

Notes and News

EARLY MEDIEVAL GLAZED POTTERY IN HOLLAND

I read with much interest and pleasure the article on red-painted and glazed pottery in western Europe in *Med. Archaeol.*, xiii (1969), 93-147, written by a group of highly competent scholars from different countries under the skilful editorship of Mr. J. G. Hurst. But it may be convenient to provide what may in some respects be a more complete account of early finds of glazed ware in Holland than Mr. Van Regteren Altena has done. I do not disagree with his conclusions, but I think that his arguments are not well chosen and that his conclusions should have been expressed a little less hastily, in order to avoid accepting at this stage of the research what might later prove to be a mistaken preconception. That he does not agree with what I asserted (fairly rashly indeed and on insufficient grounds) thirty years ago does not hurt my feelings in the least.¹

Mr. Van Regteren Altena says *ibid.*, p. 129: 'At the settlements of Dorestad, Middelburg, Medemblik and Den Helder occupation-layers containing Badorf and other imported pottery can be dated 8th to 9th century. Painted Pingsdorf ware is not found in these layers. In a later occupation-layer Pingsdorf, Andenne and Paffrath wares were associated.' I do not deny this, but the question is not so simple as it seems at first sight. First, the sites are not so happily chosen as I hope to prove, and second, we must make a distinction between Andenne ware, that is nearly always partially glazed ware (although fully glazed ware was still occasionally made at Andenne and other places of manufacture in the 12th century), and fully glazed ware, that is Stamford ware² or ware of the same character made in western France. Although I cannot prove it, and am still uncertain whether fully glazed ware appears in Holland (but only in that part of Zeeland which formed part of the county of Flanders in the earlier middle ages) already at the end of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century, in my opinion this is still quite possible.

In my extensive investigations in the Wieringermeer (the first part of the Zuiderzee that was drained in 1931) I found in several places many sherds and whole vessels, not only of pottery imported from the Rhine, but also partially glazed ware, which I presumed to be imported from Belgium or northern France.³ I conjecturally ascribed it to the 12th century, and when Borremans and Lassance published the pottery finds from Andenne⁴ they based their dating on my finds from the Wieringermeer. Although my dating rested on weak assumptions (I made the mistake to which archaeologists are sometimes liable, of drawing rash conclusions from doubtful data), the ascription of Andenne ware to the 12th or even the later 11th century was later confirmed by other finds. I did not find fully glazed ware in the Wieringermeer and it seems that this does not occur at all in northern Holland.⁵ Thus Van Regteren Altena's argument that glazed pottery does not occur in the Netherlands in the late Carolingian period, as far as it is based upon his excavations in Medemblik, is not conclusive, nor are his arguments based upon the excavations of Dorestad by Van Es and of Middelburg by Trimpe Burger. The

¹ I have said other things which I now no longer believe. This will be the case with most scholars.

² The fully glazed fragments from the Zeeland earthworks look just like Stamford ware and might have been imported from England.

³ W. C. Braat, 'De archeologie van de Wieringermeer', *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden (hereafter O.M.R.O.)*, xiii (1932).

⁴ R. Borremans et W. Lassance, *Recherches archéologiques sur la céramique d'Andenne au moyen âge (Andenne, 1956)*.

⁵ H.H. Van Regteren Altena en J. A. Bakker, 'Opgravingen bij Medemblik', *Westfrieslands Oud en Nieuw* (1968), p. 201.

occupation-area of Dorestad appears now from Van Es's extensive excavations to have been much larger than Holwerda thought when he had only a small area open.⁶ The site must have been abandoned shortly after 860 when, as a consequence of a disastrous flood, the course of the Rhine was diverted through the channel of the Lek by a dike just a little above Dorestad. The mouth of the Rhine at Katwijk silted up, so that the commerce of Dorestad was ruined, and other places, especially Tiel on the River Waal, another branch of the Rhine, sprang up in its place. So it is no wonder that in Dorestad no glazed pottery was found, since it started, as we know, at the earliest in the last years of the 9th or the beginning of the 10th century in England and France (Doué la Fontaine, as de Boüard has demonstrated).

I got my first intimation that fully glazed pottery might be late Carolingian during a preliminary excavation on the defensive earthworks of the Viking period at Souburg in the island of Walcheren in 1939.⁷ I had only a very small area open and I could merely identify the positions of the bank and the ditch. Behind the bank I found fragments of *Reliefbandamphorae*, early Pingsdorf ware and small fragments of fully glazed ware. Recently Trimpe Burger exposed the whole area of these round earthworks. The soil proved to have been very little disturbed by later occupation, as was unfortunately the case in Middelburg and Burgh in the island of Schouwen, excavated by me in 1940 and 1953 respectively;⁸ Trimpe Burger was able to reveal excellent ground-plans of houses, built of sods. Now for the first time we know that these earthworks were laid out according to a regular street plan intersecting at right angles.⁹ The finds consist of *Kugeltöpfe*, *Reliefbandamphorae*, very little Pingsdorf ware (possibly from a later occupation in the 12th century) and some fragments of fully glazed pottery, the last looking decidedly late and certainly not late Carolingian. Not a single sherd of Badorf ware, so frequent at Middelburg and Burgh, was found, so we must conclude that Souburg was later than the other two earthworks—presumably of the 10th and not the late 9th century.¹⁰ Yet the glazed pottery of Souburg found by me in 1939, although just like Stamford ware, may also come from the 12th-century level and the fact that in these extensive, and very ably conducted, excavations of Trimpe Burger no other sherds of this description have been found so far, seems to me to constitute the strongest argument against the occurrence in Zeeland of glazed ware in a Carolingian context.

