A Jutish Ware vessel from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

Alan Vince

Whilst the author was undertaking a survey of Anglo-Saxon pottery from sites in the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria a sherd from a site in Gateshead was shown to him, as a possible Anglo-Saxon vessel. The vessel was handmade, black throughout and with a burnished outer surface. However, it was recognised visually as being an example of Jutish Ware, a coarseware produced in Jutland during the post-medieval period. In fact, the tradition survived until the Second World War.

At that time, the author was unaware of other examples in the British Isles and undertook a petrological and chemical analysis of the sherd so as to provide a reference point should further examples come to light, and for comparison with genuine Anglian pottery.

It is unlikely that they were ever traded but this conclusion can only be tested once the existence of the type on British sites is more widely known.

Description

Petrological analysis

The following inclusions were noted in thin section:

Chemical analysis

A sample of the Gateshead vessel was analysed using Inductively Coupled Plasma Spectroscopy. The resulting data were then studied using Principal Components Analysis. They were compared with a range of fine-textured sandy wares from sources around the North Sea:

- Samples of Flemish floor tiles from York, Hull and Launceston (Cornwall). These are shown as half-filled circles on Fig 1).
- Samples of London-type ware from sites around London (half-filled squares on Fig 1).
- Samples of medieval glazed wares from Sigtuna which have been variously identified as of Flemish, London and local origin! (Filled squares on Fig 1).
- A sample of Coarse London-type ware from the same Sigtuna site (Open diamond on Fig 1).
- A sample of a Jutish ware oven tile from Viborg, Jutland (V918, filled circle on Fig 1)
- Samples of Jutish Germanic Iron Age pottery from various sites in Jutland (filled diamonds on Fig 1).

- Samples of Low Countries Highly Decorated ware from a kiln site in Bruges and from Aardenburg and Ieper (Ypres). These are shown as dotted circles on Fig 1.

Plotting PC1 against PC2, shows that the data fall into two clusters, one containing the Flemish floor tiles and the other the remaining samples. This split is due to the presence of calcium carbonate in the floor tiles. The elongate nature of the clusters in Fig 1 is due to variations in the quantity of silica present. High silica content causes samples to plot further towards the bottom right hand corner of the graph. The Gateshead Jutish ware sample plots at the edge the floor tile cluster whilst the Viborg sample falls into the other cluster.

