

A French Connection:

Danish Funerary Pots – a Group of Medieval Pottery

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This article discusses a small number of medieval Danish graves which, unlike the common medieval burial, contain one or several funerary pots (Madsen 1977; 1980 (I); 1980 (II); 1981) (1). One of the best examples of this type of grave was found in Roskilde Cathedral in 1823 by workmen who were breaking up the floor at the entrance to a new royal chapel (*Antiquariske Annaler* 1827: 400 f.; *Danmarks Kirker, Københavns Amt* 4: 1969). The discovery was immediately reported to the Antiquities Commission (*Oldsagskommissionen*) in Copenhagen, who subsequently received all the finds, together with a set of very precise measurements of the grave itself (fig. 1).

The grave was constructed of great bricks and mortar and was of oblong trapezoid form, with a niche to accommodate the head. The roof of the grave was made of specially cut bricks, resting on a rebate on the upper edges of the long sides. This type of trapezoid or body-shaped grave, which before the introduction of brick had been made of stone, was relatively common in Denmark in

the Middle Ages and is also to be found throughout the greater part of western Europe. In Denmark the trapezoid grave seems to have been used mainly amongst the upper classes and the grave-type appears to go out of use during the last quarter of the 13th century (Worsaae and Herbst 1858; Gay 1931; *KLNM* 5: 438ff.).

The Roskilde grave contained the undisturbed remains of a high-ranking prelate, who was buried in accordance with his ecclesiastical privileges, dressed in his vestments and accompanied by a chalice and paten (Ruland 1901: 172f.; Friedberg 1879, 1: col. 720–732; Mackeprang 1906: 80; Kornerup 1873: 262f.). A more unusual feature was, however, the presence of four clay pots, which were placed in small niches on each side of the body and at both ends of the grave. The pots contained charcoal and some earth from the grave-fill and were very well preserved.

The Commission's published report of this find (*Antiquariske Annaler* 1827: 400f.) states that other medieval

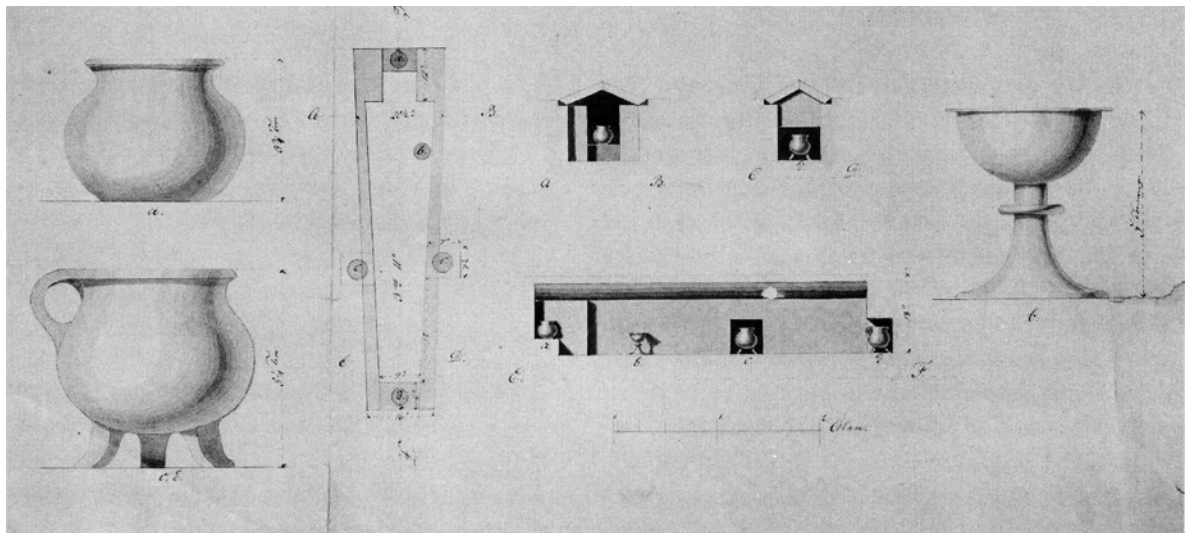


Fig. 1. Plan of the brick-built grave with funerary pots found in 1823 in Roskilde Cathedral. National Museum Copenhagen, 2nd Dept. Photo: National Museum.

