

medieval ceramics **Papers**

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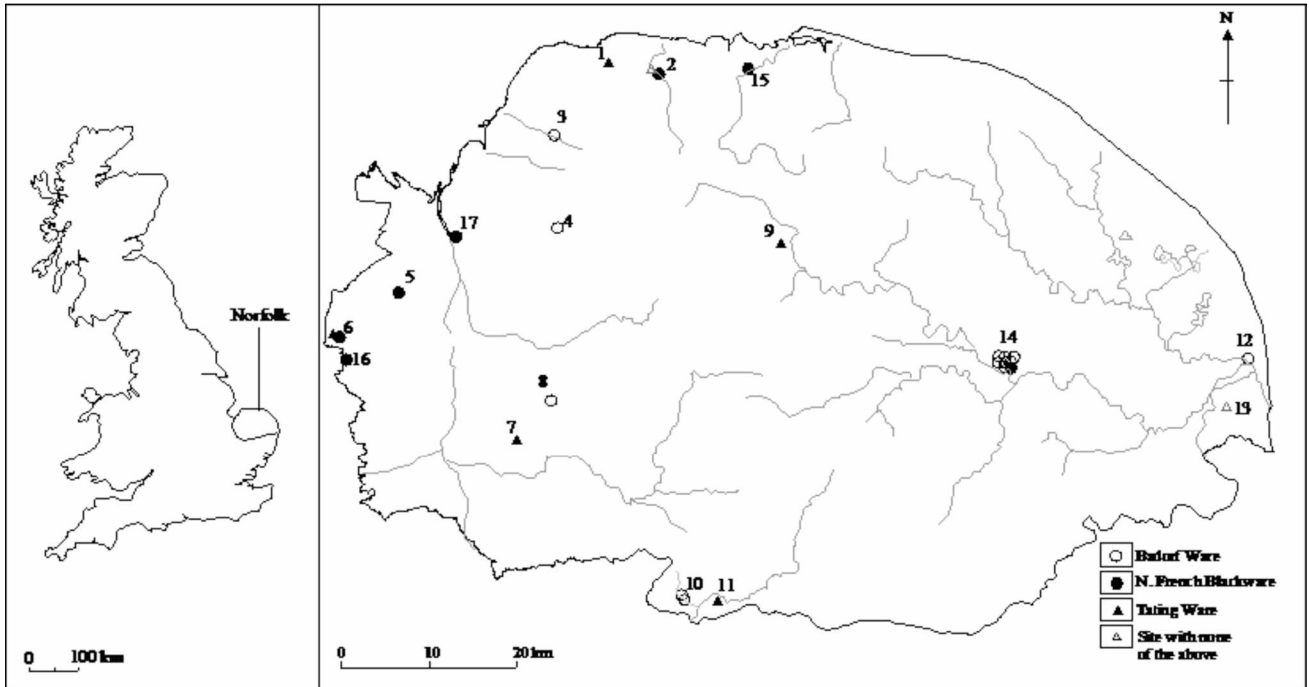


Figure 1

Middle Anglo-Saxon Continental wares from Norfolk.

(From NHER data and published reports, see Appendix I for references).

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Brancaster | 10 Thetford |
| 2 Burnham/Burnham Thorpe | 11 Middle Harling |
| 3 Sedgeford | 12 Caistor-On-Sea |
| 4 Congham | 13 Burgh Castle |
| 5 Terrington St Clements | 14 Norwich |
| 6 West [?] | 15 Wells-next-the-sea |
| 7 West Dereham | 16 Outwell |
| 8 Barton Bendish | 17 Gaywood, nearr Kings Lynn |
| 9 North Elmham | |

Middle Anglo-Saxon continental wares in Norfolk

A Social Interpretation

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Summary

During the Middle Anglo-Saxon period, the distribution of imported ceramics in Norfolk provides an excellent opportunity to identify settlements and to reconstruct regional economies. An analysis of their distribution suggests that the contrasting distributions might indicate contrasting trading networks comprising unregulated mercantile exchange within the coastal zone and ecclesiastical or secular controlled exchange and consumption further inland. In addition, certain

wares may have been considered only a minor valuable within the emergent centre of Norwich, prior to re-distribution inland where they attained a higher status. This potential new model – of diverse control over ceramic distribution – stands in opposition to the more rigid anthropologically influenced models of exclusive royal control over exchange pioneered by Hodges (1982) and can serve as a hypothesis for future testing.

