

Medieval and post-medieval pottery studies in south-west England: a review

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This paper presents a review of the state of pottery studies in the four historic counties of south-west England (Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset) and offers a guide to the production centres and principal consumer sites in the region. Coverage extends into Bristol, whose pottery is inseparable from that of Somerset. The unique Cornish tradition of wares spanning the post-Roman to Norman periods, which has seen important work in recent years is not discussed. The gazetteer in Part 2 is organised by historic county.

Part 1: Methods of analysis and general themes

Fabric classification and nomenclature

In this region, as elsewhere, the systematic classification of medieval ceramics began in the 1950s and 1960s with the identification of fabrics solely by visual means. Jope's studies of pottery from specific sites such as Beere (Devon) were innovative works of that period (Jope and Threlfall 1958), while his celebrated paper on the regional cultures of medieval Britain (Jope 1963) achieved a wider-ranging overview of some of the region's pottery types which subsequent researchers have rarely matched. Rahtz's early papers, publishing the pottery from his own excavations, as well as his corpus of pre-Conquest pottery, provided model examples of such work in Somerset and Bristol (Rahtz 1971; 1974; 1979; Rahtz and Greenfield 1977; Rahtz and Hirst 1974).

In the 1970s, with far more material becoming available from large-scale rescue excavation, especially in towns, new type-series were developed for many sites. The Bristol Pottery Type Series was started by Ponsford in 1968 to accompany his thesis on Bristol Castle (Ponsford 1980). Based on characterising pottery types by a combination of fabric, form and finish, it has been refined over the succeeding years, and remains a robust framework for the classification of the Bristol region's pottery, but now needs to be published in some form and supported by new

petrological and chemical analyses. The two type-series developed by Pearson for Ilchester and Taunton, which, like the Bristol type-series, include post-medieval as well as medieval wares (Pearson 1982; 1984) laid the foundations for underpinning pottery classification across the rest of Somerset, although the Taunton series was later simplified by Burrow (Burrow 1988; Dawson with Dawson 2016). Similarly, the type-series of fabrics established for Exeter in the late 1970s (Allan 1984a) has been much used in the classification of pottery on many sites in Devon and Cornwall. This had the advantage of being accompanied by a programme of petrological description based on thin-sectioning, subsequently developed with chemical analyses (see below). Equivalent work was far more restricted in Dorset, in large part because of the lack of the sustained, large-scale programmes of urban excavations with the well-stratified contexts which had provided the basis of work in Bristol, Exeter and Somerset. Limited type-series were published for Wareham, Poole and Christchurch but although they are, broadly speaking, linked by common types, they lack a common nomenclature. These too need re-examination in the light of fresh petrological and chemical analyses (Hinton and Hodges 1977; Jarvis 1992; Thompson 1983; Jervis 2011). A more extensive type series has been constructed for Sherborne Old Castle, linked as far as possible to regional wares/ware traditions (Mepham 2015).

Inevitably, the development of these type-series reflected the organisation of archaeological units in

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the 1970s and 1980s, rather than the operation of the medieval pottery industry, and no certain correlation currently exists between the various classifications noted above. Indeed, as type-series multiplied in subsequent years, the problem has become more pronounced, resulting in a lack of overall consistency in reports describing the region's fabrics. For example, Pearson's work in producing a unified type series for Gloucestershire and Somerset has unfortunately become fragmented.

The weaknesses in the published fabric series, based solely on visual examination, started to show more clearly when later researchers undertook petrological and chemical analyses of selected type-sherds. In a study of Saxo-Norman pottery in Somerset, for example, petrological and chemical study showed that five different fabrics in the Ilchester type-series were essentially the same, the differences reflecting minor variations in texture and density of inclusions (Allan *et al* 2010). There is, therefore, a need to revisit some areas of the work of a generation ago, and a need for an agreed nomenclature which reflects our current understanding of production centres and underlying geology. Furthermore, some particularly important key sites need renewed examination; Cheddar Palace remains one example, despite important work by Vince (1984a) and unpublished work by Gerrard.

Recently, Taylor has proposed that we should name major fabric groupings from the parent geologies represented in their temper (eg Taylor and Allan 1998–9), and various subsequent publications reflect this change of approach. Thus the broad group of fabrics initially named 'South-West Micaceous' after their most obvious single mineral inclusion is now usually named 'Granite-Derived'. The change reflects the realisation that the temper typically consists of a range of minerals washed down from the granite, their sizes and relative quantities reflecting their ability to withstand weathering and transportation (although they often include water-rolled fragments of the surrounding). Such fabrics should be distinguished from 'granitic' fabrics – ones where weathered granite has been pounded to form the principal temper (eg Taylor and Allan 1998–9). Similarly, Taylor points out that the term 'chert-tempered', widely used for a major grouping of Saxo-Norman ceramics, is unsatisfactory, since it picks out one mineral, and not an especially diagnostic one, rather than seeking to distinguish a range of inclusions indicating a particular geological origin. Fieldworkers are now adopting his preferred term 'Upper Greensand-derived' (UGSD), although admittedly more of a mouthful. His proposed categories are now being adopted in the descriptions of prehistoric and Roman pottery.

Petrological analysis

The region's earliest essay in thin-sectioning was Peacock's examination of the fabrics in Rahtz's type-series of the Saxo-Norman wares from the royal

palaces of Cheddar (Peacock 1979). A few years later Cunliffe similarly engaged Vince to define medieval fabric types from Bath (Vince 1979), while Vince and Brown were invited by Allan to test the validity of the fabric divisions for the large Exeter collection (Brown and Vince 1984a). The latter led on to their programme of thin-sectioning and petrological description on other Devon sites in the late 1970s and early 1980s including Totnes, Okehampton Castle, Lydford and further sites around the fringe of Dartmoor (Allan 1978; 1981; 1984b; Vince 1978; 1984b; Vince and Brown 1981; 1982).

The Exeter finds volume (Allan 1984a) also illustrated the value of petrological work on imported wares, with contributions by Mainman and Hodges on Saxo-Norman imported pottery (Hodges and Mainman 1984), Williams on Iberian coarsewares and probable Breton wares (Williams 1984a; 1984b), Dornier and Woods on pottery from Laval, France (Dornier and Woods 1984), and Vince on Spanish and Portuguese tin-glazed wares (Vince 1984c). Williams went on to publish studies of Iberian coarsewares from sites in Devon and Somerset as part of his wider research interest in the subject (e.g. Williams 1984c; 1998). Unfortunately some of the thin-sections from this era can no longer be found in the institutions where they were deposited. For the Exeter fabric series, however, some fresh thin-sections have been prepared from the vessels originally chosen as type specimens, and these now form part of a collection of thin-sections of Devon and Somerset pottery held at the Royal Albert Memorial (RAM) Museum, Exeter (ref: EXTS).

Petrological study in Devon took a different direction in the 1990s when Roger Taylor brought to the study of ceramics of south-west England a lifetime of work for the British Geological Survey, and thus a more intimate knowledge of the region's complex geology than any archaeologist could acquire. He recognised that the conclusions being drawn from thin-sectioning could be improved simply by examining the inclusions exposed on the surfaces of pottery using a hand lens at X10 or X20 magnification, greatly increasing the chances of encountering uncommon, but sometimes diagnostic, inclusions. His reports have been characterised by appreciably fuller descriptions of the inclusions in fabrics than has been customary in archaeological work (e.g. Taylor 1998; 2005; 2007; 2018). They have brought about a number of key breakthroughs in the study of medieval pottery, as has his work with Henrietta Quinnell on the prehistoric pottery of the region (most recently, for example Taylor 2017).

For Dorset, Williams' analysis of samples from Wareham underpinned the type-series there (Williams 1977), while that for Sherborne Old Castle was supported by a similar programme which suggested links with Ilchester (Harrison and Williams 1979). This has been superseded by work leading to the

identification of a major industry on the fringes of the Upper Greensand of Somerset and Devon (Allan 2003a; Allan *et al* 2010), but apart from this little petrological work has been carried out for the county.

Chemical analysis

In the 1980s Paul Spoerry undertook a regional study of Dorset's medieval pottery using Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry (AAS), in conjunction with documentary and topographical evidence, to characterise ceramic production across the entire county. This impressive work, still fundamental to the study of pottery in Dorset, was at the forefront of developments in a national context, and although the early use of chemical analysis was relatively unrefined, it enabled the definition of several major ware traditions and the identification of potential source areas (Spoerry 1990a).

Chemical analyses were taken up in the late 1990s, when Michael Hughes was invited to examine the chemistry of the local medieval fabrics being studied by Allan, using Inductively Coupled Plasma and (latterly) -Mass Spectrometry. The analysis of the much wider range of chemical components achieved by these techniques than the earlier AAS offered a highly sensitive means of analysing fabrics; Hughes' reports form an important strand in the reporting of medieval pottery in the south-west (Hughes 1998; 2002; 2002–3; 2005; 2010; 2011; 2014; 2015a; 2015b; 2018; forthcoming). They have underlined the suitability of the region, with its varied geology, for chemical analysis. This work has been aided by agreement from curating archaeologists working in some local authorities (most notably Devon County Council) that ICP reports may routinely be required in developer-led post-excavation programmes.

While amounting to the most extensive effort to map the chemistry of the medieval ceramics of a region of the British Isles (Mike Hughes, pers comm 2016), the samples studied do not, of course, offer comprehensive coverage of the region's known kilns and fabric types. Recently, however, Gutiérrez has carried out a more extensive survey of post-medieval production sites across Somerset, and further chemical analyses of the granite-derived fabrics of South Devon may also be noted, the results of which have yet to be digested (Badreshany 2018; Gutiérrez and Badreshany 2018).

Mineralogical analysis: automated SEM-EDS or QEMSCAN

A new advance pioneered in Somerset has been the use of the technique of automated scanning electron microscopy using energy dispersive X-rays (QEMSCAN) as deployed by Andersen and Rollinson at the Camborne School of Mines. This has permitted detailed mineralogical scanning differentiating between constituents of the matrix of a sherd as well as its inclusions (Andersen *et al* 2016a). In addition

to defining comparisons between fabrics, it offers a direct visual reference to the sectioned sherd, so that the fabric can be understood and characterised with greater confidence (Dawson *et al* this vol). A good example is the later fabric from Donyatt site 13, whose matrix has been found to contain large quantities of kaolin, accounting for its characteristic of being soft-fired. Three studies have now been undertaken: a) of medieval and later wares from Taunton Castle; b) of the Hemyock production centre and comparative contemporary wares; c) of medieval wares from Mendip (Andersen *et al* 2016b; 2018; forthcoming). As a result, it is now becoming clear that families of wares can be discerned, each linked to the characteristic geology of their source area.

The use of these techniques in combination

A key point about these techniques is their enhanced value when used in combination. For example, in the study of Upper Greensand-Derived fabrics, Taylor's petrological work identified the parent geology of the temper; chemical analysis (initially ICP, later ICP-MS) began to identify groupings within this large body of material, suggestive of production at a number of different centres (Allan *et al* 2010), and subsequent work has shown that the chemistry of some sherds is close to that of the known potteries at Donyatt (Hughes 2014). Similarly, QEMSCAN analysis is a powerful aid to understanding the mineralogy of a sherd and its relationship with others, and, by mapping the individual components of fabrics which give rise to the generalised chemical signature, in interpreting the results of ICPS. It is, therefore, ideal for defining fabric types. It should be noted, however, that the results of these techniques do not always elide comfortably and challenging issues can arise from their results (Andersen *et al* 2016; Allan *et al* 2018a, where a strategy for future sampling has been suggested).

