

Historically visible but archaeologically invisible? – the Huguenots in 17th-century Spitalfields

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SUMMARY

Throughout all periods, the historical, archaeological and anthropological study of the material culture of distinctive ethnic groups has always been a topic of much research and debate. The emigration of Europeans (through colonialism) and Africans (by slavery) during the post-medieval period, notably to America and the Caribbean, has been widely studied. As a result, little comment has been made on those immigrant communities settling into Britain and their impact on the archaeological record. However, the recent excavations, on part of the post-medieval suburb of Spitalfields in East London, have given the opportunity partly to redress the balance by allowing the study of the pottery from an area settled by the Huguenots (Protestant refugees from France and the Low Countries).

INTRODUCTION

Historical records show that the Huguenots gradually settled in England throughout the 17th century, with immigration reaching a peak after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in October 1685 ended the religious tolerance of Protestants in France. It is estimated that this event displaced 40,000 to 50,000 Huguenots (Gywnn 1998). The first report of the French Committee founded in 1687 to oversee the distribution of funds raised by a nationwide collection, estimated that 13,050 Huguenots settled in London, with their communities centred on Spitalfields and Soho; the new inhabitants became the driving force behind the establishment of the silk weaving industry in this country (Molleson and Cox *et al.* 1993, 114). The extensive excavations undertaken since 1998 by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS), just to the north and the west of Spitalfields market (sitecode SRP98) affords important opportunities to undertake an integrated study of the material culture represented by waste discarded in a post-medieval London suburb, and examine the impact of the Huguenots on the assemblage found. The excavations between 1982 and 1991 around Norton Folgate and Spital Square, focusing mainly on the medieval Priory and hospital (Thomas, Sloane and Philpotts 1997), are not discussed (see Fig. 1).

This paper is divided into two parts. The first considers the use of French pottery in post-medieval London. The second part draws on the historical and economic evidence to examine the context of Huguenot material culture during the height of their emigration within the wider debate surrounding the study of cultural identities in England during the (medieval and) post-medieval period.

THE POTTERY ASSEMBLAGE FROM SPITALFIELDS

The post-medieval pottery is purely domestic in its composition and reflects attributes of everyday life, from the plain earth-toned London-made redware and Surrey/Hampshire Border vessels to decorated tin-glazed ware and Chinese porcelain dinner service sets. Viewed as a whole, the Spitalfields assemblage may be seen as representative of the range of pottery in widespread, everyday use in London during the 17th and 18th centuries. Most of the pottery was found in sealed deposits, such as the cesspits that served tenements in the Old Artillery Ground to the west of the present market, or from those that served properties on the St John and Tillard estates on the south-east side of Spital Square, and the Wheler and Wilke estates to the north, on Lamb Street (for full details see Sheppard 1957).

