

Medieval pottery from St Albans

A. TURNER-RUGG*

SUMMARY

A large quantity of pottery, consisting mainly of a restricted range of wares, manufactured locally, has been recovered from medieval St Albans. There is a small proportion of wares from non-local but mostly British sources, few of which have been identified. By association and stratigraphic position, using those contexts most likely to contain non-residual pottery, these wares have been grouped into five ceramic phases ranging in date from the 11th to the 16th century, which illustrate a gradual development from unglazed sandy, gritty and calcareous wares through highly standardised, unglazed, sandy greywares, to the use of glazed wares, both locally-made and imported, mainly from the London area and Surrey.

INTRODUCTION

Rescue excavations in the modern city centre of St Albans have produced large quantities of pottery (over 1000 kg), principally of medieval and later date. The succession of wares follows a pattern already established in the county of Hertfordshire. A preliminary note to this effect, and a description of the major pottery type recovered, South Hertfordshire Greyware, have already been published (Havercroft *et al.* 1987; Turner-Rugg 1987). The principal collections of relevance to St Albans from the county and neighbouring areas come from Northolt Manor (Hurst 1961), the Manor of the More (Biddle *et al.* 1959), Kings Langley Palace and Priory (Neal 1973; 1974; 1977), Therfield Castle (Biddle 1964), and the City of London (Vince 1985; Vince and Jenner 1991). At these sites long sequences provide a relative chronology for the different wares commonly found in the county, and both associations and historical evidence have suggested at least broad dates for the commonest local wares.

St Albans has been a major settlement since the late Iron Age. The prehistoric and Roman towns are located some distance away from the medieval town, which grew up around the shrine of St Alban, the first British martyr, and the adjacent Benedictine monastery. A 10th-century abbot of the monastery is recorded as having founded three churches at the outskirts of the town, and a market-place close to the abbey. The modern streets of Market Street, French Row and Chequer Street, and the small alleys leading between them, have always been considered to preserve the layout of the

medieval market, and there are many standing buildings dating to the 15th century remaining in this area of the town. Excavations took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s at Tankerfield Place (site code D78), just north of the main gateway of the medieval abbey, and at Christopher Place (site code D81) and The Maltings (C80, C81, C82, C84), on either side of the market place. Also of importance is a large pit (G82), containing a group of almost complete vessels, recovered during construction work on a site at the corner of College Street and Dagnall Street, a medieval street. Fig. 1 shows the position of these sites. The finds come principally from pits, wells, and cesspits in the back yards of craftsmen, shopkeepers, and the less affluent members of society, providing an interesting contrast with those from the excavations at the Abbey (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 1981; 1984; 1986). It should be borne in mind that documentary records (wills) from the 15th century which have been analysed (Flood 1993) show quite a different range of household equipment from those recovered during excavation.

Evidence for dating the pottery from St Albans city centre is, unfortunately, poor when compared with sites on the London waterfront, for example. There are few stratigraphic relationships between those contexts from the Christopher Place and Maltings sites which contain useful pottery, and very little independent dating material. Fifty contexts were selected for study, principally those containing at least some pottery, which is unlikely to be residual or the result of contamination because a large proportion of the original vessel remains. As a

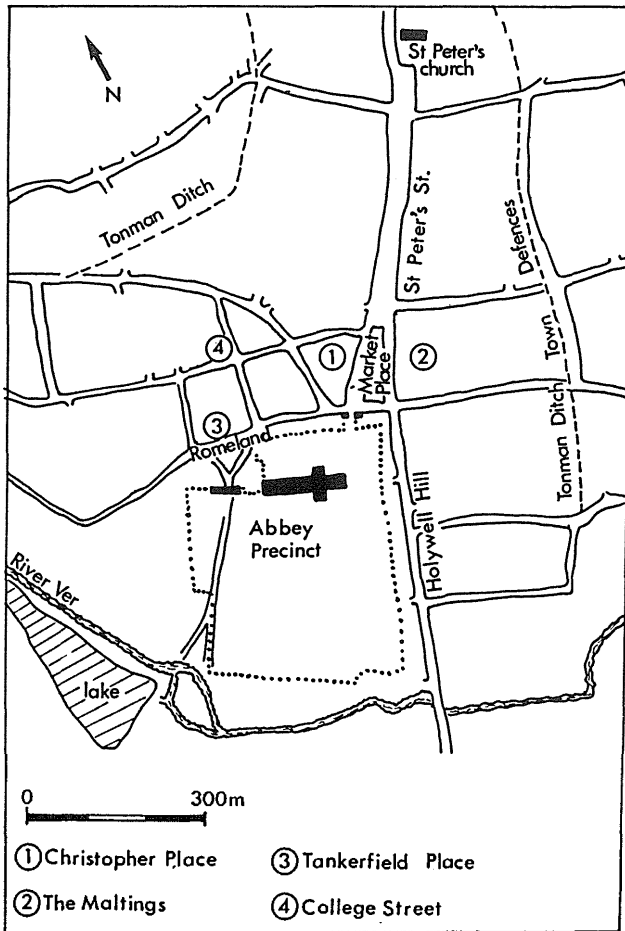


Fig. 1. Map of the centre of St Albans showing the location of the sites referred to in the text.

convenient rule of thumb this was taken to be any fragments of a pot representing over 25% of the original vessel and whose form was recognisable. These contexts, mostly pits but including a large late medieval cellar, are hereafter referred to by the individual codes they were given on site, namely, the code for the site (as above) followed by a two- or three-letter context code.

CERAMIC GROUPS

The pottery was first divided into broad ceramic groups, and only afterwards, where possible, into wares, the exception being South Hertfordshire Greyware and Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware which were treated separately from the start. The section which follows is accompanied by drawings of the best examples of vessels from each ceramic group, with the exception of South Hertfordshire Greyware which has already been published. These examples are taken from the whole of St Albans, including not only the contexts included in this analysis, but also some from contexts from the same sites which have not been included, and some

examples taken from the excavations at Belmont Hill, St Albans (unpublished), a site at the bottom of Holywell Hill, on the outskirts of the medieval town.

(1) Pre-medieval

This includes all Prehistoric, Belgic, Roman and Early Saxon pottery. As the main focus of settlement at all these periods lay outside the site of the medieval town, these wares occur only in very small numbers as residual sherds in medieval contexts.

(2) Calcareous (Fig. 2, Nos. 1-7)

The calcareous group includes any ware containing a proportion of shell, chalk or limestone, with or without sand. Calcareous wares were found in low numbers only, generally as small abraded residual sherds in later features. There are no complete or nearly complete vessels. It is intended to produce a separate, more detailed study of the calcareous wares from St Albans, and few positive identifications of ware types have yet been made, apart from the presence of true St Neots ware, confirmed by P. Jones (pers. comm.). Comparable calcareous wares are usually dated elsewhere to the 10th to 12th centuries, and those in St Albans, from their condition and stratigraphic position, probably fall mostly in that date range. However, it should be remembered, in the absence of positive identifications, that calcareous wares continued to be made into the 13th and 14th centuries in areas to the north and west, where the underlying geology of Jurassic limestone most easily provides calcareous tempering material.

Although it is recorded that Abbot Ulsinus founded a market in St Albans north of the Abbey in the 10th century, the areas excavated have produced so little pottery predating the later 12th/early 13th centuries, let alone early features, that it appears likely that the main area of settlement in the earliest medieval/Saxo-Norman period was not sampled. Pottery was in general a scarcer commodity at that date, and survives less well in recognisable form, but it seems unlikely that the main late Saxon settlement would produce so little. It is possible that it was closer to the Abbey itself, as excavations by the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society on the site of the Abbey Orchard in the late 1960s (Turner-Rugg, in prep.) produced a higher proportion of shell-tempered wares. A large collection of 11th- and early 12th-century pottery was recovered during the Biddle's excavations at St Albans Abbey (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 1984), much of which has been identified as Early Medieval Chalky ware (Vince and Jenner, 1991).