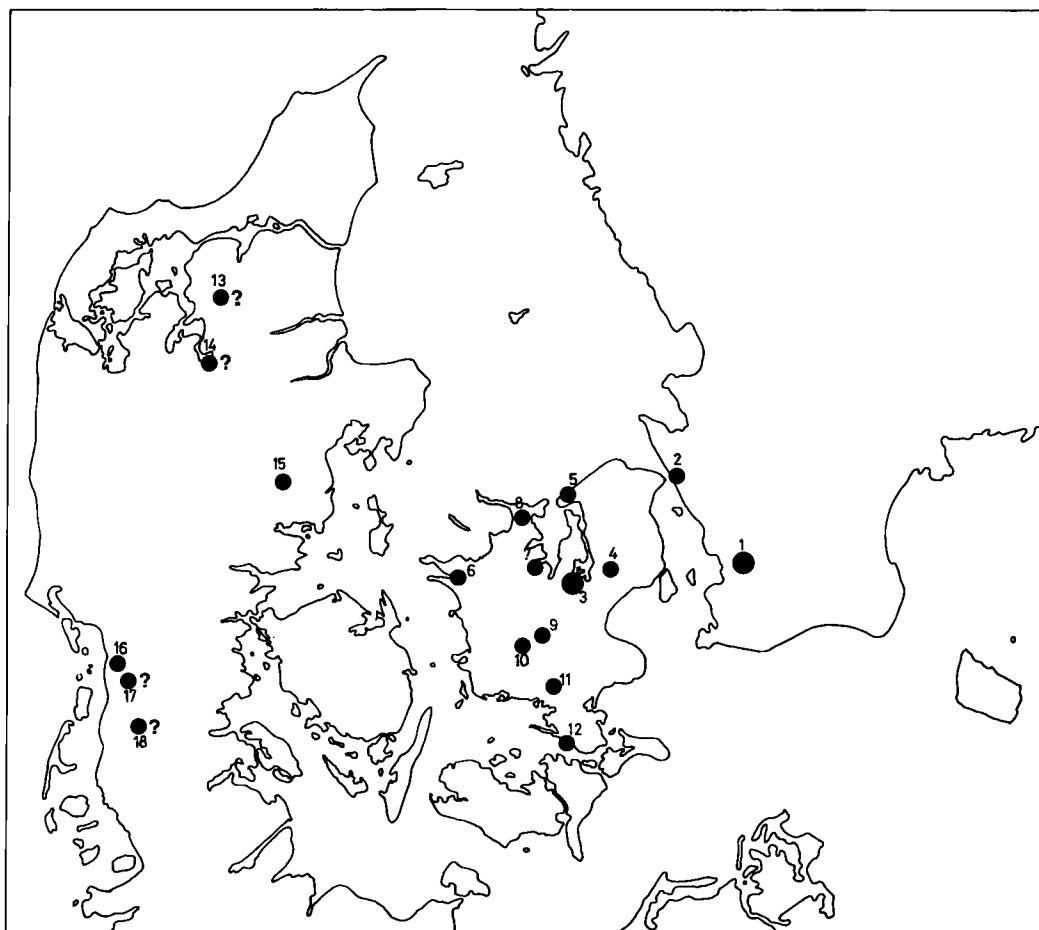


Fig. 2. Distribution of medieval Danish graves with funerary pots. ? denotes presumed finds, 1: Lund. 2: Helsingborg. 3: Roskilde. 4: Smørum. 5: Melby. 6: Kalundborg. 7: Labæk. 8: Asnæs. 9: Ringsted. 10: Vester Broby. 11: Næstved. 12: Vordingborg. 13: Gislum. 14: Navntoft. 15: Øm. 16: Ribe. 17: Løgum. 18: Roager. Drawing: Jens Kirkeby.

graves with clay pots were known from Ribe and also from Lund, which in the Middle Ages was the residence of the Archbishop of Denmark. None of these finds survive today. The present known material consists of *c.* 75 graves with *c.* 200 pots of different types. The latest find was made in 1978 during excavations in St Peter's churchyard in Helsingborg (Wihlborg 1979). A number of finds and funerary pots are known only from find-reports or other documentary evidence, but 144 funerary pots survive and are kept in various collections. The greater number are in the National Museum in Copenhagen and in Kulturen in Lund and these two collections together constitute the largest coherent group of complete or almost complete medieval Danish pottery. All the finds were surveyed in 1978 (Madsen 1978), when the material was discussed with reference to the

European background for the burial custom and with particular concentration on the pottery itself. This article presents the more important results of that survey. It must be noted that the term »funerary pot« here corresponds to the Danish *gravpotte*.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE FINDS

All known finds are marked on fig. 2. The map shows the area which was under Danish rule until 1658, including Skåne, Halland and Blekinge, now parts of Sweden. Very few finds have been made in Jutland and the distribution map gives the immediate impression that the use of funerary pots was predominantly an east Danish phenomenon, especially common in Sjælland

parish churches		cathedrals		monasteries		Total
20	13	13	12	7	24	89

Table I. Finds of funerary pots as distributed among the three types of ecclesiastical institution from which they are known: parish churches, cathedrals and monasteries. The first figure in each column represents finds inside the church, the second finds in the churchyard. The number of finds exceeds the number of registered graves.

(Zealand) and concentrated in Roskilde and Lund, the two most important towns in eastern Denmark. Naturally, the map only shows the known finds and the great number of pots found in Lund and Roskilde may simply be the result of the intensive archaeological research to which the many churches in the two towns have been subjected. It must be borne in mind that only a few churches have been excavated on Fyn and that the island has not yet been included in the inventory in *Danmarks Kirker*. Parts of Jutland are, however, covered by the inventory and it should be noted that there are only two possible finds in the part of South Jutland which is now Danish. On the other hand, if one views the distribution of finds in the light of the reasons that lay behind the use of funerary pots (*cf.* below) it is very likely that their known distribution may yet be of significance and that the finds from Ribe Cathedral also fit into the pattern.

Graves with funerary pots are known from nearly every form of ecclesiastical institution, in town as well as country (Table I). In Lund they were found in all parts of the town, although most occur in burials at the two major foundations, the cathedral and the Dominican monastery. The monastery was founded in 1223 at the latest, as the first of that order in Denmark, (*SRD V: 501*) and almost 20% of all known Danish funerary pots come from graves in its churchyard, immediately east of the monastery church chancel (fig. 3), where they were excavated by G.J. Karlin in 1906 (Blomqvist 1944). Virtually the same pattern can be seen in Roskilde, where we know of 8 graves with a total of 21 pots in the churchyard to the north of the cathedral (fig. 4). Altogether, these two towns have mustered 57 graves and 111 funerary pots: about 75% of all the graves with funerary pots and 82% of all surviving funerary pots.

