



Compendiario

An Assemblage of Notes and News



A COMPLETE ANTHROPOMORPHIC/ ZOOMORPHIC JUG FROM ABERDEEN

This jug was found during the excavation of the south side of Castle Street/Castle Terrace, Aberdeen (site code E37) by the Archaeological Unit, Aberdeen City Council (The Art Gallery, Aberdeen, Small Find No. 54). It was broken into many pieces, but appeared to have been deposited complete in a dump of midden material, dating to the 13th–14th centuries. The jug has been fully restored, although a small number of tiny sherds were not recovered. A full site report will appear in a forthcoming monograph in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland series (Cameron in prep.).

FORM AND FABRIC

The jug is wheelmade with a rounded body, long slender neck, thick rod handle and concave base with discrete groups of thumb impressions. The decoration has been divided into three panels (numbered 1, 2 and 3 left to right on Fig. 1; see also Pl. 1). The jug has an upright, collared rim, 9cm in diameter and has a small pinched spout. The handle is grooved along its length, has two sub-circular pads of clay or thumb stops at the top, and two leaf-shaped pads at the bottom (for use of the term 'thumb stop' see Newell 1994, 53). The base has four groups of between five and seven thumb- or finger-impressions at roughly equal intervals. The top three-quarters of the jug has the remains of what was originally, probably, a green lead glaze, which was altered when the jug was burnt after deposition (it was found in a layer with burnt wood and metalwork). The base is unglazed, although glaze has dripped down from the top of the jug and there are drip marks on the base, and a stacking scar on the edge of the base below Panel 2.

There is heavy rilling on the interior of the vessel just above the base, and brush or cloth marks around the exterior, lower, unglazed third of the vessel.

The fabric is medium fine, hard and compact and contains moderate white quartz. It varies in colour from grey (Munsell 5YR 6/1) at the top of the jug to orange (Munsell 2.5YR 6/6) with a grey core towards the base. The fabric has been identified by Jane Young (City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit) as Toynton-type ware, but the vessel form is unlike any excavated from Toynton. Examples similar in form to this long-necked jug have been found in Lincoln Splashed Glaze ware dating to the 13th/14th century (Jane Young pers comm; see McCarthy and Brooks 1988, Fig. 145, No. 805).

No residues were detected from a visual inspection of the inside of the vessel.

DECORATION

The three decorative panels are divided with applied lines which run from the neck to below the belly of the jug. At

the top of these lines, one or two pads have been applied. Within each panel, just below the base of the neck, a face has been applied from the outside of the vessel. Each face is slightly different and has been distorted by heat. The face on Panel 3 consists of a squared forehead, with circular pads of clay attached at the top two corners representing ears. The eyes are applied circles of clay with an impressed dot in the centre. The face has a roughly triangular nose, flattened presumably when it pressed against another vessel during drying or firing. A downturned slit mouth is made with a simple linear incision. Underneath, a beard or hairy chin is represented by an applied line incised with round and oval impressions. The Panel 2 face is very similar to Panel 3 except that the chin and cheeks are made up of small linear incisions. Panel 1 is the narrowest and most poorly preserved and an area under the left ear of the face has been lost. The face is thinner than the other two, and lop-sided. The nose is broader and the beard is an applied line, as in Panel 3, with incised lines similar to but less well executed than Panel 2. The eyes of the Panel 2 face are crudely made, only one having an incision in the centre.

DISCUSSION

Face-mask and Knight jugs in Scarborough-type fabrics are well-known from sites in Aberdeen (e.g. Murray 1982, Ill. 75, No. 126; Ill. 76, Nos. 153–54), whilst local potters are known to have copied this style of decoration (*ibid.*, Ill. 78, No. 191; Fig. 81, No. 283). The type of applied face which appears on this jug is previously unknown in Aberdeen and the author is not aware of any direct parallels.

Decoration of this kind could be categorised as anthropomorphic (e.g. Pearce *et al.* 1985, Fig. 56), but it is clearly different from other published examples, in that the ears are positioned at the top corners of the face, not on the side. Is it possible that this was artistic licence on the part of the potter (or the person who decorated the jug), or might this be a representation of an animal, perhaps a bear? If anyone knows of any parallels for this type of decoration, the author would like to hear from them.

