

strengthened by the not infrequent discovery of flint arrowheads in its vicinity. There is now no local oral tradition concerning the ship.⁶⁷

Magnus Barefoot was traditionally buried on Irish soil. The site of his grave has never been satisfactorily identified, though a small triangular mound close to Downpatrick known locally as *Magnus' Grave* has been suggested as a possibility.⁶⁸ This mound is undistinguished in character, but its proximity to the Quoile marshes at once suggests a similarity to the marshes so vividly described in the *Heimskringla*.⁶⁹ The discovery of such a large ship at Ballywillin (not certainly Viking, but buried in a manner characteristic of the Viking period) provides ample grounds upon which to speculate that Magnus, or another similarly distinguished warrior, may have been laid to rest there.

C. S. BRIGGS

A LATE MEDIEVAL JUG WITH LETTERING FROM CANONS ASHBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (PL. XXXI; FIGS. 55-6)

In 1963 Mr. J. S. Ashby of Coventry found a potsherd at Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire; it is now in the Central Museum at Northampton (no. D 29/1964). The find-spot is 700 ft. NNW. of St. Mary's Church, close to the western side of a field on the E. side of the road from the village to Central Farm, and on the opposite side of the road to the Manor House. The sherd lay amongst the roots of a fallen tree, in line with the N. garden wall of the Manor House grounds.⁷⁰

It is very probable that the find-spot is on the site of the medieval village of Canons Ashby.⁷¹ The fields (ridge and furrow) of the village are in the deer park to the W. of the Manor House. The main part of the village itself is almost certainly in the field in which the sherd was picked up; slight earthworks are still visible over much of this field. In any case the location is not on the site of Canons Ashby Priory, which lies to the S. and E. of the existing church. I am grateful to J. G. Hurst, who has visited Canons Ashby, for kindly showing me air photographs and discussing the layout of the site.

The fragment (PL. XXXI, A; FIG. 55) is the rim and upper part of a jug. The stump of the upper end of the handle is present; it has two wide grooves down the back, at each side of a sharp central ridge. The fabric is brown in fracture, dense in texture and highly fired. The outside surface is purple-brown, with splashes of a purple glaze; the inside is dark brown and unglazed. Sufficient of the rim remains to show that the jug is narrow-mouthed, with the rim sloping outwards and with a step inside at the turn into the splayed conical neck. The rim-section compares closely with that of a 15th-century jug of similar fabric from the excavations of Coventry city wall.⁷² The jug from Canons Ashby thus belongs to the 'midland purple' group of ceramics, and this identification will be referred to again below.

Parts of two lines of lettering are preserved near the lower edge of the sherd, which are thus the upper part of a wide zone above the bulge of the vessel. The lettering passed round the body of the jug, and continued across the space inside the handle. All the letters are incuse, that is, stamped into the surface. The first line has ten consecutive letters, all perfectly clear, which read *CONMMQEIDM*. The letters are Lombardic,

⁶⁷ Mr. Laurence May kindly imparted much information about local tradition and put the notes of his father, the late A. McL. May, at my disposal.

⁶⁸ *The Archaeological Survey of Co. Down* (H.M.S.O., 1967), 170.

⁶⁹ E. Monsen, *The Heimskringla* (Cambridge, 1931), 603. A more detailed survey of this earthwork is currently being prepared for publication by Michael Avery; I am grateful to him for drawing this to my attention. I must also thank the Librarians of the National Library and the Royal Irish Academy for allowing me to study the documents and for permission to publish them; Professor M. Dolley for encouragement, and Don Patterson of the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, for telling me of Adams' book *Dalriada*.

⁷⁰ N.G.R. SP 577506, O.S. 6 in. map, Northamptonshire, LV, NW.

⁷¹ K. J. Allison, M. W. Beresford and J. G. Hurst, *The Deserted Villages of Northamptonshire* (Leicester Univ., Dept. of English Local History, occasional papers, no. 18, 1966), 35.

⁷² *Trans. Birmingham Archaeol. Soc.*, LXXXI (1966), 114, fig. 8, no. 21.