In only one, or perhaps two cases is it possible to make a comparison between the total number of graves in a cemetery and the number of graves that contained

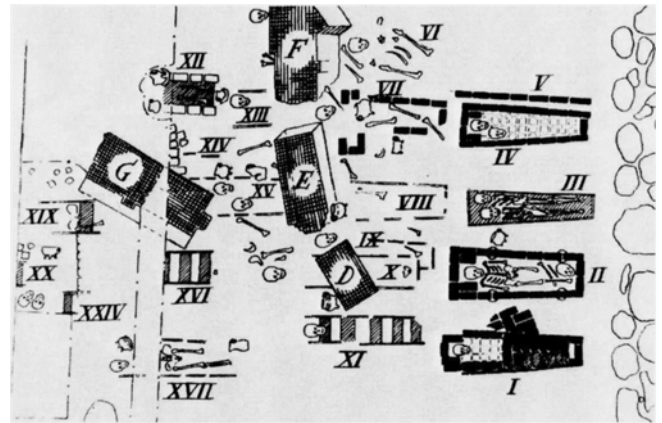


Fig. 3. Part of plan of excavations at the churchyard east of the Dominican monastery in Lund. From: Blomqvist 1944.

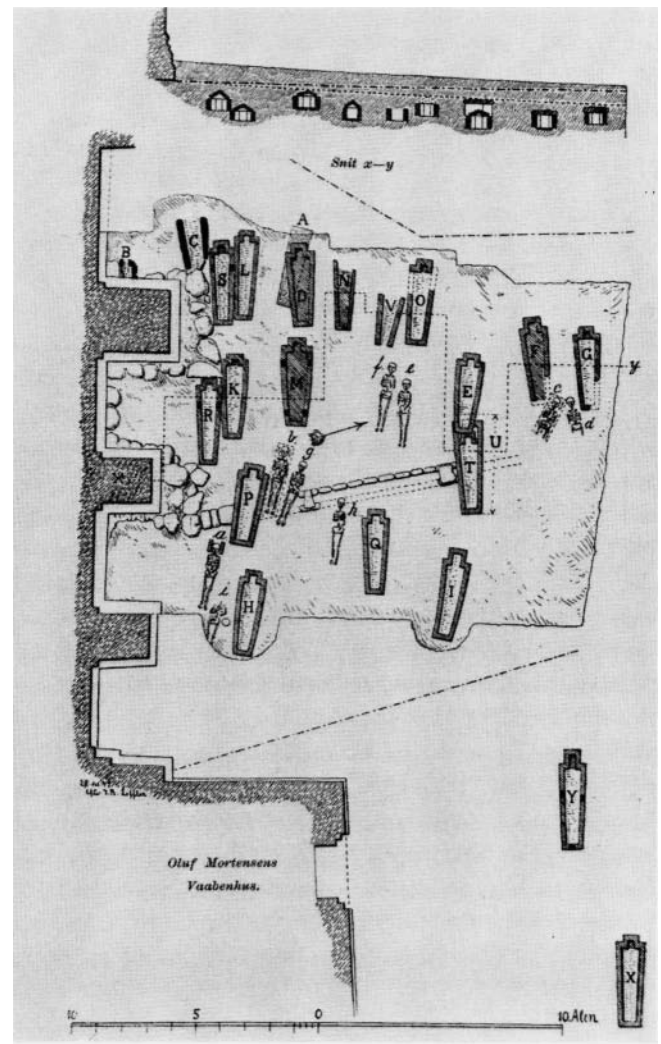


Fig. 4. Plan of excavations at the churchyard north of the northern transept of Roskilde Cathedral. From: Löffler 1897.



Fig. 5. Metal censer containing charcoal, found in a child's grave in Smørum churchyard. Height: 10.5 cm. National Museum Copenhagen, 2nd Dept., mus. no. 19939. Photo: National Museum.

funerary pots. St Stephen's Church and churchyard in Lund, which were completely excavated in 1977–78, contained the burials of more than 3200 individuals, which must be taken to be the minimum number of people buried there during the Middle Ages (Persson and Persson 1980: 151f.). Funerary pots were found in only four of the graves and these were all situated inside the church, where only 34 burials were made during the entire period of its active use (Mårtensson 1980: 100ff.). Being buried with funerary pots seems to have been a prerogative of the select and this impression is strengthened by the results of excavations in the churchyard at St Peter's parish church in Helsingborg, where only one of the 1447 excavated graves was found to contain funerary pots (Wihlborg 1979). Finally, among the c. 900 graves in the church and churchyard at the Cistercian monastery in Øm in Jutland (fig. 2) only one contained funerary pots, namely the grave of a bishop found in the chancel in front of the altar (Madsen 1977; Olsen 1979).

The distribution of the finds thus indicates that we are dealing with a predominantly eastern Danish practice and demonstrates that the use of funerary pots was





				Total
29	4	5	13	51

Table II. Graves with funerary pots where the grave-type is known.

only practiced by a limited number of people. It is, however, possible that sources other than the archaeological finds may throw some further light on the subject.

GRAVE-TYPES

Table II shows the graves with funerary pots where the grave-type is known, compared with the grave-types in common use in Denmark in the Middle Ages. It can be seen that funerary pots occur in all types of grave. The comparatively large number of brick graves, and in one case a stone grave, in all c. 45, which have been found to contain funerary pots, may attest that the custom of using such pots was associated with the higher social classes – even though we must take into account that brick-built graves were overrepresented in earlier investigations of medieval graves, when insufficient attention was given to traces of wooden coffins or uncoffined burials. On the other hand, we may safely assume that wooden coffins were also used for upper class burials. Wooden coffins, as well as coffins of lead plates, occur in the brick graves and a wooden coffin or bier may also have had some decorative function in the funeral procession and during the funeral mass.

