

can be distinguished. The pottery on this site operated between about 1550 and 1620. The most important finds were wasters and second-quality ware of red- and white-fired clay, generally covered with a lead glaze: these rightly constitute the main part of the book. A few years before this excavation, in 1987, the traces of a round, updraught kiln were found, quite near the site of the 1991 excavation, but it was not possible to excavate. Wasters and sherds of the same material as found at the Wortelsteeg-site were, however, collected.

The pottery was made of a red-firing clay dug locally and, to a lesser degree, of an imported white-firing clay. The products made of the latter clay were, in the opinion of the author, possibly meant to compete with ceramics imported from the German Rhineland. The plates were similar to those produced at the same time in the large pottery-producing centre of Bergen op Zoom. No examples were found of North Holland slipware. The most richly decorated objects were two charming, miniature firecovers. The production, minus the firing, of a frying pan, a dish and a pipkin is reconstructed and photographically documented.

Archaeology, and information from the municipal archives, in particular deeds concerning immovables, made an important contribution to dating and attributing the occupational and industrial traces. The archives showed that the potter was well-to-do and belonged to the society of the town. This was confirmed by the finds of household items from the cesspit, such as kraak-porcelain and expensive glassware.

Finds from this excavation were shown in the municipal museum of Alkmaar in 1992 in the exhibition "Uit de Alkmaarse bodem", accompanied by a publication with the same title.

The book is recommended to all who are interested in post-medieval red- and white-firing lead-glazed pottery from the Netherlands in considering this pottery as the source of their own material. The description of the wasters and the second-quality ware in the catalogue offers an important resource.

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**Leiker á Íslandi. Pottery found in excavations in Iceland.** Guðrún Sveinbjarnardóttir. Rit Hins íslenska fornleifafélags og Þjóðminjasafns Íslands, Reykjavík, 1996. ISBN 9979-54-134-2. No Price.

It is now over a decade since John Hurst and colleagues (1986) published the first survey of medieval and later pottery traded in North-West Europe, with a special focus on the cross-Channel region. The extent and complexity of the North Sea pottery market has recently been exposed by Ian Reed in a detailed study of the Trondheim sequence (1990). Current work by the writer and others in South Scandinavia, Germany, Poland and the Baltic States confirms the scale and intensity of the neighbouring Baltic ceramic trade between the 13th and 17th centuries. This new survey by the London-based Icelandic archaeologist, Guðrún Sveinbjarnardóttir, extends our knowledge of the long-distance pottery trade of the late Middle Ages and early modern period into the as yet uncharted waters of the North Atlantic, and reveals much about the close commercial and cultural links between Iceland and the

Nordic countries and regions along the North-West European littoral.

This survey includes all pottery of medieval to early modern date found in excavations in Iceland up to the end of 1991, and stored in the National Museum and in the Árbær Museum in Reykjavík. The principal aim of this project was to establish a fully comprehensive type-series of ceramics imported into Iceland during this period — the (relatively young) geology of the island being unsuitable for native pottery manufacture — and to investigate the geographical and social distribution of the wares. This handbook of ceramics found in Iceland, including quantified data from each site, is prefaced by a discussion of methodology and data collection, and concludes with a series of discussions on inter-site variability and the ceramic evidence for Iceland's import trade during the medieval to later period. The appendices at the rear include the results of neutron activation analysis on the elusive sources of North German/South Scandinavian redware (a contribution by Dr. Michael Hughes of the British Museum, Department of Scientific Research). The book is attractively produced with high quality photographs and line-drawings of key types. In all there are eight pages of colour, but most importantly, the volume is divided into two halves, the first in Icelandic, the second in English. The bilingual approach is essential if the results of this research are to be disseminated internationally, and fellow pottery researchers in Scandinavia, Germany and the Low Countries would do well to follow this model.

