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WESTERWALD STONEWARE AT KELMSCOTT MANOR

Morris, Pottery and the Politics of Production

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Kelmscott Manor, the country home of William Morris, houses a remarkable collection of ceramics bearing a singular relationship to one of the most influential figures in Victorian cultural history. This study of Kelmscott's collection of German stoneware reveals new interpretations of its production history and fascinating insights into its significance for the cultural context of Morris's work.

Based on a complete catalogue, the paper examines the ensemble of *c*30 pieces of 18th–19th-century Westerwald stoneware, or *grès de Flandres*, as it was known to Morris and his contemporaries. The Kelmscott group is the largest collection of this material known from an English historic house and has a composite and well-documented provenance. Supplementary material provided as an online appendix contains a fully illustrated, descriptive catalogue.

Westerwald pottery of the 17th century and earlier has been extensively studied, but its ceramics of the late 18th–19th centuries have received little attention. Most accounts stress the simplification of vessel forms and 'degeneration' of decorative designs during this period, leading towards mass production *c*1900. This paper re-assesses later Westerwald output, drawing attention to a vernacular pottery tradition of significant interest in its own right.

This paper suggests it was this continuing tradition of vernacular production and its naturalistic, decorative schemes that attracted the interest of Morris throughout his adult life, from the Red House experiment to the heyday of Morris & Co. Examining his writing on creativity, the minor arts and labour, the paper interprets *grès de Flandres* as an expression of Morris's idealisation of the relationship between labour and craft production.

Introduction

Kelmscott Manor in Oxfordshire, now in the care of the Society of Antiquaries, was the rural home of William Morris: designer, craftsman, socialist and writer. He lived there with his family, leasing it as a summer home from 1871 until his death in 1896. It was purchased as a permanent home by his wife, Jane Morris, and then left to their daughter, May Morris. The property and its collections finally passed to the Society of Antiquaries in 1962.[1] This paper is concerned with the large group of attractively decorated, grey-and-blue stoneware vessels inherited by the Society as part of the Kelmscott collection. Commonly referred to as *grès de Flandres* (Flemish stoneware) by Morris and his contemporaries, the term was adopted generally by antiquarian collectors in the nineteenth century as a 'purposely vague and indefinite name' for Rhenish stoneware recognizing that it was imported to Britain for centuries through Low Countries ports.[2] Now more commonly referred to as 'Westerwald', after their region of manufacture, these wares were produced in the Rhineland between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries. Morris is said to have admired them, used them in his home and to have encouraged a fashionable taste for the richly patterned grey-and-blue stonewares still being manufactured in small, family-run workshops in the Rhineland. These continued to employ the wheel-thrown, hand-decorated methods of late medieval and early modern craft production, using local clays. We refer to this as a vernacular pottery tradition, in the same sense as one speaks of a vernacular building tradition: that is, utilising local craft skills and materials, making wares primarily for functional, everyday use and employing a repertoire of simple forms and, sometimes naively executed, decorative motifs. This is the largest collection of such Rhenish stonewares that the authors have identified in an historic house collection and includes a significant group of nineteenth-century, hand-decorated vessels of this distinctive, vernacular character [INSERT Figure 1 HERE].

The history and archaeology of Kelmscott Manor since it came into the Society's care has been studied by many scholars.[3] Most recently it was re-examined authoritatively for the Kelmscott Manor and Estate Conservation Management Plan. Its authors observe that the Manor's collection of furniture, household objects and fittings are a composite work, like the building itself, repaying careful scholarship whilst presenting challenges for curation and interpretation.[4] This paper offers a contribution towards that work through this study of the Westerwald stoneware collection in the house today and its wider context. It considers its

[1] Dufty 1977, 3
[2] Solon, I, 1892, v-viii
[3] See essays in Parry (ed) 1996, Crossley, Hassall and Salway (eds) 2007, Holt 2010, Hulse (ed) 2017
[4] Maddison and Waterson 2013, 11

connections with Kelmscott and with Morris & Co.; the history of stoneware production in the Westerwald; and its significance for William Morris as reflected in his life, work and writing. Recent work in material culture studies has encouraged thinking beyond a fixed materiality of objects towards the richer 'social life of things' and entanglement of object biographies.[5] 'That persons and things are not radically distinct categories, and that the transactions that surround things are invested with the properties of social relations', as Arjun Appadurai suggests, [6] are notions that resonate in this study of the relationships between an object collection and the socio-economic and political context of a key figure in Victorian material culture. William Morris's homes contained collections that were as complex as the man himself and, as Imogen Hart's work on arts and crafts objects shows, entangled with his diverse, and at times contradictory, personal interests.[7]

When it was opened to the public by the Society of Antiquaries in the 1960s, visitors to Kelmscott Manor were introduced to the house and its collections by A. R. Dufty, the Society's Secretary and curator, through his illustrated *Guide*. He commented that 'much Grès de Flandres ware' survived in the house and introduced a central question around the provenance of the collection.[8] Given that the house is no longer arranged as Morris knew it - and that, as a rented holiday home during his lifetime, it probably contained few of his possessions - what certainty is there about today's collections' origins? We know that many of the Manor's present contents were brought from Kelmscott House in Hammersmith after Morris's death, and that some came from the London house of May Morris, his younger daughter.[9] May Morris inherited Kelmscott Manor from her mother in 1914 and retired to live there permanently in 1923 when she brought together items from the family's previous homes in London and Bexleyheath.[10] Prior to May's death in 1938, she drew up a Memorandum as part of making her Will which specified that particular 'furniture, chattels and effects' associated with her father should be bequeathed in Trust with the house and estate. However, it was May's companion, Miss Mary Lobb, who inherited the everyday household items from the Manor: 'all my articles chattels and effects of personal household garden or stable use'.[11] Mary Lobb's own death followed soon after May's and a major sale

[5] Appadurai 1986, Kopytoff 1986, Hoskins 2006, Olsen 2010, Hodder 2012
[6] Appadurai 2006, 15
[7] Hart 2010, 67-103
[8] Dufty 1969, 8; Morris 1961, 8; and detailed account in Maddison and Waterson 2013, Gazetteer
[9] Dufty 1969, 4; Maddison and Waterson 2013, 12
[10] Howard 2007, 131-32
[11] Dufty 1996, 94

of furniture and effects from Kelmscott Manor took place in July 1939 which included the residue of the household glass, china and other wares. [12]

This enquiry began with an assumption that Kelmscott's *grès de Flandres* collection was assembled by William Morris and that research would focus on their provenance and manufacture, and how he acquired them.[13] As it has developed, the research has revealed more of an entanglement of relationships between Morris and his circle, changing taste in the Victorian period and Morris's concern for the production of the wares themselves. Morris's ownership of them - where indeed it can be demonstrated - is perhaps less significant than the ideas, connections and inter-dependencies, revealed through study of them. 'Humans and things emerge contextually in relation to each other', as Ian Hodder suggests, and in the flows of what we know and perceive about them in material and connected relationships.[14] This paper explores how the Westerwald stoneware in the Kelmscott Manor collection today can be connected with William Morris's life and work as a designer and maker; and more generally, goes on to offer insights into Morris's ideas and vision for everyday art and creativity as expressed in his lectures and socialist writing.