There seems to have been no general rule that governed either the position or the number of funerary pots in a grave. They were usually placed close to the body and only in the bishop's grave in Øm and in three or four of the graves in Lund do we know that the pots were placed outside the brick grave (Madsen 1977: 149). In 27 of the brick graves there were niches made specially for the pots, as in the example from Roskilde Cathedral (fig. 1). Here the funerary pots were obviously intended to remain inside the grave and they must have been placed there during the burial ceremony at the latest.

						total
25	15	16	2	79	18	144

Table III. The 144 surviving funerary pots can be divided into six types as shown. Drawing: Jens Kirkeby.



Fig. 6. Four glazed jugs, presumably used as funerary pots in Ribe Cathedral. The height of the jug to the left is 13.5 cm. National Museum Copenhagen, 2nd Dept., mus. no. D 7901 and D 7902. Photo: Preben Dehlholm.

THE FUNERARY POTS

The known Danish funerary pots are, with one single exception, made of clay. The exception is a metal censer (fig. 5) from a child's grave in the churchyard at Smørum on Sjælland (fig. 2). Like the other funerary pots, whose contents are known, this contained charcoal.

The 144 surviving pottery vessels can be divided into six types on the basis of their shape (Table III): flat base pots, globular pots, globular pots with handle, globular pots with three feet, globular pots with handle and three feet, and jugs. Apparently, fairly small vessels were preferred for use as funerary pots, especially globular pots of various types, no doubt partly because of the confined space in the grave. That this was so is confirmed by the fact that on several pots the feet had been broken off to make them fit into the niches in the brick graves. Although the finds include both glazed and unglazed pottery, as well as a few examples of imported stoneware, the group as a whole does not represent the entire range of pottery types from the period during which funerary pots were used. It seems unlikely that pots were made specially for the purpose, as far too many similar pots have been found in purely secular

contexts (Madsen 1978: 3ff.; Liebgott 1979). On the other hand, a closer inspection of the funerary pots reveals that several had suffered greater or lesser damage during manufacture and they must thus be seen as second-rate goods. This is the case with four glazed jugs from Ribe Cathedral (fig. 6) (Madsen 1980 (I) and (II)), a couple of pots from Lund (Wahlöö 1976: no. 167) and a flat base pot from Roskilde which had split from top to bottom during firing (fig. 7).

It has been assumed that it would be possible to classify the graves with funerary pots in a typological and datable sequence on the basis of the grave-types, so as to establish an instructive series of well dated and well preserved pottery (Madsen 1977 with references). On examination of the material this has, however, not proved possible; at least not at the present stage of research. In several cases we have to date the graves by the pots rather than vice versa. But the funerary pots are still important to the study of medieval pottery in Denmark, particularly of local groups. The development and the dating of the pottery must, however, still be established on the basis of well documented stratigraphical contexts (Madsen 1982).

The jugs from Ribe (fig. 6) belong to a local group of jugs which probably cannot be dated any earlier than c.

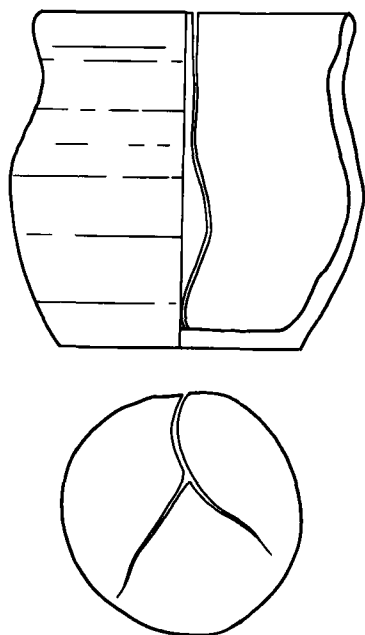


Fig. 7. Funerary pot from Roskilde, Our Lady's churchyard. During firing the pot has split from top to bottom. 1: Roskilde Museum, mus. no. RM 31–33. Measurement: Per Kristian Madsen. Drawing: Jens Kirkeby.

1300 (Bencard 1979; Madsen 1980 (I)). Similarly, the jugs used as funerary pots in the Dominican monastery in Lund belong to a group which has been demonstrated to be particular to that locality (Mårtensson 1973). The very characteristic tripod globular pots, which were found with the jugs, may also be thought to be local products. Sherds from jugs, which correspond to those found in the Lund graves, have turned up in other places, for example in Oslo, where they have been dated by stratigraphy to the beginning of the 14th century (Molaug 1977: 99; Molaug 1979: 42). The Oslo finds demonstrate that funerary pots were not made specifically for the purpose, but that everyday pottery was used.

The same applies to the finds from Roskilde, and in this material it is furthermore possible to detect some workshop connections. Pots of the type shown in fig. 7, which have a flat base and characteristic surface smoothing and bear some resemblance to the so-called Baltic pottery, also occur in finds from the town (Liebgott 1979). A pot of this type was found in a brick grave together with two handled globular pots, one of which had been splashed with glaze. These globular pots correspond to wasters found in a workshop at Farum Lillevang in North Sjælland – the marks made to attach the

handles on these pots are identical to those made on the pots from Roskilde (fig. 9).

The grave was found in the churchyard north of Roskilde Cathedral (fig. 4, M) (Löffler 1897: 233ff.; *Danmarks Kirker, Københavns Amt 3*, 1951: 1320ff.). Some of the other graves in this cemetery, one with funerary pots (fig. 4, Y), were situated above the foundations of the projecting northern transept, which was never completed. These foundations were probably laid at the end of the 12th century and the plans for the building were changed in *c.* 1220 (*cf.* Héliot 1964). The *terminus post quem* for the graves is thus around 1200 or rather 1220. As mentioned above, the trapezoid grave went out of use during the third quarter of the 13th century at the latest.