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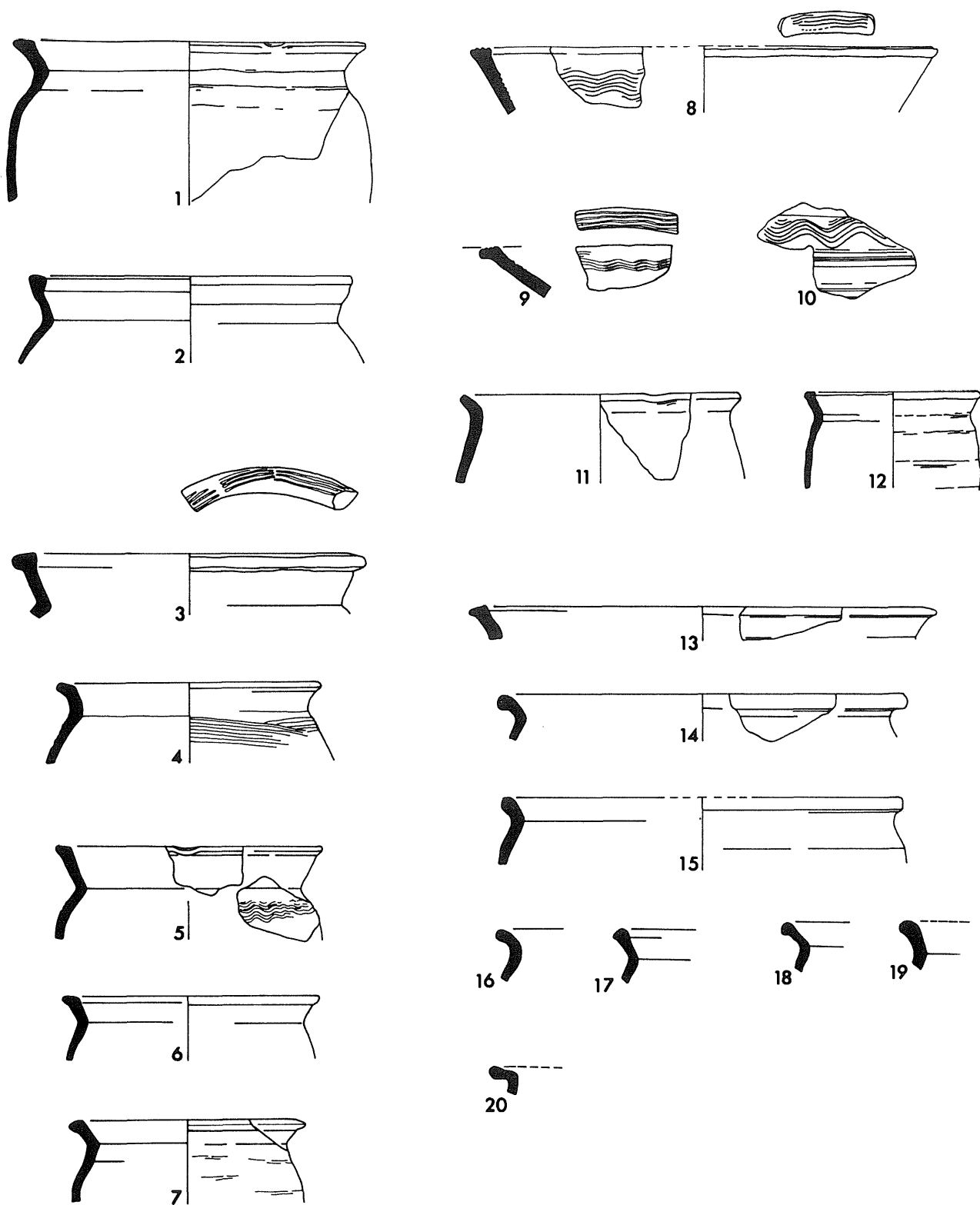


Fig. 2. Nos. 1-7: Calcareous wares — jars; Nos. 8-12: Early medieval gritty and sandy wares — bowls and jars; Nos. 13-20: 'Crucible' rims. Scale 1:4.

(3) Early Medieval Unglazed Sandy and Gritty (Fig. 2, Nos. 8–12)

These wares date from the 11th and early 12th centuries. As well as occasional sherds in later features, there are three important groups, one from Christopher Place (D81 NNC), and two from the Maltings (C81 NHH and C84 HD/HL), in which larger quantities of calcareous wares are associated with sandy or gritty wares. The sandy/gritty pottery from these contexts is typified by its coarser fabric and poor finish and especially by its lack of homogeneity. This is in contrast to South Hertfordshire Greyware, which is later in date, and is in general a standardised product, with a limited range of forms, rims, fabric colours and decorative elements. The early pottery varies quite widely in fabric type, and the colour of individual pieces is also variable. As the sherds are so small, few forms can be identified and therefore the range of forms remains uncertain. However the greyware found in these three groups has a different set of rim forms from the later greywares. There is more decoration than on South Hertfordshire Greyware, and most commonly in combed patterns, whereas in the standard 13th-century greyware contexts, thumbled applied bands, corrugations, and raised lines on the neck are commonest, the latter possibly an imitation of metal vessels.

Similar wares are known from elsewhere in St Albans and the county of Hertfordshire. There is a group of reduced handmade flint- and quartz-tempered cooking pots from the lower layers of a pit at St Stephens Church, St Albans, excavated by the St Albans and Hertfordshire Archaeological and Architectural Society (Turner-Rugg in prep.). These and the overlying contexts contain greyware. There are early wares from Northolt, Manor of the More and the City of London, where they occur in reliably stratified contexts, known to be earlier than those containing typical South Hertfordshire Greywares. Northolt Early Medieval (h) (c.1050–1150) is recorded by Hurst as a very hard, well-fired, handmade gritty ware. The 11th century Sandy Ware A from Therfield Castle (Biddle 1964), and the Northolt Developed Early Medieval (i) (c.1100–1200) are both sandy. Northolt Rough Medieval ware (j) (c.1150–1250) is described as very rough and gritty and distinctively light-coloured. Wall thickness, manufacture (i.e. handmade or wheelthrown), and surface treatment vary. Northolt Developed Early Medieval has thumbled rims and incised combed decoration. A significant collection of similar early wares was recovered in 1988 by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust from Wyllyots Manor, Potters Bar, unfortunately from contexts without evidence for date. At Wyllyots both glazed and unglazed wares were coarse,

sandy or gritty, usually handmade with thick walls, showing a lack of control in firing and a low firing temperature as demonstrated by softness of fabric, presence of carbon streaks, and patchy reduction/oxidation of sherds. Although no production sites are known to the author, it seems probable that most of these earlier medieval wares were of local manufacture, since several kilns for the manufacture of very similar but later greywares are known.

(4) South Hertfordshire Greywares (not illustrated)

'South Hertfordshire Greywares' are broadly defined as unglazed, reduced, sand-tempered wares, sometimes also flint-tempered, which are widespread in Hertfordshire, London and much of South-east England. Several kilns are known (Renn 1964; Turner-Rugg 1993), and the wares are dated principally by reference to the sequences at Manor of the More (Biddle *et al.* 1959), Northolt Manor (Hurst 1961) and the City of London (Vince 1985) to the mid 12th, 13th, and possibly the early 14th centuries. The excavations in St Albans have produced very large quantities of these wares, including an unusually large series of complete and partially complete vessels which appears to be unique in the county, with the possible exception of the moated site at Whomerly Wood, Stevenage (Turner-Rugg 1993, 45, figs. 8–11). The greywares from St Albans have been described in detail elsewhere (Havercroft *et al.* 1987)

It can be difficult when dealing with large quantities of featureless, unglazed, undecorated, dark-coloured, sandy and gritty body sherds, to assign some to the category 'South Hertfordshire Greyware' and others to the category 'early medieval'. Therefore, distinctions within this group can only be made with any certainty for complete or partially complete vessels (as opposed to sherds); for rims; where there is unequivocal evidence of an early date; or where there is some other clearly defined individual feature, such as distinctive decoration. The occurrence of early wares may, therefore, often be somewhat underestimated. It is also possible that small quantities of Roman greywares may have been inadvertently included. These are recognisable when present in large numbers, or large fragments, but not when only one or two small sherds are present.

(5) Glazed (Fig. 3, Nos. 21–29, glazed white-wares; Figs. 4–5, Nos. 30–42, glazed redwares)

Proportions of glazed and unglazed wares vary with time. Glazed wares occur in very low numbers in the earlier 13th-century contexts, becoming more common, and then with the arrival of 'Late

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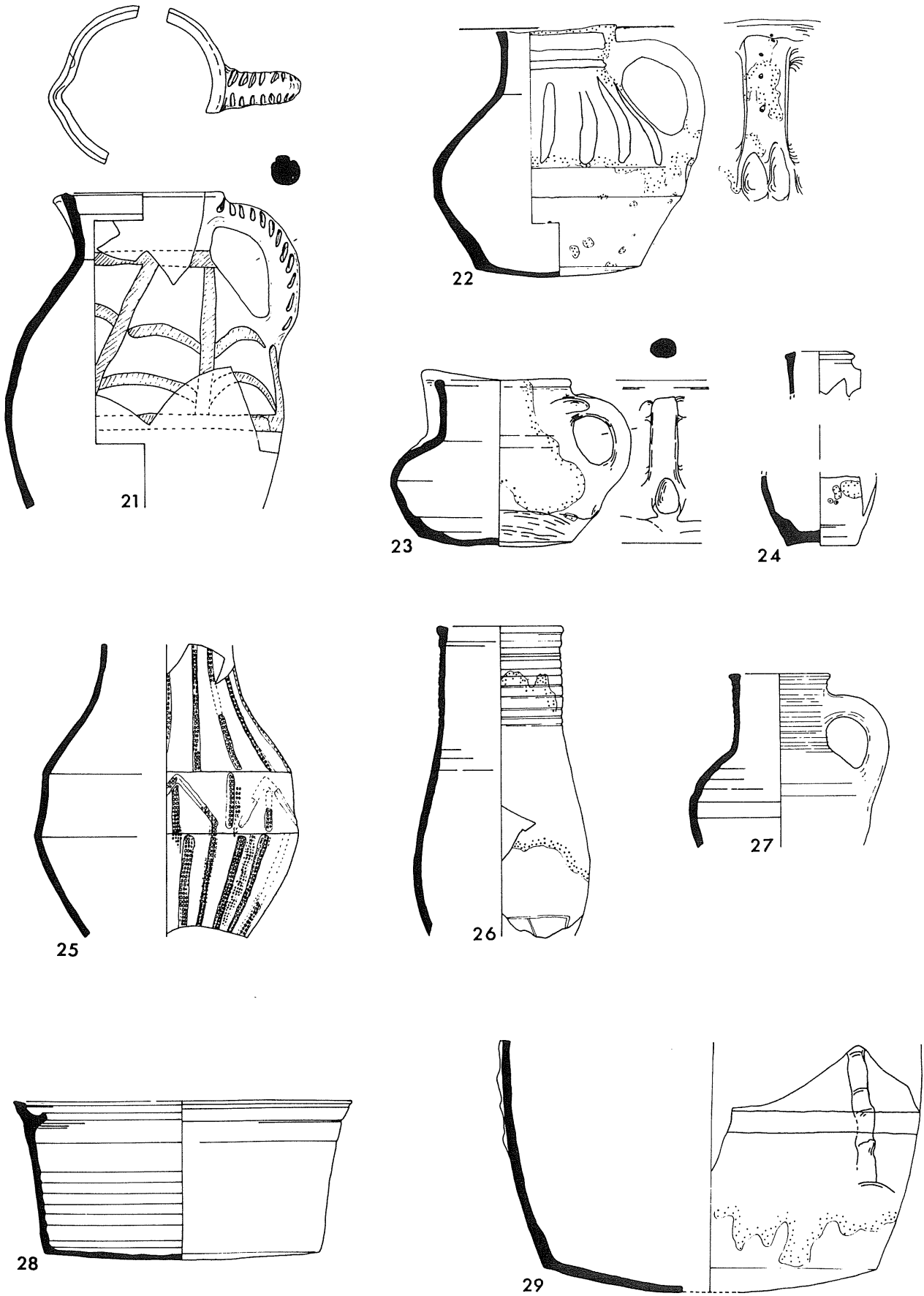


Fig. 3. Nos. 21–27, 29: Unidentified Glazed Whiteware jugs; No. 28: ?Coarse Border ware bowl. Scale 1:4.

