

By, marsk og geest 8



Årsberetning 1995

Den antikvariske Samling i Ribe

Knivskaft af elfenben, fundet nær Ribe Domkirke og siden 1960-erne brugt som Samlingens bomærke. Skaftet viser en falkonér med jagtfalken på dens stok - sådan som han optrådte i en stormands følge. Stilen er høvisk, præget af 1300-årenes elegante pariserkunst. Højde 7,5 cm. Tegning: Aage Andersen.



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Redaktion: Claus Feveile og Jakob Kieffer-Olsen

Tryk: Winds Bogtrykkeri • Haderslev

Oplag: 400 stk.

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1. 176
70.00



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Årsberetning 1995

Den antikvariske Samling i Ribe 1996

ISBN 87-89827-12-0

ISSN 0905-5649

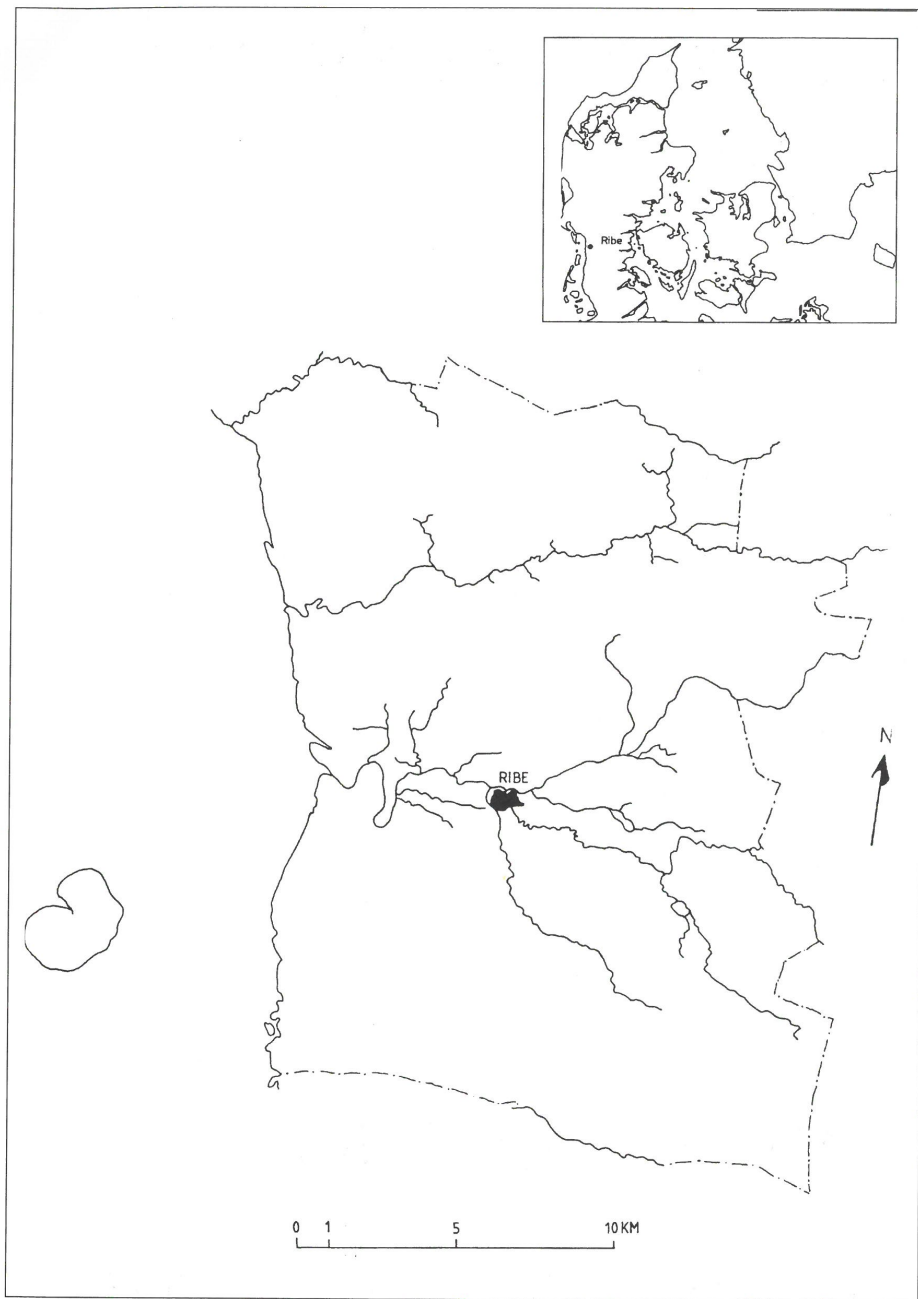
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»Odin fra Ribe« - 4,2 cm høj mandsmaske af støbt bly. Odins hoved med det flotte, svungne overskæg flankeres af de to ravne Hugin og Munin, som tilhvisker Odin vise råd om verdens gang. Sandsynligvis lavet i Ribe i 700-årene, men fundet for få år siden i en kasse med bøjede søm. Tegning: Lars Hammer.

