

## Pottery from a late 12th Century Well-filling and other Medieval Finds from St. John's College, Oxford, 1947

By E. M. JOPE, H. M. JOPE, and S. E. RIGOLD

IN April-May 1947, the foundations for the new building at St. John's were dug out by mechanical excavator. Unfortunately no arrangements were made for any concurrent archaeological examination of the site, in spite of the fact that the archaeological levels were being completely removed, making perhaps the largest hole in Oxford's soil since the New Bodleian excavation in 1938. Much material evidence of archaeological value had already been destroyed before the operations were brought to our notice. It is a sobering comment that in these days of archaeological awareness such a destructive operation can have been carried out without a thought for archaeological responsibilities. Oxford has lost so much by lack of adequate recording in the past that every piece of soil containing medieval remains in their original context has become exceedingly precious.

Nevertheless, some results of considerable value were obtained from this site, notably the recovery of a large group of pottery associated with a coin of Henry II found in the filling of a well. Lack of datable pottery of the later twelfth century is one of the outstanding lacunae in the study of English medieval pottery. This well was first observed one afternoon, and could only be examined that evening, destruction being relentlessly continued the next morning. Work was in fact continued by two of us (E.M.J. and H.M.J.) far into the night by artificial light in a very confined space, and under these conditions we were able to excavate the well filling to within about 7 feet of the bottom, as estimated by comparison with the water table indicated by the well bottoms on the site of the Bodleian Extension (*Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 95). This filling yielded a considerable homogeneous group of pottery, together with a much-used coin of Henry II, minted 1168-80, as well as remains of wooden vessels. Pottery of this period associated with coins is extremely rare in England, and it is most unfortunate that no facilities could be obtained for a proper and more leisurely excavation of this well right to the bottom, especially as it is now irretrievably covered by a substantial stone building.

## POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

One of us (S.E.R.) kept watch on the general progress of the work on this site, and collected much pottery from the rest of the excavated area, as well as from the soil-dump in Aristotle Lane. Owing largely to the method of working, little of this had any archaeological context, though some, such as the lamps and drinking vessels, had intrinsic interest. One pit (H) with sealed deposits was found, yielding a valuable associated group of thirteenth century pottery. For some 30 feet back from St. Giles's seventeenth and eighteenth century cellars had destroyed almost every trace of earlier remains. Behind this lay a belt of gravel, with trenches 3 or 4 feet traversing it; here the earlier medieval levels had been little disturbed, but the mechanical excavator gave no chance of recovering any plans. The well and pit H lay in this area. Behind this, at the back of the site, lay an area of rubbish pits, earth-closets, etc., of the seventeenth century onwards, but any early levels had again been disturbed, and early finds were obviously 'derived'. Systematic work on the whole site was confined to the sides of the area excavated for building, in which, fortunately, the well appeared.

*History of the Properties on the Site.* The area examined is made up of half the 'Dolphin' site (the other half of which is the Trinity entrance) and the tenement that St. John's acquired from the Churchwardens of St. Martin's on 1 May 1866. The history of the latter is traced (Stevenson and Salter, *Early Hist. St. John's College*, O.H.S., n.s., 1 (1939), 503) back to 1412, when it was a messuage consisting of a tenement of William Appulton on the north, and a shop belonging to the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen on the south. There is probably now little hope of tracing the history of this property back any earlier, but it does appear to have been actually occupied as a shop and a tenement in 1412. (For a plan of the site, see *Early Hist. St. John's College*, opp. p. 501.)

The 'Dolphin' site had a frontage of 84 feet northwards from the present north-west corner of Balliol (of which frontage we are concerned only with the northernmost 30 feet), and its history is complex. It appears to be the *Domus de Brampton* of the Osney Rentals from 1270 to 1374 (*Cart. Osney*, III (O.H.S., xci, 1931), 113, 126, 143, 149, 158), and was held by *Johannes de Brampton* in the Hundred Rolls of 1279 (*Collectanea* IV, O.H.S., XLVII (1905), 86, no. 1018). In the Osney Rentals from 1353 to 1428 (*Cart. Osney*, III, 168, 179, 197, 201, 206, 216, 233) there appears in the corresponding place a *Domus Wm. Keyser*, then in 1449 as *Ten. Keyser ex parte boreali de la Newin* (*Cart. Osney*, III, 243) and is so styled up to 1498 (*Cart. Osney*, III, 267, 284). It appears that by 1503 the south part of this site consisted of a large tenement and a brewhouse which had belonged to James Zouch (died 1503); the north part was a tenement belonging to the charity of St. Mary in the church of St. Mary Magdalen, adjacent to their shop mentioned above (*Oxford City Properties*, O.H.S., LXXXIII (1925),

256 ff.). The north part passed to John Hennys and then to Robert Jarmayne, then to William Jarmayne, and then in 1560 to Robert Lynke. On the Osney rental of 1498 (*Cart. Osney*, III, 2284) *Rob. Jerman porter* is written in a later hand over *Ten. Willelmi Keyser ex parte boreali de la Newin*, thus showing that these two sequences of records are referring to the same property.

*The Well.* The well was 36 feet back from the present street front of St. Giles's, and 40 feet south of the main St. John's building; it was therefore probably at the back of the early medieval houses on the site. It was elliptical in plan, 4 ft. 3 in. by 3 ft. 3 in., cut into the natural gravel, and unlined. The sides were sharp and vertical, and it may therefore have become choked, the shaft having been used perhaps as a rubbish-pit, even before it fell in appreciably. In any case, such unlined pits in this gravel seem to have had an effective life of less than half a century (*Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 94-5). By comparison with the water table of the Bodleian medieval wells, the St. John's well was cleared by us to within about 7 feet of the bottom, which must have been some 20 feet below the present ground surface. The main filling consisted mostly of fairly clean yellow gravel, but it had two black layers 12 to 14 in. thick separated by 1 foot of clean gravel, at 8 feet and 10 feet below the present surface. These layers were clearly all part of the same filling process, as several sherds from the upper layer fitted sherds from the lower. The black layers, especially the upper, contained many food bones, considerable remains of blackened straw-like material (perhaps remains of thatch), and other vegetable remains, layers of pale grey ash, and numerous fragments of blackened wood, especially carpenters' shavings and chips, fragmentary remains of wickerwork, and poorly preserved remains of two wooden vessels (FIG. 19). Most important of all, from these black layers came the extensive collection of pottery (described below; FIGS. 16-18) of the later twelfth century, extending perhaps a little into the thirteenth century, and, from the lower black layer, the much-used coin of Henry II, minted 1168-80.

*The Period of Occupation of the Site.* While documentary evidence on this particular site cannot prove its occupation before the thirteenth century, the archaeological evidence indicates occupation extending back into the first half of the twelfth century, but not earlier. In general, both documentary and archaeological evidence suggest an expansion of the inhabited area up St. Giles's from the North Gate in the century following the Norman conquest.