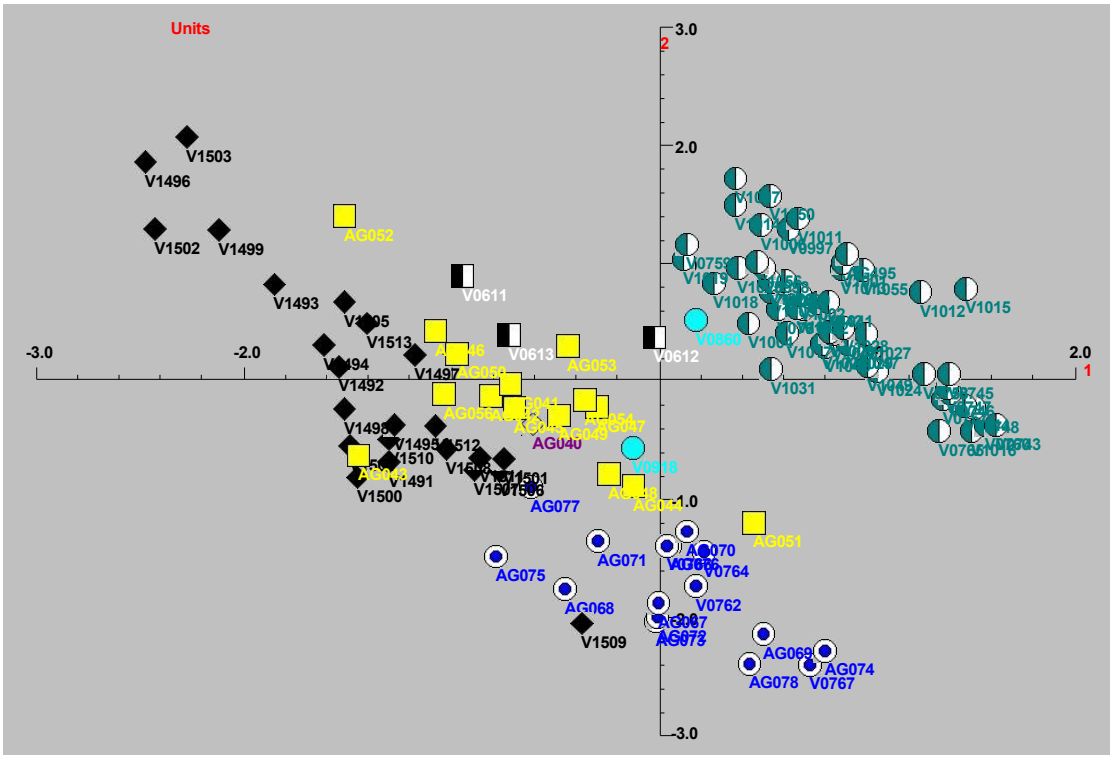

Figure 1

A plot of PC3 against PC4, however, separates most of the Sigtuna unsourced samples and the Jutish Germanic Iron Age samples, whilst leaving the two Jutish wares in the same cluster as the Flemish/London/Low Countries Highly Decorated samples (Fig 2). The main reasons for these separations are the rare earth content of the Sigtuna samples and the P2O5, Na2) and Ba contents of the Germanic Iron Age samples. Phosphates commonly form concretions in the pores of vessels buried on archaeological sites whilst the sodium and barium contents are probably influenced by the presence of feldspars in glacial erratics. Two of the Sigtuna samples, however, plot with the main cluster: AG43 and AG48.

