

# Aspects of trade and exchange evidenced by recent work on Saxon and medieval pottery from London

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## SUMMARY

*Until the 1970s the Saxon and medieval pottery of London was poorly understood and a relatively neglected topic. Now after some 25 years of sustained research there is a series of closely dated assemblages, a good ceramic chronology and an extensive reference collection. This vast data set offers the possibility to examine patterns of regional, national and international trade, and, by plotting changes in assemblage composition through time, social and economic factors governing the increasing demand for pottery during the period. This paper considers some of the trends which have emerged in trade and exchange, not only of pots themselves but also of ideas.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Museum of London and its predecessors have over the years built up an important reference collection of Saxon and medieval pottery from sites in the London area, which has been supplemented by gifts and purchases. Some of these finds have been published in catalogues (Wheeler 1935; London Museum 1940, 212–240), archaeological reports and synthetic papers (eg Dunning 1959; Hurst 1959, 21–5), but little was known of the medieval pottery traditions of the area, and the resources to maximise the potential of the collections were limited. With the creation of a full archaeological service for the City and for Greater London, the situation has changed considerably. Over the last 25 years vast amounts of pottery have been recovered from excavations both within and outside the City, and study of this, together with the material

in the reserve collections, has led to considerable advances in the understanding of the pottery used in London, from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods. The resulting reports and the material archive now form an immense resource for the study of London's social and economic development.

For the post-Roman period, most progress during the 1970s and early 1980s was made in the creation of a fabric reference collection for the City of London; during the mid 1980s a ceramic chronology for the City was formed which was linked to the developing Dated Type series of Medieval Pottery (see below). During the 1990s this framework has been gradually refined by additional typological studies and by excavation of closely datable groups. Since c.1986 there have been major advances in the study of Middle Saxon pottery from London, and in the last year or two the Early Saxon period has also become a little clearer. This paper comprises a broad outline of the ceramic trends from c.630–1480, with some general observations on trade and exchange within the social and regional context.

## MIDDLE SAXON (c.630–880)

Over the last 15 years, fieldwork and related documentary research have shown that *Lundenwic*, the main hub of commercial activity between c.650–850, was not within the City walls, but to the west, in the Covent Garden area, see Fig 2 (Blackmore 1993; 1997; Bowsher & Malcolm, this volume). Prior to this Saxon material had

been excavated at the Savoy (Wheeler 1935, 39, 54, 139) and at Arundel House (Hammerson 1975; Haslam 1975, 221–2) but these sites had not demonstrated the true importance of the area. The first excavation to do so was that at Jubilee Hall in 1985, where deep stratigraphy was revealed (Cowie *et al* 1988). Although limited to 353 sherds, the ceramic assemblage from this site provided a remarkably good picture of the range, frequency and distribution of the different ware types. Together with the slightly larger group recovered from Maiden Lane in 1986 (720 sherds), it forms the core of a Middle Saxon pottery type series, which has since been developed with the study of finds from other sites in the area (Blackmore 1988; 1989; 1993); consideration of the social, economic and chronological significance of these assemblages is ongoing (Blackmore in prep, a and b).

During the Middle Saxon period London was at different times part of the kingdoms of East Anglia, Kent, Mercia and Wessex, and was also part of an international trading network which included Southampton, Ipswich and York; it was thus open to contacts and influences at both regional and supra-regional level. During the 7th and earlier 8th centuries the main contacts of *Lundenwic* included the Frankish markets of *Quentovic* and Rouen in Neustria (which then comprised northern France/western Belgium), and the Austrasian markets of Dorestad and Huy (respectively near the mouth of the Rhine and on the important trade route of the river Meuse). The latter were predominantly frequented by Frisian traders (Hodges 1991, 882–3), whose network extended to Denmark later to the Baltic. After 747, Neustria and Austrasia became part of the Carolingian empire, and the influence of the Frisians increased (Lebecq 1992, 8). In the 9th century Viking incursions, together with the fragmentation of this area of north-west Europe into various smaller kingdoms, led to a decline in international trade.

The external contacts of *Lundenwic* are reflected in the composition of over 40 ceramic assemblages recovered from excavations carried out by the Museum of London. Most sites have produced up to c.600 sherds, but the assemblage from the extensive excavation at the Royal Opera House site amounts to over 2800 sherds (c.60kg). These sums are much in line with the assemblage from Fishergate in York (c.757 stratified sherds, plus c.850 residual), but fall far behind the vast amount from the emporium of *Hamwic*

(Southampton), where published material totals over 46,000 sherds (Timby 1988, 79; Blackmore in prep a). The volume of imported pottery, however, is much the same for *Lundenwic* and *Hamwic* (average c.12% by sherd count), whereas in York it stands at a surprising 20–30% (Mainman 1993b, 191). Some of the more diagnostic ware and form types are illustrated in Fig 11.

Most pottery made in England during the 7th to 9th centuries was handmade. The dominant fabric in the period c.630–750 in *Lundenwic* is chaff-tempered ware, which was fired in bonfire kilns (Fig 11, Nos 1–3). The earliest wares were probably locally made, but production in Essex has been suggested (Vince 1990, 99); if so, some degree of organisation must be envisaged, and a case could be argued for distribution via Barking Abbey (founded 666). Numerous cooking pots and jars of various sizes have been found across the settlement. Other forms comprise lamps, and vessels which may have been used for craft-related purposes such as the boiling of dyes. Current knowledge suggests that the ware was going out of use in the mid 8th century (730–750).

In the mid 8th century chaff-tempered wares were superseded by a range of hard sandy grey wares made in Ipswich, the first native pottery since the Roman period to be fired in permanent kilns. Possibly instigated by Frisian potters, the industry seems to have been introduced to Ipswich c.730. The well-made and durable products were probably handmade and wheel-finished, but some were fully wheel-turned; the main forms were large jars and spouted pitchers, often with stamped decoration, and a range of cooking pots (Fig 11, Nos 12–14, 17). The wide distribution of this ware across England shows that the Ipswich potters were definitely involved in exchange mechanisms, whether they were selling pots or making them as containers for other commodities; if the latter was the case the pots were certainly reused for cooking and other purposes. It has been suggested that these wares were beginning to reach London from c.730 and to dominate the market from c.750 (Blackmore 1988, 101, 106–8; 1989, 106–7), but these dates might now be put forward to c.750 and c.770 (Blackmore in prep, a; b); they were then the most common type until the demise of the settlement in the mid/late 9th century.

