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MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM DARTFORD

By D. C. MYNARD

With an Appendix by Dr. G. C. Dunning

THE pottery described was recovered from the filling of a ditch revealed during the construction in 1959 of a Woolworth store, on the site of the former offices of Penny, Son and Parker in High Street, Dartford, extending to the Market Place (N.G.R. TQ 543740).

The ditch ran in a north-south direction from the High Street to Market Street almost parallel with the River Darent and about ninety yards to the west of Holy Trinity Church.

The ditch was discovered and excavated by Mr. L. C. Dale, who has kindly allowed this publication of his discovery.¹ No section was drawn but the excavator noted that the ditch was 10 ft. wide and 6 ft. deep. The filling was also unrecorded apart from the fact that a seam of black organic material, varying in thickness from 1 ft. to 2 ft. 6 in., ran throughout the whole of the observed length of the ditch, which was in places destroyed by a succession of later rubbish pits and cellars.

The pottery from the ditch is referred to by the abbreviation P.P. Other sherds here published, were collected on a development site in 1958 on the site of Marks and Spencer's store, and are referred to by M.S.,² and several residual sherds from the ditch site are referred to by R.

The ditch group is of particular interest as it includes a knight jug (P.P.28), a jug with a zoomorphic decoration (P.P.29) and part of an aquamanile (P.P.17), all stratified in the black organic layer with other local wares which can be given a general date range of mid-thirteenth to early-fourteenth century, by comparison with recently published material from Eynsford Castle,³ the majority being allied to those from Eynsford phase D (c. 1300 to 1312).

¹ 1951. On the south side of Watling Street, the shop of Messrs. Penny, Son and Parker and two other shops were demolished for the erection of a Woolworth store. This site proved more difficult to examine than the northern one because most trenches were mechanically excavated. However, with the co-operation of the contractors, some finds were recovered. The bulk of the medieval pottery came from the remaining sections of a ditch cut into the Romano-British layers (cf. *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxvi (1971), 210 ff.) (L.C.D.).

² A limited amount of digging was done on an extension at the rear of Marks & Spencer's store on the north side of Watling Street, and a small number of medieval sherds were recovered, some in association with a very fragmentary building which had a chalk floor. The kind co-operation of the store manager is acknowledged. (L.C.D.)

³ *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxv (1971), 109-71.

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UNGLAZED WARES

JUGS

'Shelly-sandy' Ware

The fabric so called in the Eynsford report is a reduced grey sand-tempered ware with sparse shell grits. There are two jug-sherds in P.P.—a sagging base (not illustrated), diameter 21 cm., exactly paralleled at Eynsford, knife-trimmed, with buff core, smooth dark grey surface and faint grooves round the body; and a grooved strap-handle, P.P.1, with a thumbed strip running down the groove, a form found at Eynsford in completely sand-tempered ware in phase B (c. 1250–60).⁴

Sand-tempered Ware

Eight jug-sherds (three wall, two from one base, three handles) are exactly like the fabric at Eynsford called 'ST b', grey with smooth surfaces generally somewhat darker than the body. Two of the handles are normal at Eynsford in phase D (c. 1300) and perhaps earlier—P.P.2, an oval-sectioned strap-handle (rim-diameter 9 cm.) and P.P.3, a strap-handle with thumb-presses running down raised edges (rim-diameter 10.3 cm.). P.P.4, a rod-handle with slashed decoration (rim-diameter 10 cm.) is not paralleled at Eynsford.⁵ The base P.P.5, decorated with two rows of vertical slashes, averaging 7 cm. long (diameter 25.5 cm.), may be compared with a jug-base in the same fabric, with a single row of slashes from phase D at Eynsford.⁶

COOKING-POTS

'Sandy-shelly' Fabric

This form of shell-gritted ware, with a sandy surface quite unlike the regular local shell-tempered wares, is rare at Eynsford and generally grey with red-brown surfaces. Six sherds, perhaps from one vessel, were found in P.P., of which the rim, P.P.18, diameter 25 cm., is of the flat-topped form, slightly undercut, emergent at Eynsford in phase B and dominant in D (in other fabrics).

'Shelly-sandy' Fabric

This is a completely reduced, grey sand-tempered ware with some sparse shell-tempering added. It is common at Eynsford in phase B, and in cooking-pots, down to D. Thirty-six sherds were found, six of which were base sherds and all were almost flat. Four typical rims are illustrated P.P.19–22, P.P.19, diameter 22.7 cm., P.P.20, diameter 20.5 cm., P.P.21, diameter 20.2 cm., P.P.22, diameter 25.6 cm.