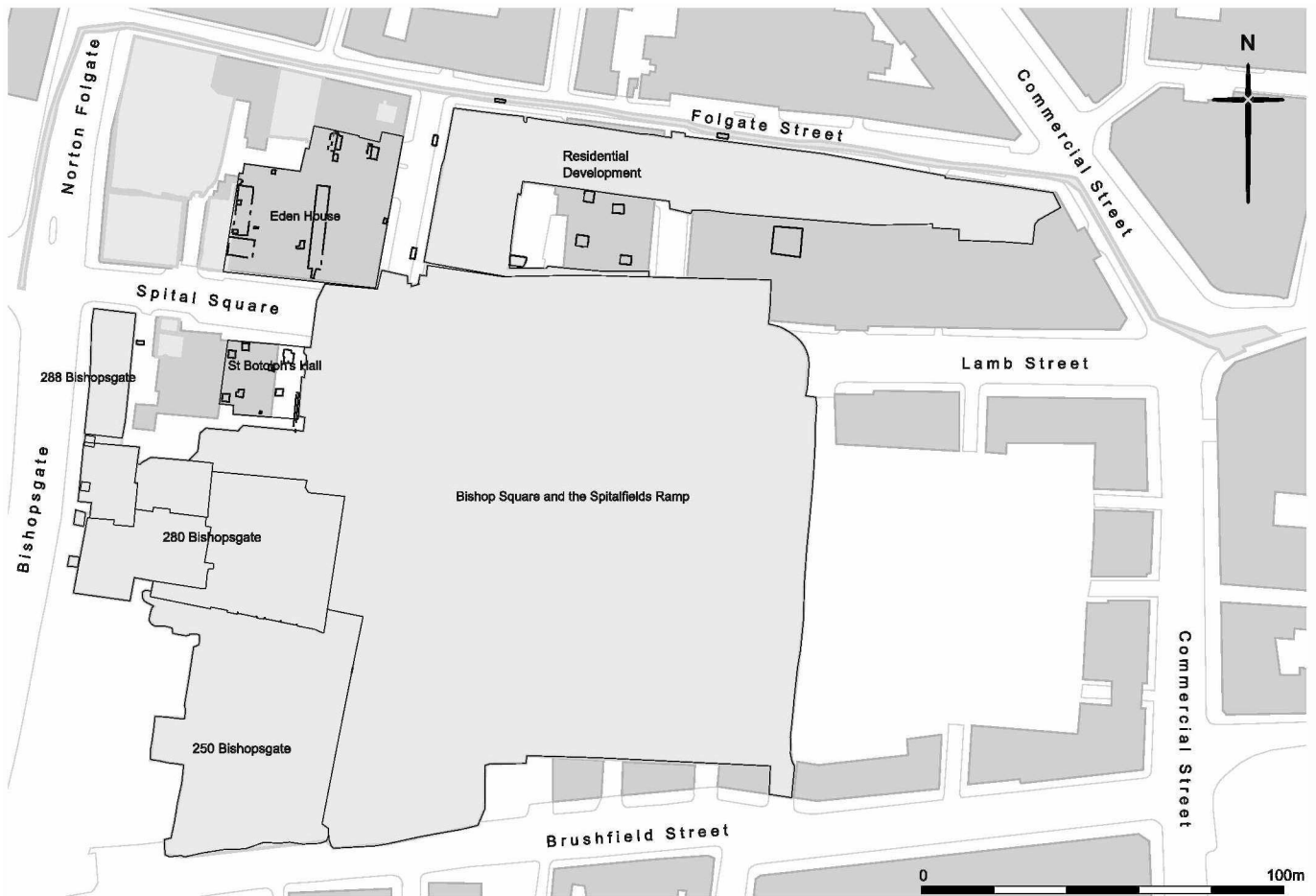


Fig. 1 Site location plan

The 16th and 17th-century French-made products include green and yellow-glazed pottery made near Beauvais, in western France, Saintonge wares from production centres in south-western France, and Martincamp-type stoneware costrels made in Normandy. Vessels worthy of note consist of a Beauvais chafing dish with anthropomorphic decoration, and a small medallion jug (see Hurst, *et al.* 1986, 106-108, figs 49: 152 and figs 50: 157), with a few Martincamp costrels and flasks (*ibid.*, 103, figs 47: 142-143). However, from a total post-medieval assemblage of over 25,000 sherds, only 79 were identified as French products (less than 0.3% of the total sherd count). Even when found from within the closely dated pit groups that could be specifically linked to one property, French pottery did not occur in sufficient quantities that might indicate a Huguenot household. Examination of the other finds has identified only a few distinctly French-made and prepared artefacts; the only material evidence for the area's connection to the silk weaving industry was the blade from tailing shears (Thomas, Sloane and Philpotts 1998, 168) and a stamped bobbin (C. Thomas, pers. comm.). The current phase yielded just the one silk cloth seal (G. Egan, pers. comm.). So why, despite the presence of a large immigrant French population, is there so little evidence for French pottery, and why is their identity not reflected through artefacts used, or more appropriately, discarded?

Comparisons: two domestic assemblages from London

In medieval and post-medieval studies in England, imported pottery has often been used or discussed as a tool in identifying immigrant communities (Atkin, Carter and Evans 1985; Blackmore 1994; Brown 1997a and 1997b; Pearce 1998). Since Spitalfields yielded such a limited range and quantity of French pottery, it is important to compare this assemblage with contemporaneous groups from other sites that are not associated with immigrant communities, and to establish whether there are any significant differences in the amount of French, or any other imported pottery, found. Two sites on the north bank of the Thames are considered here, the Royal Mint (sitecode MIN86), near Tower Hill, and Aldgate High Street (sitecode AL74).

The Royal Mint site is located to the north-east of the Tower of London and just north of St Katherine's Dock. It was chosen for this study because it yielded a varied range of imported post-medieval pottery in London and because it was recovered from an area just north of the docks. The site functioned as a naval victualling yard from the early eighteenth century with a series of Managers quarters and Coopers' shops occupying the site, together with stables, a pickle shed, a cutting house and a new slaughter house

(Grainger, Falcini and Phillpotts in prep.). For the period between 1680 and 1785, excavation yielded a large group of imported wares of which 49 out of 668 sherds were identified as French, mostly from Beauvais (Blackmore in prep.). French pottery therefore accounts for 7.3% of the total imported sherd count and 1.27 EVES for this phase. A study (by using sherd count and ENV) of the chronological and geographical distribution of imported post-medieval pottery found in London and its immediate environs has demonstrated that the amount of French pottery found during this period is limited, with its importation peaking between 1550 and 1600 (Jeffries in prep.). French pottery however makes up just 2.4% of the total sherd count of all imported pottery found on London sites between 1650 and 1700 and only 0.7% between 1700 and 1750. Unfortunately, as there is no sherd count available for the domestic pottery found from the Royal Mint; it is therefore impossible to reflect what % the total imported pottery is within as a total of the overall assemblage.

