 poll-tax return to have employed a servant; he may also have shared a working-shed, for in 1383 he rented a quarter of a *domus* situated on a selion of a bovate called *Sansonland* which had changed hands once or twice before among the potters.⁶⁹

FUELS

A certain amount is known about the types and quantities of fuel in use, though figures are easier to get for the burning of tile-kilns. The three fuels available were coal, wood and peat. Coal was mined in the vicinity of potteries at Burslem (Staffs.), Chilvers Coton (Warws.) and Potter Newton (Yorks., W.R.). No documentary evidence has yet been found for its use for firing pottery-kilns during the medieval period, but there is archaeological evidence for its occasional use.

Wood, in the form of loppings, brushwood or 'small wood', was in common use. Such underwood was sold annually as a manorial perquisite in a number of places, usually in the form of faggots or bundles. A thousand of these were required for the burning of ten tile-kilns in the 14th century.⁷⁰ If the figures can be relied upon, the fuel costs of the smaller pottery-kilns must have been low. Some potters may have obtained their fuel by renting a specified area of woodland by the year, and taking what underwood they could. This is likely to have been the custom at Laverstock (Wilts.), where men with the potter surname have been found paying 4s. annually for roods of brushwood at Chesil, Ashley Hill and Catsgrove,⁷¹ all in the vicinity of the kilns. But these 'Potters' took no more than a large number of other men did who are mentioned in the accounts, and by the 13th century the surname is no longer a sure indication of working potters, so that it is not certain that this particular rent covered wood for more than domestic purposes. In some cases potters paid for an unspecified quantity of wood, as, for example, the men working in Holden woods (Yorks., W. R.) in 1322.⁷² Such too was the Crockerton payment, if it has been interpreted aright. Many, perhaps the majority, of kilns must have relied on brushwood for fuel, particularly the large proportion of industries that were situated in or near forest or woodland, and particularly, also, in the earlier period. Larger timber was always too expensive and too valued for the purpose.

During the later middle ages the areas of woodland became more restricted, and even brushwood was in short supply. An increasing number of entries in manorial accounts read 'and for brushwood nothing this year, because the lord does not wish to sell it'. In eastern England, at least, the shortage was met by the use of peat as an alternative fuel. Turbaries were common and peat was cheap, varying, in the 14th century, between 8d. and 11d. per 1,000 turves. It was traded

⁶⁹ Sheffield City Lib., SCR. 28, 7 Ric. II.

⁷⁰ *Op. cit.* in note 64, p. 177.

⁷¹ P.R.O., SC 6 105/05, /6, /7.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1147/23.

for considerable distances, even from overseas, as is demonstrated by the large quantities on which alien merchants paid customs duty in Kentish ports. At Cowick in the late 14th century regular peat-cutters worked throughout the summer months, and on one occasion were fined for leaving their work 'to the grave damage of the lord and his tenants'.⁷³ Alexander Gledhow, one of the potters, sued Richard Osset (possibly a dealer, since his name is not found in local tax lists) for non-delivery of 20,000 turves.⁷⁴ Alexander worked separately from the other Cowick potters, and apparently on a considerable scale. The matter of the turves was satisfactorily settled, but it may have been the delay involved that caused him, the following year, to rent twenty acres in adjacent Dykemmarsh, where many turbaries were situated. More than 200 years later part of the turbarry still bore his name.⁷⁵ A single potter at Thorner, towards the end of the same century, made a tied payment for clay and a cart-load of peat for several consecutive years.⁷⁶ On one occasion he took two cart-loads, paying 3d. for the additional fuel. At Toynton, in 1399, Nicholas Potter paid 5s. 8d. for his turves (some 6,000 at the current rate), and 9d. for their carriage, possibly from Bolingbroke, where they were cut at that time.⁷⁷ Peat was used even in the more highly organized tile industry. Evidence from Ely is clear and unequivocal. In 1337 peat was bought *pro tegulis apud Tydbray faciendis et arendis*.⁷⁸ In the previous year the number of turves bought for the purpose was 48,000. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries the brick and tile industry at Hull used nothing else for firing the kilns and a stoker's wages are itemized as 'for throwing peat on to the kilns'.⁷⁹ As far south as Essex (Harleywood, 1385) turves were used for firing tile-kilns.⁸⁰

