

A GROUP OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POTTERY FROM ST. THOMAS STREET, WINCHESTER

By CHARLOTTE MATTHEWS

with contributions by Kenneth Qualmann and R G Thomson

SUMMARY

Several nearly complete, eighteenth-century pots were found during excavations for a swimming pool in St Thomas Street, Winchester, in 1979. The group includes a fine French faience plate and two green-on-white slipware vessels. The latter are discussed along with others of their type found in and around Winchester.

INTRODUCTION

by Kenneth Qualmann

In July 1979, workmen excavating for a swimming pool extension in the garden of 24 St Thomas Street discovered a group of mostly post-medieval pottery. They brought their collection to Katherine Barclay of the Winchester Research Unit, who passed it on to the City Archaeology Office. Staff from the Office visited the site during the brief course of further excavation. More pottery, including a range of earthenwares, was collected but, owing to a misunderstanding, was subsequently thrown away.

The original group was examined and identified by Kenneth Barton, who pointed out its importance. In subsequent discussion, Bob Thomson noted the similarities between two green-on-white slipware vessels in the group and others from the Winchester area. He has contributed a section on these vessels, below (p193).

Number 24 St Thomas Street is a substantial property with a large garden to the south and west. It includes an early twelfth-century hall over a two-bayed undercroft (plan and drawings in Page 1912, 8–9). Like the other two examples of twelfth-century stone houses known from Winchester, it was set back from the densely built up street frontage (Biddle 1976, 346). The hall was remodelled in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and the part of the property

next to the street was rebuilt before 1633 (Keene forthcoming). About a century later the structure was again rebuilt and it is this attractive brick house, with its mid-nineteenth-century south wing, which occupies the street frontage today. Its construction is probably roughly contemporary with the deposition of the pottery described below.

DESCRIPTION

The Excavation, by Kenneth Qualmann

The swimming pool extension was dug 14.3 metres west of the twelfth-century undercroft and just south of the line of its south wall. The excavation measured about 5.5 m east-west by 3 metres north-south and was about 2 metres deep. Its location is shown by the position of the symbols on Fig 1. The stratigraphy recorded in the south section was: 20 cm turf/topsoil; 1.60–1.70m dark-grey soil; 10–20cm lighter grey, chalky soil. A brick-built well or soakaway appeared in the south section, but extended southward beyond the limit of excavation. No other archaeological features were observed in the trench. It is most likely that the vessels described below derived from the thick layers of dark grey soil – earthenwares were certainly found in this deposit – but it is impossible to be certain.

The considerable depth of post-medieval soil encountered would seem to be characteristic of this area of Winchester. Similar deposits have been recorded both at the southern end of St Thomas Street and to the west behind properties in Southgate Street and probably reflect the use of large areas as gardens around substantial houses.