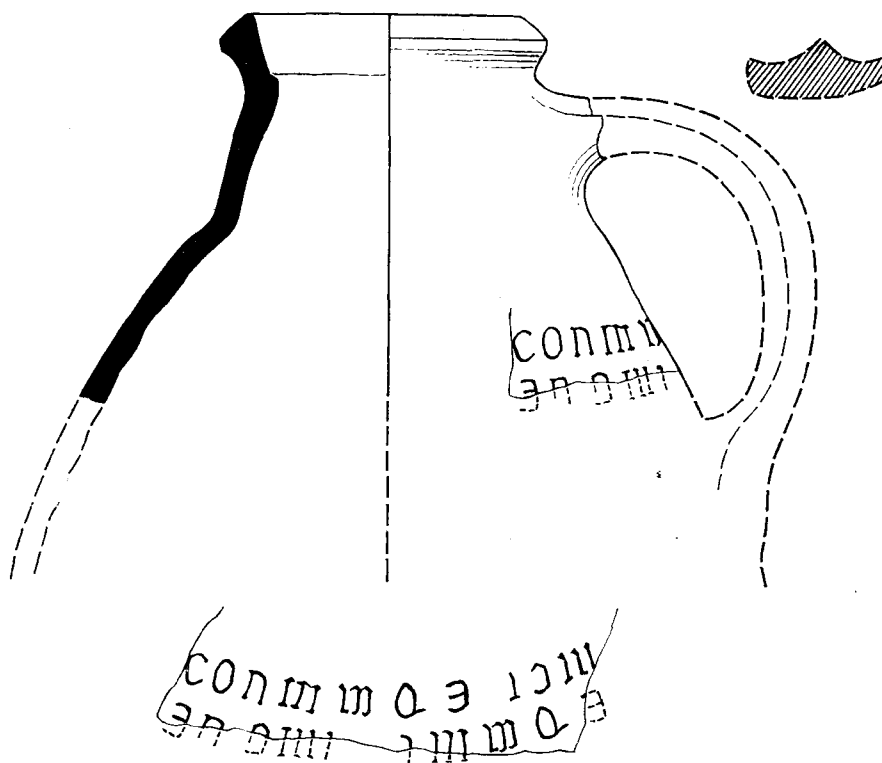


FIG. 55
JUG FROM CANONS ASHBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
(pp. 160 ff.). Sc. $\frac{1}{2}$

the *E* being reversed, and vary from 7 to 9 mm. in height. At the right side of the second line, four of these letters, *MMQE*, are repeated in the same order. In both lines the spacing of these letters is identical, and the first *M* is slightly larger than the second. The middle part of the second line is blurred, so that the letters *CON* are mostly effaced; only the right stroke of the *N* is visible, and is at the same distance from the first *M* which follows it in the first line. The letters at the left side of the second line are too imperfect for certainty after a reversed *E*, but appear to be *ENDMI*. The space between the *E* and *M* is also the same as in the first line, but both of the letters in between are closed at the top. The repetition of all the letters in both lines points to the use of a roller stamp about 4 cm. in diameter, on which the letters stood in relief.

Comparison of the jug from Canons Ashby with the other late medieval jugs with lettering published in this journal⁷³ shows that it belongs to the same group. The similarity is particularly close with the jug from Coventry in regard to fabric, rim-section and the grooved handle, and the technique of the lettering. In style the letters also resemble those on the Coventry jug, though they are larger and in detail are cruder; for instance, the *O* and *Q* lack the cusps at the sides, and the *D* is open on the left side. Moreover, the components of the two inscriptions have several points of identity; in both the *M* is repeated three times, and the letters *D*, *E* and *Q* occur in both of the series of letters.

⁷³ *Med. Archaeol.*, xi (1967), 233-41.

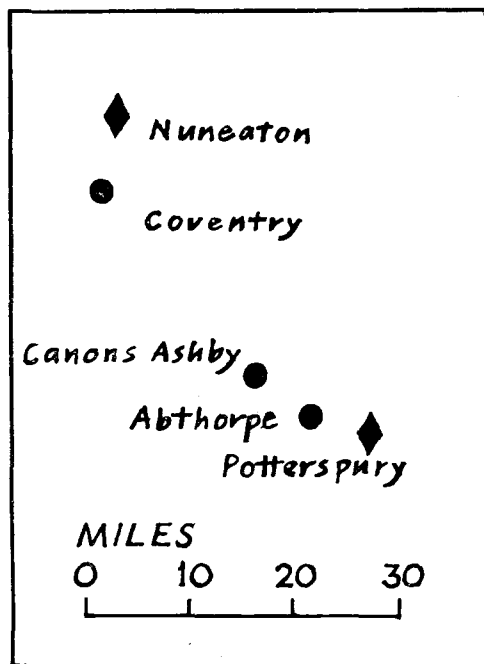


FIG. 56

DISTRIBUTION MAP OF JUGS WITH LETTERING AND
LATE MEDIEVAL POTTERY KILNS IN THE REGION (p. 56)

Circles: jugs with lettering. Diamonds: pottery kilns

However, in spite of this approximation, no interpretation of the letters on the Canons Ashby jug can be offered, whichever letter is taken as the starting-point.

The fact that three late medieval jugs with lettering are known justifies plotting of the find-spots on a map, and considering them in relation to the known pottery kilns in the region. The distribution (FIG. 56) is localized in the midlands, and the distance covered is only 30 miles. The 'midland purple' fabric of the three examples found at Coventry, Canons Ashby and Abthorpe, and the cognate style of the inscriptions on them indicate a common source in the locality. Two pottery kiln centres are known in this immediate region, namely at Chilvers Coton, Nuneaton,⁷⁴ and at Potterspury.⁷⁵ Two of the inscribed jugs were found only 10 miles from each of these places. Until it is feasible to make a direct comparison between all the material, it would be premature to suggest at which of these sources the jugs were made, unless of course they came from another kiln as yet not located. However, in fabric and in structural details, such as rim-form and the emphatic grooving of the handles, it appears more likely that the jugs were produced at the Nuneaton kilns. Abthorpe, the farthest away, is about 35 miles from Nuneaton, and well within the accepted marketing range of medieval pottery kilns.