As regards Farum Lillevang, this means that at least some of the products from the workshop there must be dated to that period. As traces of glazing occur on one of the pots which have been thought to come from Farum, it is, moreover, possible that glazed jugs were produced at Farum Lillevang already before 1250. The Farum finds comprise a large number of jugsherds and it must be noted that the floor of just that Roskilde grave which contained the presumed Farum pots (fig. 4, M) was made of re-used glazed tiles.

At the same time as Farum Lillevang, another workshop in or near Roskilde was producing pots such as those shown in fig. 9 (Liebgott 1979 and 1982). Two of these pots come from a woman's grave in the churchyard north of the cathedral (fig. 4) and bear identical marks stamped on the base before firing (fig. 10). Sherds from pots of this type have been found at Jernløsegaard and these are dated to the first half of the 13th century. Niels-Knud Liebgott (1982: 153ff.) has pointed out that this group of relatively low-fired, unglazed pottery must probably be seen as a connecting link between older, mainly Baltic, traditions and the new influence from the West.

Bishop Peder of Århus (Øm Monastery, fig. 2, 15)	..	died 1246
King Christoffer I (Ribe Cathedral, fig. 2, 16)	died 1259
Queen Agnes (Ringsted, St Bendt's Church, fig. 2,9)	.	died 1304
Queen Ingeborg (Ringsted, St Bendt's Church, fig. 2,9)		died 1319
Archbishop Karl (Lund Cathedral, fig. 2,1)	died 1334
Archbishop Magnus (Lund Cathedral, fig. 2,1)	died 1390

Table IV. Danish graves with funerary pots dated by the known identity of the deceased.

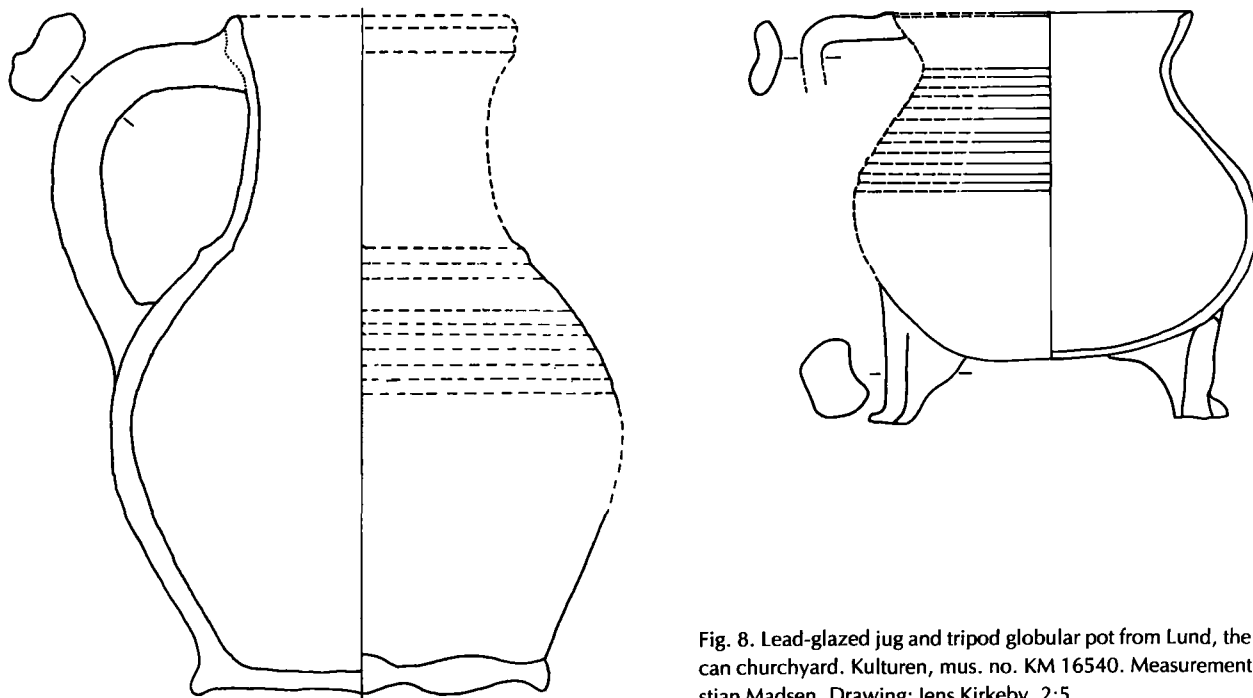


Fig. 8. Lead-glazed jug and tripod globular pot from Lund, the Dominican churchyard. Kulturen, mus. no. KM 16540. Measurement: Per Kristian Madsen. Drawing: Jens Kirkeby. 2:5.

DATING

The dating of medieval grave-types, be it relative or absolute, is a very difficult matter. As mentioned in the introduction, the trapezoid grave with head-niche seems to discontinue in the third quarter of the 13th century and this provides a basis for dating part of the material.

Six of the graves, or at least the interments, can be dated precisely, as we know the identities of the deceased (Table IV) (Madsen 1977 and 1980 (II) with references). It would, however, be too optimistic to assume that just those graves represent the development of the burial custom in the period they cover. King Christoffer II was presumably buried in a re-used sarcophagus of sandstone, for example, and the graves dated by identified persons do not help us either, when it comes to dating those graves about which we only know that they contained a wooden coffin, were unconfined burials, or simply that one or more pots with charcoal were excavated with a skeleton. In most cases we do not even know the position of the skeleton in the grave.