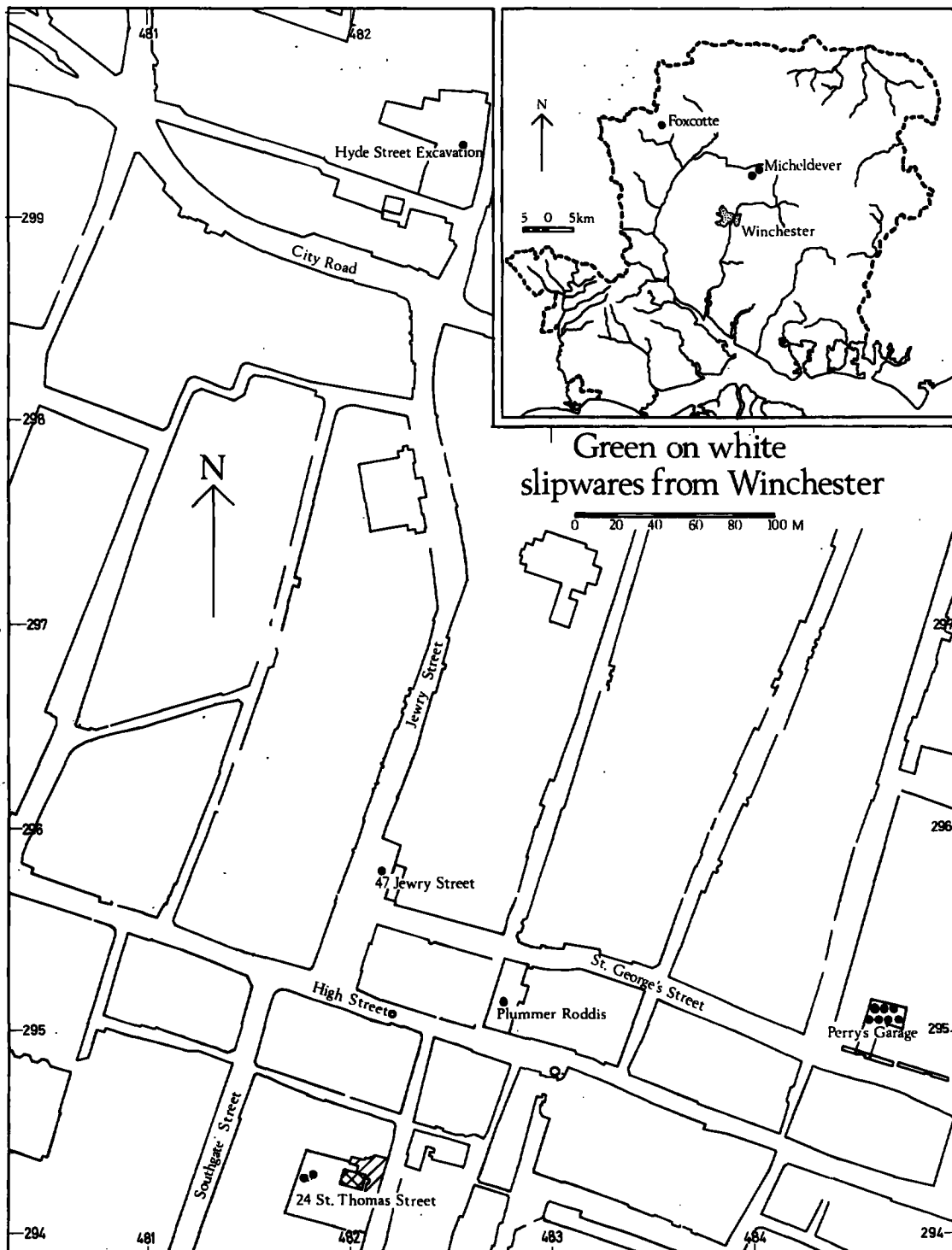


Fig 1. Location of the St Thomas Street site, with findspots of green on white slipwares from the area. Drawn by A Adams.

The Pottery, by Charlotte Matthews

In addition to the vessels described below, ten Romano-British sherds, three late Saxon sherds and a number of tiles – including part of a glazed ridge tile – were recovered. The final disposition of the finds has not been settled, but any enquiries should be directed to Winchester City Museums with reference to catalogue number 3024. The numbers cited below in the text refer to the illustrations (Figs 2–6), which have been drawn by Paul Jones.

1. Platter, brown internal glaze up to the rim; decorated by 'joggling' a white slip onto which drops of copper green have been added. Probably mid-eighteenth century; for provenance and fabric see the section by Thomson, below.

2. Two fragments of a faience plate made at Moustiers in southern France around 1760. Part of a mark in green is visible on the underside of the larger fragment (see Fig 2.2). This might have been an 'F' such as occurs in various forms attributed to the Olerys and Laugier factory, and may possibly represent the painter's mark of Foque (Chaffers 1932, 213–9; Honey 1952, 436). The plate is painted in green on a white ground. It is unusually attractive, even for Moustiers, which was one of the most important centres of French faience manufacture.

3. Chamber pot, bright green internal glaze up to the rim, produced by adding powdered copper oxide onto a white slip; brown external glaze with spots of white slip onto which copper green has been added. The running of the copper green from the blobs of white slip suggests that the pot was stood upside down in the kiln. It appears to belong to the group discussed by Thomson, below. The unusual, all-over green glazed interior has been found in Oxford, as has the fabric (Oxford fabric number 45) and the external blobbed decoration (M Mellor, pers com).

4. Chinese porcelain, first half of the eighteenth century; painted design in gold, red and dark and light blue.

5. Surrey white ware pipkin; internal green-yellow glaze on a fine, sandy off-white fabric with occasional larger sands (0.2–0.3mm). Probably late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century. It originally had tripod feet, all of which have now broken off, and a solid strap handle with thumbmark showing how it had been pressed onto the body. There are three grooves running around the body just above the handle base.