From all this it is clear that peat was an important item in the economy of the industry. It would be of great interest to know whether any special form of kiln was necessary for this type of fuel. Two small pieces of evidence suggest that it may have been so. In two villages, Cowick and Toynton, multi-flued circular kilns, firing pot directly on the floor, are associated with known payments for peat. No kilns of this shape are known for the early middle ages when wood was plentiful. It might be added that at Brill, where the use of wood is certain, and at Laverstock, where it is highly probable, kilns of different types were found. On the other hand, bricks and tiles, which are known to have been fired with peat on occasion, were usually fired in kilns with internal structure, and the Meaux (Yorks., E.R.) tile-kiln, though perhaps it was of somewhat early date for a peat-burning kiln, was of normal tile-kiln construction, though within a peat-burning area. Since it is possible to distinguish the three types of available fuel by their ash, this is a question capable of ready solution.⁸¹ All that can be safely said at present

⁷³ Sheffield City Lib., SCR. 28, 37 Edw. III.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 19/20 Ric. II.

⁷⁵ Yorks. Archaeol. Soc., MS. 495, 1.

⁷⁶ Leeds City Lib., Mexborough Collection, 18-31 Edw. III.

⁷⁷ L.R.O., Anc. 1, 18/50.

⁷⁸ F. R. Chapman (ed.), *Sacrist Rolls of Ely*, II (1957), 93.

⁷⁹ F. W. Brooks in *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, 3 ser., IV (1939), 170.

⁸⁰ E.R.O., D/DP, M. 1154.

⁸¹ Professor A. L. Roberts of Leeds University considers that ashes of the three fuels will be readily distinguishable on analysis.

is that there were a number of kilns in eastern England during the later middle ages which used peat for fuel.

MARKETING

Sale in the local market must always have been the most common method of distributing pottery. In York, clay pots were sold in the Saturday market; in Oxford potters had a place next to the charcoal-burners. A big increase in the number of local markets and fairs in the later 13th century made distribution easier, and meant that more than one market was available for each potter, just as each market was available to a number of surroundings potteries. Thus Toynton potters sent cart-loads to Whaplode and to Spalding (32 miles), even keeping a stock at Spalding for the potter in person to sell at a later date.⁸² Though normally carts were used for marketing, as is demonstrated by reports of broken cart-loads, pottery was also sold by the tubful, and by packs. These last were presumably distributed by horse or donkey, as was pottery at the time in southern France. Whatever mode was used, containers must have been packed with bracken or straw at the kiln itself, and this may well be the means whereby obvious wasters are distributed far from their place of origin. Cart-loads and pack-loads alike were subject to toll in the town in which they were sold. At Lynn they were classified with butter and cheese as *menuez merchandises*; in London the toll was $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a cart-load. Much the same value was set on them the other side of the Channel, where a pack-load was charged $\frac{1}{2}$ d. *tournois* (about $\frac{1}{8}$ of a penny sterling) for the second-best pot. Cowick, Thorne and Toynton potters all owned carts, and at Toynton the potters carted for one another on occasion. Evidence at Toynton shows that dealers, too, were sometimes involved: Richard Couherd in 1311 sold a hundred packs to someone who must have been a dealer, and a century later a case of broken contract between a local potter and an Alan Pynder shows the latter complaining that only sixteen of the twenty kilns (*fornaces*) ordered had been delivered. Buying by dealers for resale has also been found in northern Germany at this time.⁸³

Pottery distributed in the local towns would have been bought largely by the peasantry and the smaller landowners, and the prosperity or otherwise of these consumers must always have been a considerable factor in influencing the amount and quality of the pot produced. There are, still, so many unknown factors that it is impossible to do more than to suggest that the advent of highly decorated pottery over the country as a whole comes at a time of relative prosperity among the peasantry and that the decline in quality, though not necessarily in quantity, of pottery in the late 14th century comes at a time of general depression.

At least from the late 13th century there was a parallel method of distribution in use that must have been much less dependent on the ups and downs of the peasant market. Large consignments of pot were ordered on behalf of the royal household, or on behalf of monastic houses against Christmas, Easter or the

⁸² L.R.O., Anc. 1, 18/31.