Regional wares are much less abundant, and mainly comprise sandy wares, some with inclusions typical of the medieval Surrey whitewares

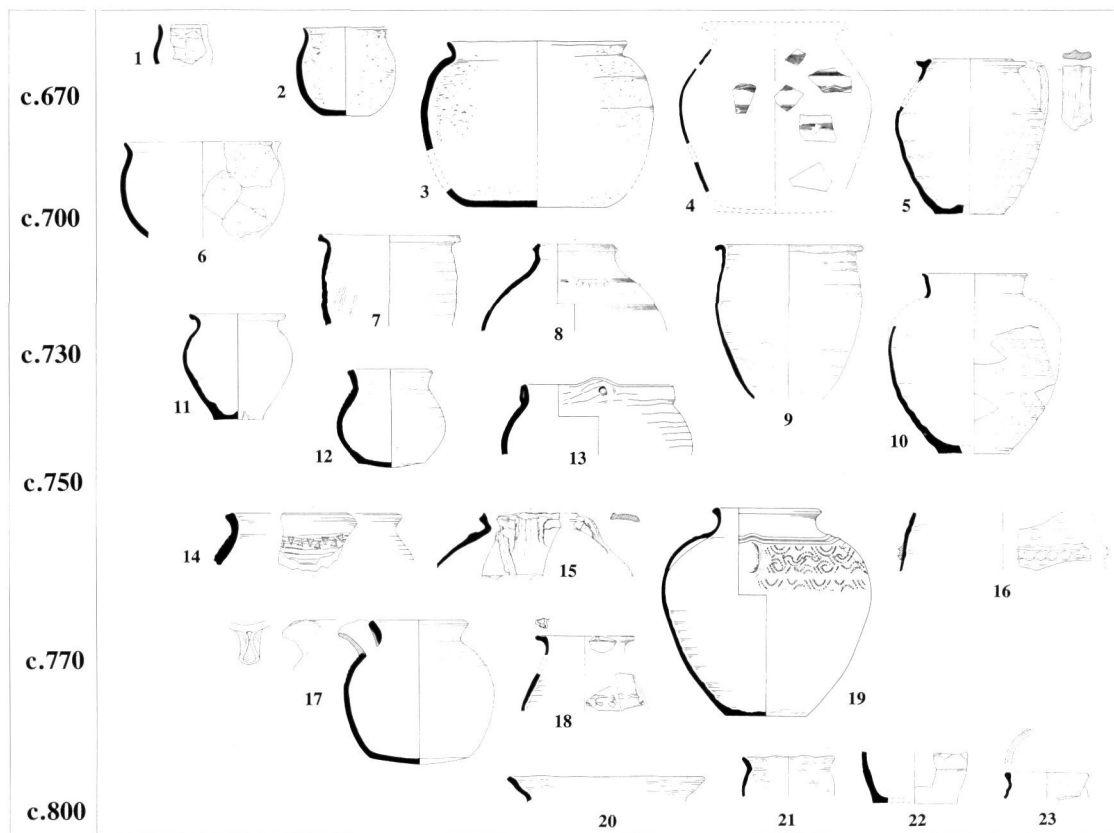


Fig 11. A provisional chronology for the Middle Saxon pottery from Lundenwic. Chaff-tempered ware (Nos 1–3); Walberberg/Badorf ware (Nos 4, 7–9, 15, 16, 23); 'North French' Blackware (No.5); Surrey-type sandy ware (No.6); 'North French' greyware (No.10); Normandy whiteware (No.11); Ipswich ware (Nos 11–14, 17); Tating ware (No.18); shell-tempered wares (Nos 20–22)

found in London (Fig 11 No.6). These may have been brought to *Lundenwic* for sale, or marketed via other centres such as Staines and Kingston. Sherds which can be identified by their inclusions as coming from further afield include oolitic limestone-tempered wares which must derive from an area well to the north or west of London, and others with igneous rock inclusions typical of the Charnwood Forest area of Leicestershire. While it is clear that shell-tempered wares do not appear until the late 8th or 9th century (see below), the other non-local wares occur sporadically throughout the sequence, and due to their small numbers it has not yet been possible to determine their chronologies or significance; they may have been used by merchants along the way, or have been redistributed via intermediate markets.

Turning to the imports, precise attributions and interpretations can be difficult, due to the

lack of kiln sites and published continental groups. The excavations at the Royal Opera House have shown that the earliest types found in *Lundenwic* comprise 'North French' reduced wares, followed by Rhenish buff wares from Walberberg (the predecessor of Badorf ware). The latter, formerly identified as coming from the Seine Valley (Blackmore 1988, 91) was reaching *Lundenwic* from the late 7th century (Fig 11, Nos 7–9, 16); the range of forms now known shows that some finds from other sites have been dated too late; a vessel from Westminster Abbey, for example, first published as a pitcher and dated to the late 8th or 9th century (Blackmore & Redknapp 1988, 226; Fig 3 No.9; Blackmore 1995, 80), is now seen to be an early *Reliefbandamphora* of the mid 8th century (Fig 11, No.15). These wares probably arrived alongside cargoes of quernstones, wine and luxury goods via the port of Dorestad, where similar late 7th-

century forms have been found (Dunning 1956, 218–220, 233; van Es & Verwers 1980, figs 55, 56; fig 62, no.8) and the same applies for the later *Reliefbandamphorae* from Badorf (van Es and Verwers 1993, 229–31; see below). The first fine Badorf-type wares in *Lundenwic* are from contexts dated to the later 8th or 9th century (Fig 11 No.20; Blackmore 1988, 92, 102–3; 1993, 141).

White and buff wares were also exported to England from Northern France and the Meuse Valley (Roy 1993; Giertz 1996); the former are quite common in *Hamwic* (Hodges 1991, 884), the latter more so in Ipswich, but both are relatively scarce in *Lundenwic*, where finds such as a complete Normandy ware cooking pot, found on the Royal Opera House site possibly from La Londe (Hodges 1991; Roy 1993) may have belonged to a merchant rather than have been a traded item (Fig 11, No.11).

The reduced wares probably also reflect the wine trade (Hodges 1977, 246). A number of fabrics have been identified, although the rims fall into three broad typological groups: rolled inverted/flanged and everted/recessed (Fig 11, Nos 5, 10, 18). The first two types may be from the Pas-de-Calais or Escaut valley (perhaps marketed through Quentovic or Domburg). The third type is typical of the later Huy products; these tend to be whitewares with reduced surfaces, although fully reduced wares are also found there (Giertz 1996, 63–4). Tating-type ware (with applied tinfoil decoration) seems to have been produced at a number of centres in the Rhineland (Stilke *et al* 1996), the Meuse Valley and/or in France (Meyer-Rodrigues 1993; Giertz 1996). The rim form of a *Lundenwic* find is of Meuse Valley type (Fig 11, No.18), as is that of a pitcher from Old Windsor (Dunning 1959, 52, fig 24). Tating-type ware has a general currency of c.750–800; it may have come in as gifts or for other specific purposes rather than by trade.

In the late 8th or 9th century, a range of shell-tempered wares came into use alongside Ipswich ware (Blackmore 1989, 83, 106; 1993, 141; in prep a; c); although never abundant, these are significant as part of a wider trend across the whole of southern and eastern England. Analysis carried out late in 1998 on samples from *Lundenwic* and Sandtun in Kent has shown that sherds which contain abundant shell (Fig 11, No.20) are from a source on the Woolwich Beds and are similar to a late Saxon ware which was probably made in Kent, perhaps near Greenwich

(Vince & Jenner 1991, 44, 63–4; Vince 1988). A few sherds have fossil shell similar to that found in St Neots ware, which is indicative of a source in the Jurassic, probably in the south-east Midlands (Fig 11, No.21), while those which contain shelly-limestone may be of continental origin (Vince 1998); similar fabrics and forms have been recovered from excavations at *Hamwic* and in Canterbury (Fig 11, No.22; Blackmore in prep a; c).

Other types which may be considered typical of the 9th century include reduced trellis-burnished wares and late Badorf-types. Where these, and shell-tempered wares, are absent, it is not yet possible to distinguish between contemporary and residual material in the latest Middle Saxon deposits.

