

Brian Spencer, Roy Stephenson, Hedley Swain, Frans Verhaeghe and Alan Vince. Thanks are also due to Sue Hurman for her part in the illustration and Maggie Cox for the plate.

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CONTINENTAL STOVE-TILES FROM COLLECTIONS IN CANTERBURY

This note was prompted by the discovery of two continental stove-tiles during recent excavations in Canterbury by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust. In addition, there are three other stove-tiles in the reserve collection of the Royal Museum, Canterbury. All five examples are briefly described here, though it is hoped that a fuller discussion, at least of the excavated tiles, together with the results of Neutron Activation Analysis, will be published at a future date.

The late Gothic tile (Fig. 1, No. 1) is both the earliest stove-tile from Kent and the only example from a secure archaeological context. It was found in a rubbish pit on the site of 26 Broad Street/Diocesan House on the east side of Canterbury, just outside the city walls and within the precinct of St. Augustine's Abbey. The fabric of the tile is creamy-white and finely sandy with sparse coarser inclusions of red iron oxide. A rich even green glaze covers the outer face and there are broad splashes down the back. It is of niche-type construction (Gaimster *et al* 1990, 8) made from a half-cylinder attached to a rectangular frame with an elaborate late Gothic baldachin canopy. There are three finger-tip impressions around the basal angle, possibly caused by the potter picking-up the unfired cylinder at these points.

While enough of the stove-tile survives to reconstruct its overall dimensions, the precise reconstruction of the canopy details must remain a matter of conjecture. In the spandrels of the Gothic arch are two shields suspended from a central post or tree-stump. The right shield with its fleur de lys clearly represents the arms of France; the left shield is too poorly preserved to be certain of anything except that it was not the same design as that on the right. Although the rampant lion shown here is little more than artistic licence, both heraldic devices are known to occur together on some continental stove-

tiles of the same general type (Strauss 1972, Taf. 13.4). The significance of the shields in relation to St. Augustine's Abbey has not yet been fully investigated. Over the left shield is part of an inscription, possibly '-alle'; its meaning is not yet understood, though it may be part of a longer inscription continued on adjacent tiles.

Both the form and fabric of the St. Augustine's stove-tile indicate that it is almost certainly of German origin, probably from Cologne or the Lower/Middle Rhineland, and dating to c. 1500 (D. Gaimster pers. comm.). The context in which it was found is interpreted as one of a series of medieval rubbish pits to the rear of the Almonry, an out-building of the main abbey complex, which was founded in the 12th century as a *hospitium* where charity was distributed to the poor and where the sick were tended. It is said to have had its own chapel (Hasted 1801, 223; Urry 1967). In 1538 the abbey was dissolved. After 1541 however, part of the abbey was converted into a royal palace and the remainder torn down. The Almonry was among the buildings that escaped destruction and was re-roofed in 1552 (Sherlock 1983, 44). Assuming that it originated from this particular building, it can be surmised that the stove-tile was thrown out of the Almonry between 1538 and 1552, and possibly that it was broken during the 1552 refurbishment. This fits well with the date of c. 1525-1550/75 provided by the associated pottery in the same pit.

In England, at least until the Dissolution, tiled stoves were normally found only in high-status contexts such as abbeys and noble households *etc.* (Gaimster *et al.* 1990). The discovery of an imported stove-tile at St. Augustine's Abbey, the oldest and one of the wealthiest abbeys in the country, is typical of this pattern of recovery. It is not definite, however, that the present example came from a functioning tiled stove. As it is unsooted and quite unworn it may have had some lesser function or perhaps a purely ornamental rôle; alternatively the sooting has simply been washed away.

The second excavated stove-tile fragment (Fig. 1, No. 2) was found during trial-trenching in the grounds of St. Gregory's Priory, another extramural foundation to the north-east of the city. Unfortunately it was residual in a 19th-century layer containing other pottery of the 16th to 19th centuries. The fabric is creamy-white with a pale buff core, very finely sandy with occasional iron-tinted quartz grains and rare inclusions of coarse flint or chert. The decorated side is covered with a bright yellow glaze. Although very small, the lack of curvature, the high-relief decoration, and the presence of clear textile impressions on the back point convincingly to its identification as a stove-tile. Textile impressions appear to be a common feature on the backs of Renaissance panel-type stove-tiles (see below). The design shows an elegant female head, possibly with a veil or long hair down her back. This closely resembles the 'head of a Samaritan woman' design in the Cologne type series of Biblical panel tiles dated c. 1572 (Unger 1988, Cat. 105). Neither this design, nor those on the Royal Museum tiles, has a parallel in the known series of English stove-tile designs (Gaimster 1988a), and this fact argues strongly in favour of their continental origin. Clearly the St. Gregory's sherd must post-date the Dissolution of the priory and perhaps belongs to the phase when the remaining priory buildings were leased as a private residence to influential local lawyers and Deans of the cathedral, as happened at St. Radegund's Abbey, Dover, where an earlier stove-tile was found (Gaimster 1989).