⁸³ Information from Dr. W. Janssen.

major feast days, and they were ordered direct from potters on the estates of the magnates concerned. A series of orders between 1260 and 1265, varying between 500 and 1,000 pitchers at a time, were ordered from Kingston-on-Thames (Surrey: Crokkeres Furlong in Norbiton and the curtilage of John Le Poter in Surbiton probably indicate the neighbourhood of the potteries). One such order on the Close Roll, dated 15 March 1265, required 500 pitchers at 19 days' notice to be delivered to the king's butler at Westminster.⁸⁴ If the Kingston pottery, like so many others, consisted of half-a-dozen potters or more, there would be no difficulty in executing such an order *ad hoc*. Otherwise it must be assumed that potters could be expected to carry such a stock at the end of the winter, and that there was no close season for the craft. Laverstock potters received similar large orders between 1267 and 1270 and the cost of transporting this bulk of pottery is implicit in their costing. In 1270 the price of 1,000 pitchers and their transport to Winchester was 25s.⁸⁵ Two years previously a similar number cost 20s. and 5s. 10d. was allowed for their transport, again from Milford to Winchester,⁸⁶ some twenty miles, the transport charge for which was therefore over 25 per cent. of the purchase price. These Laverstock pitchers were probably bought for convenience as the royal household was at Clarendon from late November until mid December and at Winchester for Christmas, in at least three of the years in which these large purchases were made for the Christmas feast. That similar provision would have been possible nearer Winchester seems probable, in view of a large order directed to the keepers of the vacant see in 1243.⁸⁷ At that time the pots were bought to equip ships for Gascony, and it seems likely that, like the other commodities ordered at the same time, they were to come from the episcopal estates, where potters were working, both at Fareham and in the Isle of Wight.

OTHER METHODS OF DISTRIBUTION

In the course of the middle ages a good deal of pottery travelled long distances from its parent kiln by other than regular trade-routes. King, bishops and nobility were constantly on the move, and with them went their household gear. A cart illustrated in the Luttrell psalter, cooking-pots suspended along its sides, symbolizes the peripatetic household of the middle ages. If kings and lords found their lodging indoors, the carts, with their attendants, frequently camped in the fields. Bishop Swinfield lost a cart-load of kitchen gear in 1289 in this way.⁸⁸ The king was more lucky with his pottery in the late 13th century, but at least 3,000 Laverstock pitchers should lie in pieces somewhere in Winchester. From a study of contemporary prices it seems likely that these were the small pitchers used for drinking rather than jugs for carrying liquids. Exotic pots, too, circulated by

⁸⁴ *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1264-68, p. 32.

⁸⁵ *Cal. Lib. Rolls*, vi, 169.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, 185.

⁸⁸ J. Webb (ed.), *A Roll of the Household Expenses of Richard de Swinfield* (Camden Soc., old ser., LXXI, 1853), p. 47.

other than the regular trade-routes. An example is the pot of *greneginger* presented to the archbishop of York in 1422.⁸⁹

Trade in the usual sense must always have been comparatively restricted, if only because of the low prices commanded by pots, the density of potteries and the high cost of transporting fragile commodities. Yet pottery did travel, and sometimes for long distances. Occasional ship-loads came from Brittany to Exeter in the 14th and 15th centuries; a ship-load has been noted from Malaga; 14th-century pottery went into Scarborough and Hull and pots from Normandy and Aquitaine are relatively frequent finds on archaeological sites in England. Probably the finer quality of foreign pot, and its novelty, allowed it to command a higher price. Possibly local depression may, on occasion, have made export at almost any price an economic necessity. Whatever the cause, it would seem that special circumstances would be required before pottery was exported far from its place of origin.

DENSITY OF THE INDUSTRY

The density of medieval potteries was first worked out in connexion with the study of local pottery in the West Riding of Yorkshire (FIG. 27). It was compiled, in the first instance, by studying the incidence of the potter and crocker elements in place-names and surnames. The list of places so obtained had certain drawbacks, as has been suggested earlier. First, it is uncertain to what period a given name refers, particularly in the case of field-names. John Scott of Cowick, for instance, held a plot called *potting* in the 16th century, but investigation showed the family to have left the industry 150 years earlier. Worse, there are place-names in Hampshire that owe their origin to the *Poteria* family who had estates there early in the 12th century. But the family took its name from La Poterie-Mathieu (Eure),⁹⁰ where, if anywhere, the pottery must have been located. The presence of the surname *Potter*, with all its variations, in taxation returns is a reasonable indication that there has been a pottery in the vicinity, but not that it is extant when the entry occurs. The form *le Poter* with its variations, particularly before the mid 13th century, is more reliable, but at any later date, even with the article, the surname need have no great validity. Yet in practice, partly because of the relative stability of the medieval population, partly because of the long life of the industry in any given place (TABLE VI, p. 124), it has been proved over and over again that the presence of such place and personal names is a reasonable guide to the existence of an industry.