Årsberetning 1995

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English Pottery Imports in Medieval Denmark

By Alan Vince

The importation of English and other Western European pottery into Scandinavia during the medieval period is well-known in outline but the detail has yet to receive the attention it deserves. In this paper the first results of a programme of museum study in the medieval kingdom of Denmark, now the territories of Germany, Denmark and Sweden, is described and the interpretation of the frequency and distribution of 12th- and 13th-century English medieval pottery at seven towns is discussed. These towns are: Ribe, Århus, Ålborg, Roskilde, Svendborg, Schleswig and Lund. This detailed discussion is preceded by a brief overview of the importation of pottery into Denmark, from the 8th to the 15th centuries.

North Sea trade in pottery from the 8th to the 15th centuries

The late Germanic Iron Age and Viking Age pottery of Denmark has recently been surveyed by H.J. Madsen (Madsen 1991). From this survey it is quite clear that much work remains to be done to establish exactly where pottery was being made and the extent to which it was carried from its place of production to the sites where it was used. However, it was quite clear from Madsen's survey that imports from outside of Scandinavia and the Baltic littoral were extremely rare. To date, only one site in Denmark breaks this pattern, the Viking-Age settlement at Ribe, where excavations on the north bank of the Ribe river have revealed the existence of a riverside trading settlement founded at the beginning of the 8th century and continuing in use into the 12th century, at which point the focus of settlement shifted to the southern bank, to the site of the medieval and modern town of Ribe (Jensen 1991, Madsen 1993). Excavations at earlier high status settlements which may have also had a trading function, Gudme on Fyn and Dankirke, on the west Jutish coast, just south of Ribe, have produced imported coins and metalwork but, ap-

parently, no pottery imports other than two bowls from Västergötland (Stilborg 1990; Jensen 1991).

Imported pottery and other goods are common within the 8th and 9th-century deposits at Ribe. The majority of the imported wares are of Rhenish origin, at least from the second half of the 8th century onwards, but a small quantity of shell-tempered pottery probably originated in northwest Germany or the northern Netherlands. With two or three possible exceptions, identified by Dr H. Stilke of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn, none of this pottery is likely to be of English origin. There is a moderate quantity of unsourced imported pottery from Ribe but no sherds of Ipswich-type ware or other potential English imports are present.

Late ninth, tenth- and eleventh-century pottery from Ribe is, so far, less common than earlier or later material and the range of wares present is poorly known. The shell-tempered sherds mentioned above are, in fact, the only potential English imports of this period in Ribe, which, given the strong connections between England and Denmark at this period, is quite remarkable.