Introduction

It is extremely difficult to use pottery to interpret wider exchange patterns and economic identities at settlements of the Early Anglo-Saxon period in East Anglia, while by the Late Anglo-Saxon period, continental imports become the preserve of the mercantile urban hubs and are of less use for assessing differentiated ceramic use in a rural context. However, during the Middle Anglo-Saxon period, the distribution of diagnostic ceramics in Norfolk provides us with an excellent opportunity to identify settlements and to reconstruct regional economies. Indeed, there are a number of studies discussing regional imports of Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery to Norfolk, such as Ipswich Ware, and they have attempted to interpret regional distributions in social terms, for example it has been argued that its distribution was a monopoly controlled by royal elites with little scope for profit from the sale of the pottery (Hutcheson 2006, 86). However, it has also been suggested that even if the production of Ipswich Ware was strictly controlled, its distribution might not have been (Blinkhorn 1999, 9).

In addition to regional imports such as Ipswich Ware, Middle Anglo-Saxon wares imported from the Continent have been found at settlement sites, both rural and proto-urban, throughout the county. These ceramics are all indicative in some way of either direct or indirect trade or exchange with mainland Europe and may reveal a great deal about mechanisms of exchange and the social identities of communities in receipt of the products. However, although these continental wares are highly diagnostic and have a growing literature in relation to other geographical regions, the significance of their distribution in Norfolk has not been considered systematically

and no social interpretation has been offered in recent years. Subsequently, interpretations have not moved beyond earlier studies that used imported ceramics to emphasise direct trade between Anglo-Saxon England and the Rhineland (Dunning 1956), or their successors which used ceramic distributions as evidence for elite-controlled socially embedded exchange (Hodges 1981; Hodges 1982), so imported ceramics at rural sites indicate high-status aristocratic or ecclesiastical centres (Wickham 2005, 809).

So, while the dataset remains small (Norwich excluded only 35 sherds in total¹), recent work on a regional basis (Davies forthcoming) has demonstrated that ceramic distribution indicates that a variety of settlement sites were in receipt of these imported ceramics (Figure 1). Furthermore, recent integrated field survey and limited trial trenching at rural sites in west Norfolk, including the estate centres of rural elites (Davies 2010), have demonstrated that rural settlements were remarkably diverse. These two observations mean that it now seems appropriate to offer a new interpretation of the distribution of this material.

The dataset

Many of the imported Middle Anglo-Saxon ceramics in Norfolk can be divided into three main groups: Tating Ware, Badorf Wares and North French Grey/Black Burnished Wares, which may also include sherds originating in the Low Countries. A simplified table relating to Figure 1 is presented below (Table 1), whilst a table of detailed references noting uncertain identifications and other ceramic types is provided

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Table 1

Broad Categories of Middle Anglo-Saxon Continental Wares in Norfolk by site.

	Badorf	N.French Black	Tating	Other
NORWICH				
Lower Close	3			
Worlds End Lane	13			
49-63 Botolph St	2			
Whitefriars St Car Park (LS)	5			
Fishergate (LS-MED)	17			
St. Martin at Palace Plain (MS-LS)	24	1(Hamwic 13)		
1-9 Bishopsgate	7			
40 Fishergate	5	1		
St Faiths Lane	2			
Site 831N, Norwich	2			
THETFORD				
Redcastle Furze				1 Mayen/Frankish Grey
GXXIII Site 2 North	2			
RURAL				
<i>Gaywood (nr Kings Lynn)</i>		1		
<i>Middle Harling</i>			3	1 sherd Rouletted Oxidised (Hodges Class 21) Rhenish
<i>North Elmham</i>	1		1	5 (plus ?6), various Frankish and Rhenish
<i>West Walton</i>		1	1	
<i>Terrington St Clements</i>		1		
<i>Burnham Market</i>		1		'Several' Frankish and Rhenish (1 Bornheim Waldorf)

<i>Wells-next-the-sea</i>		1		
<i>West Dereham</i>			1 (‘sherds’)	
<i>Sedgeford</i>	1			
<i>Burgh Castle</i>				1
<i>Barton Bendish</i>	1			
<i>Casitor On Sea</i>				4
<i>Congham</i>	1			1 Spouted pitcher uncertain fabric
<i>Outwell</i>		1		
<i>Caistor St Edmund</i>				Inconclusive

as Appendix 1. The production, distribution and circulation of all three ceramic groups have been interpreted in different ways and this can be used to interpret their Norfolk distributions. The main ceramic groups are now introduced.