Encountering *grès de Flandres* at Kelmscott

The Westerwald wares at the centre of this study have a distinctive, finely textured, grey fabric, often used in thick-walled stoneware vessels, fired in kilns operating at a high temperature (1250-1350^{o}c.) and with a salt-glaze. The pure clay of the Westerwald gives the ware a distinctive light grey colour when fired in a reducing atmosphere in the salt-glaze kiln.[15] Although other production centres developed similar wares with similar clays, both elsewhere in Germany, in Europe more widely, and in America, these Rhineland products are sufficiently distinctive for them not to be easily mistaken.[16] German stoneware of the seventeenth century and earlier has been the subject of study since the mid-nineteenth century in both Germany and Britain, when it began to be prized by antiquarian collectors.[17] Large

[12] William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow. *Sale of a large portion of the Furnishing and Effects removed from Kelmscott Manor the Home of William Morris*, 19 and 20 July 1939, Hobbs & Chambers Auctioneers, Cirencester. This copy bears the name of Marion Sloane, an artist friend of May Morris, and her bids for some lots are written on the copy. She noted 2 shillings against Lot 634 which included a 'Flanders ware' pot
[13] Barringer, Rosenfield and Smith 2013, 146 note that 'Morris was an avid collector there being over thirty pieces at Kelmscott'
[14] Hodder 2012, 33
[15] For a history of clay-digging in the Westerwald see Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 74-80
[16] For summary of the various schools of stoneware production related to the Westerwald see Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 94-7.
[17] Solon 1892

collections were eventually acquired by both the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum and an account of its development and wider cultural context is available in David Gaimster's comprehensive monograph.[18] Morris's interest in, and promotion of, this particular ceramic places him, therefore, amongst a group of early enthusiasts and collectors, whose activities led into the formation of important national museum collections in Britain and Europe which sought to illustrate technological innovation in the decorative arts, as admirably documented by Gaimster.[19]

By contrast with earlier periods of production, Westerwald wares of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have received relatively little scholarly attention in Britain. Most accounts stress the simplification of the vessel forms and the 'degeneration' of decorative designs during this period, prior to the industrial mechanisation of production towards 1900. The intention here, however, is to reassess late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Westerwald output, and to draw attention to a vernacular pottery tradition of significance in its own right. As we will suggest, it was this continuing, authentic vernacular tradition that engaged Morris's personal and business interest and is evident in the collection at Kelmscott.

The Kelmscott Manor collection's history

The Kelmscott collection today comprises 29 Westerwald vessels of different forms. Individual vessels are referred to here by their 'KM' accession number and full details of each vessel are provided in the Gazetteer (Appendix 1).This study shows that they span several centuries from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries with the later, vernacular, wares of the mid-nineteenth century forming the majority.[20] In terms of condition, it is striking that more than two-thirds of the vessels are damaged and have been repaired historically. These were evidently household items in regular use, then, and the 1926 inventory for May Morris's Memorandum (below) reveals the collection distributed around the house as it might have been when in use.

Like the house itself, the collection is a composite, having developed since Morris's time.[21]

[18] Gaimster 1997
[19] Gaimster 1997, 25-29
[20] A full descriptive catalogue can be found in Appendix 1 with notes on dating and comparative material.
[21] Howard 2007; Maddison and Waterson 2013, 72-109

The 1939 Kelmscott sale catalogue lists several lots that include 'Flanders ware',[22] including, for example:

Lot 609	Two Flemish ware basins
Lot 610	Ditto and ewer….
Lot 634	A 14 inch blue oriental stoneware pot and Flanders ware ditto…
Lot 638	Flanders ware ewer and vase
Lot 639	Ditto and two pots
Lot 640	Ditto vase with cover, miniature ditto and 2 other pieces
Lot 641	Two ditto ewers etc

Evidently some of the *grès de Flandres* stoneware from the house, perhaps the less prepossessing items, were auctioned amongst the household effects left to Mary Lobb after May Morris's death in 1938.

The items that May Morris intended to be kept as part of her bequest with the house, however, were listed in the Memorandum of furniture and effects at Kelmscott Manor attached to her Will in 1926. As Julia Dudkiewicz has shown, May Morris's memorialisation of her father at Kelmscott Manor was the result of long and careful reflection on the way the house and its contents should be handed on as authentically as possible.[23] The Memorandum itemises: 'three grès pots' in the Green Room, and 'Grès de Flandres pots (three big ones, four others)' in the Passage & Lobby to the panelled room. On the first floor there were 'Grès de Flandres pots on bookcase' in William Morris's bedroom; 'Red House grès de Flandres ware' in the Passage Room with a washstand; and similarly in the Cheese Room on the first floor, 'Washstand, horse and dressing table – Red House grès de Flandres ware'.[24] Possibly the Red House pieces were pitchers and pancheons used with a washstand, as a basin and ewer would have been.[25] The total number of pieces in these three upstairs rooms is not indicated but, if the 29 pieces in the collection today were all accounted for, then there would have been an unfeasibly large number of pots (19) distributed among them. It seems more probable that other Westerwald pieces from the London houses, brought to Kelmscott Manor by May Morris, were mingled with the collection and remained even after the 1938 sale. Importantly, though, the Memorandum indicates that some of Kelmscott *grès de Flandres* itemised by May Morris had furnished the family's early home in the Red House,

[22] 'Sale of a large portion of the Furnishing and Effects removed from Kelmscott Manor'
[23] Dudkiewicz 2017, 222 -223
[24] Transcript of May Morris's Memoranda (1926), Society of Antiquaries Library; also see Maddison and Waterson 2013's Gazetteer and Dufty 1996.
[25] As displayed at the V&A's 1934 Morris exhibition which drew extensively on the Kelmscott Manor collections loaned by May Morris, see Dudkiewicz 2017, 226-7, Fig.13.4

Bexleyheath.