Aldgate High Street was part of an extra-mural suburb developed at the same time as the expansion of Spitalfields during the 1670s (Thompson, Grew and Schofield 1984). The site is located between Spitalfields to the north, and the Royal Mint to the south. It was predominantly inhabited by English lower class artisans (Grew *ibid.*, 33) and allows comparison to be made with pottery used by English and French artisans of a similar class. The pottery from Aldgate was recorded in detail, using statistically viable groups recovered from cesspits (Orton and Pearce *ibid.*, 61-62), but once again there are difficulties in using this assemblage. All 'imported' wares have been grouped together and not only include foreign imports, but also Staffordshire wares and 'other redwares'. It is hoped, however, that by focusing on the four groups deposited between 1650 and 1700, this should preclude the influence of the later 18th-century Staffordshire-type wares and include relatively few combed slipwares and mottled wares. The dating of these groups also corresponds with the main influx of Huguenots into Spitalfields. Stonewares at Aldgate were also grouped together for the statistical presentations, but products of the English stoneware industries were found only in minor quantities; the remainder are derived from the Rhenish industries (*ibid.*, 61). The quantities of Continental and other non-British pottery found in these four groups are shown in Table 1.

A number of trends become apparent when comparing the Royal Mint and Aldgate with Spitalfields. A total of 7.6% of the total post-medieval sherd count from Spitalfields came from imported sources, with just over half consisting of German stonewares, a common find in contemporaneous British ceramic assemblages and used across the social spectrum. Aldgate High Street reflects a slightly different pattern of imported pottery use for the period between 1650 and 1700, with the overall proportions of imported pottery from the chosen groups between 5% and 10% of the sherd count. In common with Spitalfields, around half this total consists of German stoneware. The same pattern is reflected

Table 1 Relative proportions of imported pottery and stoneware from dated assemblage from Aldgate High Street (AL74; after Orton and Pearce 1984, Fig 30, 62)

Statistically reliable groups	Cesspit (1650-1675)	Other (1650-1675)	Well (1660-1680)	Cesspit (1670-1700)
Imported wares	10%	5%	5%	5%
Stoneware	1%	5%	6%	11%

in the Royal Mint assemblage, where approximately 75% of the material from period C2 comprises German stoneware (Blackmore in Grainger, Falcini and Phillpotts, in prep.). However, the French pottery from just one phase of the Royal Mint almost exceeds the sherd count of French pottery found from all phases at Spitalfields. No French products were found in the selected groups from Aldgate High Street, although a small quantity of Beauvais slipware came from contexts dating between 1500 and 1625.

The Royal Mint assemblage is derived from what can be considered as an industrial docklands area whereas Aldgate High Street and Spitalfields functioned mainly as manufacturing suburbs. However, it is worth noting the Spitalfields excavation did include areas inhabited by wealthier merchants, as opposed to the main concentration of weavers, who probably lived further to the east. Neither Aldgate High Street nor the Royal Mint has a history of immigrant settlement, and the pottery found on these sites is probably representative of what the artisan class were using at the time. The majority of imports in London are therefore more likely to be found on sites in the developing dockyards to the east of the City, where the Spanish, Italian and German wares found are either imported or presumably brought back by sailors and merchants living in the area (Blackmore 1994, 30). The excavations at the Elizabethan/Stuart dockyards at Victoria Wharf, Limehouse E14 (sitecode VIT96), support this interpretation. This site yielded a substantial quantity of imported pottery (23% of the total sherd count) and other finds drawn from all over the world, with the greater portion of imported wares derived from Spain and the Rhineland (Stephenson 2001).

Comparison of the assemblages described above appears to demonstrate a pattern of pottery use during the 17th century; the quantity and range of imported wares is greater on dockland sites, the amount of French pottery found inland is negligible, and the most frequently found imports across all sites are Rhenish stonewares. No ethnic justification for this is required. The pattern is similar to the distribution of imported pottery in medieval London (Blackmore 1994, 40). More comparative work on a sample of both waterfront and hinterland sites is, however, needed to confirm this interpretation. Four sites are not a large enough sample. The differences in pottery use between sites on the north bank of the River Thames and those in Southwark also need to be considered.