⁴ *Ibid.*, fig. 19, BB3, B27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, fig. 22, 37, 39.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fig. 24, D52.

Sand-tempered Fabrics

Hard fine light grey ware with smooth surfaces, generally darker externally. Seven wall sherds were found.

BOWLS

'Shelly-sandy' Fabric

Two rims were found. P.P.23, simple flanged rim, diameter 34.4 cm., with thumb impressions around the top edge. P.P.24, complete profile of a shallow bowl with everted flange rim, diameter 29.2 cm., sloping down internally. Both are completely reduced. The thumbed flange is seen on a bowl at Eynsford in phase D.⁷

SKILLET

'Shelly-sandy' Fabric

P.P.25, diameter 32 cm., part of rim with hollow tubular handle. There is a similar example at Eynsford in phase D,⁸ but the handle is not completely tubular as in this example where the tube came right through the wall of the vessel. Certainly this Dartford example could have been used as a spout.

STORAGE JARS

'Shelly-sandy' Fabric (London-Middlesex type?)

Wall-sherds of perhaps three different vessels. P.P.26, is the best example; all have the fine horizontal rilling on the body and applied vertical thumbed strips. A similar example was found at Eynsford in phase B.⁹ Other wall-sherds from a like vessel, P.P.27, are in fabric like Eynsford 'S T b'.

Residual Sherds

A heavy thick base in a soft sand-tempered ware, dark grey with buff brown surfaces, possibly Romano-British, not illustrated. Two sherds in a reduced 'Sandy-shelly' ware: R.I., wall sherd from jug, with incised wavy lines between horizontal shallow grooves; R.2, base from small cooking-pot, diameter 12.3 cm., roughly knife-trimmed, more shelly than usual.

MARKET SQUARE

From the Marks & Spencer area came a small group of uncertain association. The only three sherds worth mentioning are M.S.1 jug rim, diameter 10.4 cm., and handle in sand-tempered fabric. The strap

⁷ *Ibid.*, fig. 21, 22.

⁸ *Ibid.*, fig. 17, B14.

⁹ *Ibid.*, fig. 19, B12.

handle is heavily stabbed and is typical of many examples found at Eynsford, in phase D. M.S.2, unusual bowl rim, diameter 33.5 cm., in 'Sandy-shelly' ware, light grey with buff surfaces. M.S.3, cooking-pot rim, sand-tempered fabric, flanged rim with convex top and pointed inner bead, short neck.

GLAZED WARES

The range of fabrics was less wide than at Eynsford, but again the London area products predominate.

JUGS

(a) *London Area Wares*

Without slip: Hard, fine, sand-tempered fabrics, generally with grey body and orange-brown surfaces, which are sometimes streaky grey-brown internally. The glaze is of good quality, generally a shiny dark olive-green with darker green speckles. Seven sherds—four wall sherds, two with faint vertical brush-marks; two rims, both with very mottled green glaze, P.P.7, a flat-topped bead-rim, diameter 10 cm., and P.P.8 from a baluster jug, diameter 12.7 cm.; a thumbled base, P.P.6, with runs of glaze from the upper body and a patch of glaze on the underside.

With slip: Very much as the above but a white slip goes just inside the rim and covers the body almost to the base, showing that the jug was held in an inverted position and dipped into the glaze. This is the typical 'London Baluster' fabric, already found at Eynsford in phase B and dominant in phase D, ending in 1312. It is the most common ware in this Dartford group. P.P.9 and P.P.10 are wall sherds with raised strips of clay added to the slipped body before glazing, the strips decorated with a rouletted pattern of small diamonds giving a trellis effect, a decoration common at Eynsford.¹⁰ P.P.11 is a reconstructed baluster with a rod handle, like the Eynsford example Fig. 24 D54 except that this does not have a thumbled base. P.P.12 and 12a are strap handles; 12a includes a wall sherd with light vertical grooves or brushmarks. The grooved rod handle P.P.13 has two pieces of clay added at the top; this is reminiscent of the 'spurs' on French jugs.¹¹ P.P.14 is a thumbled base, diameter 15.1 cm.

(b) *Surrey Ware*

Off-white Surrey ware, fine sand-tempered buff ware with a good quality olive green glaze, at Eynsford in phase D. A thumbled base, P.P.15, diameter 18 cm., and two wall-sherds.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fig. 24, D57.

¹¹ K. J. Barton, 'Medieval Pottery at Rouen', *Arch. Journ.*, cxxii (1965), 73-86.