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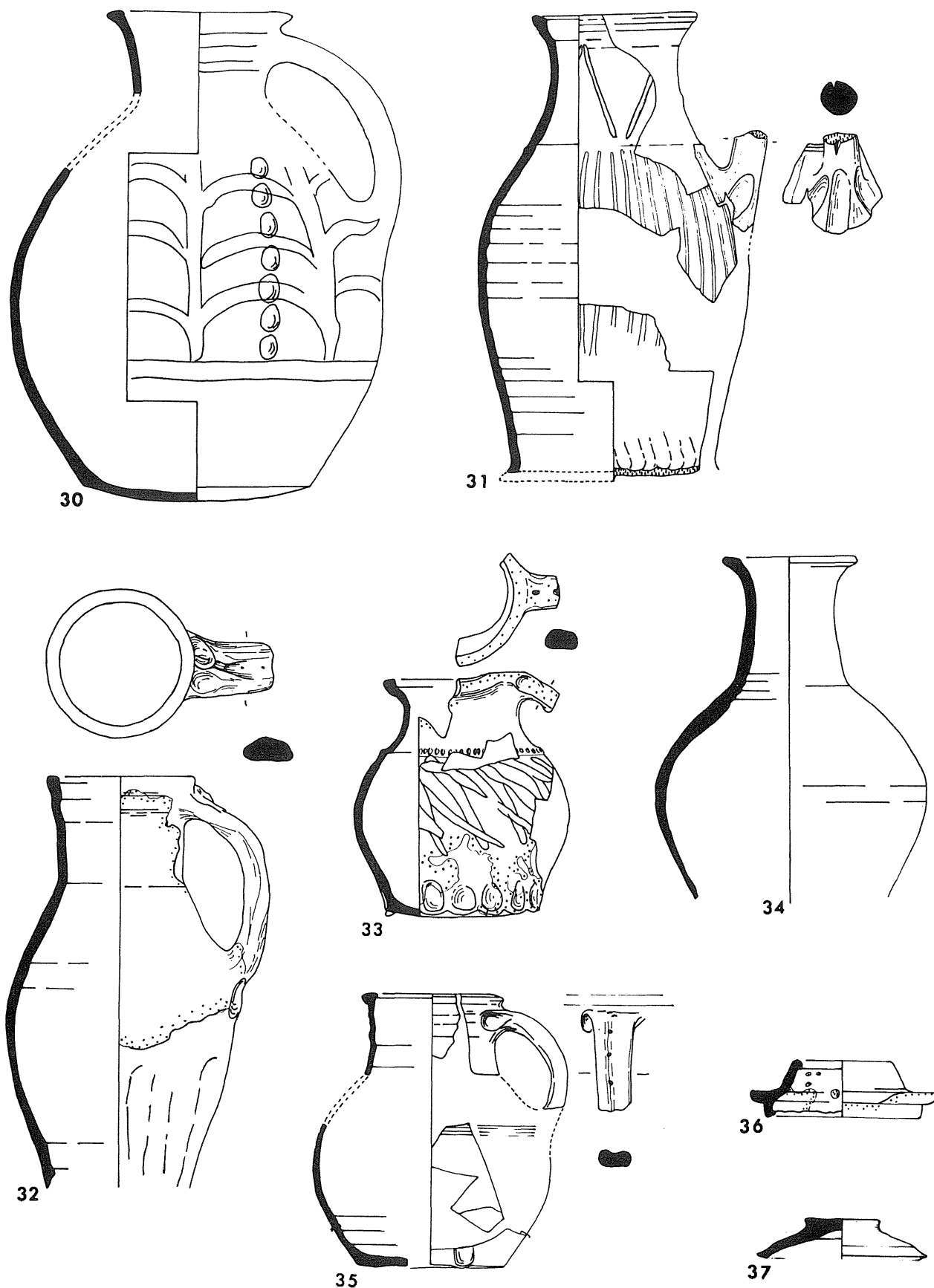


Fig. 4. Nos. 30–31, 35: Unidentified Glazed Redware jugs; No. 32: ?Mill Green ware jug; No. 33: London-type ware jug; No. 34: Unidentified Glazed Redware bottle; No. 36: Unidentified Glazed redware lid; No. 37: ?Cheam Redware lid. Scale 1:4.

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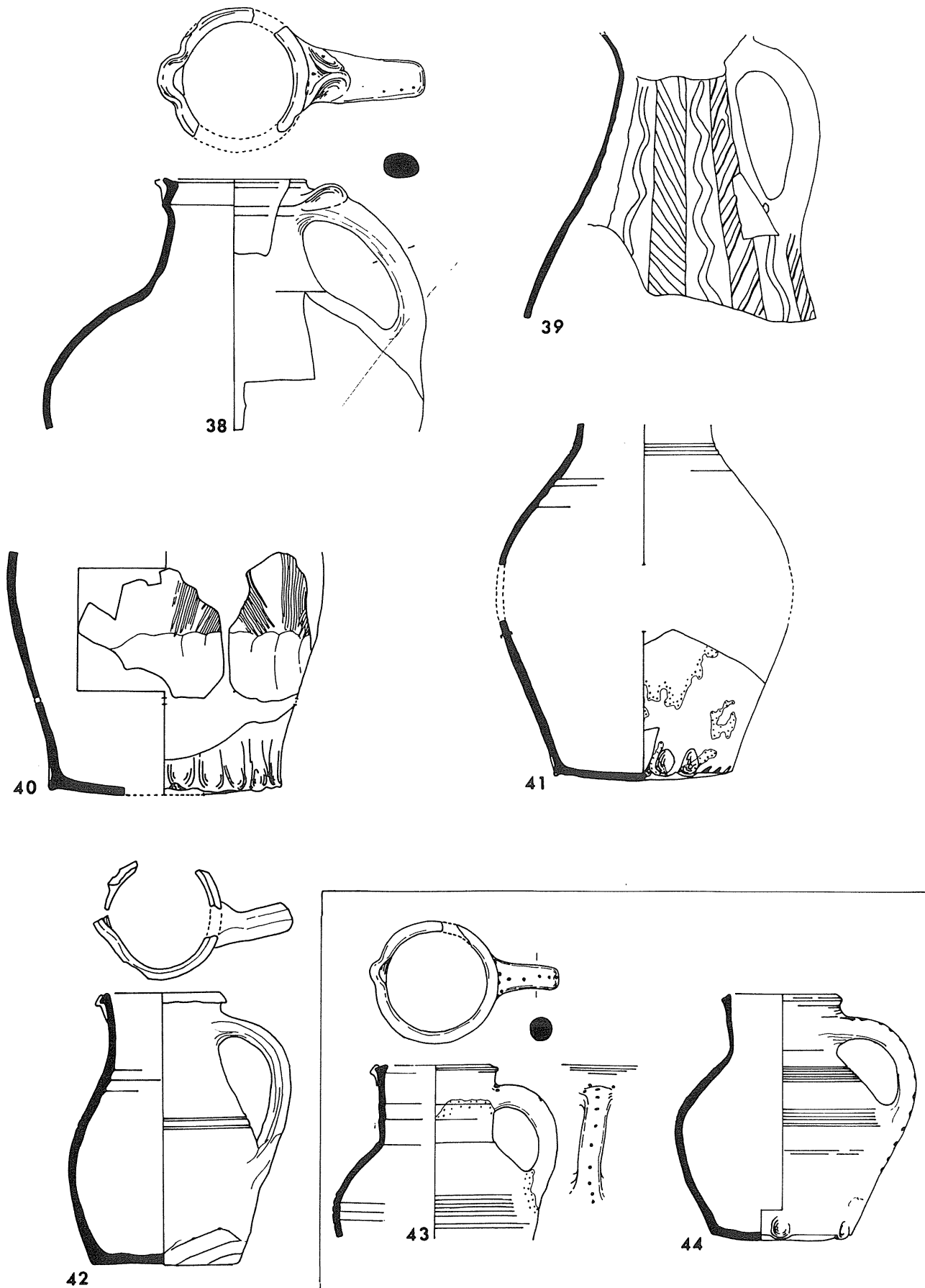


Fig. 5. No. 38: ?London-type ware jug; Nos. 39-41: Unidentified Glazed Redware jugs; No. 42: ?Bedford Type-series E2 jug; Nos. 43-44: LMHG jugs. Scale 1:4.

Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware' during the 14th century, apparently largely replacing the unglazed wares in the 15th century. The vast majority of glazed vessels in all wares from all sites included here are jugs and pitchers, but other forms include one lid (Cheam redware); one bottle (unidentified redware); one strainer (fine whiteware); one large bowl with a bifid rim (Coarse Border ware); and one curious unidentified form (unidentified redware). It has not so far been possible to identify the kiln or source area of very many of them, which is most unfortunate considering their potential use as a dating tool. Samples were taken to the then Department of Urban Archaeology at the Museum of London, Aylesbury Museum and the Field Archaeology Unit of Essex County Council at Chelmsford, and were also shown to researchers visiting the St Albans museum and at regional meetings of the Medieval Pottery Research Group. The author also visited Bedford County Archaeology Service and viewed material there. Identified sherds include, unsurprisingly, small amounts of Kingston-type ware; London-type ware; Mill Green ware and Bedford Type-series E2 ware, as well as those isolated items mentioned above. Chandlers Cross-type Glazed Greywares have also been found. These are otherwise typical South Hertfordshire Greywares, but with a greenish glaze and sometimes white slip decoration. Figures 3 to 5 show the best and most complete examples of all these wares from the town.