English wares are present in a few other 10th- or 11th-century deposits in Scandinavia and the Baltic in small quantities. Amongst these are Trondheim (Stamford ware and Lincolnshire shell-tempered coarsewares, Reed 1990, 67), Birka (a complete shell-tempered jar of Lincoln Kiln Type ware)(Adams-Gimour 1988, 83; Selling 1995, 60-64 fig. 14 no. 1, pl. 4 no. 1) and a single shell-tempered jar rim sherd noted at Haithabu/Hedeby (on display at Haithabu/Hedeby museum) which may be of either St Neot's-type ware or a Lincoln area product.

[Henning Stilke has drawn my attention to shell-tempered vessels from Haithabu which Hubener has identified as being English. These sherds would repay further study as it is now possible to distinguish groups of English shell-tempered wares by fabric and manufacturing

and decorative traits (Jenner and Vince 1991; Adams Gilmour 1988)].

Early 11th-century glazed ware from Lund, published as being of English origin, has recently been subjected to a program of petrological analysis, as a result of which it can be seen to have been of Scandinavian manufacture, albeit produced under strong English influence (Christensen et al 1994). It is worth noting that this minimal evidence for the importation of pottery from England to Denmark contrasts with the evidence of coin finds, which shows that late 10th and early 11th-century English pennies were in widespread use. This, however, is probably a consequence of the vast amounts of Danegeld paid by English kings to the Danes rather than being a result of commercial contact.

From these faltering beginnings the trade in pottery between England and Scandinavia grew considerably, mainly during the second half of the 12th century. The main wares involved at that time were London-type and Stamford wares but individual sherds of Ham Green ware jugs, from kilns at the mouth of the Bristol Avon, have been identified at Bergen and Lund and a sherd from a South-East Wiltshire tripod pitcher, at type of glazed ware exported via Bristol in the later 11th and early 12th century, has been recognised at Lund.

In the early 13th century these wares were joined, and then supplanted altogether, by other English wares. The decline of the trade of pottery from London to Scandinavia is clearly shown by the study of material from the Bryggen in Bergen, where there is a sharp contrast between the quantities of late 12th and early 13th-century London-area wares and those which can be dated later than c.1250 (Blackmore and Vince 1994). The decline in Stamford area pottery exports can be seen by comparing the quantity of Developed Stamford ware known with that of Lyveden-Stanion ware. The latter type is extremely distinctive, since its fabric is tempered with rounded calcareous ooliths of Jurassic age and the glazed jugs were typically decorated with stamped pads of clay. Sherds of Lyveden-Stanion ware jugs have been found in Trondheim and Bergen, with a single example from Ribe. As the London and Stamford area connections faded away so new contacts grew up, principally

with east coast English ports and the potteries which served them. Amongst the wares which have been identified on Scandinavian excavations are: Scarborough ware, York whiteware, Lincoln glazed ware (exported via Boston rather than direct?) and Grimston ware. Many of these sherds are difficult to identify by fabric and there was clearly considerable exchange of ideas between East Coast potters so that one cannot automatically take the presence of plastic decoration in the form of knights or anthropomorphic figures as evidence for the source of a later medieval east coast glazed ware vessel. A handful of sherds were seen by the author and identified simply as English? for this reason. At some stage they would repay further study but their extreme rarity demonstrates the point that pottery from eastern England is rare on Danish medieval excavations. At Bergen and Trondheim, however, these later medieval English glazed wares are relatively common.

A preliminary survey of Grimston-type ware from Trondheim by Sarah Jennings shows that types typical of the late medieval period are present. At other sites, however, it seems that the main sources of imported pottery in the late medieval period were the Low Countries, the Rhineland and North Germany.

To recap, the importation of English pottery to Scandinavia in the Viking and medieval periods was never on a large scale. It began in the late 9th or 10th century in a very small way but grew rapidly during the 12th century, tailed off during the 13th century and was dead by the 15th century. In the remainder of this paper I will examine in detail the evidence for English pottery imports in the 12th and 13th centuries and in particular the importation of Stamford ware and London-type ware.

