

Dutch Redwares

JAN M. BAART*

SUMMARY

The chronological development of Dutch redwares is discussed, including the link to the dating of German stonewares. The earliest pots are the greywares; a particular focus of interest has been the highly decorated wares, whose origins seem to belong to the production of Flemish pottery in Bruges. The types of Dutch redware produced are discussed; many of them have found their way to other European countries, from England to Poland.

INTRODUCTION

Research on Dutch redwares has a long history in the Netherlands. A systematic start was made just before and continued after the Second World War. Three series of excavations form the basis of this research: early work carried out by Braat in the Wieringermeer during the 1930s (Baat 1932); the excavations of the stronghold of Kuinre by Modderman (1954); and research undertaken during the 1950s by Trimpe Burger in Zeeland, especially at Aardenburg (Trimpe Burger 1962–63, 495–548).

The first series of excavations yielded much relevant data, including well-dated groups of finds; and the first stronghold of Kuinre was in use for only a short period, from 1165 to 1196. However, in later studies the pioneering work of Braat and Modderman has been rather neglected, while the work of Trimpe Burger, on the other hand, has gathered a following. Many Dutch and English publications refer to highly decorated Dutch redwares as Aardenburg or Aardenburg-type ware (e.g. Dunning 1968, 47–48). However, it was not until the 1970s that towns were excavated in the Netherlands on a large scale. At the 1983 MPRG Annual Conference on 'Ceramics and Trade', a survey given by Hans Janssen, town archaeologist of Den Bosch (Janssen 1983), listed the excavated kilns and waster dumps of redwares. Taking into account the data from the last ten years, we can now put this research into a general framework for production and distribution.

EARTHENWARE PRODUCTION IN THE NETHERLANDS

Local production of earthenware in the Netherlands from 1000 to c. 1175 consisted almost exclusively of

greyware globular cooking pots, hand-formed and fired in small quantities, probably in open fires (Pl. 1). There are no large groups of wasters or kilns known from this period. In contrast, in the 13th century there are finds of larger, kiln-fired pottery in a number of Dutch town centres. These were produced by potters working for a consumer market (Baat 1990, 74–77)¹.

Highly decorated wares

Research on material from Amsterdam town centre has begun to gather clusters of finds dated to the nearest ten years. These clusters have been examined typologically as well as petrologically (Fig. 1; Wageningen 1988). By way of example, the analysis of a finds assemblage dated 1190–1200 is given in Fig. 2. In this way, a database has been built up for the period between 1075 and 1900, and leads to the following conclusions about the start and development of known redware production. The earliest known redware is a skillet dated c. 1150 (Janssen 1983, 137). Jugs, cooking pots, and bowls, began to be made c. 1175. The fabric ranges from light red to dark red-brown, and the vessels are usually partly covered with a lead glaze to which copper is sometimes added. A small number of the jugs, the so-called "highly decorated ware", are decorated with stamped bosses. These typically have a thumb base, a rod handle and rows of stamped bosses, for example in the form of raspberry prunts and shells. This type of jug has been excavated in several places around the Zuiderzee (Col.pl.5a; Braat 1932, 22–24; Pl. V, 1, 3 and 7; Modderman 1945), and in Amsterdam in a group of finds dating from the last quarter of the 12th century. On the basis of this distribution, it is probable that one of the early urban

