

APPENDIX.

POLYCHROME POTTERY FROM STONAR.

BY G. C. DUNNING, F.S.A.

THE partial excavation of the site of Stonar since 1936 has resulted in the recovery of a quantity of medieval pottery, remarkable both in its character and variety. Apparently the greater part of this material is not later than the thirteenth century, and it is proposed to deal here with only a small part of it, reserving full treatment of the pottery as a whole for a future occasion.

The polychrome pottery found at Stonar is very fragmentary, but sufficient remains to show that about ten different vessels are represented, and that nearly all the painted designs known from other sites in Britain may be identified here.

Polychrome pottery is now known from fifteen sites in Britain ; of these, nine are on or close to the south-east, south, and south-west coasts of England, three are in South Wales, two in North Wales, and one in south-west Scotland. More than one-half of these sites are medieval castles, either earlier sites refortified in the late thirteenth century, or built by Edward I, and the remainder are towns and large monastic settlements. The finds of polychrome pottery at all these sites are, however, few in number ; from one to three vessels, either complete or in fragments. At London, on the other hand, no less than four fairly complete jugs and fragments of five others have been found in the City, and it is recognized that London was the main if not indeed the only centre of importation of polychrome pottery, whence it was redistributed by coastal trade or overland.

The date of this, the finest pottery of the period, is closely determined by the context in which it occurs. It has been found in well-dated deposits of the period *c.* 1275-1320 at Kidwelly Castle ; at Beaumaris Castle and

Kirkcudbright it is not older than c. 1300, and at London and Guildford it is associated with glazed pottery of the late thirteenth century. The period c. 1275-1300 may be given to polychrome pottery on the evidence at present available, and it is very doubtful if it lasted into the early fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

The explanation of the finding of at least as many examples of polychrome ware at Stonar as in London is to be sought in the history and character of the place in medieval times. Both Sandwich and Stonar, situated at the English Channel end of the Wantsum, were subsidiary ports and coastal depôts of London, and owed their importance to the fact that in the Early Middle Ages shipping to and from London passed through the Wantsum. Unlike Sandwich, however, Stonar did not become one of the Cinque Ports, and it almost ceased to exist after a destructive raid by the French in 1385.<sup>2</sup> It is now known that polychrome pottery was brought to this country from south-west France, apparently carried along by the Gascon wine trade of Bordeaux. The quantity of polychrome ware at Stonar is evidently due, therefore, to the position of the place as an entrepôt of London, participating in the carrying trade to the City.

#### DESCRIPTION OF POLYCHROME WARE FROM STONAR

(Plate II.)

Fragments representing seven jugs of polychrome ware are illustrated here, and there is sufficient of two vessels (Nos. 6 and 7) for a reconstruction of the complete pot to be attempted. In addition to the pieces figured, there are two bridge-spouts of characteristic "parrot-beak" shape, parts of two more spouts, several pieces of rims and handles, and indeterminate sherds with painted designs. It is likely that

<sup>1</sup> For a general discussion of polychrome ware, see *Archæologia*, LXXXIII (1933), pp. 114-18 and 126-34. The most up-to-date distribution map is in *Archæological Journal*, XCIV, p. 132, Fig. 2. The above summary incorporates material found since the date of these publications.

<sup>2</sup> M. Burrows, *The Cinque Ports* (London, 1903); see also J. A. Williamson, "The Geographical History of the Cinque Ports," *History*, XI, pp. 97-115.

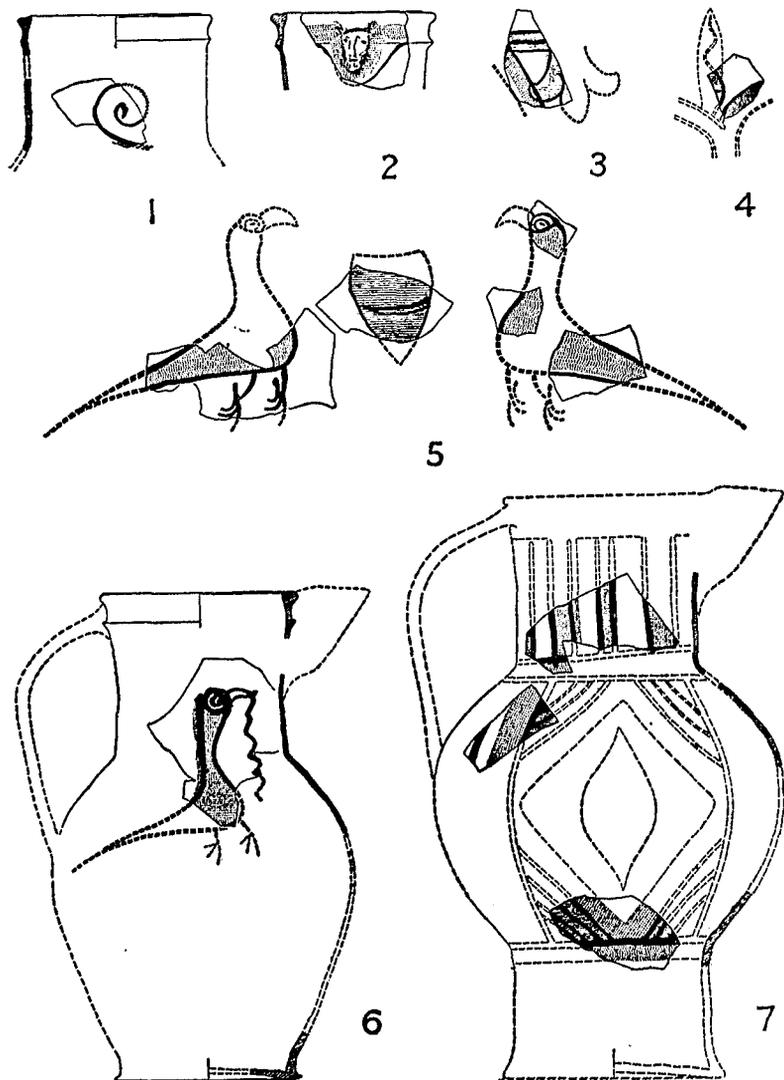


PLATE II. POLYCHROME POTTERY FROM STONAR (4).

some but not all of these belong to the same jugs as the fragments illustrated, so that the estimate of ten vessels from the site is probably conservative.