Stamford ware

The survey of Stamford ware fabrics, forms, glazes and manufacturing techniques produced by Dr. K. Kilmurry in the 1970s has established the broad pattern of development of the industry with some certainty (Kilmurry 1980). A white-firing clay, the Estuarine Beds, was used throughout the industry, although there are differences in texture with time which could be due

to developments in clay preparation or to the exploitation of different clay pits. Glaze colour and application too changed consistently through time so that it is possible even with small body sherds to assign a Stamford ware sherd to one of three broad date-ranges: 10th-early 11th-century wares with glossy glaze (Glazes 4 and 5) and slightly sandy fabric (Fabrics D, E, F and G); Mid-11th-century to mid-12th century thin glaze (Glazes 1 and 2) and fine fabric (Fabric A) and late 12th century to mid-13th century very fine fabric (Fabrics B and C) with plain (Glaze 6) or more usually mottled green glaze (Glaze 3).

In the seven towns visited only five sherds of Stamford ware without a green glaze were seen. These were a tentatively identified pitcher sherd from Ribe; a complete yellow glazed costrel and part of a second vessel of identical form, both from Ribe; a sherd from a sprinkler from Lund and a pitcher base from Schleswig.

Sherds of green-glazed, 'Developed' Stamford ware were found at various sites in Ribe, four sites from Lund, two sites in Roskilde and at Schleswig. A complete lid was present at the Schild site, Schleswig, whilst the remaining sherds come from jugs. Interestingly, fragments of tubular spot were found at Ribe (1 out of 5 sherds seen), Lund (1 out of 12 sherds seen) and Roskilde (1 out of 2 sherds seen). This form may be over-represented in Denmark in comparison to its frequency in England suggesting that the vessels brought to Denmark were specially selected rather than a random sample of the total production range.

Stamford ware ceased to be produced early in the 13th century and indeed its main period of exportation in England appears to have been in the late 12th century. Even in Stamford itself it was supplanted by Stanion/Lyveden glazed wares. The evidence for contact between the Scandinavia and Stamford therefore can be closely dated between c.1150 at the earliest and c.1220 at the latest.

London-type ware

Unlike Stamford ware, the precise source of London-type ware is unknown. That the kiln sites must be within a few kilometres of London is

clear from a study of the pottery found on 12th and 13th-century sites in the Thames valley but whether it is the product of potters working in workshops in the suburbs of the city itself or from one of the surrounding villages is not known. That the pottery is in fact from a single 'industry' is clear from similarities in the methods of clay preparation, manufacture, style and decoration. It is also clear from the occasional spots of glaze found on unglazed cooking vessels and from fragments of broken cooking vessels found adhering to the glazed London-type ware jugs that what has been isolated as a single entity, London-type ware, was actually one part of a larger enterprise in which potters could choose any one of three distinctive fabrics, or wares, in which to make their vessels. These three wares are termed Coarse London-type ware, London-type ware (ie. Fine London-type ware) and London Shelly-Sandy ware and are usually referred to by their codes of LCOAR, LOND and SSW.

Of these three fabrics only one, SSW, is petrologically distinct and thin-sections taken from samples found at the Bryggen, Bergen, have confirmed that these finds are made from the same geological ingredients as the London finds. The coarse ware contains a mixture of rounded quartz, fragments of sandstone, flint, chert and iron-rich compounds. These inclusions are typical of the Thames valley sands and gravels but are also found over a wider area of south-east England, from East Anglia down to Kent. The fine ware contains even less distinctive inclusions, which appear to have been obtained from deposits of 'brickearth' or loess whose grain size is so small that only quartz grains can be expected with any frequency in thin-section. Not only does the fabric alone not identify these wares as being from London, there is also a high degree of overlap between the fabrics of the London glazed wares and those of Low Countries glazed wares which are very similar in appearance. Identification of London-type wares in Scandinavia therefore depends on the sherds found having some distinctive traces of their original form or manufacture. Small, featureless body sherds cannot be reliably identified as being of London area origin.