Visual records fill out the limited documentary evidence. Photographs for *Country Life* in 1921 illustrate Kelmscott when the house began to be opened occasionally to visitors. Although neither furnished nor arranged as when Morris lived there, these are a reliable early record of the contents of the house as May Morris intended as a memorial to her father. A photograph of the North Hall corridor[26] shows a large Westerwald flagon (Fig 2a, KM163) and a Westerwald pancheon on the south side of the lobby. In another image, a spirit keg (Fig 7, KM433) sits on the window seat opposite. An early photograph of 1897 also shows a large pitcher (KM 346) in the same passageway.[27] The flagon, keg and pitcher are all in the collection today and we can say with some certainty that these three pieces were among the *grès de Flandres* ('three big ones, four others') mentioned in May Morris's 1926 Memorandum in this location. [INSERT Fig 2a and 2b HERE]. The 1912 watercolour by Mary Annie Sloane, 'May Morris in the Tapestry Room at Kelmscott Manor', also shows what appear to be a number of Westerwald pots including pancheons, a vase and a jug.[28]

The collection of 29 Westerwald vessels at Kelmscott today, then, includes items that May Morris believed to be from the Red House, belonging to the period of Morris's early married life (1860-65) in the house designed for the couple by Philip Webb in Bexleyheath, Kent. Some 16-20 pieces of Westerwald are listed as being in the house in May Morris's 1926 Memorandum and, though only a proportion of these can be specifically identified from early images, these form the core of the collection today. Two vases can be linked with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Jane Morris in the early 1870s (see below). [29] However, the later date of certain vessels suggests some were collected by the Morris family in the 1890s and early twentieth century.

Encountering Grès de Flandres with Morris and his circle 1858 - 1890

We can turn now to consider *grès de Flandres* in Morris's own era, and in the circles in

[26] More 1921, 260, Pl. 7; also reproduced in Howard 2007, Fig 87 captioned 'Garden Hall leading into the White Room'
[27] Frederick Evans, photograph of the passage, Kelmscott Manor, 1897 (William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow), reproduced in Hart 2010, fig. 8
[28] William Morris Gallery collection, London Borough of Waltham Forest, reproduced in Dudweikicz 2017, Fig 13.10
[29] A loose label with the collection reads 'this vase is from Kelmscott Manor & was given by Rossetti to Mrs William Morris' but cannot be firmly associated with a particular vessel

which he moved. As a young man interested in medievalism and renaissance art in the mid-nineteenth century, Morris is likely to have encountered *grès de Flandres* as a part of the growing antiquarian interest in renaissance and baroque German ceramics. Indeed, the earliest evidence we have of Morris's interest is in the form of an eighteenth-century vessel.[30] It appears in a painting by Morris of his future wife, Jane Burden. Now known as *La Belle Iseult*, it was painted in 1858 and is believed to be Morris's only completed easel painting.[31] This shows the unmistakable grey-and-blue of a Westerwald pitcher on the bedside table, partly obscured by a candlestick [INSERT Figs 3a and 3b HERE]. This image has often been described as the embodiment of the vision that Morris strove to evoke in his future work. It was, as Walter Crane expressed it, 'the revival of the medieval spirit… in design; a return to simplicity, to sincerity; to good materials and sound workmanship'.[32] This was the world that William Morris and his wife, with his friend and architect, Philip Webb, set out to create in Red House, their first home.[33] They moved into the recently completed, barely furnished, building in the summer of 1860 and struggled to find contemporary furnishings, decoration and tableware to suit the interior they sought to create:

> … in only a few isolated cases - such as Persian carpets, and blue china or delft for vessels of household use - was there anything then to be bought ready-made that Morris could be content with in his own house. Not a chair, or table, or bed; not a cloth or paper hanging for the walls; nor tiles to line fireplaces or passages; nor a curtain or a candlestick; nor a jug to hold wine or glass to drink out of, but had to be reinvented.[34]

Webb designed many decorative items to be manufactured for them, some they devised and made themselves, like tapestries and hangings; and some items came from makers whose work continued a tradition of craft practice, like the blue and white Delft tiles from the Netherlands in the Dining Room fireplace. The *grès de Flandres* wares formed part of an ensemble with the elaborate glass beakers and decanters in seventeenth-century German style (commissioned from Powell's), designed by Webb, and blue-and-white Staffordshire tablewares. Our tentative suggestion here is that it was possibly on their honeymoon, through

[30] This appears to be an eighteenth-century *Kanne* of the type illustrated in Seewaldt 1990, Nos. 190-7, especially, perhaps, Nos. 190 & 194.
[31] Tate Gallery 1984, 169; Marsh 2005, 66. D G Rossetti, it is suggested, may have finished the painting and it was left to the Tate Gallery in May Morris's will.
[32] Crane 1897,
[33] Garnett 2003, 4; Marsh 2005
[34] Mackail 1899, I, 142-43

France, Belgium and the Rhine in 1859,[35] that Morris and his wife first encountered the continuing German stoneware tradition that evoked the same values of craft production, simple forms and stylised naturalistic decoration that Morris was to celebrate and rediscover through his own creative enterprise. Several of the Westerwald vessels now at Kelmscott Manor came from the Red House and belong to that tradition.

Morris and his collaborators founded their business enterprise, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., in 1861 in response to dissatisfaction with the poor quality of design and manufacture of decorative arts in mid-Victorian England. This was much more than an amateur venture.[36] As an innovative businessman, Morris effectively created a new business concept, a specialised interior design firm offering a complete range of products to its clients.[37] The circular announcing their opening displays an ambitious scope: murals, architectural carving, metalwork, stained glass and furniture, 'besides every article necessary for domestic use'.[38] The wallpapers, printed fabrics, tapestries and carpets, for which Morris & Co.'s work is still widely admired, followed in successive years. The firm's aim at the outset, however, was to establish a collective enterprise of artists, architects and designers who would combine their different skills in decorative art projects.

The initial business collaboration did not include ceramic experience (apart from tile decoration) amongst its talented members, and Morris & Co. was never involved directly in pottery production. Morris's biographer, Mackail, commented on this and, crucially for this study, observed:

> ... while the firm never either designed or made pottery of any kind - the tiles used for painting being got from outside, chiefly from Holland - they did something towards introducing in England the knowledge of some of the best varieties of foreign manufacture, *especially the simple and beautiful Grès de Flandres ware, now so common in the shops of London furnishers, which made its first appearance in England, except as a curiosity, in Morris's showroom* [our italics].' [39]

Mackail, writing in 1899, is referring to the Morris & Co. showroom on Oxford Street,

[35] Op cit, 139; MacCarthy 1994, 152.. Mackail appears to be the main source for the itinerary followed on this six-week continental tour about which little is known in detail and nothing yet discovered about their stay on the Rhine.
[36] Harvey and Press 1991
[37] Op cit, 4-5, Kelvin, II, 228-229
[38] Mackail 1899,I, 151-52
[39] Mackail 1899, II, 43

London which opened in 1877. The business had developed into a very different kind of enterprise through the 1870s, especially from 1875, when the initial partnership was wound-up and Morris took sole ownership and management.[40] Retail of ceramics, glass and decorative items by other makers, whose design and hand-crafted quality fitted with the Morris & Co. ethos, was increasingly available in their showrooms (William de Morgan's Iznik-inspired earthen- and lustre-wares, for example and, from 1894, Della Robbia pottery from Harold Rathbone's pottery in Birkenhead). *Grès de Flandres* formed part of the extended Morris & Co. interior design repertoire, then, and the clear implication is that the Firm was importing contemporary *grès de Flandres* vessels from Europe.