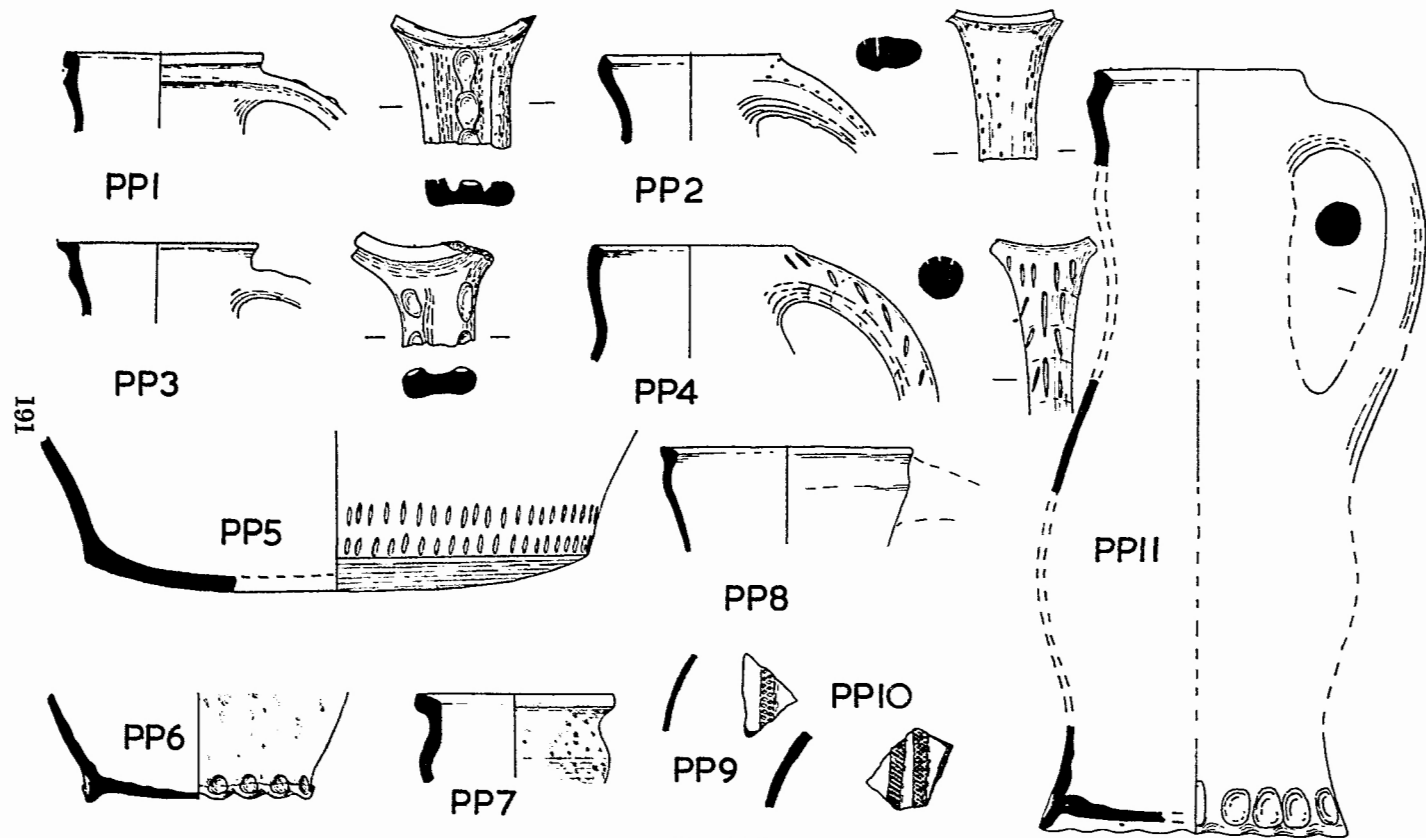


FIG. 1 ($\frac{1}{4}$).

(c) *Tyler Hill Ware*

One sherd of a strap handle, P.P.16 (not illustrated) in fine sand-tempered ware, with grey core, orange brown surfaces, patchy olive green glaze, is exactly like the material produced at the Tyler Hill kilns, near Canterbury, which has a distribution mainly in east Kent.¹² Although little of this ware was found at Eynsford, its discovery at Dartford is not unexpected.