In one of the graves with funerary pots in St Stephen's Church in Lund a coin was placed in the mortar be-

tween the bricks. This was minted in Lund for Erik Plovpenning, who ruled 1241–1250, but it only gives us a *terminus post quem* for the dating of the grave, as its circulation period cannot be determined (Mårtensson 1980: 103f.; Jensen 1980: 148). As mentioned above, it may be presumed that the graves in the churchyard north of Roskilde Cathedral (fig. 4) date from between c. 1200/1220 and the third quarter of the 13th century. The graves in the Dominican churchyard in Lund cannot be from before 1223 and one's immediate impression is that they are contemporary with the graves in the cemetery at Roskilde Cathedral. If it were not for the graves from Ringsted (1304 and 1319) and especially those from Lund (1334 and 1390), which are dated by known persons, we would probably not have hesitated in dating the greater part of the material to the 13th century. That this period is too limited is emphasized by several of the tripod globular pots from the Dominican churchyard: they bear a striking resemblance to a pot from the grave of Archbishop Karl the Red who died in 1334. Similarly, the characteristic glazed jugs (fig. 8) that were found with the pots in the Dominican churchyard seem to date from the 14th century (Mårtensson 1973; Molaug 1977: 99 and 1979: 42f.). A fairly recent

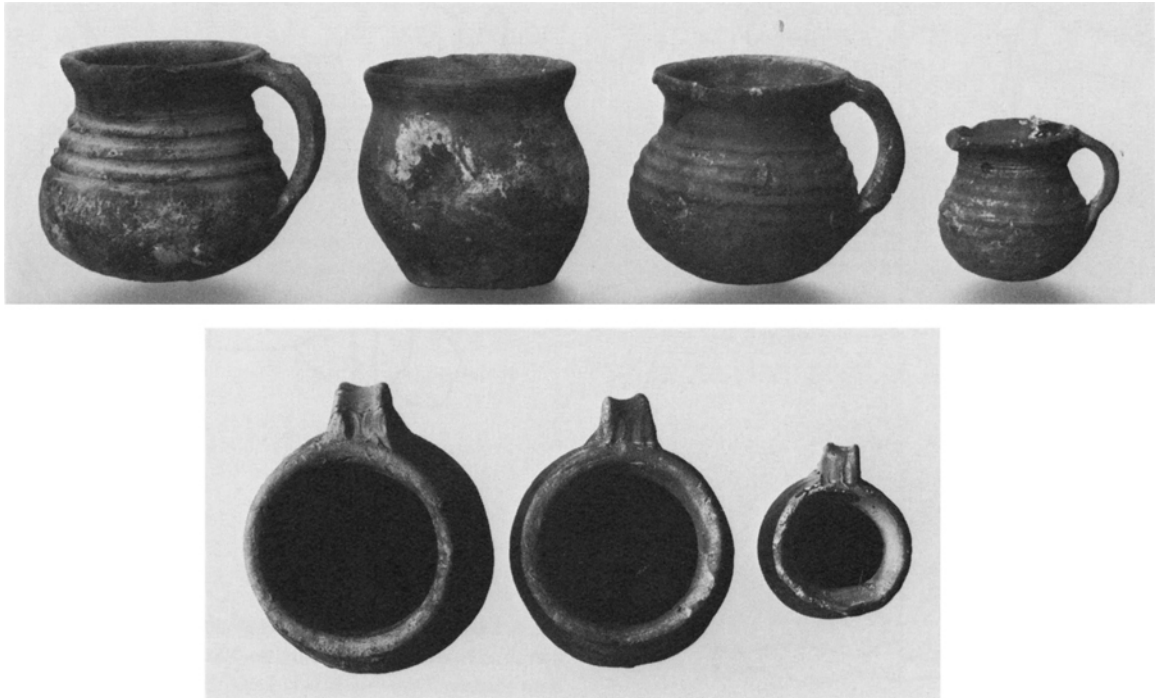


Fig. 9. 4 funerary pots from a grave north of Roskilde Cathedral's northern transept. The marks on the top of the handles correspond to marks on wasters from Farum Lillevang. The smallest of the pots is oxydized and has patches of lead glaze. National Museum Copenhagen, 2nd Dept., mus. no. 2694a–d. Photo: Lennart Larsen.

find in Lund may confirm this last dating, as a jug of that type was here found together with a kidney dagger (Wahlöö 1981).

The datable material – and particularly those graves which can be dated absolutely – thus places the custom of using funerary pots in Denmark within a comparatively long period, from the first half of the 13th to the end of the 14th century. Or perhaps even a little later, as we cannot take it for granted that Archbishop Magnus (died 1390) was the last to go to his grave accompanied by a funerary pot.

A BURIAL CUSTOM FOR KINGS, BISHOPS, AND NOBLEMEN?

The material, as we know it, points to a burial custom practised by a few, all of whom were of the elite in medieval society: kings and queens, archbishops, bishops and prelates. Both sexes are represented among the unidentified people who were buried with funerary pots and we know of one child's grave – the one from Smørum that contained a censer (fig. 5). St Stephen's

Church in Lund may have enjoyed a special relationship with an aristocratic family (Mårtensson 1980: 45ff. and 78ff.). Such connections may partly serve to explain the presence of anonymous graves with funerary pots in various parish churches.