Morris himself travelled in Europe collecting for his showrooms, sourcing products and makers who could supply the business with traditionally-produced wares. In 1873, for example, he travelled across France and Germany to Italy, writing to Philip Webb from Florence:

> I have been merchandising for the Firm here, rather to Ned [Burne Jones]'s disgust… I have bought a lot of queer pots they use for hand-warmers (*scaldini*) of lead-glazed ware; also I have ordered a lot of flasks wickered of all sorts of pretty shapes… some things for the Firm in Paris also.'[41]

The Morrises had returned to the Rhineland together again in 1869 staying at the spa at Bad Ems, on the river Lahn at the southern edge of the Westerwald pottery production area. The visit to Bad Ems spa was for the sake of Jane Morris's health and the couple spent nearly two months there while she took the waters and therapeutic baths.[42] Morris's letters show how bored and restless he was during this visit, writing but also struggling to find things with which to occupy himself. He took energetic walks out into the Westerwald hills whenever he could get away. One can reasonably speculate that Morris must have encountered some of the small country pottery workshops producing the *grès de Flandres* stonewares for which the area was already renowned. If not on his walks, he will have seen these wares for sale in local markets.[43] Unfortunately, his surviving correspondence from Bad Ems makes no reference to local ceramics but it seems likely that this visit and subsequent ones to the Rhineland were opportunities to meet local suppliers of stoneware for the Firm's showrooms

[40] Harvey and Press 1991, 70 - 127
[41] Henderson, 56
[42] MacCarthy 1994, 231- 246
[43] Bärbel Kerkoff-Hader offers a detailed study of the marketing of domestic pottery in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (1980, Chapter 9)

in London.[44]

The Westerwald pottery industry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

The ceramics industry by which Morris was surrounded at Bad Ems is named from its production centre in the Westerwald hills, which lie in the wine-growing region, west of the Rhine's confluence with the Moselle at Koblenz. Falling to the Rhine around Vallendar, opposite Koblenz, the hills lay within the former territory of the Electors of Trier (the so-called Kurtrier), which became part of the Duchy of Nassau at the start of the nineteenth century. The territory was ceded to Prussia in 1866 and sits today within the *Land* of Rhineland Palatinate. [INSERT Fig 4 HERE].

Long-standing tradition holds that potters from manufacturing centres further north, who had dominated the international stoneware trade between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, re-located themselves here during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[45] It is said that potters moved from their traditional clay-diggings and kiln sites at Köln, Raeren, Siegburg and Frechen into the Westerwald after 1586. More recent research has established, however, that stoneware manufacture was underway in the Westerwald region from at least the fourteenth century.[46] Even so, this reported migration coincided approximately with a change in the character of German stoneware, from the brown and cream-coloured salt-glazed vessels of Raeren and Siegburg, to the grey-and-blue salt-glazed wares that became so characteristic of the Westerwald. These attractively decorated drinking vessels appealed to the English market especially, and Westerwald vessels were imported to England from around 1600 until 1914.

The early Westerwald pottery tradition

Initially migrant potters in Westerwald continued to produce vessels of very similar forms to those previously associated with Raeren and Siegburg, only now in grey-and-blue fabric. By the mid seventeenth century, however, the Westerwald potters had developed their own

[44] Kelvin 1984, I, 79-96
[45] An authoritative account of the development of the Westerwald industry is found in Gaimster 1997, Chapters 2 and 3.
[46] Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 34; Gaimster 1997, 251.

distinctive vessel forms. Increasingly, painted surface decoration was enhanced by the widespread use of moulded appliqués, manufactured separately and applied to the body whilst still 'green'. These appliqués took the form of trails of foliage and flower-like bosses, as well as the traditional achievements of arms, which had previously been a feature of both Raeren and Siegburg products.

The year 1643 has been taken as a critical moment in the development of the Westerwald pottery industry as it marked the foundation of the jug-bakers' guild (*Kannenbäckerzunft*).[47] This was a cartel of producers operating within approximately 8 miles of the town of Grenzhausen and the adjacent settlements Grenzau and Höhr, and this zone of country soon became known as 'Kannenbäckerland'.[48] Three resources were critical for a successful potter hereabouts: access to one of the closely-guarded concessions to dig the pure clay in the hills; access to timber; and access to one of the banks of communal kilns that were typically located in the towns. In the towns, however, there were already a number of 'masters' who ran both workshops and their associated kilns, some of whom also purchased clay-digging concessions on their own behalf, becoming integrated, self-contained, businesses.

Alongside such 'masters', however, some local farmers and land-owners held onto their traditional rights to clay-digging, and onto their woodland rights, and thus to a traditional small-scale 'craft' production of pottery, fired in communal kiln-banks.[49] Such figures would become clay-diggers and potters in winter, when work on the land was less intensive. to supplement agricultural income. In such circumstances they might, for example, make leather-hard pots in their own outbuildings, and then take their unfired vessels into Höhr, Grenzau or Grenzhausen for firing, when it was advertised that communal kilns there were to be lit.[50]

Whereas wood and clay were local materials, salt always had to be imported. During the early-modern period this came from salt-pans on the Dutch and Baltic coasts, but by the nineteenth-century salt had become a complex international trade that included mined as well as sea-salt.[51] Cobalt, used to provide the distinctive blue colour, was mined in Saxony and

[47] Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 16-17
[48] Gaimster 1997, 251.
[49] It has been calculated that in the eighteenth century Westerwald about 27cu.m of wood was required for a single kiln firing (Gaimster 1997, 33, quoting Finke 1983). By the nineteenth century, wood was being imported to the Westerwald from the west bank of the Rhine by rail (Ibid.)
[50] Kuntz, A, 1988. In Siegburg in the late sixteenth century, the kilns were fired approximately once every six to eight weeks between June and November (Gaimster 1997, 48-9)
[51] Gaimster 1997, 33. By the nineteenth century salt supplies to the Westerwald were in the hands of specialist

had to be ground with silica into a powder, before being used as a paste (*smalt*) for decorating pottery. Cobalt processing was another Dutch industry.[52] The powder was then mixed with water by the potter and brushed onto the leather-hard pot as a wash before firing.