'Crucibles', (see Fig. 2, Nos. 13–20) in a grey, fine-textured, very friable ware with thick crumbling glaze, are found in very small amounts in greyware contexts on several sites. Justine Bayley (pers. comm.) has suggested that they may be Roman pottery reused for glass-melting in medieval times, as the 'glass' or 'glaze' is lead/potash-based and would therefore be Saxon or medieval. The 'glaze' does resemble the glassy deposit found on such vessels at York. Only sherds have been found and no vessels which are anywhere near complete, but the diameters of the few rims which could be measured show that some at least were quite large, about the size of the larger greyware jars.

(6) Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware (LMHG) (Fig. 5, Nos. 43–4; Figs. 6–8; Col. Pls. 1 and 2)

The medieval glazed pottery includes a large amount of the ware recently identified by Jenner and Vince as a local Hertfordshire type, 'Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware' or 'St Albans ware', and dated to the mid 14th to mid 15th centuries (Jenner and Vince 1983). Although LMHG may resemble Brill/Boarstall wares in individual cases, the collection taken as a whole differs

strongly in general appearance and the fabric is clearly distinguishable. It has therefore been assumed that in default of positive identification as the latter, it would be safer to class all examples from St Albans as LMHG. These are numerically the largest group of wares apart from the Greywares, found at all these sites, which they appear to replace at some point in the 14th century, and there are several contexts with particularly fine series of complete or nearly complete vessels, for example the backfill of a large late medieval cellar at Christopher Place and a pit (AS) on the Maltings (Lloyds Bank) site.

The fabric is characteristically smooth-textured, red/orange/salmon-pink, often with a greyish core; there is frequently a very thin, darker, redder surface, especially externally, which wears or scratches through to reveal the lighter-coloured body underneath. This does not appear to be a slip. It is tempered with very fine, sparse, white/clear quartz sand, with occasional inclusions of a brick-red mineral. The glaze is typically situated on the external shoulder/upper body of jugs and cisterns, the internal lower wall and base of jars and bowls, and varies in colour. Some vessels have a mottled bright green/clear combination; some a bright canary-yellow colour which appears to have been imperfectly mixed with green glaze; there is also a variant with darker, unmottled pine-green glaze.

The principal forms are jugs, both baluster and rounded, and jars. Some of the jugs are extremely regular and symmetrical in shape, others are slacker, sagging forms. The jars, unlike greyware jars, mostly have elaborately lid-seated rims, and lids are not uncommon in this ware. Bowls, both larger and smaller examples which may have been for drinking, are common. Other forms found in St Albans in small numbers include money-boxes, lobed cups, handled pipkins or skillets, and bung-hole cisterns. Figures 5 to 8 show the best and most complete examples of LMHG ware vessels from the medieval town.

The jugs are often decorated, usually with a group of horizontal grooves on the shoulder or neck, or hollow bosses made against a stamp in star or wheatear motifs, with clear fingerprints inside. There are a few sherds with lion or '*Agnus Dei*' stamps, a religious motif perhaps indicating some kind of connection with the Abbey. One sherd carries a stamp similar to a Long Cross penny, but it is not an actual coin impression, as the parts in relief are the wrong way round and there is no lettering around the edge.

(7) Continental imports (not illustrated)

These are rare in St Albans, which is to be expected, as not only is the town some distance

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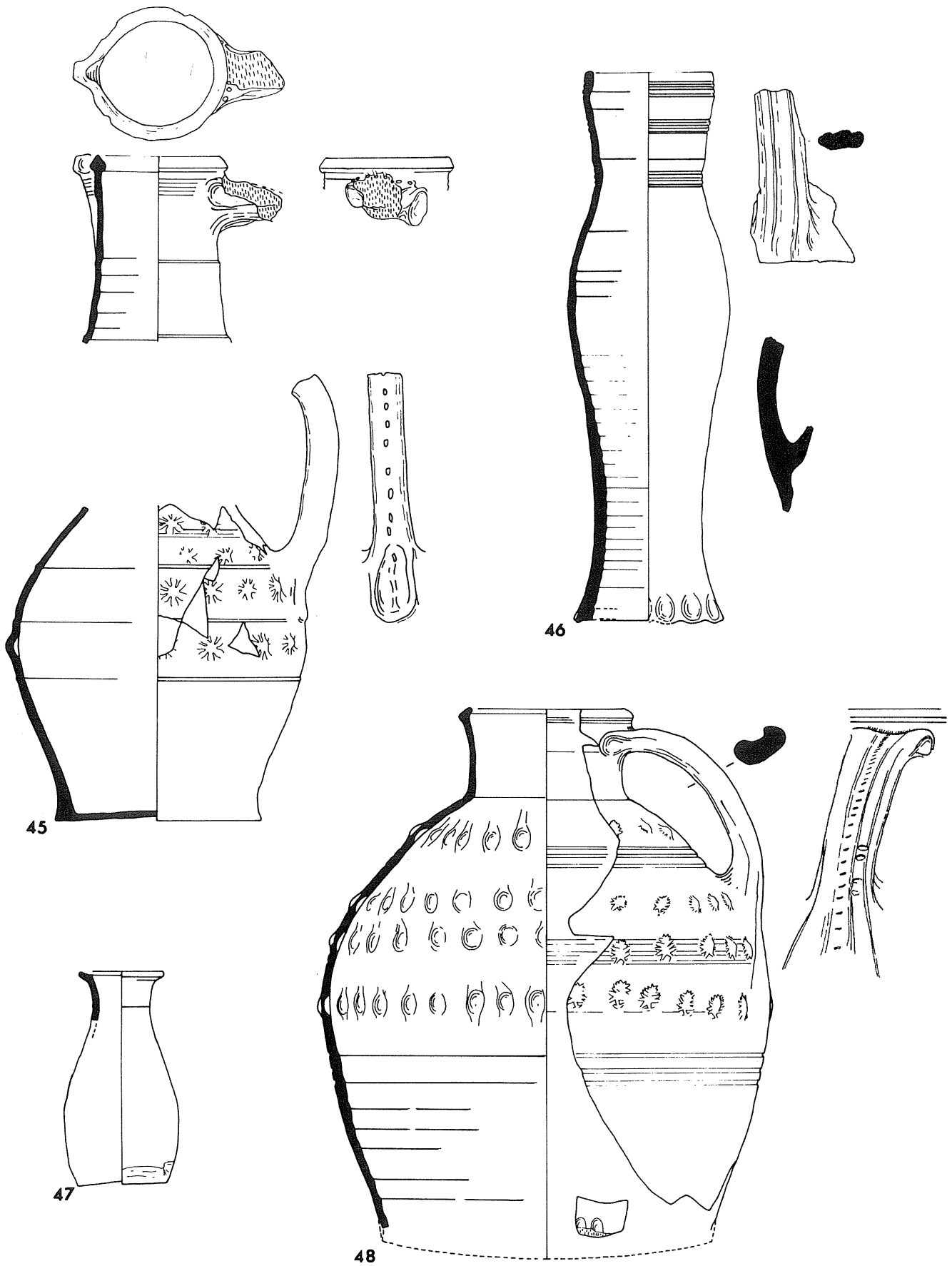


Fig. 6. LMHG: Nos. 45–46: jugs; No. 47: bottle; No. 48: jug/cistern. Scale 1:4.

MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM ST ALBANS

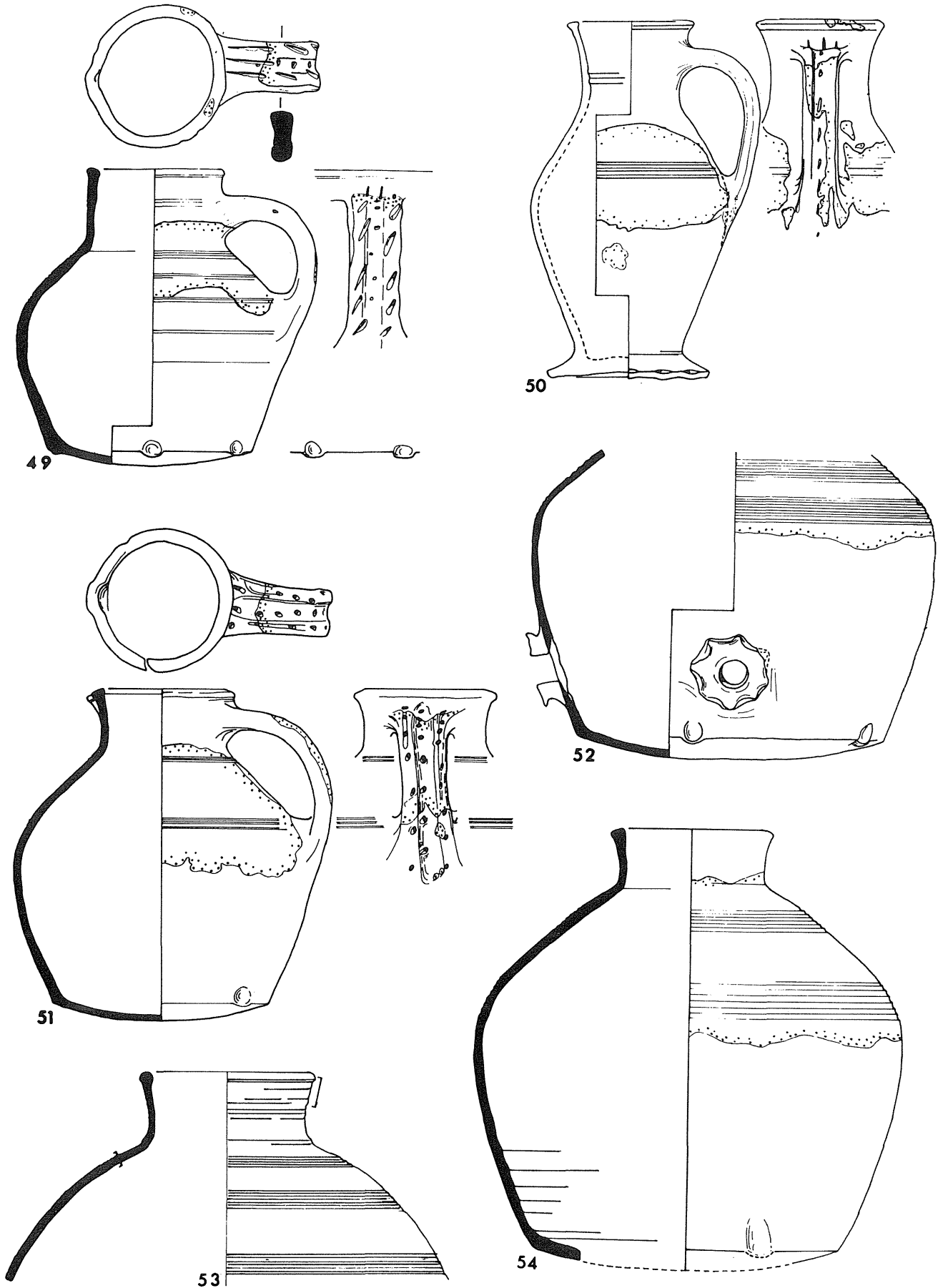


Fig. 7. LMHG: Nos. 49–51: jugs; Nos. 52–54: cisterns or ?cisterns. Scale 1:4.

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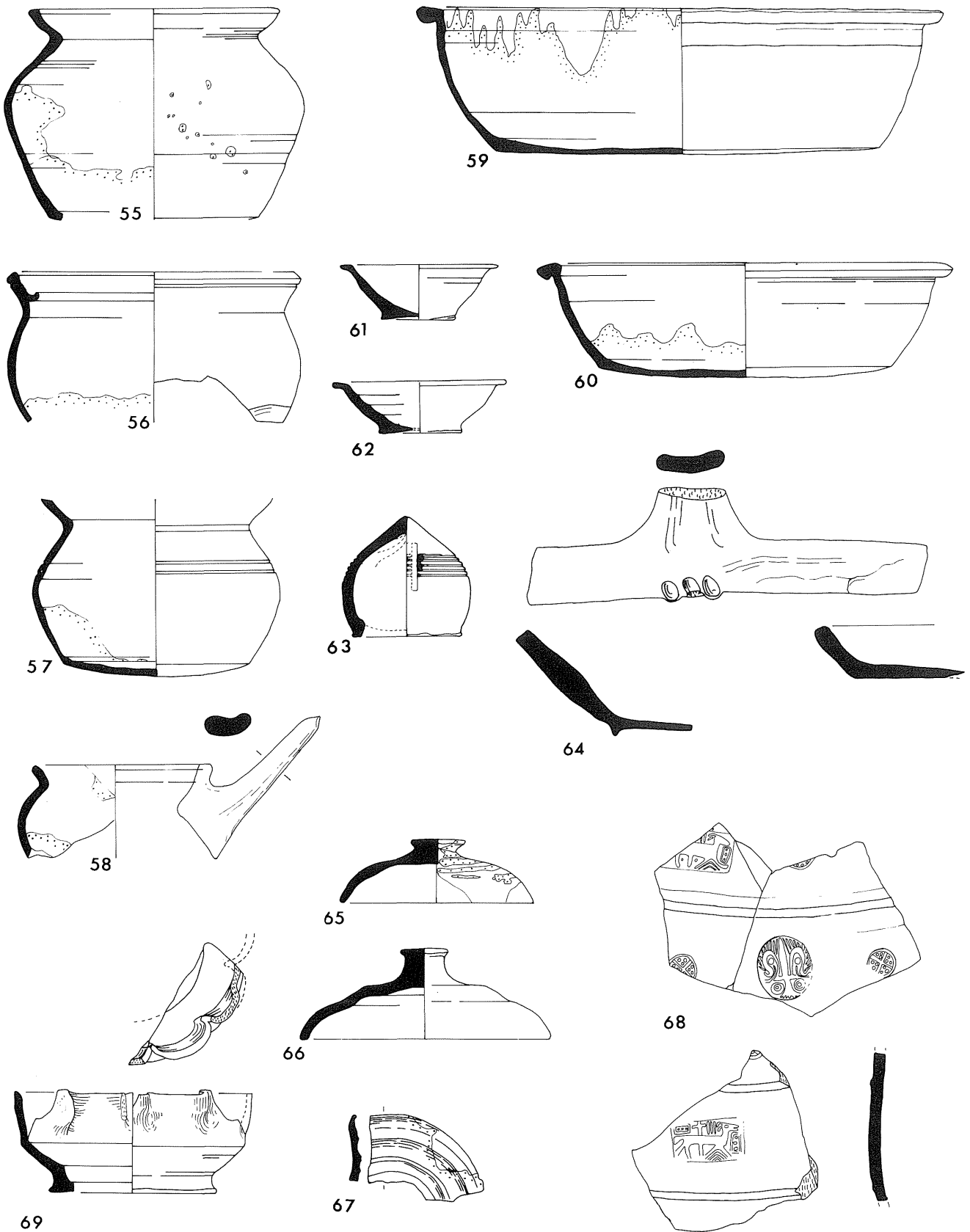


Fig. 8. LMHG: Nos. 55–57: jars; No. 58: pipkin/skillet; Nos. 59–60: large bowls; Nos. 61–62: small bowls; No. 63: money-box; No. 64: dripping dish; Nos. 65–66: lids; No. 67: unidentified base; No. 68: jug/cistern; No. 69: lobed cup. Scale 1:4.

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Table 1. Sherd Count by % of total sherds, contexts with non-residual vessels. (See also Fig 1.)

Context	Early wares	Grey-wares	LMHG	Transitional	Other	Total sherds =100%
A) Non-residual vessels in greywares only						
<i>Phase 1/2</i>						
C81 DP	23	41	0	0	46	195
<i>Phase 2</i>						
D78 YA	0	100	0	0	0	25
C84 DM	0	100	0	0	0	31
C81 FB	0	100	0	0	0	44
D81 UE	2	98	0	0	0	41
C81 MBN	0	97	0	0	3	65
D78 DH/EA	2	96	1	0	1	194
D78 CG/DB	1	96	1	0	2	106
C84 BP	0	95	0	0	5	39
D78 FM	0	95	5	0	0	19
D78 FJ	6	94	0	0	0	69
D81 WG	5	92	0	0	3	154
D81 HG	1	92	<1	0	7	339
D81 MG	6	91	0	0	3	100
C84 CX	3	91	<1	<1	6	267
D78 AG/DC/EE/EF	8	88	<1	0	4	777
D81 AB	4	86	0	<1	10	197
D78 DD/FB	12	84	0	0	4	109
D81 NIC	4	76	0	0	20	285
<i>Phase 5</i>						
D81 NJC	3	40	13	15	29	68
B) Non-residual vessels in both greywares and LMHG						
<i>Phase 3</i>						
C81 MES	2	82	15	0	1	136
D78 AQ/BM/ BN/BP	2	82	13	0	3	165
C82 AP	0	71	28	0	1	329
G82 AC	0	69	10	0	21	398
C82 AT	0	52	48	0	0	294
C) Non-residual vessels in LMHG						
<i>Phase 4</i>						
D78 BQ	4	70	3	0	23	216
C82 AS	0	33	59	2	6	300
D81 WQ	3	25	60	0	12	67
D81 cellar backfill	1	19	68	5	7	1548
D78 YF	0	0	82	0	18	27
C80 EC	1	5	88	0	6	65
C81 MBX	13	41	15	1	30	121
<i>Phase 5</i>						
C82 AG	0	19	19	31	31	36
C81 ADF	0	13	38	38	11	8
C81 AHS	0	4	5	79	12	56
D) Non-residual vessels in Transitional wares						
<i>Phase 5</i>						
D81 EB	1	28	25	21	25	349
E) Non-residual vessels in various other wares						
<i>Phase 2</i>						
C84 EX (a)	0	56	6	0	38	52
<i>Phase 4</i>						
D78 DF (b)	0	36	2	0	62	59
<i>Phase 4/5</i>						
C81 NLB (a)	6	51	0	11	31	115

from the coast, but, unlike the major ports such as Bristol and Southampton, it was without large numbers of wealthy merchants who might indulge themselves with such wares. The excavations have covered a reasonably large sample of the town centre, which seems, from the point of view of the pottery at least, to have been something of a modest provincial backwater, even allowing for its status as a place of pilgrimage (and setting aside the Abbey itself which is not considered here). There are a few sherds of South Spanish maiolica and Langerwehe and Raeren stonewares from Christopher Place (R. Thompson pers. comm.).

(8) Transitional Wares

Redwares, Tinglazed wares, Slipwares, 'Tudor Green', Cistercian and other Black-glazed wares are associated in various contexts, which probably date from the late 15th to approximately the end of the 17th centuries. Relevant local collections include the large dated group from Sopwell Nunnery in St Albans (Moorhouse in Johnson forthcoming), Manor of the More periods IV–VIII (Biddle *et al.* 1959), and the small group from the recut of the early manorial enclosure ditch at Kings Langley (Neal 1973, 64–65).