AQUAMANILE P.P.17 (Fig. 2)

Large sherd of the rear part of an animal body with simple rod legs. The fabric, unknown at Eynsford, is a buff-grey, fine sand-tempered ware with pink surfaces. There is a good quality yellow green external glaze which is darker in patches and some glaze has run inside the body. The body appears to have been thrown on a wheel, the legs added in the same way as many jug handles: by being pushed through a hole in the body and smoothed over internally and externally. There are raised vertical lines running down the body, no doubt a stylised version of hair or bristles. The rear view shows an external scar where a tail, which may have continued up the body to form a handle running along the back, has been broken away.

STONE MORTAR

The ditch-filling, P.P., also contained half of the lower part of a globose mortar (Fig. 5) in fine grey calcareous sandstone with sparse crumbled fossil shells of *ostrea* and *cardium* type, perhaps a superb bed of Kent Rag. It has a base-roll and traces of lugs, in the general fashion of mortars from c. 1300 in Caen stone,¹³ Burr stone¹⁴ and other materials (as distinct from the Purbeck mortars, which tend to be conical rather than globose and usually without the base-roll). The dressing is fairly fine on the exterior, with a claw-tool effect, horizontal on the body, vertical on the roll. It is ground smooth inside, neither towards the centre nor the sides but eccentrically, so that the base slopes from 45 to 30 mm. in thickness, and was broken before it wore through.

Mr. L. C. Dale also reports an iron tripod.

¹² *Arch. Cant.*, lv (1942), 57-64. Surface finds from the site in the Royal Museum, Canterbury.

¹³ *J.B.A.A.*, 3rd series, xxxiii (1969), 82-4 (from Dover).

¹⁴ *Med. Arch.*, v (1961), 279-84 (from Northolt, Middx.).

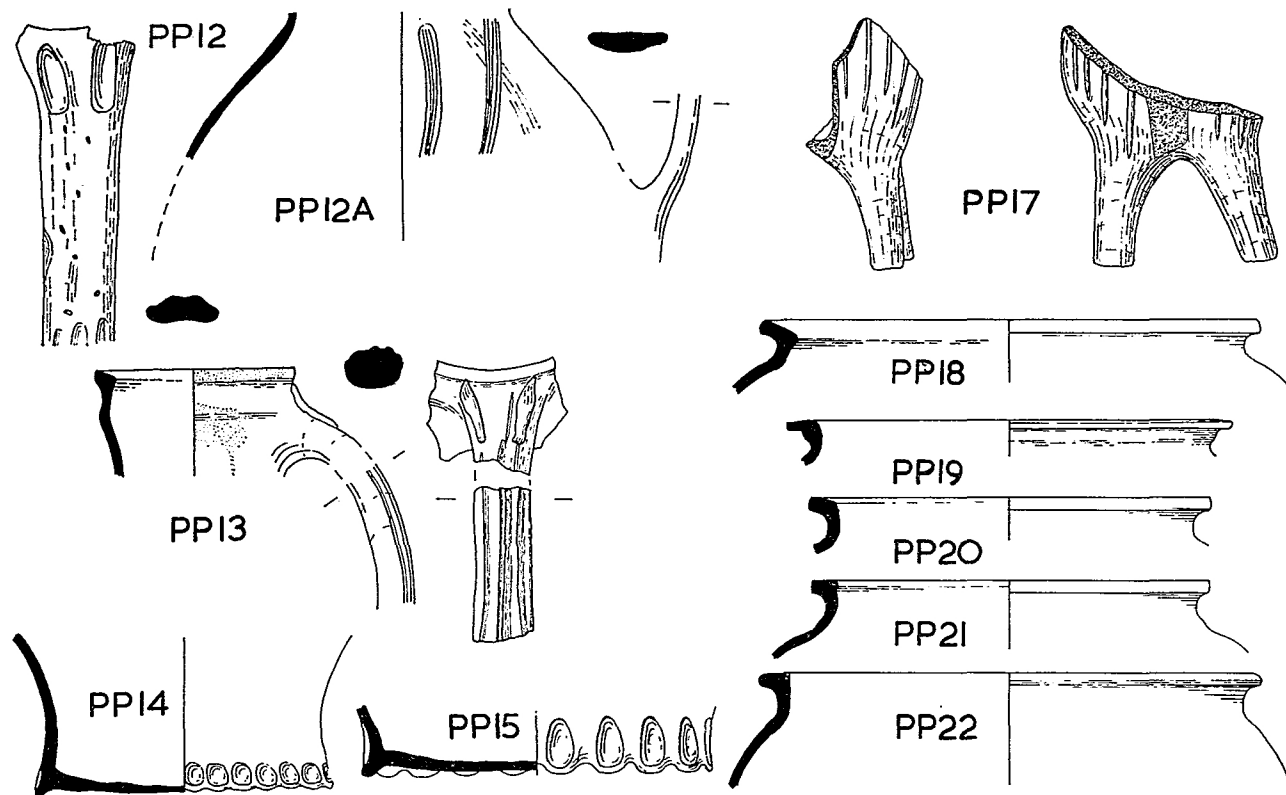


FIG. 2 ($\frac{1}{2}$).