The ambition of the Westerwald potters declined after about 1700. Until the early eighteenth century, a wide variety of vessel forms had been produced, often mimicking baroque metalwork, and decoration had been varied and had incorporated many types of appliqué. As the century went on, however, forms became more limited, whilst decoration became increasingly simplified, deploying a limited range of formulaic designs. As the tradition of complex appliqué-work fell away, decoration was increasingly confined to simple incised patterns, with the lines providing a guide for the painter, using cobalt. Vessels themselves were still potted on the wheel, although profiles were sometimes created using templates applied to the outside once the clay had become leather-hard. These templates were known as *Stege*.[53]

When the vessels were leather-hard, they were first decorated with linear floriated patterns, simple but vivid animal and bird forms, and other motifs, inscribed with a sharp implement sometimes called a '*Redholz*'.[54] Then, in a second process, they were usually coloured with cobalt *smalt*, applied either inside or outside the inscribed lines. More rarely, and only at certain periods, a smalt containing manganese was also used, which gave a brown-purple colour. The inscribed decoration was usually rapid and formulaic, though not imprecise, and occasionally admirably skillful. The cobalt painting, however, was frequently more haphazard, spilling outside the framework of decoration provided by the inscribed lines.

Early Westerwald forms at Kelmscott Manor

The Kelmscott collection contains several vessels which belong to the early period of Westerwald production: a *krug* or 'flagon' vessel, KM 439, and two *humpen* or 'tankard' forms, KM 337, and KM 342. This group is eclectic in style of decoration and date range and is typical of the small collections of antique *grès de Flandres* assembled by private collectors in the mid-nineteenth century. Comparable small collections appear in the auctions of

merchants based at Koblenz (ibid. citing Finke 1983)
[52] Gaimster 1997, 41
[53] Gaimster 1997, 35
[54] Strauss and Aichele 1980, 18

personal estates at Christie's towards the end of the nineteenth century.[55] [INSERT Fig 5 HERE].

The Kelmscott flagon KM 439 is an important early vessel, with a globular body sitting directly on an unornamented flat base, and with a strap handle (Fig 5a). It belongs to the first quarter of the seventeenth century. This pot was evidently already two hundred years old by the time it came into Morris's possession.

The *humpen* or 'tankard' form, KM 337, dates from about a century later than the early flagon, but the restrained elegance of its decoration contrasts with the more robust vernacular style of the remainder of the collection (Fig 5b). It is of greater refinement than many vessels of the contemporary monogram series (below) and is aiming at a more demanding local market for tableware. Parallels place KM 337 firmly in the second half of the eighteenth century, so it would have been a century old when Morris acquired it. The 'S' shaped layout of the fleshy leaf-form - akin to acanthus - shown here is not only reminiscent of much Westerwald foliage decoration for the next century, but it is also a form that would have appealed to Morris, who used it in both textiles and wallpapers. We can also see this celebration of natural form on two other 'tankards' in the Kelmscott collection: KM 434 and KM 342 (Figs 5c and 5d). Both vessels would also have been antiques when Morris acquired them.

With its 'spiral' hip and shoulder, the prancing horse on KM 434 looks almost like a work of the Jelling or Ringerike style, which would also have appealed to Morris' interests in Nordic folk-art. The rather wispy foliage streamers behind the horse's ears also resemble foliage emerging from the ears and horns of similar beasts in Viking-age art styles. The stalk of foliage on which the horse treads, with its bunched stalks and crown of impressed circles, also appears medievalising, resembling schematic trees seen in Romanesque manuscripts, for example. It might have been these distinctive design details that attracted Morris to this piece, badly damaged though it now is. The form of animal modelling is similar to an example from the Mittelrhein-Museum, Koblenz, dated to the early nineteenth century.[56]

The 'monogram' jug series

[55] For example, Christie, Manson and Woods 1875, 1888
[56] Zühlcke 2008, 370, No.307

During the eighteenth century the Westerwald area produced a long series of so-called 'GR' jugs (*krugen*), evidently in very large numbers. These jugs, designed for drinking, not for pouring, have a slowly developing profile but they become increasingly loosely decorated and, although earlier-on they sometimes included additional decoration in manganese-derived purple, finally they were decorated only with the cobalt blue.[57] For antiquarians in the later nineteenth century, and indeed still for collectors today, these monogram jugs were highly collectable. They were typical of the collections of *grès de Flandres* wares formed in the nineteenth century which appear in auctions in the 1890s, such as that of the artist, Myles Birket Foster (whose house was furnished by Morris & Co.).[58] Although a frequently-found type in England, however, there are no examples of GR or monogram jugs in the Kelmscott collection. Nonetheless, an account is given of them here as they form an important chapter in the history of the Westerwald industry. (INSERT Fig 6 HERE).

Monogram series jugs are typically small, bellied, drinking vessels with a tall cylindrical 'rilled' neck (i.e. decorated with concentric ribs). The body was decorated with incised patterns, which, in the earliest examples, were derived from the floral and geometrical appliqué designs of the previous century, but increasingly incised foliage trails with stylised leaves and buds became standard. Over the incised decoration, frequently painted blue, was placed a separately moulded boss containing a centrally placed cartouche with the letters 'GR' (for *George Rex*). In fact, the earliest such cartouches bear the letters 'WR' (for '*William Rex*') and 'AR' (for '*Anne Regina'*). These earlier cartouches are applied, however, to quite a wide range of vessel forms, whereas the 'GR' cartouches tend to be applied to jugs of the more standardised type. These cartouches reveal several important points about Westerwald production in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. First, the pottery was clearly aimed at the export market, specifically at England. Secondly, we must presume that the trade relied on the Protestant Netherlands, as there are no examples of 'JR' (for '*James Rex*') or 'CR' (for *Charles Rex*'). Thirdly, the rarer 'WR' cartouches demonstrate that the earliest vessels belong to the period after the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

The relatively rapidly changing series of monarchs initials at the start of the eighteenth century offer us a well-dated sequence of vessels; those with 'WR' and 'AR' cartouches were presumably produced between 1688 and 1714. The run of four English Georges (1714-1830),

[57] Hinton 2012, 47, plate 32 and catalogue entry.
[58] Christie, Manson and Woods 1894

on the other hand, make it possible to argue that the monogram series remained in production for a century or more. In fact, the trade in monogram jugs must have been greatly disrupted by the wars between Britain and revolutionary France, beginning in 1792. Jugs with such monograms must have come to an end by 1802, in any event, when Trier fell to Napoleon. The 'GR' monogram jugs, then, must date from 1714-*c*.1790.

As the Rhenish wine trade with England increased in the second half of the eighteenth century, the output of the 'monogram series' jugs probably increased also. By 1771 there were reported to be more than 600 potters at work in the Westerwald and in 1783 a new kiln capable of firing 3200 jugs at a time was constructed in Grenzhausen.

