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(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

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Editor Alison Taylor

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Editorial

My first task in this volume is to thank and pay tribute to the retiring editor, Audrey Meaney. She took the Proceedings through several difficult years, from 1993–7, coping in particular with new publishing technology and increasingly complex archaeological reports. In this time she made tremendous efforts to catch up with annual publication, so that, by September 1998, we are only nine months behind the date for which the issue is intended. This is despite the size and professional standards required for the only vehicle for regular reporting of most archaeological discoveries to a wide local and international readership in Cambridgeshire, as well as publishing historical and other antiquarian research.

1996–7 once again had a well-filled programme for the Society, with two conferences, on Fenland Waterways in March and on recent archaeological excavations in November. There was an impressive programme of lectures, headed by Barry Cunliffe and our own ex-President Christopher Taylor, and some enjoyable excursions. It was also a year when the Council, and in particular its President and Secretary, were involved in efforts to protect local services for archives, archaeology and local studies. Sadly, just as this volume was being prepared for the press, we heard of the deaths of two of our stalwart members and supporters. Nesta Rooke, for many years Sites and Monuments Officer for Cambridgeshire, and Brian Charge, Director of the Haverhill and District Archaeological Group, died in July 1998.

This volume contains a few minor changes in design, principally with the intention of making better use of expensive space, and it follows the usual format except for the revival, after several years, of a Reviews section. As a first attempt it perhaps appears rather incestuous, but I hope that in future we will receive a wider range of books, and I would also welcome offers of suitable reviews by other writers. This is an important way to bring works that might easily be missed to the attention of members, and to entice them to read reports which are often more interesting than their titles suggest.

Alison Taylor

Medieval Pottery from Cambridge

Sites in the Bene't Street – Market area

David Edwards and David Hall

Introduction

The urban archaeology of Cambridge still remains poorly developed. Like many towns, it suffered considerable depredations in the 1960s and 1970s, both in the heart of the medieval town and in the area of the Roman settlement on Castle Hill (Addyman and Biddle 1965).¹ A series of rescue excavations in both areas made efforts to mitigate the effects of development work, but while much valuable information was recovered, particularly with regard to Roman Cambridge, such work has as yet contributed relatively little to our understanding of the development of the medieval lower town. Unlike many towns, Oxford being an obvious comparison, very few opportunities for investigating substantial areas of town blocks, and especially street frontages, have presented themselves over the last 30 years, and indeed the likelihood of opportunities appearing in the foreseeable future appears slight. It is ironic that, while the history and architectural wealth of the University and collegiate buildings have attracted considerable attention, the medieval face of the 'Town' remains largely unknown.

Many questions, both general and specific, still remain unanswered concerning the development of Cambridge. Little hard evidence has yet been found concerning the early medieval history of the town outside the Castle Hill area where there seems to be substantial pre-Conquest occupation. However, Saxo-Norman pottery, albeit often poorly dated, occurs quite widely, while the presence of pre-Conquest churches points to the existence of an extensive settlement, within and possibly extending beyond the King's Ditch. More generally, questions concerning the character of medieval settlement, the development of street layouts, localising industrial or trade areas or the use-history of plots have yet to be explored archaeologically.

Opportunities for developing the study of the material culture of medieval Cambridge in all its manifestations must also be considered. At a basic level, ceramic studies within Cambridgeshire as a whole remain poorly developed (Mellor 1994) both in our knowledge of production sites and the character of

medieval assemblages. Pottery studies in this region, still focused primarily on defining chronologies, remain largely dependent on the pioneering work of Hurst (1956, 1957, 1959) and results of excavations at Wintringham (Beresford 1977) and Denny Abbey, Waterbeach (Coppack 1980), the only sites which had produced substantial stratified deposits. Within Cambridge itself, only small groups have been published (Addyman and Biddle *op. cit.*; McCarthy 1974), material from the limited rescue excavations associated with the many city centre developments of the 1960s and 1970s remaining largely unpublished. More ambitious analyses, concerned with, for example, function and social context (Brown 1997, Cumberpatch 1997) have yet to begin.

Ceramic studies form only one element of broader research interests concerned with patterns of medieval subsistence and consumption within Cambridge. There is also considerable potential to compare and contrast assemblages of all forms of material relating to the various components of the medieval town, the University and the religious houses being of particular interest. In view of the substantial property holdings of religious houses, for example, Cambridge represents a particularly interesting townscape within which to investigate the archaeological manifestations of the Dissolution. The impact of the Dissolution on religious houses is of course well known. Locally, the end of Denny Abbey provides particularly valuable archaeological material associated with this period, repeating a pattern encountered at sites such as the Austin Friars, Leicester (Mellor and Pearce 1981), and the monastic grange at Sawtry (Moorhouse 1971), with highly distinctive demolition horizons. As at Denny Abbey, such episodes commonly saw the dumping of substantial quantities of domestic artefacts, especially pottery. Such well-dated groups have potential not only for refining ceramic chronologies but also for analysis of well-contexted assemblages and their composition.

Since 1990, Cambridge Archaeological Unit has maintained a significant presence within the town, exploring a range of sites spanning most periods of its history, providing amongst other finds several

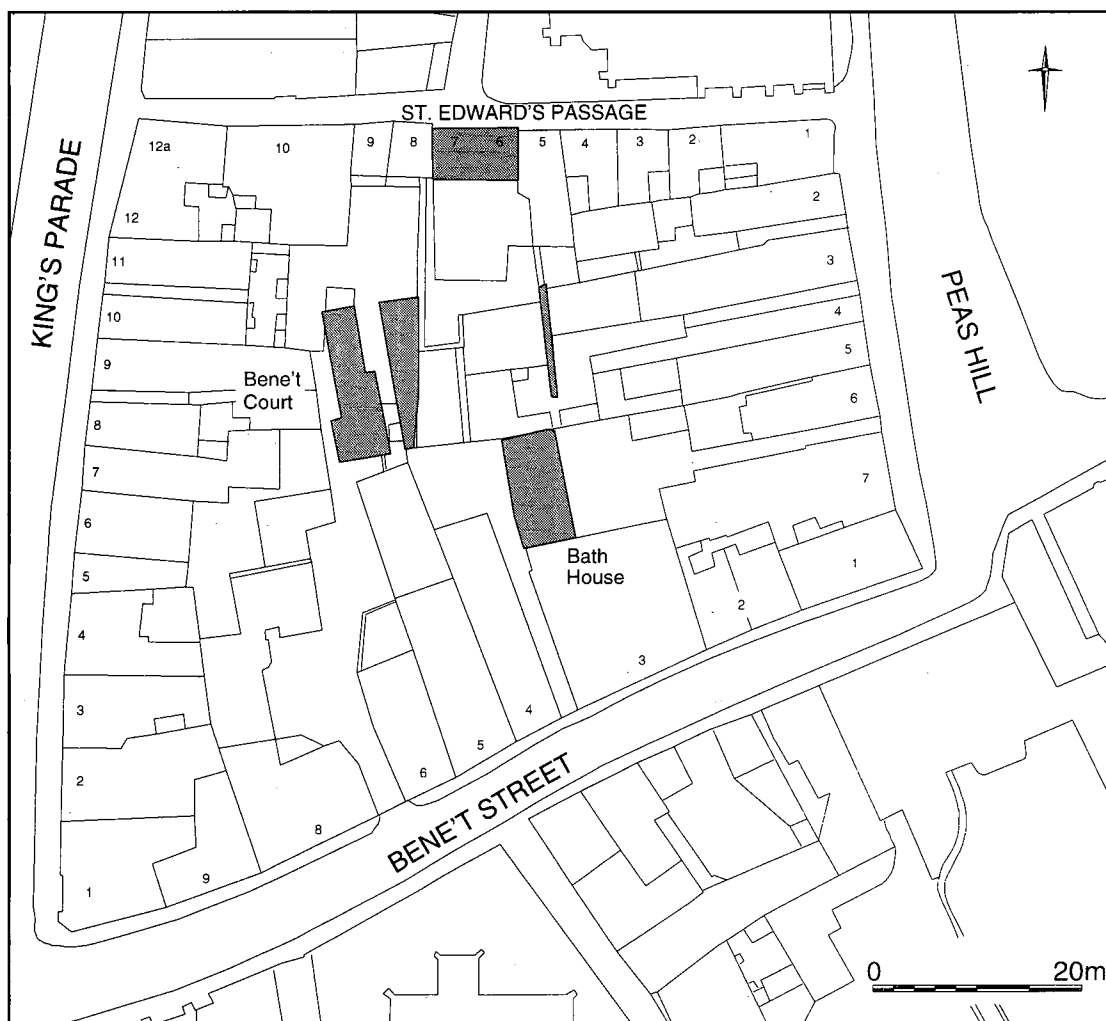


Figure 1.

important pottery groups.² Some excavations have dealt with parts of the Roman suburbs at New Hall (Evans 1996), while on Castle Hill quantities of Roman and Middle Saxon material, albeit much disturbed, have recently been recovered (Alexander 1996). Within the lower town, excavations at St. John's College (Dickens 1996) have revealed important groups of medieval material, primarily of the 11th–13th centuries, while three excavations within the town block southwest of the Market produced other groups, mainly of the later medieval and early post-medieval periods. This latter group is discussed here, with a brief review of the archaeological and documentary evidence for this town block,³ and forms the first of what is hoped will be a series of synthetic reports on recent work within Cambridge.