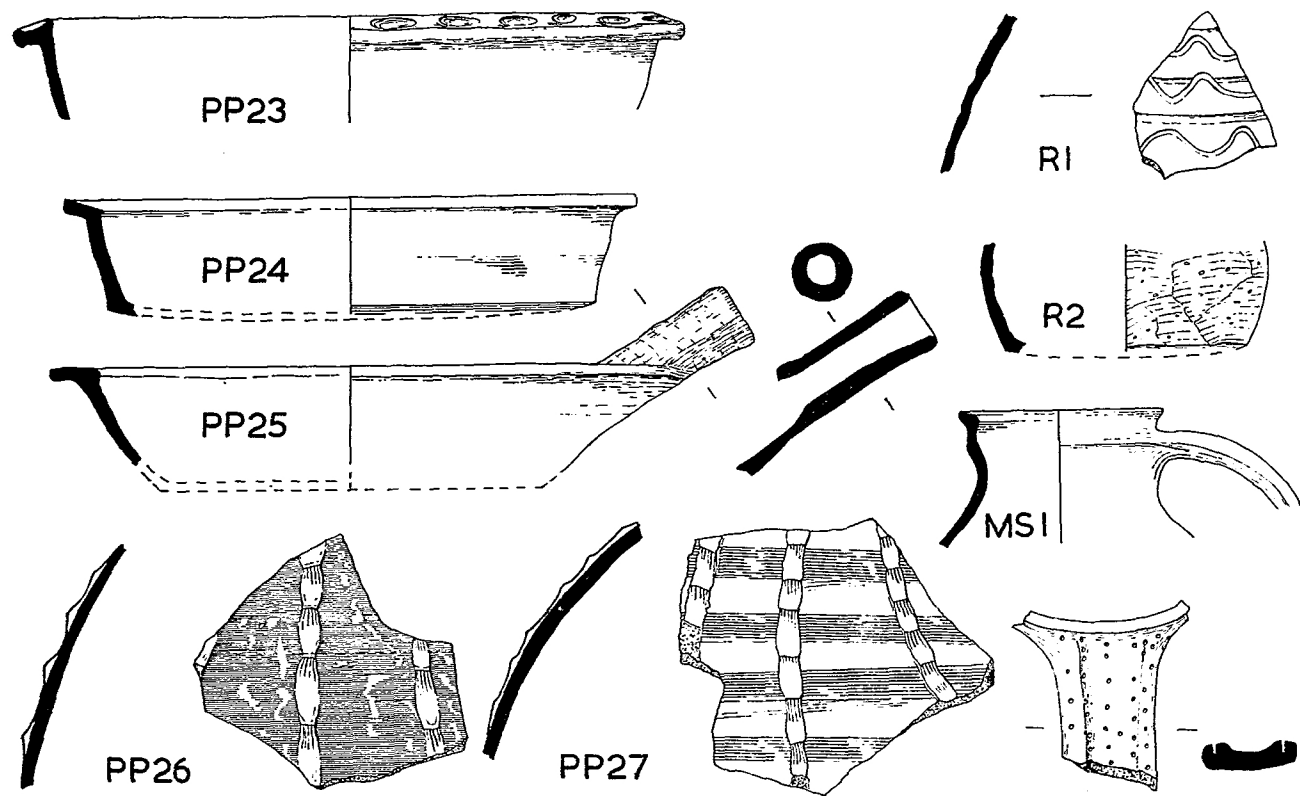


FIG. 3 (1).

APPENDIX

KNIGHT JUG (Fig. 4, P.P.28, and Plate I)

Top and most of the body of a knight jug made of fine light orange/red ware, throughout and on surfaces. The outside is entirely glazed, covering the spout, handle and figural decoration, and the body down as far as is preserved. The glaze is glassy in appearance, thick and even, and streaked vertically; it is dark green with a reddish brown tone due to the body colour showing through.