To sum up, it is possible that the original ceramic chronology for *Lundenwic* needs to be stretched a little, with a start date of pre-650, and development of c.670, when the first Walberberg wares occur. If the arrival of Ipswich ware is placed at c.750 (rather than at 730–750), then its dominance at 770, and the later introduction of shell-tempered ware at c.800 would coincide with the peak of trade proposed for Dorestad, c.770–830 (Lebecq 1992, 7; Blackmore in prep, a; b). Only time will tell if this is the case.

## LATE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS

The greater part of the late Saxon and early medieval commercial waterfront was located at the western end of the City, between the Fleet valley and London Bridge (see Fig 1, 8; 14). The main hub of activity was at Queenhithe; the Steelyard was on the site of the earlier headquarters of the merchants of Cologne, established c.1170, while Vintry was the main landing point for wines from France from the mid 12th century onwards (Blackmore 1994; in prep d). From c.900 until the 15th century most of London's rubbish was discarded in revetment dumps which were created as the waterfront was pushed out into the Thames (Vince 1985; Blackmore 1994). Since the 1970s, study of excavated riverside assemblages, which can be dated by dendrochronology, coins and other artefacts, has not only shed light on patterns of trade but has also led to a pottery chronology for Late Saxon and medieval London which has been published in general terms (Vince 1985;

Blackmore 1994), as essays on particular ware groups (Vince 1982; 1988, 1995; Blackmore & Vince 1993) and as fabric and form type series (Vince & Jenner 1991; Pearce *et al* 1982, 1985; Pearce & Vince 1988; Jenner & Vince 1983). Similar studies of Shelly-Sandy ware and South Herts greyware are in progress (Blackmore & Pearce in prep). This work led to the concept of Ceramic Phases (Vince & Jenner 1991, 20–25), a useful dating tool during a period where groupings could be discerned but their actual dating was uncertain; now, however, date brackets for both medieval fabric and form types have become more secure, and are inbuilt into the computer systems used by the Museum of London, so that although the ceramic phases are still used for some ongoing projects based on the waterfront finds, they are no longer applied to current sites.

### Late Saxon c.850–1050

The pottery from Late Saxon London is quite different from that found in the *wic*. Until recently the earliest securely dated waterfront assemblages (from New Fresh Wharf) were dendro-dated to 1014+ (Vince 1992) and although more recently excavated sites appeared to take the sequence back to the early 10th century, they lacked the back-up of independent dating. Excavations carried out at Queenhithe between 1989–1996, however, have provided a complete ceramic sequence from the late 9th century onwards, with supporting coin and dendro-dating (Ayre *et al* 1996; Wroe-Brown this vol; Pearce in prep). This has confirmed many of the earlier hypotheses (Vince & Jenner 1991, 24–5), but has forced some changes on a few of the earlier observations (*ibid*, 20–1; 40–5). The most common wares for the period 900–1050 are illustrated in Fig 12. The dominant fabric from the start is the wheel-thrown Late Saxon Shelly ware (LSS), which was produced in an area of Jurassic geology some distance from London. This was first thought to be in the vicinity of Oxford (*ibid*, 40–1, 49), but there are several differences between the wares found in London and Oxford; it is possible that there was more than one production centre (Vince 1990, 102), as LSS has closer affinities with ceramic traditions within the Danelaw than the equivalent Oxford fabric (Mellor 1994, 59–60). This shelly ware remained the preferred coarseware for some 70

years, when it was accompanied by small amounts of a handmade sandy ware (EMS) which probably has a fairly local source. This was followed *c.*1000, by a sand-and-shell-tempered ware (EMSS), and later by a range of other handmade wares, mostly regional (Vince 1985, 34–49; 40–2; Vince & Jenner 1991, 42–5; see below).

The Bull Wharf sequence has shown that from the outset LSS was accompanied by occasional cooking pots, jars and spouted pitchers in Ipswich-Thetford ware (THET, from within the Danelaw) and continental wares. The latter mainly comprise Rhenish red-painted wares (REDP) with a small amount of Badorf-ware (BADO), the latter types which until this point could only be dated stratigraphically to the 11th and 12th centuries (Vince & Jenner 1991, 20–1).<sup>1</sup> Another ware, represented by sherds from globular vessels and pitchers in a sandy greyware (sometimes with distinctive bossed decoration), can now be identified by 10th-century parallels from Tiel, the successor of Dorestad and other sites in the Netherlands (Dunning 1956, 221; M.Bartels pers comm) as a Rhenish greyware (RHGR).<sup>2</sup> All these types are present in contexts dated to pre-950; another ware from this period is Huy-type glazed ware (HUY), although so far this has only been found in later 10th-century contexts. The best example from London is the famous Lime Street pitcher, which now can be dated, on the basis of excavated finds from Huy, to the early 10th, if not the late 9th century (Giertz 1996, 48).

In the 9th century the quantities of non-local and imported pottery found in the City are insufficient to prove that the pots themselves were traded, but they reflect London's position at the fringe of the Danelaw and the fact that it was visited by Frisian and Viking traders using the market created by Alfred in 886 (Wroe-Brown, this volume). From *c.*970, the volume of imported pottery increases and from *c.*1000 North French wares are also found. Together with other changes in the pottery assemblages from Queenhithe and elsewhere in the City, this reflects a growing and more stable population and London's role as an international port (Dunning 1956, 219, 221), and lends support to the documentary evidence that merchants from Normandy, the Paris Basin, Flanders, the Meuse valley and the Rhineland were again regularly visiting the City by the 11th century (Vince 1985, 42–3; Keene 1989, 100). Rhenish wares are