Documentary evidence suggests also a continuous habitation on this site through the later Middle Ages to more recent times. Finds of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on this site were prolific, and there was a reasonable amount of what can now be considered as later medieval pottery (compare, for instance, *Oxoniensia*, VII (1942), 76-9).

## POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

### THE FINDS

#### I. ASSOCIATED POTTERY AND WOODEN VESSELS FROM WELL-FILLING OF c. 1200

The coin found in this filling was very much worn, and though minted in 1168-80, must have remained in use until at least the end of the twelfth century. The well cannot therefore have been filled in before this date. Although no strict argument for an upper limit of date for the filling can be derived from this coin, it is most probable that the active lifetimes of the coin and the pottery extended over a similar period, and that the well was filled in some time early in the thirteenth century. Other datable late twelfth century pottery is rare; the base of one pot containing coins of Henry II is known from Leicester (Soc. Antiq. Res. Report xv (1948), *Jewry Wall Site, Leicester*, 229, fig. 62), and some is known from a well filling at Taunton Castle (*Antiq. Journ.*, xxi (1941), 68), and also unpublished groups from Deddington Castle and Clarendon Palace, Wiltshire.

(a) *Glazed Pottery.* This extensive group of pottery is homogeneous as compared with other associated groups from Oxford, there being no vessels that by external parallels should be considered as in use later than the earlier years of the thirteenth century. The glazed wares correspond largely with Mr. Bruce-Mitford's 'Group A' from the Bodleian site, with some examples of his 'Well I' fabrics, and an occasional finer and harder ware (e.g. FIG. 16, no. 8, where the tripod form suggests nevertheless an early date). The coarse wares from this well-filling correspond with, for instance, those from the upper twelfth century layers at Deddington Castle, which also yielded Oxford type tripod-pitchers of 'group A' fabric.

The baggy tripod-pitcher in sandy, rather friable fabric ('group A') usually with a yellowish glaze, with tubular spout, small side handle, main strap handle with twisted rope filling, somewhat irregular broadly spaced girth grooves and vertical applied strips, either wavy or finger-pressed, on the body, is a typical Oxford style, now well recognized (*Antiq. Journ.*, xx (1940), 103 ff.; *Oxoniensia*, iv (1939), 96 ff.; *Oriel Record*, Jan., 1942, 175 ff.). Apart from the numerous examples from Oxford City, where 'group A' is considered as late twelfth century to c. 1210, this identical type of Oxford-style tripod-pitcher is known from Ascot-under-Wychwood, 15 miles to the north-west, where it is probably not much later than mid-twelfth century; from Aylesbury, 19 miles to the east of Oxford, associated with a group of pottery of the twelfth century, though apparently extending into the thirteenth century (*Rec. Bucks.*, ix, 282). To the south the recorded limit of the Oxford type seems to be only 5 miles away at Abingdon, though some of the Wallingford and Reading tripods, and even occasional pieces from Avebury, over 30 miles away to the south-west, are very similar indeed to the Oxford style. Thus this particular

style of tripod-pitcher appears to have been in current use in the second half of the twelfth century, and extending a little into the thirteenth, over an area of something like 20 miles radius from Oxford, similar to the radius of distribution of vessels from the Brill kilns a century later (*Oxoniensia*, x (1945), 96). The general type of tripod-pitcher is virtually restricted to the Oxford region and west country (*Antiq. Journ.*, xx (1940), 103 ff.), and outside about a 20 mile radius from Oxford other stylistic variations on the general theme are found. It is still impossible to say where these Oxford-style tripod-pitchers were made, but it can hardly have been very far from Oxford; a 'pottery' (*ollaria*) worth 10s. yearly is recorded at Bladon in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (*V.C.H. Oxon.*, 1, 405), and extensive pottery making seems to have started at Brill, 10 miles north-east of Oxford, at least by the early years of the thirteenth century (*Oxoniensia*, x (1945), 96), but as yet no manufactory seems to be known in the immediate locality which is recorded as working during the twelfth century.

The handles (FIG. 16, nos. 5, 5a) of pitchers in this well-filling seem intended to give the general impression of twisted rope handles, but for much less trouble in the making, and some of the vessels appear to have weaker shoulder profiles than the best tripod-pitchers (FIG. 16, nos. 5, 6).

The pitchers with more vertical necks (FIG. 16, no. 3; FIG. 17, no. 3) probably represent stylistically the later members of this group, and vessels of this form appear in the 'Well I' group from the Bodleian (*Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 100, fig. 23; probably *c.* 1210-1230). From the St. John's well-filling they are still of the sandy wares of the 'group A' and 'Well I' type, and only one tripod base (FIG. 16, no. 8) is of a finer, harder fabric.

FIG. 17, no. 1 shows a baggy pitcher in hard shell-filled ware. Too much of this vessel survives for it to be considered as a stray from an earlier deposit, and the extended use of this shelly fabric in the Oxford region through the later twelfth century and into the thirteenth century is now well recognized (see below, and *Oxoniensia*, XI-XII (1946-7), 171; compare *Antiq. Journ.*, XXXI (1951), 49-50, for the same trends in the Bedford region).

Notable absentees from the glazed pitcher series in the St. John's well filling are the bifid rims and less baggy forms appearing in the 'group A' series at the Bodleian (*Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 98; fig. 22, A, C, G), and indeed, tall jugs generally.

FIG. 16. *Glazed Pottery*

(1) Large number of fragments of a typical Oxford-style tripod-pitcher, with tubular spout and wavy applied vertical strips over rather irregular girth grooves; strap handle with twisted rope effect. The complete vessel probably had a subsidiary side handle, as no. 2, below. Of rather friable sandy fabric with grey core

