

'creek, inlet' (Jackson 1953, 529–34). Because the Test is not a particularly powerful or dangerous river, it is perhaps better to relate its name, not to *trais*, but to *tres* 'tumult, commotion, contention, uproar'. This seems a more suitable name for a chalkland river which is not deep, but which can move rapidly and noisily, especially after rain or the melting of snow.

References

Primary Sources

- Canu Aneirin*, Williams, I (ed.), Caerdydd, 1938.
Early Welsh Saga Poetry, Rowland, J (ed.), Cambridge, 1990.

Author: Andrew Breeze, MA DipCeltStud PhD FRHistS FSA, Universidad de Navarra, 31080 Pamplona, Spain. E-mail: abreeze@unav.es

Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: a dictionary of the Welsh language, Caerdydd, 1950-.

The Poems of Taliesin, Williams, I (ed.), Dublin, 1968.

Secondary Sources

- Breeze, A 1997 *Medieval Welsh Literature*, Dublin.
 Coates, R 1988 *The Place-Names of Hampshire*, London.
 Ekwall, E 1960 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th ed., Oxford.
 Jackson, K H 1953 *Language and History in Early Britain*, Edinburgh.
 — 1969 *The Gododdin: the oldest Scottish poem*, Edinburgh.
 Morris-Jones, J 1913 *A Welsh Grammar*, Oxford.
 Vendryes, J 1978 *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien: lettres T-U*, Paris.
 Williams, I 1972 *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*, Cardiff.

A MINIATURE MEDIEVAL OR POST-MEDIEVAL CAULDRON FROM NEAR SILCHESTER

By STEPHEN ALLEN

Abstract

A miniature tripod cauldron with two handles has been found in fieldwalking on a possible moated site near Silchester, associated with medieval and post-medieval pottery. The form and distribution of the cauldron type is discussed.

The Findspot

Travelling east from the Roman town of Calleva (Silchester) is the Roman road now known as the 'Devil's Highway'. From the town, the road begins a gentle descent across the Lower Bagshot Beds and London Clay, and crosses the flood plain deposits in the narrow valley of the Silchester Brook at c. 1 km from the town. It is at this point, centred on NGR SU 6544 6251, that the findspot is situated (Fig. 4). The site is noted in the Hampshire SMR (SU66SE15) and was initially recorded through aerial photography. On the ground, although to a major degree ploughed out, there is still faint evidence of the moated nature of the site.

Fieldwalking by the author has revealed a pottery concentration on the site, together with the miniature cauldron discussed in this note. The object is now with Hampshire County Museum Service (acc. A.1996.58).

The Pottery

Coarse Border ware, a product of the Surrey-Hants industry which became widely distributed in south and south-east England in the 14th–15th century (Pearce & Vince 1988), dominates the medieval pottery collection. It includes fragments of lobed cups, a strap handle with incised line and stabbed decoration, lid-seated cooking pot rims and a clay disc decorated with a stamped grid pattern.

Late medieval and early post-medieval sherds, again from the Surrey-Hants industry (Timby 1989), were also found, consisting of pots, bowls and chamber pots. The sequence continued with red earthenwares with an orange-brown internal glaze, typical of 17th-century sites in the region. Fragments

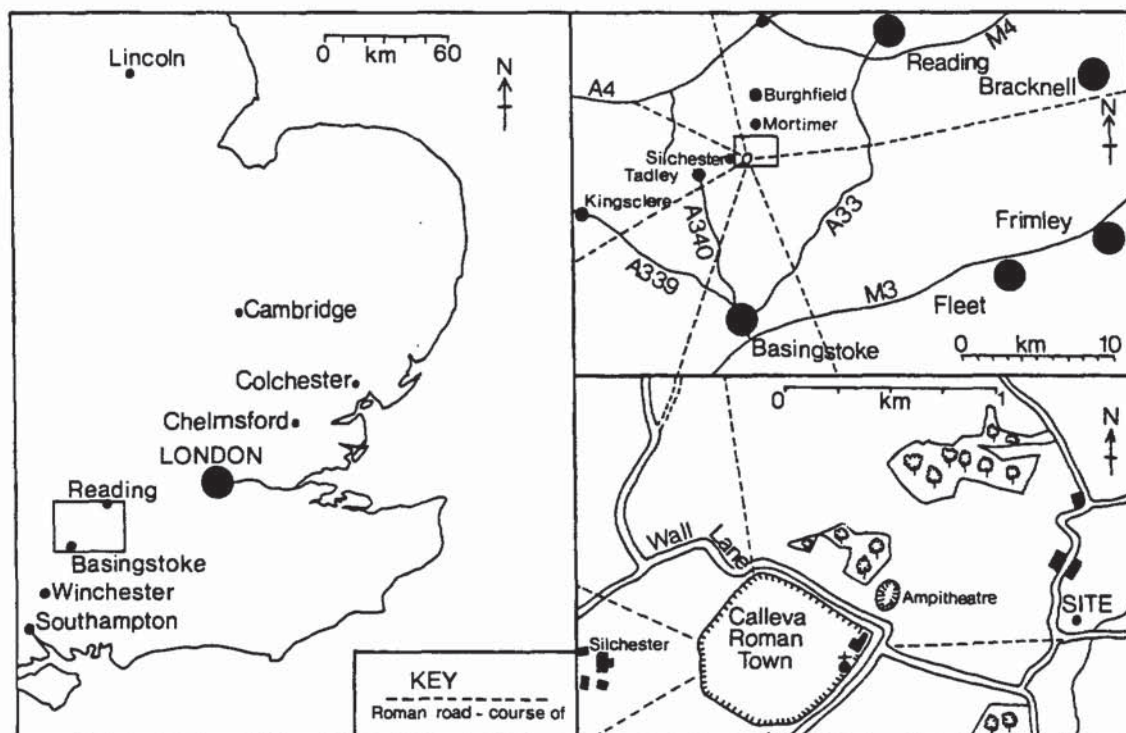


Fig. 4 Silchester miniature cauldron: location of find-spot

of Bellarmine stonewares were common, as were china plates and cups, typical of the 19th century.