CONCLUSIONS

It will have been observed that, except for the earlier period, the documentary evidence used is heavily weighted for eastern England, and that the available evidence has been no more than sampled. It is difficult, in these circumstances, to be certain that a representative selection of documents has been studied. The

⁸⁹ J. Raine (ed.), *The Fabric Rolls of York Minster* (Surtees Soc., 1859), p. 48.

⁹⁰ L. C. Loyd, *Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families* (Harleian Soc., CIII, 1951), p. 81.

evidence as far as it goes is reasonably consistent. Cottagers worked full- or part-time in the earlier period, either singly or more frequently in small communities, both in towns and in or outside the villages. They were small-holders whose primary concern was with pot-making. During the 13th century an increase in the number of potters and in places where pots were made is observable, associated with an improvement in the quality and variety of the pottery, but not with any general change in the personnel or the economic circumstances of the potter. It must be a response, rather, to the existence of a relatively prosperous market. The last quarter of the 14th century saw the industry pass into the hands of a different type of man whose main interest was in agriculture. The change seems to be associated with a decline in potting standards and with the disappearance of elaborate decoration, which in turn must owe something to general economic depression and fall in demand for high-class pottery. This phase of development may coincide with an increase in the number of dealers and is certainly accompanied by an increase in specialization. But it must be emphasized that no uniformity is to be expected. The small peasant potter continues to be found long after the advent of factory-produced wares.

It is clear that pottery travelled round the country a great deal throughout the middle ages and that styles and ideas moved rapidly from one region to another. Though this must have been in part due to the overlapping gathering grounds of the many markets of the later middle ages, it was partly due also to direct copying—a process that can be demonstrated in the finds from excavated kilns. An outstanding example of this spread of ideas can be seen in the rapid extension of Cistercian ware in the late 15th century.⁹¹

Little has been said of the import of foreign pottery and its influence on native traditions, but this, it is hoped, will form the subject of a further paper.

⁹¹ *Antiq. J.*, XLVI (1966), 264.

TABLE I. TENANTS AT CROCKERTON MAKING POTS IN 1234*

NAME	CLAY	WOOD	TENANT OR OTHER
Johannes Bernard	4d.	7d.	tenant
Johannes Hedrich	4d.	7d.	other
Robertus de Cruce	4d.	7d.	tenant
Rogerus Luval	4d.	7d.	tenant
Willelmus Cros	4d.	7d.	family
Johannes in Cumba	4d.	7d.	family
Stephanus de Stroda	2d.	3½d.	family
Hedwardus Coc	4d.	3½d.	other
Willelmus Rochel	4d.	5d.	other
Galfridus Coc	4d.	7½d.	other
Heme super Hulle	4d.	7d.	widow
Johannes Comes	2d.	3½d.	family
Johannes Furbuc	2d.	3½d.	other

* Potters having the same surname as the holder of a cotsetland but a different Christian name are taken to be members of the family. Among cotsetlers not potting that year are two who are also virgate holders. Two of the 'others' are probably their sub-tenants.

TABLE II. CLAY PAYMENTS BEFORE 1350

PLACE	NO. OF POTTERS	TOTAL RENT	PER HEAD	YEAR
Bladon (Oxon.)	11?	10s.	c. 11d.	1086
Brill (Bucks.)	10	2s. 6d.	4d.*	1255
Burstall (Staffs.)	1	6d.	6d.	1348
Conisbrough (Yorks., W.R.)	2	1s. 8d.	10d.	1328
Cowick (Yorks., W.R.)	3	9s. 9d.	3s. 3d.	1322
Crockerton (Wilts.)	13	9s. 6d.	11d. (5½d.)	1234
Hanley (Worcs.)	13	6s. 6d.	6d.	1296
Hasfield (Glos.)	5	3s. 8d.	c. 8½d.	1086
Ringmer (Suss.)	6	4s. 6d.	9d.	1349
Wenlond (Worcs.)	3?	2s.	8d.?	1288
Westbury (Wilts.)	22?	20s.	c. 11d.?	1086
Worcester city	6	4s.	6d. and 2 pots per week.	1187

* In the Hundred Rolls there are *decem furna vel plurima* at 3d. each in 1255. A reeve's account of 1279 gives 4s. 6d. for claygavel.