Chronology

Stratigraphy

For Somerset, the principal relative chronological sequence is that for Bristol, but even here there are only a few reliably dated groups; St Nicholas's Almshouses (*c* 1656–60) and Narrow Quay (*c* 1580–1600) are the two key examples for the post-medieval period (Barton 1964; Good 1987). For the medieval period there are no radiocarbon dates from the city, but there are the dendrochronological dates from Dundas Wharf (see below).

For the rest of Somerset, medieval and later sequences from Taunton and Ilchester can be cross-referenced to Bristol and Exeter. Taunton also offers some post-medieval groups with independent dating evidence on which the dating of waste from production sites in west and south Somerset is often dependent.

Dorset is only sparsely provided with well-dated stratified sequences. The best evidence comes from

Poole, where the dating of various stratified medieval and post-medieval groups relies on imported pottery (Barton *et al* 1992 – although some key groups are contaminated). Other assemblages from Dorchester are dated on typological grounds, and could usefully be reviewed, although the post-medieval groups have at least provided a framework for dating the local earthenwares (Draper and Chaplin 1982; Draper 1993a; 1993b).

In Devon, the establishment of the pottery sequence for Exeter was based on stratified sequences and interlinked pit groups, and brought together the evidence from about 40 sites to define ten ceramic horizons spanning the period 900–1500 (Allan 1984a). However, although there is no reason to doubt that the order of the ceramic horizons is correct, the amount of primary dating evidence was quite limited. Some of the sequence hinges on imported wares (such as the introduction of Saintonge pottery *c* 1250), and uncertainty remains in dating some key developments in the sequence – for example the date when the late Saxon wheel-thrown Bedford Garage wares went out of use, and the dating of the first tripod pitchers.

In the 40–50 years since the Bristol and Exeter sequences were studied, disappointingly little new primary dating evidence has been recovered from late Saxon and later sites across the entire region, in part because there has been much less excavation in town centres, but also due to a decline in new work on castles and abbeys.

Radiocarbon dating

The widespread usage of radiocarbon dating in medieval contexts is now throwing some new light on the chronology of the region's medieval ceramics. Valuable results are emerging for the period 400–1000 AD, most notably from Cornwall, where the C14 dates from Tintagel and elsewhere are bringing a reassessment of the whole chronological framework of the county's unique ceramic sequence (Carl Thorpe, pers comm). Radiocarbon dates are also beginning to emerge for this period from Somerset and Dorset. Those from Chewton Mendip are the only ones where sufficient samples have been taken to use Bayesian statistics; preliminary results appear to show two 11th-century clusters, as well as a possible date in the 7th century AD (Pip Osborne, pers comm 2018). A 10th-century date is all that has been secured so far for nearby Brent Knoll, but it is of great interest, suggesting that the site was aceramic at that time (Gutiérrez 2008). As the Heritage Grants Committee of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History has recognised, more secure samples need to be acquired if the apparent aceramic gap between *c* AD 650 and *c* AD 950 is to be understood more fully. A date obtained from Wimborne, Dorset, calibrated to the mid 7th–late 9th century AD, appears to confirm a mid–late Saxon origin for the Wessex coarseware tradition of south-east Wiltshire and east Dorset

(Mephram forthcoming a; this volume). Charcoal from a kiln in Shaftesbury produced dates between the mid 7th and mid–late 9th century AD; this is, therefore, the earliest dated production site within the south-west region and thus of considerable interest (Carew 2008).

For the Saxo-Norman period the results have so far been more limited, partly due to problems arising from the short plateau and double peak in the C14 curve over the period 1000–1200. An initial English Heritage-funded programme on broadly 11th- to 12th-century pottery from Calstock, Cornwall, may serve to illustrate the problem. This aimed to achieve a dozen C14 dates from carbonised residues adhering to pottery. After Bayesian modelling, it was determined that the site occupation began in cal AD 940–1150, lasted between one and 320 years, and closed in cal AD 1055–1295 (at 95% confidence; at 68% probability these figures were AD 1000–1115, 35–190 years and AD 1155–1250 respectively (Hamilton *et al* 2014, 80)). These wide date ranges, whilst far more reliable than previous estimates, are no closer than the dating which would be offered by a pottery specialist; furthermore, it was noted that a simple increase in the number of C14 samples from the site would not have materially affected the range of dates offered (Hamilton *et al* 2014, 80). This problem is likely to be encountered on other sites.

A more recent attempt to carry out a substantial C14 dating programme formed part of the project 'Exeter a Place in Time'.¹ It was hoped that key contexts containing pottery associated with large quantities of bone and other organic finds might be used to produce a sequence of C14 dates and so tighten up the chronological sequence for the city. However, following initial assessment in 2017, it was concluded by Historic England (HE) that, given the complex urban context with residual Roman finds in most features, few deposits offered sufficiently reliable associations between the pottery and the organic material to meet current HE criteria for dating.

Dendrochronology

The first sequences of dendrochronological dates for the region were from Exeter, where more than 40 waterlogged timbers of Saxo-Norman date yielded tree-ring dates. However, although providing felling dates they did not form a firm basis for dating the pottery sequence, since many of the dates came from timbers which had been discarded long after felling, and even where the construction of a pit could be dated, there remained uncertainties about the length of time between that event and the infilling of the feature.

Given the sparsity of primary dating evidence throughout the region, the great significance of the dendrochronological dating from Dundas Wharf, Bristol, published in summary by Ponsford (1991), should be emphasised. This remains the sole instance

in the region where tree-ring dating has been successfully brought to bear on a pottery sequence. The resulting dates were as much as a century earlier than had been expected, with profound implications for medieval archaeology, not just in the Bristol region but throughout south-west England, but in south Wales and Ireland.

Pottery production

The evidence for pottery production at individual centres is presented in the Gazetteer below (Part 2). Whilst no pottery production sites have been excavated in their entirety, apart from the 19th-century Barton Hill Pottery in Bristol (Mason 2017), the wisdom of saving as much material as possible for later processing and analysis has been demonstrated on two 17th-century Devon sites. At the Exeter Inn, Barnstaple (Morris 2017 and this volume), recovery of fired clay and slate debris from the waste filling a pit enabled the reconstruction of both the shoulder of the upper edge of the cylindrical ware chamber of a kiln and the method used in lining the floor of a kiln (Dawson and Kent 2017). Similar processing of material from Hemyock, Devon recovered kiln furniture whose precise function is still uncertain (Dawson and Kent 2018).

In Somerset, experimental firings carried out as part of the Bickley Ceramics Project (1981–2010), yielded many insights into how simple updraught kilns worked and the nature of the cycle of oxidation, reduction and reoxidation common to all simple kilns, and incidentally to bonfire firing. In particular, reconstructions of the archaeological evidence based on three 17th-century kilns at Potters Lane, Barnstaple, one of which is preserved and displayed in the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon, and the 17th-century kiln at site 13, Donyatt, provided the basis for much of the research (Dawson and Kent 1999). This work has had a fundamental impact on how pottery is described, in particular the nature of colouration and hardness of sherds.

More work needs to be done on documenting standing structures, and on analysing such data together with records of recently surviving structures and the pottery complexes of which they formed a part (Weddell and Westcott 1986; Dawson and Kent 2007). Archaeological evidence for the Verwood district kilns in east Dorset is patchy, but photographic evidence and surviving film footage provide fascinating insights into the working of this rural industry, which was still employing recognisably medieval methods of pottery manufacture well into the 20th century.

Imported pottery

South-west England has been one of the richest areas of the British Isles for the study of imported ceramics – particularly for wares from southern and western

Europe. In this regard, Devon has yielded appreciably more material than the region's other counties, the most remarkable site by far being Plymouth, whose primacy in this regard is still not widely perceived. For example, Casimiro's (2011) national survey of Portuguese faience in England lists about 1529 vessels. Fully 87% of them were found in Devon, with 1242 vessels (81% of the national total), from Plymouth alone (Casimiro 2011, 35–40; no doubt there are some distortions here, since some finds, *eg* in Dorset were not included). A recent survey of Italian ceramics in Britain noted that 'it remains true – perhaps unexpectedly – that south-west England offers much the largest sample of post-medieval Italian ceramics in Britain, far exceeding even that from London' (Allan 2015a, 117). A database of 16th-century Beauvais imports in the region shows a similar picture, with 89% of the 309 vessels recorded coming from Devon (Allan unpublished).

The period AD 900–1200

The region's imported pottery from the period AD 900–1200 has recently been reviewed (Allan 2019). The major regional collection remains that at Exeter, where almost 200 imported vessels of this period were analysed by Hodges and Mainman (1984); since then the volume of new finds from the city has been lower. Wareham (Dorset) and Totnes (Devon) offer smaller collections, and there have been a few isolated finds in small ports on the north coasts of Cornwall and Devon (Hinton and Hodges 1977; Hughes 2002–3). All of these finds are dominated strongly by pottery from northern France (*c* 90% of the Exeter series by vessel count), a high proportion of which may have come from Rouen. Significantly, petrological analysis shows that *c* 5% of the imported wares are from a source(s) in Brittany or western Normandy (Allan 2019). Pottery from the Low Countries and the Rhineland is appreciably less common here than at Southampton (totalling *c* 2%, compared with *c* 6% in a Southampton sample; Brown 2002) or London (Vince and Jenner 1991).

Current scientific analysis forming part of the 'Exeter: a Place in Time' project, builds on the promising results of a pilot project exploring the chemistry of the Saxo-Norman imports of the region, using ICP-AES (Hughes 2002–3). Although based on only 13 vessels of this period, from *Hamwic* (middle Saxon Southampton), Exeter, Barnstaple and Padstow, the study showed striking chemical matches between some samples which are now being examined in a more extensive research programme.

The period 1200–1500 and beyond

For the period 1200–1500, three general regional reviews of imported pottery have been published (Allan 1983; 1994a; 2019), with surveys of Iberian

and Italian ceramics and South Netherlands Maiolica (Allan 1995; 1999; 2015b). These papers are likely to remain useful general guides to the range and distribution of the ware types discussed, but should be superseded by a new generation of identifications based on chemical analysis and fuller knowledge of the production sites, as has been achieved at Glastonbury Abbey (Blake 2015a; Hughes 2015a) and elsewhere (Blake and Hughes 2015). In this regard the current programme of ICP-AES analyses which re-examine the northern French, Iberian and Italian wares from Exeter (by Badreshany, Gutiérrez and Hughes) as part of the 'Exeter a Place in Time' project should be instructive.