The jug has a cylindrical neck joining the body at a well defined angle. The rim is rounded on the top and thickened on the outside as a collar about 2 cm. deep. Below the collar is a broad swelling in low relief.

The spout is long and tubular, level with the rim at its upper end. It is held by a thick strut to the upper part of the neck.

The handle is a solid rod, grooved lengthways. At both ends it is marked by large thumb impressions.

The jug had plastic decoration of two knights on each side of the neck, facing the spout. The knights on the side illustrated are largely original; those on the other side were missing and are wholly restored. The knight nearer the spout is mounted on a horse (head restored), with its legs extended in the attitude of galloping. The figure behind him is not mounted, and has a rod-like body only. Both knights wear helmets with three large crests (partly restored) and each carried a long triangular shield decorated with horizontal lines, alternately vertical and oblong (probably rouletted) and irregular oval tool marks.

Below the spout was the figure of a stag (head and neck only present), shown in profile, with long pointed ear and a stab marked pellet as an eye. The antlers are highly stylised and pass up each side of the spout, with collar like pellets at intervals to represent the tines.

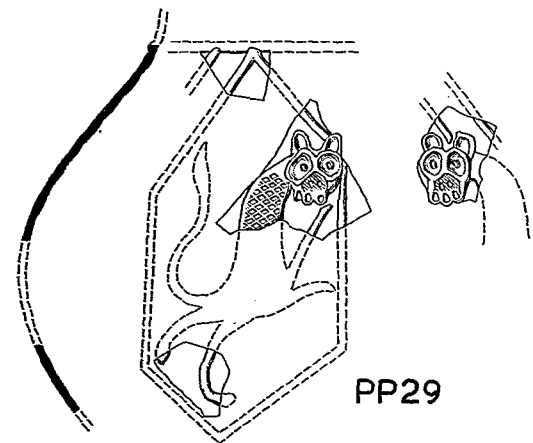
Round the bulge below the figural decoration is an applied finger pressed strip forming a large chevron.

The lower part of the jug and the base are restored, with groups of thumb marks at intervals along the basal angle. The height, as restored, is 41.5 cm. (16.3 in.) and the body diameter is 22 cm. (8.6 in.). The restoration was made in 1964 by Mr. J. Yasi, in the Conservation Laboratory of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London.

The knight jug found at Dartford is an import from further north in England, probably from the north or east Midlands rather than from Yorkshire. In these regions at least three sources for the style are known and others are suspected.

The type-specimen was found in Nottingham¹⁵ and is presumed to be a product of the pottery kilns there. The decoration is in two zones:

¹⁵ *Annual Report of the Ferial Archaeological Group*, 1955, 18-23.