The London-type pottery industry has been the subject of three studies. Firstly, vessels of

later 12th to 14th centuries found in London were arranged into a type series and a corpus published, alongside dating evidence derived from dendrochronologically-dated deposits from the Thames waterfront (Pearce & Vince 1985). Subsequently, a study of 10th- to 12th-century deposits in London showed that the industry actually began in the later 11th century, albeit in a small fashion, but that given the small number of stratified sherds, and their generally small size, it was not possible to recognise distinctive traits which would identify these early vessels if not found in a stratified deposit (Jenner & Vince 1991). Thirdly, the London area pottery found at Bryggen in Bergen has been studied and the sequence of fabrics and forms found there compared with that established for London itself (Blackmore & Vince 1994). Since the publication of the corpus in 1985 London-type wares have been identified over a wide area of Western Europe stretching from Waterford in southeast Ireland, through eastern Scotland (especially Perth), Northwest Germany (Hollingstedt and Schleswig) as well as in Scandinavia. Certain patterns in this distribution are clear. Firstly, it is not the case that London-type wares occur everywhere and with decreasing frequency as one travels away from London. Rather, there is a scatter of findspots at English sites which have produced large late 12th or early 13th-century assemblages but then much more frequent finds at specific sites, most of which are interpreted as ports in which it is likely that ships sailing out of London docked. Other ports, such as Boston, Grimsby and Kings Lynn, all of which were involved in North Sea trade, have produced only small quantities of London area pottery. The only exception to this rule appears to be the site of Otford in Kent which is not on the coast but was a palace of the Bishop of London. Here, probably, is evidence for pottery travelling in the caravan of a peripatetic magnate rather than that magnate's agent (reeve or bailiff) arranging for the palace to be provisioned by traders from local markets.

Since it is impossible to identify a late 11th- or early 12th-century sherd of London-type pottery from a mid to late 12th-century one there is no way of studying the growth of this trade without large stratified assemblages. At Bryggen, where

such deposits exist, it seems that London area pottery was absent from the earliest deposits, dated to the middle of the 12th century, but rose quickly to a peak in the late 12th century and declined quickly thereafter. Although it is possible that this sequence reflects local circumstances, the same basic sequence is found on sites elsewhere in Bergen excavated by Siri Myrvoll and being studied by Rory Dunlop and Anna Christensen. From the beginning of the 13th century onwards there were a number of changes in the range of forms produced and in their style of decoration, starting with the production of a range of types which appear to be close copies of vessels made in or around Rouen and the Seine valley. Later in the century new types are found which are not so closely related to the French prototypes (whilst Rouen was supplied by a glazed ware industry whose products are not copied in London). The two industries had therefore diverged from a common origin by c.1230. By the middle of the century much plainer vessels were being produced in London, principally baluster jugs with 'tulip necks' and small, unglazed and poorly-made drinking jugs. These types occur in the Bryggen collection but are so rare as to confirm that by this date the London connection was about to end. In Denmark, no sites have produced anything like the quantity of London-type pottery as found at Bergen and the absence of late types should not be taken to imply such a different history to that demonstrated at the Bryggen. As in Stamford ware, tubular-spouted and lidded jugs were produced in London-type ware and appear to have been amongst the most elaborate products used, alongside highly decorated vessels with figures and animals moulded in relief. All three types occur in the Bryggen collection but are not represented on the Danish sites. Given the small quantities of pottery concerned it may, however, be premature to make a distinction between situations in which finewares were selected and those in which a more mundane range of types is found. It is the case, however, that SSW cooking pots have been found at both Ribe and Hollingstedt.

As with Stamford ware, however, the London area finds are clearly most common in a limited period, the later 12th and early 13th centuries.