Prior to the late 15th century, the near-complete dominance of French imports (first northern French; very largely from the Saintonge after 1250) is striking; very few examples of late medieval stoneware or Low Countries redware are known, although their incidence increases further east, as seen in Poole (Barton *et al* 1992, 118). The overall picture of imports has not changed greatly since the last review (Allan 1994a), but the pattern is rather denser, with many more individual finds reflecting the impact of small-scale evaluation work. Perhaps the most remarkable discovery has been the underwater find from Tresco Channel, Isles of Scilly, with its range of Saintonge, northern French, English and Breton wares; Hughes' exploration of the chemistry of the Saintonge wares from the site and others forms a particularly important aspect of their study (Allan *et al* 2011; Hughes 2011).

Pottery and the household

Finally, mention should be made of the few studies which have dared to tackle wider questions such as the usage and meaning of ceramics in the household. Here the most interesting work has been on the early modern period rather than the Middle Ages, although Jervis's examination of pottery from two medieval tenements in Christchurch, Dorset, and his re-examination of some of the pottery from Launceston Castle have been valuable contributions (Jervis 2011; 2014). Two recent papers (Kent 2015; Brears 2015) have added significantly to the understanding of pottery usage in the early modern period. Firstly, Kent discussed the problems of vessel nomenclature and usage in the light of the combined evidence of documents (notably probate inventories), contemporary illustrations (such as Randle Holme's *Academy of Armory* which provides detailed information on the contemporary terms used for specific types of vessel) and artefacts. His paper includes re-examination of two of the largest 17th-century groups of West Country ceramics (from St Nicholas Almshouses, Bristol, and Goldsmith Street, Exeter), comparing them both by origin of materials and by function using POTS (the Potomac Typological

System) analysis, which relates archaeological finds and contemporary understandings of function and form (see Beaudry *et al* 1993). Secondly, Peter Brears, with his wide experience of household ceramic usage, challenged the terms widely used by archaeologists and others for a number of common late medieval and post-medieval vessel forms. A third paper, rather inaccessible to researchers in Britain (Allan 2003b), has offered a functional analysis of the most substantial groups of 17th-century household goods excavated in the ports of Devon, again using POTS analysis. It demonstrates broad changes in vessel function in the course of that century which may be connected to changes in the architecture and furnishing of south-western houses. All three papers draw attention to specific regional customs in the preparation and consumption of food and drink, and a number of suggestions are made about the local use of individual vessel forms. A project to determine the use of the West Country, or incurved, dish, a regional form of unknown function, is currently in progress. It entails organic residue analysis of such vessels found at Nerrols Farm, near Taunton (Dawson and Payne forthcoming) and is being undertaken at the Bristol Biogeochemistry Research Centre, led by Richard Evershed and in association with Naomi Payne and others.

Discussion

The above demonstrates how much progress has been made towards achieving the aims set out in the MPRG research framework (Irving 2011, 41–2) and how much further there is still to go. Integrated fabric type series for both Dorset and Somerset have yet to be created, though the latter is in preparation. Consistent characterisation of each identified fabric type needs to be completed, particularly using scientific analysis. Further work is required to publish evidence of production so far unpublished particularly that from north Devon and east Somerset and further fieldwork is required to identify the location and evidence from suspected production centres. There is still enormous scope for analysing the distribution and uses to which pottery was put and its cultural significance in terms of community identities. Perhaps above all there is a need to encourage more people to address pottery as archaeological evidence and consider the importance of publishing or not new evidence and assemblages as they emerge in current fieldwork.

Part 2: Gazetteer of the main pottery centres and consumer

See Fig 1 for the location of sites mentioned in the summary.

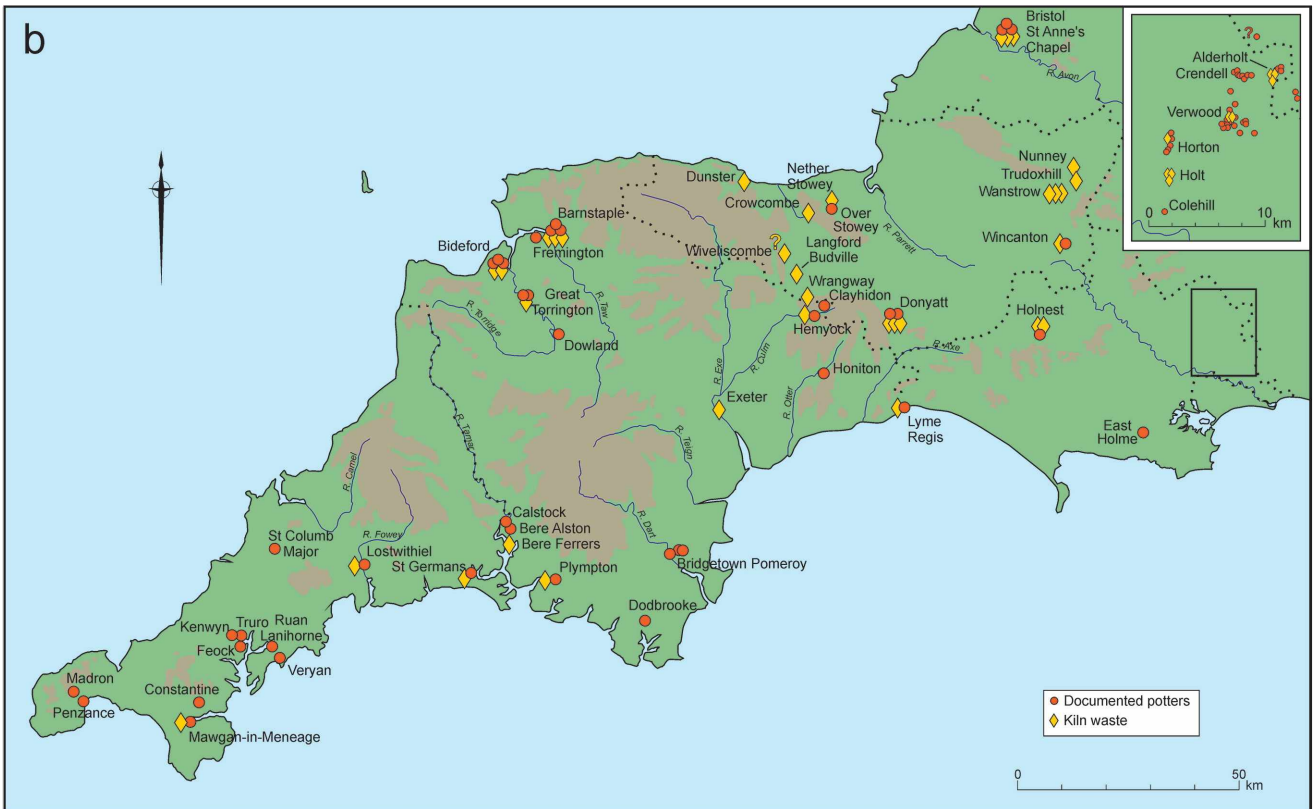
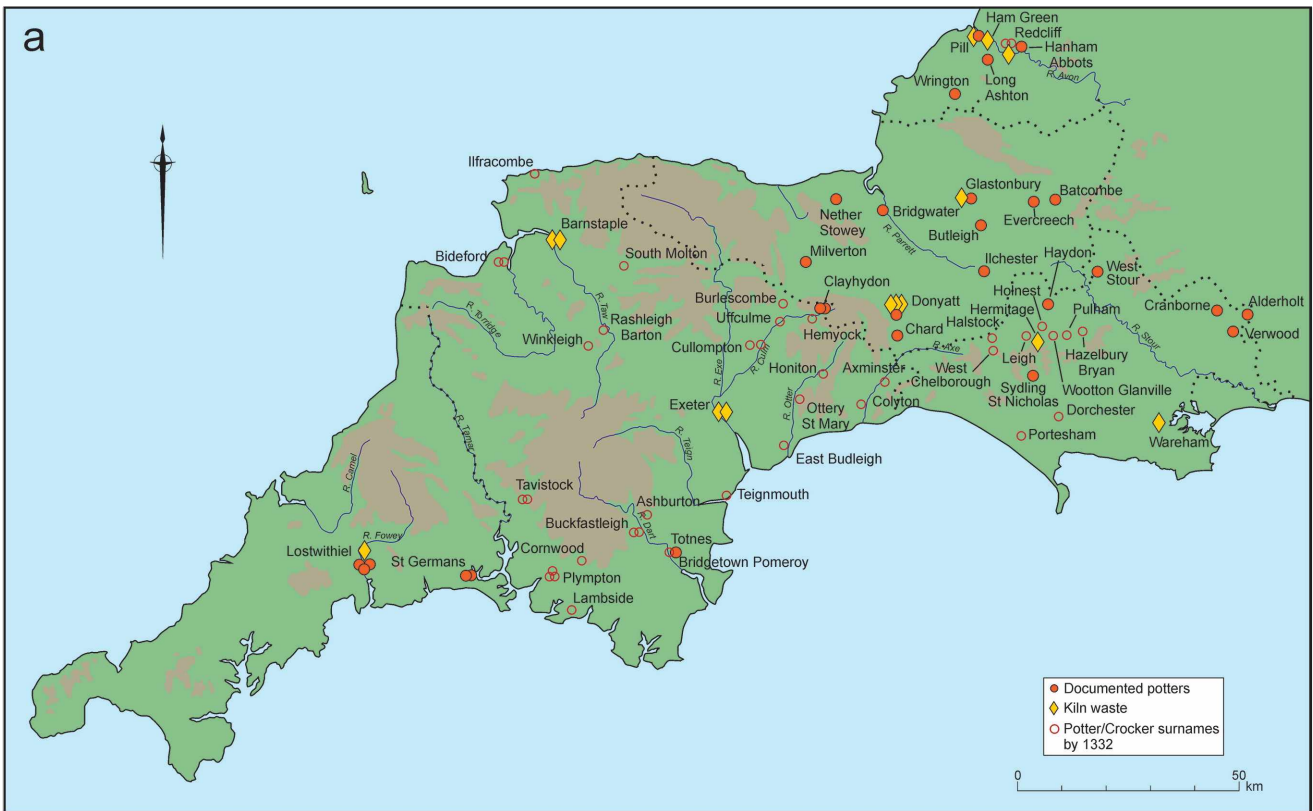


Figure 1. Potteries in South-West England. A: c 1200–1500; B: c 1500–1760. Image: T Ives (incorporating information from Le Patourel 1968, 123, 125; Allan 1984, 99; Ponsford 1987, 76; Dawson et al. 2016, 288–9; Sperry 1990; Draper with Copeland-Griffiths 2002, 28, 46, 66)

Devon and Cornwall

Granite-derived fabrics in Cornwall

No medieval kilns are known in Cornwall, but documentary research indicates the presence of 17th- and 18th-century coarseware potters producing granite-derived wares in no fewer than 12 Cornish parishes, all near estuaries or navigable rivers (Douch 1969; fig. 1b); it is likely that many of these places originated as medieval pottery production centres. Accounts of the three sites for which there is some archaeological evidence are given below.