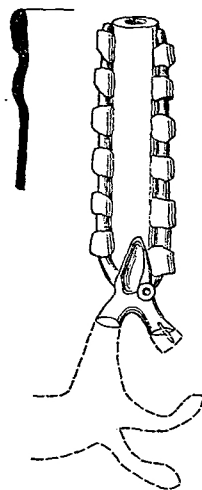
PP29



MS3



MS2



PP28

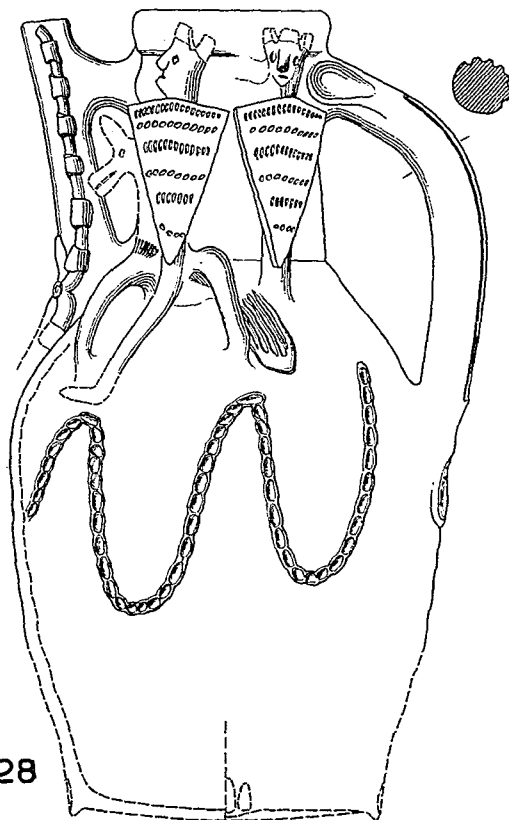
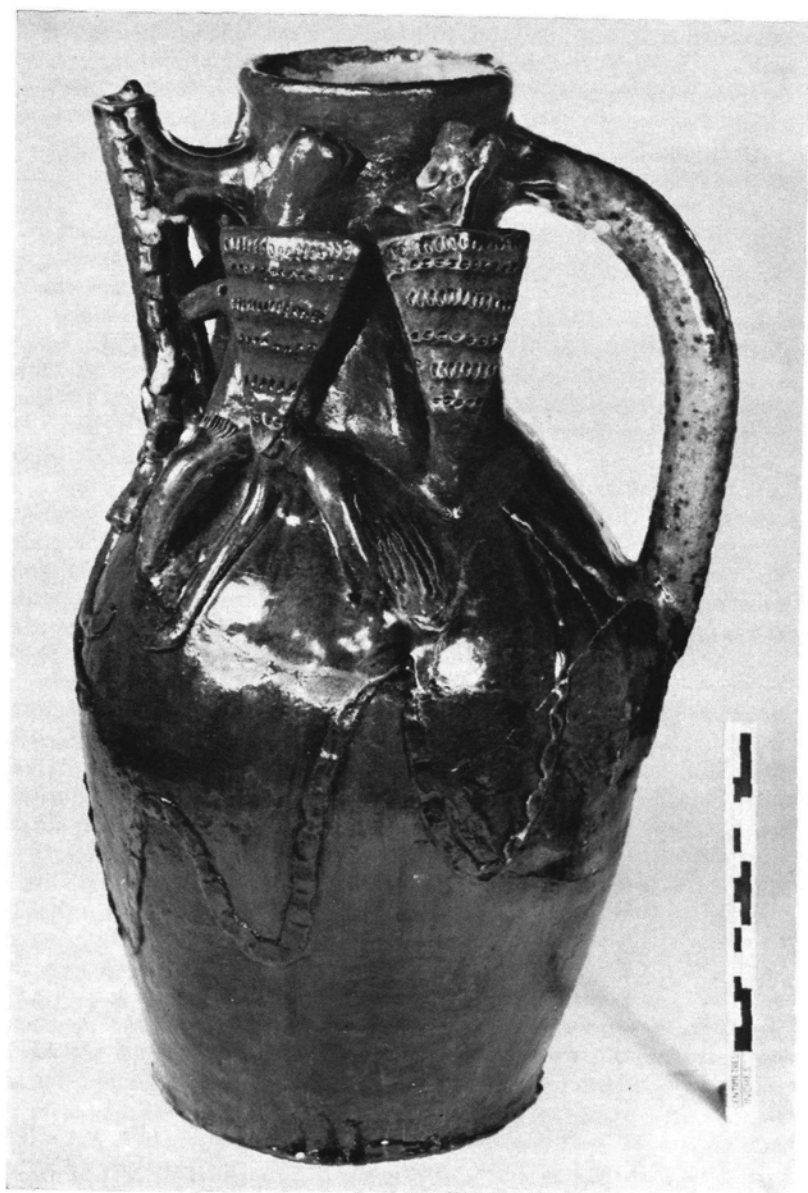


FIG. 4 (1).



Knight Jug from Dartford.

Photo: London Museum

knights, both mounted on horseback on the neck, and the stag-hunt below them in a continuous zone around the body. In some respects the knight jug found at Hatterboard, near Scarborough¹⁶ is a closer analogy for the Dartford jug. On this jug both the knights are reduced to rod-like bodies and neither is mounted; below the figures is a finger-printed strip round the bulge; and the rod handle is also grooved lengthways. Differences between the two jugs are: a human figure on the front of the spout instead of a stag, and structural details such as the conical neck and plain rim. Although the fabric of the Hatterboard jug is not typical of the Scarborough locality it is more likely to be the product of kilns there than elsewhere.

Other centres making knight jugs were at Hallgate, Doncaster and at Winksley, near Ripon.¹⁷ Until illustrations of these jugs are published, detailed comparison is not feasible. However, at Hallgate there is a tubular spouted jug with lateral face-masks and a panel decoration on the body of straight and wavy strips, a partial analogy for the strip on the Dartford jug.¹⁸

Among the knight jugs sent to other regions, that found in Cambridge¹⁹ has several similarities to the one at Dartford. On this jug the stag is also on the front with its antlers up both sides of the spout, and the rod handle is grooved lengthways; but both knights are mounted. The fabric differs from that of the other knight jugs mentioned above; it is grey and sandy, and a source in the region of Lincoln has been suggested for this ware.