Satellite industries around the Westerwald

A travel diary of 1785 refers to monogram series jugs being made at Gelsdorf, a village near Adendorf, located on the western bank of the Rhine and about half way between Koblenz and Köln. They are described as 'Englische-' or 'Londensche Krüge', attesting the market they evidently supplied.[59] The vernacular pottery industry at Gelsdorf was one of several satellites of the Westerwald industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, all using very similar or identical vessel forms and decorative motifs. Three of these satellite industries are relevant to the present study, as we know that all of them were producing comparable vessels to those now at Kelmscott Manor. One of these centres was based 200km up the Rhine, around Betschdorf in Alsace, just across today's French frontier (though within Germany from 1871 to 1919). A second centre, based around the town of Speicher, on the north bank of the Mosel river (in the 'Südwesteifel' region), had also been producing comparable wares since at least the final quarter of the eighteenth century.[60] The production centre in the Hunsrük hills around the village of Münchwald was apparently more recently established, but also produced vessels similar to certain Kelmscott examples.

Marcel Schmitter has studied the production of Westerwald-type products in Betschdorf , and has not only developed a basic type-series, but also established a detailed genealogical history of several immigrant potter families.[61] These genealogies reveal a number of migrating potters, including the Spitz, Wingerter and Krumeich families, arriving in Betschdorf in the second quarter of the eighteenth century having received their training at towns in the

[59] Gaimster 1997, 252, 268 cat.126 (citing Engelmeir 1969 and Lehnemann 1971/2)
[60] Kerkhoff-Hader 1982, 173
[61] Schmitter, 1982

Westerwald hills. They imported the high-temperature salt-glaze kiln technology to this new landscape and continued production, through changes in political administration into modern times. Latterly they produced flagons, pitchers and the large wide-necked storage-pots called 'crocks' or *keulsen,* all similar to examples at Kelmscott.

The Westerwald 'satellite' production centre at Speicher has been studied by Bärbel Kerkhoff-Hader.[62] Also using genealogical research, Kerkhoff-Hader recruits archaeological studies to offer a complete picture of this industry. Although stoneware production began in the medieval period, by the nineteenth century this industry was producing pitchers in the Westerwald tradition, very similar to those being produced at contemporary Westerwald ateliers, with well-executed foliage and animal decoration, outlined with incised lines in the Westerwald manner. The earliest of these pitchers are said to be of eighteenth-century date,[63] as are similar-looking 'flasks' based on the same body-form.[64] Later examples of pitchers and flasks from Speicher, however, almost always lack an inscribed design, it being only painted in cobalt. The Südwesteifel kilns also produced a wider range of domestic vessel types from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, amongst which *keulsen* of the type represented at Kelmscott were predominant, of which the earliest dated example is inscribed 1861.[65] Like ateliers in the Westerwald, they also produced novelty spirit barrels of the type collected at Kelmscott (Fig 7, KM 433).[66] In the Hunsrück hills the vernacular salt-glazed stoneware tradition seems to have originated with another branch of the Wingenter family in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The fact that this family had representatives in most of the satellite centres, shows how interconnected all these producers were, and with the Westerwald itself.[67]

All the Westerwald 'satellite' ateliers not only continued the kiln technology of pre-industrial Westerwald, but they also maintained the traditional vessel forms, techniques of decoration and decorative motifs, so that it is difficult to be certain which products originated in the 'satellite' industries and which were produced by potters remaining in the Westerwald itself. Consequently we should be aware that some of the pitchers, pancheons and *keulsen*, at Kelmscott may have been products of Westerwald's satellite industries.

[62] Kerkhoff-Hader 1980; 1982. See also Seewaldt 1990, 21-2
[63] Kerkhoff- Hader 1980, plates 188--195, Seewaldt 1990, 69-71, Nos.201-3
[64] Kerkhoff- Hader 1980, plates 197-223
[65] Kerkhoff- Hader 1980, plate 240
[66] Kerkhoff- Hader 1980, plates 358, 359
[67] Freckmann, 1983, 26-43

The 'pitcher series'

The distinctively decorated group of twelve Kelmscott vessels, described here as the 'pitcher' series, constitute a substantial part of the collection, for which, it seems, Morris had a particular liking. Evidently the Westerwald potters retained the globular body form of their monogram series after *c*.1790 and developed it into a form of larger pitcher. The pitcher series also marks a transition from vessels designed as drinking 'jugs' (*kruge*) to larger vessels designed for pouring. As well as being based on the body-shape of the monogram series, vessels of pitcher series also often have a similar tall, cylindrical, rilled neck, decorated externally with concentric grooves, created on the wheel with a broad wooden comb.[68] Many such pitchers have the same gently waisted foot as monogram series vessels, but a tradition evidently developed, subsequently, of a more squared-off foot. The pitcher series also have remarkably similar forms of inscribed and painted decoration to those on the earlier monogram series jugs; certain bud- and leaf-forms are clearly seen on both monogram series and 'pitcher series' vessels (INSERT Fig 8 HERE). These decorative foliage forms are also seen on most other Westerwald products of the second half of the eighteenth century, for example on the collection of jugs imitating porcelain in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.[69] The appliqué cartouches of the monogram series, however, are never reproduced on the pitcher series vessels, although several of the larger pitchers have decoration arranged around a painted 'sunburst-like' motif which could be seen as the continuation of the monogram cartouche, only in a simplified and politically neutral manner (Fig 8b, KM166). The pitcher series deployed a second decorative technique that is also sometimes found on monogram series vessels: the use of a small wooden tool with a narrow chisel-like blade on one end, called a *knibis*.[70] This tool was used to create 'fans' of distinctive indentations and other motifs, which develop across the surfaces of some vessels in complex patterns and sometimes come to dominate the entire design (Fig 8 a – d).

A major difference between the two vessel forms, though, is in size. The pitchers are uniformly larger and, critically, they all have a small pinched 'spout' in the neck – a feature which is rare in monogram series vessels. These differences point towards variations in

[68] The famous 'Hefneryn' playing card of 1457 shows this tool in use by the female potter (Gaimster 1997, Fig.2.1 and caption)
[69] Klinge 1996, 102-3, No.46b
[70] Klinge 1996, 102. The earliest *knibis* work appears to belong to the mid-eighteenth century.

function between the vessels. It is thought that the monogram series jugs are associated with the Rhenish wine trade with England, though they were evidently also used for drinking English beer.[71] While they are, then, primarily drinking vessels (not requiring a spout) the rarer large examples - still without spouts - may have served as jugs to be filled from the barrel. They are said to have been shipped along with the wine barrels, partly as ballast on Rhine barges carrying the wine downstream for export, and partly as packing to stop the barrels rolling about in the hold.[72] The wine barrels were transshipped at Low Country ports into sea-going vessels for onward transport to England. The monogram series jugs were often made to standard sizes or 'measures', calibrated from 1 to 10, sometimes noted in cobalt wash on the sides, or occasionally incised.[73] The pitcher series vessels, however, rarely have measures on them, indicating perhaps, that they played a slightly different role in drinking culture. They may represent a more communal style of drinking, whereby the pitcher was filled from the barrel and then served into smaller individually calibrated mugs or glasses for people to drink from.