The Excavations

Major building works carried out during 1994–1995 associated with the rebuilding of the Arts Theatre and construction of new facilities for Corpus Christi College were accompanied by excavations by Cambridge Archaeological Unit within the city-centre

block bounded by Bene't Street, King's Parade (the medieval High Street), St. Edward's Passage and Peas Hill, at the southern end of the market place. The location of these sites and their restricted surface coverage meant that they had limited potential to address questions concerning the development of the town block and the history of individual properties (Fig. 1). Both the Bene't Court and Bath Hotel sites lay in areas that were probably used as rear yards and gardens in the medieval period. The small area at St. Edward's Passage was located in a long-established lane but, as indicated by late 16th century maps, was probably the one area of street frontage which had not been developed by that date. Later cellaring along the lane frontage had also removed any late medieval and early post-medieval deposits.

Documentary sources indicate that the street frontages of the block were fully built-up by the 14th century, with the exception of a small area along St. Edward's Passage, but the interior of the block remained largely undeveloped.⁴ Bene't Court site lies to the rear of a messuage fronting King's Parade (probably Nos. 5–9), owned by Anglesey Abbey from the mid 14th century. The frontage was leased out, but a

garden at the rear appears to have been reserved by the Abbey. The Bath Hotel site appears to represent the extreme west end of the property occupied by the White Hart inn by the 1440s, which fronted on to Peas Hill. Houses and garden properties along St. Edward's Passage were being divided from main properties fronting either King's Parade or the Market frontage, the excavation area falling close to the boundary between the two.

Bene't Court

The largest site investigated, Bene't Court (Edwards 1996), lay to the rear of the King's Parade frontage (Nos. 7–11). Evidence for early activity was negligible, with only a single Middle Saxon sherd identified and small quantities of Saxo-Norman wares potentially of 10th or 11th century date. The first significant activity on the site may date to the 13th or possibly late 12th centuries, a phase marked by widespread pitting across the site, almost certainly for gravel extraction. Generally backfilled with existing soils, the pit fills incorporated small quantities of Saxo-Norman and later pottery, but they do not appear to have been used for rubbish disposal in a more formal way. A sondage on the east side of the site revealed structural remains, probably broadly contemporary with, and respected by, the quarrying activities, and a well in the centre of the site. Sherds from the fills suggest a 13th century date for its abandonment.

Quarrying was followed by a relatively well-defined 'agricultural' phase (Phase III) over much of the site, marked by a widespread horizon of silty clay soils, its lower levels representing the turned and returned upper fills of the pits. Limited sherd material indicates a broadly 14th century date for this phase. Two wells were latterly sunk through these layers and infilled, probably in the late 14th century. A single beam slot and two post settings indicate the presence of buildings along parts of the north edge of the site, providing a first suggestion of land division. This became clearer in Phase IV, spanning the 15th century, with the laying-out of a gravelled surface or lane across the north of the site, subsequently weathered and patched. Postholes running across the area may represent a boundary wall that was further raised following resurfacing of this lane. The centre of the site appears to have remained open, while a cobbled surface, relaid in gravel, covered parts of its south end. This surface was somewhat lower than contemporary levels to the north, reflecting the absence of build-ups of agricultural soils in this area. A further resurfacing at the north end of the site was linked with the first stone wall construction on the site of coursed flint, seen in the north baulk.

The northern boundary was re-established and maintained by substantial east-west walls running across the site. Floors, some possibly tiled, and structural elements on its north side indicate the presence of buildings there. The wall was then rebuilt and shifted just to the north, with foundations in brick and clunch, probably a wooden superstructure, and at least one internal partition wall running to the north.

Areas to the south appear to have remained open, with a stone-lined well inserted near the east edge of the site.

Phase V activity, dating to the late 15th and early 16th century, saw more pits dug on both sides of the northern wall and through existing surfaces at the south end of the site. A section of a substantial north-south ditch, possibly marking the back end of the plot was found behind No. 9 King's Parade. The fills of most of the features were notable for including quantities of demolition material and domestic debris, including important groups of pottery and leather shoes.

In the later 16th century, the southern part of the site to the rear of No. 8 King's Parade was resurfaced as a yard, with a well. This was probably bounded to the north by new clunch walls along the line of the present No. 9, enclosing a brick cellar. The area to the north remained open, with a number of pits being cut. The yard area was latterly cut away by a massive pit that was later filled with organic-rich deposits, largely consisting of stableyard sweepings or similar material, covered with rubble and again resurfaced.

Despite the limited areas investigated a number of conclusions can be drawn. For most of the medieval period, the area to the rear of Nos. 8–9 King's Parade appears to have been open. Used for gravel quarrying during the 13th century, subsequently given over to gardens, the location of a number of wells close to or over later property boundaries suggest this area was undivided, and may well have lain within the 'Garden of the Priory of Anglesey'. By the 14th century however, the first of a number of structures and lane ways appear to the north, in the area behind No. 10 King's Parade. The sequence of walls and gravel surfaces in this area indicates a tenement behind No. 11 King's Parade with a lane and property wall along its south side, the lane probably giving access to King's Parade, along the north side of the Priory of Anglesey property. While the central area may have remained open, the first cobbled yards at the south end of the site may also have been accessed from part of this property.

Demolition and dumping episodes are likely to date to the mid 16th century, when there were other changes to the site. After this, wall lines to the rear of No. 9 were extended to the east, possibly marking an expansion of this property, with a surfaced yard and well to the south. The rear of No. 10 still remained open, probably as a yard with buildings to the north, and a well was later dug here.

St. Edward's Passage

A further small site was investigated during 1995 in the centre of the northern frontage of the town block at No. 7 St. Edward's Passage (Mortimer 1995). The area measured c. 12m x 5m of which only half was available for excavation due to cellars and standing structures. Later cellars and buildings had removed almost all late and post-medieval stratigraphy, with only cut features surviving.

Most of these features were gravel pits. Cut in a

fairly random pattern, they reflect piecemeal quarrying activities. Backfills were predominantly redeposited soil layers including little artefactual material although three pit groups seem to have been used for rubbish disposal. Sparsity of finds, absence of water-laid fills and unweathered sides of the pits all suggest that they were dug and backfilled within a relatively short period. The pitting sequence cannot be precisely dated and the possibility remains that much of the ceramic material may be residual. However, the earliest seven pits produced sherds of exclusively Saxo-Norman types including St. Neots, Thetford and Stamford wares. In view of the lack of later material and the likelihood that material was incorporated in the pits from previously dumped material, a 12th century or even earlier date cannot be discounted.

A wicker-lined well at the west side of the site could not be stratigraphically related to the pits. However, as its fill included 13th and 14th century sherds and it is located in an area undisturbed by pitting, the well may be contemporary with, and respected by, the latest of the quarries.

Foundation work to the south of the site also exposed an 11m north-south section which extended towards the Bath Hotel site, crossing the rear of the plots 3-5 Peas Hill. Although not available for excavation, the exposed section again revealed extensive pitting but no evidence for medieval structures. The earliest pits seem likely to be for gravel extraction although the significance of others remains uncertain. Some may have been linear ditch features. A well at the south end of the section probably lay at the extreme rear of the No. 5 Peas Hill property.

Bath Hotel

Excavations to the rear of the Bath Hotel were also limited, not penetrating beneath the projected foundation levels, leaving earlier medieval levels unexcavated (Edwards 1997).⁵ Due to this it was not possible to confirm whether the same pattern of intense quarrying occurred in this area. Much of the area was taken up by a series of late medieval pits or tanks which had removed much of the earlier stratigraphy, although ephemeral traces of probably 14th-century floors were recorded on the east side of the area. Latterly the area appears to have been built over, probably by a workshop or outbuilding rather than a domestic structure. The main features were truncated and recut tanks, several with wooden linings and clay floor surrounds. The best preserved was nearly square. Their function remains unclear, although tanning remains a possibility. Artefactual and faunal remains recovered from this small site were limited, largely confined to dumps infilling the largest of the tanks with material very similar to the major dumps from Bene't Court and again likely to date to the mid 16th century.

The Pottery

Each context from all three sites had its sherds assigned to a particular fabric type. Well-known fabrics,

such as the three Saxo-Norman types, presented no difficulty. Some sherds were given temporary fabric numbers during analysis. As work progressed, the temporary fabric types were better defined, with the addition of variants. Some local fabrics occurred in small quantities and were found to have little significance, others were recognised as major types. In some cases these were firmly identifiable from parallels in neighbouring production centres or collections. An archive was prepared containing notes on the forms and fabrics of all significant sherds, the number of rims, bases etc, likely identifications of fine wares, and data from any cross-context refitting of sherds. It is possible to work out the minimum numbers of vessels from this archive.