6. Pipkin, probably from the Poole/Hamworthy area. Coarse, sandy pink fabric with internal yellow glaze and a bib of external glaze around the lip; probably

eighteenth century. The solid, upturned handle is at 90° to the lip and has a thumbmark at its base.

7. Chamber pot with handle missing in fine, sandy dark-red fabric with internal and external dark green-brown lead glaze containing much iron. Probably from West Sussex and of eighteenth-century date.

8. Handle from a slipware cup in fine, cream-coloured fabric with internal and external yellow glaze and a dark brown slipped decoration on the outside. Eighteenth century; probably from Bristol rather than Staffordshire.

9. Flowervase in fine, sandy dull pink fabric; biscuit-fired. The coarse, sprigged decoration dates the vessel to the second quarter of the eighteenth century.

A number of eighteenth-century wine and drug bottles (Fig 2.10 and 2.11) were also found, along with part of a clay pipe stem (Fig 2.12) stamped 'W Sayer' – a West Wellow pipemaker working around 1700 (Oswald 1975, 173).

Slipwares decorated with copper green on white slip from the Winchester area, by R G Thomson

Fabric: hard red earthenware; fine-textured clay with sparse to common quartz grains, some red iron oxides and occasional black specks of ironstone.

Forms: the platter is most common, though a bowl, chamber pot and small pan have also been found.

Decoration: white slip onto which powdered copper oxide has been added in places. The slip is trailed either in deliberate patterns, or it may be 'joggled'.

Manufacture: the pots were wheel thrown. Although the typical 'tearing' usually to be seen on press-moulded wares seems to be absent, the platters were definitely produced by this method. The pots were stacked on their sides one against the other in the kiln, as is shown by scars on the backs of the vessels where the next pot along had stuck to its neighbour. There is no evidence for kiln separators or trivets. Copper staining of the glaze also shows that the pots were stood upright, as do accidental patches of glaze which have run down the backs of the vessels. These presumably were drips from the glazed interiors of the next pots along.

Provenance: the use of copper in conjunction with a trailed slip is not usually an English technique and was previously thought to indi-

