

Notes and News

A BRONZE FIGURINE POSSIBLY FROM WOODEATON IN THE GUILDHALL MUSEUM, LONDON¹

Although a great many bronze objects have been found at Woodeaton and, indeed, bronze casting is known to have been practised in the neighbourhood of the temple, few figurines have been recorded. Kirk lists five representations of eagles and two human figures, one of them a crudely executed rendering of a 'female figure, naked to the waist' and the other a seated Venus worked in a more classical style. Any addition to the corpus of such pieces is likely to be of some interest in assessing the nature of the cult practised at the temple even if a single object can only advance our knowledge very slightly.²

An item in the printed catalogue of the Guildhall Museum, London, seems to have escaped the attention of scholars. It is No. 15 in the list of 'Roman Figures and Statuettes' in the Museum's collection and the entry reads, 'Statuette, bronze, of a well-modelled male figure; 2½ in. h. *Woodeaton, Oxon.*'³ It must be presumed that it formed part of some collection of antiquities presented to the museum in the nineteenth century but, unfortunately, no other information is available. The museum contains very little material from outside London, and it is likely that the Woodeaton figurine belonged to a London collector at one time.

No object in the Guildhall exactly answers to the catalogue description which is not surprising, as it is a notoriously inaccurate compilation. However 'Roman Figurine No. 15' has been assigned the accession number 2073 in the current system of registration, and there is a bronze in the collection numbered 2073.

This (PL. XIX) stands 2¾ inches in height (¼ inch longer than the dimension stated in the catalogue), but it is closer to the size given than is any other figurine in the museum. A more serious objection is that the personage represented is certainly female, although this is apparent from her dress, rather than from any anatomical detail. She wears a chiton, and a himation is draped around her body from the left shoulder. Her hair is held in place by means of a diadem, and it is tied in a bun at the back. The patera, which she holds in her right hand, suggests that she is to be regarded as a worshipper at the shrine (or as a personal *juno*, who stands in relation to the individual woman as a genius does to a man).⁴ There is, in fact, a male equivalent to the type in those figurines that depict *genii*, and it may have been of these that the compilers of the Guildhall Museum Catalogue were thinking.⁵ The patination of our piece is very similar to that of other bronzes certainly from the site.

¹ I would like to thank Ralph Merrifield Esq., F.S.A., for the photograph, and the authorities of the Guildhall Museum for permission to publish the object.

² *Oxoniensis*, xiv (1949), 1-45: for bronze-working, *ibid.*, 28-30. Nos. 15, 16. figurines *ibid.*, 30-31 pl. iv-v.

³ *Catalogue of the Collection of London Antiquities in the Guildhall Museum*. (Second edition, London 1908.) 69.

⁴ Note a similar figurine from Carnuntum, R. Fleischer, *Die Römischen Bronzen aus Österreich*. (Mainz 1967) 166-7 and pl. cxv No. 226 and another from Provence, with an elaborate diadem, H. Rolland, *Bronzes Antiques de Haute Provence*, xviii supplement to *Gallia* (Paris 1965), 110 No. 208. (In *Muséum Calvet*, Avignon.)

⁵ A. N. Zadoks-Josephus Jitta, W. J. T. Peters and W. A. van Es. *Roman Bronze Statuettes from the Netherlands*, 11 (Groningen 1969), 44-7 No. 19, from Domburg near the temple of Nehalennia: a genius wearing a mural crown, himation and carrying patera in his right hand.

E. Esperandieu and H. Rolland. *Bronzes Antiques de la Seine—Maritime* xiii th supplement to *Gallia*. (Paris 1959) 44-5 and pl. xxviii-xxix, No. 67, with laurel diadem, mantle draped over left shoulder, patera in right hand. (*Musée départemental des antiquités de Rouen*).

Although the figure may be as late as the third century A.D. in date, analogous bronzes are common in northern Italy from at least the fourth century B.C., and the idea of placing the worshipper amongst his gods is clearly of 'classical' origin.⁶ In Britain, we may note the statuette from a temple site at Bruton, Somerset, showing a veiled man, probably a priest, holding a patera, which formed part of a votive cache that also contained two representations of Mercury, a figure of Hercules and others of Mars and of Minerva. Doubtless other figurines, such as the 'Flute'-girl from Silchester, were intended as to serve as votive offerings as well.⁷

MARTIN HENIG.

MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM SWINBROOK, OXON.

During 1969 and 1970, Major-General J. Scott-Elliott carried out excavations in the garden of Swinbrook Cottage, Swinbrook, Oxon. (G.R. SP/280121), revealing considerable traces of occupation sealed by two feet of overburden, from which came the pottery and other finds described in this note.¹

The pottery forms a useful small group of Late Saxon-Early Medieval wares. The site is only 4½ miles south of the castle at Ascott Doilly, excavated and published by Professor E. M. Jope,² and the pottery comparisons are valuable. The only other recently published rural site in this area is Seacourt, Berks.³ : the other comparisons are of course with the Oxford series.⁴ The site is also only six miles west of Shakenoak, where recent excavations at the Roman villa have revealed much Saxon pottery.

Description : Pottery.

Late Saxon fabrics recognized were St. Neots ware, and a distinctive 'very coarse' hand-worked fabric, filled with a quantity of quite large grits of various kinds, and generally with very black surfaces. The rest of the sherds were in a 'standard' fabric, with a variety of surface colours, and a large amount of rather smaller grits of limestone detritus, presumably similar to the 'standard' fabric at Ascott ('Ascott', 244-6). Unfortunately only a very small amount of the Ascott pottery is at present available for study, in the British Museum.

(a) St. Neots Ware (Not illustrated).

Two everted rims from round cooking-pots, cf. 'Logic Lane', Fig. 9, esp. nos. 7, 12, from Late Saxon pits.

Two flat-topped rims from straight-sided bowls or cooking-pots, cf. 'Logic Lane', Fig. 10, esp. no. 17.

There were also six small body sherds.

⁶ Female figures. G. Maetzke in *Studi Etruschi*, xxv (1957), 502-4, No. 25 (fig. 26), No. 26 (fig. 27) in Chiassi, Museo Archeologico. Giovanni Colonna, *Bronzi Votivi Umbro-Sabellici a Figura Umana, 1-Periodo 'Arcaico'* (Florence 1970), 177 and pl. cxl No. 569, 179 and pl. cxlii No. 583, pl. cxliii No. 585.

Male Figures. Maetzke *op. cit.* 496-8 No. 11 (fig. 13); No. 13 (fig. 15) Colonna *op. cit.* 178 and pl. cxlii No. 582 and 179 pl. cxlii No. 586.

⁷ J. M. C. Toynbee *Art in Roman Britain* (second edn. London 1963), 149 and pl. liii No. 50 (Burton); pl. lv No. 52 (Silchester). cf. note 5 *supra* for figurine found near the temple at Domburg.

¹ The finds have been deposited in the Oxford City and County Museum, through the kindness of the owners Mrs. Dower and Miss Baerlein. Plans, section drawings and detailed notes about the site made by General Scott-Elliott are also in the Museum.

² E. M. Jope and R. I. Threlfall, 'The Twelfth Century Castle at Ascott Doilly, Oxfordshire', *Antiquaries Journal*, xxxix (1959), 219-73. Abbreviated 'Ascott'.

³ M. Biddle, 'The Deserted Medieval Village of Seacourt, Berks.', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961-2), 70-201. 'Seacourt'.

⁴ Esp. F. Radcliffe, 'Excavations at Logic Lane, Oxford', *ibid.*, 38-69, Late Saxon pits B.4, C.1 and C.2. 'Logic Lane'.

(b) 'Very Coarse' Wares.

FIG. 1, no. 1 : Everted rim, slightly thickened on the exterior. Very coarse fabric with some large pieces of white and red stone. Black core and surfaces.

There were also five body sherds, including one base sherd.

(c) 'Standard' Fabric.

FIG. 1, no. 2 : Cooking-pot with straight, thick, almost vertical sides, and uneven, thickened rim. Coarse fabric with a high proportion of small red and white stones. Interior dull red-brown, exterior grey-black.