Pottery from Bene't Court consisted of 1,252 sherds weighing 48.25kg, including complete vessels. The assemblage contained one abraded Roman mortarium piece and one Middle Saxon sherd. The earliest material was Saxo-Norman, traditionally dated to the 9th-12th centuries. Early St. Neots wares, characterised by a soapy fabric and small vessel forms, occurred in a several contexts, some of them probably disturbed. There was a quantity of early medieval to 14th century material which, like the earlier sherds, was largely recovered from pit fills and agricultural soils rather than relating to buildings and occupation levels.

Saxo-Norman material (72 sherds) represents 5.8% of the assemblage. Medieval sherds, predominantly of the 13th and 14th centuries, number 222 (or 17.8%). Coarse reduced sandy wares (F8) dated to the 15th-16th centuries. Of particular interest was material from a ditch/gully which contained unbroken pots and vessels of which more than 50% was reconstructable from a few large pieces. This group included 26 'complete' vessels. Several other reconstructable vessels from the initial site clearing, carried-out by the contractors, were almost certainly associated with the group.

Most of the assemblage consists of 15th and early 16th century East Anglian sandy wares (662 sherds, 53%). When oxidized these are often called Orange Sandy Wares (Coppack *op. cit.*: 224). They also occur in reduced fabrics. In this assemblage the oxidized fabrics have been subdivided into six types (F7, F9, FA, F10, F10A and F11) which include sgraffito and white slip wares from Colchester and Hedingham, Essex (446 sherds, 35.7%). Reduced versions of fabrics otherwise identical to the oxidized materials were subdivided into three types (F3, F10B, F12; 208 sherds, or 16.6%). Slip decorations rarely occur on the reduced forms (*cf.* Cumberpatch 1997). These fabrics occur with imported stone wares, small quantities of other Continental material, Netherlands tin glaze (7 sherds), pseudo-Beauvais sgraffito (4 sherds), English Cistercian Wares and Tudor Green Wares. As a whole the group, comprising 804 sherds or 68.8% of the material, falls into the early part of the 16th century according to Continental parallels and has many similarities to well-dated material at Denny Abbey.

Imports are mostly stonewares and form 8.8% of

the total (117 sherds). Expressed as a total of the early 16th century group they are 14.7%. The main part of the Tudor assemblage, with its complete pots, is a group of major importance which shows what forms were used in Cambridge at the time, as well as providing a type series of contemporary fabrics and forms. The latest material is mainly 17th century, with sherds of Staffordshire vessels, tin glazes, and some manganese speckled and Ely 'Babylon' type iron-glazed wares. Only a very small quantity of 18th century and later material was recovered.

Material from St. Edward's Passage consists of 102 sherds, weighing 2.88kg, many of them large and from undisturbed stratified contexts. All of the three Saxo-Norman wares are present, 50% of the total. Some of the small St. Neots vessels are probably 11th century or earlier. There are a few developed St. Neots Wares and one Stamford sherd. A single sherd of a grey ware vessel of a 12th century type found at St. John's College Cambridge, and one Lyveden type sherd (Rockingham Forest, Northants) occurred with a glazed jug of Essex type decorated with a red slip band.

The Bath Hotel site produced 427 sherds (8.52kg). The largest single group (22% by number, c. 60% by weight) came from dump deposits associated with infilling of the latest pits/tanks. From their large sherd size and general appearance, they have much in common with the Bene't Court dumps of the first half of the 16th century. Remaining earlier contexts have no stone ware imports, and contain mainly 15th century Essex wares with some material from the 14th century. Essex wares begin to reach Cambridge in the late 14th century, according to evidence from this site, a date confirmed by the presence of Brill and Grimston wares.

Pottery Fabrics

Cambridgeshire medieval and later pottery

Saxon and medieval pottery studies in Cambridgeshire began with the pioneering work of Hurst, based on the material held at Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Other more exotic material from Cambridge is also known (Bushnell and Hurst 1953), and small groups were published by Addyman and Biddle (*op. cit.*), but, as noted above, excavations of substantial stratified deposits, until recently, were limited to Wintringham and Denny Abbey. This last site produced a well-dated assemblage based on architectural phasing, from which a useful type series was prepared (but which is not readily accessible). More recently (1992–6), assemblages have come from several sites in Cambridge, Ely and elsewhere in the county, mainly excavated by Cambridge Archaeological Unit and Cambridgeshire Archaeological Field Unit.

Studies of pottery in the county have been hampered by the absence of known kiln sites. This has now been improved by the discovery of sites at Colne (Healey *et al.* forthcoming) and Ely (Robinson and

Spoerry, forthcoming). The Ely site was only discovered in 1995. Other kilns around the fen edge at Grimston, Blackborough End (Middleton) and King's Lynn, Norfolk, and in Lincolnshire at Bourne and Toynton All Saints, served a wide area of the Fenland and beyond, particularly in the 14th century. From the 15th century the local kilns seem to have been largely superseded by material from Essex and places further south.

Early Fabrics

The three well-known fabrics of Saxo-Norman pottery, St. Neots, Thetford and Stamford Wares, fully described by Hurst and Kilmurray (1980), occur in early pit fillings at Bene't Court. None has been drawn as there are no large groups. The latest St. Neots fabrics have a sand content and some are oxidized to a pink colour (Hall 1996a). Forms are all standard; St. Neots jars, jugs, and bowls with inturned and hammerhead rims. Pink fabrics and large forms of developed St. Neots Ware occur less frequently, while a single sherd of hard grey 12th century fabric, also identified at St. John's College and occurring with Saxo-Norman wares, was found at Bene't Court.

Fabrics of the 13th–15th centuries

Brill-Boarstall, Bucks.

Pinkish buff ware; jugs decorated with green speckled lead glaze (Ivens 1978). Sherds were found in three pit fills (5 sherds). Another possible source is Hertfordshire (Jenner and Vince 1983).

Colchester, Essex (Fabrics F10, F10A, F11)

Fine orange sandy ware, often decorated with a white slip (Cunningham 1982; Cotter forthcoming). Sherds of jugs with slip are illustrated in Fig. 2, 22–24. Many sherds occur in the later contexts, there being 28 with white slip decoration (F10). The plain sherds F10A (fine wares) and F11 (coarse wares) are probably also from Colchester. They occur as the major fabric of the main Tudor group (Figs. 4–5). Reduced wares in similar fabrics, not yet confirmed as Colchester products (F10B), are shown in Fig. 2, 34–35.

Ely and Colne, Cambs. (Fabric F4)

Coarse wares containing white grits and some sand (99 sherds identified, 8%), often both surfaces have a pimply green glaze. Colne products are slightly finer than Ely (Hall in Alexander, 1996). Production at Ely began by the 13th century, and many of the 14th and early 15th century coarse wares are likely to be from there. A definite example of Ely ware is illustrated in Fig. 2, 27.

Grimston, Norfolk

Sandy ware, normally reduced grey but can be oxidized pink or red. Decorated with applied strips often containing iron (Jennings 1981; Leah 1994). All sherds are probably from jugs. A total of 14 body sherds was recovered. A fragment with a slip flower motif is shown in Figure 3, 16. One sherd may be an Ely copy of Grimston with gritty fabric.

Hedingham, Essex (Fabric F9A)

Orange sandy ware with 'mica' dusting; clear or green glaze, and sometimes white slip decoration (Huggins 1972). Classified as fabrics F9 and F10 at Bene't Court (74 sherds), which also includes sgraffito (see below).

Sgraffito. (F9)

Fine orange sandy ware, with patterns incised through a white slip and clear glaze with speckles of green copper on the upper parts (Bushnell and Hurst *op. cit.*). Probably decorated Colchester or Heddingham Ware. Two sherds are illustrated in Fig. 3. Eight sherds found, with 13 more having slip that might be part of sgraffito jugs. Some plain orange sandy wares (F10A, F11) may be from the lower parts of such sgraffito jugs. An example of the same fabric (with no sgraffito) occurs reduced, as a grey sherd with all-over white external slip and green speckled glaze.

Reduced (grey) sandy wares (Fabrics F8, F10B, F12)

Coarse reduced dark sandy ware (78 sherds). Probably mainly a 15th century fabric but can be later. No source identified. Illustrated sherds are in Fig. 2, 29–30. Fabric 10B has fine mica (probably reduced F10A) – 63 sherds, two illustrated Fig. 2, 34–5. Fabric F12 is light grey, with little sand and some mica (107 sherds), Fig. 2, 31–33).

Post medieval wares, 16th–17th centuries

Babylon (Ely), red earthenware with black or brown iron glaze (12 sherds including large vessel parts), made at Ely (Hall 1996b), King's Lynn (Clarke and Carter 1977) and elsewhere. Mainly a 17th century fabric, but the Cistercian sherd (Fig. 5, 64) may be an Ely copy of Cistercian Ware. This is normally a hard, vitrified dark fabric with a lustrous purple-brown glaze (Brears 1967).

Stonewares

Off white and dark grey vitreous fabrics imported from the Rhineland and elsewhere during the 15th–17th centuries (Hurst *et al.* 1986; Gaimster 1987). Sherds of Siegburg (1) and Langewehe (1) were recovered, but most of the material in the main Tudor group was early Frechen (74 sherds), with some Raeren (28 sherds), Figs. 4–5, 57–60.