3024

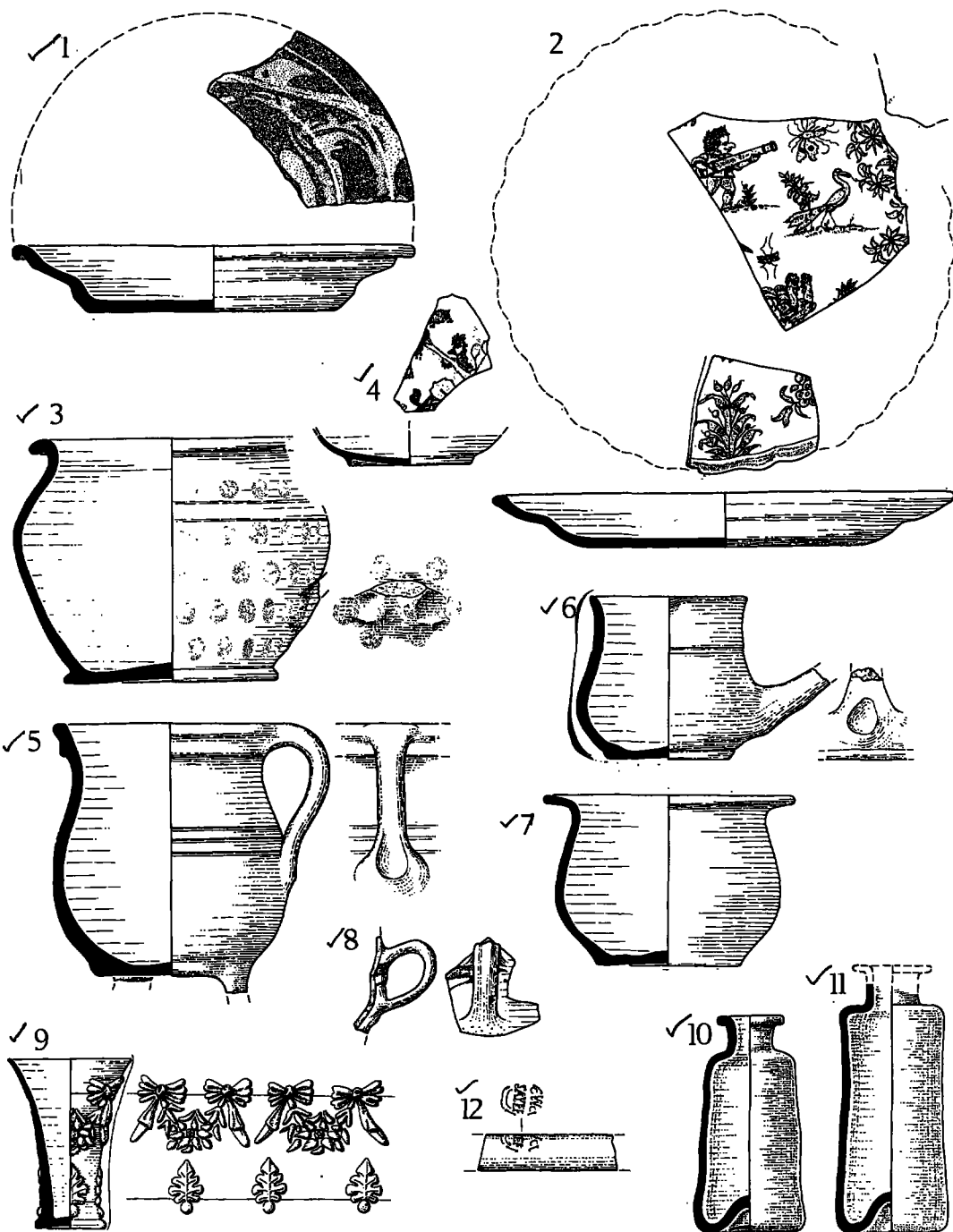


Fig 2. Finds from 24 St Thomas Street, Winchester: 1-9 pottery; 10-11 glass; 12 clay pipe. Scales: 1-9, 1:4; 10-12, 1:2. Drawn by P Jones.