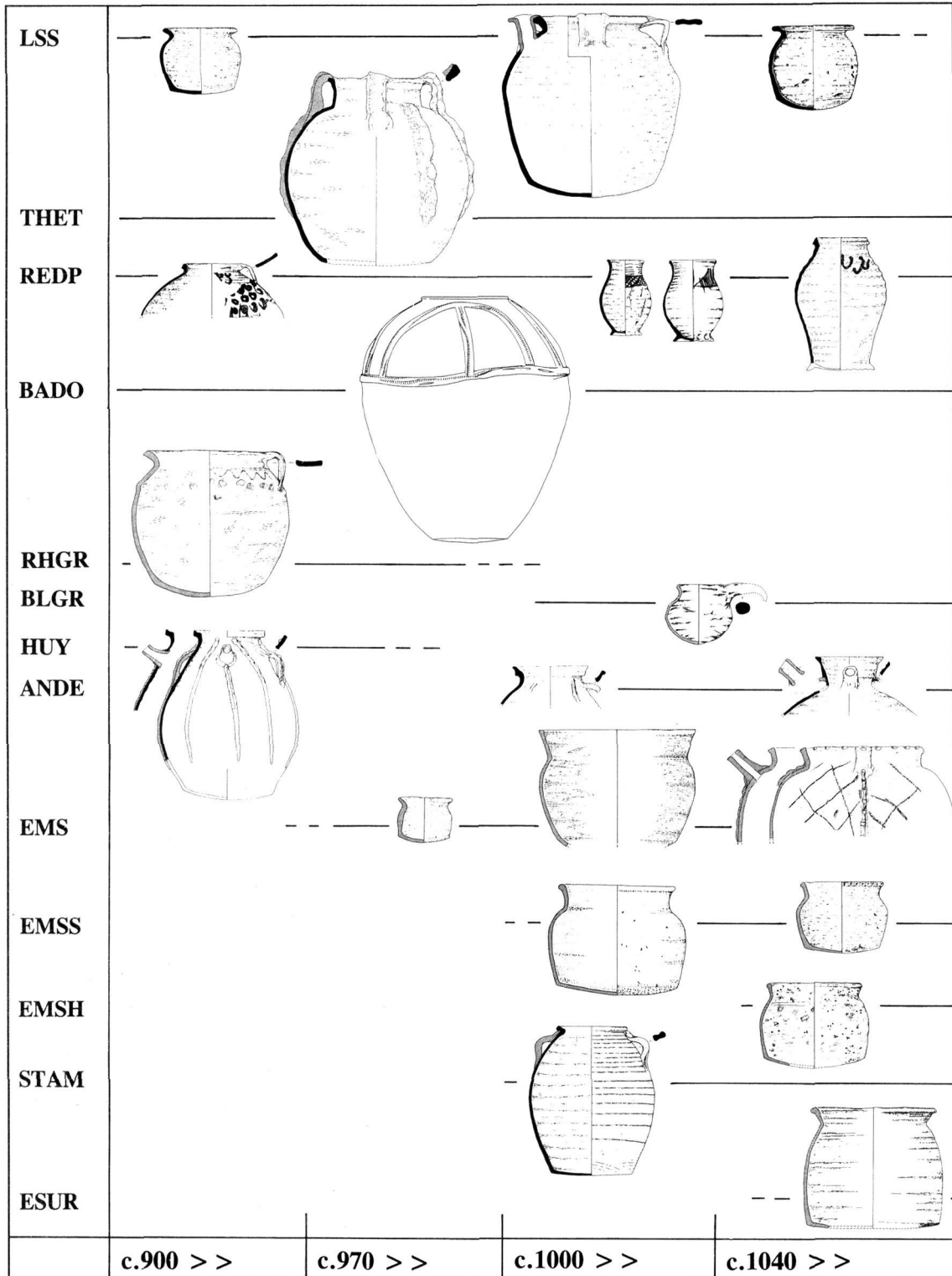


Fig 12. A chronology for Late Saxon pottery from the City of London c.900-1080 (see p.44 for code expansions)

present on almost all waterfront sites of this date (Vince & Jenner 1991, 45). The largest single group, dated to the late 11th to mid 12th century, was found on the foreshore at Dowgate, near the Steelyard (Dunning 1959, 73–7). The fact that these sherds were quite worn shows that they were either used on board ship or in a nearby property (Vince 1985, 86; Vince & Jenner 1991, 45).

### Medieval c.1050–1350

In the mid 11th century the popularity of LSS declined as a number of new regional industries emerged (*eg* Fig 12, EMSH, ESUR), both to the north and south of the Thames (Vince & Jenner 1991, 42–6; Jones 1992, 82–4). An important well-dated assemblage of this transitional period (1050–1080) has been recovered from Westminster Abbey (Goffin 1995). Although these new wares were initially handmade, some early Surrey wares and some of the early London-type and Coarse London-type wares (which appeared c.1080) were certainly wheel-finished, if not thrown (Vince & Jenner 1991, 42–3). The increasing use of the wheel coincided with an increase in population and opened the way for new organised industries capable of large-scale production (Vince & Jenner 1991, 42–3), leading to the demise of the handmade tradition.

By the mid 12th century wheel-thrown London-type wares and shelly-sandy ware, which was probably made alongside the London-type wares (Blackmore & Vince 1994), were beginning to dominate the market, but numerous new potteries were also established in

Hertfordshire and Middlesex at about this time (Pearce *in prep*). The market seems to have been quite fairly divided: the London-area potters mainly produced tablewares, with fewer cooking pots (at least after c.1200), while the reverse was the case for the wares produced in Middlesex and Hertfordshire. Whether this implies greater sophistication in the capital and simpler tastes in the hinterland, or reflects the nature of the raw material remains open to debate. Jugs and pitchers in London-type ware became increasingly decorative between c.1150–1270, and then much simpler as the industry declined in the 14th century. A range of jug forms dating from c.1270 is shown in Fig 13.

From the late 12th century, finds from excavations at Kingston Bridge (sitecode HOR86) suggest that pottery was also produced in this inland port and market town, situated at the first river crossing upstream from London Bridge, which was involved in trade with both London and the hinterland. The development of the industry, which from the start used imported white-firing clay from the Reading Beds, may have been a response not only to the growing consumer market, but more specifically to a demand for white pottery like that imported to London from France, although it was not until c.1230 that Kingston-ware began to reach London in bulk (Pearce & Vince 1988, 13–7; 82). Five medieval kilns have been found in Kingston, one in 1982 on the Knapp Drewett site (Thompson *et al* 1998, 120), and four in 1995 at Eden Street (Miller & Stephenson 1996; 1999). The latter have been dated by archaeomagnetism to between 1290–1340. The main output was tablewares, with cooking pots in second place. Royal patronage is hinted at in orders placed in the 1260s for up to 1,000 pitchers to be delivered to Westminster (*ibid*), but jugs and cooking pots from Kingston were in common use in the City. It is thought that the industry as a whole continued until c.1400. Other regional wares which appeared in London c.1270 are Coarse Border ware, a whiteware from the Surrey/Hampshire borders (Pearce & Vince 1988) and a fine redware from the area of Mill Green in Essex. The latter has stylistic elements in common with Kingston-type ware, and appears to have competed quite successfully for a share of the London market until c.1350, accounting for 10–20% of contemporary pottery on sites in the City (Pearce *et al* 1982, fig 1; Vince 1985, fig 18).

As far as the imports are concerned, Rhenish

Table 1. Key to pottery codes used in Fig 12

Pottery codes	Expansion
ANDE	Andenne ware
BADO	Badorf-type ware
BLGR	Blue-grey ware
EMS	Early medieval sandy ware
EMSH	Early medieval shelly ware
EMSS	Early medieval sand and shell-tempered ware
ESUR	Early Surrey ware
HUY	Huy-type glazed ware
LSS	Late Saxon shelly ware
REDP	Red-painted ware
RHGR	Rhenish greyware
STAM	Stamford ware
THET	Ipswich Thetford-type ware