Tating Ware, recovered from six Norfolk sites, is a black burnished ware with characteristic tinfoil decoration attributed to the second half of the Eighth century and the first quarter of the Ninth century (Hodges 1981, 65). Pots were traditionally thought to be manufactured exclusively in the Mayen area of the Rhineland, although more recent analysis suggests that the majority of production occurred in northern France or the Meuse valley (Silke, Hein and Mommsen 1996); all the production foci are represented in Norfolk (the sherd from North Elmham being Frankish) (Hodges 1981, 66). Because of its scarcity and the decorative scheme applied to jugs (tinfoil Maltese crosses), the function of Tating Ware has been linked to Christianity, specifically the ritual of communion (Blinkhorn pers comm.; Wade 1988, 98). It has also been considered ‘high status’ (Brown 2003, 23), or a ‘primitive value’ traded in tandem with utilitarian Mayen lava querns (Hodges 1981, 67).

Subsequently, however, finds of Tating Wares from a range of European sites, indicate that the vessels were used at a number of types of site, and not just high status ecclesiastical, in Northern Germany (Stiegemann and Wenhoff 1999). Tating Ware has also been recovered at elite centres with overtly secular elements, for example, St. Denis (France) (Wyss 2001) or Paderborn (Loveluck 2005, 242–243).

In Anglo-Saxon England, Tating Wares were also recovered from the temporary market site at Lake End, Dorney (Eng) (Hiller et al 2002). These finds suggest that the function and mode of distribution of Tating Wares is rather more complicated than first imagined.

Badorf-type Ware refers to a broad tradition of light coloured and, later, red-painted fabrics produced from the second half of the Eighth century, perhaps initially in the Middle Rhineland, such as the Vorgebirge region near Cologne (Hodges 1981, 63). It was produced in a number of different kilns from an early date (Hurst 1969, 94) and distributed across the lower Rhine and Meuse valleys, Flanders and Frisia, dominating, for example, Dorestad’s ceramic assemblage by c 800 (Van Es and Verwers 1981; Wickham, 2005, 94).

A specific class of Badorf-type Wares are relief-band amphorae, which were probably intended for transporting wine (Van Es et al 1984). The relief band amphorae were initially considered to have been produced exclusively between the Seventh and Ninth centuries (ibid.), but a number of excavations on the continent now provide a chronological sequence extending to the later Eleventh century (Piton 1993; Hodges 1981b, 27). Relief band amphorae are recovered in the south and east of Anglo-Saxon England from the eighth century onwards, perhaps reflecting a growing taste for imported Rhenish wine. Although we must be cautious about using the wares to define one specific aspect of trade (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 82), amphorae found at Ipswich (Wade 1988) led Hutcheson (2006, 86) to suggest that the imported wine represented by the sherds denoted royally controlled trade and tribute.

North French Blackwares identify a broad tradition of potting, including some grey burnished wares, concentrated in northern France, but with a distribution stretching across the low countries to the Meuse valley and as far southeast as the Rhineland. These fabrics were originally identified in Merovingian cemeteries of the Sixth and Seventh centuries (Hodges 1981, 68). Given it is now accepted that the production of Tating Ware occurred in N. France, there is a possibility that some sherds of Tating Ware which have lost (or did not have) tin foil decoration have actually been identified more generically as a 'North French Blackware'.

The large amount of black wares in the environs of the *emporium* at Quentovic led to suggestions that this was an important production centre (Hill et al, 1992; Hill et al 1990, 55). Imports from northern France, including Carolingian black wares of the Eighth and Ninth centuries from five different production centres, dominate in Anglo-Saxon Southampton (Brown 1997). The scattered production centres for Blackwares has led to the suggestion of a somewhat different mode of production and control of distribution to the Badorf-type wares (Hodges 1981, 94). North French Blackwares are also well represented in Lincolnshire (Crowson 2005), including Lincoln itself (Adams Gilmour 1988), and in east Yorkshire around the Humber (Loveluck 2007b). This can be contrasted with Ipswich, which is dominated by ceramics originating in the Rhineland (Brown 1997).