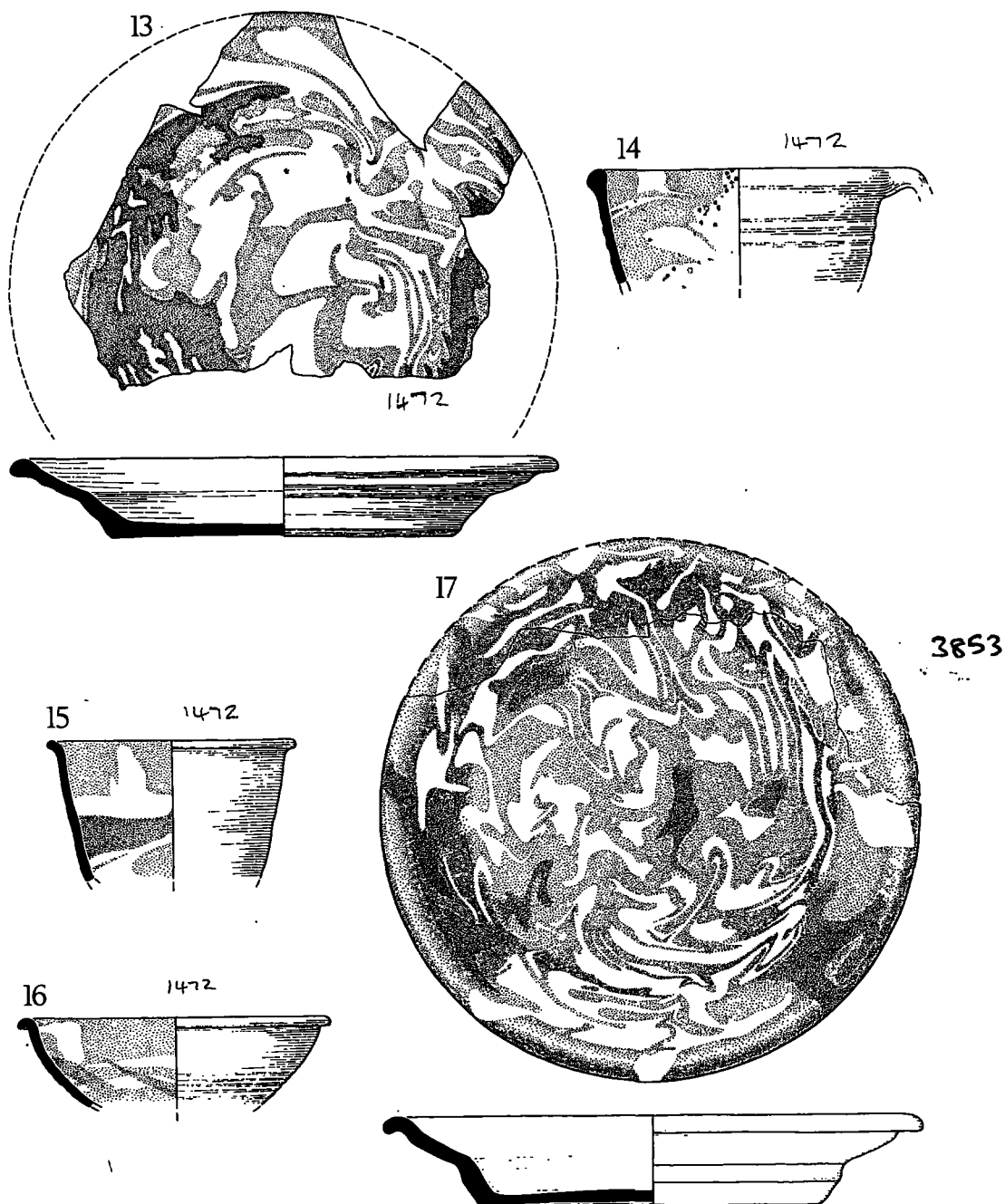


Fig 3. Green on white slipwares from the Winchester area. Dense stippling – green; medium stippling – brown; plain areas – white slip. Scale, 1:4. Drawn by P Jones.

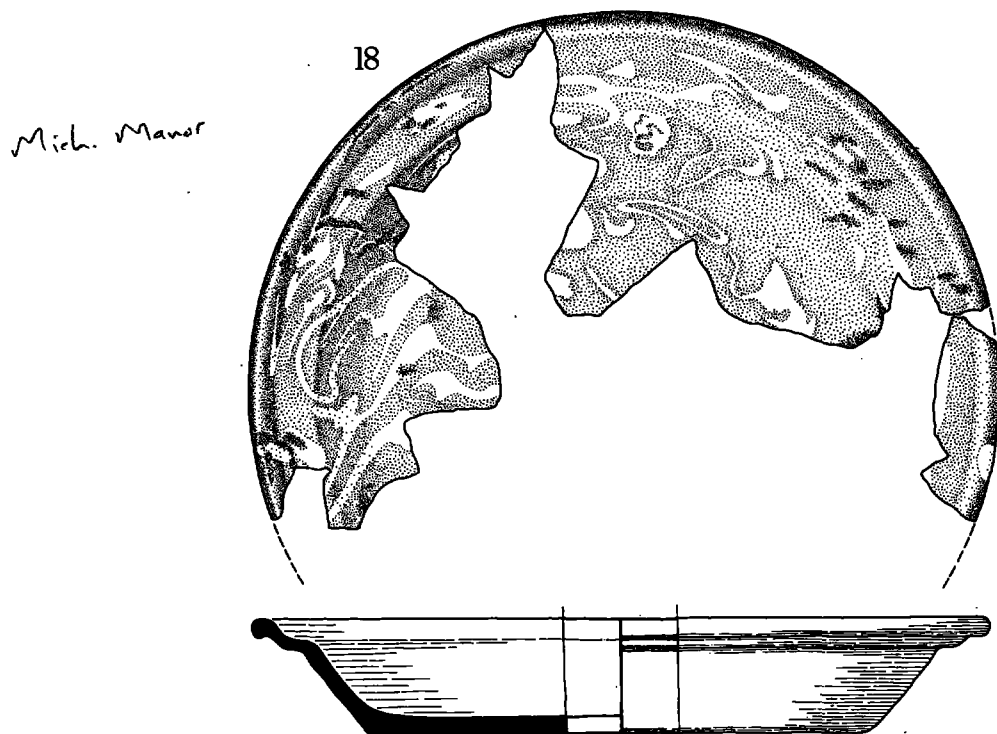


Fig 4. Green on white slipwares from the Winchester area. Dense stippling – green; medium stippling – brown; plain areas – white slip. Scale, 1:4. Drawn by P Jones.

cate a continental origin, particularly North Holland, as for the well known series of cockerel and other anthropomorphic vessels (Hurst *et al* 1975). These have been found in Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975 165–71), Plymouth (Brown 1979, 46–7) and other ports such as Poole, Christchurch, Bournemouth and London.