Comparisons: Individual vessels of interest from Spitalfields and London

There are individual vessels of interest (not all imported) that have significance for the study of immigrant groups in London. One of the most unusual examples of excavated French pottery from London is the pedestaled, tin-glazed ware of faience, strainer deposited in a well at Spelman Street, E1 (SPE95), alongside other pottery dated between 1740 and 1760. The vessel (see Fig. 2) is thought to have been made in Lille in north-east France (Jean Rosen, pers. comm. to R Stephenson) and is notable both for its decoration and in the location of the site itself. The decoration shows a Cardinal's hat with tassel surmounting a shield, which has been identified as the coat of arms serving the diocese of the Bishop of Tournai. The town (now in Belgium) captured in 1667 by Louis XIV who subsequently imposed a series of French bishops until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 (www.newadvent.org/cathen/14798a.htm). The function of the vessel is quite specialised – examples of English tin-glazed wares in this form are very rare – and so it is likely to have been well looked after. However, Spelman Street is just east of Brick Lane and therefore within the Spitalfields area. The question arises of how this vessel, with all its Catholic symbolism, was acquired and used within an area associated with the settlement of Protestant French refugees.



Fig. 2 French tin-glazed ware vessel decorated with 'Cardinals Hat'

Another vessel (see Fig. 3) of note is a London made tin-glazed plate found during the most recent phase of excavation at Spitalfields (SRP98); the contrast between the symbolism of its decoration and that of the Spelman Street strainer could not be greater. The decoration depicts an episode of the 'Popish plot' of 1678 by Titus Oates, who swore to a magistrate that he knew of a Papist plot to assassinate Charles



Fig. 3 London made tin-glazed ware decorated with 'Popish plot' scene

II and establish a Catholic ministry. This imagery is often found on tin-glazed tiles of the period, with the decorators taking their inspiration from a set of playing cards produced in 1679 (Britton 1986, 176). This is the first example of this decoration on tin-glazed ware from London (R Stephenson, pers. comm.). The plot was a hoax, but it caused near-hysteria in England, leading to the arrest, trial and execution of many leading Catholics, such as the underlying fear of Popery.

The third vessel (see Fig. 4) discussed here was also recovered during the most recent phase of excavations at Spitalfields (SRP98). The substantial remains of a tin-glazed ware charger are decorated with the double royal portrait of William and Mary (who reigned together between 1689 and 1694), and although tin-glazed wares bearing royal portraits are not particularly unusual, this vessel stands out from the composition and date of the other pottery retrieved from this feature. An aspect of early 19th-century Spitalfields is the large-scale clearance of substantially complete pottery and other household objects discarded in cesspits during the second decade of the century. The charger came from one of these clearances, and was therefore over 100 years old when discarded, so could be an heirloom, well looked after and



Fig. 4 London made tin-glazed ware with William and Mary portrait

handed down through successive generations in honour of the philanthropy and royal support that William and Mary showed to the Huguenots. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, William and Mary were responsible for the setting up of a 'Royal Bounty', offering gifts of money out of their own Royal revenues towards the resettlement of the Huguenots, and the Bounty was not removed from the Civil List until 1804 (Gwynn 1985, 58). A measure of Huguenot loyalty to the crown is highlighted in the functioning of the *Societe des Enfants Des Nimes*, the first French Friendly Society established in London in 1683. Its inaugural rules stipulated that the prosperity of the City of London, as well as the royal family, was to be toasted at its annual feast (Gwynn 1998, 50-51).

The final vessel discussed here was the English delftware plate an inscription in Hebrew characters found in a cesspit at 12-14 Mitre Street in the City of London, alongside a large quantity of decorative tablewares, kitchen and sanitary wares dating to the 1740s (sitecode MIR84; see Pearce 1998, 95-112). The inscription on this remarkable and unique vessel read *chalav* (milk), and it would have formed part of a set used for the separate serving of meat and dairy observed by orthodox Jews. The north-east part of the City was settled by Sephardi and Ashkenasi Jews from the late 17th century onwards (*ibid.*, 105-107). The 'excavation' where this unique plate was recovered from was, however, a watching brief and thus it was not possible to collect environmental samples and thereby examine diet more closely.

CASE STUDIES: NORWICH AND CANTERBURY

The evidence from London suggests that greater quantities of imported pottery are likely to be found on dockland sites and that their occurrence is not associated with immigrant settlement. It is also necessary to consider whether Huguenot influence can be detected in pottery assemblages from other English cities. Norwich and Canterbury were chosen for study, as like London, both were associated with European immigrant settlement during the early post-medieval period (Gwynn 1985).

Canterbury

During 1988, an excavation in the grounds of St Gregory's Priory, Northgate uncovered a number of waster and kiln furniture dumps, evidence of a kiln operating nearby. This finally linked what is termed 'Canterbury slipware' to a production centre within the town itself (Cotter 1994, 12-13). Yet, the slip-trailed decoration applied to these utilitarian and mundane red earthenwares was found to be directly copying Flemish styles. Cotter's enquiries drew him two possible conclusions – that the evidence is indicative of an English potter copying Continental styles, or that an immigrant potter was working in Canterbury. Consultation

of historical documents showed that in 1709 a Peter Hibou or Hibon, recorded as a potter of Northgate, married one Jane Fremoult. The Overseers Accounts for the Parish of Holy Cross, Westgate, for the period between 1698 and 1707, also refer to the payment of 'the French potter' (*ibid.*, 15). This suggests that Peter Hibou, possibly a Huguenot immigrant or at least of Huguenot descent, may have been responsible for the production of Canterbury slipware, although more research is needed to confirm this (J Cotter, pers. comm.).