Discussion

The distribution pattern

Even though the total quantity of pottery involved is very small, much smaller than that from the single excavation at Brygen, there is an apparent pattern in the distribution of these late 12th- and early 13th-century wares. Firstly, several of the towns, despite being medieval ports, have produced no sherds of either type. These towns include Ålborg, Århus, Svendborg and (with less certainty) Odense. Next is a group in which London area products outnumber those from Stamford. In medieval Denmark this group only includes the town of Ribe and the transshipment site at Hollingstedt. In Norway it includes Bergen (1274 sherds of London-type ware compared with 63 sherds of northern French origin) and Trondheim (149 sherds of London-type ware compared with 95 sherds of northern French origin). Finally, there is a group in which Stamford ware outnumbers London-type ware and this group includes Lund, Roskilde and Schleswig. Neither group is exclusive, but such figures as are available suggest a very strong separation, unlikely to be simply the result of change if the two wares were in fact originally present in similar quantities.

Potential factors affecting the distribution of English medieval pottery in Denmark

Any discussion of the significance of these distribution patterns has to consider also the whole question of the mechanisms by which pottery was carried from place to place in medieval Europe. Clearly, by the later 12th century (and in fact almost certainly throughout the medieval period) pottery was being produced for the market rather than for domestic use or for non-commercial exchange. It may well be that potting was not the sole means of support of the people involved and there seems to have been a movement by English potters away from the towns, where they may have been working solely on the production and distribution of their wares (as at Stamford), to rural sites where they were almost certainly combining pottery production with agriculture (as at Lyveden and Stanion). Undoubtedly in some of the cases described here

the proportion of a potter's wares which ended up being exported may have been very small (in particular the Southeast Wiltshire tripod pitcher, which was made at about the most landlocked part of western England possible) and in these cases there can have been little connection between the manufacture and export of the pottery. In other cases, the Ham Green industry being the clearest example, pottery was produced specifically for export. This is shown by the location of the kilns, in an area separated from the surrounding countryside by wooded hills but easily accessible by ships travelling to and from Bristol. Recent work on the dendrochronologically-dated pottery assemblages of Bristol suggest that this industry was in operation in the mid 12th century, if not before (Ponsford 1991). I would suggest that both the Stamford and the London-type pottery industries were also producing their wares for an organised market, taking advantage of shipping which for one reason or another was using their respective ports. Since in both cases there was high quality pottery being produced in the period before it starts to be found in Scandinavia this either implies a change in the marketing of the pottery or the character of the cargoes being carried. Pottery is bulky and fragile. It is therefore not an ideal cargo for a 12th- or 13th-century ship, especially since it is unlikely to have commanded a high price at its destination. The circumstances when it might make an acceptable part of a consignment are when a ship has already made its main profit on the outward journey. In the case of Bergen and Trondheim there is little doubt that the majority of the ships sailing to Stamford and London were carrying fish. Similarly, fish would have been one of the main exports of the 12th- and 13th-century Baltic ports, especially in the Øre Sund coast of Scania. Later on, both Norway and the Baltic would also be exporting timber and London, especially, provided a ready market for Baltic oak in the later medieval period as more and more pressure was placed upon local resources. This sequence is not only shown by references to Baltic timber in contemporary documents but also by the results of dendrochronology.

Per Kristian Madsen has suggested that one possible reason for a decline in the importation

of English pottery even though documentary sources show that Danish traders were still using English ports is that these traders had started to undertake more complex journeys. Instead of travelling back and forth from Stamford to Ribe their ships might travel first to the east coast of England, then down to northern France then back along the Flemish, Dutch and Frisian coasts to Ribe. Only the last goods to be loaded would therefore make their way back to the home port. This model can be tested by looking at pottery which might have been obtained along such a final leg of a long voyage. Low Countries wares are certainly common both on the western Jutish coast and in the Baltic. There is, however, some difficulty in reliably distinguishing locally-made copies from genuine Flemish redwares and I have therefore taken a most distinctive type to act as a marker for this trade – Northwest French whiteware. As mentioned already, some of the glazed pottery from Rouen and the Seine valley has a strong similarity to that from London but after the middle of the 13th century this similarity is lost and the later wares are quite distinct in their overall form and methods of decoration. It is possible to distinguish early and late types even from small sherds and they are sufficiently distinctive to have been identified on most sites where they have been found, so that it is possible to quite quickly survey their Danish distribution.