A cursory glance at the information presented here is enough to gain an impression of the diversity, intensity and longevity of the Icelandic pottery market during the medieval to later period. From the 14th to 19th centuries the island imported a wide range of household ceramics from northern Europe and beyond, from Grimston and Scarborough ware at the beginning of the sequence to North German stoneware pharmaceutical bottles and English creamware at the end. As a regional type-series it bears close comparison to the Nordic and Baltic ceramic profiles of the late medieval to early modern periods. This relationship illustrates the close commercial and cultural ties which bound Iceland to Scandinavia and the Continental littoral at this time. Indeed, the close correspondence of ceramics excavated in Iceland and Denmark emphasises the colonial nature of Icelandic material culture during the pre-industrial period. The ceramics are the clearest evidence for the adoption of 'Hanseatic' lifestyles in Iceland during the period when German merchants dominated North Sea trade. The pottery markets of both Iceland and the Continental coastal regions can be characterised, for instance, by the wide distribution of the same fineware imports from Germany, the use of similar redware kitchen products and the introduction of ceramic tile-stoves for interior heating.

A number of individual categories of North Sea trade ceramics immediately catch the eye, particularly as they significantly extend the known distribution of these wares. In addition to the full spectrum of Rhenish stoneware the author has identified a substantial assemblage of Lower Saxony and North Hesse stoneware (section 4.4.7). These wares did not penetrate the stranglehold of Rhenish stoneware on the mainland British market but seem to have enjoyed some popularity in the North Atlantic where the Northern Isles off Scotland have also produced notable groups. Of principal importance, however, is the sherd of late medieval Saxon stoneware with rouletted chequer-board decoration found at the Bergþórshvoll farm-site (section 4.4.6). This ware, known most commonly as the 'Falke Group' after Otto von Falke's original 1907

attribution to Dreihäuser in Hesse, was probably the most technologically advanced stoneware to be produced in late medieval Europe. It comprised a range of ornate drinking vessels with complex geometric rouletted and elaborate plastic ornament which were often mounted in silver-gilt or occasionally applied with gold foil. This find extends the northern distribution of the ware which includes Stockholm, Kalmar, Uppsala, Copenhagen and Lund. To the West finds have been made in Bruges, while Colchester produced the only fragment found on British soil. Despite the fact that none of this ware has been excavated in Waldenburg — the principal manufacturing source in the region — (the reference to Stephan 1983 is a little out-of-date here) a Saxon origin remains a strong possibility as most finds cluster in this region and the areas east of the Elbe.

Stove-tiles form another litmus test of Continental culture on the island during the 15th to 16th centuries. Originating in central Europe during the High Middle Ages, the fashion for smokeless interior ceramic stoves rapidly spread to Scandinavia by the late 15th century. Copenhagen, Stockholm and Lübeck have all produced moulds of this date, confirming the extent to which this advanced heating technology and fashion item had penetrated Scandinavian and Baltic society prior to the Renaissance. During the 16th century Lund in Scania (South Sweden), along with the island of Zealand across the Oresund, channel became a centre of stove-tile production. This South Scandinavian/ South Baltic region may well have supplied the 16th-century stove-tiles found in Iceland (section 4.7, incorrectly numbered as 3.7) as moulds and wasters with the same designs have been excavated in Lund, Lübeck, Wismar and Stackhaven (Zealand).

Minor irritants detract only marginally from an otherwise impressively organised and well presented publication. On a number of occasions the author could have been more precise about geography ('Southern Saxony' should really be Lower Saxony in section 4.4.8. The former is part of the modern state of Saxony in eastern as opposed to northern Germany). I also feel that comparative

references in the type-series might have been more complete, with figure and page numbers to distinguish between individual wares. However, overall, I cannot help but feel that this publication marks a milestone in the study of commercial and cultural exchange in northern Europe. At a stroke the ceramic evidence transforms our rather outdated view of the North Atlantic during the medieval and later period as a peripheral zone, isolated from European developments, to one of a more cosmopolitan society - both in trading centres and rural farms - which was familiar with contemporary dining habits, kitchen practices, heating technology and lifestyles being practiced on the Continent and in Scandinavia. I look forward to further refinement of this work, particularly on the microscale, and the publication of comparable regional studies in other parts of Scandinavia and the Baltic. This is surely the best and most efficient approach to kick-starting a sustainable interest in pottery studies in areas where little work has thus far been attempted. Guðrún Sveinbjarnardóttir deserves our sincerest congratulations for having the initial vision to address such a major void in Icelandic archaeology and for completing this pioneering work in such a short time (five years) — and all the more so as she has come fresh to the subject from a non-related archaeological specialism.

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