Tin glazed wares

Cream buff fabrics with white tin glaze, underglaze blue and polychrome (Hurst *et al.* 1986). Part of a vessel of North Netherlands Maiolica with blue and brown floral decoration is shown in Fig. 3, 38.

The Drawn Pottery (Figs. 2-7)

All vessels illustrated at 1:4, except sherds and small vessels in Figure 4 at 1:2.

Bene't Court – Medieval**Early sandy ware**

- 1) Pedestal lamp in fine, hard, dark grey sandy ware. Occurs with two St. Neots sherds and two early sandy medieval sherds. Similar to an example from Angel Court, Trinity College, dated to the 12th century (Addyman and Biddle 1965: 110, Fig. 15, A1/1).

13th century sherds

A group of 13th century sherds, also including a Middle Saxon sherd and with all three Saxo-Norman types came from the Phase III agricultural horizon. Presumably some mixing of features or soil horizons occurred; 42 sherds in all.

- 2) Jar rim in pink late St Neots fabric.
- 3) Jar rim in buff sandy fabric with some white grits, similar to later Ely and Colne fabrics.

- 4) Jug rim in similar fabric with squared rim. (*cf.* Addyman and Biddle 1965: Fig. 15, P12/3, P12/5).

- 5) Cooking pot in gritty fabric with some sand; red exterior and grey-pink inner surfaces. (*cf.* Jennings 1981: Fig. 5, 305).

- 6) Hard sandy fabric with white grits; three rows of rouletted decoration.

From pit F.86 came a group of 34 sherds including Nos. 7–10, with one St. Neots Ware.

- 7) Cooking pot rim in pink late St. Neots fabric.

- 8) Open bowl in sandy ware with white grits; pink surface, dark grey core.

- 9) Rim of large jug in pink sandy, gritty fabric, akin to Ely and Colne types.

- 10) Jug rim in similar fabric to No. 9.

- 11) Cooking-pot rim from fill of pit/quarry (4 sherds), slightly sandy with white grits; dark pink and blackened.

Context [219], a quarry fill, had 12 sherds that included two Stamford Ware pieces and two Grimston sherds.

- 12) Cooking pot in sandy gritty fabric, buff and darkened.

- 13) Large cooking pot in hard sandy gritty fabric, buff-pink.

- 14) Handle with thumbled decoration in pink late St. Neots ware.

14th century sherds

- 15) Cooking pot in hard sandy fabric with white grits, pink-buff. Akin to Ely fabrics, and called 'Ely, F4' in the fabric series. From Phase IV gravels surfaces at north end of site, 35 sherds in all, many of them reduced fine grey fabrics.

Grimston

Only 14 sherds were recovered.

- 16) Cross-fitting sherds of a jug with flower decoration came from three pit fills. The flower is made of white slip and the whole jug glazed with fairly dense green, appearing dark on the reduced fabric and yellow on the slip. (Jennings 1981: Fig. 20, 360).

The fill of pit F.157, contained 76 sherds in all, among which were large pieces from three jugs, all of probable 14th century date.

- 17) Large jug in reduced buff-grey fabric with a strap handle and decorated with parallel horizontal lines 3cm apart. No base or spout.

Sgraffito F9

- 18) A jug body-sherd in dull orange-red fabric without mica. An all-over light yellow slip with curved and linear motifs incised to the red fabric. Light green glaze.

- 19) Jug sherd in fine orange sandy ware with mica; curved motifs incised through a light yellow slip. Transparent glaze giving a red finish where there is no slip.

Heddingham

Illustrated sherds from a beam slot, part of earliest structures at north end of site.

- 20) Body sherd of jug in pink-buff fabric, with affinities to fabrics from Brill and Surrey. Two lines of parallel iron strips, apparently intersecting. Presumed 14th century.

- 21) Similar fine Orange Sandy Ware fabric with mica and all-over white slip. Dense green glaze near rim, thinning lower down to a light colour with green speckles, breaking into speckled streaks. Rim and five other sherds. Assumed to be 14th century.

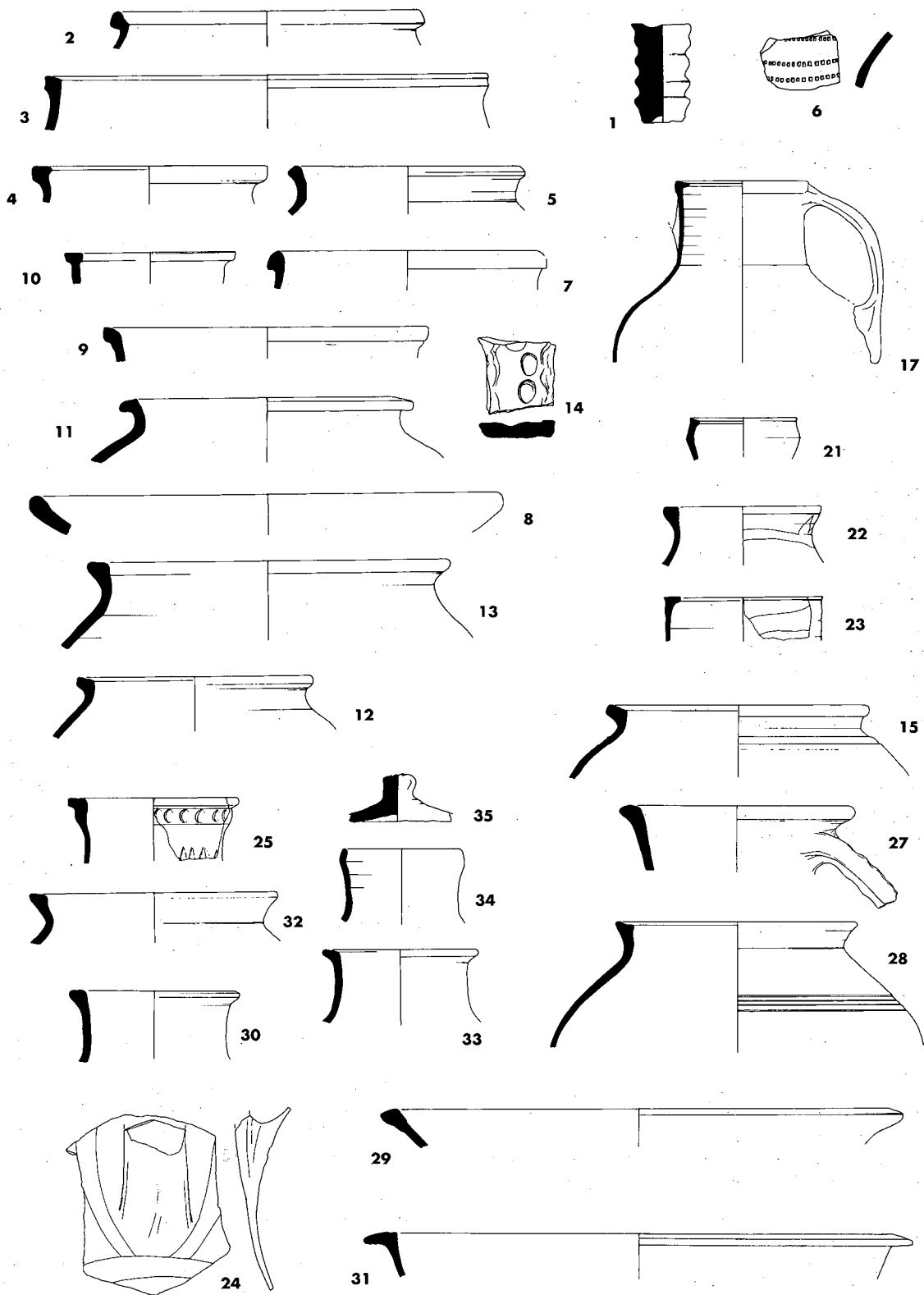


Figure 2.