The three Royal Museum stove-tiles were either donated by, or purchased from, local antiquaries/archaeologists c. 1880-1910. Whether they were acquired locally or from elsewhere is entirely unknown, but it is hoped that details of their provenance may one day emerge. All three are Renaissance-style panel tiles of the mid to later 16th century and are most likely of Rhenish or Central European origin.

Fig. 1, No. 3 is from the corner of a stove-tile with an original

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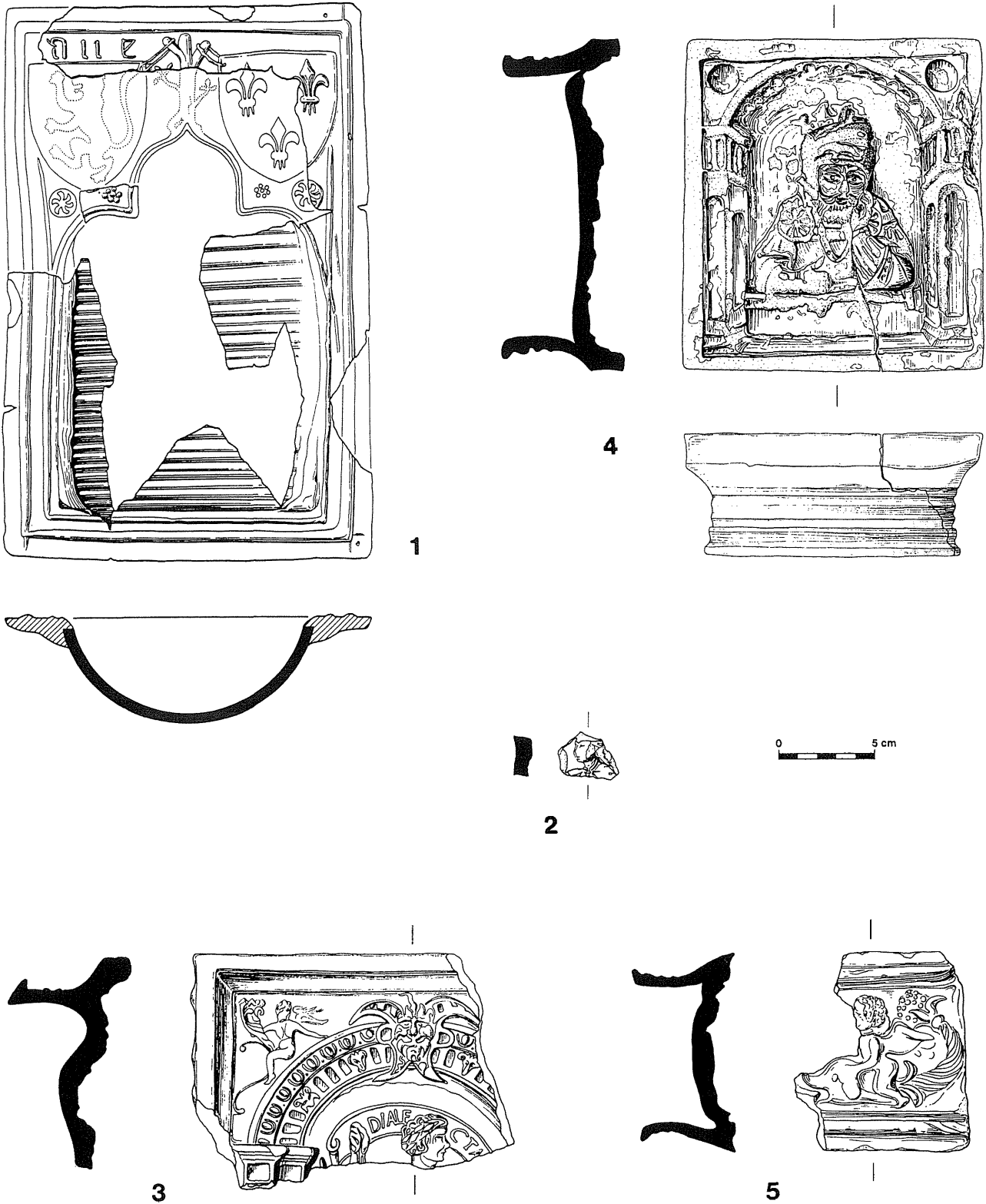


Fig. 1. 16th-century German Renaissance-style stove-tiles from collections in Canterbury. No. 1. Late Gothic stove-stile from St Augustine's Abbey (green-glazed). No. 2. Renaissance stove-tile from St. Gregory's Priory (yellow-glazed). Nos. 3-5. 16th-century Renaissance panel stove-tiles in the collections of the Royal Museum, Canterbury (unprovenanced: Nos. 3, 4 green-glazed; No. 5 polychrome). Scale 1:3.

width of around 228 mm. The design format is a common Renaissance one: a central figure under a classical arch with cherubs or *putti* in the spandrels. As the inscription informs us, the central figure here is 'DIALECTA' (Logic), one of the Liberal Arts. Examples of this design, mostly with the date 1561, occur in the Cologne type-series; several others are known from England (Gaimster 1988b, Fig. 22, Nos. 26, 328–9). The fabric is creamy-buff, pasty and micaceous with a scatter of large red iron oxide or grog inclusions. A dark green glaze covers the front and there are patches of clear glaze on the back as well as textile impressions (behind the figure) and clear evidence of sooting. The degree of wear on the broken edges suggests a period of exposure prior to burial. Possibly donated by Lt. Col. Copeland (Acc. No. 68).