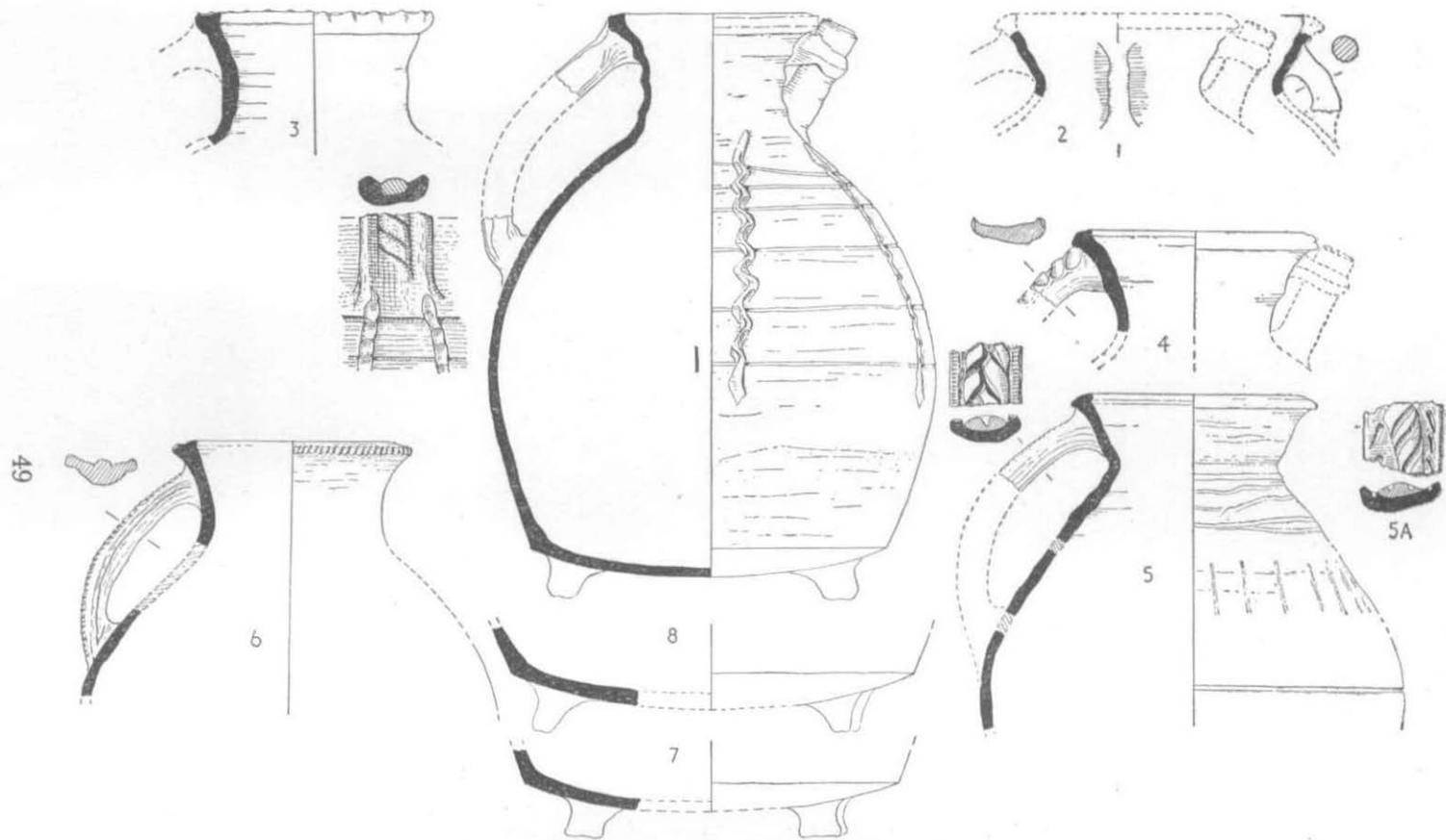


FIG. 16  
 GLAZED PITCHERS FROM THE ASSOCIATED GROUP IN THE WELL FILLING AT ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE  
 Scale :  $\frac{1}{4}$

E. M. JOPE, H. M. JOPE, AND S. E. RIGOLD

and buff surface, with pimply glaze, mostly pale olive, but varying from lemon yellow to pale brownish in places; glaze on both interior and exterior of neck, on exterior only of body, and becoming very scanty towards base. This corresponds to Bruce-Mitford's 'group A' fabric (*Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 115-18). Some pieces of this pot have been burnt, after breakage. There are smaller fragments of at least two or three other examples of this type of pitcher and fabric in this group from the well-filling.

(2) Part of neck of tripod-pitcher, with small side handle attached, such as are quite usual on Oxford pitchers of this type (*Oriel Record*, Jan. 1942, 177, fig. 1, no. 2); of fabric similar to no. 1 above, but with green glaze on exterior only.

(3) Jug with frilled rim; no evidence for type of spout (probably tubular) or handle (probably strap); of rather friable sandy grey fabric with buff-brown surface and olive green glaze, covering exterior, but patchy on interior.

(4) Top part of jug, with simple strap handle frilled at the edges; no evidence for spout (probably tubular); of friable sandy buff-grey ware with an orange to dirty olive glaze over interior and exterior surfaces. Much blackened, and with soot still adhering.

(5) Part of a jug, with strap handle carrying an inserted rod of clay down the back, slashed in crude imitation of the real twisted rope effect (above, no. 1). (5a) shows a similar handle fragment in lighter fabric. Of friable sandy reddish fabric, with orange to olive glaze over exterior, quite thick in places on body, and evenly over interior of neck.

(6) Parts of jug with notched rim, and simple strap handle carrying a rod of clay inserted down the back and pressed tightly in, but not slashed in any way—an undecorated version of (5) above. Of slightly less friable harsh sandy pale grey ware, with greyish surfaces and rough olive glaze.

(7) Part of base of tripod-pitcher, of orange-buff fabric, slightly less friable and sandy than (1)-(5) above. Some patches of pale orange-yellow glaze on base angle.

(8) Parts of base and lower body of a tripod-pitcher, with girth grooves and applied vertical wavy strips. This vessel is of a harder, finer and less sandy fabric than (1)-(5) above, but still of a sandy texture, with grey core and buff surfaces; olive green glaze, as usual, patchy near base. This fabric is comparable with those more usual towards the middle of the thirteenth century (e.g. Bodleian, Well 9), and there are very few other sherds of such fabric in the whole St. John's well group.

FIG. 17. *Glazed and Unglazed Pitchers*

(1) Numerous fragments of a plain baggy pitcher, with a strap-handle thumbed down a little on to the body. Of hard fine shell-filled fabric with grey core and even, light red surface. This seems to be the only pitcher of shelly fabric in the well-filling group. It may be compared with the pitcher from St. Giles's Churchyard (*Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), pl. x, no. 1), though the St. John's pitcher fabric is the finer, and may be closely paralleled among pitchers from late twelfth century levels at Deddington Castle.

(2) Top part of body of jug, with irregular broad grooving, of rather thick friable sandy ware with grey core and buff to grey surface; olive to orange glaze on exterior, with a little splashed down interior.