DUTCH REDWARES

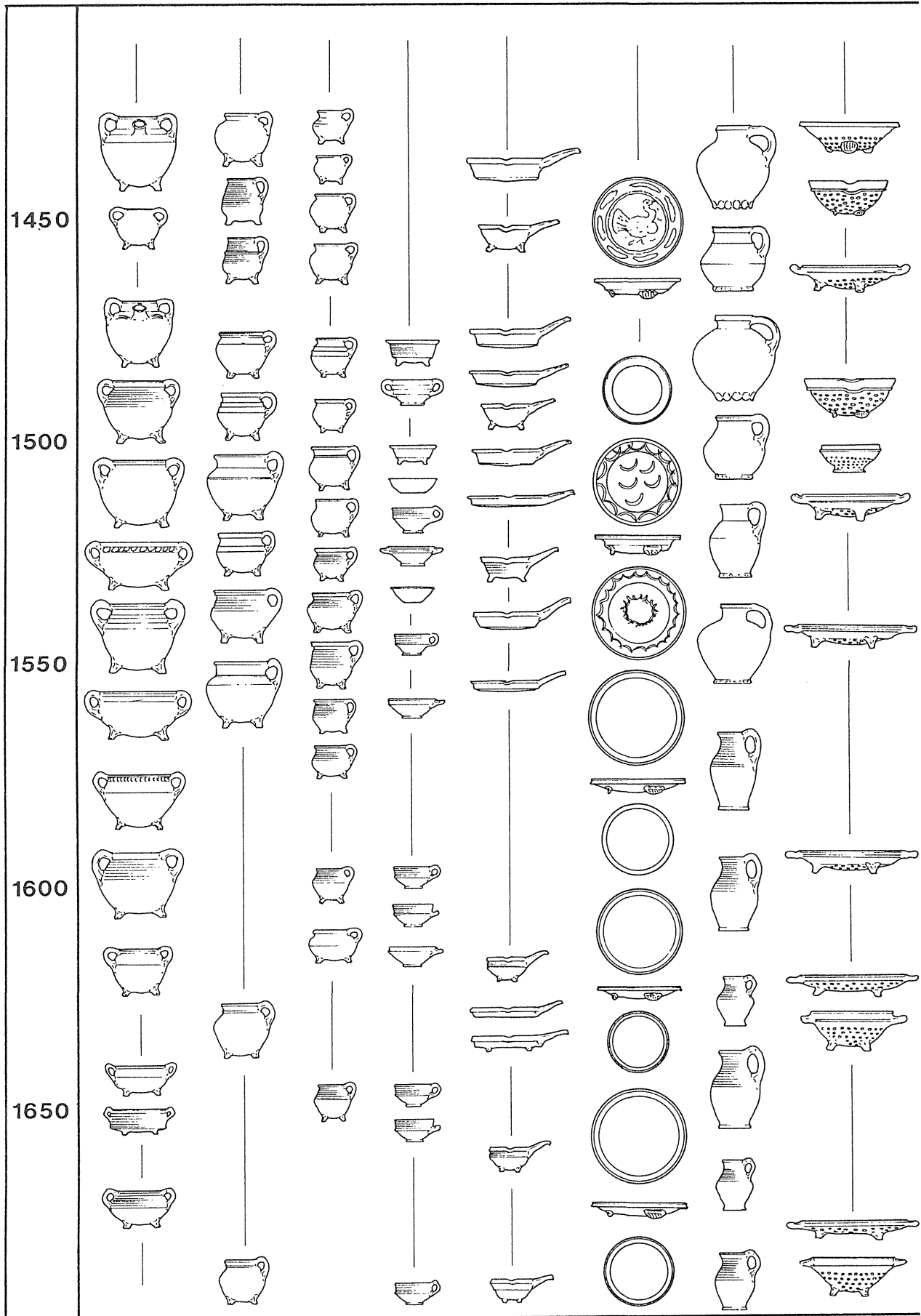
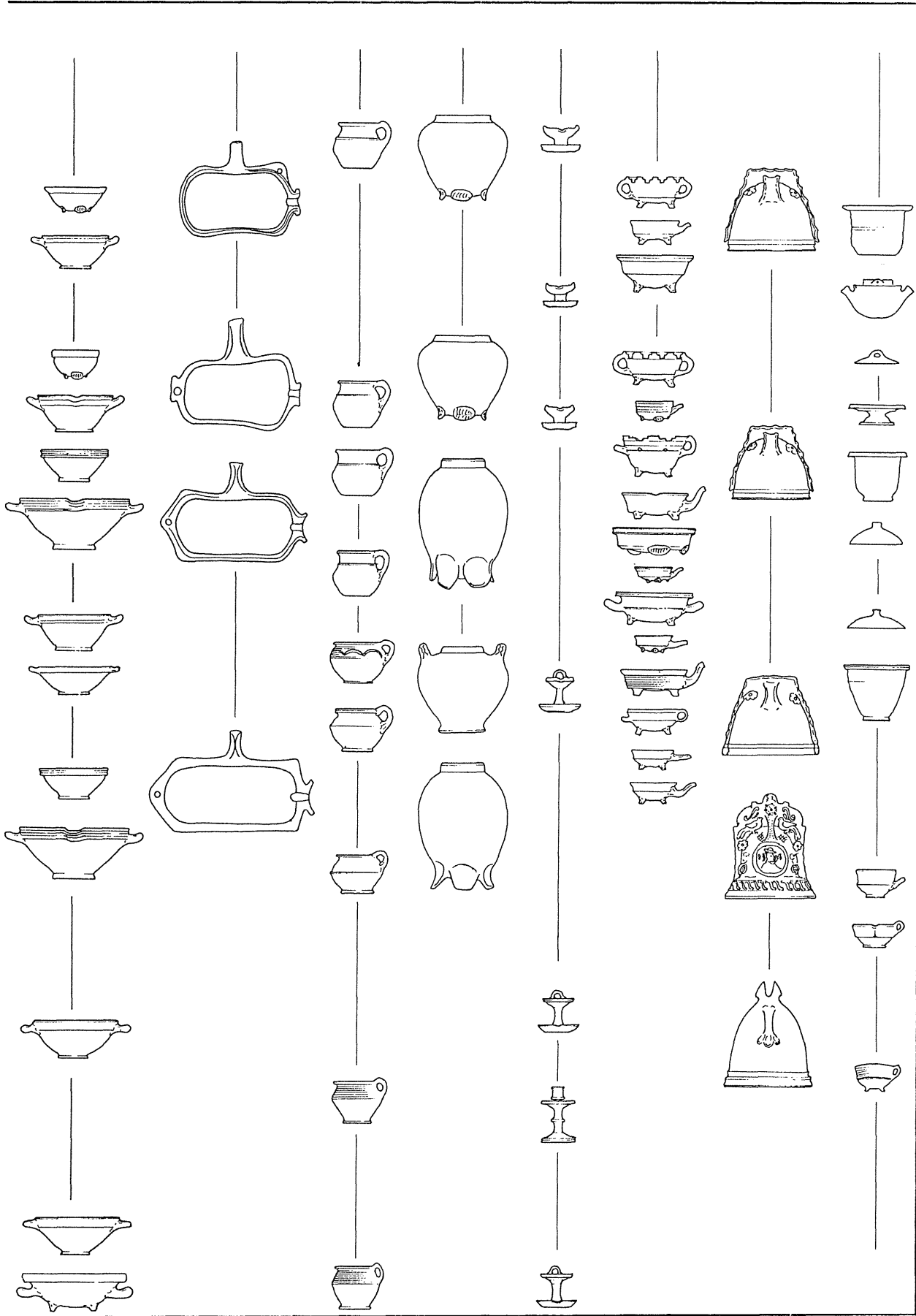