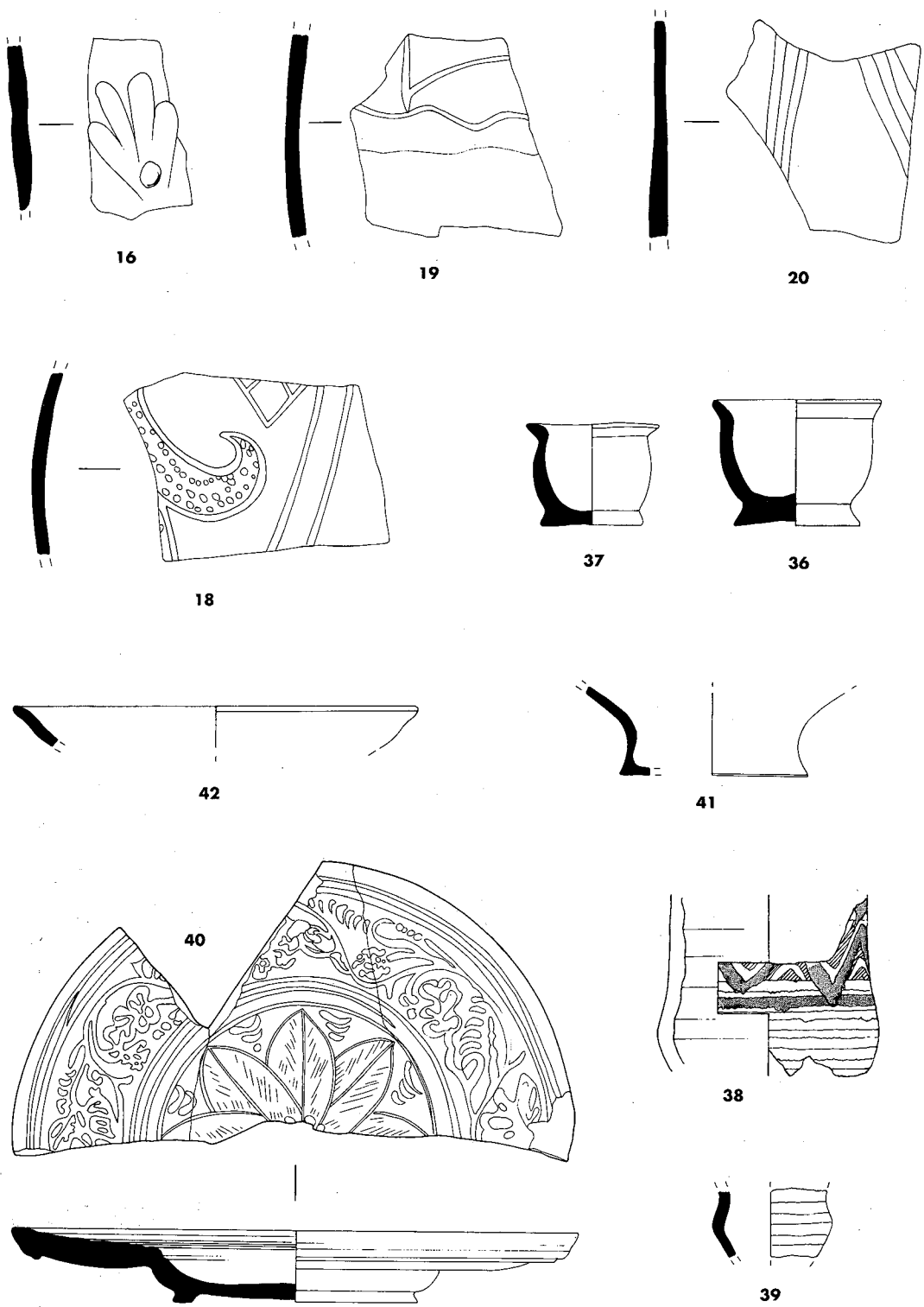


Figure 3.

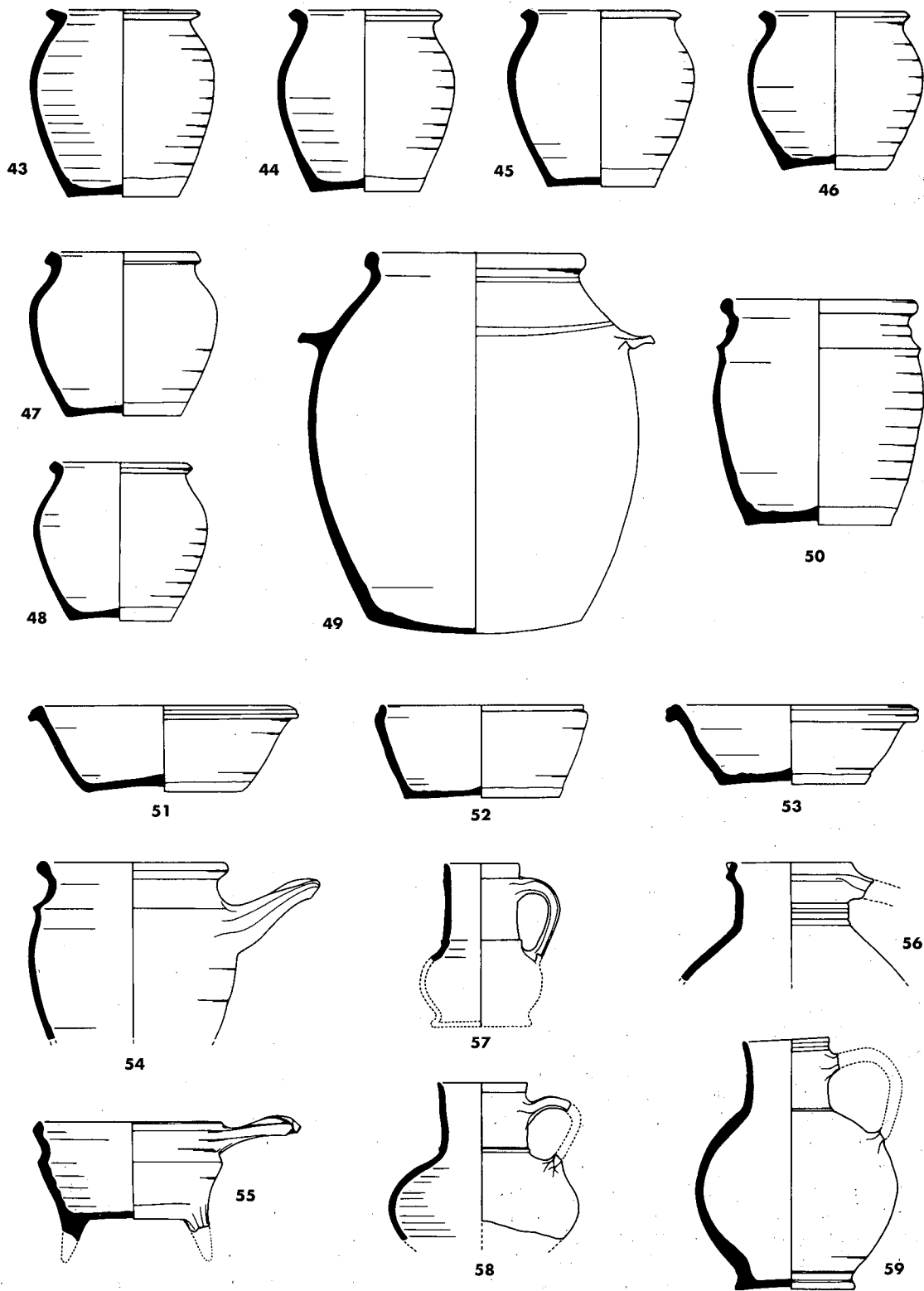


Figure 4.

Colchester-type ware

- 22) Jug rim in fine Orange Sandy Ware with mica. Thin slip decoration glazed light green on the lower part; from a pit fill F.49 (20 sherds).
- 23) Jug rim with similar decoration and fabric but having a grey core and an internal grey reduced finish; from pit fill F.110.
- 24) Jug handle in Orange Sandy Ware with a rough interior finish. Slip decoration forming an 'arch' around the handle. Small areas of patchy transparent glaze below the handle.

Essex type

- 25) Jug rim in Orange Sandy Ware with mica [F10A]. Horizontal thumbing under the rim, vertical fluting lower down the body; streaks of green glaze; from fill of a well F.134 (16 sherds). Occurs with Grimston Ware and Ely Ware, probably late 14th century.

Ely and Colne fabrics

- 26) Bowl rim of Ely Ware from the same well F.134; coarse sandy fabric with large white grits and stabbed decoration. Observed in material from Ely and found in a 14th-century collection excavated at Parson Drove (Hall forthcoming). Late 14th century (not illustrated).
- 27) Jug rim and handle of Ely Ware in coarse grey sandy fabric with large white grits and characteristic stabbed decoration; from fill of a small pit, F.31. Paralleled at Ely and Parson Drove.

Reduced wares

- 28) Large jar in dark grey coarse sandy ware; lighter grey inside; from pit fills F.41 (F8).
- 29) Large bowl in same fabric; from pit fill F.110 (F8).
- 30) Jug rim in the same fabric from pit fill F.48 (F8).
- 31) Flanged bowl rim in grey reduced fabric with fine sand with some mica and a few small white grits (F12).
- 32) Jug rim in sandy grey ware, slightly brown inside (F12).
- 33) Jug rim in sandy grey ware (F12).
- 34) Jug rim in grey fine sandy ware with mica, 15th-16th century (F10B).
- 35) Lid in sandy grey ware with a little mica, 15th-16th century (F10B).

Tin glazes

- 36) Albarello in cream fabric with pink-tinged white glaze inside and out. Roughly finished base; unstratified.
- 37) Small albarello or egg cup crudely made in light pink-brown fabric. Crizzled glaze, that was probably transparent (and not tin) giving a yellow-brown finish; unstratified.
- 38) Part of polychrome albarello with horizontal blue bands (except one from the upper). Wavy lines and the second horizontal band from top are purple. Light orange-brown patches between the waves. Cream-pink fabric, plain white glaze inside; probably from North Netherlands. Five more sherds of the same vessel came from a second pit.
- 39) Netherlands maiolica in cream-pink fabric with sharply defined bands of dark blue; 17th century.