It may be pointed out that at least partial analogies for the English jugs with lettering are known on the continent. During the excavation of a medieval house in the Warmoesstraat in Amsterdam a large pot was found in the foundation trench of the

⁷⁴ Interim report in *Med. Archaeol.*, xii (1968), 208-10.

⁷⁵ Preliminary report by E. M. Jope in *Archaeol. News Letter*, ii (1950), 156-7.

building. The vessel (PL. XXXI, B-C) is ovoid in form, 35 cm. high, and made of the blue-grey ware in general use over a large part of the Netherlands and Flanders in medieval times. Above the shoulder is a single line of inscription with the repeated words *AVE. MARI. AVE. MARIA* in Gothic style, made by a roller stamp.⁷⁶ The stratigraphical position of the vessel shows that it was buried just before or when the wall of the house was built. Nothing was found inside it; there is one instance of a pot filled with ash and bones of ox and sheep, which is considered to be a kind of building sacrifice or ritual deposit, being buried in the 16th century on the inner side of the foundation trench of a house at Leeuwarden. In discussing the Amsterdam pot H. H. van Regteren Altena considered that it had a more direct liturgical use, since the first owner and occupant of the house was Jan Diers, a priest of the parish church near by.

Otherwise the only close parallels are in Czechoslovakia, localized in S. Bohemia. These are also large ovoid jars, dated early 15th century. Several have the single name *MARIA* stamped on the upper part, while another jar, 48 cm. high, has part of a Hussite chorale, roller-stamped in three zones.⁷⁷

Although any direct connexion between Bohemia and the Netherlands at this time is difficult to envisage, the identity of the *Maria* inscriptions on pottery in these countries is a striking fact. It is relevant to refer here to Italian and Netherlandish maiolica of the late 15th and 16th centuries, bearing the sacred monogram *IHS*. These pedestal vases were intended for flowers, and Bernard Rackham originally suggested their use on the altar.⁷⁸ Examples imported to England have been found in London and elsewhere.⁷⁹

In the case of the earlier and less overt jugs with lettering found in England, insofar as the inscriptions are legible they appear to be religious or magical in character. In that case it is possible to relate them to the widespread practice of witchcraft, and the prevalence of superstitious beliefs in Europe during the later middle ages and since.⁸⁰ Even a papal bull was issued by Innocent VIII in 1484 against these cults and deploring the spread of witchcraft on the continent.

G. C. DUNNING

THE GREAT HALL AT BOLINGBROKE CASTLE, LINCOLNSHIRE (PL. XXXII; FIG. 57)

In volumes x (1966) and xiii (1969) of this journal Dr. M. W. Thompson described the first five years' work at Bolingbroke undertaken as part of a scheme for the consolidation of the castle by the D.O.E. In 1965 Thompson located a stone structure parallel to the NE. wall, the substantial nature of which suggested that it represented the remains of a hall.⁸¹ Documentary evidence also suggests this as the probable site of a hall in existence in the 15th century. Between 1404 and 1413 a tower "at the east end of the hall" was repaired at a cost of £350.⁸² Assuming the hall to be adjacent to the curtain wall this tower can only be tower Q or A.⁸³ In 1518-19 the "south wall of the King's

⁷⁶ *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek*, xix (1969), 242-4, fig. 5, II, no. 1 and pls. xxxii-xxxiii.

⁷⁷ *Medieval Ceramics in Czechoslovakia* (Guide to Exhibition in the National Museum, Prague, 1962), 29, pl. 12; Květa Reichertová, *Středověká Keramika ze Seximova Ústí, Tábora a Kozího Hrádku* (Archeologické Studijní Materiály, III, Institut d'Archéologie de l'Académie Tchécoslovaque des Sciences, Prague, 1965), 73, fig. 28, no. 2, and fig. 29, nos. 1 and 3.

⁷⁸ *Antiq. Jnl.*, xix (1939), 285-90. J. G. Hurst, *Records of Bucks.*, xviii (1971), 362-4. The MS. Douce 219 in the Bodleian Library, illuminated c. 1485-90 by the 'Master of Mary of Burgundy', depicts flower vases and also dishes with the sacred monogram.

⁷⁹ The sacred monogram also occurs on the bases of bowls, as at Basing House, Hampshire: *Post-Med. Archaeol.*, iv (1970), 83-5, fig. 24, no. 296.

⁸⁰ H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Pelican Book, 1969), *passim*, especially 24-54.

⁸¹ *Med. Archaeol.*, x (1966), 154, fig. 62.

⁸² H. M. Colvin, *The History of the King's Works*, III (H.M.S.O., forthcoming).

⁸³ *Loc. cit.* in note 81.