This, and the following examples, are very similar to the 12th century 'Cotswold' cooking-pot bi ('Ascott', 240), except that the rim is thickened on the inside as well as the outside. Similar rim forms occur in the 12th-early 13th century levels at Upton, Glos.⁵

no. 3 : Another, more sinuous profile, and without the red stone in the fabric. Red/grey.

no. 4 : Another. Red/black.

no. 5 : Another. Thinner walls, and more pronounced rim. Grey-black. Cf. 'Logic Lane', Fig. 7, no. 6, from the 11th century pit C.I.

no. 6 : Another. Flat-topped rim, with rounded exterior flange. Cf. 'Ascott', Fig. 9, D.7.

no. 7 : Another. Longer flange.

There are six other examples of rims like nos. 6 and 7.

no. 8 : Profile of a bulbous cooking-pot, with simple everted rim. Grey-buff/red-brown. None of the illustrated pots from Ascott or Seacourt has an identical rim, but the general type is extremely common.

no. 9 : Everted flanged rim, with oblique marks from the potter's fingers on the inside.

There are three other examples of this rim type.

no. 10 : Rim of a deep bowl with thick slightly curved sides. The rim is slightly thickened on the inside, and has finger-pressing on the outside. Grey-black.

There are two other very similar rims, without the presses. Cf. 'Ascott', Fig. 12, C.2.

no. 11 : Small shallow bowl. Red-brown/grey-black. Cf. 'Seacourt', Fig. 24, no. 12, from an early 13th century level.

There is another bowl rim like this.

Also in the 'standard' fabric were 17 small base sherds, all with angles like nos. 8 and 10, from pots or bowls ; 43 body sherds ; and one other body sherd with small spots of light green glaze on the exterior.

Other examples of the rim shapes, in the same 'standard' fabric, have been found at Filkins, six miles south of Swinbrook.⁶ Clearly this is a common East Cotswolds pottery type, perhaps starting in the 11th century.

Bone Implements.

FIG. 1, no. 12 : Pin, the end broken off. A hole was bored through at the end from both sides.

no. 13 : Roughly-shaped 'pin-beater', one end broken. Polished surfaces.

Tools like these were probably used in textile manufacture, and are common on Late Saxon and Early Medieval sites ('Logic Lane', Fig. 15, no. 10 ; 'Seacourt', 184).

Although the relative proportions of numbers, weight, or volume of the different types of pottery are not statistically useful, the range of the group is interesting. At Ascott, for instance, there was only one sherd of (probable) St. Neots ware, G.I, and

⁵ P. A. Rahtz, 'Upton, Glos., 1964-8', *Trans. Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.*, LXXXVIII (1969), Fig. 13, P64-66.

⁶ Exhibited in the Museum maintained by Mr. George Swinford.