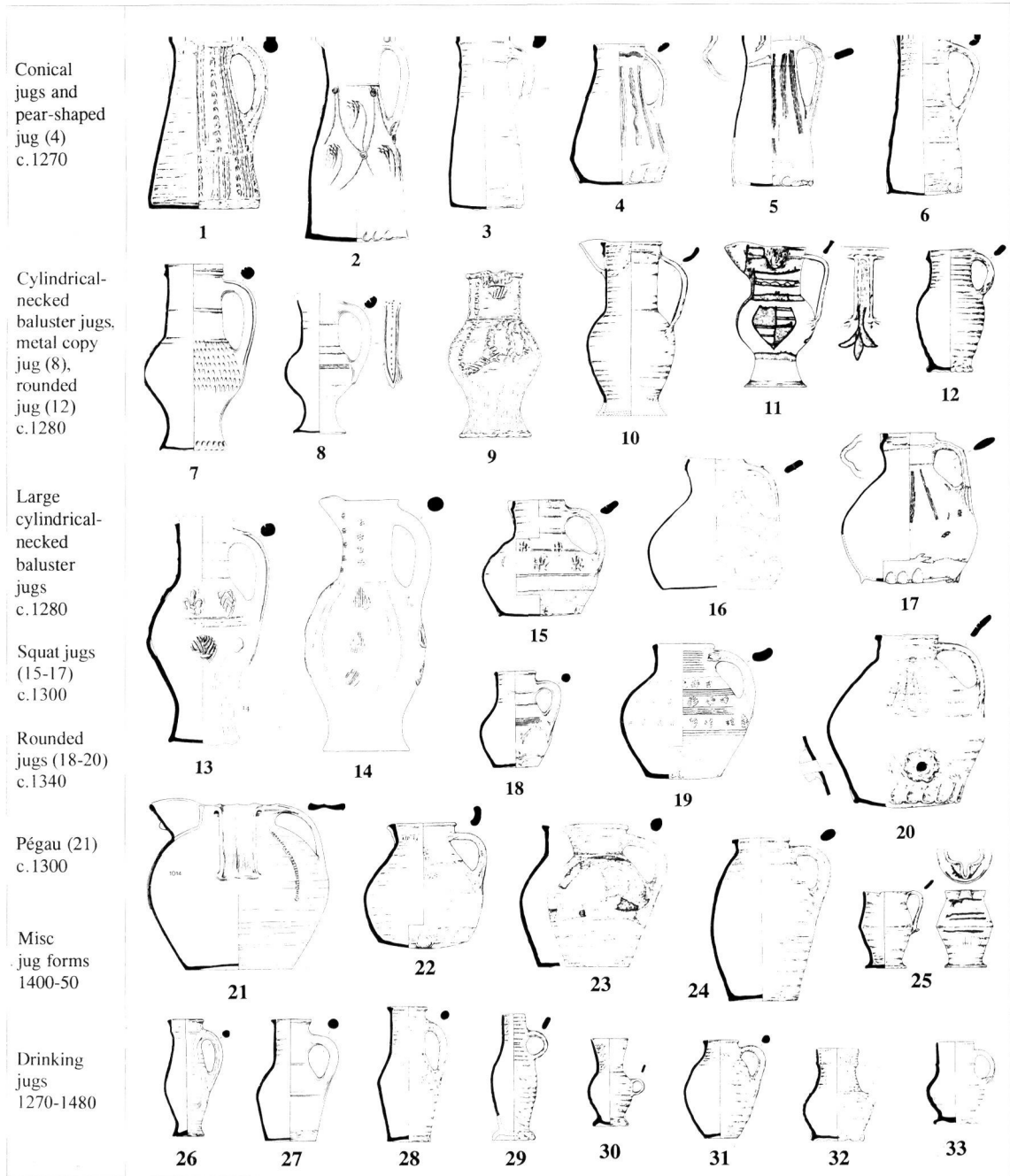


Fig 13. Some comparative jug forms from London, c.1270-1480. London-type ware (Nos 1, 22, 26); Kingston-type ware (Nos 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 13, 15, 18, 27); Mill Green wares (Nos 5, 16, 17); Coarse Border ware (Nos 6, 20); Tudor Green ware (No.9); Saintonge ware (Nos 10, 11, 21); Early German stoneware (No.12); Aardenburg-type ware (No.14); Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware (No.19); Cheam ware (Nos 23, 24, 28, 31, 32); Italian white-slipped ware (No.25); Siegburg stoneware (Nos 29, 30); Raeren stoneware (No.33)



wares continued into the 12th century, but declined and, despite the early role of German merchants in London's trade and the documented imports from Regensburg and Mainz in the early 12th century (Keene 1989, 100), they remain surprisingly rare until c.1350. The few proto-stoneware jugs and beakers which occur in mid to late 13th-century groups may have been used by visiting German merchants rather than traded goods. It has been suggested, therefore, that there may have been a hiatus in the importation of Rhenish wares between the late 13th and mid 14th century, and possibly from c.1200 (Vince 1985, 54; 1988, 241-2; Gaimster 1997, 84). From the late 11th century, however, there was a gradual increase in the amount of French pottery, initially coarse wares and early glazed jugs from Normandy, but from c.1170 coming from Rouen and the area of Paris, which must reflect the growth of the wine trade, the colony of merchants from Rouen in the City (Hodges 1977, 249) and the foundation of the Vintners company c.1155. There is a concentration of French wares at this site, and scattered occurrences along the waterfront as a whole, but the frequencies decline inland, suggesting that despite reciprocal contacts with Paris (Keene 1989, 105), North French wares were never imported in bulk, or at least available to the general populace (see also below). In the late 13th century the source of French wares found in London shifted from Normandy to the Saintonge, again reflecting political and commercial trends in the early 14th century when the importation of wines from Bordeaux to London was facilitated by the construction of large cellared houses at the Vintry (Blackmore 1994, 33). The first Spanish and Mediterranean wares figure in waterfront deposits of the late 13th and 14th centuries, but are extremely rare until the 15th century (see Fig 14).

### Medieval c.1350-1480

This period saw some major changes in the demand for and marketing of local and regional pottery. The London-type ware industry died out c.1350, perhaps as a consequence of the Black Death; Mill Green wares ceased to be used in the capital from this time, but similar wares continued to be marketed in Essex. This may, therefore, reflect a change in fashion away from redwares, as Kingston-type ware continued until c.1400, while the Coarse Border ware potters

gained a near monopoly on the supply of pottery during the later 14th and 15th centuries. Production of London redwares was revived c.1400 (Pearce & Vince 1985, 3, 135), but many of the products were slipped so as to appear white. Other whiteware industries which started to supply London were that at Cheam (Orton 1979; 1982; Pearce & Vince 1988) and another in the area of St Albans (Pearce *et al* 1982). Most pottery produced during this period comprises basic utilitarian forms, but a range of tablewares such as cups, lobed cups and condiment dishes was also produced which reflect the changes taking place in social customs at this time; some of these are in 'Tudor Green' ware (basically a convenient term for a range of finewares which were probably made in or near the Coarse Border ware potteries).

Saintonge ware became the most common imported French pottery, although the number of vessels represented on most sites is usually limited. The wine trade suffered during the Hundred Years War, but later Saintonge wares continue to appear on more affluent sites until the later 15th century (Vince 1985, 59,79). From c.1350, the increasing amount of Siegburg and Langerwehe stoneware in London reflects the rise of the Hanse and the emphasis of trade centred on the Rhineland and the Low Countries (Gaimster 1987, 340; 1997, 84-7; Blackmore 1994, 35-7).

In the mid 15th century the Cologne Englandfahrer, resident at the Steelyard, controlled not only the export of stonewares along the Rhine but also up to 85% of the Hanseatic trade with England (Gaimster 1997, 79). In 1474, moreover, the Cologne merchants acquired, through the Treaty of Utrecht, trading privileges equal to those of English merchants. Customs accounts indicate that between 1384 and 1480 the amount of pottery imported to London from North-west Europe rose slowly from an estimated average of 127 individual vessels per year to c.1160, and this soared in the early 16th century. The bulk came on boats sailing from the ports of the Low Countries and carrying querns, beer, wine and other goods (*ibid*, 79). It is likely that much of the Spanish, Italian and other Mediterranean wares which began to reach London in greater quantity during the 14th and 15th centuries arrived, via the markets of Antwerp and Bruges, on the same vessels (Blackmore 1994, 34, 38, 40-1).