Norwich

Norwich reveals another example of probable immigrant pottery use. The excavations on sites at Botolph Street and Alms Lane, amongst others, revealed a number of cesspits and pits with an unusually high proportion of Low Countries pottery, while the tax records reveal that 'strangers' had settled the areas in question (Atkin *et al.* 1985). This term was commonly used in contemporary records to describe refugees who had settled in England to escape religious persecution, and in this instance applies to the Walloons, Protestants from the southern Low Countries (now Belgium and northern France), who had been forced to flee during the 1560s and 1570s. It is estimated that these refugees made up a third of the population of Norwich by the 1570s (Gwynn 1985, 28). Although Low Countries pottery is recovered on other sites in Norwich, the quantities found in these areas were far greater, and the pots were therefore interpreted as the property of immigrant families who had moved directly into the area from the Continent (Atkin, *et al.* 1985, 201). Accepting this interpretation therefore suggests that these people either managed to bring over their pottery when they fled, or, more likely, they were able to specifically stock up on vessels that they had been when they settled in Norwich.

DISCUSSION

The evidence can be interpreted in many different ways, but although the Walloons of Norwich were using imported pottery, and the French potter in Canterbury was producing Flemish-style earthenwares, the Huguenots of London were not acquiring pottery from their homeland. It has been suggested that the importation of Dutch and Rhenish pottery was ethnically motivated and controlled (Gaimster 1999, 216), and the vast quantities of Low Countries pottery found from excavations in Norwich support this. Moreover, a consortium of London-based Dutch traders monopolised the trade in Rhenish stonewares 'or vessels of English taste' into London between 1660 and 1665 (Gaimster 1997, 82-83). It is possible that the use of Low Countries pottery by the Walloons reflects their desire to use particular forms for cooking that were not yet made by local potters. This is reflected by a letter from

Claus Van Werveken, who in writing to his wife in Antwerp in 1567, requested that she ‘bring a dough trough, for there are none here... Buy two little wooden dishes to make up half pounds of butter: for all the Netherlanders and the Flemings make their own’ (Atkin *et al.* 1985, 201). Although he refers to wooden objects this suggests that even some wooden forms could not be acquired in local markets. Peter Hibou may have started producing distinctive slipwares in Canterbury to serve a demand created by the settlement of the Huguenots. The pottery was made in a decorative style to which he was accustomed, and which would have been one visible way of maintaining tradition in domestic life; these were cheaply made vessels used in mundane, everyday activities such as cooking and food preparation. In addition, depressions in cross-channel trade (see below) may have spurred the Huguenot potter in Canterbury to start producing Flemish-style slipwares shortly after many Huguenots had settled in the city and were looking to restock their households (although his motives could have been equally economic). The evidence from Norwich and Canterbury demonstrate the use of utilitarian pottery with which an immigrant would have been familiar. The occurrence of these groups of imported pottery is unlikely to be a sign of status, as newly arrived immigrants were often amongst the poorest members of society. However, a note of caution should be sounded since Norwich was one of England’s major trading centres during this period, with the Netherlands and Low Countries serving its principal source of supply, so the occurrence of such wares would not be unusual.

More research is needed on the distribution of imported pottery during the post-medieval period and the relationship between London and its hinterland. Studies of this kind have been applied to imported medieval pottery from Southampton, Winchester (see Brown 1997a and 1997b), and Wessex as a whole (Gutierrez 1997), and the results are telling. Comparison between contemporaneous pottery assemblages (by sherd count) from Winchester and Southampton showed the tenement plot occupied by one of Winchester’s most influential citizens, John de Tytynge, yielded only 0.4% imported wares (Brown 1997a, 101), whereas the assemblage from Bull Hall in Southampton belonging to a merchant of a similar class contained nearly 30% imports (Brown 1997b, 91). Brown interpreted the differences as a reflection of Southampton’s status as a port; imported pottery could be seen in the context of being ‘local’ and by living in a port the inhabitants had a wider choice of wares to purchase (*ibid.*, 108). This afforded the merchant at Bull Hall the opportunity to acquire and use greater quantities of imported pottery than his counterpart of a similar class living in Winchester.

