

SOME RECENT FINDS OF IMPORTED MEDIEVAL POTTERY

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I

An Aardenburg Ware Jug from the site of the Old Corn Hall, Exchange Street, Norwich

PART of an imported green-glazed jug (N.C.M. reg. no. 84.965) was found in 1965 during building operations on the site of the old Corn Hall which was bounded by Exchange St., Bedford St., and Little London St. Thanks to the co-operation of Mr. John Jarrold and R. G. Carter Ltd., members of the Norwich Museums staff were able to visit and record the site during the excavations for the new building. A cess pit was discovered about 40 feet south of Bedford St. and about 15 feet west of Little London Street, the bottom of which was 21 feet below street level. When Mr. W. F. Milligan saw the pit only the bottom 6 feet remained and it was impossible to determine the original level from which it had been cut. Some indication was given by the position of the remains of a Late Saxon Thetford ware kiln, the base of which was 9 feet below street level. The remaining 6 feet of deposits in the cess pit, which was about 4 feet in diameter, were removed by hand. The only finds were a few sherds of three green-glazed pitchers of "Grimston ware", made near King's Lynn, and beneath these, lying on the bottom of the pit, the sherds of another green-glazed vessel, the subject of this note. The Grimston ware vessels were too fragmentary for a reconstruction to be attempted; one was probably a short-beard face-jug.

Description

Only the central part of the vessel survived; the measurements are based on Dr. Dunning's reconstruction (Fig. 1). Height 12 inches (30.5 cm.), maximum diameter $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches (22 cm.). Hard, slightly sandy fabric, brick red with a dark grey core of variable thickness. A white slip had been applied to the outside, covering the neck and body to just below the maximum diameter. Covering this and extending just below the lower limit of the slip is a lustrous green glaze with characteristic streaking and mottling. Base of neck defined by a cordon, below which were horizontal corrugations. Over these were four horizontal bands of rather faint diamond-shaped rouletting. A similar zone of rouletting occurs below the maximum diameter, the two upper rows only being glazed.

Between the zones of rouletting is a single row of large stamped bosses, pushed out from the back. Large, continuous, emphatic thumb-marking around the sagging base. The base and lower part of the body covered with carbon.

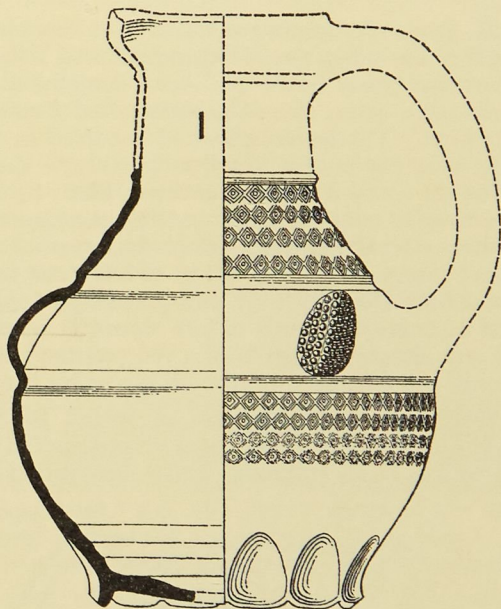


Fig. 1 (1/4)

Discussion

This vessel belongs to a class of jugs found in large numbers at Aardenburg in Zeeland.¹ Although the kiln sites are not known it is thought that this ware was made in that region.

Aardenburg ware has been identified at only a few coastal sites in England; in Norfolk it has been found at King's Lynn² and Great Yarmouth,³ in addition to the Norwich site. On the continent, outside the Netherlands, these vessels have been identified in North Germany, Denmark and south-east Sweden.⁴ They are dated to the late thirteenth century in Aardenburg; the association in Norwich with Grimston ware sherds is consistent with this.

The writer's thanks are due to Dr. G. C. Dunning for the original identification of this piece.

B.G.