It is clear that the custom was not exclusively to royalty and it also seems to have been rare within that circle. Indeed, as far as we know, only two royal personages – Queen Agnes (died 1304) and Queen Ingeborg (died 1319) – were buried with funerary pots. The two queens were laid to rest in similar, brick-built graves in Ringsted, whereas King Erik Menved, son of Agnes and husband of Ingeborg, who died only a few months after his queen, was buried at her side in a wooden coffin without funerary pots. The splendid brass that adorns their graves shows that, when it came to commemorating the royal couple, restraint was certainly not a governing factor.

This example makes it difficult to come to any final decision about the extent and continuity of the practice. Were funerary pots, for example, only used on certain occasions, in some churches, or within certain circles or families? Is it possible that pots were used at Erik

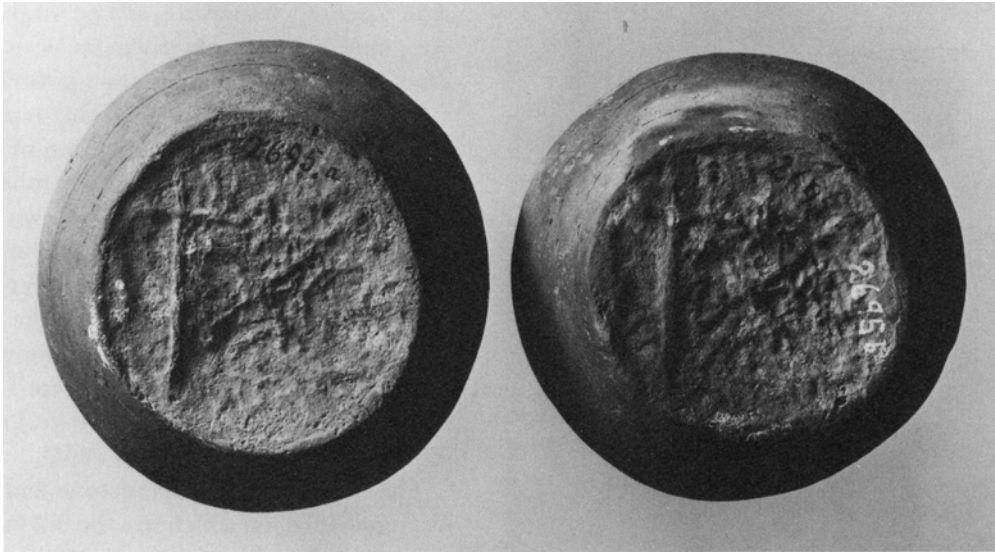


Fig. 10. 2 funerary pots from a grave in the churchyard north of Roskilde Cathedral's northern transept, cf. fig. 4. The pots, which are of the same type as that in fig. 7 and one of the pots in fig. 9, are stamped on the base with the same stamp. National Museum Copenhagen, 2nd Dept., mus. no. 2596a-b. Photo: Lennart Larsen.

Mened's burial and were simply removed from the grave before it was closed? An explanation of the background for the use of funerary pots will help to explain at least some of these questions.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

The only known parallels to the Danish funerary pots, i.e. vessels containing charcoal, found in medieval graves, occur in France. In the middle and second half of the 19th century L'Abbé Cochet, from 1849 Inspector of Ancient Monuments in Normandy, examined and published a large number of churchyards and cemeteries in the area. Among his finds were many graves with funerary pots. Since then similar finds have been made in other parts of France as well, including Paris. The custom seems to have been practiced in Paris during the 13th and 14th centuries (Cochet 1857: 339ff.; Nicourt 1974) although pots also occur in graves dating from later centuries. The earliest dated grave is said to be from 1180, the latest from 1688 (Cochet 1857: 356ff. and 383).

The pottery used as funerary pots in France was, as in Denmark, of everyday character. But in France, unlike Denmark, it was common to break some holes in the sides of the pots. In only very few cases were the holes

made before firing. The purpose of these holes was, no doubt, to provide a sufficient airsupply to enable the charcoal to burn, or rather to glow. That this was so, appears from the sooting of the holes.

L'Abbé Cochet refers to two authorities on liturgy in his attempt to interpret the funerary pots, namely Johannes Belethus of Paris (died after 1165) and Gulielmus Durandus of Mende (died 1296). Durandus's book *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* from c. 1290 was and still is a normative work on liturgical practice, as it summarizes the earlier traditions, including Beleth, and gives a symbolic interpretation. On the basis of Beleth's text, Durandus writes the following concerning burials (2):

Then [the deceased] is put in the grave, and holy-water and glowing charcoal with frankincense are put there in certain places. The holy-water is put in order that the demons, who are very afraid of it, may not approach the corpse; for they will make furious attacks on the corpses of the dead, in order that they may at least do after death what they could not do in life. The frankincense is put there to remove the stink of the corpse, either so that it may be understood that the deceased has offered the acceptable odour of good actions to his creator, or to show that the assistance of prayer helps the deceased. The charcoal is put there to testify that this ground can no longer be turned to ordinary use; for charcoal keeps better in the earth than other things.



Fig. 11. Funeral mass with three funerary pots standing beside the bier. From: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Man. latin 18014, f° 134v°. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale.

This passage explains the function of incense and charcoal, both practically and symbolically, but does not necessarily imply the employment of pots. The incense may have been placed on small heaps of glowing charcoal inside the grave, as was possibly the case in two graves in Øm. That pots could be used is, however, demonstrated by archaeological finds in both Denmark and France, though funerary pots with vents have not yet been found in Denmark. On the other hand, niches for pots have apparently not been found in France, and only in Denmark has a grave been found to contain a real censer. To judge by the archaeological finds the practice was probably never common in France.

