

An Aquamanile and a Spouted Jug in Lyveden-Stanion Ware

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SUMMARY

This article describes the manufacturing techniques and decoration of two unusual products of the Lyveden-Stanion industry, an aquamanile in the British Museum and a spouted jug in Chelmsford Museum, which are thought to date to the later 13th or early 14th century.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM AQUAMANILE

In 1984 the British Museum acquired a near-complete aquamanile in the form of a ram (BM MLA 1984, 6–3, 1; Fig. 1)¹. A note on the back of an old photograph of the vessel acquired at the time states that it was found at Twyford and was owned by one H. K. Waller. However, information from the vendor subsequently revealed that it belonged to Horace Waller, vicar of Twywell, Kettering, Northamptonshire from c.1864–1884, and that he had bought it from a local workman. It was therefore probably found, not at Twyford, but at Twywell (centred on SP 951 783), a village some four or five miles south-west of the kilns at Lyveden, and a similar distance to the south-east of the kilns at Stanion.² The fabric, which contains abundant oolitic limestone inclusions, conforms to previous fabric descriptions of Lyveden-Stanion ware (Webster 1975, 63; McCarthy 1979, 228; Pearson 1983, 28), and was confirmed as a product of the Lyveden-Stanion industry by comparison with type-series of sherds from the two kiln sites in the National Reference Collection of Medieval Pottery in the British Museum (BM MLA 1969, 11–1, 1–25; 1979, 11–4, 1–23).

Description.

The vessel has a cylindrical body, 238 mm in length, and is rounded at the rear. The irregular knife-trimmed surface suggests that it was coil-built, rather than wheel-thrown. The chief technique for potting at Lyveden and at Stanion was coiling (McCarthy 1979); wheel-throwing was not introduced at Lyveden, and probably not at Stanion, until the 14th century (Pearson 1983, note 4). Xeroradiographs of the aquamanile (Fig. 2) confirm that the cylinder was hand-built by revealing the parallel alignment of coils and the corresponding ridges in the section of the vessel, rather than the oblique alignment of ridges, inclusions and voids which are characteristic of wheel-thrown

vessels (Middleton, Lang and Davis 1992). Further interpretation of the xeroradiographs is more difficult, as the lead glaze covering the vessel tends to obscure the constructional details. The tubular filling-spout was luted on over a hole pierced in the rear of the upper body, with extra clay smoothed over the join, and a separate band of clay added around the internal join. The rod handle and the legs were attached to the body, with extra clay added to support the joins. The xeroradiograph suggests that the ends of the handle were inserted through holes cut in the body of the vessel. One of the leg scars indicates that a plug of clay at the top of the leg was also inserted through a hole in the body, in the same way that jug handles were attached to rims at Lyveden (McCarthy 1979). The legs, like the handle, do not survive, but single stab-holes in three of the remaining leg scars penetrate the body of the vessel. The front of the body is flat and was probably formed from a disc of clay; jug bases were made in a similar way (*ibid.*, 1979). The moulded head with applied curled horns was probably joined to the coil-built neck, which was then luted on over a hole in the body, and a single, circular hole pierced through the mouth as a pouring spout.

Decoration.

The head is decorated with incised lines running down the nose, and with eyes formed by applied pads of fine, white clay, incised with a ring and dot. The body is decorated with applied strips of white clay. Four horizontal strips run across the front of the vessel, with roughly applied pellets just above each strip. On the sides, two parallel horizontal lines are joined by a series of oblique lines, running down both sides of the body; the latter continue with the lower horizontal line around the back of the vessel. The oblique lines are ridged, probably formed with thumb and forefinger, while the horizontal lines are broader and flatter, and