Fig. 1. contd.

DUTCH REDWARES





Pl. 1 Greyware handmade and turned cooking pots (photo: W. Krook, *Stedelijk Beheer, Amsterdam*).

settlements, specifically Utrecht, was the centre of production. Examination of the clay used confirms this hypothesis (Wageningen 1988, 61; 148). The most numerous products are jugs, skillets, and cooking pots respectively. No kiln waste has been found so far. The technology and manner of decoration are related to Flemish products well known from excavated kiln waste in Bruges, and research by Frans Verhaeghe (1983; 1988; and especially 1989). There are two possible explanations for the origin of these innovations. Flanders exerted a strong cultural and economic influence, and technology may have been spread by immigrant potters from the earlier developed Flemish towns such as Bruges and Ghent. A second possibility is the influence of pottery made in Bruges and found in the Netherlands, and particularly in Amsterdam during the period 1175–1250. Developments in the production of earthenware using Flemish technology and styles from the mid-13th century onwards, can be seen in the excavated kiln waste from the towns of Haarlem, Leyden, Delft (Col.pl. 5b), Dordrecht and Breda (Bart 1992, 126–127). These industries can all be dated 1225–1275. This is also the latest date in the Amsterdam finds assemblages for highly decorated jugs with stamped bosses, so that the period of Dutch production of this type of earthenware can be placed within a century, i.e. between 1175 and 1275. Slip decoration of earthenware continues after this date.