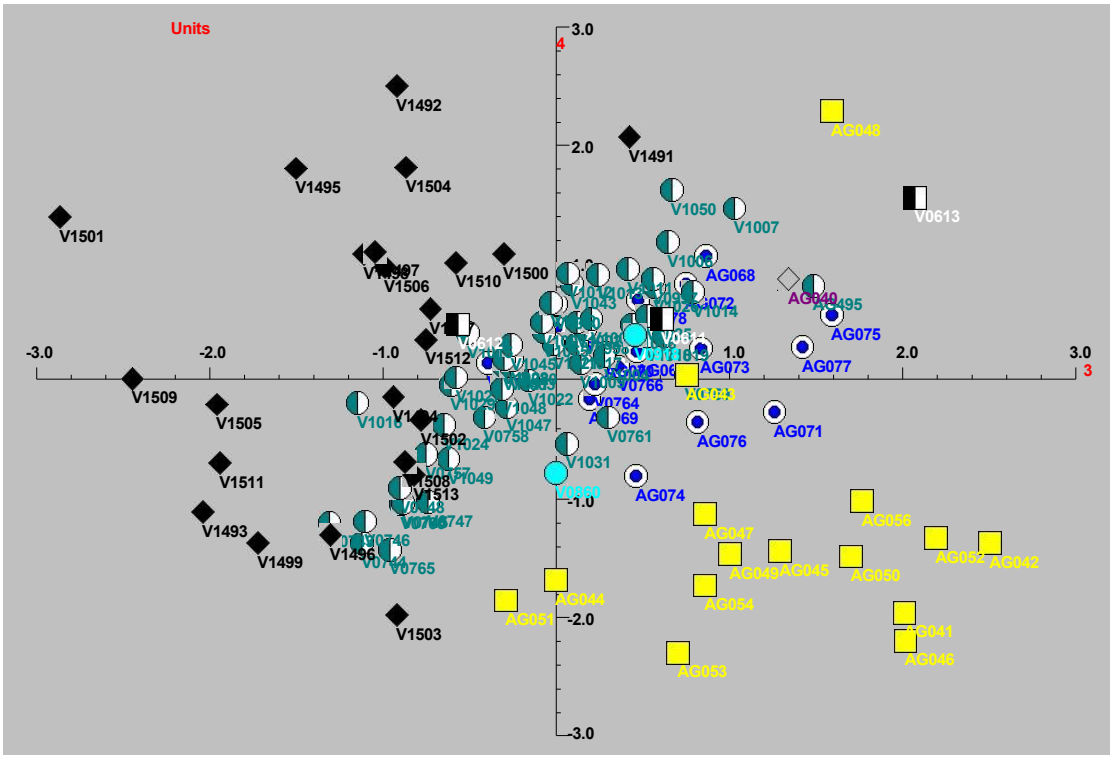

Figure 2

Although this analysis is consistent with the Viborg and Gateshead samples belonging to the same chemical group it indicates a broad similarity in composition between them and samples from Flanders and the Thames valley.

The Jutish ware samples were then compared with samples of post-medieval red earthenwares from various sites in Scandinavia and northwest Europe (Fig 3):

- Husum (Filled diamonds).
- Luneburg (Filled squares).
- Lubeck (Unfilled diamonds).
- Lund (Half-filled squares).
- Low Countries Red Earthenware (from Gateshead). Half-filled circles.
- A clay sample from Viborg (V919, dotted circle)