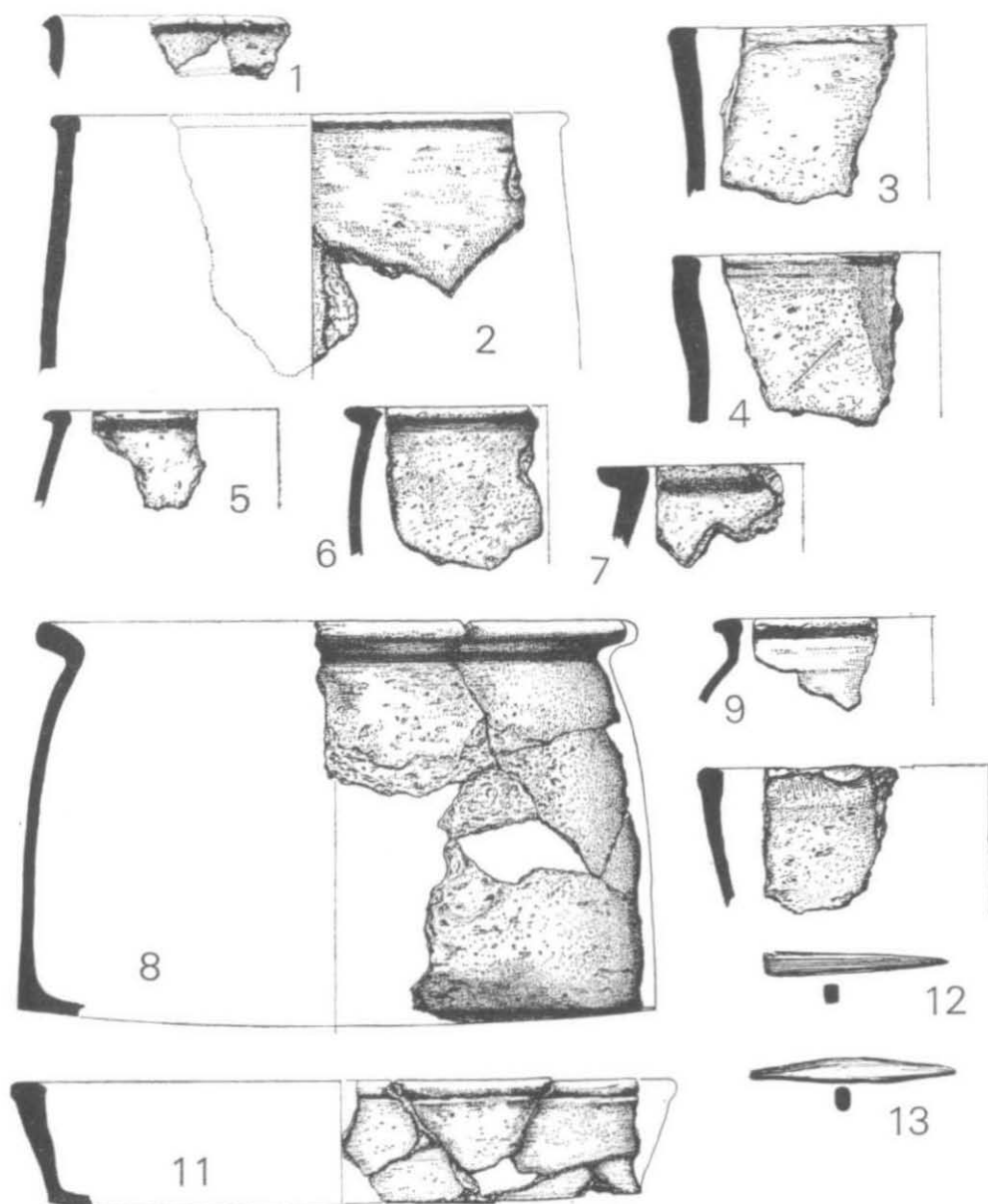


FIG. 1

11th-12th Century Pottery and Implements from Swinbrook, Oxon. (Note : the diameter of no. 1 could not be measured accurately).

Swinbrook can claim to be the most south-westerly point of the fabric's known distribution. The date of the introduction of St. Neots ware in the Upper Thames area is uncertain; it was prolific in Oxford at Logic Lane in the 11th century, but it is still unknown when it became available. At Logic Lane, it was found in pits with a few sherds of 'very coarse' wares ('Logic Lane', Fig. 7, nos. 3-7), which are very like the Swinbrook sherds. This 'very coarse' ware was not apparently present at Ascott, but occurred at Seacourt in a large cooking-pot from a late 12th century context ('Seacourt', Fig. 22, 3), too much of which survives for it to be discounted as residual. So the fabric was in at least occasional use for two centuries. In Oxford, a similar fabric was used for 11th century pitchers, as well as cooking pottery.⁷ Miss Freda Berisford tells me that it can be distinguished from the earlier Saxon coarse wares at Shakenoak,⁸ but as with St. Neots ware it has no introductory date yet. It is possible that there was an interruption in Saxon pottery manufacture in the Upper Thames Valley, as there was in at least parts of the south-west,⁹ and the Welsh borders.¹⁰ This is suggested by the lack of pottery at Dorchester associated with a Saxon rectangular structure,¹¹ and in the presumably early pits in Cornmarket Street, Oxford.¹²

That the Swinbrook pottery extends into the early 12th century at least is shown by the one glazed sherd. Glazes were known locally from the mid-12th century ('Ascott', 257-9), and may have been introduced earlier. The Swinbrook group lacks any hard sandy wares, glazed tripod pitchers, or the unglazed red jugs common in Oxford (e.g. 'Logic Lane', Fig. 13, no. 1). These would be expected in a group predominantly 12th century, and their absence suggests that the main concentration of the Swinbrook group is 11th-early 12th century, with the St. Neots and the 'very coarse' wares. The initial date of the group is uncertain, but it seems to be well before the construction of Ascott Castle in the 1140's, and the main settlement at Seacourt. It is therefore an important Late Saxon-Early Medieval group in its area.