¹Trimpe Burger, J. A. "Opgravingen te Aardenburg. Ceramiek uit de bloeitijd van Aardenburg (13de en 14de eeuw)", *Berichten R.O.B.*, 12-13, 1962-3, 495-548.

²Dunning, G. C., "The trade in medieval pottery around the North Sea", *Rotterdam Papers. A Contribution to Medieval Archaeology*, Rotterdam 1968, 35-58.

³Rye, C. G. and Hurst, J. G., "Medieval Pottery from Great Yarmouth", *Norf. Arch.*, xxxiv, 1968, 279-292.

⁴Dunning 1968.

II

*A Red-Painted Pitcher from the site of
Calthorpe's House, Palace Plain, Norwich*

IN 1962 the Norfolk Research Committee was able to carry out a weekend trial excavation of the site of the hall of the Calthorpe's House, Palace Plain, Norwich. This basically fifteenth-century house had been demolished and the site was to be converted into a car-park. Seven superimposed floors were found overlying the natural gravel. The lowest (floor 7) occurred in the southern part of the cutting only, at a depth of 4 feet 8 inches below the surface, and was tentatively dated to the early eleventh century. Floor 6, made, like floor 7, of rammed chalk, extended over the whole cutting at a depth of 3 feet 8 inches from the surface. Beneath the *c.* 2 inches thick floor was a brown friable layer, perhaps a brushwood foundation. At a depth of 5 feet, at the northern end of the cutting and sealed by floor 6 which was probably of mid-twelfth-century date, was a deposit of unglazed sherds of late eleventh—early twelfth-century date, oyster shells and about 150 sherds of a red painted vessel. These sherds had been badly burnt and fractured into small pieces by the fire.

The material from the excavation was presented to Norwich Museums (reg. no. 1.963). The red-painted vessel was reconstructed and studied soon after it was found by Dr. G. C. Dunning, whose description and comments are given below.

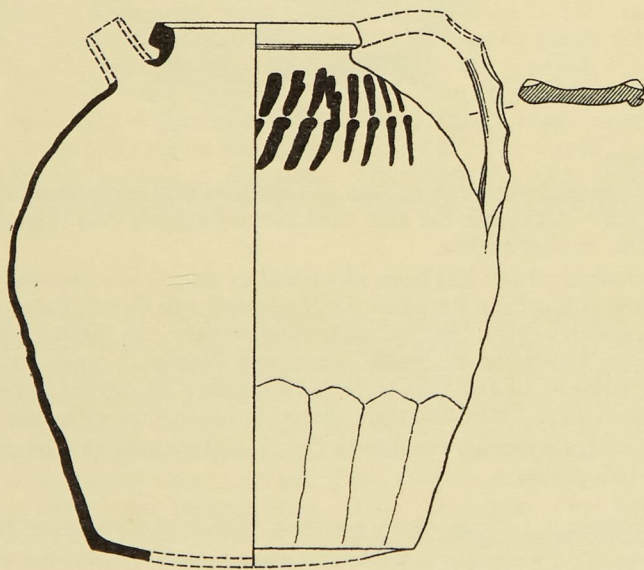


Fig. 2 (4)

Description (Fig. 2)

About fifty of the sherds could be joined together so that the following measurements could be estimated accurately: rim diameter 4.3 inches (10.9 cm.), bulge diameter 9.9 inches (25.1 cm.), base diameter 6.5 inches (16.5 cm.). The height is about 11 inches (c. 28 cm.); it could be slightly higher but not shorter. The fire has discoloured many sherds grey but, even so, the surfaces are still partly yellow or buff. One large sherd is not burnt and this is uniformly yellow in the core and on both surfaces. The vessel is unglazed. The pitcher is full-bodied, with a rather small mouth. The rim is thickened and moulded on the outer side and has a bevel on the inside. There is evidence of only one handle, wide and strap-like, which is therefore placed on the side opposite the tubular spout. The margins of the handle are decorated with long thumb-impressions, giving a scalloped appearance in profile. The pot is decorated with a narrow zone of red-painted marks round the upper part of the body. The lower row is continued round the side below the spout and the decoration is interrupted by the handle. The marks are comma-shaped and fairly uniform in size and slope.