(3) Parts of a baggy pitcher, with vertical neck, and zones of parallel girth grooves; friable sandy fabric with grey core and buff surface; pimply olive brown

POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

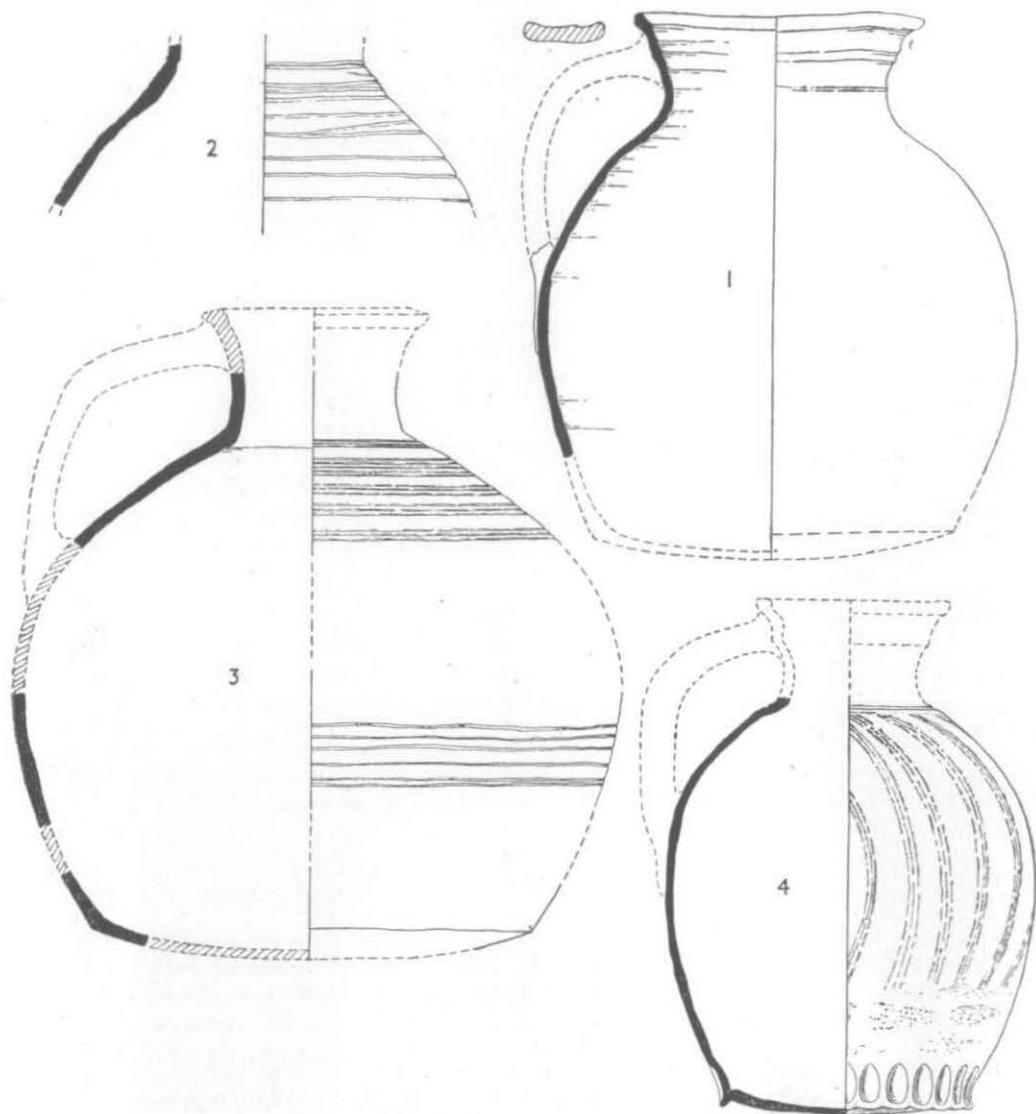


FIG. 17

JUGS FROM THE ASSOCIATED GROUP IN THE WELL-FILLING AT ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE (1-3) AND FROM LINCOLN HALL, TURL ST. (4)

1, unglazed; 2-4, glazed

Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}$

glaze on exterior, splashing down interior. Parts of another vessel in similar fabric, but less baggy, and with more regular grooving (not illustrated) are also among the finds in this group.

(4) A number of fragments of a jug decorated with delicate vertical comb markings, of friable brown sandy ware with patchy pale greenish to yellow glaze on the exterior, were contained in the well-filling. It was hardly possible to reconstruct the vessel, but illustrated here is an example of exactly similar fabric and decoration from Lincoln Hall, Turl Street (*Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 198); fragments of similar vessels are known from no. 41 Queen Street (*Oxoniensia*, III (1938), 172). This type of glaze is often insufficiently fired, and may be classed with the thin wash of yellowish glaze to be found round the rim flange of a certain type of thirteenth century cooking-pots (*Oxoniensia*, VII (1942), 73; XIII (1948), 68, 73; *Berks. Archaeol. Journ.*, L (1947), 60). These glazes are also often distinguished by an abnormally high content of Tin in what is fundamentally a Lead Silicate glaze (of the order 5 per cent.); this is in fact the case with the glazes on these jugs from St. John's, Lincoln Hall and Queen Street, Oxford, as shown by spectrographic analysis.

(b) *Coarse Pottery*. Sandy wares predominate over shell-filled wares in this group. The former came into fashion in the Oxford region towards the middle of the twelfth century (*Oxoniensia*, XI-XII (1946-7), 171). However, shelly wares certainly continued in use beside the sandy, gritty wares throughout the twelfth century, and for some types of vessel, especially to the west of Oxford and in the Bedford region, well into the thirteenth century. On the floor of a building at Deddington Castle, in use probably during the third quarter of the twelfth century, cooking-pots of both these fabrics were found almost complete, crushed where they had been in use side by side, one still containing a mass of fish bones. Thus also in the St. John's well-filling the most completely recoverable cooking-pot (FIG. 18, no. 1) is of a fairly hard shelly ware, though most of the coarse pottery is of sandy textures. A few other odd pieces of softer shelly ware (e.g. FIG. 18, no. 6) may, of course, be a little earlier in date; there is a certain amount of pottery from the whole site which was probably in use during the first half of the twelfth century, and a few pieces might easily have become incorporated in the deposit, as they were probably lying about on the surface at the time of filling of the well shaft.

There is, however, a complete absence of the recognizable late Saxon types of pottery from the whole St. John's site. A notable absentee from the coarse pottery of the well-filling is the vertical sided cooking-pot with clubbed unflanged rim (*Oxoniensia*, XI-XII (1946-7), 167-70; XIII (1948), 71-2). There are in this group no rims of this form, and no bases square enough for it, and this rather confirms the impression from other sites that the type was passing out of use after the middle of the twelfth century.

FIG. 18, no. 11, shows a large pan with broad everted rim flange, of a well recognized local type (*Oxoniensia*, VIII-IX (1943-4), 102 ff.; XIII (1948), 68, 73;

## POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

*Berks. Archaeol. Journ.*, I (1947), 60-1), and this example adds to the evidence which already exists to show that the type had developed before the end of the twelfth century.

### FIG. 18. *Cooking-pots, Dishes and Pans*

(1)-(3), from lower black layer; (4)-(6), fragments from both lower and upper black layers, fitting together; (7)-(10), from upper black layer; (11), (12), from just above upper black layer.

(1) Considerable part of a medium-sized cooking-pot of hard dark grey ware with some shell and crushed flint; blackened exterior surface.

(2) Hard sandy buff ware with grey core.

(3) Hard sandy buff ware with greyish core, with some larger stones in the fabric.

(4) Hard sandy buff ware with greyish core. Exterior surface blackened a little.