Pseudo-Beauvais

- 40) A presumed English copy of a Beauvais rosette sgraffito bowl. Light grey fabric partly oxidized to light pink. Internal white slip. Dark green glaze on the leafy motif

of the flange; light green glaze over the central rosette and all exterior. The glaze and slip have partly run into the incisions masking much of what would have been pink lines of decoration (*cf.* Hurst *et al.* 1986: 111, dated 1500-1550).

Tudor Green or Surrey White Ware

- 41) Base of cup in white fabric with dense green glaze inside and a few splashes on the outside.
- 42) Unstratified rim of cup in white ware densely glazed green both sides. A few other fragments of this ware were found in the upper levels, 21 sherds in all.

Gully group [266]

A substantial group of complete/nearly complete vessels from the Phase V ditch, not fully excavated. All fabrics are coarse orange sandy ware (F11) unless stated otherwise and without glazing.

- 43) Complete cooking pot in coarse ware with a few large white grits, buff and blackened. The simple rim form resembles Denny Abbey 260, but is probably earlier.
- 44) Small jar with some rilling. One dark patch near the rim, rather coarse; a few flecks of external glaze. Complete except for a small hole.
- 45) Small jar in bright red fabric with a few large white grits, nearly complete as reconstructed.
- 46) Similar small jar in dull red fabric, almost complete as reconstructed. A similar shaped vessel (3 sherds making a complete profile) was recovered from unstratified levels.
- 47) Small jar blackened outside and as reconstructed complete, bar one small hole. Rim similar to No. 45, and paralleled at Norwich (Jennings 1981: Fig. 72, 1242), although the corresponding Norwich vessels are less globular.
- 48) Jar very similar to No. 44; outside blackened.
- 49) Large storage jar with hollow rim and two stumpy handles and rounded base. Some large grits in the fabric. Not exactly paralleled at Denny Abbey or Norwich for handles, similar rim to Denny Abbey 152 (1539 group).
- 50) Cooking pot with hollow rim for a lid; red, buff and dull parts, scale inside. Rim similar to Denny Abbey 152 (1539 group), but the lower external rill is not paralleled at Denny Abbey or Norwich.
- 51) Bowl roughly finished with internal glaze patchy near rim. Similar to Denny Abbey 105 (1525-52). Bowl, well finished with some large grits.
- 53) Flat based-bowl, rather rough, buff-pink outside and orange red inside; internal clear glaze. Nearly complete, *cf.* Denny Abbey 105.
- 54) Pipkin with rough finish, rather sandy, dark around the handle, some large white grits visible, brown inside. *cf.* No. 50 for rim form and external rill.
- 55) Pipkin with very slight hint of lip at right angles to the handle. The three feet have all their ends broken. Internal transparent glaze, blackened outside, fabric has a few grits and some mica. Form not exactly paralleled at Denny or Norwich, *cf.* Denny Abbey 134 for rim and handle as 161 (1539 group).
- 56) Unglazed jug with blackened outside, a few large grits in the fabric. *cf.* Denny Abbey 168 (1539).
- 57) Frechen stone ware, uniform brown dusting inside and out (*cf.* Hurst *et al.* 1986: Fig. 106, 373).
- 58) Frechen stoneware jug without lip, base missing. Slightly pink inside, fine brown dusting externally. *cf.* Denny Abbey 200 (1539) for form.

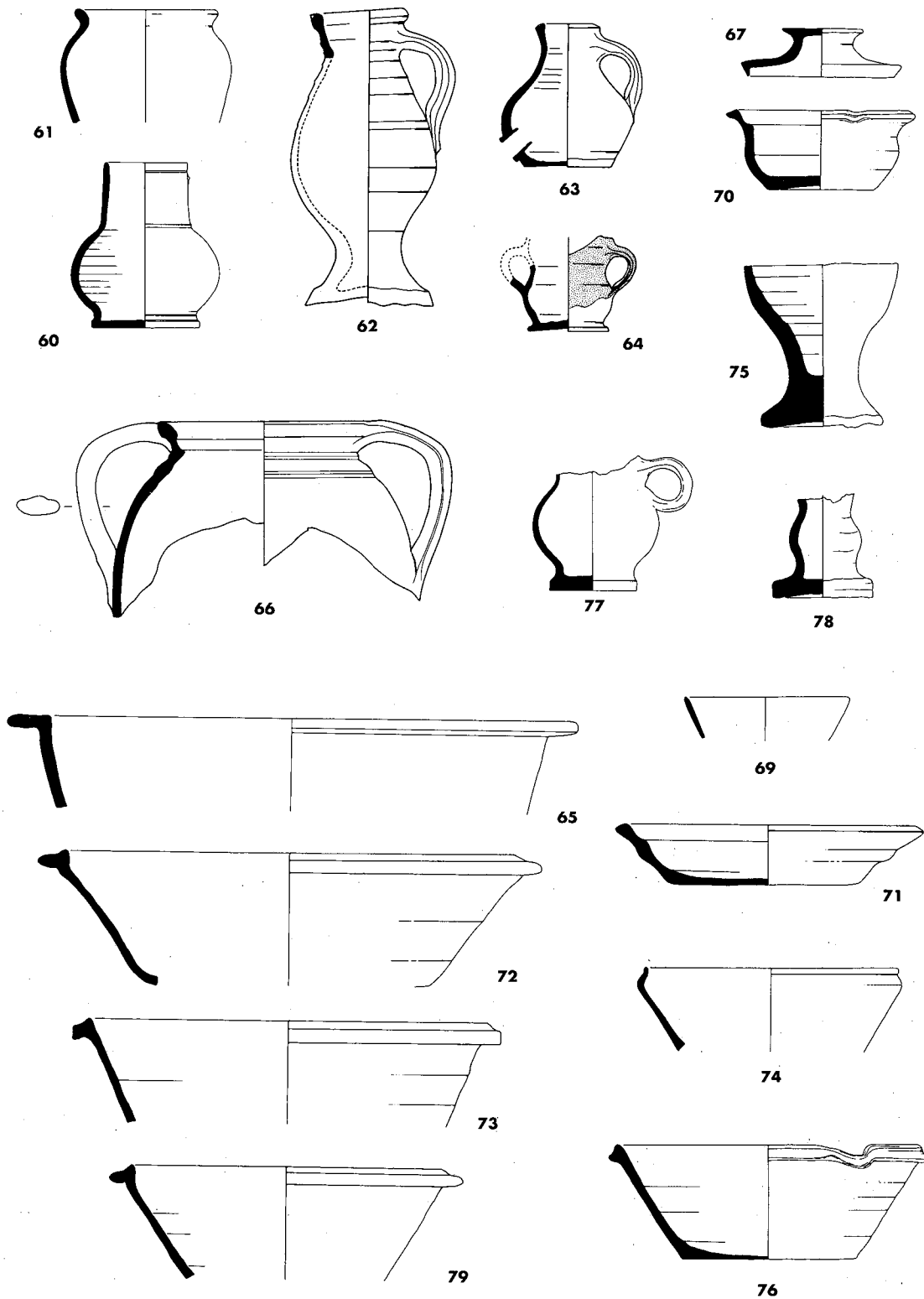


Figure 5.