TABLE III. AMOUNT OF LAND HELD BY POTTERS

PLACE	BEFORE 1250		PLACE	AFTER 1250	
	ACRES	DATE		ACRES	DATE
Atherstone (Warws.)	under 1	1246	Bentley (Derbys.)	2	late 13th
Batcombe (Som.)	2½	1189	Chard (Som.)	indigent	1265
Butleigh (Som.)	5	1189	Codicote (Herts.)	1	1284
Chingford (Essex)	8 shared	1222	Coombe (Wilts.)	2	1307
Crockerton (Wilts.)	under 5	1234	Coteham (Kent)	5	1275
Halstead (Essex)	2½	1229	Damerham (Hants)	virg.	1260
Navestock (Essex)	under 1	1222	Derby	1½	1323
Wigwell (Derbys.)	5	1247	Evercreech (Som.)	curtilage	1272
Winksley (Yorks., W.R.)	2	1233	Harewold (Beds.)	½ virg.	1275
Wrington, nr. Bristol (Som.)	5	1234	Limpsfield (Surrey)	3	1314
			Milverton (Som.)	indigent	1265
			Park (Herts.)	curtilage	1332

TABLE IV. EARLIEST KNOWN DATE OF PLACE-NAME CHANGE

Potters Brompton (Yorks., E.R.)	1285	Potter Heaton (Yorks., W.R.)	1314*
Potters Coton (Warws.)	1393	Potter Heigham (Norf.)	1230
Potters Follifoot (Yorks., W.R.)	1329*	Potters Marston (Leics.)	1267
Potters Lyveden (Northants.)	1285	Potternewton (Yorks., W.R.)	1285
Potters Hanley (Worcs.)	1296*	Potterspury (Northants.)	1287
Potters Hanworth (Lincs.)	1327	Potters Somersal (Derbys.)	1415*
Potters Harnall (Warws.)	1315*		

* Indicates that the place-name change is temporary only.

TABLE V. PRICES OF POTTERY BEFORE 1350

DATE	PLACE	NUMBER BOUGHT	PRICE	APPROX. PRICE PER 100
1205	Staffordshire	4,500	53s. 7½d.	1s. 3d.
1249	Hampshire	1,203	30s. 2½d.	2s. 5d.
1264	Kingston-on-Thames (Surrey)	1,000	21s. 5d.	2s. 1½d.
1265	Northampton	268	8s. 4d.	3s. 7d.
1265	Wiltshire	1,600	38s. 6d.	2s. 5d.
1267	Clarendon Palace (Wilts.)	1,000	20s.	2s.
1267	Woodstock (Oxon.)	4,500	53s. 7½d.	1s. 2d.
1270	Milford (Wilts.)	1,000	20s.	2s.
1296	London	300	8s. 6d.	2s. 9d.
1330	Cleobury Mortimer (Salop.)	2,400	60s.	2s. 6d.
1336	Durham	80	3s.	3s. 9d.
1344	Bardfield Park (Essex)	41	1s. 6d.	3s. 9d.

TABLE VI. DURATION OF SOME KNOWN INDUSTRIES

PLACE	CENTURIES	PLACE	CENTURIES
Baldon (Yorks., W.R.)	14-16	Harlow (Essex)	13-17
Bentley ((Derbys.)	12-14	Pill (Som.)	13-18
Bladon and Woodstock (Oxon.)	11-late 13	Potterton (Yorks., W.R.)	11 (gap?) 16
Brandsby (Yorks., N.R.)	14-16	Rawmarsh (Yorks., W.R.)	13-15
Brill (Bucks.)	13-17	Ringmer (Suss.)	13-15
Burslem (Staffs.)	14 onwards	Sible Hedingham and Halstead (Essex)	13-19
Coton (Warws.)	13-17	Skelton (Yorks., N.R.)	14-15
Cowick (Yorks., W.R.)	14-16	Toynton (Lincs.)	13-16
Grimston (Norf.)	11-15		