From this brief survey it will be seen that the 'knight' style of figural decoration is, with certain variations, remarkably uniform throughout the northern region. The differences relate mainly to the knights, which are either mounted on horses, or reduced simply to rod-like bodies; these forms can occur separately or together on the same pot, as at Dartford. The stag-hunt varies from a complete scene with the stags attacked by hounds (Nottingham) to the separate figure of a stag on the spout and hounds at the sides (Cambridge) and finally to the stag alone in this position (Dartford). These differences appear to indicate local variations rather than chronological changes; as regards the skill and competence of the potting, and the details of the figures and shields, there is little to choose between any of these sources. It is not possible to say, from the material at present available, that the knight jug style, like that of the related face-mask jugs studied by Mrs. Le Patourel, 'originated at any one of the places where

¹⁶ J. G. Rutter, *Medieval Pottery in the Scarborough Museum, 13th and 14th Centuries* (1961), 16, fig. 2, no. 8.

¹⁷ *Med. Arch.*, x (1966), 160-4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, fig. 67, no. 2.

¹⁹ B. Rackham, *Medieval English Pottery*, London, 1948, pl. 12A.

it was made'. In any case, an origin for it in the north Midlands or in south Yorkshire is reasonably certain.

Examination of the fabric and glaze of the Dartford jug has not helped to solve the problem of its origin. Smooth, slightly sandy, oxidized fabrics glazed in brownish-green, occur over a wide area of north Lincolnshire and south Yorkshire (Humber ware), and the known kilns produce pottery in a whole range of colours. Mrs. Le Patourel has kindly examined a sherd of the Dartford jug and considers that it is not from a kiln in Yorkshire.

In all these uncertainties and factors that are by no means easy to assess, it is at present not possible to be more precise than that the

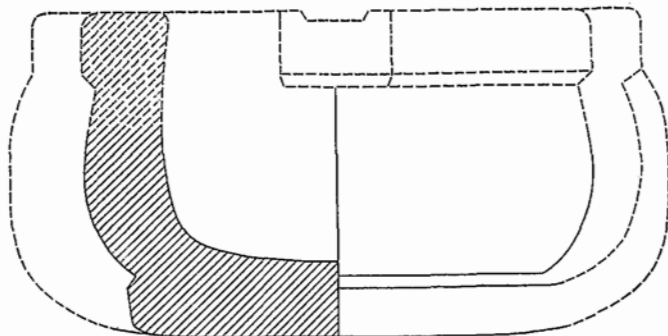


FIG. 5 ($\frac{1}{4}$).

Dartford jug is an import to Kent from the north Midlands. It is one of the few examples of this type found away from the sources, and in association with other pottery. The date, either side of 1300, usually assigned to knight jugs, falls well within the brackets of the deposit as a whole (p. 187).

It may be added that at two other sites in Kent, Canterbury and Stonar,²⁰ knight jugs are represented by fragments. On the adjacent part of the continent, knight jugs have been found at Bruges and at Aardenburg in Zeeland;²¹ these examples were no doubt carried to the Netherlands by the English wool trade.

JUG WITH ZOOMORPHIC DECORATION (Fig. 4, P.P.29)

Four sherds of fine, grey sandy ware. The inside surface is light brick-red; the outside has a thin white slip and lustrous mottled green glaze.

²⁰ In the Royal Museum, Canterbury and Deal Castle Museum.

²¹ *Berichten van de Rijksdienst voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek*, 15-16 (1965-66), 199-200, pl. XXIV, 1-2.

MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM DARTFORD

The decoration is of six-sided panels formed by narrow strips, each containing an animal in low relief, all coloured dark brown. The animal is standing, with one foreleg raised and the head in full face. The features are identical on both the heads, the ears are small and upright; the eyes are large and round, with stab marks for the pupils; and the nostrils and teeth are also shown as stab marks. Fur on the neck and body is shown conventionally by diamond rouletting. The character of the features and the stance as far as this can be reconstructed suggest that the animals are felines. The two animals face in opposite directions, so presumably the panels were on the side of the jug. The only relevant parallel is a jug found in Cannon Street, London,²² which has panel-style decoration containing quadrupeds, and birds in the spaces between the panels. Elements of the decoration are coloured reddish-brown and dark green. These jugs were almost certainly made at the same place, not yet located, but probably in east Surrey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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²² British Museum, *Catalogue of English Pottery* (1903), 63, B40, fig. 49 B. Rackham, *op. cit.* in n. 15, coloured pl. B, facing p. 8.