Background: Economy and society in late 17th century England

The comparative lack of French and other imports on non-dockland sites in the capital (with the notable exception of German pottery) during the 17th century requires

explanation and appears to be related to economic, cultural, function and taste. One important reason why imported pottery is not found in any large quantities at Spitalfields and other London sites mentioned may be due to the difficulty in acquiring them from their source. The effects of the powerful Cromwellian Navigation Acts of 1651, their subsequent refinement by Charles II in 1660 and three Anglo-Dutch wars between 1652 and 1674 severely limited Channel and North Sea trade during the time of Huguenot settlement in Spitalfields. Shortly after 1685, augmentation duties of 25% were imposed by Parliament on all French commodities including wines and spirits so that it could raise revenues to aid the resettlement of the Huguenots (Smith 1974, 23). In addition, England was involved in two lengthy wars with France between 1689 and 1713, during which trade was suspended between the two countries. A celebrated case of the 1690s led to the refugee Etienne Seignoret and many others being impeached, convicted and fined by Parliament for the illegal trading of silk with France during wartime (Gwynn 1998, 36). The extent of smuggling can perhaps be judged by the number of convictions obtained, and the case shows how willing some Huguenots were to trade with France after it had expelled them. Lastly, after petitioning by London tin-glazed potters, a Royal Proclamation was passed in July 1672 prohibiting the imports of ‘painted earthenware’ (or tin-glazed ware: Kilburn 1999, 134). This may account for the scarcity of French faience in London assemblages (fewer than ten sherds recovered since 1995). During the 1750s, the Society of Anti-Gallicans, a group of merchants and gentleman who championed British goods over French competition, serve as an additional reminder that the struggle with France was also economic.

The second factor could lie in the overriding emotional force of the time: the inherent fear of Popery. The French were seen not only as traditional enemies but also as the representative of extreme Catholicism and this manifested itself in anti-French feeling in England at the time, as poignantly reflected by William Hogarth and other 18th century satirists. However, while the English ‘middling sort’ and aristocracy considered French taste and fashion universally supreme, they also perceived France as a ‘vortex of Popish evil’ (Swindlehurst 2001, 368). The Palissy-type tazza found in a stone-lined well in Blackfriars is representative of fashionable and ‘high-status’ French pottery (Blackmore 1992, 371-379) but is so far unique. The overall occurrence of French ceramics in most post-medieval assemblages from London is very small, a phenomenon observed in contemporary assemblages from Exeter and the south-west (Allan 1981, 111 and Allan 1994) and Canterbury (J Cotter, pers. comm.). Most of the French pottery found in London during the late medieval period where from production centres around Saintonge, with its potters exploiting established trade links by exporting their wares alongside wine shipments. By the 17th century the market for the products of Saintonge industry had

diminished and Martincamp-type stoneware costrels represent the most common type of French pottery found in London. The popularity of Martincamp-type ware during the 16th and 17th centuries can be explained by their durability and function (costrels are not made in English stoneware production).

The relative scarcity of French imports in post-medieval London could also be due in part to the beginning of what has been termed the English 'Ceramic Revolution' around 1650 (Barker 1999, 271), with the strength of the English ceramic market determining choices in the purchasing of pottery. During the last quarter of the 17th century, the noted political factors, together with the beginning of the English bottle glass industry and production of John Dwight's Fulham stoneware, puts pay to the importation of Frechen stoneware. During the later 17th century Chinese porcelain and English tin-glazed wares had the monopoly on quality table and display wares; French pottery does not seem to have figured at all. The equation of French goods with taste and fashion does not seem to apply to French-made ceramics.

These factors must have had an effect on French ceramic exports to England, however minor the market may have been. London was a major port with an international catchment serving a burgeoning Empire, and it seems inconceivable that if French-made goods were freely available, that they were not brought and discarded, and thereby represented in the archaeological record. Conversely, excavations undertaken on 17th and 18th-century French colonial sites in Louisiana in the United States revealed that directly traded French-made pottery and faience was frequently found on many sites (www.southalabama.edu/archaeology).

HUGUENOT IDENTITY IN THE HISTORICAL RECORD

The second part of this paper applies these observations to the Huguenots of Spitalfields and considers the impact this may have had on 'the tortured phenomenological world of the artefact in its context' (Johnson 1999, 17). It is the historian who provides the lead for the study of the Huguenots and their identity in post-medieval England and the volume of work published in the proceedings of the Huguenot Society is testament to this. The Huguenots of Spitalfields formed a discrete community and initially operated in isolation; they were effectively ostracised from French society some decades before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and those who settled in London faced a similar kind of isolation, based on culture and language rather than religious preference (Swindlehurst 2001, 169). Assimilation appeared to be slow; it is recorded that French was the language still spoken among the Huguenots some 60 to 70 years after their ancestors had left France, and in many of the streets of Spitalfields the Huguenot community was so

numerous it was impossible to hear English spoken (Waller 2000, 271). Evidence from the nearby Christ Church crypt showed that 41.6% of the total named sample had French-sounding surnames (Molleson and Cox *et al.* 1993, 94). Manchee observed that French influence was still prevalent in Spitalfields during the second decade of the last century (Manchee 1912–14, 339–342). The Huguenots founded their own schools and churches (nine in Spitalfields alone by 1700), and were seen by many as upholding their traditions in an apparently honourable way. The editor of Stow's Survey of London found that the Huguenots had '*found quiet and security, and settled themselves in their several trades and occupations; weavers especially...and this benefits also to the neighbourhood, that these strangers may serve for patterns of thrift, honesty, and sobriety as well*' (www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/5399/silk.txt). The tone of this document reflects no obvious hostility toward the immigrants and the notion of the Huguenots as hard-working and spiritual people is reflected in Hogarth's 'Noon' (Fig. 5).