An analysis of the ceramic distributions

Tating Ware has so far been located at too few sites to reconstruct distribution patterns with any confidence. However, a consideration of the Norfolk assemblage as a whole appears to confirm that vessels were used at a number of types of site, and not just high status ecclesiastical ones. North Elmham (Reynolds 1999, 140) and the unexcavated site at West Dereham (Percival and Trimble 2008, 333) both have potential ecclesiastical associations. Brancaster has also been considered a potential Middle Anglo-Saxon religious site (Pestell 2004, 57), possibly a missionary station (Hoggett 2010), although its coastal situation contrasts with the former sites. In contrast, finds of Tating Ware have also been made at coastal sites in West Norfolk with no obvious ecclesiastical associations (West Walton, Outwell). Most interestingly, three sherds come from the excavated site at Middle Harling, which is certainly not monastic or even 'top-ranking' (going by the metalwork) in status terms and is also an inland site (Rogerson 1995, 87–88).

In contrast, to the Tating ware, Badorf-type Wares and North French Blackwares, have been recovered more frequently and their distribution can be analysed more coherently. Blackwares are concentrated in coastal

West Norfolk, with the Fen-edge sites potentially linked with North France and the Low Countries, an east coast exchange network extending to Lincolnshire and the Humber (Loveluck 2011). In contrast, a number of inland sites, including those in a zone of 'estate centres' in West Norfolk (Hamerow 2002, 125), were in receipt of Badorf Wares, perhaps reflecting the consumption of wine from the Rhineland. Vessel glass indicative of wine drinking has also recently been recovered from Sedgeford (Davies forthcoming). The contrasting distributions of Badorf-type Wares and North French Blackwares in rural areas seem to indicate the existence of different trading networks; perhaps unregulated mercantile exchange within the coastal zone represented by the North French Blackwares, and ecclesiastical/secular controlled exchange and consumption further inland represented by the Badorf Wares.

In addition, finds of Badorf-type wares in Norwich and Thetford also indicate exchange and redistribution from these emergent urban foci (a single Badorf ware sherd from Kings Lynn is probably Twelfth century and not included in this analysis (Clark and Carter 1977)). A further mode of exchange might be indicated at the emergent centre of Norwich and Thetford as these sites seem to differ from rural Norfolk and West Norfolk in terms of import patterns (see Figure 2). Norwich in particular seems very strongly tied up with the Rhenish wine trade on the basis of the proportion of Badorf wares, although there may be some over-representation because the numerous archaeological interventions here and some of the wares may date to as late as Twelfth century. It is possible that at Norwich, Badorf Wares (and their contents) exchanged under an uncertain mode of control, might have only been considered a minor valuable prior to re-distribution inland. In this instance, contrasting status between imported ceramics in coastal/riverside locations (low) and inland (high) zones might be postulated (following Loveluck and Tys 2006, 142), even though the Badorf Ware may have initially passed through the coastal or riverside sites (following Loveluck 2011, 13). Forthcoming work by Oakley on the distribution of ceramics within Norwich.

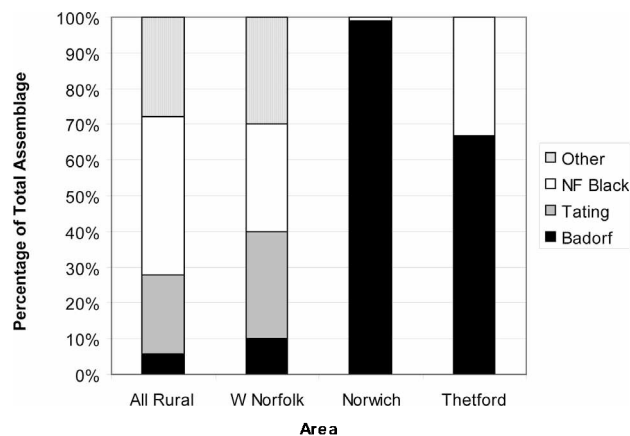


Figure 2 Middle Saxon continental pottery imports in Norfolk regions

This situation is paralleled on the south coast of England, where very little imported pottery moved inland from Middle Anglo-Saxon Southampton to Winchester. Rejecting the assumption that imports were perhaps exclusively used by foreign merchants at the *wic* sites (Morton 1992, 67–68), Brown (2003, 21) argued that this distribution pattern might indicate a change in mode of exchange and status of imported ceramics in coastal and inland zones. Although some imports do appear to have been more restricted in their use than others in Hamwic (Jervis pers comm).