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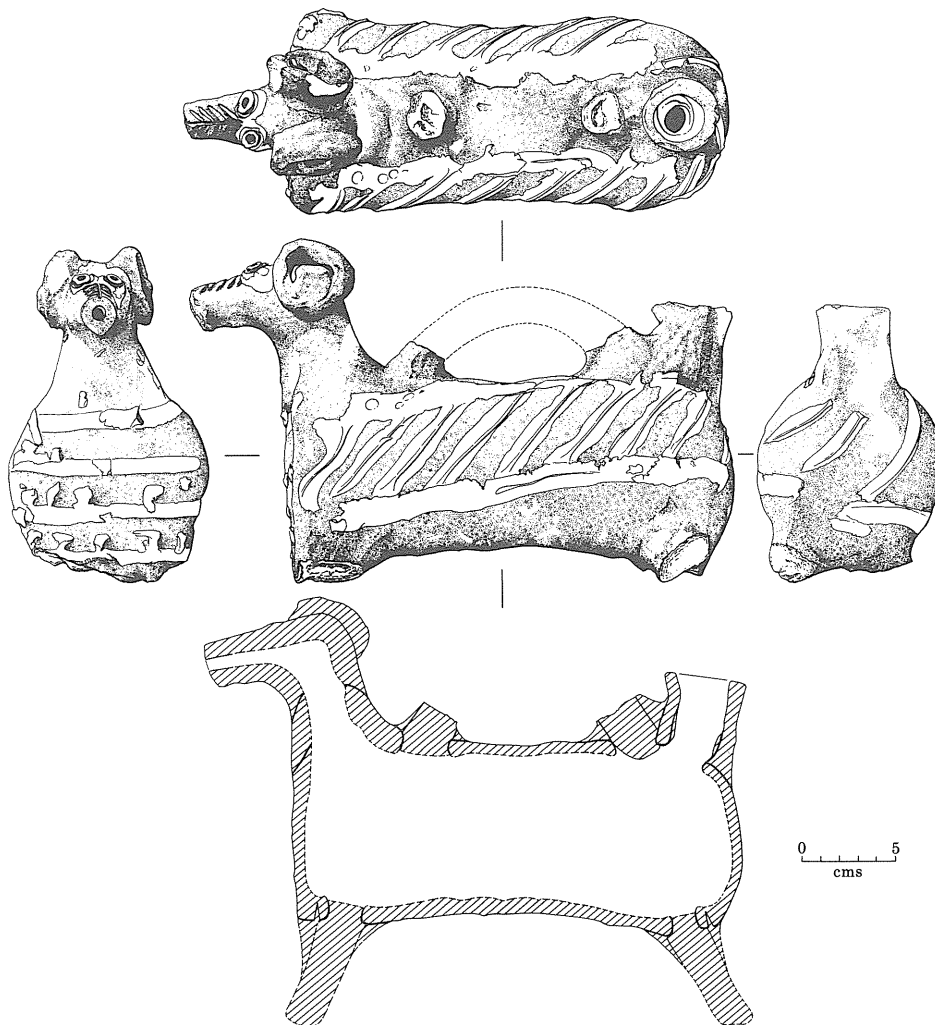


Fig. 1. The British Museum aquamanile. Section produced with the aid of radiography, suggesting method of construction. Scale 1:4