LOSTWITHIEL

Lostwithiel is the best-documented Cornish pottery centre, and was probably the largest in the county; it operated from at least the late 13th century until after 1862. Following the recovery of small amounts of 15th- and 16th-century ceramics in the 1970s (Miles 1976; 1979), the Cornwall Archaeological Unit excavated substantial collections of kiln waste from Pydar Street in the 1990s and Quay Street in 2002. A pottery report of 2005 on the latter find is now (2018) in press (Allan forthcoming a). The products consist principally of wheel-thrown wares, sometimes with white-painted decoration, many unglazed, their fabrics characterised by muscovite inclusions, often abundant. Petrological and chemical analyses show that Lostwithiel pottery circulated widely in Cornwall; it is, for example, the principal ware at Tintagel on the north coast, and the fabrics previously named 'Bunning's Park ware' and 'Stuffle-type ware' were almost certainly made there (Taylor forthcoming; Hughes forthcoming, see also Litt and Austin 1989; O'Mahoney 1989b). The type is discussed further in the Launceston Castle report (Brown *et al* 2006, 273, 'south Cornish wares').

ST GERMANS

Documentary evidence indicates pottery production at St Germans between 1463 and 1720 (Douch 1969, 42–4). Following trial excavation by Minter and Russell, two superimposed kilns with much kiln waste were excavated by Greenfield in 1956 (Wilson and Hurst 1957, 170); they remain the only kilns excavated in the county. The pottery consists of unglazed wheel-thrown jugs, cisterns and bowls, many with white-painted line decoration. At the time of excavation, the pottery was thought to date from the 15th century, but the presence of large bowls now favours a date after 1500. Petrological study by Taylor has shown that three fabrics were in use: a) with finely crushed shell temper (perhaps from estuarine mud); b) with granite-derived sand; c) wares almost lacking in temper but with local non-granitic inclusions (Taylor and Allan 1998–9, 187). The site and finds remain unpublished; both the pottery and site notebooks are at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro. The type is discussed further by Brown *et al* (2006, 273–4).

MAWGAN-IN-MENEAGE

Potteries are documented in the parish between 1682 and 1837 (Douch 1969, 53–7). Samples of the plain, largely unglazed, kiln waste, probably of 17th- or 18th-century date, were collected by Douch before 1975. They contain granite-derived temper, indicating the transportation of sand to the potteries from the beds of rivers draining from the granite (Taylor and Allan 1998–9, 186).

Consumer sites in Cornwall

Our knowledge of the pottery of Cornwall remains very patchy – in part because urban sequences, which have been fundamental to progress elsewhere, have rarely been uncovered.

In the 11th and 12th centuries, prior to the emergence of the production centres noted above, the eastern part of the county was supplied with pottery containing inclusions derived from the Upper Greensand of east Devon and south-west Somerset (UGSD), indicating the long-distance movement of pottery from the Blackdowns, at least 30 miles to the east (described below). Key sites which illustrate this long-distance trade are Launceston Castle, Stourscombe near Launceston and Calstock in Cornwall and Okehampton Castle in Devon (Allan 1978; 2014; Allan and Perry 1982; Brown *et al* 2006; unpublished recent excavation by AC Archaeology 2016). These wares were used alongside gabbroic pottery whose temper derives from the Lizard Peninsular of south-west Cornwall. The trade may have begun in the 10th century.

By far the most substantial contribution to ceramic research in the county has been the study of the finds from Launceston Castle (Brown *et al* 2006), where the range of wares is much wider than on rural sites in the county. Other high-status sites with useful groups of local wares and datable imported wares include Berry Court, Jacobstowe (Beresford 1974) and Restormel Castle (Thorpe 2015). The key reports on medieval pottery from rural sites are those on Treligga, Tintagel and Bunning's Park (O'Mahoney 1987; 1989a; 1989b).

The production of Granite-derived wares in south Devon

Granite-derived coarsewares similar to those of Cornwall are also characteristic of the south coast of Devon; they follow the same evolution from hand-made unglazed wares in the 13th and 14th centuries to wheel-built unglazed wares in the later Middle Ages, followed by more heavily potted and glazed wares in the post-medieval period.

PLYMPTON

Following the unexpected discovery of a large dump of coarseware wasters at Hillside House, Station

Road, Plympton, on the edge of Plymouth (SX 541 563), a sample of *c* 38,000 sherds was excavated by the Plymouth and District Archaeological Society in 2007. The forms consist of jugs, tripod skillets, bowls, cisterns, sugar cones, syrup jars and ridge tiles. Many of the vessels are unglazed externally but have a dull green internal glaze; some are white-painted. Clay pipe bowls stratified in the waste indicate a date of *c* 1660–80. A report is being prepared for the Devon Archaeological Society (Allan *et al* in prep.), which will include ICP-MS analysis by Badreshany (see remarks on Berry Pomeroy below).

BERE FERRERS

A small collection of kiln waste collected by the site owners, comprising less than 10 sherds of wheel-thrown post-medieval coarsewares, was shown to JA *c* 1998. The site (NGR SX 445619) remains unexplored.

BRIDGETOWN POMEROY

Documentary evidence indicates pottery production in this suburb of Totnes from 1292 until *c* 1755; 11 potters were recorded there in the period 1696–1714 (Allan 1984b, 79–80). Although no wasters have been recovered, they presumably made the distinctive local ‘Totnes-type’ coarseware, the predominant coarseware in Totnes and Berry Pomeroy, less than a mile from the kiln sites (Allan 1984b; 1996). The fabric is tempered with sands derived from the granite but also containing fragments of the surrounding metamorphosed rocks (for a petrological description see Brown and Vince (1984b); ICP-MS analysis has shown that although Totnes-type wares are very similar to Plympton products, the two can be distinguished chemically (Badreshany 2018). The ware was exported to North America in the 17th century (Allan and Pope 1990).

DODBROOKE

Potters are documented at Dodbrooke, a small borough near Kingsbridge, in the late 13th and late 17th centuries (Allan 1984b, 79, 82). The location, close to a tidal creek, is similar to that of Bere Ferrers and several of the Cornish potteries. No archaeological evidence has been recorded.

Consumer sites in south Devon

Although Plymouth offers only a few closed groups of medieval and early modern date, they are of national interest. The 14th- and late 15th-century finds from Woolster Street, and the fine early 17th-century group from the Kitto Institute, are the most important published groups (Gaskell Brown 1986; Allan and Barber 1992) but important material from other sites such as China House, North Quay, Plymouth Parade and Vauxhall Street await publication. The exceptional nature of the enormous Castle Street assemblage

(Gaskell Brown 1979) has been emphasised in Part 1 (imported pottery).

The other major urban collections are from Totnes, where, in addition to the important group from 39 Fore Street (Allan 1984b), further large quantities of material from subsequent excavations in Fore Street in 1985 remain unpublished (finds in RAM Museum, Exeter).

North Devon

Production sites

In the 11th and 12th centuries this area was also supplied with Upper Greensand-derived wares, but by about 1200 (or earlier?) a separate tradition developed, showing the succession from unglazed hand-made local Granite-derived wares in the 13th and 14th centuries (NDMC: North Devon Medieval Coarsewares) to wheel-thrown wares by the close of the Middle Ages.

Centred on the region’s three main medieval and early modern towns: Barnstaple, Bideford and Great Torrington, this largely urban industry developed into a major concern, with an international export trade in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and continued until the 1980s. Modern excavation has been concentrated in Barnstaple, the most important being those by Trevor and Henrietta Miles at The Castle and elsewhere in the early 1970s, and the series of excavations under the direction of Blanchard, undertaken in the 1980s in advance of urban redevelopment schemes. The ceramics collection arising from these programmes is large (400–450 according to an unpublished assessment undertaken for English Heritage) but almost entirely unpublished.

In a national context, some of the interest of the early modern collection lies in the survival of information in port books, allowing the reconstruction of the trading pattern of vernacular potteries in the 17th and 18th centuries (Grant 1983; 2005). Barnstaple’s potting tradition has survived into the very recent past, and has been the subject of one of the most celebrated descriptions of a traditional English pottery (Fishley Holland 1958) and more recent accounts.

Three groups of medieval wasters have been recovered from Barnstaple. The earliest was from a small kiln with two opposing fireboxes, excavated at the Library site, Potters Lane. The wasters consisted of unglazed jars/cooking pots; an archaeomagnetic date centring on AD 1290 has been quoted (Anon. *c* 1985; Lovatt 1988). The second comprises a small group of later medieval pottery waste, including both wheel-thrown jugs and bowls and probably of 15th-century date, recovered from the backfilled robber trench of the town wall at Bull Court, near Green Lane (Markuson 1980, 83–5). Thirdly, a collection of 15th- or early 16th-century wasters was recovered from No. 6a Litchdon Street. The major new find of 1.4 tonnes of 16th-century kiln waste from the Exeter

Inn, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, has recently been published (Allan and Morris 2017) and is summarised by Morris (this volume).

With the rapid expansion of the north Devon industry in the late 17th and 18th centuries, the volume of archaeological evidence also becomes much more plentiful. Again, the most important finds come from Barnstaple, where late 17th-century kilns were excavated on Potters Lane, with very large quantities of pottery wasters both from the kilns and from the infill of the adjacent castle ditch. Although the operation of the kilns has been the subject of important publications (Dawson and Kent 1999; 2008a), and photographs of selected examples of the products have been published (Grant 1983, plates 8–15, mainly from these sites; 2005), the absence of a full report on the site and its products is a major deficiency in the study of the industry in the region and beyond.

The substantial collections of kiln waste from Great Torrington and Bideford, however, have been published, and the reports on these finds currently offer the fullest records of North Devon forms and

fabrics, with quantification and a revised type-series of forms, *etc* (Allan *et al* 2005; 2007; for a more recent guide to the fabrics see Allan and Morris 2017, 286–7). A particularly informative aspect of these reports has been Cramp’s account of the relief-decorated tiles made on these sites; some of the designs can now be attributed to individual kilns and even individual potters (Cramp 2005; 2007). Her work on the massive earthenware firebacks and on the use of these tiles in a domestic context has also been published in recent years (Cramp 2003; 2015).

