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Stephen Clarke, Reg and Philomena Jackson  
Monmouth Archaeological Society

#### EARLY PANTILES FROM LONDON

Until recently it was generally supposed that pantiles were first introduced to London after the Great Fire of 1666 (Vince 1984, 71–3). However, there is now firm archaeological evidence from three sites in London for their use on a limited scale prior to 1666.

At *Billingsgate Fish Market Car Park*, the earliest excavated pantiles are dated to c. 1630/50–1666 (Betts 1991). They were found in the vicinity of St. Botolph's church and what appear to be commercial buildings bordering St. Botolph's Lane, all of which were destroyed in the Great Fire. There is no indication which building was roofed in pantile.

At *90–94 Old Broad Street*, twenty-one fragments of pantile were found in the main fill and backfill of the post-medieval City ditch. The ditch infill contained a large pottery assemblage dated to c. 1620–early 1640s. Documentary sources indicate that the ditch had been infilled by c. 1642–47, if not earlier. The date of the pantiles is uncertain, but it would seem unlikely that they are earlier than the associated pottery.

A small quantity of pantiles were also uncovered during excavations at the *Royal Mint* site (also known as St. Mary Graces). They were found in contexts associated with the earliest phase of a victualling yard for the Tudor navy, which dates from c. 1565 to the mid-17th century (Crowley 1990, 3).

The early pantiles used in London were probably imported into the City from Holland. This importation began during the 17th-century, and such tiles were still being used in London in the Georgian period (Clifton-Taylor 1987, 279). When pantiles were first manufactured in England is still uncertain. As early as 1636 William Westby was granted a patent for the 'makeing of Pantiles of Flanders Tyles', although according to Clifton-Taylor (*ibid*, 275) there is no conclusive evidence that Westby actually began manufacture. It is generally believed that the first English pantiles may have been those produced by a company at Tilbury from 1701.

After the Great Fire pantiles were used in London in great quantities until the introduction of cheaper slate roofing in the 1760s (Cruickshank and Wyld 1975, 176). During the later 18th century ceramic roofing tiles were gradually superseded by slate roofing and many formerly tiled roofs were resurfaced in slate.

#### Discussion

Recent work in London has shown that at least a few buildings prior to the Great Fire of 1666 had pantile roofs. However, the amount of pantile which has been recovered is extremely small compared to peg tile, which seems to have been the normal form of roof covering. The evidence from Old Broad Street suggests that pantiles were first being used in the City by the second quarter of the 17th century. Unfortunately, very little has been published on pantile dating elsewhere, and so it is difficult to know whether pantiles were first introduced to other areas of

Britain during the same period. The author would be grateful for any comments on this point.

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Ian Betts

Museum of London Archaeology Service

#### CONFERENCE SUMMARIES

##### 'Pottery from 5th – 10th century in North-West Europe' ('La Céramique du Ve au Xe Siècle dans l'Europe du Nord-Ouest')

The second International Colloquium of the Groupe de Recherches et d'Études sur la Céramique (G.R.E.C.) dans le Nord/Pas-de-Calais was held at Outreau near Boulogne from the 10th–12th April 1992. The first conference in 1988 at Lille had looked at the state of knowledge of medieval and post-medieval pottery research in north France.

While the Colloquium concentrated on pottery of the 5th to 10th centuries, it began with extremely useful and informative surveys of the Roman to early medieval *continuum*, with a paper on late Roman pottery in Belgian Gaul by Marie Tuffreau-Libre, and two contributions of the evolution and distribution of pottery, one on the 4th–6th century in the north of Gaul by Didier Bayard, and the other on the regional and interregional distributions in the 4th and 5th century by Paul van Ossel.

This was followed by a session covering pottery from England. Lyn Blackmore reviewed 5th- to 10th-century local and imported pottery found in London and its hinterland, plotting the evolution of the settlement and parallel changes of pottery use. Alan Vince described the forms, functions, and manufacturing techniques of late 9th- and 10th-century wheelthrown pottery in England, and proposed the testing of several of John Hurst's models for their origins. Ailsa Mainman described the continental pottery from 8th- to 10th-century sites in York, and how the fluctuating proportions of the different wares reflect the changing rôle of York as an international and regional centre.

The following day began with a session on Belgium and the Netherlands. Yann Hollevoet described the pottery found in Merovingian settlements such as Roksem and Kerkhove in the region around the *Castellum* of Oudenbourg (côte flamande, Belgium), which have produced quartz-tempered hand-made pottery, some wheel-turned Rhenish wares, and grey burnished biconical pottery from the Pas-de-Calais/Belgium. Of interest is the occurrence on a few sites of chaff-tempered hand-made wares