Hogarth's engraving shows the clear contrast, as delineated by the kennel (gutter) running down the middle of the street, between the pious, soberly dressed Huguenots leaving the French Church in Greek Street, Soho, on the right and the gluttonous and loose Londoners to the left. This engraving, produced in 1738, some 50 years after the arrival of most of the Huguenots in London, and finds them still dressed in a distinctive style. This contrasts with the evidence from the pottery at Canterbury, where, as successive generations inherited the Northgate pothouse, the style and appearance of the slipwares becomes increasingly English in appearance (Cotter 1994, 15). So, with the archaeological and historical evidence sending out conflicting signals, how is it possible to detect Huguenot culture in the Spitalfields excavation?

HUGUENOT IDENTITY IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

The underlying contemporary political, economic and social climate must have made an impact on the first generation of Huguenots in Spitalfields and affected the acquisition and use of French-made items across all levels of society. What must be questioned is whether the Huguenots would have immediately sought French-made items upon their arrival in London. The results of war and successive Parliamentary Acts meant that cross-channel smuggling was rife, but the Huguenot smugglers impeached for illegally exporting silks from England to France, were paid in money, not in return contraband. I would tentatively suggest there was no immediate desire to acquire French-made goods. It is therefore worth considering the circumstances of their Huguenots departure from France. Whilst escaping



Fig. 5 William Hogarth, *The Four Times of Day: Noon, 1738*. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore 1904 Memorial Fund.

persecution, it is unlikely that any refugees would take with them bulky and cumbersome ceramics, but would want their exceptional belongings rather than mundane possessions. Historical records show that the fortunes of the immigrants varied considerably, with some managing to bring all or part of their wealth from France, whereas others became recipients of the French charities established in Britain to assist them (Molleson and Cox *et al.* 1993, 97). They may have taken particular heirlooms, which may have included ceramic pieces (such as the Spelman Street faience), but these are less likely to be found in the archaeological record as they were presumably treated with care and not put to everyday use.

During his study of imported pottery in medieval Southampton, Brown makes the pragmatic argument that to the medieval consumer it may not have mattered where a pot was made, as cost and function would have been the overriding consideration (Brown 1997b, 95 and 101). Can

such pragmatism be applied to the Huguenot, or any other immigrant population during the post-medieval period? How important would it have been to these newly displaced people to use a French-made and decorated dish, rather than an English-made dish? Had they desired French pottery it would have been difficult to acquire because of political and economic factors, and when it was imported to London, there seems little redistribution beyond the dockyards. The products of the French pottery industry were of little importance in English culture and society. As it appears that the Huguenots did not use French pottery, then Brown's argument can be extended to the post-medieval period. For the Spitalfields Huguenots, economics and availability appear to have overridden culture and taste, and it would seem that the community reflected its cultural identity not through its possessions, but in other, more socially visible ways (such as language, religion, cuisine and dress). This is not to diminish the significance of the Spelman Street

faience, the 'Popish plot' plate and the William and Mary charger, all of which could have had symbolic value in Huguenot society.

In studying the early Chinese district in Sacramento in California, Praetzellis showed that on a mundane level, whoever was in charge of purchasing supplies and where they were purchased from could have a big impact on the archaeological record (Praetzellis 1999, 129). After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, such tasks were given to the Elders and deacons of the French Church in Threadneedle Street, which had developed into a highly organised relief charity. They divided the area in which its congregation lived into a number of quarters or districts, each supervised by an Elder and a deacon. The Elder dealt with the religious well-being of his district, leaving the deacon in charge of clothing, feeding, finding work and housing newly arrived immigrants. The church also maintained almshouses and rooms where clothes and movables were stored, and employed doctors, teachers and a surgeon (Gwynn 1985, 107). There is no evidence in the historical record to suggest that the deacons achieved resettlement by acquiring 'familiar' goods from France. If we approach this pragmatically there is no reason why they should. The large quantities of fashionable late 17th-century English pottery found at Spitalfields – the same object may have different uses and meanings for different individuals or groups – may instead present a better reflection of how artefacts were used by the Huguenots.

A WAY FORWARD?