Discussion

The pitcher is an import from the continent and the question arises whether it originated in Dutch Limburg or in Normandy. The Pingsdorf group of kilns can be ruled out on several grounds—ware, absence of foot-ring, section of handle, etc. The comma-like strokes of red painting certainly occur at both Brunssum¹ and Schinveld,² but the Dutch pitchers are also provided with hand-made foot-rings and do not have plain sagging bases. Moreover, thumb-marks down the sides of the handle appear to be quite unknown in Holland.

On the other hand, all the features of the Norwich pitcher have analogies in northern France, though not associated on an individual pot. The full-bellied shape is similar to that of a pitcher from Pecquigny, Somme,³ while the plain sagging base is of frequent occurrence on red-painted pitchers and jugs both in Normandy, as at St. Vincent-de-Nogent, Seine Maritime,⁴ and on such pots exported to England, for instance at Pevensy Castle⁵ and Southampton.⁶ Red-painted decoration in comma-strokes does occur in Normandy,⁷ though on the whole the patterns are bolder and made up of long stripes of variable width. The most determinative feature of the Norwich pitcher is, however, the thumb-decorated handle and for this parallels exist in Normandy, both of about the same date and also later. The early example is the large jug from the lower occupation-level of the Motte de la Nocherie, St. Bômer-les-Forges, Orne,⁸ which is dated not later than the eleventh century. The later examples are five or six jugs, all with emphatic thumbing down the sides of the handles, found in a late thirteenth-century context in Professor M. de Boüard's excavations at Caen Castle. The northern French examples of this style of handle decoration thus seem to be localized in Lower Normandy, where the motif has a range in date of some three centuries.

The source of the Norwich pitcher thus appears to be established as Lower Normandy. Most likely it was exported to England via Rouen, though a route

from a port further west, such as Caen, is possible. The date of the pitcher, as indicated by the analogies quoted above, should lie between the mid-eleventh and mid-twelfth centuries.

B.G. and G.C.D.

¹Renaud, J. G. N. "De pottenbakkersoven te Brunssum Limburg", *Berichten R.O.B.*, 6, 1955, 106-125; Bruijn, A. "Die mittelalterliche Töpferindustrie in Brunssum", *ibid.*, 9, 1959, 139-188.

²Renaud, J. G. N. "Middeleeuws aardewerk uit de pottenbakkersoven te Schinveld Limburg", *ibid.*, 8, 1957-59, 179-191; Bruijn, A. "Die mittelalterliche keramische Industrie in Schinveld", *ibid.*, 10-11, 1960-61, 462-507; Bruijn, A. "Die mittelalterliche keramische Industrie in Südl limburg", *ibid.*, 12-13, 1962-3, 357-459.

³Dunning, G. C. *et al.* "Anglo-Saxon Pottery: A Symposium", *Med. Arch.*, III for 1959 (1960), 62, fig. 34, 3.

⁴*Ibid.*, fig. 34, 2.

⁵Dunning, G. C. "A Norman Pit at Pevensey Castle and its contents", *Ant. Journ.*, xxxviii, 1958, 209, fig. 2, 1-2.

⁶Dunning *et al.*, 1960, fig. 36, 3.

⁷*Ibid.*, fig. 38, 2.

⁸*Ibid.*, fig. 38, 3.

III

A Glazed Jug from Redenhall-with-Harleston

THIS JUG was brought up by a swimmer from the bottom of the river Waveney at Shotford Bridge, Redenhall-with-Harleston (TM 24708221) in 1965. The finder took it home where it was later broken. Dr. A. J. Dinn rescued the pieces, repaired the jug and presented it to Norwich Museums (reg. no. 619.965).