CHRONOLOGY

On the basis of these definitions, the pottery from the contexts chosen has been arranged into hypothetical chronological order, which has then been checked against the meagre stratigraphical and independent dating evidence available. Estimated vessel equivalents (eves) and rim counts were attempted, but owing to the small numbers of rim sherds which can be attributed to vessel and shape group, these proved of little value. The chronological arrangement was therefore based on the presence or absence of non-residual vessels in early medieval wares (calcareous and obvious early medieval sandy/gritty wares), greywares, LMHG, Transitional wares, and on the proportions of sherds in those wares. This continuum was divided into five ceramic phases, and, where there was stratigraphic information these ceramic phases were then compared with the relative chronology (it should be remembered, however, that the ceramic phases are no more than convenient slices of a continuous development). An attempt was then made to give absolute dates to at least part of this sequence, using pottery dated elsewhere and the few other finds available. Sections (2) 'Stratigraphic evidence' and (3) 'Absolute Chronology', supported by Appendix A, demonstrate that in St Albans we do not have a stratigraphic sequence covering all the ceramic phases, well dated by coins

and dendrochronology. The absolute dates depend almost entirely on the dates at which a limited range of wares are found elsewhere, principally London, and the dates in St Albans may be some 25–50 years different.

(1) Ceramic Phases

Table 1 part A shows sherd counts by % for all contexts which have at least one non-residual vessel in greyware or earlier medieval sandy/gritty wares. Part B shows sherd counts for contexts with vessels in these wares and LMHG; part C for contexts with vessels in LMHG only; and part D for those with vessels in Transitional wares only. Part E is for those contexts with vessels in (a) medieval glazed wares other than LMHG, and (b) medieval glazed wares other than LMHG plus greywares. Table 2 shows contexts which have no non-residual vessels, but which have been included for other reasons; for example, they contain very early pottery, or are stratigraphically related to contexts in Table 1. In both of these tables the column 'Other' includes medieval glazed wares other than LMHG, pre-medieval wares, post-medieval wares, and the unclassifiable residue.

From this data, the following ceramic phases have been defined. Fifty contexts are represented here; of these, forty-six clearly conform to this standard pattern, and four are anomalous for some reason or another.

Phase 1

The majority of the sherds are greywares, but there is a significant proportion (over 25%) of early medieval wares of various types. Unfortunately, there are no contexts containing non-residual vessels in these wares, therefore these contexts may either be truly early in date, or contain a mixture of wares of different dates up to the 13th century. Two contexts, C84 HD/HL and C81 NHH contain significant proportions of early wares, together with a majority of greywares. D81 NNC contains a large number of sherds of 'crucible', counted with 'Other'. This ware is extremely friable and this has probably biased the sample.

Phase 2

Almost exclusively greyware, with a very low proportion of glazed wares of any kind. All the non-residual vessels are greyware. Seventeen of the twenty contexts with non-residual vessels in greywares, and four other contexts without any non-residual vessels (C80 CC and FE; D81 MF and MH), belong in Phase 2. C81 DP may be Phase 1 or Phase 2 as it is not clear how much of the sherd

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Table 2. Sherd count by % of total sherds, contexts without non-residual vessels.

Context	Early wares	Grey-ware	LMHG	Transitional	Other	Total sherds =100%
<i>Phase 1</i>						
D81 NNC	13	22	0	0	65	321
C81 NHH	26	54	0	0	20	89
C84 HL	40	52	0	0	8	157
C84 HD	33	63	0	0	4	157
<i>Phase 2</i>						
C80 CC	8	80	0	0	12	323
C80 FE	8	80	0	1	11	234
D81 MH	0	94	0	0	6	17
D81 MF	9	78	0	1	12	95
<i>Phase 3</i>						
D81 cellar construct.	5	67	15	0	13	107
<i>Phase 4</i>						
D81 floor	0	47	29	0	24	17
<i>Phase 5</i>						
D81 NC	0	3	51	24	24	164

material is early medieval sandy and gritty ware and how much is greyware, and D81 NIC has a total absence of LMHG or Transitional wares and is therefore assigned to Phase 2.

Phase 3

These include non-residual vessels in both greywares and LMHG. The majority of sherds are still greywares, but there is too large a proportion of LMHG, over 10%, to be likely to be the result of contamination. All five contexts with non-residual vessels in both greywares and LMHG conform to the standard pattern. Of those contexts without non-residual vessels, Christopher Place (D81 cellar construction) contains over 10% LMHG, together with a high proportion of greywares.

Phase 4

All non-residual vessels and over 50% of the sherds are LMHG. Five contexts conform to this standard pattern. These are C82 AS, D81 WQ, D81 cellar backfill, D78 YF, and C80 EC. D78 BQ has a misleadingly low percentage of LMHG because it includes a complete LMHG vessel which had to be counted as a single sherd, but presumably belongs to this phase. There is also a context without non-residual vessels, D81 cellar floor, which probably belongs in Phase 4.

Phase 5

The non-residual vessels are either LMHG or Tran-

sitional wares, as are a significant though not major proportion (21–79%) of the sherds. This phase is represented by C82 AG, C81 ADF and AHS, D81 EB and NC.

Phasing of atypical contexts

Forty-three of the fifty contexts considered here thus conform to a standard pattern, and three more are anomalous for clearly defined reasons, mostly relating to the method of counting the sherds: no method is without drawbacks. This leaves four other contexts which do not conform: C84 EX and C81 NLB have vessels in medieval glazed wares other than LMHG; the vessel from EX is a medieval glazed redware, that from NLB a glazed whiteware. On the relative proportions of sherds, EX probably lies within the Phase 2 date range, and NLB, in spite of the absence of LMHG, is probably Phase 4/5. Two contexts, D78 DF and D81 NJC, both have vessels which ought to be non-residual according to the working definition (given in the introduction), but which are associated with much later pottery. D78 DF has a greyware vessel, associated with glazed wares which are usually dated to the 15th century. These include a complete lid in fine redware, possibly Cheam redware, and a deep bowl with a bifid rim, which may be Coarse Border ware. There is only 2% LMHG, which is very unusual in St Albans at such a date. D81 NJC also has a vessel in greyware, associated with a percentage of both LMHG and Transitional sherds sufficient to suggest a date in Phase 5 for this context as well. These four anomalous contexts only

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Table 3. Contexts with potentially-datable glazed wares other than LMHG

Ceramic Phase	Context	Ware
1	D81 NNC	'crucible'
2	D78 AG/DC/EE/EF D81 HG D81 NIC	unidentified medieval glazed redware unidentified medieval glazed redware unidentified medieval glazed whiteware
3	G82 AC C82 AP C82 AT C84 EX	Kingston-type ware; unidentified medieval glazed redware; unidentified medieval glazed whiteware unidentified medieval glazed whiteware unidentified medieval glazed redware; Mill Green ware? unidentified medieval glazed highly decorated redware
4	D78 BQ D81 cellar backfill C82 AS	Kingston-type ware unidentified medieval glazed whiteware; ?Surrey Whiteware; ?Cheam Whiteware; South Spanish maiolica; Langerwehe and Raeren stoneware (sherds only) unidentified medieval glazed whiteware
5	D81 EB D81 NC C82 AG	'Tudor Green'; Post-medieval redware; unidentified medieval glazed whiteware; unidentified medieval glazed redware Surrey Whiteware; Post-medieval Redware Post-medieval Redware

emphasise once again that discrepancies can occur and that dating contexts from their pottery alone is an exercise in probabilities only.

(2) Relative chronology

Tankerfield Place is the only site which has been entirely phased and the contexts studied here can all be located in the sequence. They follow the predicted order of the ceramic phases.

Stratigraphic Evidence

D78 Tankerfield Place

Site Phase:

- 1 AG+DC+EE+EF; DD/FB; DH/EA;
FJ; FM
- 2 CG/DB
AQ+BM+BN+BP
BQ
- 3 DF

Whole site

- Phase 2
- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Phase 4
- (equivalent to Phase 4)

At Christopher Place, the various elements of the cellar sequence and the pit which cuts it are also in the expected order.

Christopher Place

- cellar floor Phase 3
- cellar construction Phase 3
- cellar backfill Phase 4
- EB pit cutting cellar Phase 5

There is no overall stratigraphic relationship for the

majority of the contexts from the Maltings and Christopher Place. They can only be placed in relation to each other in very few cases and in those cases, the ceramic phase is the same for each context. Therefore those instances where they can be related to the natural undisturbed subsoil or to contexts with small numbers of small sherds have also been considered. These small individual sequences are shown in Appendix 1 in small type, giving the number of sherds involved and the spot date.

None of these sequences is very informative, except insofar as nothing contradicts the hypothetical order of ceramic phases. Attention is drawn to the fact that the earliest contexts, D81 NNC and C81 NHH, directly overlie natural subsoil. C84 HD/HL is separated from natural by a context containing a single sherd of pottery spot-dated to the 13 or 14th century.

(3) Absolute Chronology

Medieval glazed wares, other than LMHG, which may be dated at sites other than St Albans, are shown in Table 3. These include not only probable non-residual vessels as defined above, but also, because of the small numbers, large fragments (significantly larger than average sherd size). A few have been identified and dated. The scarcity of non-local wares, especially in the earlier contexts, is unfortunate.

Datable finds other than pottery are scarce and largely confined to the later deposits. Most of the pits with a large proportion of greyware have very few finds other than pottery and it is only the later 15th-century and later pits which begin to have other associated finds. Typically, these later 15th- and 16th-century pits have larger numbers of finds overall, and particularly copper-alloy objects such as cauldrons, dress accessories (pins, tags, buckles, strap-ends) and furniture accessories (studs, bindings). Iron objects, such as nails, horseshoes, knife blades, scissors and window glass also appear in quantity (Chris Saunders pers. comm.).