The chronology of the production of Dutch redwares

Although Modderman's and Braat's dating in the 1930s and 40s pointed to the 12th century for the start of redware production, later work has dated this material roughly a century later (Janssen 1983, 138; Verhaeghe 1983, 68). This was the result of two things: in the first place, a consensus had been reached in the Netherlands whereby German proto-stoneware and the later types of stoneware were themselves to be dated some 50 to 100 years later.

Redwares and excavated sites were dated on the basis of this stoneware. In dating earthenware finds from castles, documentary data on these castles were used extensively, and earthenware was often found in the moats. However, the fact that these castles were often built on older settlements was sometimes overlooked. Consequently, 12th- and 13th-century earthenware was dated to the 14th century (Alders 1988, 309). For example, the Haarlem pottery was dated c.1350 by Schimmer on the basis of proto-stoneware found with the kiln waste (Schimmer 1979). Janssen has subsequently dated these kilns between 1275 and 1350, and discussed the problems of dating the stoneware and highly decorated redware (Janssen 1983, 173–4). In Amsterdam, stonewares are now dated as follows: start of proto-stoneware from Mayen between 1150 and 1160; Siegburg imports of proto-stoneware between 1160–1170; the first near-stoneware in 1260; and the white stoneware between 1270–1280. This problem of dating is of great importance in discussing the first period of Dutch redware manufacture.

The current dating of the Haarlem kilns to the period 1240–1260 is based on the following evidence: during an excavation in Amsterdam, in the Warmoesstraat, highly decorated earthenware was found that could be attributed to the Haarlem kiln on the basis of typology and petrological research. It came from a house that could be dated dendrochronologically to c.1251. This observation is important because it relates not only to dating, but also to regional distribution. Material from this kiln has now been found at several sites around Haarlem, within a radius of 20 kilometers, but also in Leeuwarden (Col.pl. 5c).

The question arises as to whether these Dutch redwares of the period 1175–1275, were of more than local and regional importance; were they occasionally shipped to England, Scandinavia and the Baltic as part of long distance trade? The answer to this question seems to be affirmative on the basis of the identification of 13th-century redware imports found in Northern Europe and known as "Aardenburg-type ware" and "Low Countries redware". There are however only a few pieces known from this period, usually less than 1% of large assemblages (Davey and Hodges 1983, 5; Brooks and Hodges 1983, 246). Special care should be taken in identification because they resemble, and may be confused with, pottery from Bruges.

From a study of excavated and published pottery it seems that Dutch redwares are present in 13th-century finds across Europe, from England (especially the east coast — Hull, Norwich, and King's Lynn — and Southampton on the south coast) to Poland (for example Elbing and Gdansk). One can imagine occasional transport of earthenware as part of the trade in more important goods

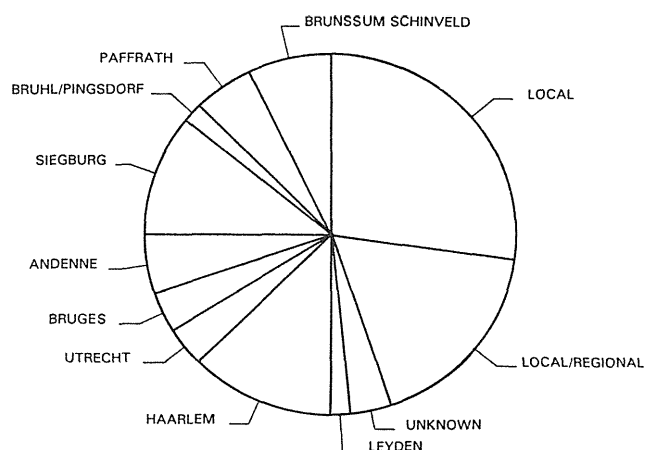


Fig. 2 Analysis of a finds assemblage (56 vessels) from Amsterdam, dated 1190-1200.

such as wool and grain.