The second Royal Museum tile (Fig. 1, No. 4) is complete though badly damaged. The front is considerably worn, though not the back. Again it follows the classical arch format with a forlorn-looking king in the centre, his crown set at a rakish angle. He appears to be wearing armour and a chain while the ends of his cloak are draped in places over the 'window-sill' on which he leans so dejectedly. Probably the design represents a Biblical figure, though it is not Rhenish in style (D. Gaimster pers. comm.). In fact the closest parallel is with a stove-tile from Prague which shows the Hebrew king 'EZEHLAS' (Hezekiah) and which is attributed to the first half of the 16th century (Brych *et al* 1990, No. 252). Unlike the tiles above, this example has a fairly coarse, sandy, pale orange-red fabric with a thick white slip over the front under a dark green glaze. Sooting and faint textile impressions are again visible on the back. Purchased from the sale of W. E. Goulden, a prominent local businessman and amateur archaeologist (acc. No. 5802).

The third and smallest stove-tile (Fig. 1, No. 5) is of similar fabric and manufacture to the preceding example. It differs from all the other tiles in being polychrome. The design shows a cherub or *putto* riding a dolphin with a cornucopia-like tail. Both figures are highlighted in cobalt-blue while the upper and lower mouldings are in pale copper-green; the remaining central area shows yellow through the clear glaze. Traces of sooting survive on the back. From the 'Old Museum' in Canterbury, possibly another donation by Lt. Col. Copeland (acc. No. 64).

All the Royal Museum tiles, though probably from different findspots and different stoves, find general parallels on a complete German tiled stove in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which includes tiles with Liberal Arts, Biblical subjects and even cherubs on dolphins. This stove was made by Hans Kraut of Villingen in the Black Forest and is dated 1578 (V. and A. 498–1868). The only other stove-tile found in Kent, from St. Radegund's Abbey near Dover, is also a Renaissance-style arch-format panel-tile dated to shortly after 1574 (Gaimster 1989). On the basis of these comparisons, therefore, the Royal Museum stove-tiles may similarly be dated to the 1560s to 1580s.

The increasing numbers of imported stove-tiles now being recognised in Kent suggests that tiled stoves were a more common sight in wealthy Kentish households than has previously been suspected. This fact inevitably raises questions about the mode of transporting these bulky items from the Rhineland to Kent, the possible routes by which they reached their destination, the expertise necessary to assemble them, and finally the nature of the contacts that caused the stoves to be imported in the first place.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to David Gaimster (Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum) for his useful comments and information given, and to Tom Hodgson of Canterbury Museums for his assistance in the preparation of this note. The late Gothic stove-tile was drawn by Sue Barnett (CAT), the others by the author.

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IMPORTED POTTERY IN THE MEDIEVAL KINGDOM OF DENMARK

In August 1993 the Society of Antiquaries of London funded a three-week study tour of medieval Denmark, during which time collections of pottery from Ribe, Arhus, Svendborg, Roskilde, Schleswig (Germany) and Lund (Sweden) were examined by the author. The purpose of this study tour was to establish the patterns of pottery importation from England and, for comparison, the pattern of importation of other Western European and Mediterranean sources. It should be emphasised that the great majority of pottery seen, of whatever type (handmade, wheelthrown, glazed and unglazed), was manufactured within Scandinavia. This is in contrast with the pattern emerging from Norway, although both countries show a steady increase in the quantity of Rhenish products. Nevertheless, the survey showed that English pottery was present in small quantities in all the towns examined, except Svendborg, whilst north-eastern French wares were present in every collection, usually in higher quantities.

English wares recognised include Stamford ware, Developed Stamford ware, London-type ware, Coarse London-type ware, London Shelly-Sandy ware, Grimston-type ware, Scarborough ware, Yorkshire whiteware and South-east Wiltshire glazed ware (a single sherd from Lund). In addition a few sherds were recognised as being most likely of English origin, but were not identified to common name level. Most of this pottery can be dated to between the 12th and 14th centuries, but a single sherd of Cistercian-type ware cup was seen at Schleswig.

Low Countries redwares and greywares were not consistently recorded, because of the difficulty in distinguishing Flemish imports from locally produced types. Andenne wares, however, were recorded where seen. French wares were predominantly North French monochrome vessels (both ?Rouen and ?Seine Valley types) and Rouen wares (two distinct fabrics with separate ranges of decoration and form), but sherds of Normandy Gritty ware and Saintonge Polychrome ware were also seen (Ribe).