At Christopher Place, the cellar backfill (Phase 4) has, for example, a very large quantity of associated finds, including coal; iron scissors, knives and horseshoes; bone parchment prickers, bone tuning pegs from a musical instrument, and a bone needle; many copper-alloy pins, lace-tags, finger-rings, repoussé mounts from leather, and fragments of cast copper-alloy vessels. The pit EB (Phase 5), which cuts the cellar, and NJC (Phase 5) have similar associated finds. There is also a coin, a Long Cross penny, minted in York, from EB, but unfortunately the obverse is so badly damaged that the name of the king cannot be read, and its date could be anywhere within the 14th to the 16th centuries.

At the Maltings, C81 DP (Phase 1 or 2) has floor tiles paralleled at the Chapter House of the Abbey, some in Paul de Caen's building of 1077–88 and some in Robert of Gorham's rebuilding of 1154–66. There is also a compass-decorated tile believed to date from the 12th century. Totternhoe clunch, which is believed not to have been used as a building stone before the 12th century, at the Abbey is found in C80 FE, C84 BP and C84 EX (all Phase 2). C81 MES and C82 AP (Phase 3), C82 AS (Phase 4) and C82 AG (Phase 5) all contain substantial quantities of iron, copper-alloy and glass finds. The only anomaly is C80 FE (Phase 2) which also contains more copper alloy and window glass than expected for an early context.

Thus, Phase 1 includes no glazed ware recognised and dated elsewhere, and there are few associated finds. The unglazed wares include pottery usually dated elsewhere to the 11th to 12th century (see Ceramic Groups, section (2) Calcareous wares).

Phase 2 consists mainly of greyware, usually dated to the late 12th, 13th and possibly early 14th centuries, and the associated glazed wares are few in number and mostly unidentified to date. There are few associated finds, with the exception of those from C81 DP, which are consistent with a date in the mid to late 12th century.

Phase 3, with greywares and the appearance of significant quantities of LMHG, contains Kingston-type ware, which was manufactured from

the mid-13th century, but becomes commonest in the London area in the late 13th to early 14th centuries. So far as may be seen with such low numbers of sherds, whitewares in general seem to become commoner than redwares (setting aside LMHG) at this stage. At Northolt Manor the change from the dominance of greyware to Surrey Whitewares was dated to *c.* 1300 on coin evidence. At the Manor of the More, Hurst dated the appearance of Surrey Whitewares to the early 14th century, and their predominance to the late 14th to early 15th century. The cellar occupation at Kings Langley, which has greyware, Oxford-type ware (?LMHG), and Surrey Whiteware, was dated late 14th to the first half of the 15th century. The early manorial ditch at Kings Langley, backfilled by the late 13th to early 14th century, has the earliest Surrey Whiteware and Oxford-type ware. At this date there is also a significant increase in finds associated with the pottery, an increase which continues in Phases 4 and 5. Phase 3 is therefore probably representative of the 14th/early 15th century.

Phase 4, consisting largely of LMHG, has some contexts containing dated wares. For example, some sherds from the Christopher Place cellar backfill have been identified as South Spanish Maiolica (Valencian lustreware) and others as Raeren and Langerwehe stoneware. A date in the 15th century, possibly towards the end, is suggested for Phase 4.

Phase 5. A date in the late 15/early 16th century is suggested for this phase.

The date ranges given below should be regarded as approximate, having an accuracy of ± 25 –50 years.

Phase 1	900–1150
Phase 2	1150–1350
Phase 3	1350–1425
Phase 4	1425–1475
Phase 5	1475–1550

CONCLUSION

The medieval pottery from three excavations in St Albans town centre can be divided into five ceramic phases. Their relative chronology can be demonstrated through stratigraphic relationships, but a scarcity of associated datable finds allows only broad date ranges to be assigned. There is little pottery dating from before the mid 12th century and it is probable that the late Saxon and early Norman settlement was not, as previously assumed, in this area of the town. Its location remains the subject of research by the Verulamium Museum and the Abbey Research Committee. Throughout the period for which there is ceramic evidence, local wares (South Hertfordshire Greyware and Late

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Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware) dominated the market, with a major change from unglazed to glazed wares in the 14th century and an increase in the range of forms, especially tableware. Imported pottery has proved difficult to identify, but appears to come mainly from neighbouring counties.

APPENDIX 1: STRATIGRAPHIC RELATIONSHIPS

D81 Christopher Place

Cut into natural subsoil (but not related to each other):

NNC = Phase 1
AB = Phase 2
HG = Phase 2

D81 sequence (i)

MF = Phase 2
|
MG = Phase 2
|
MH = Phase 2

D81 sequence (ii)

WL (17 sherds; 16thC)
|
WK no pot
|
WQ = Phase 4
|
WY (5 sherds; 13/14thC)
|
WZ (3 sherds; 13/14thC)

The Maltings

C80 sequence (i)

EB no pot
|
EC = Phase 4
|
EA (12 sherds; 13/14thC) EG (2 sherds; 14thC or earlier)

C80 sequence (ii)

FD (FD 2 sherds post-medieval/ FD(3) (5 sherds 13/14thC)
|
FE = Phase 2
|
FR (22 sherds; 13/14thC)

C80 sequence (iii)

CC = Phase 2
|
CP (4 sherds 13/14thC)

C81 sequence (i)

NGP (16 sherds; 13/14thC)

NHH = Phase 1

natural subsoil

C81 sequence (ii)

DP+AF = Phase 1/2

DX (24 sherds; 13/14th C) CE (9 sherds; 13/14th Century)

C81 sequence (iii)

MAB (71 sherds; post-medieval) MAE(2) (4 sherds; post-medieval)

MBN = Phase 2

C81 sequence (iv)

MBA (10 sherds; date uncertain) MDW (13 sherds; 13/15th C)

MES = Phase 3

MEF+MET (38 sherds; 13/14th C)

C81 sequence (v)

NKH (474 sherds; 16/17th C) NKX (86 sherds; post-medieval)

NLB = Phase 4/5

NNA (no pot) NMP (5 sherds; 13/14th C)

C81 sequence (vi)

AHE (13 sherds; 15/16th C)

AHS = Phase 5

AHF (32 sherds; 14/15th C) AHP (3 sherds; 13/14th C)

C81 sequence (vii)

MDM (9 sherds; 13/14th C) MAK (1 sherd; post-medieval) MEK (no pot);

MAH (25 sherds Post-medieval)

MCT (15 sherds 13/14th C)

MCC (2 sherds; 16th C) MCS (1 sherd; 15th C or later)

MBX = ?

MCH (102 sherds; 13/14th C) MEF (22 sherds; 13/14th C)

C82 sequence (i)

AP = Phase 3

BQ (12 sherds; 13/14thC)

C82 sequence (ii)

AT = Phase 3

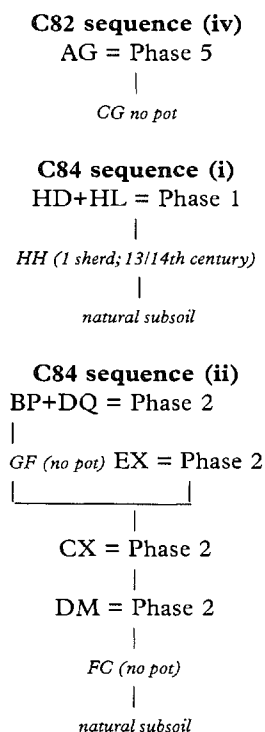
AM (228 sherds; no later than 14th C)

C82 sequence (iii)

AS = Phase 4

BG (10 sherds; 13/14th C) CK (11 sherds; 13/14thC) CM (2 sherds; 13/14thC)

CN no pot



CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED POTTERY
(FIGS. 2-8)

Fig. 2:

1-7 *Calcareous wares*: a selection of the most complete jars from the medieval town (The Maltings).

8-12 *Early medieval gritty and sandy wares*: a selection of the largest sherds from bowls and jars and typical decorated sherds (The Maltings).

13-20 *'Crucible'*: rims from Christopher Place and the Maltings — the most complete examples recovered.

Fig. 3: 21-29 *Glazed Whitewares*

21 D81 NIC: upper part of large ovoid jug with red slip decoration and thin mottled yellow/green glaze over most of surviving portion of vessel. Fine whiteware, unidentified.

22 D78 BQ: complete profile of squat, crudely made jug, with white slip stripes decorating neck/upper body, under a green glaze; lower body has crude knife-trimming, and occasional glaze spots. There are also large glaze splashes on the underside of the base. Fine whiteware, undated.

23 C82 AP: jug in unidentified coarse sandy fabric, with patchy pale greenish-yellow glaze over neck and upper body, apple-green glaze on underside of base. Knife-trimming on lower body; sooting on base/lower body.

24 C81 MBX: rim and base, probably of same jug, with spots of glaze inside the rim and spots and splashes of green glaze externally, including on underside of base, which is poorly finished. Fine whiteware, unidentified, but might be LMHG.

25 C82 AM/AT: partial profile of highly decorated waisted jug with rouletted red slip strips and mottled clear/green glaze. Fine whiteware, unidentified.

26 C81 NLB: upper part of ?baluster jug decorated with horizontal grooving on neck and mottled apple-green glaze externally. Fine whiteware, unidentified.

27 Belmont Hill: upper part of jug in unidentified coarse sandy fabric, with nearly continuous green glaze over most of exterior and interior of neck, and spots of glaze internally. There is a slight dent in one side — possibly a 'second'?

28 D78 DF: bowl with bifid rim (distilling base), identified as possibly Coarse Border ware. Bright yellow glaze with occasional spots of green on base/lower body internally. There is also a run of glaze which has collected under the ledge of the rim suggesting that it was stood upside down while the glaze was still wet. There is a spot of glaze with fragments of a red-firing vessel stuck to it on the external wall. The base has knife-trimmed edges, and very occasional tiny glaze spots on the underside, which is sooted.