During the 14th and 15th centuries the proportion of Dutch redwares exported increased, sometimes to over 10% (Brooks and Hodges 1983, 246; Davey and Hodges 1983, 12). This is true for all the areas mentioned above and is in line with the general development of regular trade with these parts of Northern Europe.

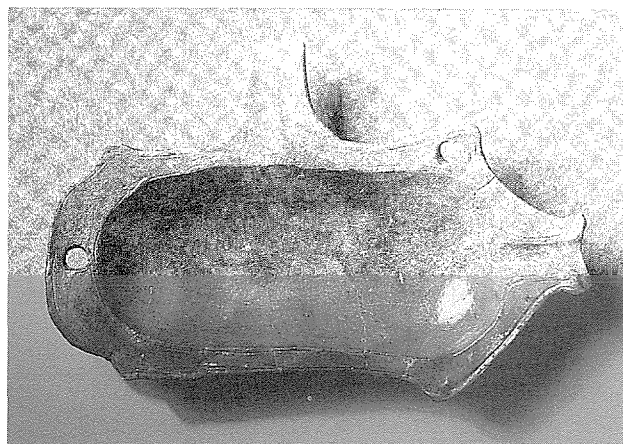
Types of redwares produced and traded

Skillets are present from the very beginning of redware production and are closely related to the form made in Bruges. The handles are usually hollow and solid handles are rare. In the last quarter of the 13th century they have a heavily thumbbed rim. During the first quarter of the 14th century, hollow handles were no longer made, solid handles developed from flat to squeezed form, while the vessel became deeper.

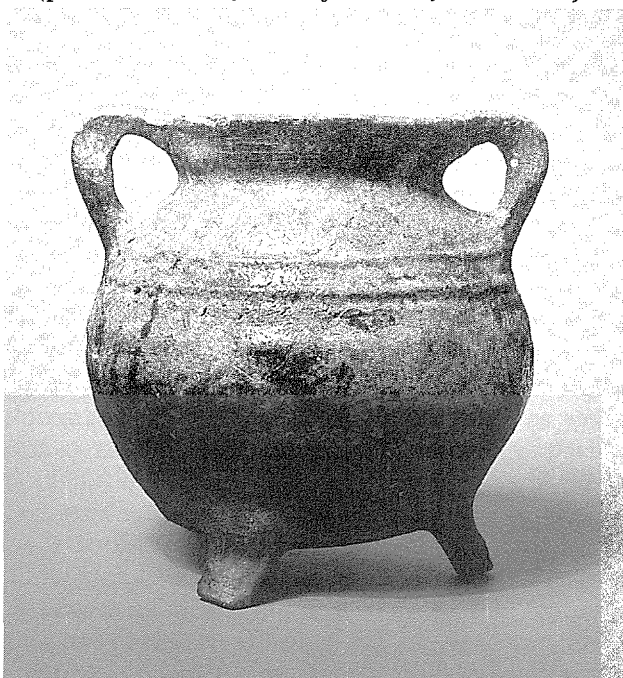
During the 13th century *jugs* were produced in large quantities, but they were much less common during the 14th and 15th centuries. Stoneware jugs were probably the preferred alternative in all levels of society.

Plates with thumbbed feet were produced from c. 1300 onwards. They are common from 1350 onwards, and in the 15th and 16th centuries were extremely popular and widely used. This increase reflects a change in table manners, for example, serving food at dinner on dishes rather than trenchers. In the 14th and 15th centuries, plates were decorated in slip with animals and other motifs, whereas decoration based on arcs dominates in later periods. Around 1500, plates may be entirely coated with a slip layer and sometimes have "sgraffito" decoration.