Early Rouen glazed wares occur at Ribe, where they outnumber English wares on all sites, at Lund, at Odense and at Schleswig. The later Rouen glazed wares, however, occur on a much higher number of sites. In addition to Ribe, Lund and Schleswig they occur at Ålborg, Århus, Svendborg and Kolding. Furthermore, they have been found at two monastic sites, Tommarp in Skåne and Løgumkloster in Jutland. Except at Ribe, they are never common finds but do seem to indicate that if Per Kristian Madsen's hypothesis is correct then there is actually an increase in this circular trade in the later 13th century and a widening of the number of ports concerned, a conclusion in agreement with the documentary sources.

Conclusion and future work

Using pottery to study trade in the medieval period is fraught with dangers. There are certainly patterns in the data which must be related in some way to the shipping which criss-crossed the North Sea and the Baltic during the medieval period to supply an ever increasing population in England, France and the Low Countries with food and raw materials. However, as this example has shown, the connections between these archaeological finds and the historical situation which gave rise to them are complex. Pottery vessels had a different value in western Norway, where for some reason or other no local pottery industry existed, and in Denmark, which had always been able to supply itself with cooking pottery and by the later 12th and 13th centuries was starting to establish local supplies of glazed ware. London-type ware is to all intents and purposes functionally identical to these 13th-century local glazed wares. If anything the quality of the glazing is better on the Danish than the English wares. However, there was no local equivalent to Stamford ware. No natural supplies of white-firing clay exist in Denmark and it may be that there was a market for imported white firing pottery simply because it was more pleasing to the eye. This might explain to some extent the continuation of the importation of late Rouen glazed ware alongside the production of local products.

How might this research continue? Firstly, there is still a large amount of primary documentation to carry out and this sample of seven towns could easily be doubled. Secondly, there is a need to look at the relationships of town and country. Assemblages of medieval pottery from English towns seem to differ from their rural counterparts mainly in their size rather than in any qualitative way but there are indications that in Denmark this is not so. There may well be differences in the way in which pottery was used to reflect the social and settlement hierarchy in Denmark and in England and to establish these requires fundamental work on the basic data, establishing what pottery vessels were actually used for and under what circumstances they were used.

Acknowledgements

This paper is based on research carried out during a three-week study tour undertaken in August 1993 and funded by the Society of Antiquaries of London. The results of this research were presented to the Danish Medieval Pottery Research Group in October 1994 and I have incorporated several of the comments made at that meeting into the paper. In particular, I am grateful to Ian Reed of the Norwegian Institute for nature and cultural heritage research (NINA NIKU), both for comments on the interpretation of the evidence and for his comments on the identification of some of the English wares. Per Kristian Madsen not only allowed me free rein throughout the stores at the Antiquarian Collection in Ribe but also suggested where else I

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should go and who I should meet. Without his support and encouragement the project would not have started. I am very grateful to the staff of all the museums visited and especially: Michael Andersen, Jacob Tue Christensen, Tom Christensen, Claus Feveile, Henrik Janssen, Jens Jepsen, Stefan Larsson, Jens Nielsen and Torvald Nilsson.

I am extremely grateful to Prof. Peter Sawyer, both for his interest in this work in particular and for giving me at much-needed overview of medieval Scandinavia. The staff and students at the Department of Archaeology, University of York, took part in a seminar on this topic in November 1993 and I have adsorbed several useful ideas from the ensuing discussion into this paper.

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