29 C81 DN: large sherd from base/lower body of jug/pitcher in an unidentified coarse flint-gritted fabric, decorated with a vertical, thumbled, applied strip and horizontal red-brown slip stripe. External clear/yellowish glaze.

Fig. 4: 30-37 *Glazed Redwares*

30 C80 CC/EL/FE: reconstructed profile of probable tripod pitcher in unidentified coarse sandy fabric. The sagging base has a scar at one point appropriate to the foot of a tripod vessel, but the positions where the other feet would have been are missing. White slip decoration and vertical row of poorly-executed hollow bosses on upper part. External clear/green mottled glaze, heaviest on shoulder and upper body, spots and streaks on rim/neck, spots on underside of base.

31 C81 PAW: jug in unidentified coarse sandy fabric. Highly decorated with applied strips in chevrons on neck, cordon on shoulder, and vertical ribbing formed probably by applied strips below the shoulder, thumbled base. Green, slightly mottled glaze on neck and body, dribbles and patches of glaze on neck and on lower body.

32 C82 AT: upper part of jug in coarse sandy fabric, with white slip and green glaze, possibly Mill Green ware. Poorly finished both inside and outside.

33 D81 HG/KJ/LZ: Complete profile of small rounded jug in coarse sandy fabric, London-type ware, decorated with diagonal white slip lines and notched cordon on neck. Clear glaze over most of exterior, becoming patchy towards the base, and with occasional spots internally especially on the neck.

34 C81 DP: upper part of bottle in unidentified coarse sandy fabric. The wall of this vessel is unusually thick at the shoulder and thin at the lower body. There is a thick green glaze, crazed and bubbled, over the whole external surface and part of the rim, thinning towards the base where a bright orange glaze shows.

35 C81 PR: reconstructed profile of jug in unidentified fine fabric. Horizontal grooved decoration on shoulder, green glaze with purple flecks mainly on upper part, spots of glaze on underside of base.

36 C81 BAK: large sherd from vessel in unidentified coarse sandy fabric, with spots and patches of green glaze with orange edges both internally and externally.

37 D78 DF: unglazed lid with flattened knob, probably Cheam redware.

Fig. 5: 38–42 Glazed redwares

38 The Maltings: upper part of jug in coarse sandy fabric, possibly London-type ware, with a white slip externally and inside rim/neck, under an external mottled green glaze with occasional glaze spots inside rim and neck. Sand grains and clay fragments stuck to glaze give a rough surface over much of the vessel.

39 C84 EX: large sherd from upper part of jug in unidentified coarse sandy fabric with external green/yellow glaze. Highly-decorated with vertical panels in two different colours and textures: (a) plain yellow background with vertical wavy red-brown slip lines; (b) diagonal slip bands with darker green glaze.

40 C80 FE: reconstructed lower profile of jug in unidentified coarse sandy fabric. Thumbing around base, combed decoration and white slip on upper part; a few specks of clear glaze externally.

41 D81 OG/FU/BV: reconstructed lower profile of large jug in unidentified coarse sandy fabric, with external green glaze and occasional glaze specks and patches internally. Horizontal grooved decoration on neck and thumbing around base.

42 Belmont Hill: Unglazed jug with horizontal grooved decoration on shoulder and knife-trimming on lower body. Possibly Bedford Type-series E2.

43–44 Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware

43 C82 AP: upper part of jug with horizontal grooved and combed decoration and mottled green glaze.

44 G82 AA: jug with horizontal grooved decoration and green/brown glaze on shoulder, spots elsewhere, glaze patch on underside of base. Partially burnt.

Fig. 6: 45–48 Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware

45 Belmont Hill: upper and lower parts, probably from the same jug, decorated with cordons and hollow stamped stars. Mottled green glaze externally and on interior of rim.

46 D78 BP/DH/DN: very fragmented, but complete profile of baluster jug. External green glaze mainly on neck/ upper body and occasional spots on lower body and underside of base. Decoration of horizontal grooves on neck, scratched cross near base.

47 C82 AT: unglazed bottle, slight cordon around neck. Poorly finished, lower body knife-trimmed, concave base with toolmarks and irregular dent.

48 C80 EC/AY: jug/cistern (base missing), decorated with stamped 'prunts', pressed against a stamp from behind; also bands of shallow horizontal grooves at intervals over most of external surface. External clear/green mottled glaze, discoloured in places, on the upper body, and also a patch internally beside the lower handle attachment.

Fig. 7: 49–54 Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware

49 C81 AHS: complete jug with horizontal grooved decoration on neck/upper body, green glaze mainly on shoulder, occasional spots on rim and lower body, many spots and streaks on the base. Slightly dented and rim distorted, possibly a 'second'? Burnt.

50 D78 YF: jug with horizontal grooved decoration on shoulder, bib of green glaze, glaze spots on underside of base.

51 D81 CJ/EB: jug with horizontal grooves on shoulder and base of neck. Green glaze mainly on shoulder, some under base.

52 D81 CJ: cistern (rim missing) including thumbing bung-hole. Horizontal grooved decoration on shoulder.

53 Belmont Hill: upper part of probable cistern with edge of handle scar. No surviving bung-hole, but shape similar to Nos. 52 and 54. External mottled green glaze, spots on interior of rim. Bands of horizontal grooved decoration at intervals over most of surviving portion.

54 D81 NCY: reconstructed profile of probable cistern, horizontal grooved decoration on upper body and shoulder, and mottled green glaze externally. No surviving bung-hole, but shape similar to Nos. 52 and 53

Fig. 8: 55–69 Late Medieval Hertfordshire Glazed ware

55 D78 YF: lid-seated jar, sooted externally. Internal green glaze (purple where thin) mainly on base/lower body. Occasional spots of green glaze with orange colour around their edges on rim/exterior.

56 C81 NLK: upper part of lid-seated jar, sooted externally. Mottled green glaze internally and over rim.

57 C81 ADF: jar, no external sooting, but much damage to surfaces especially externally. Horizontal grooved decoration on shoulder. Internal glaze on base/lower body, mottled green and bright yellow. Knife-trimming on external lower body.

58 D81 NC: upper part of pipkin/skillet, sooted externally, with mottled green glaze internally.

59 C82 AP: large bowl with distorted rim, base/lower body neatly knife-trimmed. Internal glaze mainly green with bright yellow streaks in one place, heaviest on base with dribbles towards the rim; also a patch of bright yellow glaze externally and occasional specks on underside of base.

60 C82 AP: large bowl with internal mottled green glaze mainly on base/lower body.

61 D81 CJ/BQ: small bowl with bright mottled green glaze internally, spots on rim.

62 D81 CJ: small bowl with bright mottled green glaze internally.

63 G82 AB: Money-box with horizontal grooves on shoulder and external mottled green glaze. Thick walls, twist marks at the apex. Part of the slit is present.

64 C81 PR: large fragment of dripping dish, sooted externally. Lower part of strap handle with rough channel up centre and thumb-marks at base externally, possibly to help it stand firmly. Thin internal clear/yellow glaze with occasional green areas, and spots externally. Knife-trimmed externally.

65 D81 CI/DY: lid with solid knob handle (flat-topped knob), with cracks internally where knob attached. Patches of mottled green glaze externally, clear spots internally.

66 C82 AG: lid with solid knob handle (flat-topped knob), slight cracking on internal surface where attached. Patchy mottled green glaze externally. Poorly finished with nicks and fragments of clay adhering.

67 D81 NJC: base, possibly of a candlestick, with concentric channel decoration on upper surface, knife trimming around edges, underside of base poorly finished. Glaze on upper surface is partly mottled green and partly solid green with yellow.

68 St Albans, exact provenance uncertain. Three sherds, two of which conjoin, from a large thick-walled vessel with mottled green external glaze. Decorated with three stamps: (a) fleur de lys (b) *Agnus Dei* (c) Long Cross penny replica. There are fingerprints on the internal surface behind the stamps.

69 C81 PAM: large fragment of lobed cup, with green glaze inside and out.

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*Kygngston House, Inkerman Road, St Albans AL1 3BB

MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM ST ALBANS

Résumé

Une grande quantité de céramique, principalement un groupe restreint de manufacture locale, a été recouverte dans la ville médiévale de St. Albans en Angleterre. Il y a une faible quantité de céramique d'origine non-locale, cependant britannique pour la plupart, dont peu identifiées. Par association et en vue de leur endroit stratigraphique, utilisant les locations les plus sensibles a n'avoir été contaminé, ces céramiques sont regroupées en cinq phases allant du 11ème au 16ème siècles, illustrant un développement graduel allant de pâtes sablonneuses, graveleuses et à base de calcaire, passant par les céramiques grises sablonneuses hautement standardisées et non-vernissées, terminant avec des céramiques vernissées, tant locales qu'importées, en particulier venant de la région de Londres et du Surrey.

Zusammenfassung

Eine große Anzahl lokal hergestellter, im Sortiment aber wesentlich beschränkter Töpferwaren konnten aus dem mittelalterlichen St. Albans geborgen werden. Dazu kommen noch einige nicht lokaler, meist jedoch britischer Herkunft, von denen aber nur wenige identifiziert werden konnten. Mit Hilfe von Assoziation, stratigraphischer Anordnung und Verwendung nur solcher Kontexte, die am wahrscheinlichsten originäre Ware enthalten, konnten die Funde in fünf keramische Phasen gruppiert werden, die vom 11. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert reichen. Sie zeigen eine allmähliche Entwicklung von unglasierter, grobkörniger und kalkhaltiger Ware über hoch standardisierte unglasierte, sandige Grauware bis hin zum glasierten Töpfergut, das sowohl lokal hergestellt als auch importiert wurde, im letzteren Fall im wesentlichen aus London und Surrey.