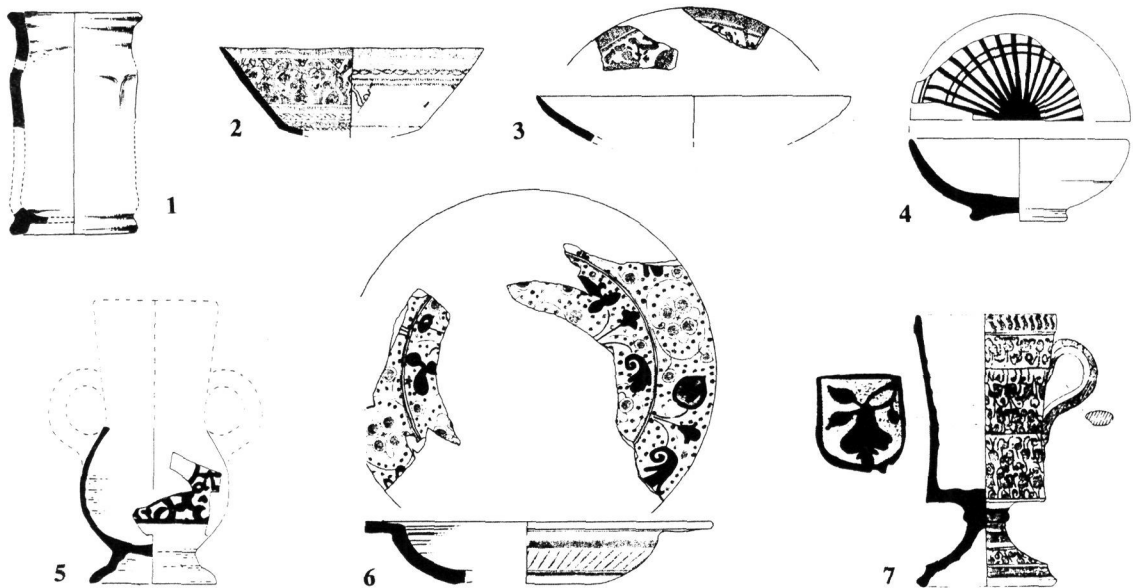


Fig 14. A selection of Mediterranean wares found in London: Magrebi ware albarello, late 13th century (No.1); Andalusian lustreware bowls, late 13th to mid 14th century (Nos 3, 4); Paterna Blue, 15th century (No.4); Mature Valencian lustreware dish and pedestal cup, mid 15th century (Nos 5, 6); Late Andalusian lustreware vase, mid to late 15th century (No.7)

## DISCUSSION

'Towns and cities cannot be understood in isolation from the wider society of which they form a part, as they are a product of a division of labour by which they provide goods and services in return for a proportion of the produce and income from the countryside' (Keene 1989, 99). It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider all the regional markets with which London was linked, or to compare trends in London with those outside it, but it is clear that due to its easy connections with both the Continent and the wealthy inland counties, London, the most densely populated city in medieval England, has a unique situation as far as imported pottery is concerned. Thus as Keene has suggested (*ibid*), the districts overseas with which London had the closest links should be counted as part of its region. The means by which imported wares reached England are complex, and this overview is naturally much simplified, but the main trends reflect those of contemporary trade, and also show that although the pottery of the different periods changes, some patterns are present, and even seem to repeat themselves.

One area of interest is the relationship of local to non-local industries at times of growth and

depression. During the Saxon period, London was at the interface of different political regions; it was successively ruled by the East Saxons, Kent, Wessex and Mercia and throughout this period it was primarily supplied by non-local potters, and the market, although notionally 'consumer-led', was monopolised in turn by chaff-tempered ware, Ipswich ware and Late Saxon shelly ware (it is uncertain to what extent the other English wares found in the *wic* were really traded and not simply the possessions of merchants passing through). Ipswich was within the kingdom of the East Angles so it is of interest that the introduction of Ipswich ware in the mid 8th century follows the expansion of Mercia, which by the end of Offa's reign included Kent and much of the country between the Thames and the Humber (Yorke 1990, 112-4). It also coincided with a general increase in international trade, which in *Lundenwic* is evidenced by rapid growth in the textile industry. Both *Lundenwic* and Ipswich were frequented by Frisian traders, and a connection between their activity and the distribution of Ipswich ware seems likely. The arrival of shell-tempered wares in the late 8th or 9th century is intriguing, partly because this seems to be a national and international trend, and partly because the economy of the English *wics* was possibly beginning to decline. If so, do

these wares reflect specific trading contacts, or diversification in response to the collapse of former traditions?

In the Alfredian period, the reoccupation of the City might have prompted the creation of a local pottery industry, partly to ensure self-sufficiency and partly as a commodity for the new market. Instead, all pottery was again imported, a small amount from the Continent (rather less than in the equivalent Middle Saxon period *c.*670–700), and the bulk from a source in the Upper Thames Valley, possibly within the Danelaw. This is of some interest, suggesting a possible political agenda: the limited resources of Alfredian London were to be put to better use than potting, while Lundenburh, like the former *wic*, remained a relatively neutral market where traders from inside and outside the Danelaw could conduct business. East Anglian wares reappeared in the early-mid 10th century, but never really competed with LSS, which had a near monopoly on supply for almost 100 years, both in London and in the region to the north of it (Vince & Jenner 1991, 40–2; Jones 1992, 84). As in the middle Saxon period, regional shelly wares do not appear until relatively late.

It might be expected that, as in Canterbury, the Conquest would have had a more immediate effect on styles and availability of pottery in London. As it is, London-type wares appear in small amounts *c.*1080, but the industry only really took off in the second half of the 12th century, when jugs and cooking pots from London were quite widely distributed around the coast of England and even reached Norway (Blackmore & Vince 1994). The effects of the Black Death and the 100 years war on local/regional pottery industries are unclear, but they may account for an interlude of *c.*50 years in the London industry and the fact that the Mill Green wares ceased to reach the capital from *c.*1350, even though they remained in use in Essex. Between *c.*1150 and 1300 local and regional wares were used together, the greatest choice of wares being in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. From 1350 onwards the situation changed; a wide variety of forms was made, but the market was dominated by the Surrey whitewares.

Looking at the imports, the foreign contacts of the 7th and 8th centuries were extensive. The imported pottery from the earliest period in *Lundenwic* includes a few Merovingian reduced wares, but no Rhenish wares; these first appeared

when the market economy was taking off and there was perhaps a greater element of competition between Frankish and Frisian merchants; after this both types are present. Later Rhenish wares are much rarer than the reduced wares, although the chronology of the latter is at present problematic. Although some, if not all, imported cooking pots may have been personal possessions, the distribution of the finewares in *Lundenwic* is so even that they must have either contained other goods or have been traded in their own right. These same wares should also have been redistributed to the centres of royal power in Kent, Essex and Mercia. Early Badorf wares are relatively common on the Royal Opera House site, but less so elsewhere within the settlement, and compared to the thousands of vessels that are thought to have passed through Dorestad each year (van Es & Verwers 1993, 232–4), the number which reached London is minimal. The significance of this is unclear. Possible reasons include: most later Rhenish wares were transhipped from *Lundenwic*; the ware exists in areas which have not yet been excavated (*eg* closer to the Thames); *Lundenwic* was already in decline when Dorestad was at its peak *c.*770–830 (but see above); the emphasis of Rhenish trade was by then with other centres.