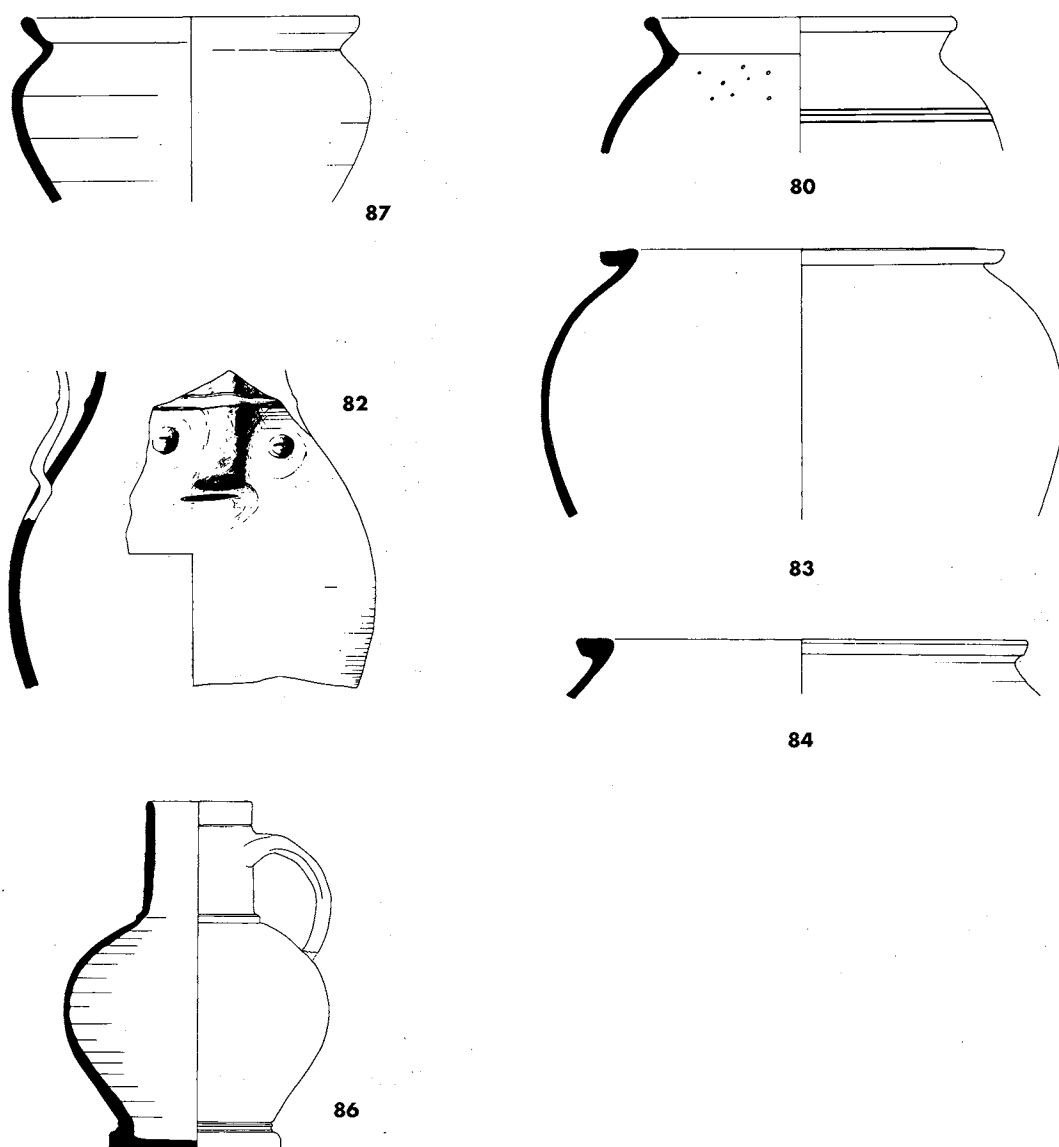


Figure 6.

- 59) Frechen stoneware jug (no lip) with handle missing; wire cut base and a body scar from kiln-stacking. External iron dusting, grey internally.
- 60) Frechen stoneware jug.
- 61) Bright orange coarse sandy ware, a few small flecks of external glaze. Globular bowl (or pipkin) with simple everted rim. No parallel at Denny Abbey (Jennings 1981: Fig. 70, 1218, is a pipkin).

Other large sherds of Tudor date

- 62) Complete ballustr jug with thumb base; faint rilling. Light green transparent glaze on upper parts.
- 63) Small squat jug in sandy coarse ware, buff and dull red colour with some slight green glaze on shoulder. A cistercian type hole near the base. Nearly complete, internal scale.
- 64) Small jug of Cistercian type. Hard red fabric, not vitrified, with dark purple glaze both sides (a clear glaze on a purple surface). Similar to Denny Abbey Cistercian vessel 97, (dated 1500–25). Possibly an Ely copy of Cistercian Ware?
- 65) Coarse orange sandy ware bowl with flanged rim (F11), internal thin glaze. *cf.* Denny Abbey 101 (1525–39).
- 66) Five sherds comprising whole upper half and both handles of a large jar (F11); large patches of external green glaze, scale inside. Unstratified. Rim similar to No. 49 and to Denny Abbey 152 (which has no handles) dated 1539. A similar but smaller vessel without handles occurred in another unstratified context [156] with a small bowl like Nos. 51–52.
- 67) Fine orange sandy ware (F 10A) unglazed lid (Jennings 1981: Fig. 79, 1323). Note that such a lid would fit bowl No. 70.
- 68) Bowl in F10A, blackened outside, *cf.* Denny Abbey 66–7 of 1500–25 (not illustrated).
- 69) Rim of small bowl or cup in F10A? fine Orange Sandy Ware, thick clear glaze inside, thin and patchy outside.
- 70) Bowl in coarse Orange Sandy Ware (F11) with a lip but no handle. The fabric has a few large grits; roughly finished base, internal rather patchy glaze. Complete ex-

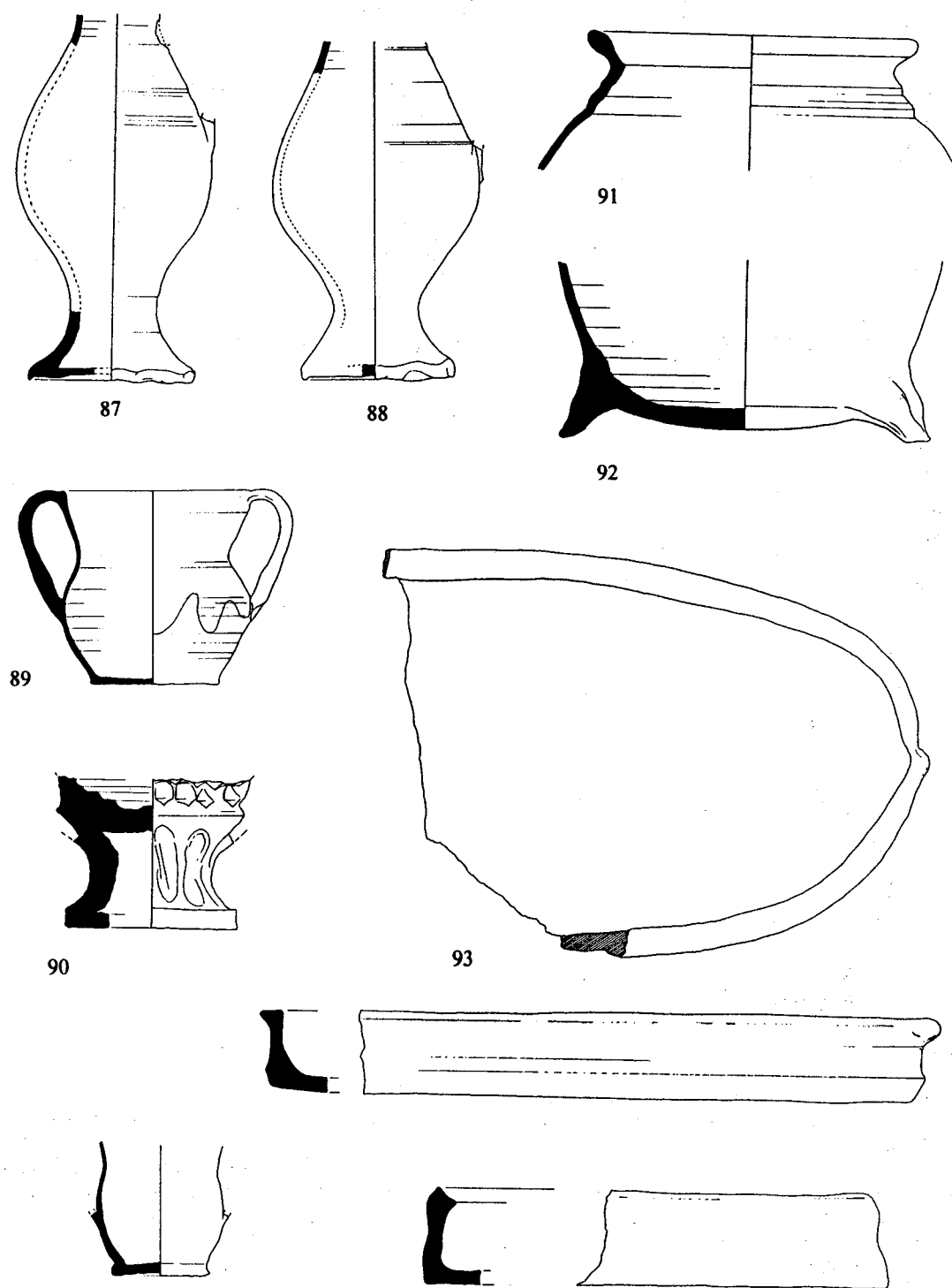


Figure 7.

cept for a small part of the rim. Occurs with rim of bowl like No. 51.

Vessels from pit F.4, with conjoining sherds from two distinct fills.

71) Bowl in fine Orange Sandy Ware (F10A) with hollowed rim for a lid; much mica in fabric, blackened on the outside, internal clear glaze with some yellow patches, over patchy white slip (Jennings 1981: Fig. 65, 1125).

72) Large dish in coarse Orange Sandy Ware (F11), rather

brown with patchy internal glaze and few external flecks. Another very similar one occurs in the group. *cf.* Denny Abbey 129–131 (1539 group).

73) Dish in F11, internal patchy yellow glaze. *cf.* Denny Abbey 107 (1525–39).

74) Small bowl with inturned rim and patchy internal glaze, similar to No.52. *cf.* Denny Abbey 134–5 (1539 group).

75) Jug base, (F11).

76) Bowl. Orange Sandy Ware (F11).

- 77) Small squat jug in Orange Sandy Ware with all-over external thick clear glaze (F10A). Complete except for the rim.
- 78) Balustre base of a chafing dish or candle stick Grey sandy ware (F12) with a thin oxidized dull red coat; patchy but thick green glaze.
- 79) Red-buff bowl, complete profile, with a lip, in coarse Orange Sandy Ware (F11) with grey core (ie slightly oxidized F12); cf. Denny Abbey 66, 105, 140, (1500–39 group).
- 80) Cooking pot with hollowed rim, internally decorated with metallic balls the largest at the top and small ones lower. Streaks of transparent glaze.
- 81) Cooking pot with hollow rim for a lid, in fine orange sandy ware (F10A).
- 82) Face jug in orange sandy ware (F11).
- 83) Flange-rimmed cooking jar in reduced ware.
- 84) Cooking jar rim, F14.
- 85) Flange-rimmed bowl (not illustrated).
- 86) Frechen stoneware jug.