Up to 1300, houses in Amsterdam and in many other Dutch towns, were built of wood with a fire-



Pl. 2 Redware dripping pan c. 1400; length c. 40 cm (photo: W. Krook, Stedelijk Beheer, Amsterdam).



Pl. 3 Redware cooking pot (grape) 1300-1325; height c. 30 cm (photo: W. Krook, Stedelijk Beheer, Amsterdam).

place in the middle of the room. Until then the *fire-covers* are bowl-shaped, and were first made at the beginning of the 13th century, unglazed and sometimes carrying an incised decoration. Glazed examples are known from the first half of the 14th century. Then, during the 14th century, houses in Amsterdam began to be built in stone, the fireplace was moved to the wall, and half fire-covers replaced the circular form.

Dripping pans appeared in the first half of the 13th century and were at first unglazed and made without a handle. Examples of 14th- and 15th-century date are entirely glazed on the inside (Pl. 2), and the shape becomes broader in time.

One-handed cooking pots (grape) with thumbbed feet were originally produced c. 1175. During the

13th century they were also made with three feet and a lead glaze, and from the 14th and 15th centuries there are examples with slip decoration. *Two-handled cooking pots (grapen)* are similar, although these were produced in much smaller quantities than the one-handled form. This type of cooking pot was a popular import to England (Pl. 3): many have been found in Southampton.

Other products included *chamber pots* (first produced c.1350), *storage jars, bowls, colanders, lids, money-boxes* and *porringers*, which were popular from the 14th century onwards (Col.pls. 6a and 6b). *Oil lamps* were squat in shape during the 14th century, but taller later. Further information about these forms can be found in Janssen (1983).

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the following observations can be made about the production of Dutch redwares: until the third quarter of the 12th century, earthenware production was characterised by household production of hand-formed greyware cooking pots, probably by women. From then onwards, potters in urban or pre-urban settlements produced redwares with or without lead glaze. Pottery production became established as urbanization spread and the size of settlements increased. The earliest centre of production was probably Utrecht, c.1150–1175. Later, as urban development continued, production started in Leyden, Haarlem, Dordrecht, Breda and Delft: actual wasters have been found in all these centres, as well as in towns such as Aardenburg and Middelburg. Utrecht and Bruges developed their earliest highly decorated wares simultaneously, while Haarlem and Leyden followed a similar course of development to Bruges in terms of decoration and shape, from c.1200 onwards, as shown by petrological analysis of the clay.

For the period 1275–1500 it seems that most urban settlements had potters: Haarlem, for example, has redware wasters from various periods. In Amsterdam, wasters have been found which date from the 14th to the end of the 17th centuries, and it appears that potters were not active here until relatively late, at the end of the 13th century. So far, no highly decorated ware produced in Amsterdam has yet been found.

Typological and petrological research on highly decorated earthenware excavated in and around Amsterdam suggests that Utrecht products dominate during the period 1175–1275. Several jugs, dating from c.1200, can be attributed to Bruges. There are also some jugs that can be attributed to Haarlem and Leyden, while Utrecht and Bergen op Zoom played a special role in supplying Amsterdam. These production centres developed into specialized regional centres.

Production in other towns was of more local importance, with a more limited regional impact. All of these centres may have played an incidental part in the long distance trade to England, Scandinavia and the Baltic.

Footnote

1. An unpublished report by Sypkens Smit, Department of Archaeology of the City of Amsterdam, on the fingerprints found on Dutch pottery has proposed that the inter-ridge distances can be used to distinguish between female and male potters, and to suggest the involvement of adolescents in the household production of some Dutch redwares.