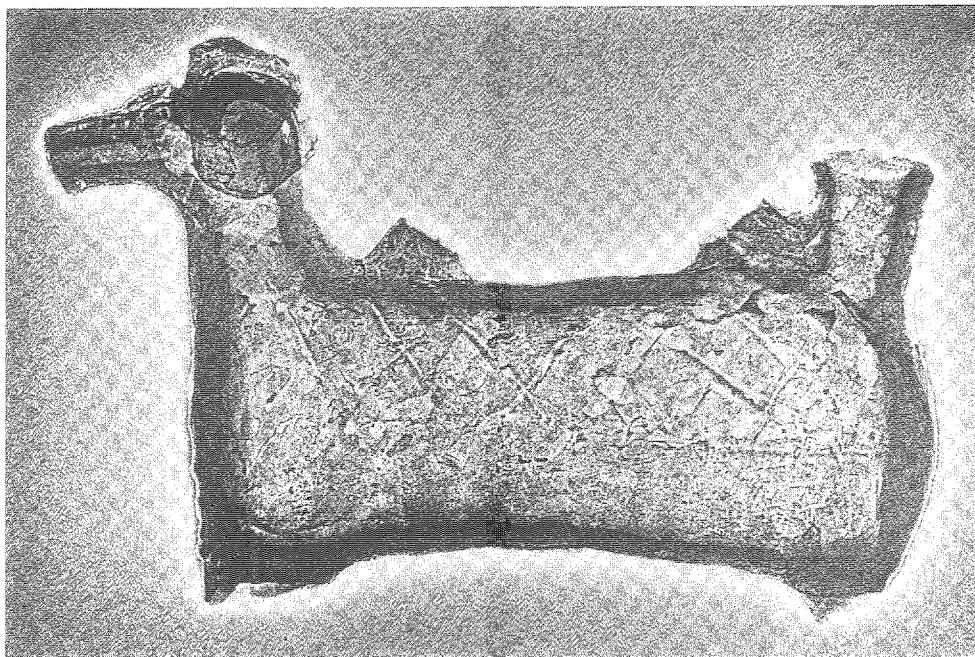


Fig. 2. Xeroradiograph of the British Museum aquamanile.

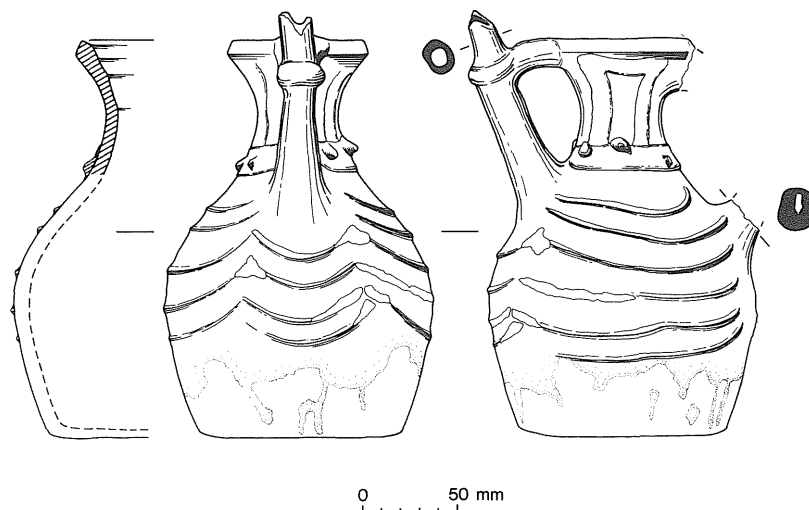


Fig. 3. The Chelmsford spouted jug. Scale 1:4

appear to have been hastily applied with a finger or knife. The impression given by the decoration on the body is one of careless execution, a characteristic feature of Lyveden-Stanion products (*ibid.*, 1979, 157). However, the decoration on the head is of a superior quality and has been executed more skilfully.

The vessel is covered in a clear lead glaze containing flecks of iron, resulting in a mottled olive green/brown colour over the body (Munsell 5Y 4/4, 2.5Y 4/4), and yellow-green over the white slip (5Y 5/6, 7.5Y 5/6–6/6), with brown staining where flecks of iron have streaked into the glaze. The white slip has flaked off in places; in certain areas this has occurred before or during the firing, as glaze has partially covered the exposed body surface.

Discussion.

The form of the vessel is similar to fragments of an aquamanile found at Furnells Manor, Raunds (Pearson 1983), situated approximately four miles to the south-east of Twywell. However, the two vessels are not identical. The filling spout on the Raunds aquamanile is positioned behind the neck, in front of the handle. Moreover, the use of white slip on the British Museum aquamanile is confined to applied decoration on the body and head, while the pouring spout, horns and filling-spout on the Raunds vessel are modelled entirely in a white clay similar to Stamford-type ware. The Raunds aquamanile has been attributed to the Stanion kilns on the basis of the use of white clay for modelling, a feature of the Stanion kilns, but not, apparently, of Lyveden. As the products of both kilns feature the use of white slip as decoration, it is currently not possible to state with certainty whether the British Museum aquamanile was produced at Lyveden or at Stanion. On the basis of style, and its similarity to the Raunds aquamanile, it probably dates to the second half of the 13th or the first half of the 14th century.

THE CHELMSFORD SPOUTED JUG

This almost complete jug (Fig. 3) was found last century while digging the foundations of the Chelmsford Savings Bank and is now on display at the Chelmsford and Essex Museum (CHMER P24024). It has an orange-buff fabric tempered with oolitic limestone and has been identified as a product of the Lyveden-Stanion industry (Bryant and Steane 1969; 1971; Steane 1967; Steane and Bryant 1975; Bellamy 1983)³. Both sites are located to the west of Oundle in Northamptonshire and lie about 112 km north-west of Chelmsford.