DAVID A. HINTON.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES 1970-1

Brighthampton. Anglo Saxon grave groups excavated by Stephen Stone in the well-known 5th-6th century cemetery in 1859 and 1863 have recently been acquired by the Ashmolean Museum. (*Proc. Soc. Antiqs.*, 1st ser., IV, 329; 2nd ser., II, 443.) (SP/383033.)

Ducklington. The objects from the 7th century A.D. woman's grave found at Ducklington in 1860 and recorded by Stephen Stone in *Proc. Soc. Antiqs.*, 2nd. ser., I, 100 have recently been acquired by the Ashmolean Museum. (SP/359075.)

Oxford. In addition to the excavations which took place in 1970 Mr. Julian Munby recorded various contractor's excavations on behalf of the Oxford Archaeological Excavation Committee.

Queen's Lane. An east-west section across early road levels of Queen's Lane was exposed in October 1970 during alterations to the drainage system for St. Edmund Hall. The section (SP/51830631) 3.5 m. to the north of the entrance to the College, extended 5.3 m. out into the road and although much of it collapsed after only a cursory examination, the eastern 1.2 m. under the pavement was recorded in drawing. The levels were as follows:

⁷ E. M. Jope, 'Late Saxon Pits under Oxford Castle Mound', *Oxoniensia*, xvii/xviii (1952-3), 94-5.

⁸ I am very grateful to Miss Berisford for her help with this pottery.

⁹ P. A. Rahtz, 'The Saxon and Medieval Palaces at Cheddar, Somerset', *Medieval Archaeology*, vi/vii (1962-3), 66.

¹⁰ P. A. Barker, *The Medieval Pottery of Shropshire*, 1970.

¹¹ S. S. Frere, 'Excavations at Dorchester-on-Thames, 1962', *Archaeological Journal*, cxix (1964), 126.

¹² T. G. Hassall, this volume, p. 23.

1. Tarmacadam, brown gravelly soil for 25 cm.;
2. Brown/red gravel ;
3. Brown stony loam ;
4. Hard packed white stone/sand (for 1 m. wide, with stony gravel to the west) ;
5. Brown loam at 45 cm. ;
6. Stony gravel ;
7. Loam ;
8. Gravel ;
9. Loam ;
10. Gravel ;
11. Disturbed brown loam at 75 cm. ;
12. Natural gravel at c. 2 m.

From the top of layer 11 a single sherd of coarse black gritty ware was recovered. Before the western end of the section collapsed, a feature, ?pit, was observed at the edge of the road, underlying layer 11 on the east and red/brown ? natural soil on the west. The fill, extending to the bottom of the trench at about 2 m., only produced bones and no pottery. It was not possible to make an accurate record of this part.

South Parks Road. Two features cut into the natural gravel were revealed during work on drains near the University Museum in October 1970. The trench ran NNW/SSE from near the front of the main museum building and underneath the Radcliffe Science Library to the edge of S. Parks Road.

I : (SP/51470686.) Three depressions in the natural gravel, all running east-west ; depth of gravel c. 84 cm. The northernmost was c. 15 cm. square, the next, c. 85 cm. to the south was 15-20 cm. deep and c. 35 cm. across and had a rectangular section. The last, another 40 cm. to the south was U-shaped, cut c. 35 cm. into the gravel, and c. 70 cm. across the top. The fill was red/brown loam, lying for 15-20 cm. over the natural gravel, beneath a darker brown loam plough soil. No finds were recorded.

II : (SP/51480683.) Two depressions in the natural gravel beneath the north verge of the road. The gravel was 1.5 m. at its highest and there was red/brown loam from a depth of c. 125 m. downwards filling both the depressions. The northern most was c. 70 cm. deep and c. 1.35 m. across. There were no layers or indications that one had cut the other. No finds were recorded. Neither of these ditches are consistent with what is known of the Civil War earthworks (see below). They could be prehistoric since they were similar to ditches found at Logic Lane ; however, extensive Romano-British occupation has been noted in the area.¹

Parks Road. The section of a trench running WSW/ENE, from the middle of Parks Road under the north drive of the University Museum in front of the Department of Geology and Mineralogy, which was opened up for drainage work, was observed in November-December 1970. Two features were noted :

I : Ditch (SP/51410693) 4.5 m. across at the depth of natural gravel (76 cm.) and 3.25 m. at the depth of the trench (1.5 m.). The fill was an even red/brown loam. No finds were recorded.

