coast of England. There may well be other unidentified jug sherds but the cooking pots are easier to identify because of their collared rims. Barton has done us a service here in England in drawing this type more formally to our attention so that they may be looked for further in English museum collections and excavations.

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A CERAMIQUE ONCTUEUSE VESSEL FROM DOVER: A BRETON SOUVENIR? (FIGS. 5–6)

Professor P.-R. Giot’s recent study of the ceramique onctueuse of Brittany has drawn attention to an important medieval pottery industry which is characterized by its oily texture, its softness (Mohs scale: 1–2) and the talc inclusions in the fabric.1 Giot has shown that this very distinctive ware was made of clays located near outcrops of talc found in a small region of W. Finistère. As a result of Giot’s publication it became clear that a dish from Snargate Street, Dover, published as probably of Cornish origin in fact bears similarities to the ceramique onctueuse (FIG. 5).2 Dr G. C. Dunning’s conclusions on this pot in the report on the find were based largely on a petrological report by Dr P. A. Sabine which can be usefully reiterated here: “The brownish-red pottery is composed of abundant mineral fragments, some up to 5 mm. in length, set in a matrix of crypto-crystalline material. A high proportion of the larger fragments and a considerable number of the smaller ones are composed of fibrous masses of talc, the fragments being elongate in the direction of foliation. Monoclinic amphibole is present in idiomorphic grains and sheared fragments occasionally up to 2 mm. in length. Scarce grains and wisps of goethite and grains of limonite are also found, whilst granules of opaque iron ore up to 0.3 mm. grain size are common. The matrix contains abundant small fragments of minerals, set in deep reddish-brown lowly birefringent material.”3

The chief petrographer of the Institute of Geological Sciences kindly made this thin-section available, and in addition to the minerals noted above a few grains of a brown mineral with the maschenstruktur of serpentine were observed. Dr D. P. S. Peacock has confirmed that these grains are microscopically identical to green serpentine which has been experimentally fired. Professor Giot made available samples of ceramique
onctueuse from Bodères (Fig. 6), one of the likely production centres for this ware. In thin-section there was clearly a similarity in texture between the Dover dish and the Bodères sample. However, there were neither grains of monoclinic pyroxene nor any serpentine in the sherd from Bodères, while a further marked difference was the considerable quantity of minerals of the epidote group present in this sample.

The analyses suggest that the Dover dish is Breton rather than Cornish in origin, as pottery of this period with talc inclusions and such a distinctive texture has not been identified in Cornwall. The form is also quite consistent with a Breton source, although of course similar dishes were made in Cornwall. The difference in thin-section may be a consequence of different clay sources being used within the locality of the potters’ centres. This is quite probable since the industry was in existence for nearly a millennium serving coastal districts all around Brittany until the 18th century.

This is the first ceramique onctueuse vessel to have been recognized outside Brittany (Fig. 6). The association of the dish with Saintonge polychromes in the garderobe in Snargate Street suggests that it might have been taken by an English or Gascon wine-merchant while his ship was docked at Penmarc’h, the nearest large settlement and port to the likely pottery centres. Penmarc’h was an expanding fishing-port by the 14th century to which Chaucer refers in the Franklin’s Tale, and which had trade connexions with SW. England (Fig. 6). It was, then, probably as an oddity, perhaps even a souvenir, that this dish was brought to Dover, for ceramique onctueuse has a texture quite unlike any other medieval pottery, and is aptly named.

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1 P.-R. Giot, 'La ceramique onctueuse de Cornouaille', Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Finistère, xcvi (1971), 109-30. Professor Giot introduced me to ceramique onctueuse and kindly sent me samples of it: I am very grateful to him for his assistance and encouragement. I am obliged to the chief petrographer of the Institute of Geological Sciences for making Dr Sabine's thin-section available. Dr David Peacock advised me on the interpretations of the sections, and to him I am most indebted. Finally, Miss L. Dyson-Bruce kindly prepared the drawings from my originals.


3 Ibid., 152.


5 Giot, op. cit. in note 1, 109.


MEDIAEVAL TUNING PEGS FROM WHITBY, N. YORKSHIRE (FIG. 7)

In a recent volume of this journal,¹ Professor Donald Fry described in detail four small bone artefacts illustrated in Peers's and Radford's report of the 1924-5 excavation at Whitby, N. Yorkshire.² These he correctly identified, for the first time, as tuning pegs from stringed musical instruments, and suggested that they are to be associated with the large amounts of other Whitby bonework which, where stratified, dates mostly between A.D. 657 and 867, the first occupation of the site.

Unfortunately, however, the results of some recent research tend to suggest the likelihood of a date very much later than this, and that the instruments concerned are rather unlikely to have been lyres. Besides the circumstantial evidence of the presence of early Anglo-Saxon bone on the site, support for assigning the pegs to such a period is somewhat lacking, for, as Fry remarks, they were found in an unstratified context.³ As such they join the rapidly increasing ranks of very similar objects found in museum collections and during recent excavations elsewhere in England.⁴ These they resemble not only in size but also in shape and material, and there are currently upwards of twenty such bone pegs known (excluding more than a dozen of a shorter type), many of them from sites with occupations beginning in Saxon times, just as at Whitby, but with human activity continuing unbroken throughout the middle ages. Fortunately a good number of these pegs are stratified, some very closely, and none of them is earlier than the example from Wallingstones near Hereford, which dates from the end of the 12th century (FIG. 7, e).⁵

If, moreover, we turn to the known instruments of the first millennium, we can see there immediately the apparently exclusive use of wood, and soft wood at that, in the making of their tuning-peg's. Of the ten lyres known to have been excavated⁶ less than half bore any trace of surviving pegs, and despite extensive research no stray individual finds have been made (a fact that in itself might suggest that the material used was customarily a soft one). The four known sets of pegs⁷ were in fact all of wood, which was identified in the case of the Sutton Hoo lyre as being of a particularly soft type,⁸ and so we are faced with a complete absence of any early parallels for the material composition of the Whitby pieces; since none of the surviving wooden pegs could be said to have any structural characteristics it is impossible to assess the significance of any morphological similarities.

The contention that bone is not a characteristic of Anglo-Saxon lyre tuning-peg's has further support from the practicalities of fitting-out and operating instruments of this sort. For both structural and functional reasons it is not advantageous for such moving parts to be made from a material harder and stronger than that of the wooden structure into which they fit, unless the instrument is either to have metal stringing or is