Description.

The jug is coil-built, and components such as the neck were made separately and attached to the body (Pearson forthcoming). The body may have been made upside down and the base attached last, allowing the potter to attach the handle and spout from inside the vessel (T. Pearson, pers. comm.). The handle was secured by pressing a thumb or finger through the vessel wall into the handle, producing a cavity inside the base of the handle (see illustration). A horizontal indented line some 20 mm above the bottom of the pot indicates the point at which the base was luted onto the body. The jug has a height of 211 mm, and when filled with water to the junction between neck and body, has a capacity of one quart. There are signs of blackening at the basal angle on one side of the pot adjacent to the spout. The glaze above this blackened area has bubbled and blistered, indicating that the jug was warmed at the edge of a fire. It must, therefore, have contained a heated liquid of some kind, such as hot water or mulled wine.

Decoration.

The body of the jug is decorated with slightly curving horizontal ridged strips in white slip, possibly made of

white-firing clay derived from Stamford, some 22 km north of Lyveden and Stanion (T. Pearson, pers. comm.). A band of slip around the base of the neck is decorated with applied pellets. The slip decoration on the neck may have been applied with a pallet knife, as suggested by the slightly serrated edges. The jug has a green glaze which appears dark green over the body and lighter green over the slip decoration.

The construction of the vessel explains several of its characteristics. The band of slip with applied pellets around the base of the neck may have been applied to conceal the join between neck and body, and may explain the different methods of slip application on the neck and body. Moreover, as some of the applied strips have flaked off, it is possible that they were applied after the construction of the body when the pot had begun to dry out, leading to poor adhesion.

Discussion.

This vessel appears to be unique for the Lyveden-Stanion kilns, both in its tubular spout and in the use of horizontal strips, and may have been a copy of a similar product from another industry. Vessels produced in kilns at Nottingham, for example, include bridge-spouted jugs (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, Fig. 162.973 and Fig. 163.974). The jug can be dated to the third quarter of the 13th century when glazed jugs decorated with white slip strips were produced at Lyveden-Stanion. This is the only instance, to the author's knowledge, of Lyveden-Stanion pottery occurring in Essex. However, the industry does have a history of chance finds in unexpected places (T. Pearson pers. comm.). A fuller and more detailed study of the Lyveden-Stanion pottery industry is in preparation (Pearson forthcoming). This note is intended as an interim publication of two unusual forms, at least one of which may have been a copy of a vessel from another industry.⁴

Acknowledgements

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permission to publish the jug. The illustration is by Lesley Collett.

Footnotes

1. Sothebys sale, *British and Irish Ceramics*, 22nd May, 1984, lot 1.
2. Evidence for medieval activity, including 13th century pottery, has been found near Twywell (Jackson 1975, 63).
3. Identification was confirmed by comparison with the series of sherds from the two kiln-sites in the British Museum (see above).
4. Non-kiln products, including vessels from Nottingham, Brill, Stamford and possibly Grimston, were found at Lyveden, and were probably copied by local potters (Moorhouse 1981, 106–107; Webster 1975, 61, 93).

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Résumé

Cet article décrit les techniques de fabrication et de décoration de deux articles peu communs de l'industrie de Lyveden-Stanion, Northamptonshire: une *aquamanile* datant de la fin du treizième / début du quatorzième siècle se trouvant au British Museum, et une cruche à bec verseur appartenant au Chelmsford Museum. Cette dernière date du troisième quart du treizième siècle. Les deux objets en question ont été fabriqués à partir d'un matériau distinctif contenant des inclusions de calcaire oolithique en abondance.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Aufsatz beschreibt Herstellungstechniken und Verzierung zweier ungewöhnlicher Erzeugnisse der Lyveden-Stanion-Produktion in Northamptonshire: ein Aquamanile des späten 13. oder frühen 14. Jahrhunderts im Britischen Museum und eine Tüllenkanne im Chelmsford Museum, die in das dritte Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts datiert wird. Beide wurden aus dem kennzeichnenden Material hergestellt, das reichlich Rogenstein-einschlüsse enthält.

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