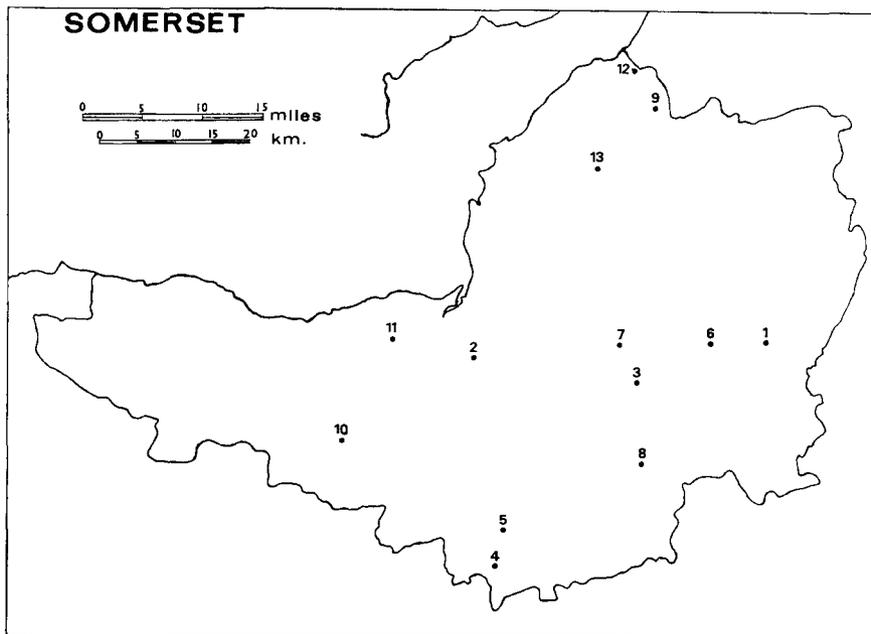


FIG. 25

SITES OF POTTERIES, BASED ON DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

1. Batcombe; 2. Bridgwater; 3. Butleigh; 4. Chard; 5. Donyatt; 6. Evercreech; 7. Glastonbury;
8. Ilchester; 9. Long Ashton; 10. Milverton; 11. Nether Stowey; 12. Pill; 13. Wrington

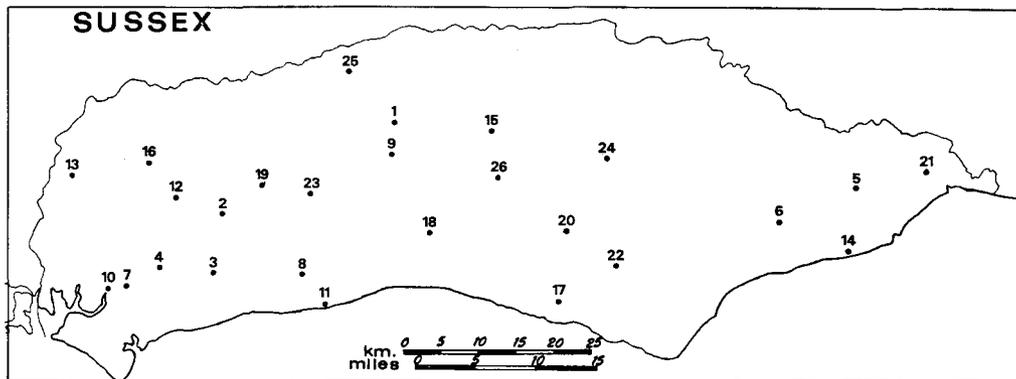


FIG. 26

SITES OF POTTERIES, BASED ON DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE (D), AND EXCAVATED KILNS OR WASTERS (A)

1. Beeding, A; 2. Bignor, A; 3. Binstead, D, A; 4. Boxgrove, D; 5. Brede, D; 6. Catsfield, D; 7. Chichester, D, A; 8. Clapham, D; 9. Cowfold, D; 10. Fishbourne, D; 11. Goring, D; 12. Graffham, D; 13. Harting, D;
14. Hastings, A; 15. Lindfield, D; 16. Midhurst, D; 17. Piddinghoe, D; 18. Poynings, D; 19. Pulborough, D; 20. Ringmer, D; 21. Rye, A; 22. Selmeston, A; 23. Thakeham, D; 24. Totease, D; 25. Warnham, D;
26. Wivelsfield, D