Bath Hotel material (Fig. 7)

- 87) Pedestal jug in orange sandy ware with frilly base and handle scar; patchy clear glaze. Nearly complete except for rim (F11).
- 88) Pedestal jug in orange sandy ware (F11).
- 89) Tudor Green cup with two handles; white fabric with dark green glaze, mainly on upper parts of vessel. Some internal glaze.
- 90) Base of chafing dish with twisted fluting and two handle scars; buff fabric. Slightly green internal glaze, some transparent external glaze.
- 91) Cooking pot rim in orange sandy ware (F11).
- 92) Tripod base in orange sandy ware with internal glaze and blackened exterior (F11).
- 93) Basting dish with lip and side-handle scar, in orange sandy ware (F11).
- 94) Basting dish, orange sandy fabric (F11).
- 95) Lower part of tyg with two handle scars (not opposing). Red, partly vitrified fabric, with external dark iron glaze, probably from Ely ('Babylon Ware'). Pieces of kiln fabric stuck to base with glaze.

Discussion

At Bene't Court, the Saxo-Norman wares and other early medieval sherds are mostly derived from pit fills which yield no large groups. Here, as seen elsewhere in the lower town, Middle Saxon wares are largely absent, represented by only the occasional sherd. Of interest are the lamp fragment and rare flower decoration of a Grimston jug. The small size of some of the vessels represented suggests that some of the St. Neots Ware may be quite early, potentially dating to the 10–11th centuries, although the material is largely residual. However, at St. Edward's Passage the earliest pit groups, with exclusively Saxo-Norman types, may well be of 12th or 11th century date. Reduced sandy grey wares have proved very difficult to date. The fabrics occurring in early medieval contexts (F14) are little different from material occurring with later orange sandy wares (F12). Both merge with the coarse grey sandy wares (F8). Only the forms are diagnostic and therefore little can be said about the

date of body sherds. The coarse wares in F8 seem to be mainly 15th century from their forms but their provenance is unknown. There are affinities with material from Barton Bendish, Norfolk, and Higham Ferrers, Northants (Hall 1974). However since neither of these areas were providing other pottery to Cambridge in the 15th century, it seems unlikely that coarse ware would travel so far.

Essex appears to be the main source of Cambridge pottery from the 15th century onwards, as was found at St. John's College. The various types of orange sandy ware (fine, coarse, sgraffito, white slip decorated) all seem to come from Colchester or Hedingham. Harlow also produced a white slip decoration on orange-red ware. The Brill types and Tudor Green probably came from their sources via London and through Essex. Few medieval sherds derive from the Fens and Fen-edge (at Bene't Court only 8%, or 80 sherds, either from Ely, Colne or Grimston, Norfolk). This probably reflects the fact that 14th century material, the period when these fenland production centres were in their floruit, is poorly represented in the groups studied here.

The main interest lies with the large late group from Bene't Court containing complete vessels. There is a range of rim forms, many of which are not exactly paralleled by similar material from Denny Abbey or Norwich. Their dating is probably the second quarter of the 16th century, although some material might be slightly earlier. The imported stonewares are also consistent with a date close to the middle of the century. Large sherds of similar vessels from other unstratified contexts presumably form part of this same group. It is also characterised by large sherds and near complete vessels which are not normally found, and probably is part of the same clearing-out operation. The vessels include an unusual pseudo-Beauvais bowl with Netherlands tin glaze as well as many more examples of orange sandy wares.

The groups with 'complete' vessels seem to represent a 'destruction' phase. Whether this may be associated with the demise or rebuilding of a nearby building, or the clearing of a stock of ceramic vessels (from a nearby inn?) cannot be determined. The presence of the long-established Eagle Inn to the south may be relevant, but a source to the west is also possible, it being uncertain exactly how far to the north the Eagle property extended during this period. The general date which may presently be offered for this episode, somewhere in the second quarter of the 16th century, was of course one of considerable upheaval, with widespread changes in property ownership in the wake of the Dissolution. In just such a way, the properties owned by Anglesey Abbey on the King's Parade frontage, and the garden to the rear, which included most of the Bene't Court excavation area, are likely to have changed hands, and perhaps usage, during this period. It is hoped that ongoing documentary research may throw further light on the history of these properties.

Composition of the groups and the presence of significant quantities of imports also merit further com-

ment. Neighbouring county and large towns have yielded varying amounts of imported pottery, although the university town of Oxford, an obvious comparison with Cambridge, has produced relatively little (Mellor, pers.comm 1997), although much more extensively excavated. This is surprising in view of the expected water traffic from London on the Thames. Northampton, with an inland location and a river not opened to navigation until the 18th century, has produced very small quantities of imports from post-medieval occupation excavated in the 1970s, and little stoneware is preserved in Northampton Borough Museum (McCarthy 1979).⁶ Bedford excavations of 1967–77 revealed some imports, mainly stonewares (Baker *et al.* 1979: 218–9),⁷ but very few sherds of Raeren and Langewehe were found during recent work in Peterborough (Hinman and Spoerry n.d.). This is surprising in view of its accessibility along Fenland waterways, but the representativeness of the sample remains to be determined. By contrast, King's Lynn excavation, during 1963–7, produced much stoneware and other imports, although the report does not fully quantify the data (Clarke and Carter 1977: 225–32, 279–84). Large quantities are also found in Norwich, many of which have been published, although again without quantification of the material (Jennings *op. cit.*). Ipswich has also been productive of imports (S. Anderson, pers.comm), and so has Colchester, the details of which, with information on the medieval wares and kilns, is shortly to be published (Cotter forthcoming).

Stonewares were imported from the Continent, primarily to London, as return cargoes for wool, being then re-distributed to other English ports. Allen (1983) has given quantitative data based on shipping cargo records, and shown that the East Anglian coastal towns received most of this material, as would be expected. In this respect, the proportion of imported wares on these Cambridge sites (14.7% of the early post-medieval assemblage) appears much higher than in other inland county towns, perhaps similar to that reported from the coastal towns. Such trade would have occurred via the Fenland waterways from King's Lynn, this traffic being attested in earlier centuries by the presence of 14th century pottery from the Grimston and Ely kilns here and elsewhere in Cambridge. Among the local wares until the 14th century, Fenland kiln products were common, after which they were superseded by the better quality red wares from Essex; these presumably coming by land routes.

In general, the pottery from this group of sites and other recent work elsewhere in the town is beginning to fill some of the gaps which have hitherto existed. A standard fabric series has now been developed for the south and centre of the county, to form a reference collection for future work. If this establishes the basic groundwork for more systematic ceramic studies within Cambridge and the surrounding region, we may begin to further consider patterns not only of production and trade, but also consumption and deposition. Vessel forms which relate to specific patterns

of consumption are of particular interest; drinking vessels and basting dishes, the latter associated with (high status?) roast meat (Cumberpatch 1997: 147) for example. The apparently unusual character of the early post-medieval groups recovered here, particularly the abundant imports, may provide new insights into trading patterns during this period, but may also represent functionally specific groups, perhaps related to an inn in the vicinity. What kind of pottery assemblage might we expect from an early-16th century inn? At the same time, the manner of deposition of the material raises questions about archaeological manifestations of changes in urban life, property ownership and property use in the wake of the Dissolution. These results can only provide a hint of the full potential of such work, but it is hoped may contribute to a renewed interest in the archaeology and history of Cambridge.

Endnotes

- 1 The work of Addyman and Biddle is all the more noteworthy in that, more than 30 years on, their article remains the last significant synthesis of the town's archaeology.
- 2 Annual summaries may be found in previous volumes of *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*.
- 3 An acknowledgement is due to all those at the CAU who helped with aspects of the work, on and off site, notably Gerry Wait, Richard Mortimer, Janet Miller and Alison Dickens, Norma Challands and Lesley McFadyen for pot processing, Crane Begg for pottery drawings, John Hurst for comments on the imported pottery and Dr. Rosemary Horrox for her work on documentary sources. Thanks also to Christopher Evans for supporting publication work on this project.
- 4 We are grateful to Dr. Rosemary Horrox for her work on documentary sources relating to this area, which it is hoped will form the basis for a subsequent study.
- 5 During the course of the work at Bene't Court, refurbishment of the Bath Hotel at No.3 Bene't Street by Whitbread Brewery provided an opportunity to record the 17th century timber frame of the building as an independent project. For a report on this, see Miller (1994).
- 6 Three sites produced only 20 sherds of stoneware, representing 0.46% of the total assemblages.
- 7 Excavations on three large sites produced 199.5kg of pottery (c. 10,000 sherds) of which 1.9% were stonewares.

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Abbreviations used

| | |
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| CAU | Cambridge Archaeological Unit |
| CBA | Council for British Archaeology |
| PCAS | Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society |

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