The neck of the pitcher series body-form is sometimes narrowed and enclosed as a stubby tube, designed for a cork or wooden stopper, creating a form of flask. Alongside the monogram series, this vessel form also goes back to the later seventeenth century, if not earlier, where some are associated with the reign of William III.[74] Although they are sometimes described as 'oil jugs', it is more likely that they were designed specifically to store and transport the distinctive brandy which was an important by-product of the Rhenish wine trade. The Kelmscott collection contains three of these flask-like variants of the pitcher series (Fig 2b KM 163; and KM 343 & KM 347). Similar pitchers were also produced at most of the Westerwald satellite production centres well into the twentieth century, so the vessel form had a very long life. In later examples, however, the painted decoration tends to be much sparser and free-style in layout, with few if any of the distinctive 'Westerwald' foliage forms, which are no longer outlined with an incised line before painting.[75] All vessels at Kelmscott are earlier in date than such vessels.

[71] The 'GR' monogram has, indeed, been directly associated with the Ale Acts starting in 1700 (Gaimster 1997, 119, citing Bimson 1970)
[72] The link between such pottery types and the Rhenish wine trade was the subject of an exhibition at the Kunstgerwerbemuseum der stadt Köln in 1992.
[73] The scale of liquid measures, in English twenty-ounce pints, have been calculated as follows: 10 = 1 gill; 8 = ½ pint; 6 = 1 pint; 4 = 1 quart; 3 = 2 quarts; 2 = 3 quarts; 1 = 1 gallon (Hume 1969, 282). See also Bimson 1970.
[74] Reineking-Von Bock 1971, Nos. 564-73, esp. No. 571
[75] See examples from Münchwald in Freckmann 1983, 110-111, 118-9, Nos. 74, 75, 76, 88, 91

It is possible that the earliest examples of the 'pitcher series' belong to the same period as the latest of the monogram series, as some examples share such similar vessel profiles and decoration. But it is also possible that they follow on from it, after the disruption of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The pitcher series, for example, never carry manganese decoration, whereas the monogram series often have this purple colour applied to their necks. This might indicate that the pitchers date from after *c.*1790, when sources of manganese became unavailable through war. The earliest clearly dated example of the pitcher series body form we have found, though with the narrow neck of a flask, is in the Kommern Museum and carries a cartouche with the date 1840.[76]

We suggest, then, that the 'pitcher series' is best seen as a later development of the monogram series jugs and that the earliest examples will date from after about 1790 with production continuing into the early twentieth century. The manufacturing techniques remained very similar throughout this long period and, even though the appliqué cartouches of the monogram series had been dropped, the foliage decoration also remained remarkably similar until production ended.

The exclusive rights that members of the Kannenbäcker's Guild had enjoyed to dig clay on the commons were withdrawn in 1802, and in 1814 the guild was wound-up altogether. But although these changes might appear to indicate a declining industry, in fact it seems to have been the consequence of its more rapid development and reorganisation under Napoleonic government and following the Congress of Vienna. Between 1817 and 1867, 250 clay mines (many of them shallow shaft-mines) were leased from the Nassau government. The noted early twentieth-century Danish ceramic scholar Emil Hannover thought these developments were a sign that 'a bourgeois craft became a rustic craft; stoneware became peasant art'.[77] In his view, then, once the stultifying control of the Guild was finally lifted, the small ateliers in the towns and farmer-potters of the countryside were released from the regulations and restrictions that had hitherto constrained them, and were now able to expand their production in a more individualistic fashion. Whether these major institutional changes were responsible for variations in the 'pitcher series', however, remains unknown. It is possible that these major changes in the organisation of Westerwald pottery industry in the first two decades of the nineteenth century also coincide with the appearance in large numbers of a second

[76] Kommern 1968, No.327
[77] Hannover & Rackham 1925, 221

distinctive vessel form during the nineteenth century: the '*birnkrug* (pear-jug) series'.

The 'Birnkrug (pear-jug) series'

Whilst the pitcher series forms might overlap with the earlier monogram series forms, the dominant Westerwald vessel form of the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, is the homogenous and uniform '*birnkrug*'. Strikingly, since these jugs were relatively common and apparently produced in large numbers during Morris's lifetime, there are no examples in the Kelmscott collection. The jugs are named from their elongated curvy form (called *Frankfurter Kannen* is their day), which is loosely related to the globular form of both monogram and pitcher series. Decoration on these jugs is more regular than in either of these vessel types – being always confined to a single, framed, vertical panel on the front of the vessel. The decorative foliage forms used, however, evidently descend directly from those of the monogram series, and are often also directly comparable with vegetable forms on jugs of the pitcher series and related vessels. Such *birnkrug* vessels are frequently found in specific graduated sizes, with their capacity usually marked on the sides.[78] Commonly these vessels have been fitted with ornamental pewter lids, for which all have seatings. [INSERT Fig 9 HERE]. Examples in the Rheinischen Freilichtmuseums und Landsmuseums fur Volkskunde, and in the Landesmuseum Trier are said to belong to the 'second half of the eighteenth century',[79] as are examples in the Nagel collection in Stuttgart and other private collections,[80] whilst a vessel apparently also of this form is stacked on a shelf behind the eponymous landlord in a painting dated 1765.[81] The vessel form, then, may have its origins in the eighteenth century, but the majority of these vessels represent a later phase of more coordinated production, after 1802, when they are associated – specifically - with the export wine-trade, perhaps taking the place of the monogram series jugs in the wine barges. They occur in price-lists issued by different ateliers in Höhr between *c.*1870 and *c.*1920, whilst a dated example of the *birnkrug* form, though with a flared foot, was produced by the Wingenter family kilns at Münchwald/Struthof in the Hunsrück Hills in 1905.[82] The characteristic *birnkrug* foliage decoration, within an inscribed outline, which is so closely

[78] See note 11 above.
[79] Kommern 1968, No.304; Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 9; Seewaldt 1990, 146-7, Nos. 411-2.
[80] Strauss and Aichele 1980, 93, No.133; 95, F4; 96-7, Nos.136-141.
[81] Peter Jacob Horemans, 'Das Bildnis eines Wirtes' (Bayerische Staatsgemälde-sammlungen, München.). Illustrated in Scholz 1978, 17 pl.5.
[82] Zühlcke 2008, 661-726; Freckmann 1983, 107, No.68

related to the decoration on vessels of other forms in the Kelmscott collection, however, disappears from the price-lists reprinted by Zühlcke after 1936.[83] *Birnkrugen* are much the most common form of Westerwald vessel seen on the antiquities market today and, most days, Ebay will be offering examples for sale internationally. Monogram series and pitcher series vessels are more rarely found in this marketplace.