(5) Cooking-pot of fairly hard sandy blackish ware with fairly smooth surface, not quite so harsh and gritty as the usual sandy wares.

(6) Cooking-pot of rather soft uneven shelly ware with some crushed flint; light red surface and greyish core; some blackening on exterior.

(7), (8), (9) Rims of small sized cooking-pots; 7 and 9, hard grey sandy ware; 8, friable soft sandy ware with blackish core, less coarse.

(10) Medium-sized shallow dish of hard grey sandy ware with dark brownish surface, decorated with finger-impressions.

(11) Large pan of well recognized local type, of rather friable shelly ware, with light grey core and light red surface, containing no flint.

(12) Large dish of fairly hard shelly ware with a little crushed flint; grey core and purply-brown surfaces, exterior surface blackened.

(c) *Wooden Vessels from the Well-filling.* These wooden vessels were in a very fragmentary condition, black, damp, and spongy or twisted, and it was found impossible to preserve them for much longer than was necessary to make reconstructed drawings of their forms. Under these conditions there is a measure of uncertainty about diameters, though the profiles should be reasonably correct. The base mouldings usually seemed best preserved, and the drawings here can be fairly certain. The wooden vessels from the late eleventh to early twelfth-century layers at Deddington Castle, illustrated here for comparison, were preserved in a much damper deposit and were in a better state of preservation; the reconstructions here may therefore be considered as fairly certain. All were apparently turned from beech wood. Replicas of those from St. John's have been turned by Mr. L. Miller of Eltham, Kent, to whom I am most grateful.

Although wooden bowls and platters must have been in common use in medieval England, published records of actual preserved examples are so far rare. These vessels should be compared with the fine series from the Bank

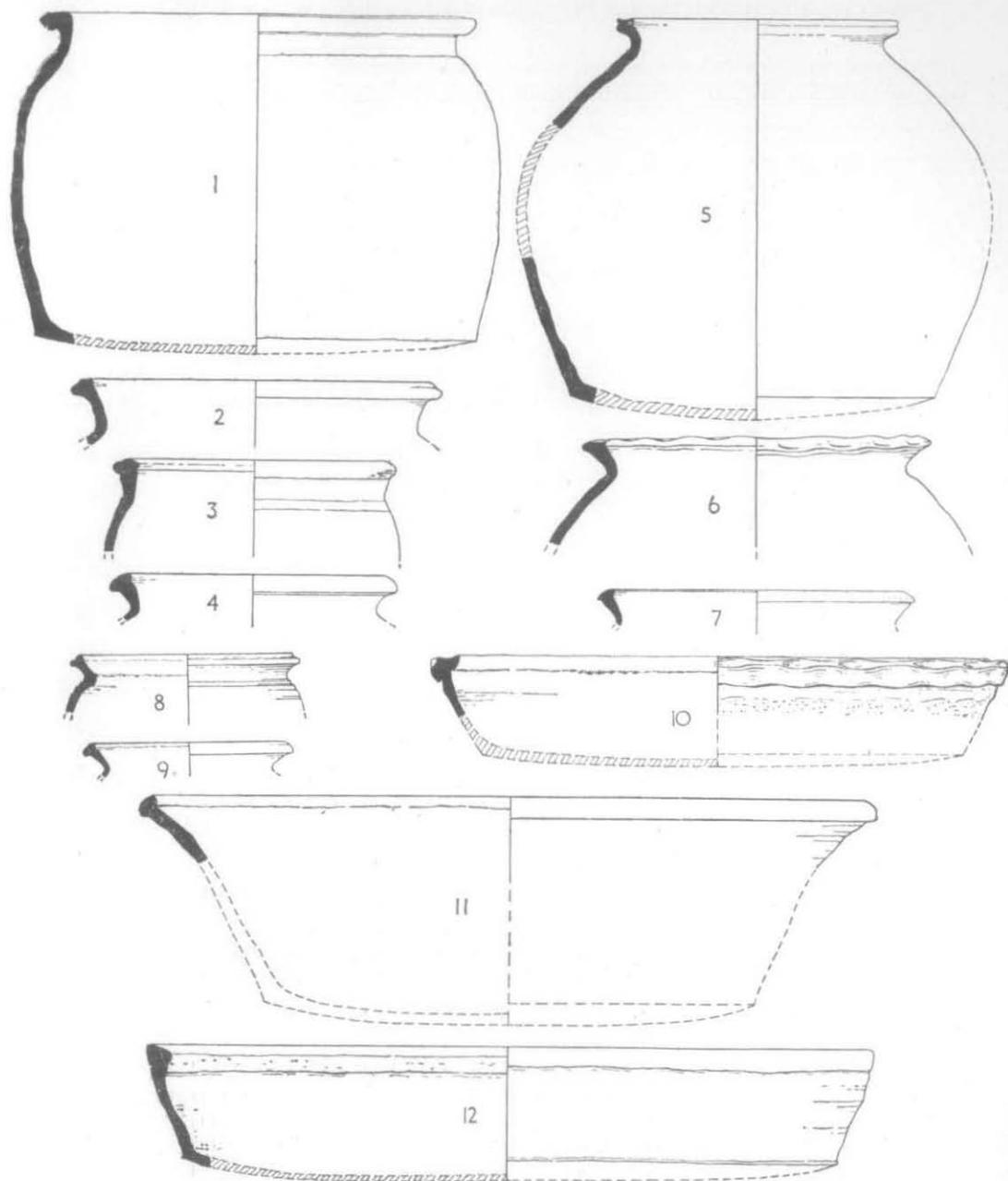


FIG. 18

COARSE POTTERY : COOKING-POTS, PANS AND DISHES FROM THE 'ASSOCIATED GROUP IN THE WELL-FILLING AT ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

Scale :  $\frac{1}{4}$

## POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

of England, London (G. C. Dunning, in *Antiq. Journ.*, xvii (1937), 416-18), on which the reconstructions here are to some extent based.

FIG. 19. *Wooden Vessels of the Twelfth Century from St. John's College, Oxford, and Deddington Castle*

(1) and (2), from upper black layer of well-filling at St. John's College, associated with pottery of late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, and coin of Henry II, 1168-80.

(3), (4) and (5), from lower floors, late eleventh to early twelfth centuries, at Deddington Castle. There was insufficient of no. 5 to derive a reasonable estimate of diameter.

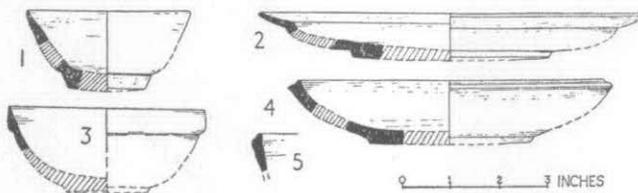


FIG. 19

### WOODEN VESSELS OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

1, 2, from the associated group in the well-filling at St. John's College ;  
3-5, from Deddington Castle, Oxon.