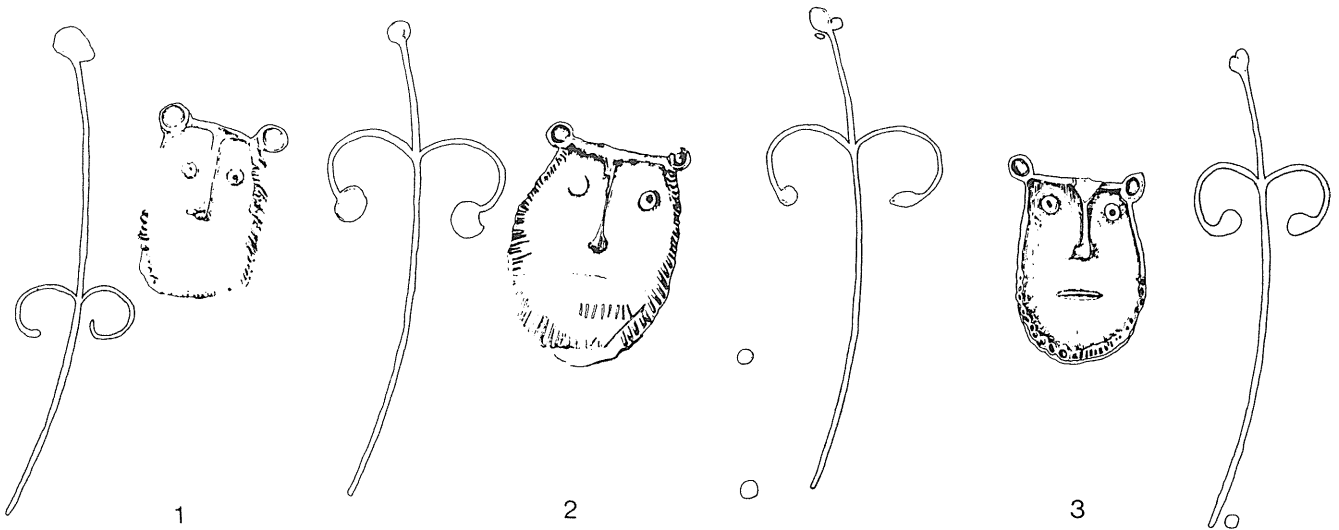
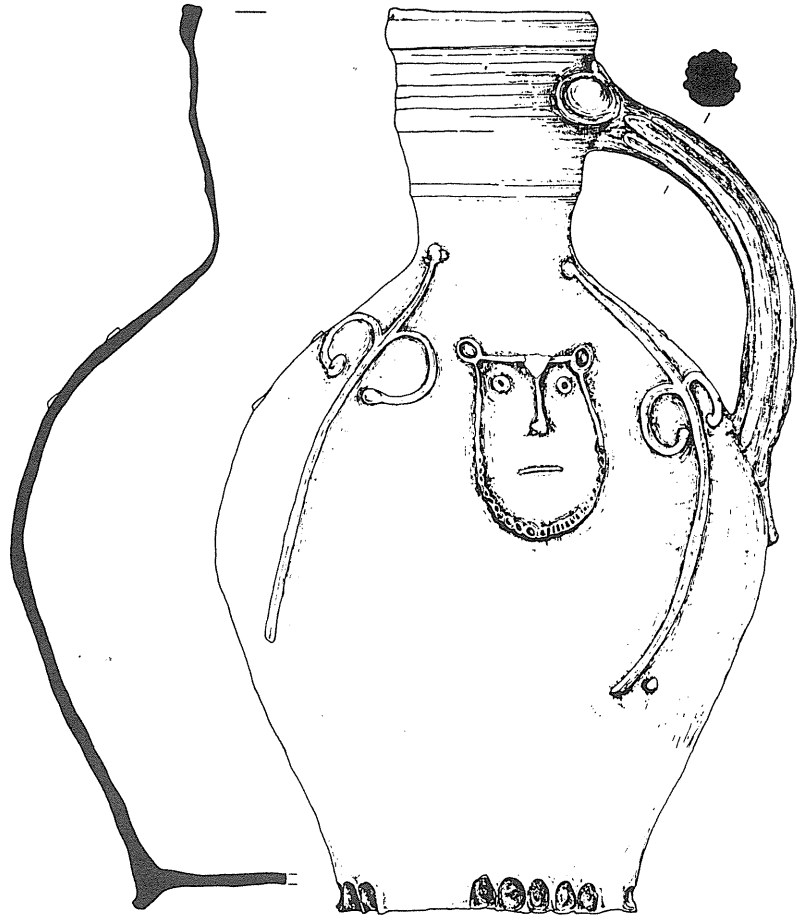
Acknowledgements

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Fig. 1. Anthropomorphic/zoomorphic jug from Aberdeen showing details of the three faces. Scale 1:4.



