

CONCLUSION

The current work has presented the available evidence gleaned from all the unpublished Upchurch finds, including the illustration of every substantially complete vessel. The exceptions to this are certain collections being worked upon by the Upchurch group and those finds which have been dispersed by treasure hunters. Evidence suggests that these do not include vessels of markedly different form or additional fabrics. Barring the discovery of additional kilns, which seems increasingly unlikely, little more can currently be added to the body of knowledge concerning pottery production. Publication of the Upchurch groups' findings should make a great difference to our understanding of the environment of the area including as they will, details of occupation and salting sites. It is possible that fortuitous future discoveries along the banks of the Medway will solve some of the outstanding problems.

Fresh excavations along the Thames could have provided the missing pieces to the puzzle concerning production there. A systematic investigation of the marshes would take several man-years and any excavation would not necessarily reveal the evidence sought. Investigations of a possible kiln site around Wharf Farm, Cliffe were frustrated by the absence of permission to excavate by the cement company who owned the land, It is however, only a matter of time before more kilns are discovered in this area.

The validity of this study's conclusions may be measured by the quality of the evidence presented. The conditions of recovery of most finds examined leaves much to be desired. Care has been taken to work from the certain to the less certain facts concerning the pottery. It is partly for this reason that the hierarchical approach to form and fabric descriptions was chosen.

A major drawback of the poor evidence is that it casts doubt on the size and relative importance of these industries. So many unknown factors come into play that it is difficult to assess how much of the evidence has been destroyed and how much still lies beneath the clay. The enthusiasm of the antiquarians for pot collecting at Upchurch suggests that there was once far more evidence for production than there is now (Appendix II). The whole mythology surrounding Upchurch Ware could not have arisen if the quantity and quality of finds were not very much greater than they have been in modern times, Beside the Thames, it is probable that much destruction of archaeological levels took place without attracting antiquarian attention. Allen's finds at Shorne (1954) were fortuitous and the attitude of the excavating company who, despite Allen's efforts, destroyed all but one kiln was probably typical. Bob Hutchings has extracted confirmation of this from cement workers who were on hand when this destruction was taking place.

It is probable that this study has reviewed only a small fraction of the volume of pottery once produced by the industries: the quantities pale into insignificance when compared with the known Alice Holt kiln dumps.

This means that the level of production cannot be established from the kiln sites. An assessment may be possible of the relative importance of the industries by the quantitative study of occupation sites outside the marshes.

The fact that only a sample, probably non-random, of the industries' wares can be examined creates doubt as to how comprehensive the typology is. Every vessel with a substantially complete profile was drawn. Many of the vessels border on the unique, particularly in fine fabrics. It is possible that Upchurch produced many more fine forms that have not, by chance, turned up in the surviving collections. The Woodruff Collection, for example, contains a fair cross-section of Upchurch fine wares, but a relatively poor selection of their coarser counterparts. This is illustrated by a study of the stray sherd collections. The Thameside finds are more numerous and show less variety than Upchurch, suggesting that a more accurate cross-section of wares has been examined. Even with respect to this industry there are known gaps, both chronological and typological which need to be filled.

Dating the pottery is perhaps the most difficult feat to achieve. The majority of vessels illustrated here had no associated dating evidence. The few from stratified sites established fixed points within the typology, but the lack of deep stratigraphy prohibited the creation of dated sequences. The history of the industries as presented relies heavily on the identification of internal trends. Sufficient datable material exists to verify the sequence of changes in both forms and fabrics from the conquest to the late second century. Beyond these limits, evidence is more limited, perhaps because the industries themselves only thrived within them. The main grey area occurs after the end of the Broomhey Farm kiln site, No new fabrics can be identified and no further development or imitation of forms can be traced which post-date the latest Cooling levels. External parallels become scarce and there are insufficient changes within the forms to enable any sort of trend to be identified. Establishing the date of the end of the industries relies on estimating how long the last forms remained in use. The solution to this can only come from further excavations in the region.

The apparent lack of third century pottery could be a product of a different problem in dating the industries. There is noticeable crowding of forms into the dating bracket from the invasion to AD 120. This effect has been noticed in other areas of Romano-British pottery study (Marsh 1981, 185 and C. Going pers. com.). Because the most readily available fine wares occur in this period, coarsewares may have their dating affected: residual pre-conquest sherds may be dragged upwards in date. Residual first-century finewares likewise hold back the dating of levels containing later - but undated - coarsewares. The gap between late samian and the major colour-coated wares creates a similar problem in the mid-third century. Those third century vessels which may have existed are therefore difficult to identify as such, even if found on stratified sites. This problem has to be addressed nationally; the Kentish industries possess too little independent dating evidence to provide a solution.

There is a pressing need for the adjacent industries to be thoroughly characterised. In particular, those of the Colchester region, Canterbury, Thameside Essex and 'Patch Grove Ware'. This will not only enable north Kent products to be more successfully distinguished, but also provide a standard against which the importance of the industries can be judged. There is also a need for prompt publication of small kiln sites which could, in total have made a substantial contribution to regional coarse ware supplies.

The trade to the northern frontiers needs to be examined afresh, thoroughly and with great care. This may have to wait until the rivals of the Thameside kilns have been positively identified. Ideally this work should use conventional techniques in order to be able to cover the ground adequately. It could be backed up by using selective scientific analysis to solve particular problems. The method must be to trace the distribution from the source to destination, not vice-versa as has been the previous practice. Scientific *verification* may be required to offset the problems of identifying diminishing quantities of a traded ware in ever more alien assemblages.

The framework which has been established leaves plenty of scope for future work. Whether this is rescue or systematic research, it is important that the results are promptly published if they are to be of any use to the archaeological community. Non-publication has thus far been the general rule in north Kent pottery research. There are gaps in the typologies which beg to be filled and blank areas on the distribution maps where fieldwork is required. The question of why and when the industries failed has still not been satisfactorily answered. Progress on the distribution of the wares rests on the future publication of excavations, both major and minor. It is to be hoped that if this work is used as a reference, parallels will be assigned with care and to an appropriate level of certainty. The correct identification of the fabrics is crucial: the author has seen too much "Upchurch Ware" that is nothing of the sort. It is hoped that the evidence presented in the preceding pages will aid the elucidation of these problems.