Scale :  $\frac{1}{4}$

## II. OTHER POTTERY FROM THE SITE

(a) *Pottery of early types.* There is also from the site a quantity of unassociated pottery of types which were probably in use somewhat before the middle of the twelfth century. There is no pottery from the site which on present evidence could be regarded as having been in use before this.

(b) *Finds from Pit H* (FIG. 20). This pit contained an associated group of pottery of about the middle of the thirteenth century, especially valuable as giving a dating for the double-shelled lamps, the significance and development of which is discussed below.

FIG. 20

(1) Neck and handle of a tall baluster jug in light red rather friable sandy ware, with small sporadic patches of yellowish glaze. The pronounced moulding of the rim is unusual. The reconstruction as a baluster jug is justified on account of the known position of the complete handle. The friable sandy fabric implies a date early in the baluster series, probably about mid-thirteenth century; the baluster jug with slightly convex base and pinched base angle from Well 9 on the New Bodleian site (*Oxoniensia*, iv (1939), 102, fig. 24, H), which may be placed at the beginning

E. M. JOPE, H. M. JOPE, AND S. E. RIGOLD

of the series, is of comparable ware, whereas the fully developed baluster jugs are usually harder and finer in fabric.

(2) Wide neck of a jug in harsh sandy ware, with buff surface layer and grey core; yellow to pale olive green glaze over exterior. Probably about mid-thirteenth century.

(3) Top part of a jug of fine hard buff ware, with patches of glaze varying in colour from yellow through shades of green to brown. It has a slashed strap handle

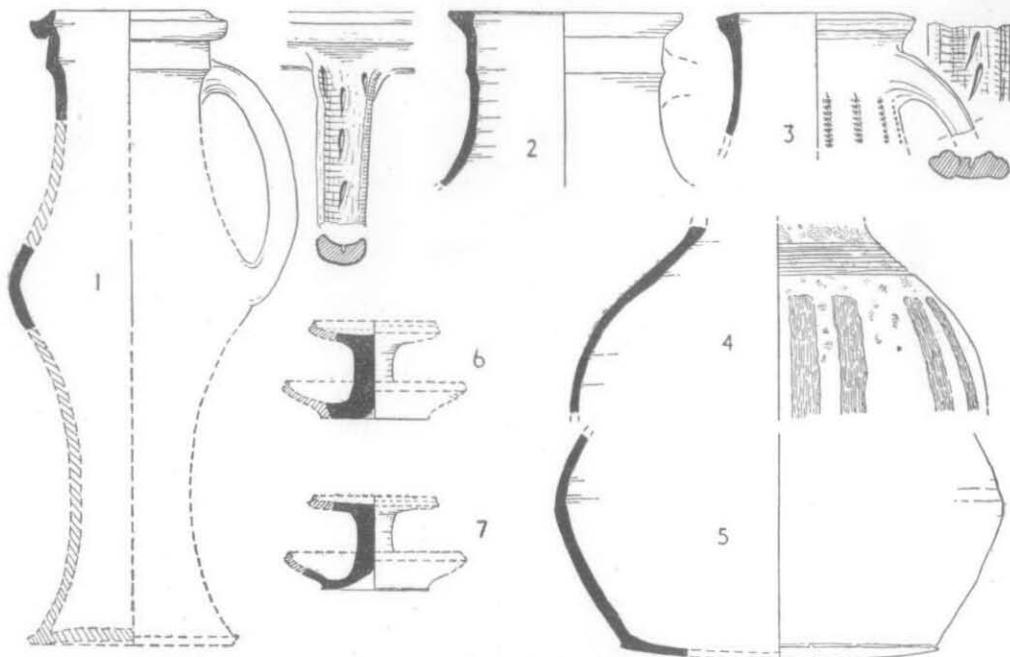


FIG. 20

ASSOCIATED GROUP OF GLAZED POTTERY FROM PIT H AT ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}$

and applied rouletted strips, alternately dark and body-coloured, on the body. This vessel, judging by the massive handle, was probably large and of the bulbous form well recognized in Oxford (*Oxoniensia*, VII (1942), 72-3, fig. 17, no. 1; from an associated group in a pit at Carfax). Probably third quarter of the thirteenth century.

(4) Top part of body of a broad jug of fine fairly hard buff sandy ware, with patchy mottled green glaze. The neck is decorated with turned grooves and the body has pairs of vertical light red stripes painted on (compare *Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 100, fig. 23, B, F, G; 102, fig. 24, C). Probably mid-thirteenth century, or perhaps a little earlier.

## POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

(5) Lower part of jug of fine hard rich buff ware, with speckled green glaze on shoulder above carination; slight convex base (compare *Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 102, fig. 24, c; 106, fig. 25, A, B, E, for convex base on thirteenth century jugs; *ibid.*, pl. XI, nos. 7 and 8; fig. 25, A, D, for the type of jug). Probably second half of the thirteenth century.

(6) and (7) Two lamps of common Oxford type. (6) is of hard grey ware with buff surface and dark mottled green in bowl and on base. Almost solid base and fairly flat bowl. (7) is of a more friable rich buff ware with fairly bright green glaze in bowl and in saucer of base. The base is conically hollowed out with a knife, and the bowl is flat; the stem is more slender than usual.

It is most valuable to have two of these lamps associated with a group of pottery extending a decade or so on either side of the middle of the thirteenth century, and the type is discussed fully below.

Also in this pit (not illustrated) were body fragments of jugs closely comparable with those from the Carfax pit (*Oxoniensia*, VII (1942), 72, fig. 17, nos. 4 and 5), probably about mid-thirteenth century. There were numerous body and convex base fragments of cooking-pots of sandy rather friable ware with black exterior and buff interior surfaces, the change in colour occurring about half way through the wall. The only rim, however, seems to be a small piece of a frilled rim in shelly fabric (cp. FIG. 18, 6), probably an early stray.

(c) *The Development of the Double-shelled Lamp in Oxford* (FIG. 21). The finding of two double-shelled lamps in Pit H in a context a little after the middle of the thirteenth century is of some importance, as similar lamps from Cambridge have recently been cited rather unjustifiably as evidence for Byzantine influence in late Saxon England (Lethbridge, T. C., in *Proc. Camb. Antiq. Soc.*, XLIII (1950), 1 ff.). On grounds of fabric, type of glaze, context, such as in Pit H here, and their occurrence on at least four sites in Oxford which seem not to have been occupied by habitations before the twelfth century (two places in St. John's, the New Bodleian site, and Manchester College), these lamps should be considered as thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The ware and glaze could not really be confused with the now well recognized glazed wares of late Saxon types, closely related to those of the Cambridge region, now known in Oxford (*Oxoniensia*, V (1940), 42-4; XIII (1948), 70-2). In Nottingham such lamps have been found among the debris from kilns operating in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (FIG. 21, no. 11 here, and *Trans. Thoroton Soc.*, XXXVI (1932), pl. II (opp. p. 84), no. 7, found with coins of 1272-1377), and there can be little doubt that the Cambridge examples are in fact of similar thirteenth-fourteenth century date.