II. ? Ditch (SP/51400694). What appeared to be the layered fill of the ditch was observed on both sides of the trench, but this and the eastern edge was much obscured by service trenches and trench collapse. If this feature was a ditch, it was about 6 m. across at the depth of natural gravel, and although there were no finds, the layers at the west end closely resembled a section through Civil War defences recorded in 1958.² Both these features are consistent with what is known of the Civil War earthworks in this area.³

Oxford, Summertown. A previously unrecorded Anglo Saxon grave group comprising

¹ Fabian Radcliffe : 'Excavations at Logic Lane', *Oxoniensia* xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), 39-40 figs. 3, 4a. *VCH Oxon.*, Vol. I, 301-2, and *Oxoniensia* Notes and News, 1949, 1956, 1963.

² *Oxoniensia*, xxiv (1959), 101.

³ R. T. Lattey, et al., 'A Contemporary Map of the Defences of Oxford in 1644', *Oxoniensia*, 1 (1936), 169-171.

a shield boss, a shield grip, a spear and a knife found at the time of the building of the gymnasium at Summer Fields school in 1898 has been placed on loan in the Ashmolean Museum by the Governors of the school. (SP/508091.)

Stanlake. Anglo-Saxon grave groups excavated by Stephen Stone between 1857 and 1863, and an Iron Age whetstone found in a storage pit in 1862 have recently been acquired by the Ashmolean Museum. (*Proc. Soc. Antiqs.*, 1st ser., 93 iv; 2nd ser., II, 92, 442.) (SP/385045.)

Yelford. Various fragmentary Anglo-Saxon objects found by Stephen Stone in 1857 when excavating the cemetery have recently been added to the other objects from this cemetery in the Ashmolean. (*Proc. Soc. Antiqs.*, 1st ser., IV, 98, 214.) (Exact site uncertain.)

Miss C. G. Bloxham contributes the following notes from the Banbury Museum :

Banbury. The Banbury Historical Society excavated the site of the White Horse Inn, Banbury, in 1962, and the material found, mainly medieval pottery, bone, miscellaneous ironwork and flint, has now been deposited in the Museum (Accn. no. 970.71.3).

2 pieces of Neolithic flint were found in the grounds of The Vicarage, Horsefair, Banbury.

Bodicote. The handle of a medieval baluster jug, c. late 13th century, has been found. (960.71.)

Banbury Historical Society has presented material found in Bodicote, consisting of R-B sherds and medieval sherds, to the Museum (970.71.2).

Brackley. Mr. Ischam has found several sites in Brackley. Material on loan to the Museum from St. Peter's Churchyard includes R-B sherds, ironwork and flue tiles. The site appears to continue from 1st-4th century.

Bandilands, Brackley : R-B flue tiles and coarse pottery.

Wimpey site, SP/593372, has R-B tiles and medieval pottery.

Broughton. Banbury Historical Society did an excavation at Pike Farm, Broughton, in 1961, and the finds, R-B sherds, bone, etc., have now been deposited in the Museum (970.71.1). The Society continued the excavation this summer.

Culworth. Mr. P. J. Rice found some Romano-British sherds, Neolithic flint and later pottery, at Barrow Hill, SP/472 561 (973.71).

Evenley. Mr. Ischam has found a great deal of R-B material in Evenley Park, including coarse ware, Samian, decorated ware from Oxford and Castor kilns, fragmentary bronze objects, coins, tiles, etc., 1st-4th century.

Hornton. The Oxfordshire Ironstone Company have donated R-B sherds from Ragnell Farm, near Hornton.

Newbottle. Mr. Ischam has found some sheet bronze, clay pipe bowl, melted lead and medieval and later pottery. (SP/525373.)

PLATE XIX



Female figure cast in bronze, perhaps from Woodeaton.

Ph: Guildhall Museum, London