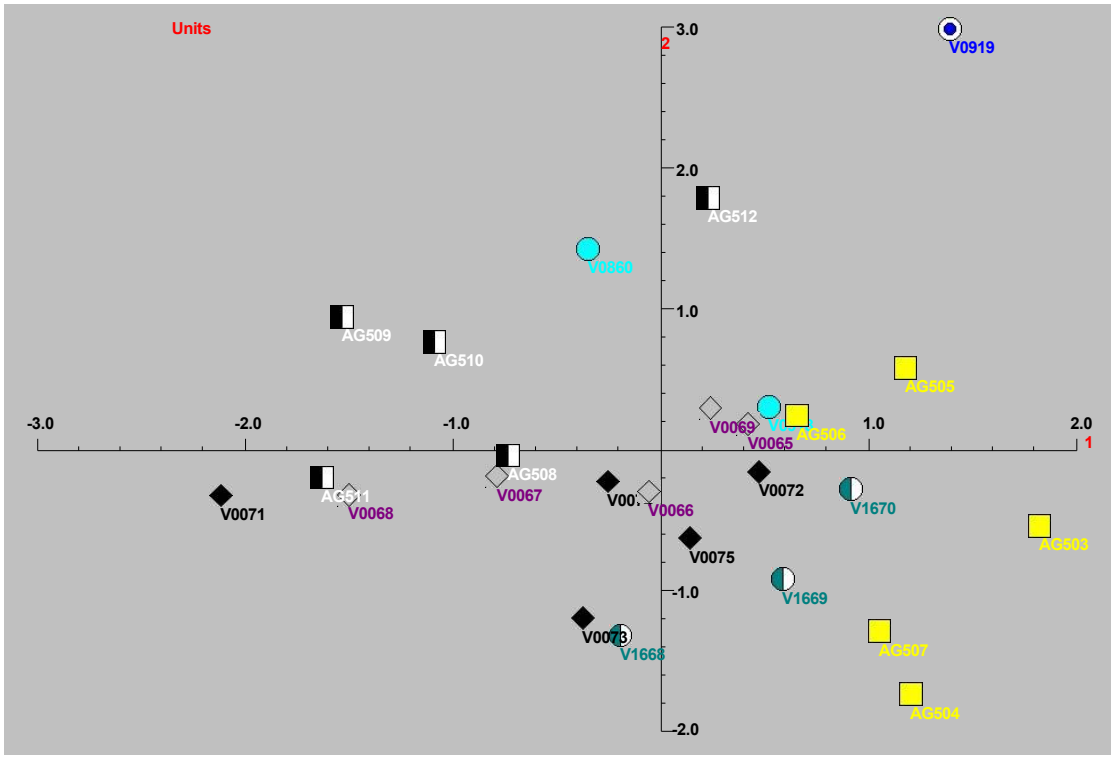

Figure 3

The main factors governing this plot are silica, which is high towards the right hand side of the graph, calcium and zircon, which are high towards the top of the graph and iron, titanium and potassium which are all higher towards the bottom of the graph. Here too the two Jutish ware samples fail to cluster with each other. The Gateshead piece plots alongside samples from Lund whereas the Viborg sample plots at a point where the clusters from Luneborg, Husum and Lubeck overlap. The Viborg clay sample is a clear outlier in this analysis.

A plot of PC3 against PC4 separates the Luneburg and Lund samples from the remainder (Fig 4). This is primarily due to calcium and sodium content. The Viborg tile sample is still plotted with the Lubeck pieces whilst the Gateshead Jutish ware sample is plotted in the centre of a diffuse group of Husum samples. The Viborg clay in this analysis plots close to the Viborg tile and Lubeck samples. The three Gateshead Low Countries Redware samples plot at the extreme edge of the Husum and Lubeck samples.

Combining the information from these two analyses, we can see that the apparent similarity in composition between the Jutish ware pieces and the remainder is probably illusory. This appears to be confirmed by a third plot, of PC5 against PC6 (Fig 5). In this analysis the Gateshead Jutish ware forms an outlier, apparently because of its manganese and phosphate contents. The Low Countries Redware samples form a discrete group, whilst all the rest, including the Viborg tile and clay, form one large diffuse cluster in which the individual groups are still recognisable but cannot be clearly separated.

In conclusion, therefore, it seems that either the Viborg tile and clay sample and the Gateshead vessel were made in a fabric which is varying in chemical composition or they are all three made from different raw materials.