The examples from Winchester, however, do not compare with those from North Holland. The forms are different and the decoration on the Winchester vessels is less carefully exercised, with abstract or geometric patterns instead of anthropomorphic design. The complete absence of Dutch slipware imports in the Winchester area and the apparent restricted distribution of the Winchester type at first suggested local manufacture. However, no slipware is known to

have been produced in Hampshire, the nearest being a possible kiln at Poole which produced poor quality vessels.

Recent work at Brill, Buckinghamshire (Farley 1979, 149–50), suggests a more tenable origin for these green-stained slipwares. The decoration and fabric are comparable, but the rim forms are not, the Winchester examples being neater and better made. The material from Brill is unstratified, in the backfill of a nineteenth-century kiln. However, parallels occur amongst early- and mid-eighteenth century pottery from the 1968–70 excavations at St Ebbe's, Oxford (M Mellor, pers com), and in collections in Aylesbury Museum, both of which were probably coming from Brill. Similar wares occur amongst kiln debris found at Yardley Gobion, Borstal and Pottersbury in Northamp-

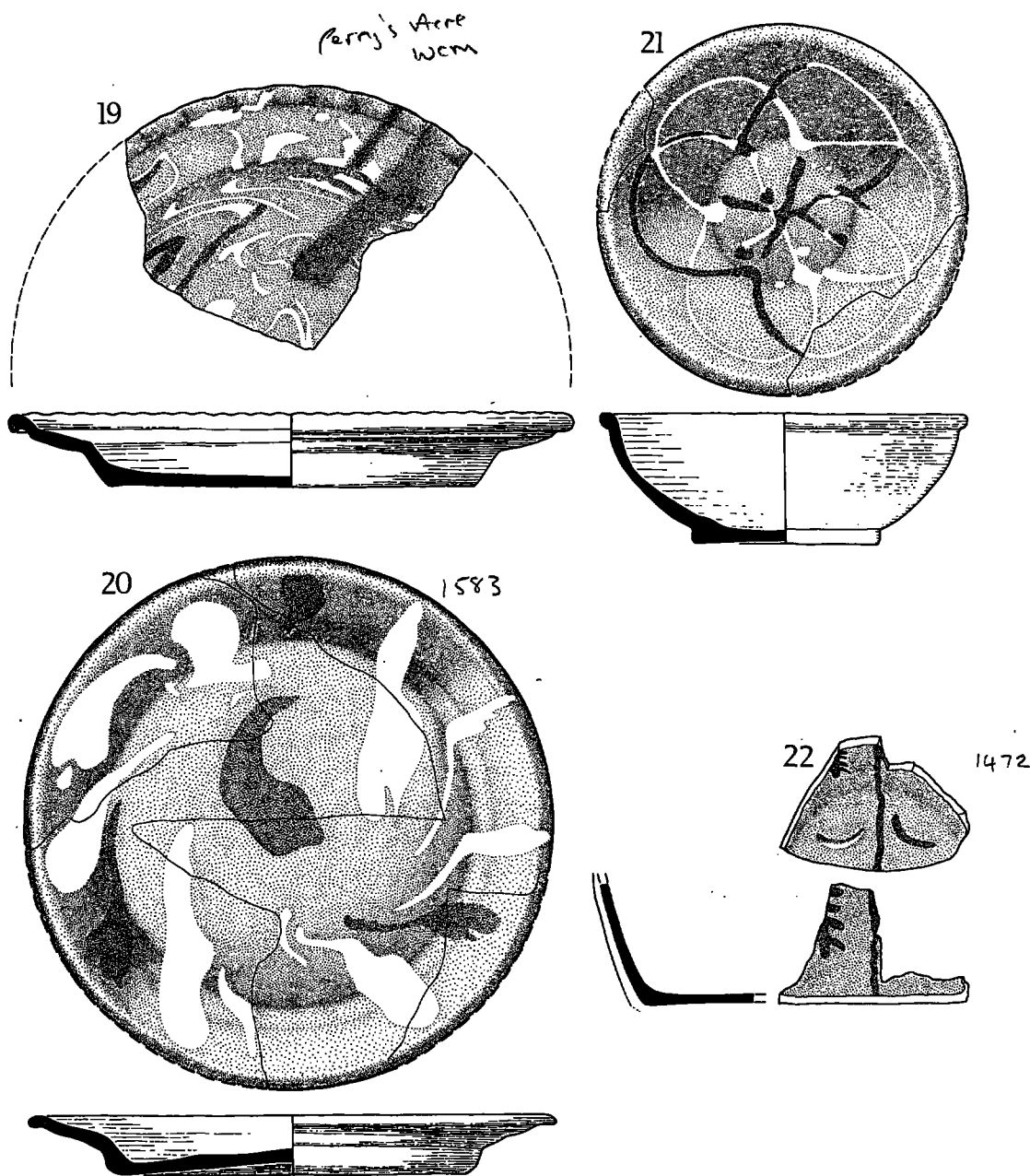


Fig 5. Green on white slipwares from the Winchester area. Dense stippling – green; medium stippling – brown; plain areas – white slip. Scale, 1:4. Drawn by P Jones.