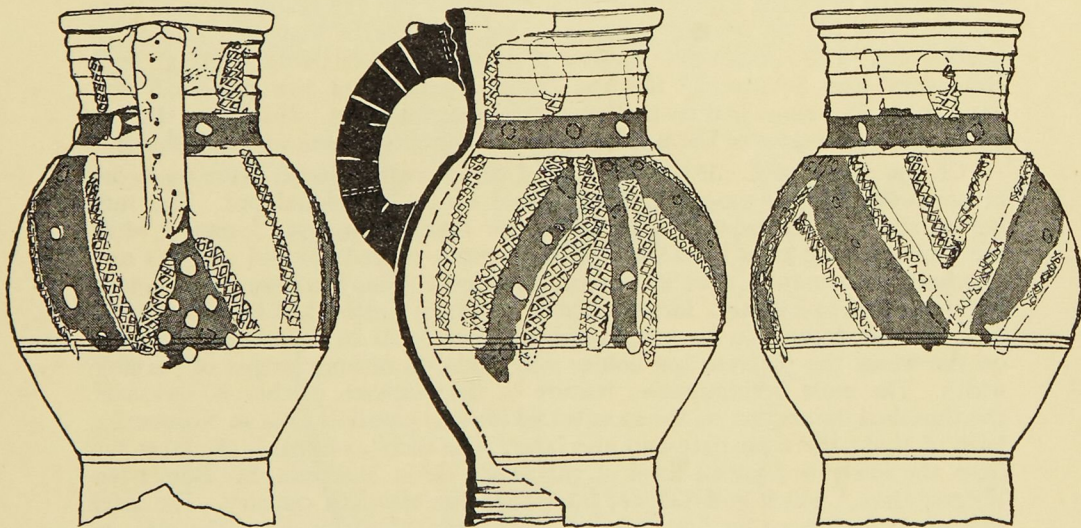


Fig. 3 (¼)

Description (Fig. 3)

The lime encrustation which covered much of one side continued on to the broken edge. Height $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. (26.6 cm.), maximum diameter $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. (17.25 cm.). Hard smooth buff paste. Zones of dark red slip (shaded on drawing), applied

strips with diamond rouletting and applied plain pellets. Decoration asymmetrical, a single applied strip between handle and slip zones on one side only. Solid rod handle, some holes pierced right through. Spurs applied as a single piece. Glaze on encrusted side light yellow, but gradually changes to light green on one side of handle and body near handle.

Discussion

This jug belongs to the well-known group made in north-west France in the thirteenth century. Here the majority of finds come from Rouen, Paris and Caen.¹ Although the kiln sites are not known it is almost certain that this ware was made in Normandy, and probably exported through Rouen. Examples of this ware have been found, usually as sherds, on at least thirty sites in England. On the continent, outside the three main areas, examples are known from north-east France and at the eastern end of the Baltic.² In Norfolk fragments have been recorded from Feltwell, King's Lynn, North Lynn and Great Yarmouth;³ the Redenhall jug is the first almost complete example.

B.G.

¹Barton, K. J. "Medieval Pottery at Rouen", *Arch. Journ.*, CXXII for 1965 (1966), 73-85.

²Dunning, G. C. "The trade in medieval pottery around the North Sea", *Rotterdam Papers. A Contribution to Medieval Archaeology*, Rotterdam 1968, 35-58.

³Rye, C. G. and Hurst, J. G. "Medieval Pottery from Great Yarmouth", *Norf. Arch.*, xxxiv, 1968, 279-292.

IV

A Polychrome Jug from Welborne

EARLY in November 1968 Mr. M. Johnson, while digging a grave in a recent extension of the graveyard on the south side of Welborne church (TG 06771013), discovered the sherds of an almost complete polychrome jug. Fortunately he realised that they were of particular interest and made an effort to collect all the sherds he could find and they were then passed to the writer. Subsequently the Vicar and Parochial Church Council of Welborne generously gave the jug to Norwich Castle Museum (reg. no. 29.969).