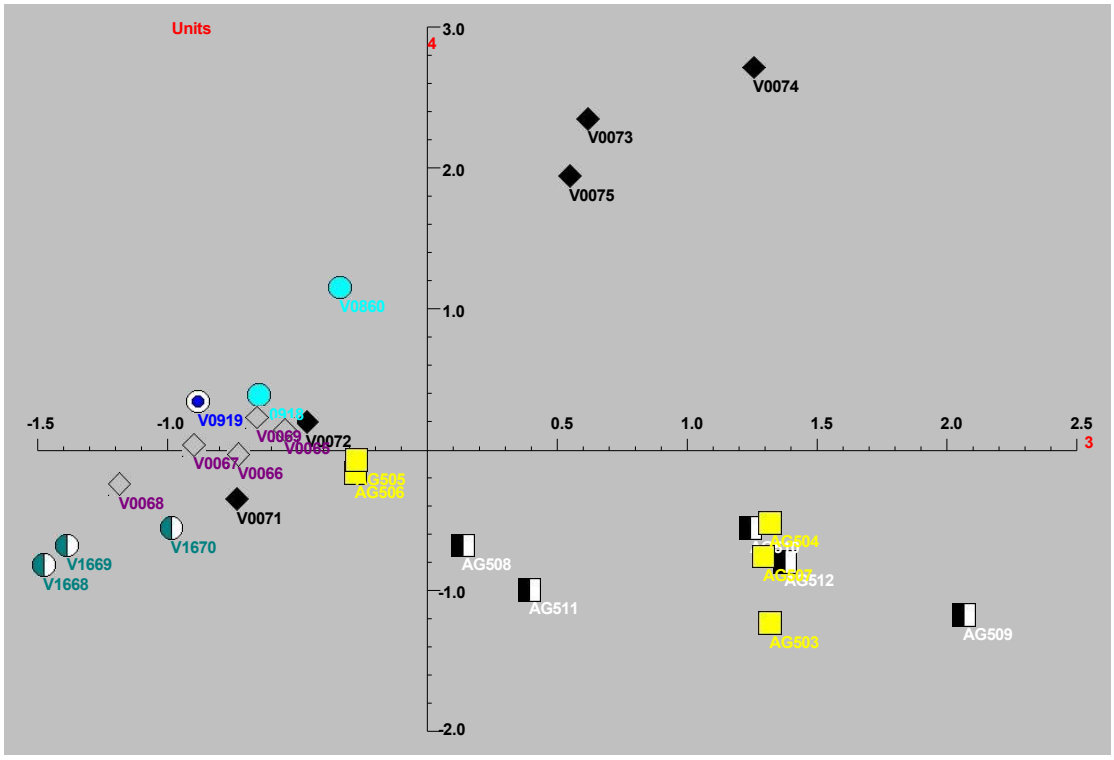

Figure 4

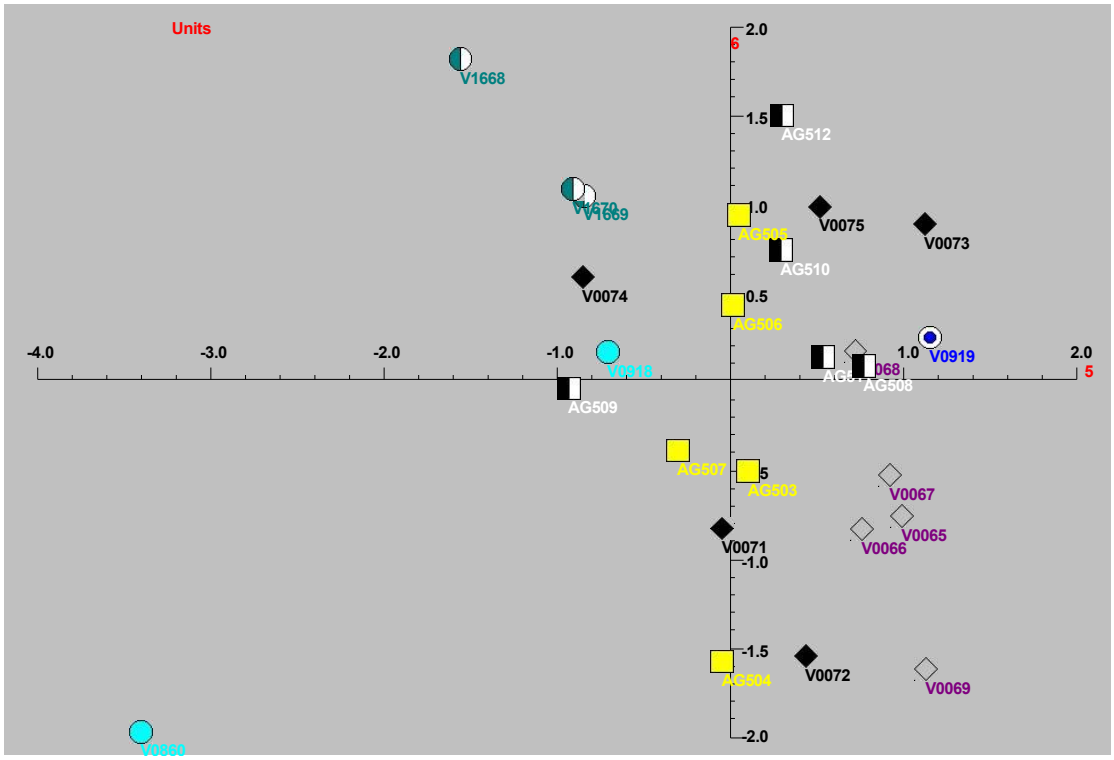

Figure 5