To understand the material culture from the post-medieval suburb of Spitalfields, because such is the scale of the excavation, it is essential to look at the finds from the cesspits and backyards in order to build up a picture of the households that they served. The 'Four shillings in the Pound' aid assessment of 1693 shows groups of French householders in certain streets in Spitalfields, with most of those names recorded in the alleys and courts rather than on properties that had street frontages, and which were more expensive to rent (Swindlehurst 2001, 369). If the finds and environmental remains are recovered in sufficient quantities to make them statistically viable the next line of enquiry is to identify the occupants of these properties. It is hoped that combining these two lines of research may lead to the identification of individual Huguenot households and establish whether there is a 'type' of artefact disposal. It is known that Spitalfields market sold 'weeds', such as burnet, chervil, and dandelion, which were habitually brought by the market-women for use by Huguenots to make the salads that formed one of their principal dishes (see Gaskell 1853); can this evidence be found in the archaeological record? Likewise, the historical references to the Huguenot invention

and consumption of oxtail soup, their skills in flower and garden cultivation, together with their love of raising singing birds, offer clues to what might be found in the environmental remains. Perhaps only by looking carefully at finds other than pottery can we identify particular cultural traits; cuts of meat used and how they were butchered along with the floral remains environmental and food preparation equipment (including ceramics) may point to the consumption of a French-style diet. Kathleen Deegan's work in Florida showed that the combination of these methods was successful in the detection of Creole households (that is, mixed Spanish and native Indian marriages) in colonial Spanish sites (Deegan 1974 and 1983). French culture may equally have affected what the Huguenot community consumed, and how they disposed of their waste. Ethnicity is stipulated as one of the reasons for the change in rubbish disposal patterns at the van Sweringen site in St Mary's City, Maryland, upon the death of the Dutch owner and the inheritance of the property by his American-born son. Each appears to have disposed their rubbish in a different way, with Van Sweringen disposing of this rubbish to the front and side of the house, according to Dutch notions of space, whereas his son used the backyard area (King and Miller 1987, 42-46). The identification of the behaviour that led to rubbish disposal is sometimes as important as the quantity and quality of the finds themselves.

CONCLUSION

The excavations at Spitalfields allow for an integrated study of the material culture to assess whether or not specific a Huguenot identity can be identified. From an archaeological perspective, London lacks any real concerted focus on social and immigrant groups (Egan 1999, 69), with the exception of the Mitre Street Hebrew plate (Pearce 1998, 95-112). The study of material culture is often masked behind, admittedly necessary, explanations of provenance and chronology which in turn hides the fact that the material goods found were made, used, and discarded by people, not by a series of processes (see Johnson 1999, 17-18 for comments on this subject). The question of ethnic identity is a slippery concept because it is complex, multi-faceted and not fixed (see Barrett 2001, 375). This paper illuminates just a few of the many paths one can take in detecting such cultures, and in this particular case I am not sure ceramics is one of them. To conclude: without the historical evidence that Spitalfields was an area of Huguenot settlement, it is unlikely that this paper would have ever been written.

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Résumé

A travers toutes les époques, l'étude historique, archéologique et anthropologique de la culture matérielle de groupes ethniques distincts a toujours été au centre de nombreux débats et recherches. L'émigration d'Européens (due aux mécanismes du colonialisme) et d'Africains (forcée par l'esclavage) à l'époque post-médiévale, et notamment celle à destination de l'Amérique et des Caraïbes, a été largement étudiée. Cependant, peu de commentaires ont été faits quant à l'impact sur les dépôts archéologiques des communautés immigrantes arrivant en Angleterre. Des fouilles récentes, sur une partie de la banlieue post-médiévale de Spitalfields dans l'est de Londres, ont toutefois permis de redresser en partie la balance, engendrant l'étude de la poterie associée aux habitations des Huguenots (réfugiés protestants de France et des Pays Bas).

Zusammenfassung

Das historische, archäologische und anthropologische Studium materieller Aspekte von Kulturen verschiedener Volksgruppen ist durch alle Perioden immer ein Thema von großem Interesse. Die Auswanderung der Europäer (durch Kolonisation) und der Afrikaner (erzwungen durch Sklaverei) während des späten Mittelalters, besonders nach Amerika und auf die Karibischen Inseln, ist ausgiebig untersucht worden. Die Folge war, daß die Auswirkungen, die Einwanderergruppen auf Großbritannien hatten, im archäologischen Befund wenig kommentiert wurden. Die Ausgrabungen aber, die kürzlich im spätmittelalterlichen Stadtteil Spitalfields in Ost-London stattfanden, erbrachten die Gelegenheit, wenigstens teilweise ein Gleichgewicht dadurch wieder herzustellen, daß man Töpferware aus einer Gegend, in der Hugenotten siedelten, untersucht hat.