The ware of these vessels and the quality of the painted decoration vary as much as on jugs from London. Usually the ware is very fine and hard, white or cream-coloured, and sometimes has a pinkish tinge in the fracture. A few fragments are inferior in quality, the paste is softer and pale buff, and shows a tendency to flake on the surface. The colours of the designs are, for the most part, brilliant; the green is bright and the yellow is pale and clear or deeper, almost orange. But subdued, almost dull, tones also occur and may be due to over-firing rather than poor preservation. The transparent glaze ranges from thick and lustrous, spread evenly on the surface, to dull or matt, thin and patchy or in dribbles. These variations have been noted previously, and may indicate slight differences in date or that the jugs are derived from different kilns.

In the illustrations, the painted decoration is shown by a uniform method. Green is stippled, yellow is hatched, and the dark brown outlines of the pattern are solid black. Nos. 1-5 were found in 1936 in a dump of pottery close to a well,<sup>1</sup> and Nos. 6-7 in 1940.

1. Rim and separate piece of neck of a jug. Fine white ware, matt glaze. The dark brown spiral on the neck is the only instance of this motif yet known.

2. Rim fragment of cream-coloured ware with thin patchy glaze. A moulded mask is applied to the neck, and is surrounded by a dull green band. The hair-fringe, eyes, and mouth are indicated in brown. Similar masks, but more finely modelled, have been found at Cardiff and London, and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

3. Sherd from the body of a jug. Cream-coloured ware, pale colours, poorly glazed. Across the top is a yellow band with wavy line, and below it a green band and part of a triple leaf in yellow. Apparently the leaf formed part

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, XLVIII, p. 237, and XLIX, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæologia*, LXXXIII, p. 115, Pl. XXVI and p. 130, Pl. XXX, 1.

of the decoration and was not a separate element below the lower end of the handle, as on many polychrome jugs.

4. Sherd of fine whitish ware, brightly painted, good even glaze. It shows part of an upright yellow bud with wavy line and the green stem of foliage pattern, as on a jug from Carisbrooke Castle.<sup>1</sup>

5. Fragments from the body of a jug. Fine whitish ware, good lustrous glaze. Decorated with opposed birds (peacocks) in bright green, flanking a pale yellow heater-shaped shield barred in brown. For the complete design, compare jugs from Cardiff and London.<sup>2</sup>

6. Restoration of jug based on nineteen fragments, comprising parts of the rim, joined fragments of the neck and body, and separate pieces of the base. The jug is about 10½ in. high, with cylindrical neck, ovoid body, and flat base concave at the centre; this shape is the most frequent in polychrome pottery. Fine white ware with pinkish tinge, over-all lustrous glaze down to the base. The entire inside surface is painted bright green under a thick lustrous glaze. This is the only instance of painting and glaze on the inside of a true polychrome jug, although it is exactly paralleled by a plain green-painted jug probably found in London.<sup>3</sup>

It is decorated with a bird in bright green, with a long wavy line hanging down from its beak. A separate sherd with a similar wavy line appears to belong to the bird on the opposite side. This appendage to the bird is not otherwise known on polychrome pottery, and although it may represent a worm, it is perhaps more likely to be simply a device to fill up space. In the Near East bowls with incised bird designs sometimes have a wavy line in this position,<sup>4</sup> and the effect is more apt as the space to be filled is circular.

A small sherd with part of a heater-shaped shield belongs to this jug, and shows that the shields normally

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 130, Fig. 14, a.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Pl. XXVI and Fig. 13, e, f.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 133, Fig. 14, d.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. British Museum, *Guide to the Islamic Pottery of the Near East*, Pl. XIII.

associated with the birds (as on No. 5) were also present. Another fragment from below the handle has the green triple-leaf normal to this position.

7. Restoration of jug based on fragments of the neck and upper and lower parts of the body. It may be relied on as giving a close approximation to the shape of the jug, which is about 12½ in. high, with a cylindrical neck, globular body, and contracted foot. The shape resembles that of jugs from Cardiff and Carisbrooke Castle,<sup>1</sup> but the Stonar pot is considerably larger than these. Fine whitish ware, painting rather subdued, glaze dull, thick and blistered, probably the result of over-firing.

On the neck are spaced vertical panels outlined in dark brown, painted green and yellow alternately. A separate part of the neck shows the green panels continuous above with a horizontal green band, but the exact height of the panels is uncertain.

On the body is a large rectangular panel bordered outside in green, and with the corners painted yellow and crossed by a series of diagonal brown lines. The middle of the panel, within another green band, was probably filled by a large ribbed leaf. The drawing of this panel is restored after a complete example from London,<sup>2</sup> with which the Stonar fragments agree in detail.

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Pl. XXVI and Fig. 14, a.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Fig. 13, b.