Consumer sites in north Devon

Most of the medieval pottery sequences of north Devon pottery are poorly dated and there are few substantial groups from consumer sites. The best-dated stratified sequences remain those at Okehampton Castle (Allan and Perry 1982) and Launceston Castle (Brown *et al* 2006) – the latter the fullest discussion of the type. Thanks to some substantial new evidence, however, notably that from Launceston Castle, Lundy (Allan and Blaylock 2005) and various south Devon sites

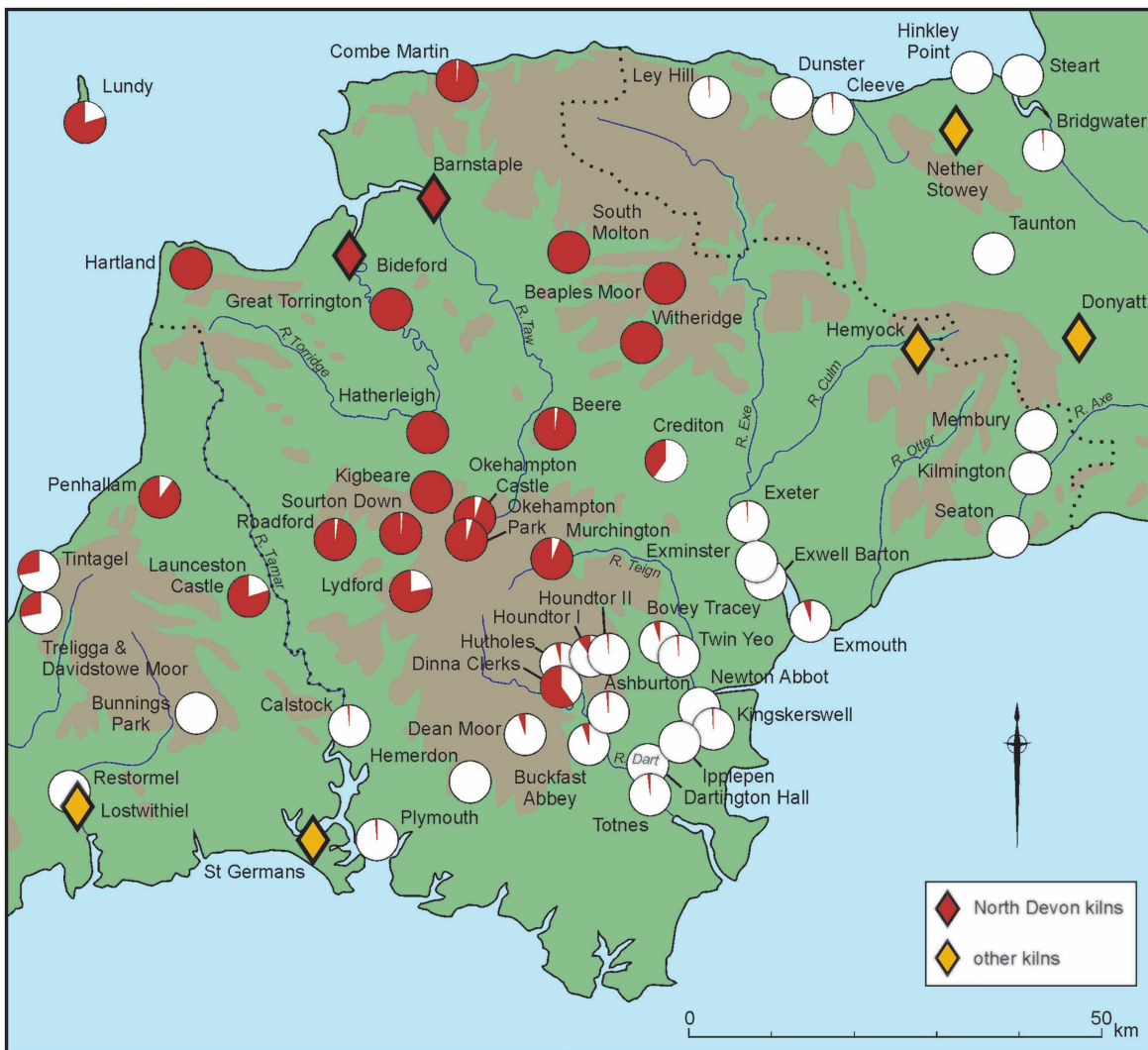


Figure 2. The proportion of North Devon Medieval coarseware in assemblages in Devon and Cornwall. Image: T Ives (incorporating information from J Allan)

including Crediton (Allan 2015b), the general picture of the consumption of north Devon pottery in the Middle Ages offered in the 1990s (Allan 1994b) can now be updated, and Fig 2 shows a revised distribution map. For the post-medieval period, several fine groups have been recovered from Barnstaple (for example from Holland Street, Joy Street and the Green Lane Shopping Centre) but none have been published. The best published 17th-century group from North Devon remains that from New Street, Bideford (Lovatt 1989).

The much wider pattern of exports by sea to Wales, Ireland and North America in the 17th and 18th centuries is described by Grant (1983; 2005). Vessels found in Jamestown, Virginia (USA; still amongst the finest examples known) were first recorded in a classic paper by Watkins (1960) and have more recently been handsomely published by Outlaw (2002). There is scope for publication of comparable finds from the eastern seaboard of North America, especially from sites in Newfoundland, Maine, Maryland and Virginia.

The Exeter area

Production sites

Evidence for pottery production in Exeter extends from the prehistoric period into the 20th century. Throughout the Middle Ages and as late as the 17th century, however, it was supplied principally with south Somerset pottery.

THE BEDFORD GARAGE KILN: LATE SAXON WHEEL-THROWN WARES

The wheel-thrown oxidised ware fired in a single-flue kiln excavated in the 1930s and 1940s at the Bedford Garage, Exeter, was initially regarded as late medieval, but is now firmly datable to the late Saxon period (Fox and Dunning 1957; Allan 1984a). However, although common in the city, its distribution outside Exeter is surprisingly limited: just three findspots are known, two of them other burhs (Totnes and Lydford). The question of whether this pottery represents potting in the late Saxon tradition, like Winchester ware, or the presence of a north French potter, deserves further consideration; we are now inclined to the latter view.

MEDIEVAL JUG PRODUCTION

The distribution of two local fabrics (Exeter 40 and 42), coupled with petrological evidence, suggests the production of high-quality jugs in the Exeter area from c 1250 until the 15th century. The most distinctive products are striped jugs, which will be discussed further in the 'Exeter a Place in Time' project.

GOLDSMITH STREET WARES: POTTERY IN THE LOW COUNTRIES TRADITION

In 1970 two pits packed with early 16th-century wasters were found at the rear of an urban tenement in Goldsmith Street, Exeter. The vessels have many

features which set them apart from the traditions of South-West England, but are seen on Low Countries redwares. The suggestion that they were the work of an immigrant potter or potters from the Low Countries (Allan 1984a, 136–8) still seems probable; the finds are, for example, comparable to Dutch-style



Figure 3. Clearance groups from Exeter. A: Queen Street 314, c 1600; B: Trichay Street 316, closed c 1660; C: 38 North Street 1501, c 1680.

Image: D. Garner, © RAM Museum, Exeter

redwares made in London. As finds of this class of pottery are rare on other sites in Exeter, the venture was probably short-lived.

Consumer sites in Exeter

The programme of four decades of almost uninterrupted excavation by the Exeter Archaeological Unit (1970–2010) has naturally amassed the largest collection of medieval and later ceramics in Devon and Cornwall; more than a tonne of pottery had accumulated by 1980, and about the same amount again must have been excavated since that time. The collection is rich in discrete ‘closed contexts’, with a series of post-medieval clearance groups, each containing hundreds of vessels, dated by associated imports, clay pipes, glass, *etc*, some also rich in organic finds such as leather, wood and textiles (Fig 3). Exeter is also attractive to the researcher because it is exceptionally well documented, both in the medieval and early modern periods. The city continues to offer especially rewarding opportunities for study.

Upper Greensand-derived wares of east Devon and west Somerset

The Saxo-Norman industry (Fig 4)

The typical unglazed hand-made coarsewares (principally jars) tempered with flint, chert, silicified shell, *etc*, represent a major industry operating from the late 10th until the 14th century on the fringes of the Upper Greensand of Somerset and Devon (Allan *et al* 2010). Collectively they are described as Upper Greensand-Derived (UGSD) wares, but within this broad category there are variations suggesting a dispersed industry. For example, the wares supplied to Devon and eastern Cornwall are largely non-calcareous (some of them matching closely the finds from Donyatt and Castle Neroche, Somerset: Hughes 2014), whilst a proportion of those found in south and mid-Somerset have calcareous fabrics, probably derived from the Lias (Allan *et al* 2010; subsequent ongoing work by David Dawson). In the late Saxon period these wares were the predominant pottery type over wide area of the region, including eastern Cornwall, all of Devon, western Dorset and south and central Somerset. By the 13th century, however, some of the fringes of the market, such as east Cornwall and the South Hams of south Devon, were lost to local production centres.

Hemyock (Fig 5)

It was the late Dr Harold Fox who first noted that the records of substantial clay rents in the late medieval manorial accounts of Clayhidon, Devon, indicated a large and previously unknown pottery industry on the western fringe of the Blackdown Hills (Allan *et al* 2018b). The recovery of 1.4 tonnes of early 16th-century pottery waste from Churchill’s Farm in the adjacent parish of Hemyock in 2008 has provided the

first substantial archaeological record of this industry (Allan *et al* 2018b). The products show similarities to Donyatt wares, but are generally better potted. The same general range of vessels is represented as at Donyatt, but the proportions are strikingly different; at Hemyock, jugs with bands of sgraffito-decorated slip account for fully 63% of the domestic pottery, and there are also detailed differences between the two centres in decoration, rim forms, *etc* (Fig 3). The architectural finds include many small wedge-shaped flat tiles, the suggested function of which is for the walls of kitchen ovens. The kiln furniture includes over 2000 sherds of the cylindrical pieces, which, although seen on other West Country sites, occur here in an unusually high quantity. Publication combining documentary study (Tompkins), a regional study of floor-tiles (Keen), petrological study (Taylor), ICP-MS (Hughes), QEMSCAN analysis (Andersen and Rollinson), discussion of kiln furniture (Dawson and Kent) and general discussion (Allan), has been funded by Historic England (Smart 2018).

Somerset

Medieval production

Hand-built wares

The Upper Greensand-derived wares from the Blackdown Hills and other parts of the Greensand have been defined by Allan *et al* (2010); they include the early Norman pottery found at Castle Neroche, which may imitate Normandy Gritty ware (Davidson 1972). Other fabrics, including a quartz-gritted ware used for making the distinctive incurved West Country dishes, have been found across Mendip, as has another very soft-fired ware almost identical to the Roman Severn Valley ware from Shepton Mallet (Andersen *et al* forthcoming). A large and significant group of late Saxon jars which parallel vessels from Cheddar and Bristol, and including possible wasters, was found at Long Ashton, near Bristol, in the 1980s (Leech and Pearson 1986, 24–5; Ponsford 1987, 85).