Description (Fig. 4)

The jug is $13\frac{3}{4}$ inches (34.8 cm.) high, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches (11.4 cm.) wide at the base and is $5\frac{5}{8}$ inches (14.3 cm.) across the body at its widest point. The fabric consists of the typical fine white paste. The surface is decorated with a wide band of green paint, edged below with a thin line of dark brown or black, under the rim and around under the spout and there is a similar band, but with a dark line above, bordering a decorative panel below the body of the pot. However, in this lower border the dark line is not continuous. The decorative panel consists of two birds outlined with dark brown and infilled with a similar green except on the face and beak which are unpainted. Behind the heads of each bird a shield is outlined with dark brown and infilled with orange-brown. One shield has two bars and the other three. In the shield

with two bars there is a single row of six dots between the bars. There is a third shield similar to this one below the spout. From the base of the handle there is a trefoil painted in the same manner as the birds. There are two splashes of dark brown paint near the base and another near the bottom of the handle. Over the decoration the whole jug is covered with a colourless glaze.

This jug may well have been a "second" for the whole shape is distorted.

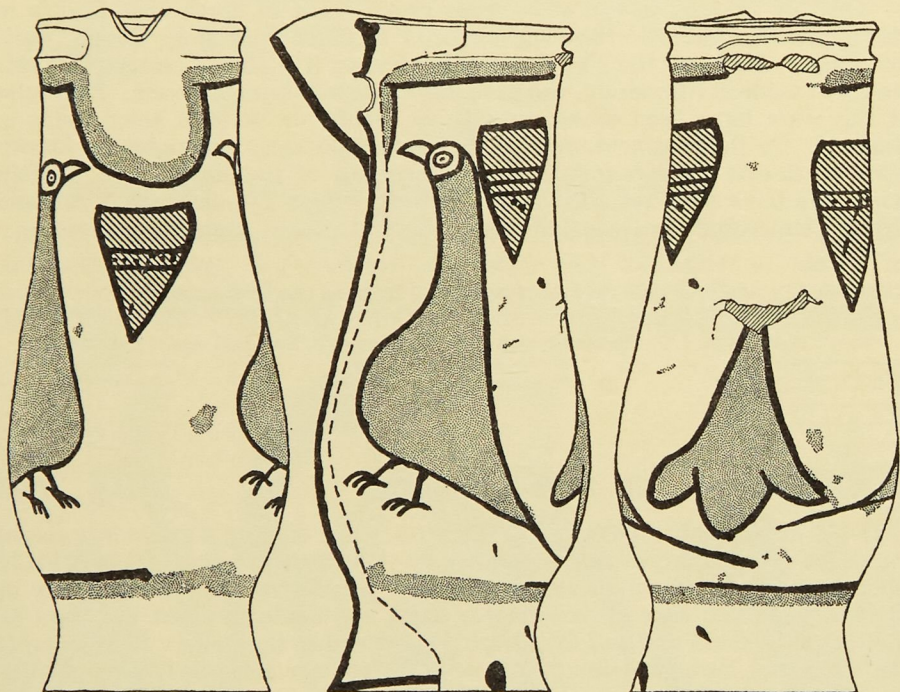


Fig. 4 (4)

Discussion

Sherds of late thirteenth—early fourteenth-century polychrome jugs imported from Saintonge, north of Bordeaux in western France,¹ have only previously been found in Norfolk at South Denes, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn. With this new and remarkable discovery on such an extremely rural site, we can now expect that future discoveries of exotic imported medieval wares in East Anglia will not be limited to the ports, large population centres and other rich sites.² The circumstances of discovery strongly suggest that this jug had been used in connection with the church and was afterwards disposed of in a small pit, in a very broken condition, outside the graveyard.

P.W-M.

¹Barton, K. J. "The Medieval Pottery of Saintonge", *Arch. Journ.*, CXX for 1963 (1964), 201-214.

²Distribution map in Dunning, G. C., "The trade in medieval pottery around the North Sea", *Rotterdam Papers. A Contribution to Medieval Archaeology*, Rotterdam 1968, fig. 21, p. 45.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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