L'Abbé Cochet reproduces a drawing of a 14th century miniature, which shows funerary pots with vents and glowing charcoal placed beside a bier during a funeral mass in a church (reproduced in Madsen 1977: fig. 10). Funerary masses and various depictions of burials and churchyards are virtually standard forms of illustration in the beautifully illuminated books of hours, which emanated from the Flemish and French workshops during the 14th and 15th centuries (Meiss 1968 and 1974 vol. I: 271; Panofsky 1964). However, other

than Cochet's miniature, whose original does not survive, only one example has so far been discovered of an illumination depicting funerary pots (fig. 11).

The most impressive pictorial representation of a burial, which includes a depiction of funerary pots in use, is to be found on the funerary monument raised by Louis the Pious to his young crown prince Louis of France (died 1260), which originally stood in the Abbey of Royaumont. The monument suffered some damage during and after the Revolution – the gable ends were, for example, for a time used as a monument to Abelard and Héloïse in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise in Paris. Its original appearance is, however, known from drawings (Vitry 1973: 78f.; Pradel 1964).

The monument is of sandstone and is in the form of a sarcophagus, on which lies the full length effigy of the young prince. On the long sides is a procession of mourners, but it is especially the picture on one gable which is of present interest (fig. 12). Here the prince is shown lying on a bier and from an account by Guillaume de Nangis we learn that one of the bearers was King Henry III of England (ed. Daunon and Naudet 1840: 421f.; Carolus-Barré 1970: 591ff.). Guillaume makes no mention of the funerary pots – which on the monument are shown beneath the bier, though their function in the procession is not made clear – perhaps because the author thought them too commonplace. None of the other, very detailed, accounts of the ceremonial funerals of French kings in the 14th and 15th centuries mention funerary pots either. Nor are they depicted on any other surviving monument from the period (*cf.* Giesey 1960: 23ff. and Brown 1980). Angels carrying censers are more or less obligatory figures on the many, more ordinary, medieval French gravestones and monuments, but so far no known example depicts funerary pots (*cf.* Adhémar 1974).

French finds of funerary pots, as well as French pictorial representations, thus demonstrate that such pots were used, not only in graves, but also during the funeral mass and possibly during the funeral procession. The pots were presumably used in the same manner in France as in Denmark, but is it possible that only in certain cases were they left behind in the grave? Was the Church in charge of the pots and were they generally removed before the closing of the grave, except in the case of certain people of high standing, or is it possible that the burning of incense in the quantity, which would require the use of a pot, was only necessary when the con-

dition of the body was such that a great deal of fragrance was called for? On the other hand, incense was, then as now, an established element in the Catholic burial ritual and we know that Prince Louis was interred on the day following his death and that part of the funeral procession started during the night. In Denmark the custom of using funerary pots did not, in my opinion, spread beyond the upper classes. Pottery was, no doubt, not so costly that people could not afford to leave behind in the graves those frequently crooked and unsuccessful pots with which we are dealing. Whether the price of incense played any role, we do not know.

The funerary pots are evidence of a French connection in Denmark in the High Middle Ages, but they are far from being our only evidence – French pottery has, for example, been found in several parts of Denmark (Bencard 1972). From the 12th century there were many personal and official contacts between the two countries. Many Danes went to France to study and particularly to Paris, among them Absalon, later Bishop of Roskilde and Archbishop of Denmark, his successors in both Roskilde and Lund, and emissaries from the Cistercian and the Dominican houses. The visitors could not have avoided noticing the use of funerary pots, particularly in the monastery at Ste.-Geneviève, where many of them went and where funerary pots have been found in the graves (Jørgensen 1915 and 1917; *KLNM* 17: 330ff.).

After their return home these people kept up their connections with France and were *inter alia* inspired by French church architecture. French ideals of style predominate in Roskilde Cathedral after c. 1200 and it was the connection with France that led to the radical change in its building programme, namely the abandoning of the planned projecting transepts; a similar change of plan was made at Nôtre Dame in Paris at about the same time (Héliot 1964). In 1193 Ingeborg, the daughter of King Valdemar I, married Philippe-Auguste, King of France, – who incidentally cast her off immediately for hitherto unexplained reasons – and in the second half of the 12th century one of the most prominent churchmen in Denmark was Abbot Vilhelm of Æbelholt (died 1203, canonized 1224), who was a native Frenchman and who played an important role in Denmark's relations with France. Not one funerary pot has, however, been found in the completely excavated churchyard at his monastery in Æbelholt. The connections with France were ever lively. For example, several



Fig. 12. The gable end of the funerary monument raised to Crown Prince Louis, who died in 1260. Beneath the bier of the dead prince are depicted three funerary pots with vents in their sides and with burning contents. 62 × 64 cm. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Photo: Françoise Rivière, Musée Carnavalet.

learned Danes made their name in Paris and achieved high standing in the academic world. The traffic went in the other direction too. At the cathedral in Lund manuscripts containing the works of Belet and Durandus were handed down through several generations of canons and bishops, as can be seen from their testamentary provisions (Erslev 1901: 120,5: 142,3: 179,2–3: 136,4 and 176,7) and the same two authors also crop up in the late medieval Scandinavian library inventories.

Denmark was not the only country that was strongly influenced by France during this period and it is something of a mystery why she alone adopted the custom of the funerary pot. The presence of those pots in Denmark does, however, emphasize the French influence in that country – however scattered the finds are – and the reasons underlying their use may be that the grander members of society wished to be buried »à la française«, in keeping with the symbol-laden liturgy of the period.

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NOTES

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² Professor, dr. Holger Friis Johansen, University of Aarhus, has kindly translated Durandus' text.

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