Whilst the work of Allan, Hughes and Taylor on establishing the source of inclusions in many Saxo-Norman coarsewares from around the fringes of the Upper Greensand seemed to simplify matters (Allan *et al* 2010), especially in the southern parts of the county, a more complex picture is now emerging for central and northern Somerset, where there is growing evidence that most hand-built wares were locally made (Andersen *et al* forthcoming). In a comparative study of fabric type-series from a series of sites across 10 miles of Mendip (Winscombe, Axbridge, Cheddar, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Wells and Chewton Mendip), over 85% of the pottery is discrete to the settlement concerned and only a small percentage occurs across the wider area (Anderson *et al* forthcoming). The first implication is that most hand-built wares were made very locally; the second that only a small proportion

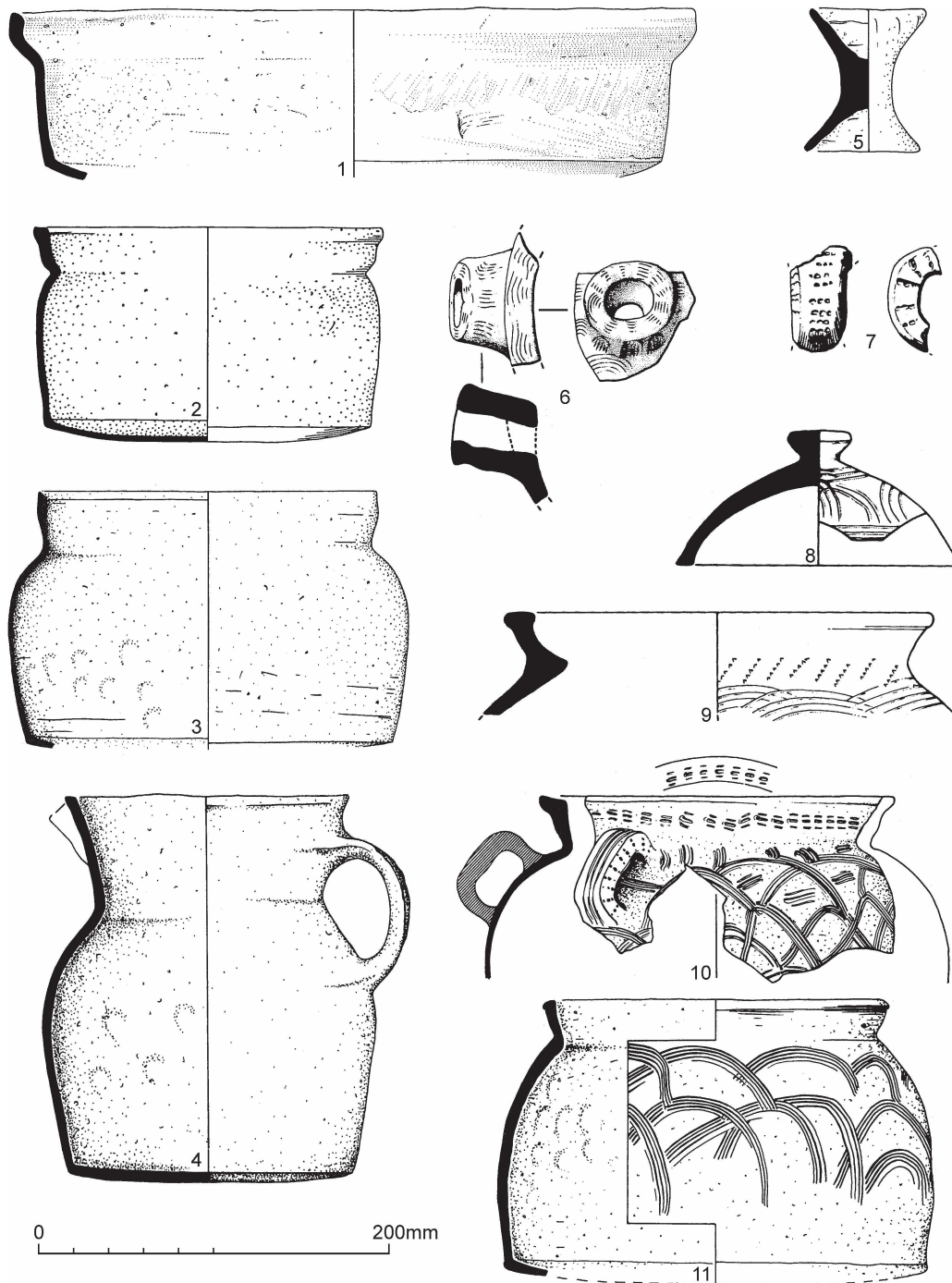


Figure 4. Saxo-Norman coarsewares tempered with inclusions derived from the Upper Greensand: 1: Sherborne Old Castle, Dorset; 2: Taunton, Somerset; 3–5 and 10–11: Exeter; 6–9: Ilchester, Somerset. Image: Allan *et al* 2010, 170, fig 2

of wares were exchanged, presumably for what they contained. Thirdly, comparison of rural sites with towns and ‘special’ sites (such as Cheddar royal palaces) suggests that the towns and special sites are likely to have more fabric types in common than either would with nearby rural settlements. For example, the contrast between Taunton and the rural site of Nerrols Farm, less than 2 miles away, is striking (Dawson and Payne forthcoming).

Ham Green wares

The single kiln with opposed fireboxes at Ham Green remains the only identified source of hand-built glazed jugs (Barton 1963). Secure dating by dendrochronology at Dundas Wharf, Bristol, has revised fundamentally the chronology of the ware’s development (c 1120–1275) (Ponsford 1987; 1991, 95–8; above). Its distribution down both banks of the Bristol Channel and to Ireland has been well documented, although Barton’s (1967) map is now in

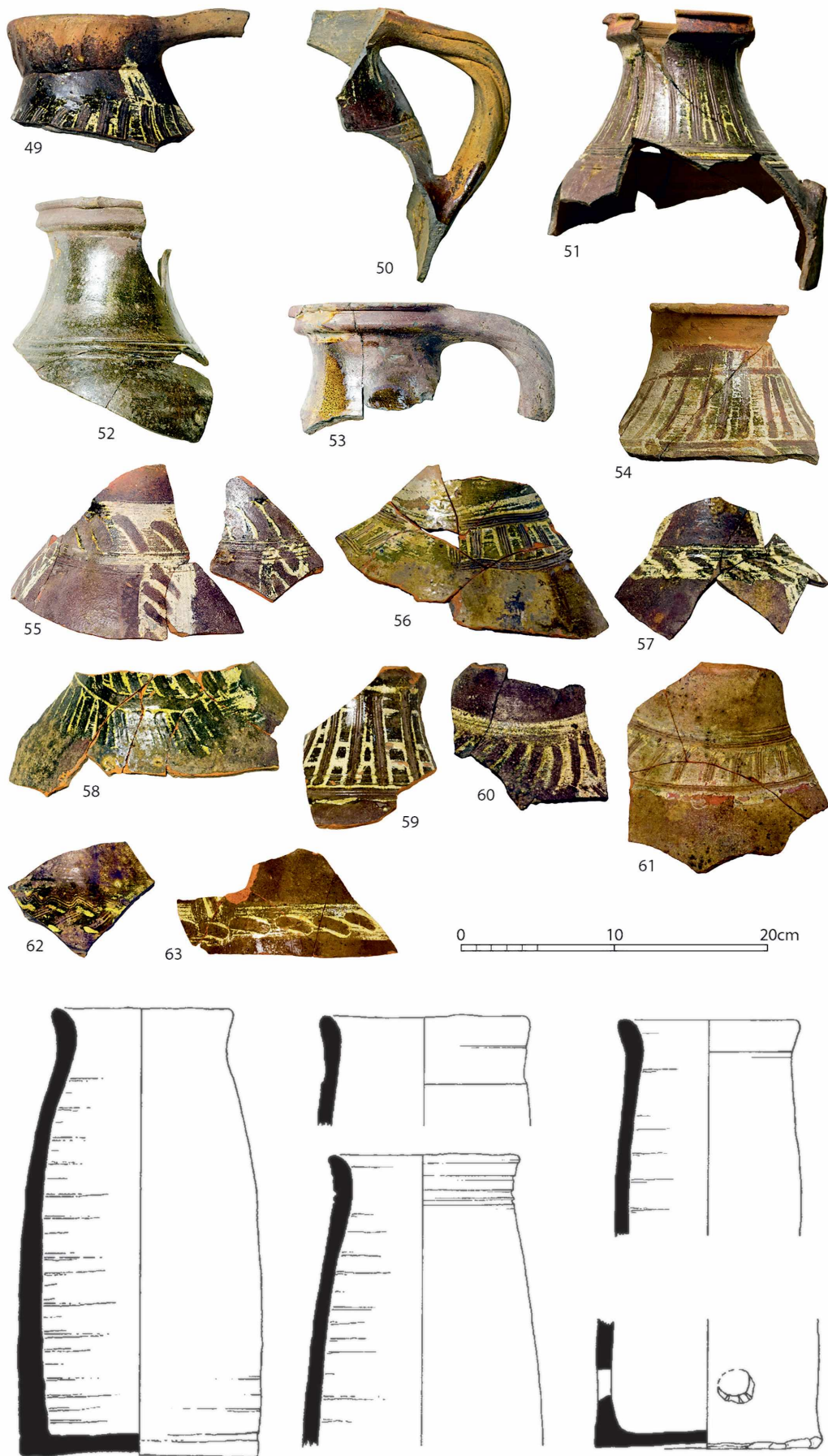


Figure 5. Early 16th-century kiln waste from Hemyock, Devon, showing its characteristic style of sgraffito-decorated jugs. Image: S. Goddard

need of updating (Ponsford 1983, 223). Subsequent fieldwork failed to locate any further kilns, but found further waste near the known kiln, as well as earlier coarseware and Ham Green A wasters nearer Pill (Ponsford 1991, 91–5; see Ponsford 1987 for detailed summaries of Ham Green types).

Redcliff (Bristol) wares

Manufacture of wheel-thrown vessels in the city was first recognised in a dump of waste under St Peter's church (Dawson *et al* 1972). The site of the pottery was later identified in an area on top of the Redcliff and on the west side of Redcliff Hill opposite St Mary Redcliff church (Dawson and Ponsford 2016–17; Ponsford and Dawson this volume). This distinctive and sometimes highly decorated ware seems to have been made from about 1250 to 1350, and in plainer forms until about 1500. Its distribution is as wide as that of Ham Green ware (Dawson and Ponsford 2016–17)

Medieval and early post-medieval wares from Donyatt

Three medieval-production sites have been identified at Donyatt (Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988). Site 1 appears to have been a bonfire or clamp kiln in which hand-made wares (mostly jars) were fired; it has been dated to the 13th century, but a case for an earlier date has been made (John Allan, pers comm 2017). Site 2 is represented by a group of wheel-thrown waste, again mostly jars, attributed to the 14th century. Site 3 is a kiln with opposed fireboxes dated to the late 15th/early 16th century by waste from wheel-thrown glazed jugs, cisterns, costrels, lobed and pedestal cups, chafing dishes, bowls, pancheons, curfews, lids, pans and jars

The fabric was sampled as part of the Hemyock project, with petrological analysis by Taylor, ICP-AES by Hughes, and QEMSCAN by Andersen and Rollinson (Allan *et al* 2018). Further ICP work, covering the wares from Site 1, was undertaken by Gutiérrez and Badreshany (2018).

Glastonbury, Bove Town

A small group of wasters, apparently representing a short-lived pottery producing highly decorated jugs and other wares, was discovered in 2005 (Hollinrake and Hollinrake 2005) but awaits publication. Samples were included in the ICP analysis for the Glastonbury Abbey study (Allan *et al* 2015a; 2015b; Hughes 2015b, 263, 265).

Other sources of wheel-thrown pottery

A kiln-like structure was reported to have been found at Nether Stowey. It was not excavated, but was thought to be medieval and unused (Ponsford 1987, 75). It is postulated that there is another production centre in east Somerset which produced a distinctive

fine hard-fired sandy ware, including wheel-thrown jugs (characterised as Wells Museum Garden type 30; Dawson *et al* 2015, 118). Unfortunately pieces are too fragmented to reconstruct forms. A further short-lived centre in north Somerset has been proposed as the source of the Wedmore anthropomorphic jug (Fig 6) (Ponsford 1978).