Acknowledgements

The photographs for Colour plates 5 and 6 were taken by A. C. Lagerweij and W.Krook of the Stedelijk Beheer, Amsterdam, respectively.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alders, G. P.** 1988, 'Nieuwe dateringen van het vroegste steengoed', *Westerheem* 37, no. 6, 306-311.
- Baart, J.M.** 1990, 'Ceramic consumption and supply in early modern Amsterdam: local production and long-distance trade', in P. J. Corfield and D. Keene (eds.), *Work in towns, 850-1850*, Leicester, 74-86.
- Baart, J.M.** 1992, 'De opkomst van nijverheid en handel in Holland', in A. Carmiggelt (ed.), *Sacred and Profane: 1000 Late Medieval Badges from the Collection of H.J.E. van Beuningen*, Rotterdam Papers VII, Rotterdam, 125-134.
- Braat, W.C.** 1932, *De archeologie van de Wieringermeer. Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het ontstaan der Zuiderzee*, Delft.
- Brooks, C. and Hodges, R.** 1983, 'Imported pottery in eastern Britain c. 1200-1500; an interim appraisal of the evidence' in P. Davey and R. Hodges (eds.), *Ceramics and Trade*, Sheffield, 241-255.
- Davey, P. and Hodges, R.** 1983, 'Ceramics and trade: a critique of the archaeological evidence' in P. Davey and R. Hodges (eds.), *Ceramics and Trade*, Sheffield, 1-17.
- Dunning, G.C.** 1968, 'The trade in medieval pottery around the North Sea', in *Rotterdam Papers: a contribution to medieval archaeology*, Rotterdam, 35-58.
- Janssen, H.L.** 1983, 'Later medieval pottery production in the Netherlands', in P. Davey and R. Hodges (eds.), *Ceramics and trade*, Sheffield, 121-185.
- Leeuw, S.E. van der** 1979, 'De technologische aspecten van het aardewerk uit de Haarlemse oven', *Haarlems Bodemonderzoek*, 10, 55-126.
- Modderman, P.J.R.** 1945, *Over de wording en de betekenis van het Zuiderzeegebied*, Groningen.
- Trimpe Burger, J.A.** 1962-63, 'Ceramië uit de bloeitijd van Aardenburg (13de en 14de eeuw)', in *Berichten voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* 12-13, 495-548.
- Schimmer, J.** 1979, 'Een veertiende-eeuwse pottenbakkersoven in de Haarlemse binnenstad', *Haarlems Bodemonderzoek* 10, 7-53.
- Verhaeghe, F.** 1983, 'Medieval pottery production in coastal Flanders', in P. Davey and R. Hodges (eds.), *Ceramics and Trade*, Sheffield, 63-94.
- Verhaeghe, F.** 1988, 'Middeleeuwse en latere ceramië te

DUTCH REDWARES

Brugge. Een inleiding', in H. de Witte (ed.), *Brugge*, Brugge, 71-114.

Verhaeghe, F. 1989, 'La céramique très décorée du Bas Moyen Age en Flandre', in G. Blicq (ed.), *Travaux du groupe de recherches et d'études sur la céramique dans le Nord-Pas-De-Calais. Actes du colloque de Lille (26-27 mars 1988)*, Lille, 19-113.

Wageningen, R. van 1988, *Ceramiekimporten in Amsterdam. Een mineralogisch herkomstonderzoek*, unpubl. PhD. thesis, Univ. Amsterdam.

*Stedelijk Beheer Amsterdam, Afd. Archeologie, Noordermarkt 45, 1015 NA Amsterdam

Résumé

L'évolution chronologique des céramiques rouge de Hollande est discutée ainsi que le lien avec la datation des poteries de grès d'Allemagne. Les pots les plus anciens sont les céramiques grises; un intérêt particulier a été porté sur les céramiques hautement décorées, dont leurs origines semblent se situer la production de poterie flamande à Bruges. Les types de céramique rouges de Hollande sont discutés, dont beaucoup se retrouvèrent à travers d'autres pays Européens, de l'Angleterre à la Pologne.

Zusammenfassung

Die Studie erörtert die zeitliche Entwicklung holländischer Rotwaren einschließlich der Beziehung zur Datierung deutschen Steinguts. Die frühesten Töpfe waren Grauware. Im Mittelpunkt des besonderen Interesses stand die stark verzierte Ware, die ihren Ursprung in der flämischen Töpferei in Brügge gehabt zu haben scheint. Es werden die verschiedenen Arten holländischer Rotwarenproduktion erörtert, von denen viele ihren Weg in andere europäische Länder von England bis nach Polen gefunden haben.