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Pl. 1. Anthropomorphic/zoomorphic jug from Aberdeen showing the face on Panel 3.

THE DEAN'S DUMP? OR THE MERCHANT OF STAFFORD?

This note takes a peek into the material culture of a well-to-do citizen or cleric and offers thoughts on some fifteenth-century Valencian lustrewares and divers other wares from the garden of a large town-centre property in Stafford.

Staffordshire is a landlocked county in the English Midlands. As might be expected, excavations of medieval sites within Staffordshire, including those deemed to be 'high-status', have produced little in the way of pottery imported from the rest of England, or abroad (Ford 1995, 19), but here we report a finding of fifteenth-century Valencian lustrewares in Stafford.

Excavations at a number of sites in the county town of Stafford between 1975 and 83 and under the directorship of Martin Carver, examined a broad sample of deposits of all dates — Roman, Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval — and produced vast quantities of artefacts. The site and finds recording were excellent, but there is no synthesised, published excavation report. The artefacts and site archives are held at the City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, where one of the authors (DAF) is able to spend some time in research on the post-Conquest medieval pottery. The aim is to establish a dated ceramic sequence, with which other sites from the county may be compared. Stafford was founded as an Aethelflaedan *burh* in AD 913, and was a pottery production centre during this Saxo-Norman period (Ford 1995, 29–31 and 38–40).

One such Carver site is St. Mary's Grove, Stafford (Fig. 1). This small east-west lane lies in the centre of the town, to the north of St. Mary's church (SJ 9212 2327). Tenements nos. 7 and 8, on the north side of the lane, were excavated in 1979–83 under the supervision of Jon and Charlotte Cane. (The main site code is ST29; codes ST18 and ST22 were also used; see Ford 1995, 30. The group museum accession code for artefacts and archive from the site is 1993.K29).

This site was selected above all the others in Stafford for further study because:

- All periods of occupation, from Roman to post-medieval, are represented in well-stratified sequences.
- Throughout these sequences, there are sufficiently large assemblages of pottery (by box: Roman 0.5, Saxo-Norman 5, post-Conquest medieval and late medieval 85, post medieval 45), which are not swamped by the waste from Stafford/ Stafford-type ware production.
- An initial sort of the pottery showed a wide range of types to be present, from cooking pots to tableware, much of it unabraded.
- The late medieval to post-medieval transition period seemed well-represented. Dating the changes, and charting the progress seen in potting technology at the end of the Middle Ages is of particular relevance to Staffordshire, the home of the Potteries, and to other large-scale production sites in the Midlands, such as Ticknall, Derbyshire (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 426 and 428) and Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire (Mayes and Scott 1984, 37, fig. 16).

Within the pottery assemblage from ST29, a small but important group of Valencian lustrewares was identified. There are 17 sherds, comprising 5 vessels:

Catalogue (for a discussion of the contexts see below).

Lugged bowl: (Fig. 2.1; Col.Pl.1 and 2, bottom right). Acc.no.1993.K29.5. Three fragments in good condition, recovered from site ST29 I context 1319 (larger fragment) and ST29 I 1012 G3 (finds plotted by one metre grid square). All-over tin glaze with interior and exterior gold lustre decoration. The interior decorative motifs consist of alternate bands of 'spurs' (*acicates*) and of crossed lines. On the exterior, the motifs are encircled palmettos with dots and five-pointed stars. These pottery motifs are well known from sites outside Spain, such as Corsica (Berti and Tongiorgi 1975, 18–20), Avignon (Carru 1995, 72), Delft (Hurst *et al* 1986, 50–1) and Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975, Vol. II, fig. 205.1302). The motif is usually dated to the second half of the 15th century, because of its association with the depiction of dated shields, such as those of Queen Mary of Castile, wife of Alfonso of Aragon (1416–58) (Ainaud 1952, fig. 94) and the Boil family, lords of Manises (c. 1475; van de Put 1927, plate 9D). Similar bowls were used as ornaments on the walls of the church of St Caterina di Sisco on Corsica and appear to be contemporary with its original construction in c. 1443 (Berti and Tongiorgi 1975). Finally there is the archaeological evidence from sealed contexts at Avignon, where the pottery is dated c.1470 (Carru 1995, 22).

Jug: (Fig. 2.2; Col.Pl. 1, left). Acc.no. 1993.K29.6. Eleven body sherds from five different contexts as follows: seven sherds from ST29 I 1012 (plotted finds from grid squares B1, B2, C3, F2, F4 and F6 (2)), one sherd each from ST29 1315 N3 (plotted), 1372, 1484 and 1486. All-