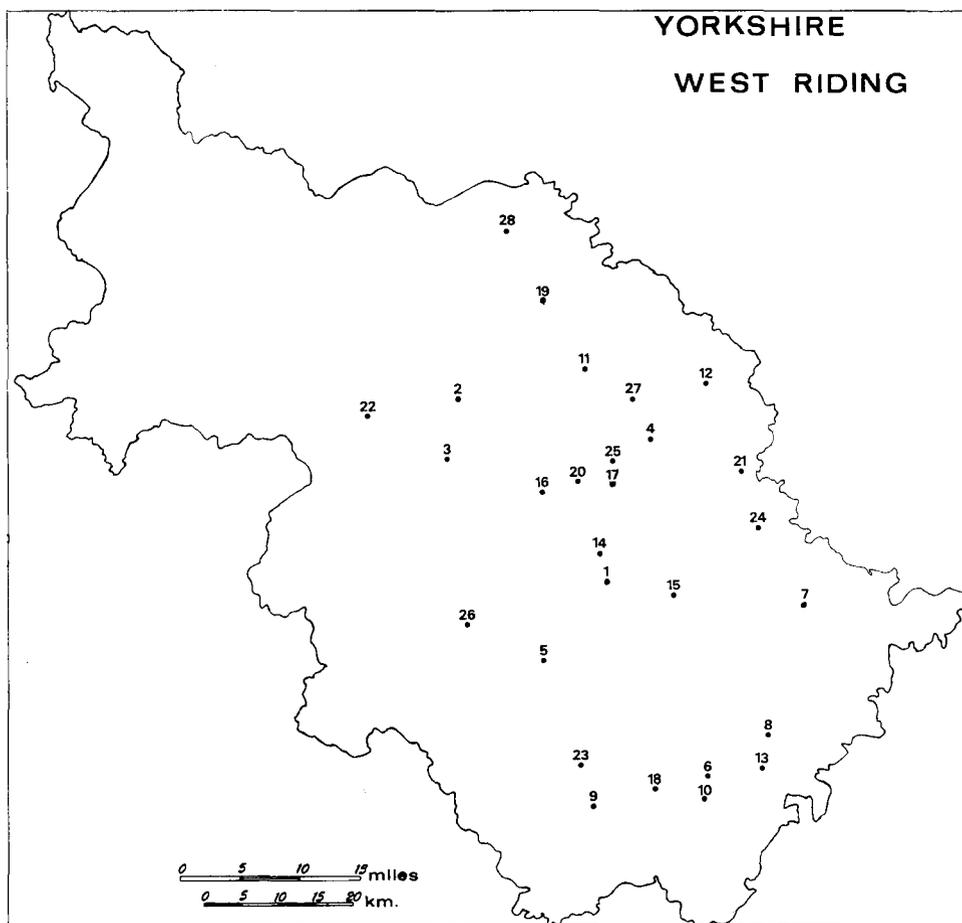


FIG. 27

SITES OF POTTERIES, BASED ON DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE (D), EXCAVATED KILNS OR WASTERS (A), AND PLACE-NAME CHANGE AS IN TABLE IV (P-N)

1. Altofts, D; 2. Askwith, D; 3. Baildon, D, A (4); 4. Bramham, D; 5. Bretton, D; 6. Conisbrough, D; 7. Cowick, D, A; 8. Doncaster, D, A; 9. Ecclesfield, D; 10. Firsby, D, A; 11. Follifoot, D, A; 12. Long Marston, D, A; 13. Loversall, D; 14. Oulton, D; 15. Pontefract, D; 16. Potter Newton, P-N; 17. Potterton, D, A; 18. Rawmarsh, D, A; 19. Ripley, D; 20. Roundhay, D; 21. Ryther, D; 22. Silsden, D, A; 23. Tankersley, D; 24. Thorpe, D; 25. Thorner, D, A; 26. Upper Heaton, A, P-N; 27. Wetherby, D; 28. Winksley, D, A