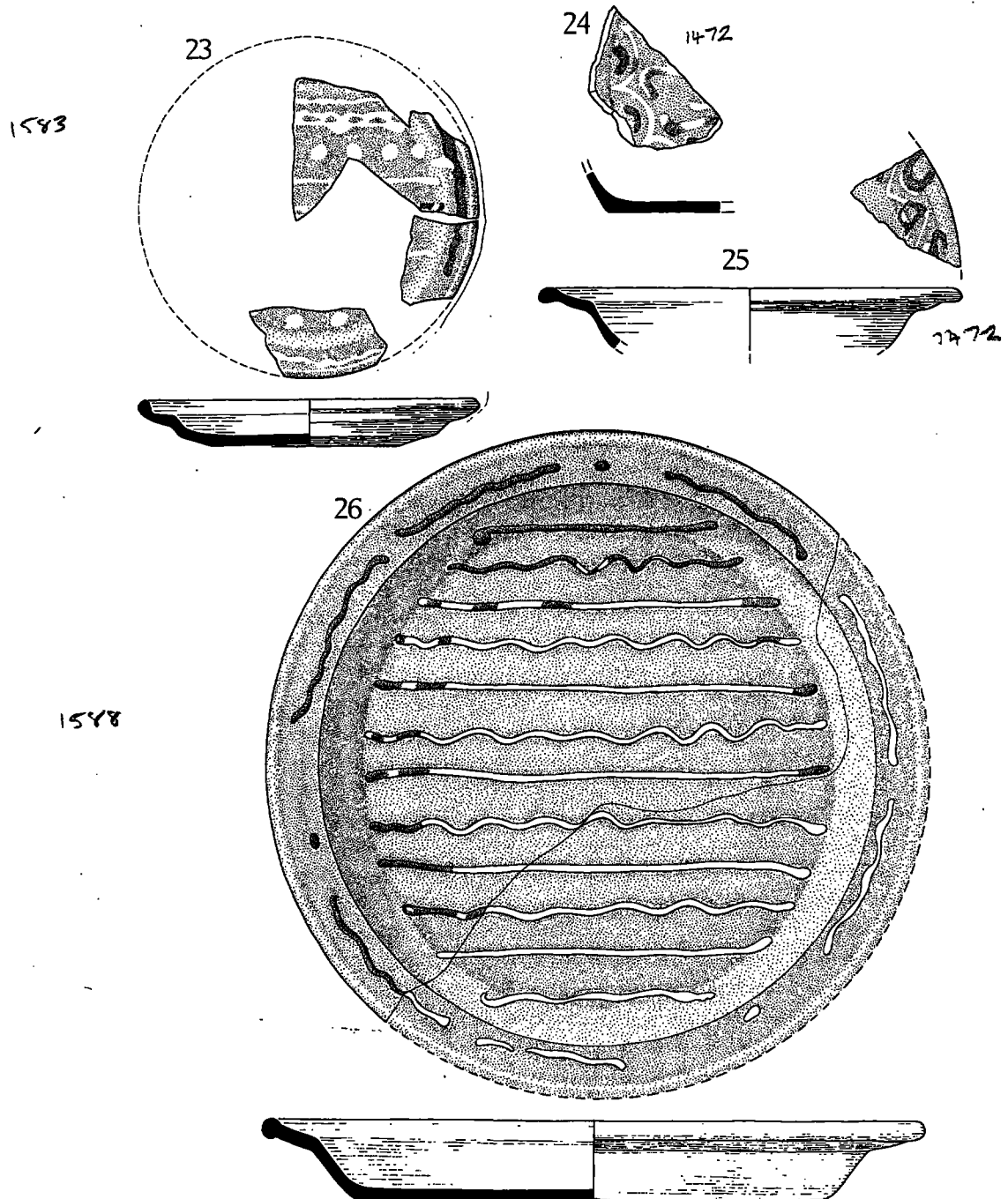


Fig 6. Green on white slipwares from the Winchester area. Dense stippling – green; medium stippling – brown; plain areas – white slip. Scale, 1:4. Drawn by P Jones.

tonshire, but the fabric is different (D Mynard pers com). It seems probable that the Winchester examples came from the south Midlands and that Winchester and Oxford shared a similar source for decorated wares in the eighteenth century. It may be that other, plainer south Midlands wares await recognition in Winchester, but no positive attributions can be made until further work is carried out in the south Midlands.

Descriptions of vessels of the type from the Winchester area:

13. Platter with brown internal glaze up to the rim, 'joggled' white slip with patches of copper green. From excavations on the site of Perry's Garage, St George's Street, Winchester (Collis, forthcoming a).
14. Small pan with handle; brown internal glaze up to the rim and 'joggled' white slip with flecks of copper oxide. Found same site as 13.
15. Bowl with brown internal glaze up to the rim, 'joggled' white slip with copper green added in places. Found same site as 13.
16. Small bowl with brown internal glaze up to the rim, 'joggled' white slip with copper green added in places. Found same site as 13.
17. Platter with brown internal glaze up to the rim, 'joggled' white slip with patches of copper green. From the High Street, Winchester, and now in Southampton Museum.
18. Platter with brown internal glaze up to the rim, 'joggled' white slip with patches of copper green. From the excavations at Micheldever Manor, 11 km north of Winchester, and now in Winchester City Museum (Sutcliffe 1975).
19. Platter with piecrust rim and brown internal glaze up to the rim; 'joggled' white slip with patches of copper green. Probably late eighteenth century. Found in the roof of 'Perry's Acre', a house in Duke Street, Micheldever and donated to Winchester City Museum.
20. Platter with brown internal glaze up to the rim;