Figure 6. The Wedmore jug. Image: David Dawson (by courtesy Wells and Mendip Museum)

Documented medieval potters

In her 1968 paper, Le Patourel published a map of Somerset showing documentary references to potters or pottery making in Batcombe (in 1189), Bridgwater, Butleigh (1189), Chard (1265), Evercreech (1272), Ilchester, Long Ashton, Milverton (1265), Nether Stowey (1275), Pill (13th to 18th centuries) and Wrington (1234) (Le Patourel 1968, 123, 125); unfortunately her notes were lost by the early 1980s, so the sources of some of these references remain unclear. It should be emphasised that more medieval potteries are known from documentation than from kiln waste,

showing the large gaps in the physical record. Use of the name 'Crokker' and variants in Bristol has been noted (Price 1978; 1991).

Post-medieval production

Red earthenwares

Manufacture of red earthenwares is only summarised here; see Dawson *et al*, this volume, for an extended characterisation of the types of ware. They have been categorised by mineralogical analysis, which confirms the distinction between the wares and validity of use of the terms of west Somerset, south Somerset and east Somerset, first proposed by Dawson and Pearson in the 1970s. In addition to the comments elsewhere in Dawson *et al* (this volume), the following should be noted:

West Somerset wares (mineralogical type A); includes waste from Nether Stowey, Crowcombe, Langford Budville and Wrangway; a group of waste reported from Wiveliscombe may also belong to this type, but the location of the material is currently unknown (Ponsford 1987, 85).

South Somerset wares (mineralogical types B₁ and D): two fabric types have been identified (both found at Donyatt), but a third, described as micaceous, is now understood (on grounds of the fabric and style of decoration) to derive from Crockerton in Wiltshire.

East Somerset wares (mineralogical type B₁) waste from several sites, mainly of the 18th century, is being prepared for publication.

Brickyard potteries (mineralogical type C): the waste from the Chandos Glass Cone in Bridgwater remains the only published assemblage (Boore and Pearson 2010).

The seminal study of Donyatt (Coleman-Smith and Pearson 1988) serves two purposes: firstly as excavation reports of the sites investigated, and secondly as a corpus defining the distinctive style of Somerset wares, in particular sgraffito decoration.

Bristol redwares

Evidence for red earthenware production in Bristol is reviewed in the excavation report on the Barton Hill Pottery (Mason 2017), which traces the development of the industry from supplying sugar-loaf moulds from the Sugar Loaf Pottery at Westbury-on-Trym (from at least 1691) to the much wider range of forms produced in the 19th century. A similar pottery has been excavated at Boot Lane, Bedminster (Parry 2004).

Bristol fine wares

The extensive scope of activity in Bristol is indicated in the study of documentary sources of 1600–1800 published in 1982 (Jackson *et al* 1982). The best

summary of the bewildering range of wares produced here (delftware, porcelain, creamwares, agate wares, Egyptian Black, Bristol stoneware and so on), some as late as 1968, remains that by Pountney (1920).

BRISTOL AND WINCANTON TIN-GLAZED EARTHENWARES

This industry was established by 1653 at Brislington, then in Bristol by 1698, and later with an outlier in Wincanton by 1737. Britton's catalogue of wares, including archaeological material, is still the most complete statement on the identification of their products (Britton 1982), although Kent has recently challenged the view of the location of the Brislington Pottery (MPRG conference paper 2016). Amazingly, excavation has shown that part of the structure of the mid 18th-century kiln and adjacent pothouse survives at Wincanton (Dawson and Kent 2008b).

BRISTOL SLIPWARES AND MOTTLED WARES

Quantities of waste have been recovered and published since the manufacture of these wares in the city was first postulated by Barton (1961; Price 2005). Attempts have been made to resolve the problem of distinguishing Bristol products from those of Staffordshire, Yorkshire and London by chemical and petrographic analysis (White 2012).

BRISTOL STONEWARES

Wasters of 18th-century salt-glazed stoneware from the city at Ship Lane, Cathay, were first published by Barton (1961). Bristol stoneware was invented here in 1835 and its widespread manufacture ensured a worldwide distribution (Dawson 2016b).

BRISTOL CREAMWARES

A dump of waste transfer-printed wares was discovered at the Barton Hill Pottery (Mason 2017). The extent of the creamware industry can be judged from documentary evidence cited above (Jackson *et al* 1982).

Consumer sites in Somerset and Bristol

In Bristol, steady application of the traditional classification of wares using the Bristol Pottery Type Series is aiding the understanding of pottery assemblages from complex urban sites such as Cabot Circus (Jarrett 2013; McSloy 2013). As a result, the changing patterns of pottery supply are becoming clearer, moving from the dominance of Malvernian wares in the 15th and 16th centuries to west Somerset wares in the 16th and 17th centuries, followed by east Somerset wares in the 18th century and the rise of a local red earthenware industry in the 18th and 19th centuries (above; Barton 1964; Good 1987; Good and Russett 1987; Dawson and Ponsford 2016–17). Elsewhere in Somerset there has been little recent excavation in urban areas and the assemblages

published by Pearson from Taunton and Ilchester remain the most substantial bodies of evidence from those towns (Pearson 1982; 1984).

In a rural context, the Shapwick Project (1989–99), overseen by Mick Aston and Christopher Gerrard and combining academic research with community engagement, attempted to find new ways of integrating evidence of pottery consumption with other forms of artefactual data in a wide-ranging study of a rural landscape (Gerrard 2007). As well as a conventional archaeological report, a second popular volume was produced in which the evidence for the patterns of

human life and settlement could be better explored (Gutiérrez 2007; Aston and Gerrard 2013). Aston and Hall then applied techniques of test-pitting, allied with gathering other forms of evidence, to the landscape of the parish of Winscombe. Since Aston's death, Hall has carried on the project with over 200 targeted test-pits which have yielded valuable complementary information, and in particular posing questions about the interpretation of finds such as pottery.

Among high-status rural sites, work on religious sites may also be mentioned. The publication of the medieval pottery from Glastonbury Abbey (Allan *et*



Figure 7. Reconstruction drawing of the Dissolution group from the reredorter of Cleeve Abbey, Somerset, c 1539. Image: Richard Coleman-Smith

al 2015a) highlighted certain striking themes: long-distance contact represented by late Saxon Winchester ware, perhaps reflecting contacts between two late Saxon monastic houses; the presence of highly unusual late medieval Italian maiolica; and an extraordinary concentration of Bristol jugs, in sharp contrast to their rarity on the abbot's own estate at Shapwick, just a few miles away (Allan *et al* 2015b; Blake 2015a). The Dissolution group from Cleeve Abbey, datable to the 1530s, illustrates the fact that monastic sites remain important in offering groups of ceramics from datable contexts (Fig 7) (Allan 1998). The impressive contents of pit 6 behind No. 8 Cathedral Green at Wells, which contained a fine series of Redcliff jugs (Dawson *et al* 2015) should also be mentioned. Material from Wells Cathedral awaits further analysis (Warwick Rodwell, pers comm). Recent fieldwork at Taunton Castle illustrates the frustrations of understanding a complex, intensively occupied, secular site and its associated pottery, as well as hinting at the potential that should await further excavation (Dawson and Dawson 2016).

Consumer sites outside Somerset

Bristol throughout remains an important source of pottery for the entire region of the Severn Sea and beyond from the 12th century onward. For example Ham Green ware and Redcliff ware commonly occur on sites throughout South Wales and south-east Ireland. Later, Bristol tin-glazed earthenwares, yellow slipwares and mottled wares and 19th century creamwares and Bristol stoneware (Dawson 2016b) have an even wider distribution including over much of the south west. West Somerset wares are also commonly found in south Wales (Dawson 2016a) The export of South Somerset wares to the eastern seaboard of the Americas has been documented (Allan 1984a; Coleman-Smith *et al* 2005).

Dorset

Late Saxon and medieval production sites in Dorset

Late Saxon pottery production in Shaftesbury

One Late Saxon kiln is known in Dorset, at Coppice Street in Shaftesbury, but its discovery in 2003 raises more questions than it answers, as the jars that it was apparently producing, in very fine-grained, visibly micaceous fabric, have not yet been identified on any consumer sites, either in the county or beyond. The kiln has a radiocarbon date (on charcoal from fuel wood) of AD 660–870, and is considered on ceramic evidence to date to the late 8th or 9th century AD (Carew 2008). Very similar wares, presumed to originate from the local Crockerton industry (Smith 1997, fabric H), are known from the Warminster area of Wiltshire, but not until *c* 1100; the two types

would, therefore, seem to be both chronologically and geographically distinct.

West Dorset sandy wares

A kiln excavated at the village of Hermitage, Dorchester, and dated on typological grounds to the 13th century, was used in the production of a limited repertoire of jars, flanged bowls and jugs in a fine-grained sandy ware, generally oxidised (Field 1966). Given that similar wares are found across the west of the county (Spoerry 1990a, sandy ware type S1), and their date range appears from evidence at Sherborne Old Castle (Mephram 2015, key groups 4 and 5), to extend into the 14th/15th century, it is likely that further production centres were operating during this period.

Wessex coarseware

The coarse sandy wares found across east Dorset and into south-east Wiltshire and parts of north-west Hampshire form a distinctive ceramic tradition characterised by quartz-rich fabrics; vessels were frequently scratch-marked. In the 13th/early 14th century they were produced at Laverstock in Wiltshire (Musty *et al* 1969; Musty *et al* 2001); other sources are suggested, by documentary evidence, around the Verwood area (Spoerry and Hart 1988) and, by petrological evidence, in Purbeck (Williams 1977). Very similar wares were circulating prior to the use of the Laverstock kilns, and radiocarbon dating from a site in Wimborne Minster supports a middle/late Saxon origin for the tradition (Mephram forthcoming; this volume).

Whiteware production in Wareham

Little is yet known about a kiln excavated in 2015 by Bournemouth University in Wareham. A preliminary scan of the waster material indicates that the products were mainly glazed jugs, with some jars, in a sandy whiteware fabric, and a 13th-/15th-century date range has been suggested (Paul Blinkhorn, pers comm, 2015; author's observation). Whether this kiln represents a later continuation of the industry producing the 13th-/14th-century whitewares found in Poole (Jarvis 1992, fabrics 4 and 5) and across south-east Dorset is uncertain.

Post-medieval production sites in Dorset

Verwood area

While the pottery industry of the Verwood area (east Dorset) may have a medieval origin, the area is primarily known for post-medieval production; the earliest excavated kilns date to the mid 17th century, and the last kiln closed in 1952. Verwood-type wares are immediately recognisable by their pale-firing fabrics (buff to pale salmon-pink), distinct from other redwares in the region. This was a dispersed rural industry with kilns in a number of villages, whose

output focused on everyday, utilitarian ceramics (jugs, storage vessels and bowls of various sizes formed its core repertoire), and whose distribution depended largely on the activities of carters, who hawked pots around rural Dorset and the surrounding counties. Despite its rural setting, from the mid 18th century the Verwood industry dominated the ceramic markets of Wessex, from Poole Harbour to Salisbury, and from the New Forest right across Dorset. Although the industry as a whole has been described, and broad chronological trends highlighted (Young 1979; Algar *et al* 1987; Draper 2002), the several excavated kiln sites excavated variously by Salisbury Museum Research Group, the Dorset Institution of Higher Education (now Bournemouth University) and the Verwood and District Potteries Trust between 1975 and 1997 are, with the exception of Horton (Copland-Griffiths 1989; Copland-Griffiths and Butterworth 1990), still unpublished.