Conclusion and ways forward

A consideration of the imported Middle Anglo-Saxon Continental Wares in Norfolk has suggested that the contrasting distributions of Badorf-type Wares and North French Blackwares in rural areas might indicate contrasting trading networks comprising unregulated mercantile exchange within the coastal zone and ecclesiastical or secular controlled exchange and consumption further inland. Furthermore, as was the case at Hamwic, individual wares may have had contrasting status attributes in different geographical locations. For example, Badorf Wares may have been considered only a minor valuable within the emergent centre of Norwich, prior to re-distribution inland where it attained a higher status. In addition, although the distribution of Tating Ware cannot be reconstructed with any confidence, the fact that the vessels appear to have been used at a number of types of site supports the notion that certain wares may have had contrasting status attributes in different locations.

This potential new model – of diverse control over ceramic distribution – and perhaps different social groups utilising different ceramics in different ways, although tentative, stands in opposition to the more rigid anthropologically influenced models of exclusive royal control over exchange pioneered by Hodges (1982) and revisited by others more recently (e.g. Hutcheson 2006). Interestingly, the model now suggested is also being offered for other geographical regions of Anglo-saxon England. For example, in relation to Ipswich Ware use away from East Anglia, it has recently been suggested that its distribution cannot exclusively be seen in a context of strict elite control from the *emporium* outwards (Loveluck 2011, 13). Contrasting the far greater quantity of Ipswich Ware found at a number of different types of site within ten kilometres of the Humber estuary with the small amount of Ipswich Ware collected from the *emporium* at York and its hinterland, Loveluck has suggested the existence of different exchange networks. These were characterised as a system of unregulated exchange operating via the coast and a system of elite controlled exchange at York, even though the same seafaring merchants may have been involved in both networks (Loveluck 2011, 13).

Finally, having made the above statements, an important caveat now generally accepted is that the trade in imported Middle Anglo-Saxon ceramics was not a commercial staple (Blinkhorn 1999, 11). In short, interpretation of the distribution of other commodities that are now unfortunately less visible (e.g. bulk goods) would perhaps better characterise modes of exchange and settlement identities (McCormick 2001, 9; see also Anderton (ed) 1999; Moreland 2000). Nevertheless, given that bulk-commodities have been rendered largely invisible over time, and given that models of royal control over exchange have persisted for a long while, it is hoped that the interpretation offered in this piece can at least serve as a hypothesis for future testing. Indeed, it is hoped that, if there is increasing integration between ceramicists and those carrying out fields surveys and excavations on Middle Anglo-Saxon sites in the region, that this model that can be re-appraised much more rapidly than the older ones.

Endnote

I *Please note* The figure of 34 sherds of imported pottery is a minimum total and a higher total of 41 has been provided by Blinkhorn (1999). The discrepancy here concerns the positive attribution of all the North Elmham sherds (see Appendix 1) plus a sherd found at Congham since 1999.

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Appendix I Catalogue of Middle Anglo-Saxon Continental Wares from rural sites in Norfolk (excluding Norwich)

The Norfolk Historic Environment Record number (NHER) is provided where sherds remain unpublished.

Barton Bendish

1 sherd of Badorf ware, identified by Cathy Coutts (Grid reference, TF 7075 0565) (Rogerson et al 1997)

Brancaster

1 Tating ware sherd. Limestone inclusions suggests North French origin (Hodges 1981). A Ploughsoil find. Perhaps a Frankish imitation of Rhenish wares. (Hinchcliffe 1985, 126).

Burgh Castle

1 sherd of possible imported continental pottery in a hard white quartz tempered fabric found in association with Ipswich ware – pimply appearance/feel, horizontal incision on neck (Johnson 1983; Dallas 1983, 106, Fig.45, No 23).

Burnham Market NHER 28127/18496

Several 'Rhineland/Frankish Sherds' from fieldwalking by John Smallwood in 1983, including 1 x Strap handle, N French Blackware (NHER 28127).

1 sherd Bornheim Waldorf pottery (NHER 27741).

Caistor On Sea

4 sherds of possible imported continental pottery. 3 sherds resemble Late Saxon Thetford Ware but are long necked vessels paralleled in Yorks and Durham (Hurst 1969; Hurst 1976; Darling and Gurney 1993).

Caistor St Edmund

1 sherd of inconclusive type (Bellinger, and Sims 1996).

Congham NHER25765

1 sherd of continental pottery possibly Badorf but with Cathy Coutts for identification, 1 sherd of a spouted pitcher in an uncertain fabric (Andrew Rogerson, pers comm).

Fen sites

West Walton 1 sherd Tating, 1 North French Blackware.

Terrington St Clements 1 sherd North French Blackware (Crowson et al 2005).

