



Fig. 2. Malvern ware with complex rouletting. Scale 1/2.

#### TWELFTH-CENTURY COMPLEX ROULETTING FROM THE MALVERN KILNS

Roller-stamp rouletting is a feature of many pottery industries from Saxon times onwards, but the decoration seldom developed beyond simple diamonds, chevrons and rectangles.

It has been thought that complex rouletting appeared during the 13th century; finds spots are concentrated on the Welsh Border and the Gloucester/Worcester region. The tradition reached its artistic zenith in Monnow Valley ware (Hurst 1962-3; Clarke 1987), with running leaves, fleur-de-lis and other ornate, curvilinear and rectilinear designs (Fig. 1, Nos. 1-6).

In the 12th century, Malvern potters used rouletting on their distinctive tripod pitchers (Vince 1977), and these vessels have been found over a wide area. Dr. Vince lists the main designs in his report on the pottery from excavations in Hereford: large chevrons, smaller chevrons, small diamonds (Fig. 2, No. 7) and small rectangles.

During excavations carried out by A. L. Sockett and J. F. Evans at Monmouth School, Monmouth (NGR SO510127), over 25 years ago, a rim bearing complex rouletting was recorded (E. Talbot, unpublished M.A. thesis). This rim was subsequently published, with reservations, as being from a cooking pot of Monnow Valley ware (Clarke 1987). A more recent examination with a binocular microscope, however, revealed acid igneous rock fragments in its inclusions.

This coincided with the discovery of a second rim bearing identical rouletting, found during current excavations at 22-24 Monnow Street, Monmouth. It is now clear that the fabric and form of these two sherds are from 12th-century Malvernian tripod pitchers. They bear a more advanced design than any

previously recognised from this industry (Fig. 2, Nos. 9, 10). A body sherd bearing a large diamond rouletting, found in a recent excavation at 71 Monnow Street, also seems to be a new Malvernian design. It has the same fabric, with acid igneous rock inclusions, as the other two sherds (Fig. 2, No. 8).

Research into complex rouletted wares (Malvernian and Monnow Valley wares) is continuing, and the author would be grateful for information on further examples.

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