East Holme

Wasters recovered from East Holme, Purbeck, are considered to fall within the Verwood tradition. The putative kiln here was certainly producing a very similar range of vessels (jars, bowls and jugs) in the 17th to early 18th century, but in a white-firing clay (Terry 1987).

Holnest

There are documentary records of potters in Holnest, near Sherborne, in the 17th century (Spoerry and Hart 1988, 32), and a possible kiln site producing redwares has been located, but not excavated. Examination of wasters by the author (LM) suggest that the kiln products were redwares and slipwares, similar to those produced at Donyatt.

Lyme Regis

A substantial quantity of wasters found just outside Lyme Regis (west Dorset) comprises slipwares in the south Somerset style. The associated kiln or kilns have so far proved elusive, although there are documentary references to potters here in the mid to late 18th century, and the wasters are thought to date to this period. Prior to this, Lyme appears to have acted as a redistribution centre for earthenwares, presumed to come mostly from Donyatt (16 miles to the north), which were exported to various points along the south-west coast (Draper 1982).

Pottery consumption in Dorset

Middle to Late Saxon

Evidence for pottery consumption during this period is, as elsewhere across the south-west, extremely patchy. The best, and earliest, evidence appears to come from Wimborne Minster, where quartz-rich Wessex coarseware was in use alongside flint-tempered and 'mixed grit' wares comparable to the

range identified in Southampton (*Hamwic*) (Mephram forthcoming a; Timby 1988). Similar wares have been identified at Bestwall Quarry, Wareham (Brown 2012). A slightly later site at Winterborne Stickland, maybe dating to the 10th or 11th century, yielded flint-/chert-tempered wares, possibly in the Blackdown Hills tradition, as well as calcareous wares; these wares are also recorded from Sherborne Old Castle (Mephram 2015, fabric group 1), while flint-tempered wares from Wareham have been linked to the Isle of Purbeck (Williams 1977, fabric A). Jars are the main form produced during this period.

Medieval and later

The broad trends in the distribution of medieval wares described by Spoerry (1990a) still hold good, but there has been uneven progress in filling in the detail, both in spatial and in chronological terms, and the overall ceramic sequence for the county is still not well understood. This is at least partly due to the scarcity of large, well-stratified assemblages with good independent dating, but there are also large parts of the county (a swathe running from north-east to south-west) with little or no coverage from excavated material.

Perhaps the best published medieval and post-medieval material is from Poole, which includes a significant component of imported wares (Barton *et al* 1992). Smaller assemblages from Wareham, Christchurch, Wimborne Minster and Corfe Castle clearly share characteristics in terms of the range of wares, **which in** the medieval period are dominated by Wessex coarseware (Hinton and Hodges 1977; Renn 1960; Davies 1983; Thomson *et al* 1983; Jervis 2011; Draper 1983; Poulsen 1984; Mephram 1992; RCHM 1960). Elsewhere in Dorset, assemblages from Dorchester, Bridport and Shaftesbury provide 'keyhole' insights into the medieval ceramic sequence (Draper and Chaplin 1982; Draper 1993a; 1993b; Mephram 2000; Spoerry 1990b).

In the rural hinterland, evidence is sporadic and largely confined to the east and south of the county, and little attempt has been made to link these sites in with the wider picture. However, three rural manorial sites have produced significant assemblages: Sutton Poyntz (Mephram 2007) and Putton Lane, Chickerell, both close to Weymouth, and Stratton Old Manor, to the north-west of Dorchester, the last two currently (2018) being analysed. These three sites, together with Sherborne Old Castle (Mephram 2015; Fig 8), go some way towards illustrating the patterns of pottery distribution in the south-central and north-western parts of the county. They also demonstrate the spread of imported wares, albeit very sparsely, away from the south coast ports.



Figure 8. Group of 13th-century pottery from Sherborne Old Castle. Image: Wessex Archaeology

Endnote

1: This project, led by Prof S Rippon of the University of Exeter, will publish some of the most important old excavations in Exeter and review aspects of the city's archaeology. See https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/archaeology/research/projects/place_in_time/

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Résumé

Cet article présente une analyse de l'état des études sur la céramique dans les quatre comtés historiques du sud-ouest de l'Angleterre (Cornwall, Devon, Somerset et Dorset) et propose un inventaire des centres de production et des principaux sites de consommation de la région. L'article s'étend jusqu'à Bristol, dont la céramique est indissociable de celle de Somerset. La tradition spécifique de la Cornouaille, qui s'étend des périodes allant des époques post-romaine à la période Normande, a connu un travail important au cours des dernières années, mais n'est pas discutée ici. La nomenclature de la partie 2 est organisée par comté historique.

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Artikel wird ein Überblick zum Stand der Keramikforschung in den vier historischen Grafschaften Südwestenglands (Cornwall, Devon, Somerset und Dorset) geboten und ein Wegweiser zu den Herstellungszentren und wichtigsten Verbraucherstandorten der Region vorgelegt. Auch Bristol, dessen Keramik untrennbar mit der von Somerset verbunden ist, wird berücksichtigt. Die einzigartige kornische Tonwarentradition, die von der nach-römischen bis in die normannische Zeit reicht und zu der in den letzten Jahren wichtige Arbeiten veröffentlicht wurden, wird jedoch nicht behandelt. Das Fundortregister in Teil 2 ist nach historischen Grafschaften geordnet.

Medieval Ceramics
Notes

Post-medieval North Devon-type wares from the Isle of Man

Peter Davey*

Background

From the 11th to the 13th centuries the Isle of Man, as capital of the Kingdom of the Isles, provided a forward base within the Irish Sea able to project Scandinavian power and economic interest south towards England, Ireland and the continent. Therefore, it is not surprising that insular ceramic assemblages of this period regularly show that around 25% of all finds derived from France and Spain (Davey 2013). In addition,

between 30%–50% of the pottery is British in origin. Although the main identified sources are Cheshire, Lancashire and Cumbria, there is nevertheless a significant southern bias, with Peel Castle providing quantities of Bristol wares and a range of Somerset products identified by Mike Ponsford (Davey 2002). These proportions remain virtually unchanged during the later Middle Ages (Davey 2011).

With the acquisition of the island in 1405 by the Stanley family of south Lancashire, it might

Table 1. Summary of north Devon pottery from the Isle of Man

Peel Castle	GTW	NDGF	SLP	SGW	Total	MVs
Old Castle Museum		1 (1)		1 (1)	2	2
Cowley Collection	3 (2)	5 (4)			8	6
1982–87 excavations	35 (6)	67(15)	1 (1)	1 (1)	104	23
Peel Town						
IRIS excavations 2000	1 (1)				1	1
Castletown excavations						
Castle Rushen Stores 1991–92	39 (13)	7 (7)	1 (1)	2 (2)	49	23
Old Grammar School 1960–61	4 (3)				4	3
Stray find 2001	1 (1)				1	1
Rushen Abbey						
Excavations 1998–2008	18 (11)	3 (3)			21	14
Cooil Shelagh, Andreas						
Stray find 1987	1 (1)				1	1
Ballaugh						
Stray find 2006	1 (1)				1	1
Maughold						
Stray finds 2015	1 (1)	1 (1)			2	2
TOTAL	104	84	2	4	194	77

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be imagined that this situation would change. But the 1540 Dissolution deposits from Rushen Abbey, whilst containing an important element derived from potteries on their English lands, nevertheless maintained a continental element of around 25%. No north Devon-type products dating to this period have been identified, however during the following century Gravel-tempered ware (GTW), Granite-free ware (GFW), slipware (SLP), including sgraffito decorated examples (SGW), make their appearance.

The north Devon ware finds

As shown in Table 1, a total of 194 sherds of post-medieval north Devon pottery, representing a minimum of 77 vessels (MV), have been recovered from seven sites on the Isle of Man.

The first finds, from rabbit scrapes at Peel Castle, were made over 100 years ago, though they were not recognised until the 1990s. One is an unusually small sgraffito dish (Manx Museum Accession Number MM 76-7A) found in 1898 the other the base of a North Devon Gravel-free ware vessel (MM 76-7F/1) recovered in 1908 (Fig 1). Eight sherds from at least six vessels were retained in the Cowley Collection from Peel castle (Curphey 1980-82, 78-9) and excavations in the 1980s of a short-lived re-fortification during the English Civil War, between 1644 and 1651 (Curphey 1980-82, 78-9), produced over 100 sherds, from at

least 23 vessels, including Merida, late Saintonge and northern French wares. At the time it was considered unwise to extrapolate from this evidence as the deposits represented an imposed garrison whose material culture might well not reflect that of the rest of the island.

Excavation in the Old Grammar School at Castletown in the 1960s found four sherds from at least three vessels (Cubbon 1971) and exploration within the town itself in the 1990s (Davey and Johnson 1996) and again in 2007 (unfortunately never brought to publication) also produced a good range of North Devon-type products from 17th and early 18th century garden deposits, thus indicating that these wares were circulating at least in the emerging towns. In 2000 a single sherd was recovered from excavations in Peel at some distance from the castle.

More recently, as a result of improved relations between Manx National Heritage and the metal detecting community, groups of medieval and post-medieval sherds have been presented to the museum from a number of rural locations. These include small numbers of north Devon-type products from Andreas, Ballaugh and Maughold. Given the absence of medieval villages or DMVs, these finds are significant in that they must derive from night soil disbursed by the farms on which they have been located. If the 21 sherds and 14 vessels recovered from post-Dissolution deposits at Rushen Abbey are included – the site was



Figure 1. Early north Devon finds from Peel Castle. Image; Author

occupied by a 'normal' Manx quarterland farm after 1540 – then north Devon wares must be considered to have been in use throughout the island at least during the 17th century (Davey 1999, 56; Table 1).

Discussion

Evidence for the activities of north Devon merchants on the Isle of Man is provided from the late 16th century by the Ingates (duties paid on imported goods) customs records, Peel and Castletown being the major ports of entry. For example, in May 1594 William Shapley of Barnstaple landed a quantity of white soap (Dickinson 1997, 284). Although there has been no systematic research carried out into the movement of ceramics into the island, earthenware imports are regularly recorded, such as the two cart loads of mugs and the single 'Creedles (*sic*) of Cupes imported by John Ottiwell of Castletown in 1667 which are most likely to refer to pottery (Dickson 1997, 284). Pottery was almost certainly included in the 17th century trade recorded from North Devon to Peel, Douglas and Ramsey in the Isle of Man. It forms part of a regional pattern including all coastal Wales, Ireland and north-west England, and extending as far north as the Clyde (Grant 2005, 125-7).

The quantity of north Devon wares from the Isle of Man appears to be proportionally much greater than, for example, equivalent finds from Chester or North Wales (Rutter and Davey 1977, 19–21) or from individual production centres in northern and western France (Davey 2011). Their recent discovery in a number of rural locations suggests that, for a period at least, the North Devon potters were able to compete successfully against their rivals in north-west England and North Wales across a wide socio-economic spectrum.

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Medieval Ceramics
Reviews