The Miniature Cauldron

The vessel is a miniature tripod cauldron (Fig. 5.1), 27 mm high, weighing 19 gm, and cast in copper alloy. For such a small object, a degree of precision has gone into its manufacture, reflected in each leg being pentagonal in cross-section. Its very small size would not suggest a practical function.

A search for parallels located a larger example, found in Chelmsford, Essex (Fig. 5.2), and now in Newbury and District Museum, Berkshire (acc. 1976: 3g). It weighs 140 gm, and has a triangular leg cross-section. The British Museum has three miniature cauldrons, each with two handles, like the Silchester example. One found in Southwark, London in 1856 (acc. 1856, 0701.1291) is 28 mm high, with a rim diameter of 23 mm. The legs

appear to be round, although corrosion makes it difficult to judge. Another, found in Lincoln in 1866 (acc. 1866, 1203.151) displays an oval leg cross-section and is smaller, with a height of 16 mm and a rim diameter of 13 mm. The third, found in Colchester, Essex, in 1870 (acc. 1870, 0402.254) is 20 mm high and has square legs rounded off at the edges. The rim diameter is 10.5 mm. The British Museum also has a 'triple pot', found at Comberton, Cambridge, in 1853 (acc. 1853, 0627.65). This consists of three cauldrons conjoined to form a clover-leaf shape. Each is 16 mm high and flat-bottomed, with one exterior handle and no legs.

With the exception of an example from Salisbury (Egan 1996), enquiries to museums in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire failed locate further examples from the region. The distribution would seem to be confined, in the main, to London and eastern England.

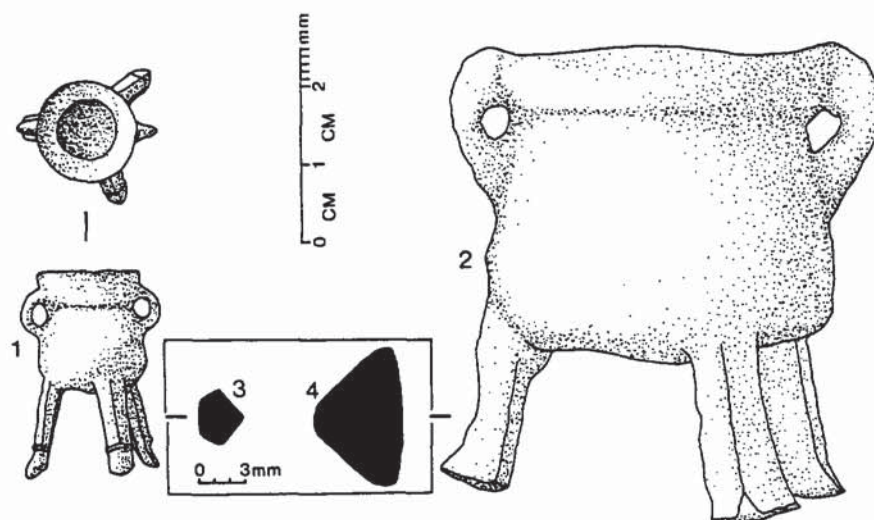


Fig. 5 Miniature cauldrons from Silchester (left) and Chelmsford (right)

Discussion

These objects are fascinating, both in the diversity of minor points of style, and their possible function. It is unlikely that the very small examples have a practical use, perhaps only being a 'toy'. G Egan (1996) suggests that children may have used them to heat liquids. He notes that lead examples are rare, suggesting the use of copper alloy for its ability to withstand heat. The larger illustrated example would indeed have been capable of holding sufficient liquid to make it a more practical 'toy'. It could also be suggested that these objects may have had an alchemic or votive function.

As to dating, full-size ceramic tripod cauldrons were common from the 12th to the 15th centuries, with metal cauldrons becoming common thereafter. It is possible that these miniatures were a copy of the metal cauldrons, perhaps suggesting a 15th–17th century date. Unfortunately, the lack of a find in a dated, stratified context prevents a more closely defined dating.

Acknowledgements

The help of Beverley Nenke, Curator of the Dept of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum, and Paul Cannon, assistant Curator at Newbury and District Museum, is gratefully acknowledged. Janet Bell, Salisbury and South Wilts Museum, Leslie Cram, Reading Museum, David Allen, Hampshire County Museum Service and Fiona Pitt, Northampton Museum Service, also gave helpful assistance. My thanks go to Mr D Hodges of Old farm, Padworth, Berks, the tenant farmer, for his kind permission to field-walk the site.

References

- Egan, G 1996 *Playthings from the Past: lead alloy miniature artefacts, c. 1300–1800* (exhibition catalogue), London: Jonathon Horne Antiques Ltd.
- Pearce, J E, & Vince, A G 1988 *Surrey Whitewares* (London Middlesex Archaeol Soc Special Pap 10), London.
- Timby, J 1989 The Pottery, in Fulford, M, *The Silchester Amphitheatre, Excavations 1979–85* (Britannia Monog Ser 10), London, 80–123.

Author: S Allen, 45 Primrose Close, Purley, Reading RG8 8DG