As for the suggested Byzantine origin of the type in England, the prototypes quoted by Mr. Lethbridge seem quite unsatisfactory, there being actually only three poor examples illustrated in Mr. R. B. K. Stevenson's report (*The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors* (1947), pl. 19, nos. 35, 36, 37). The

Oxford examples appear to be derivable from the styles of unglazed lamps in use locally in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (FIG. 21), as described below.

Real Byzantine influence, and other east Mediterranean influences can, however, be demonstrated in Saxon times in England, and are in fact quite a remarkable feature of Saxon archaeology generally. Imports may be seen, for instance, in the Coptic bronze vessels of various types (Leeds, E. T., *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology* (1936), 77), silver ware such as that in the Sutton Hoo ship burial (*Brit. Mus. Guide to Sutton Hoo* (1947), 44-9; *Antiquity*, xiv (1940), 40 ff.). Connections may also be seen in the study of coins (Sutherland, C. H. V., *Anglo-Saxon Gold Coinage* (1949), 23 ff., 50 f., 90). Artistic influences have been admirably summarized by Professor D. Talbot Rice (*Byzantine Influences in Late Saxon England* (W. H. Charlton Memorial Lecture, 1947); *Byzantine Painting* (1948), 10, 23-9; *Byzantine Art* (1935), 222 ff.); see also Lethaby, W. R., *Mediaeval Art* (2nd ed., 1949, revised by D. Talbot Rice); Kitzinger, E., in *Antiquity*, x (1936), 61 ff; Mowbray, C., *ibid.*, 428 ff.; and Casson, S., in *Burlington Magazine*, LXI (1932), 265; LXIII (1933), 26. But to derive the late Saxon, such as those found at Thetford, from Byzantine glazed wares of the dark age period is really quite unwarranted and unnecessary, as Mr. G. C. Dunning has shown (*Archaeol. J.*, cvI (for 1949: 1951), 73).

In use the bowls of these lamps were filled with oil, upon the surface of which floated a wick. The caked carbonized material round the top of the bowls of some of the earlier deeper-bowled unglazed examples shows that they were in fact used as lamps, but it is not quite so clear that the later examples with such shallow bowls were actually so used. The glaze enabled the carbonized residue to be removed easily without damage to the fabric, and one source of our evidence is thereby lost. However, they do seem closely related to the lamp series, and to be evolved from it.

Early in the Middle Ages pointed lamps were in use, for suspension (FIG. 21, no. 1; *London Mus. Med. Cat.* (1940), 174 ff.). This type appears to have gone out of use, however, by about the later twelfth century, though later examples can be found in Scotland, for instance. The pedestal lamp was most usual from the twelfth century onwards. At the beginning of the Oxford series stand FIG. 21, nos. 2 and 3, in unglazed shelly ware, probably late eleventh-early twelfth century, and similar lamps of eleventh-twelfth century date are known from Deddington Castle, Northampton, Bristol, Castle Neroche (Somerset), etc. From these were probably derived the deep-bowled lamps, of fairly hard sandy unglazed ware, with a small pinched lip (FIG. 21, no. 4), probably of the early thirteenth century. Some evolution in base profile appears also to take place at this stage, resulting in the appearance of the lower 'saucer' (FIG. 21, no. 5). We have by this time the main elements of the

## POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

double-shell vessel which became fairly common in Oxford in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The bowl became very shallow, the base often hollowed out conically underneath by scooping out with a knife, with a twisting motion rotating about the point; these lamps are finely moulded throughout. Judging by the fabric of some examples, such as FIG. 21, no. 10, the type appears to have lasted in fashion into the later fourteenth or even the fifteenth century, by which time the bowl had become so shallow as to be of questionable use as a lamp.

This type of vessel is known from Nottingham, as well as from Oxford and

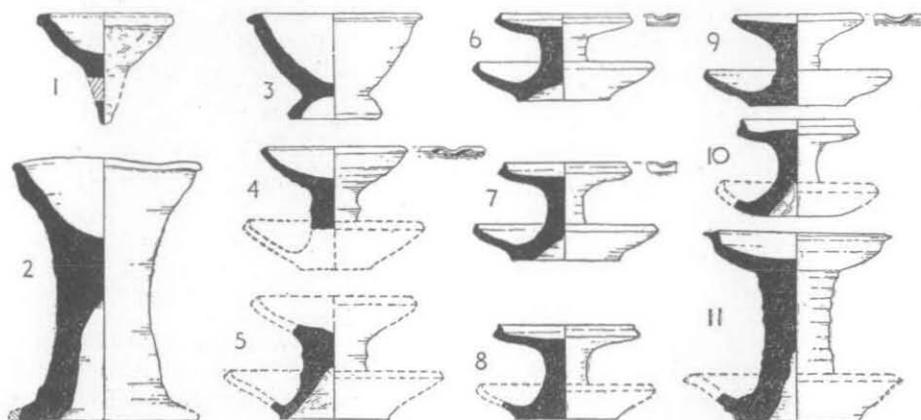


FIG. 21

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOUBLE-SHELLED LAMP IN OXFORD

1-10, from sites in Oxford; 11, from Parliament St., Nottingham

Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}$

Cambridge, and there is part of one from Cumnor Place, near Oxford, a grange of the Abbots of Abingdon. It might be expected to be fairly widespread, and it will probably become recognized in other areas in due course.

FIG. 21

(1) Part of lamp of conical type, buff fairly sandy ware, greyish core; from Oriel, second quadrangle, 1941 (*Oriel Record*, Jan. 1942, 177, no. 5). Probably about mid-twelfth century.

(2) Lamp of tall type, of close textured blackish shell-filled ware, fairly hard. From site of new Town Hall. Probably late eleventh to early twelfth century.

(3) Lamp of dark shell-filled ware, with much carbonized matter on interior. From St. Mary's Entry. Probably late eleventh to early twelfth century.

E. M. JOPE, H. M. JOPE, AND S. E. RIGOLD

(4) Top of lamp of hard sandy light brown ware with grey core, unglazed. From the Old Music School, 1892 (A.M. 1892.15). Probably second half of twelfth or early thirteenth century.

(5) Base of lamp with conically hollowed base, of fairly fine sandy brown ware, unglazed. From the City Ditch, Holywell, 1899 (A.M. 1921.213). Probably first half of thirteenth century.

(6) Nearly complete lamp with conically hollowed base, of fairly fine moderately hard buff sandy ware, with mottled green glaze in bowl and round the hollow of the base. From Oriel, second quadrangle, 1941, enclosed as a College garden in the later fourteenth century, the lamp therefore being earlier (*Oriel Record*, Jan. 1942, 175-180).

