

A NOTE ON AN ANGLO-SAXON ACCESSORY VESSEL FROM DERBY

By MAURICE BRASSINGTON

The Derby area has produced few examples of Anglo-Saxon pottery, a fact which prompts me to bring to general notice a small hand-made pot which was given to me many years ago. Stuck on the body of the pot was formerly a label, with the following legend written in ink: 'Chester Green, Little Chester'. At the time the vessel was found this would undoubtedly refer to the recreation ground which lies to the south-east of the Roman fort of Derwentio (see *DAJ* 105, 1985: Fig. 1), but when, and in what circumstances, the find was made is now unknown.

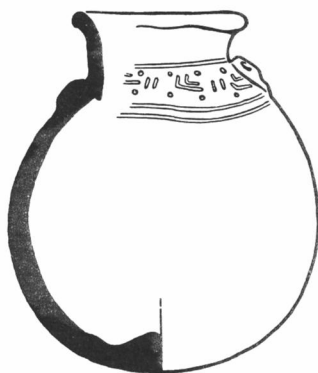


Fig. 1 Anglo-Saxon accessory vessel from Chester Green, Derby. Scale 1:2.

The vessel is 8.0 cms in diameter and 9.5 cms high (Fig. 1). There are two 'embryonic' handles, one on either side of the neck, and a line-and-dot incised decoration on the shoulder; below this, the lightly burnished surface has, for the most part, crumbled away. The slightly micaceous orange-coloured fabric is levigated with quartz grains and has a sandy texture. Although complete, the vessel has received rough usage: there are several deep slashes and abrasions on the body.

Dr J. N. L. Myres has kindly given his opinion on the date of the vessel. He reports:

This is definitely an Anglo-Saxon accessory vessel and probably came from an inhumation grave which would account for its complete state of preservation. Though hand-made it looks rather as if it is following a wheel-made model with handles and, if so, it is unlikely to be earlier than the seventh century. On the other hand the line-and-dot decoration on the neck is in a technique that could well be earlier, but I do not recall another close parallel to this rather odd pattern. So I would be inclined to date it late sixth-seventh century which I suppose would be quite appropriate for an Anglo-Saxon inhumation accompanied by a pot in that part of Derbyshire.