white slip bled on in patches, some with copper green added. Found in a stratified, early-eighteenth century context during 1956 excavations at Plummer Roddis, no 104 High Street, Winchester (Collis forthcoming a).

21. Bowl with brown internal glaze up to the rim, trailed white slip decoration with patches of copper green. Stratified early eighteenth-century context from 1977 excavations at Hyde Street, Winchester.
22. Base of a pot with trailed white slip decoration and patches of copper green. Found same site as 13.
23. Platter with brown internal glaze up to the rim; trailed white slip 'line and dot' decoration with patches of copper green. Found in a stratified, early-eighteenth century context, same site as 20.
24. Base of a pot with trailed white slip decoration and patches of copper green. Found same site as 13.
25. Platter with brown internal glaze up to the rim, trailed white slip decoration with patches of copper green. Found same site as 13.
26. Large platter with brown internal glaze up to the rim, trailed white slip decoration with patches of copper green. The bottom of the dish shows considerable wear and numerous cut marks, indicating it was probably used to carve meat on. From excavations at 47 Jewry Street, Winchester (Collis forthcoming b).
27. Not illustrated. Two small sherds from Foxcote, near Andover, Hampshire (Matthews forthcoming).
28. One sherd from Cathedral Green, Winchester (Trench XXIII layer 14) in a dated context of c AD 1771 (K Barton pers comm).

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the following people: Katherine Barclay for retrieval of the pottery and for asking Mr Barton to look at it; Mr J V G Mallet, Keeper in the Department of Ceramics at the Victoria and Albert Museum for identifying the faience plate; Maureen Mellor for showing me the green-stained slipware vessels from Oxford; Josephine Dool and Mark Wingate for help with the vessels in the collections of Winchester City Museums; and Sarah Gawthorpe of the Winchester Archaeology Office.

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(see also p4)

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