In Middelburg, where the centre of the town was almost completely destroyed by German bombing in 1940, making excavation possible, and in Burgh, fully glazed sherds were found mixed with Badorf ware, early Pingsdorf and *Kugeltöpfe*. At both places the ground was very much disturbed, so that even in the oldest occupation-layers, I found partly glazed Andenne ware mixed with Badorf ware and other early finds, and not a single ground-plan of a house (which there also were built of sods) could be established.¹¹

Trimpe Burger also undertook a small excavation at Middelburg and his results¹² are cited by Van Regteren Altena as proof that glazed ware is definitely not Carolingian. Mr. Trimpe Burger was so kind as to show me his finds and he told me that the stratification was not reliable, because he was not able to supervise the excavations personally, so that this argument of Van Regteren Altena against a late Carolingian dating for fully glazed ware cannot be sustained either.

⁶ J. H. Holwerda, 'Opgravingen van Dorestad'. *O.M.R.O.*, XI (1930), 32.

⁷ W. C. Braat, 'Souburg en Middelburg', *O.M.R.O.*, XXXII (1941), 52.

⁸ *Id.*, 'Burgh op Schouwen', *O.M.R.O.*, XXXV (1954), 8.

⁹ Not yet published.

¹⁰ According to a passage in the *Miracula Sancti Bertini* (*Mon. Germ. Script.*, xv, 512) earthworks of this character were built in the coastal area of the North Sea shortly before 880.

¹¹ See notes 7 and 8 and my article: 'Die frühmittelalterliche Keramik von Burgh', *O.M.R.O.*, XLI (1960), 95.

¹² J. A. Trimpe Burger, 'Een oudheidkundig onderzoek in de abdij van Middelburg', *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek*, XIV (1964), 107.

My conclusion is that a late Carolingian dating of fully glazed ware in Zeeland is indeed not yet proved, but that the finds in these Viking-period earthworks do not exclude the possibility, especially since fully glazed sherds occur in the deepest layers in Middelburg and Burgh. The fact that fully glazed ware was found in a late Carolingian context at Thetford and in France at Doué la Fontaine¹³ makes export of this ware at this early period to the southern (then Flemish) part of Zeeland from France or from England not at all improbable. This is not simply an attempt to support my assertion of 1939: it is a warning against what might turn out to be a mistaken preconception. And preconceived ideas have so often hindered the truth from coming to light in archaeology; we may reflect on the cave paintings of Altamira, the skull from Heidelberg, Kosinna's theories and many other examples.

May I add a further word about early painted pottery? As the earliest painted pottery of the middle ages was certainly not made at Pingsdorf, I agree with others to call it, for the sake of convenience, Pingsdorf-type ware. In 1937 I published an article about medieval ceramics in Holland in the *Bonner Jahrbücher*¹⁴ which attracted much attention in Germany. I published there my finds from the Wieringermeer, but again with erroneous (too early) datings for certain forms of German stoneware and of green-glazed French pottery (which now also has been found in kilns at Aardenburg in Zeeland by Trimpe Burger), for I dated them 12th-century instead of late 13th-, basing myself on François Poncetton and Georges Salles in their book about French medieval ceramics. I illustrated (*ibid.*, p. 159, fig. 1) sherds of Badorf ware with rouletted decoration combined with red painting from another round earthwork, the so-called Hunneschans on the shore of Lake Uddel in Gelderland, as probably dating from the 10th century.¹⁵ It is now generally agreed that this ware, with the smooth surface of the common Badorf ware, was made at Badorf and that it is the earliest ware with painted decoration made in the Rhineland. Hübener found it at Haithabu in a late 9th-century context¹⁶ and I found examples at Burgh.

In the same article I published some sherds (*ibid.*, p. 160, fig. 2) found at Dorestad which had painted decoration of long streaks, differing from the early Pingsdorf ware (as e.g. reproduced *ibid.*, fig. 3) but very much akin to the late 9th-century costrel from Zelzate and without doubt from the same source (perhaps western Flanders). In Dorestad little Pingsdorf ware came to light in Holwerda's excavations; it was probably only used by the last inhabitants who still lingered there in the late 9th and 10th centuries. I completely agree with Van Regteren Altena¹⁷ that 'although it is highly probable . . . that painted pottery of Pingsdorf type was imported before 1100, there is no firm evidence for it' (except of course the Badorf-Pingsdorf ware and the Zelzate vessel), but I would lay stress on the words *it is highly probable*, for it seems unreasonable to assume that the Badorf-Pingsdorf ware was not immediately followed by other painted (i.e. early Pingsdorf) ware. But although this ware is not much more closely datable than *Kugeltöpfe*, we should not summarily ascribe it all to the later middle ages.¹⁸ It seems safer to conclude with Lobbedey that 'There is now no doubt that fully developed Pingsdorf ware existed in the middle of the 10th century, and probably considerably earlier'.¹⁹ We should keep this in mind also when we find Pingsdorf ware in Dutch settlements.

W. C. BRAAT

¹³ De Bouard's contention seems to me duly proved.

¹⁴ W. C. Braat, 'Frühmittelalterliche Keramik in Holland und ihre Datierung', *Bonner Jahrbücher* CXLII (1937), 157.

¹⁵ Jankuhn called it promptly '*Hunneschans Keramik*'. I would prefer the term 'Badorf-Pingsdorf ware', meaning that it was made at Badorf with Pingsdorf-type decoration.

¹⁶ W. Hübener, *Die Keramik von Haithabu* (Neumünster, 1959), p. 121.

¹⁷ *Med. Archaeol.*, XIII (1969), 130.

¹⁸ Early Pingsdorf ware is generally clearly distinguishable from later products of late 11th- and 12th-century date.

¹⁹ *Med. Archaeol.*, XIII (1969), 123.