To what extent *Lundenwic* acted as an entrepôt is thus difficult to ascertain from the ceramic evidence alone, and this is exacerbated by the lack of excavated contemporary sites in the region. Mention has been made of the Tating-type ware vessel from Old Windsor and other imports are now known from this area (P. Blinkhorn pers comm), but such exotic finds are very rare, and the best indicator is Ipswich ware, which has a wider distribution. The finds from Staines (Jones & Moorhouse 1981) and Westminster Abbey (Blackmore 1995, 80) were probably redistributed from *Lundenwic*, but the few sherds from Battersea could have come via Barking (Redknapp 1991; 1992) to which it belonged in the 8th century (Blackmore & Cowie in prep). Non-local and imported pottery from Barking itself may have been shipped there directly, as perhaps was the case at Minster in Thanet, on the other side of the estuary. The Ipswich wares and imported pottery found at Waltham Abbey (Huggins 1976, 101–3, figs 35, 36) may have come up the River Lea from *Lundenwic*, or Barking, or even have travelled overland.

Whatever the case, it would appear to be the

Rhenish wares (and to a lesser extent those of the Meuse Valley) which form the ceramic link between Middle and Late Saxon periods, doubtless reflecting a revival of the wine trade. These wares are present, albeit in very small numbers, in 9th-century *Lundenwic* and in late 9th/early 10th century groups at Bull Wharf. The nationality of the 12th to 13th-century traders frequenting the waterfront is also reflected by concentrations of French pottery by the Vintry and Rhenish pottery by the German Guildhall (Dunning 1956, 218–9; 1959, 73–7). At New Fresh Wharf and Billingsgate, French pottery was more common in the pre-1200 foreshore deposits, while Rhenish wares occurred in both foreshore and revetment groups (Vince 1992, 142). Foreshore finds may indicate that cargoes were off-loaded onto the beach, but could represent goods broken in transit, or clearance from adjacent buildings.

This brings us to the problem of quantifying and interpreting assemblages. Attempts have been made to estimate the relative quantities of different wares at different times, but these can only be taken as a very broad guide (Vince 1985, figs 23, 28; Blackmore 1994, 40); the highest level of imports recorded in the waterfront groups was 8.3% (Vince 1985, fig 38; Blackmore 1994, 40). However, although it is valid to compare one waterfront assemblage with another, it is not easy to compare them with assemblages from sites away from the river, for example in the Cheapside area (Schofield & Vince 1990), where rather less pottery is found and imports are scarcer. Occasional 12th to 15th-century groups are found in pits, cesspits and wells, but they do not reflect the real amount of pottery used, or the status of the adjacent properties. This might be interpreted as evidence for limited trade and/or pottery use, but in fact reflects practices in rubbish disposal and differential survival of the deposits. Where kitchen wares are found, it is unlikely that they have travelled far from where they were used, but the paucity of imports probably reflects the greater care taken over such items, and the status and mobility of the owners, who carried their possessions with them.

For this reason the recent research into the sites and finds of religious houses is particularly important for ceramic studies, as these were primarily static communities and despite intrusions in the post-Dissolution period, it is often possible to relate finds from medieval features to the context, if not the building, in which they

were used (Stephenson 1997; Goffin 1995; Blackmore in prep, e, f, g; Pearce in prep). These communities were not entirely unworldly, and analysis has shown that while some pots continued in use until they literally fell apart, others were in the latest fashion when discarded (Blackmore in prep, e, f). When quantified, these assemblages can, therefore, be compared with those from the waterfronts, and used as a 'market research' tool to gauge the popularity of different wares in different parts of London. Consideration, for example, of the different Surrey whitewares, suggests that Kingston-type wares are less common away from the waterfront (Stephenson 1997, 184–5) whereas Coarse Border wares had a very wide distribution in the later 14th and 15th centuries (Blackmore in prep, d, e).

Another question which can be addressed is the influence of one industry on another, whether due to movement of potters or competition between different potteries. The impact of imported wares is in some cases reflected by the local wares. Norman styles are less obvious than in Canterbury (Cotter 1997), and no 11th or earlier 12th-century continental forms were directly copied in London, but there was a short lived vogue in the mid 12th century for collared rims in the Low Countries/North French style (Pearce *et al* 1985, 129–30); in the later 12th century, decorated jugs from Rouen and Northern France, which probably came in with cargoes of wine, inspired a wide range of copies, possibly made by an immigrant potter(s); metal cauldrons and chafing dishes were also copied (*ibid*, 131–33). This may reflect moves by the London potters to keep up with European fashion and maintain their hold on the domestic market.

Stylistic affinities show that the Kingston industry was almost certainly founded by potters from London (Pearce & Vince 1988, 82); the forms produced there were also influenced by wares from Northern France, and later by pottery from the Low Countries. Surprisingly, with the possible exception of the so-called 'metal-copy' jugs from Kingston (see Fig 13), there was little local attempt to imitate the Saintonge forms or the distinctive Saintonge polychrome wares, either in London or in the Surrey potteries; between *c.*1270 and 1450 these industries followed their established traditions, and although lobed cups (which are thought to have originated in France) were emulated at Kingston and in the later whitewares, other copies are so rare that they may have been individual commissions or

potter's whims. Why this should be is unclear, as the potters must have been aware of the imported wares and the technology clearly existed to copy the earthenwares, if not the lustrewares or stonewares; it would seem, therefore, that they were not perceived as a threat. Nonetheless, continental fashions were embraced, and the diversification in English tablewares and the increased use of ceramic beakers and drinking jugs seen from c.1350 might well be due to the importation of equivalents from the Continent, especially the Rhineland (see Fig 13). The widespread distribution of the Surrey wares, Dutch redwares and stonewares across the whole of the London area at this time (Vince 1985, 58) demonstrates efficient marketing systems supplying cheap and available commodities and the impact of fashion on all levels of society. The effects of this, and the local response in the late 15th century must remain the subject of another paper.

## CONCLUSION

Between 630–1480 London witnessed many social, cultural and economic changes which are reflected in the topography of, and pottery from, the *wic*, the City and the hinterland. If, however, we were to study the trade of London through finds alone the picture would be misleading, suggesting simple direct contacts where far more complex mechanisms were involved: not all foreign artefacts can be taken as evidence for trade: some may have been personal possessions, gifts or souvenirs, or imported *ad hoc* by entrepreneurial merchants (or passengers). The aim of this paper has been to suggest some patterns in pottery supply to London in the Saxon and medieval periods and to show, as Dunning first demonstrated in 1956, the importance of trade with northern France and the Rhineland, which has shaped the nature of London's ceramic assemblages over c.850 years, through exchange of ideas as much as the goods themselves. As Derek Keene has observed, the Rhine, and to a lesser extent the Seine, were almost as important to London's trade as the Thames over a long period of time (Keene 1989, 99–101), but the role of the Meuse Valley should no longer be underestimated in the early medieval period. The greatest contact was with the Rhineland, which continued, due to the power of the Hanseatic merchants, to be a major

supplier of pottery to the City of London in the post-medieval period.

To conclude, our understanding of London's pottery has advanced considerably over the last 20 years – the next steps are more consistent quantification, integrated with documentary and historical research, and the publication of key sequences, which will permit wider questions to be asked of the data and more valid conclusions to be drawn.