(7) Complete lamp with conically hollowed base and shallow flat bowl, of fairly hard sandy fine buff ware with bright mottled green glaze in bowl and hollow of base, with patches elsewhere. Found 10 feet deep at St. John's College, 1910.

(8) Lamp with solid base and flat bowl, of fine, moderately hard sandy buff ware with grey core, and dark mottled green glaze over the interior of the bowl and the hollow of the base. From the 1947 excavations at St. John's College.

(9) Lamp with solid base and very flat shallow bowl, of hard buff sandy ware with dark green glaze over interior of bowl and hollow of base. From Radcliffe Square (A.M. 1915.79).

(10) Lamp with conically hollowed base and flat bowl, of hard fairly fine grey ware with a somewhat metallic ring, and bright orange-buff surface slip. Dark mottled green glaze on interior of bowl and hollow of base. The surface slip gives an impression very much like that of wares in use in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Oxford (*Oxoniensia*, VII (1942), 76-9), a comparison also suggested by the knife-trimming facets on the base and within the hollowed cone under the base. From Radcliffe Square (A.M. 1915.84). Probably late fourteenth-early fifteenth century.

(11) Complete lamp of tall pedestal type, with conically hollowed base and moderately flat bowl; of rather coarse hard ware with grey core and buff outer layer, with very irregular patchy olive glaze. From Nottingham, Parliament Street (Nottingham Museum 98.2). I am most grateful to the Director of the Nottingham Castle Museum for facilities for studying the Nottingham lamps and for permission to publish this one.

(d) *Late Medieval Drinking Vessels* (FIG. 22). Among the more notable of the miscellaneous finds from the St. John's site were fragments of a type of drinking mug which has been found on a number of other sites in Oxford. The type (FIG. 22, nos. 1 and 2) bears a prominent and vigorously modelled face-mask on the front, and a handle on the opposite side extending from the base to very near the rim. This handle is dowelled in at the top (FIG. 22, no. 2) and pressed on at the base. The body is gracefully rilled and the base is decorated with notches, in one case (FIG. 22, no. 2) cut with a tool, and not finger-pressed, as is usual. The fabric is hard fine buff, and they carry a good, fairly thick, even, dark green glaze over the whole interior and exterior, except the under

## POTTERY FROM A LATE 12TH CENTURY WELL-FILLING

side of the base. This fabric may be compared with some of those usual in the later Middle Ages and the glaze hints at the even, all-over, deep green glazes developed by the later fifteenth century (*Oxoniensia*, XIII (1948), 94) and common in Tudor times. On the other hand, the face-mask and the base-notching are very reminiscent of the earlier medieval tradition. The face-masks especially may be compared with those of jugs of the later thirteenth century, such as that found with coins of *c.* 1268 at Winchester (compare also Rackham, B., *Medieval English Pottery* (1948), pls. 46, 47, 48, 49; also *Berks. Archaeol. Journ.*, L (1947), 76, tailpiece, from Abingdon, and A.M.1915.92 from Radcliffe

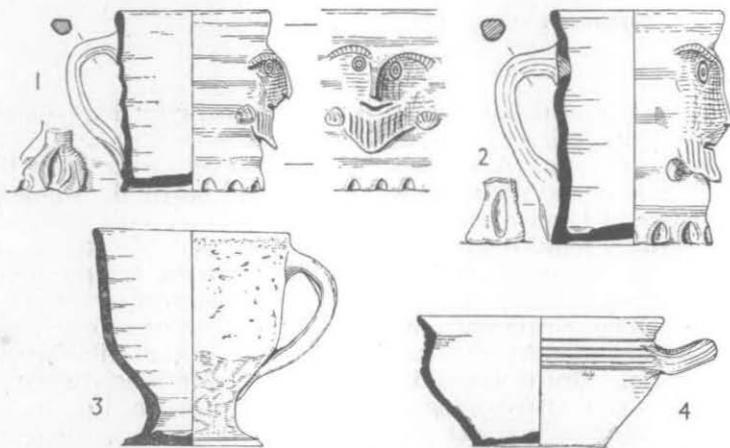


FIG. 22  
DRINKING VESSELS FROM SITES IN OXFORD  
1-3, late medieval; 4, seventeenth century  
Scale:  $\frac{1}{4}$

Square, Oxford). It seems most reasonable, therefore, to consider these excellent face-mask mugs as of the later fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, and they seem to be rather a distinctive Oxford type. They are known from St. John's, Broad Street, Thames Street, Cornmarket, Brasenose, and Radcliffe Square.

Two somewhat similar conical, dark green glazed drinking mugs of probably similar date, however, without face-masks, are known from Broomhill Weeting, Norfolk (Thetford Museum; I am grateful to Mr. G. C. Dunning and Mr. F. Cottrill for information and notes about these vessels). One other fine drinking vessel from Oxford, of late medieval fabric (FIG. 22, no. 3), is a

rarity, and FIG. 22, no. 4 shows a type of handled dish which had developed by the early seventeenth century, of which type a number of fragments were found on the St. John's site.

Medieval vessels which appear to be truly designed for drinking from are rare in English archaeology. The drinking-horn of Saxon and Viking times probably went out of fashion in the early Middle Ages, and it seems from manuscript illustrations that the most inconvenient vessels were frequently used for this purpose, as is shown by the repeated appearance of men drinking from large shallow dishes; such dishes are a common archaeological feature (Hartley, D., and Elliot, M. M., *Life and Work of the People of England, Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries*, pls. 3a, 9a, 14c, 34a, 39c; *Fourteenth Century*, pls. 4d, 9c, 17b, 27c, 41f; *Fifteenth Century*, pls. 2a).

Fig. 22.

(1) From no. 7 Cornmarket (A.M. 1896-1908, M.177); hard fine buff ware, with deep olive-green, fairly even glaze all over, except under base.

(2) From Cornmarket (A.M. 1935.862); buff hard rather sandy fabric, with deep green glaze with occasional orange patches over nearly the whole surface.

(3) From site of London and County Bank, 1866, of hard orange-buff fabric with orange surface, mottled green glaze on upper part of exterior and greyish patches on lower part. Whole of exterior covered with mottled green glaze.

(4) From Broad Street (A.M. 1937.485); *Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), pl. XIII, bottom right). Of fine cream ware, some spots of yellow glaze on exterior, and patch of bright green glaze on base below handle. Interior covered with slightly crackled lemon yellow glaze. One or two quite large pebbles surprisingly protrude through the surface. This type of vessel was in use during the first half of the seventeenth century (*Berks. Archaeol. Journ.*, XLI (1937), 82; *Oxoniensia*, XIII (1948), 94).

With these fine drinking vessels we leave the archaeological record of this St. John's site. It will be appreciated what a rich harvest of historical information can be gained by the full, systematic and, if possible, leisured, examination of sites of such building operations, and it is to be hoped that this will be possible on every such site in the future, as is indeed being made possible at Nuffield College.