Gaywood (near Kings Lynn)

1 sherd North French Blackware (Blinkhorn pers comm).

Middle Harling

3 sherds Tating, 1 sherd of Rouletted/Oxidised (Hodges Class 21) Rhenish (Rogerson 1995).

North Elmham

26 sherds but 15 remain unidentified and, 2 are c 11th/12th-century, leaving only 13 genuine possible imports, below.

1 sherd light red diamond roll stamped (?rare c 7th–8th-century Rhenish or Belgian vessel, but Roman date cannot be ruled out).

1 sherd pinkish grey handle 3 ridges, ?Merovingian Trier, decoration also found on relief band amphorae (therefore dated c 600–1100) (could be Roman).

7 sherds dark grey rilled surfaces (red core) (1 sherd abraded similarly to North French Blackwares), 1 sherd black corrugated outer surface wavy line pattern (from ?late 7th-century onwards).

1 sherd grey rilled body sherd of 'Hamwih Grey Wares' type made in the Pas de Calais (?up to 9th-century but could be 11th/12th-century) (could be Roman).

1 sherd reddish brown hard fired (paralleled at Hamwih, French rather than Middle Rhenish) (similar to Roman).

1 sherd Tating ware handle probably not Rhenish (North French strap handle) (Wade-Martins, 1980).

Of the 15 unidentified sherds 9 sherds are definite imports, of unknown type whilst 4 more probably are imports but could be Roman. Hodges considers one of these 4 sherds a Black ware (similar to the Hamwic Black wares) imitation by the Ipswich ware potters and 'a hybrid of 2 cultures' (Hodges 1981, 41).

Sedgeford

NHER 1079. 1 sherd imported Badorf ware pitcher now held at Norwich Castle Museum (Hodges 1981, 43). Reported as early as 1974. A surface artefact scatter find.

Thetford

Redcastle Furze 1 sherd Mayen/Frankish Grey (Andrews 1995), 2 Badorf from GXXIII Site 2 North (Rogerson, A and Dallas, C 1984).

Wells-next-the-sea NHER 18176

1 sherd of North French Blackware.

West Dereham NHER 1070

Tating ware sherd/s found by Peter Wade Martins during fieldwalking (Hodges 1981).

Résumé

Pendant le milieu de la période anglo-saxonne, la distribution de céramiques importées dans le Norfolk constitue une excellente opportunité de situer les peuplements et de reconstruire les économies régionales. Les contrastes ressortant de l'étude de la distribution de ces objets semblent indiquer une différence dans les réseaux d'échange : un échange mercantile non réglementé dans la zone littorale d'une part, et un commerce et une consommation séculaires ou ecclésiastiques régulés à l'intérieur des terres d'autre part. Avant d'être redistribués vers les provinces intérieures où ils devenaient plus prisés, certains objets étaient en outre vraisemblablement considérés comme n'ayant que peu de valeur dans la ville émergente qu'était Norwich. Ce nouveau modèle potentiel de contrôle diversifié sur la distribution de céramique est contradictoire avec les modèles d'influence anthropologique plus rigides privilégiant le contrôle royal exclusif sur les échanges invoqué par Hodges (1982), et pourra servir d'hypothèse dans le cadre d'essais futurs.

Zusammenfassung

Während der mittelangelsächsischen Periode bietet die Verteilung importierter Keramikware in Norfolk eine hervorragende Gelegenheit, Siedlungen zu identifizieren und die regionalen Wirtschaftsgegebenheiten zu rekonstruieren. Eine Analyse dieser Verteilung deutet an, dass unterschiedliche Verteilungsarten einen Hinweis auf unterschiedliche Handelsnetzwerke geben könnten, unter anderem nicht regulierten Handel und Austausch im Küstengebiet und von kirchlichen oder weltlichen Autoritäten regulierten Handel weiter im Landesinneren. Weiterhin wurde möglicherweise bestimmter Keramikware im aufstrebenden Zentrum Norwich nur geringer Wert zugemessen, ehe sie weiter im Landesinneren verteilt wurde, wo sie dann einen höheren Status erreichte. Dieses potenzielle neue Modell – unterschiedliche Kontrollformen für die Verteilung von Keramik – steht im Widerspruch zu den starreren anthropologisch beeinflussten Modellen der ausschließlich königlichen Kontrolle des Handels, die von Hodges (1982) aufgestellt wurden, und kann als Hypothese für weitere Überprüfung dienen.