## Appendix 1. Summary of continental pottery imported to London 600–1480

Much of the following is abstracted from a recent paper on the archaeology of London's trade (Blackmore 1999); for illustrations see Figs 13 and 14.

*Germany:* The earliest ware found in Middle Saxon London is Walberberg ware from the Rhenish Vorgebirge, which occurs as deep bowls and jars, usually with rolled rims, which can be dated, both in *Lundenwic* and by Continental parallels to the period c.670–730. Later types such as the *Reliefbandamphorae* date from the mid to later 8th century. The finer Badorf wares appear in the later 8th century and continued into the 9th century, but so far only sporadic occurrences are known. Badorf-type ware amphorae also figure in 10th to 12th-century groups, alongside Rhenish greywares (formerly classed as Thetford whiteware) and Red-painted wares (Vince & Jenner 1991, 94–5, 98–104).

The chronology of the medieval stoneware forms is in good agreement with that in the Netherlands and the Rhineland, showing that the new forms were reaching London within a few years of their introduction, probably through the Netherlands (Vince 1985, 58–9; Blackmore 1994 pl 3b; Gaimster 1987; 1997, 84–7). Proto-stoneware jugs and beakers occur sporadically in mid to late 13th-century groups, but the first real stoneware is Siegburg which occurs as rare sherds before 1350, and increasingly after this. The most commonly recorded forms are drinking jugs, firstly the tall Jakobanne, later the smaller beakers and jars. Another form is the shallow drinking bowl, which is common in contexts dating to after 1450 (Gaimster 1987, fig 1, no.4). Siegburg bottles with an iron-wash are rare; a near-complete example found in the lower fill of the Tower Postern can be dated to the 1450s by an almost identical piece found in a coin-dated feature in Duisburg (Gaimster 1987, 343, fig 1, no.3; Blackmore 1994, col pl 3b). Langerwehe stoneware also appears in small amounts before c.1350 but is more common from the late 14th century onwards; again, drinking jugs are most common, but cups, larger jars and costrels are also found. This ware has a distribution across the City, although never as common as Siegburg or the later Raeren stoneware. For a fuller summary of the documentary and archaeological evidence for the importation of stoneware to London see Gaimster (1997, 78–87).

*Low Countries:* It is likely that much of the Middle Saxon pottery described as 'North French' was made in what is now Belgium. These wares include reduced black and greyware pitchers which may have come from the Escaut valley, and whitewares which may have been produced in the Meuse Valley, either at, or exported through, the important trading

centre of Huy (see above). A few redwares and red-burnished wares may also be from this area, and it is not impossible that some of the Middle Saxon shell-tempered wares are of Flemish origin (Blackmore in prep, a and c; Vince 1988).

In the 11th century the pottery exported to London from Huy was superseded by that from Andenne (Giertz 1996, 33, 55–6), and this ware is found on sites found across the City in 11th and 12th-century contexts (Vince & Jenner 1991, 105–6). Thereafter there is a near hiatus until the 14th century (Vince 1985, 79; Blackmore 1994, 37). Dutch redwares follow the same pattern as the German stonewares, although never so abundant. They increase rapidly in number from the mid 14th century, reflecting the general increase in the cross-channel wool trade; almost all are cooking vessels paralleled in Utrecht. Slip-decorated wares of Utrecht type, including dishes and jugs, also begin to appear in small quantities in contexts dating from c.1400 (Vince 1985, 58, 79; Blackmore 1994, 37).

*France:* During the Middle Saxon period it is likely that some reduced pitchers were made in the Pas-de-Calais region, while Normandy whitewares seem to have been reaching *Lundenwic* from the 8th century (some wares previously thought to have originated in the Seine Valley may in fact be from Walberberg). A few sherds of glazed pottery identified as being from Northern France were found in a context broadly dated to 900–1050, but it would seem that little or no French wares were imported during the late 9th and 10th centuries, and they are still rare in the immediate post-Conquest period. Glazed pitchers and unglazed cooking pots from Normandy appear c.1100, although never abundant (Vince & Jenner 1991, 106–10), and it is possible that these were personal possessions. In the late 12th century jugs from Rouen and Paris began to reach London (Vince 1985, 47–48, 79); all these are most common along the waterfront, notably in the Vintry area. By c.1270 the most common French ware is from the Saintonge, near Bordeaux (*ibid* 54, 79), which like the earlier jugs entered London as part of the wine trade. Both plain glazed and polychrome jugs, pitchers and mortars are found, albeit in small quantities, across the whole of the London area until the early 15th century (Pearce *et al* 1985, 19; Vince 1985, 59, 79; Blackmore 1994, 34–5).

*Spain:* Finds of Spanish pottery are rare in the City until the late 14th century, and are more common from the mid 15th century, when trade with Spain, Iberia and the Mediterranean increased (Vince 1982; 1985; 1995; Blackmore 1994, 38–9). Dishes, bowls and albarelli of Early Andalusian Lustreware first occur in late 13th-century groups; there are also some important pieces from within the City (Hurst 1977, 76–77, fig 25, no.1). From the early to mid 14th century fragments of costrel and amphora in Merida-type ware are also found. Valencian lustreware is first found in late 14th-century deposits, when Later Andalusian wares (albarelli and pedestal jugs) also appear. Imports of the earlier 15th century comprise Mature Valencian lustreware and Paterna Blue (produced near Valencia), which is found only in London and Southampton (Hurst *et al* 1986, 38–9, fig 16, no.36; Gerrard *et al* 1995, 287). Dating of these finewares is problematic as it would seem that many pieces were carefully curated (Gerrard *et al* 1995, 283–287). A concentration of Spanish late medieval wares, including bowls and dishes in Mature Valencian lustreware has been noted in waterfront groups near Baynards Castle (TL79, SUN86) and near Bridewell Palace (BOY86) (Vince 1985, 59–64, fig 33, nos 3, 4, pl IVB; Blackmore 1994, 39), while residual sherds occur in various Tudor and

later dumps outside the City walls, for example at Finsbury Pavement (Stephenson in Malcolm 1997, 44–8).

*Italy, the Mediterranean and beyond:* The earliest 'exotic' pottery (jars and albarelli in Magrebi ware and Alkaline-glazed ware) is found in late 13th-century contexts; rare sherds continue to appear in the 14th and 15th centuries on the waterfront (Vince 1985, 54, 64; 1995, 330–1) and within the religious houses. Medieval Italian wares (Archaic Maiolica and Mediterranean Maiolica) may occur as early as the later 13th century but are very rare, even in the 15th century (Vince 1985, 54, 64, 81; Blackmore 1994, 38).

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Although it was first suggested by Wheeler (1935, 157) that Red-painted wares were present in London in the 9th century, the spouted pitcher illustrated by him (*ibid*, pl VIII) is probably of 11th-century date, and thus still in keeping with the broad 10th to 11th-century date suggested by Dunning for this form (Dunning (1959, 56).

<sup>2</sup> First compared by Dunning to finds from Normandy, the Low Countries and the Rhineland (Dunning 1959, 67), this ware was later tentatively identified as Thetford whiteware (Vince & Jenner 1991, 20–1; 42).

<sup>3</sup> This pitcher was long thought to date to the 12th century, although it was considered atypical of Andenne (Dunning 1959, 61–2); Vince & Jenner correctly suggested that it might represent an early phase of production in the Meuse Valley (1991, 104–5).

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