Later vessel forms

Governmental changes introduced under Napoleon, and following the re-establishment of the Duchy of Nassau in 1815, may have encouraged development of the '*birnkrug* series' of jugs. Furthermore the absorption of Nassau by Prussia in 1866 might lie behind the development of a much wider range of vessel forms than previously seen, though throughout all these political changes design and decoration remained remarkably conservative across all vessel forms. [INSERT Fig10 HERE]

A straight-sided jug form was now produced, for example, decorated with typical conventional foliage types but frequently incorporating a Star of David. Two examples at Kelmscott (KM341 and KM 348), both display the Star as a forward-facing trophy amidst typical foliage designs (Fig 10a and 10b). Elsewhere a vessel of this form decorated only with the Star of David, is dated '1880',[84] whilst another of similar date was associated with a Synagogue.[85] These vessels supplied a Jewish market, then, being used for water, perhaps rather than for wine, and the form might have offered a deliberate contrast with wine-carrying pitchers. The two Kelmscott examples, with their exuberant foliage and their pewter lids may be early in this series, perhaps dating from the period 1880-1914.

Another local market served by the small-scale pottery producers of the Westerwald in the later nineteenth century was the dairy industry. Vessels decorated in the traditional style, using the same floral motifs as the monogram, pitcher and *birnkrug* series, include a wide range of 'crocks' (*keulse*) and pancheons. The crocks were containers for perishable foods,

[83] Zühlcke 2008, 728. The 1919/36 price-list also relates to the Corzelius atelier in Höhr-Grenzhausen, under management by an earlier generation of potters.
[84] Kommern 1968, No.329; Sabine Zühlcke illustrates a plain example dated 1871 (2008, 537 No.261), a second advertised in a sale catalogue for an atelier at Adendorf in 1934 (2008, 773) and another dating, remarkably, from as late as 1940 (2008, 536 No.260)
[85] A jug of this type, with a Star of David for sale on Ebay on Feb 26th 2013, was accompanied by a note from the vendor as follows: 'The lid is inscribed with two Hebrew characters for the *Chevra Kadisha* or Burial Society'

vegetables, butter and salt. The Kelmscott collection contains two vessels of crock form. [INSERT Fig 11 HERE] One has a squat profile, decorated with well-executed foliage of traditional Westerwald type and two large, curved, handles (Fig 11a, KM 435). The second is more elongated and decorated with less characteristic upright banding (Fig 11b, KM 438).[86] Pancheons, like crocks, are also linked to dairying, as essential vessels for skimming and preparing milk during processing butter and cheese. Two such pancheons at Kelmscott (Figs 12a and 12b, KM 339 and KM 432), represent different vessel forms, both of which were widely marketed in the Rhineland from the mid nineteenth century. Both forms - one with large curved handles - are a little deep to have been used easily when skimming milk, so both probably relate to other processing stages. Both forms, of course, were equally useful as water bowls placed on wash-stands in the bed-room. [INSERT Fig 12 HERE]

The Kelmscott collection also contains examples of hand-made, vernacular, pots of Westerwald type that were not domestic utilitarian wares like those we have been considering (KM 320.1 and KM 320.2, KM 340 and KM 344). All four of these vessels are evidently vases. The form itself might have ultimately derived from oriental 'brush-pots' made popular during the Chinoiserie fashion, starting in the later eighteenth century. All four Kelmscott examples, however, are decorated with bands of foliage and *knibis* ornament typical of the Westerwald ateliers, and belong to the very start of a revival of interest in Chinoiserie in the 1860s. It is one of these vases (Fig 13b, KM 320.1) that appears in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's painting, *Marigolds,* executed at Kelmscott in 1874 (Fig 13a).[87] As they are not utilitarian in function, and have connections with 'high-art' at whatever remove, Westerwald vessels such as these appear to represent efforts by these vernacular ateliers to supply a tourist market, which was already becoming important to the Rhineland economy in the mid nineteenth century, catering for middle-class visitors such as William and Jane had been themselves on their wedding tour in 1859. In the cases of these 'art' vases, however, we might speculate that all four originally belonged to Rossetti, rather than to Morris. Not only was Rossetti - along with London neighbour, James McNeill Whistler - one of the earliest advocates of 'Chinoiserie' in artistic circles in late nineteenth-century London, but he was also a great collector of ceramics.[88] No evidence has yet come to light, however, that Rossetti had an

[86] A third, small - relatively recent – crock, now in the Kelmscott parish church, has also been linked with the Kelmscott Manor collection, but is not included in our catalogue.
[87] Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, catalogue number 1956-90
[88] Waugh 1928, 118-25. Waugh claims that Rossetti and Whistler were 'the first collectors in London' of Chinoiserie items (at 119, n.1), though this is flatly contradicted by Rossetti's brother (1895, I, 263).

interest in collecting Westerwald. On the contrary, he obsessively collected the more refined Chinese blue-and-white porcelain that his circle generically called 'Nanking'.[89] Rossetti was, however, very much involved in furnishing and selecting decorative items for Kelmscott Manor's interiors, together with Jane Morris, bringing items of his own from London and buying furniture locally during the period that he lived there in the 1870s. His correspondence with Jane Morris in 1878 lists the items he requested to be returned to him in London after his sojourn at Kelmscott Manor ended. This includes a reference to 'French blue ware' but there is no mention of *gres de Flandres* specifically to link him directly with the chinoiserie-influenced vases. [90] [INSERT Fig 13 HERE]

Factory Production

Alongside the development of a genuinely domestic market for decorative ceramics, the growth of Rhineland tourism was one of the drivers of mass-production in the Westerwald. The utilitarian vernacular pottery we have been considering so far is clearly distinct from the highly decorative, mass-produced, factory-made, wares that came to dominate Westerwald output in the second half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps not surprisingly, given Morris' well-known views on industrial production, none of this mass-produced material is found within the Kelmscott collection, nevertheless we should conclude this account of Westerwald ceramics with a brief outline of this final phase of mechanized industry.

New factories, dedicated to mass-production, increasingly by machine, became established in the principal towns of the Westerwald hills from *c.*1860.[91] The industry was dominated by three manufacturers in particular: SP Gerz (founded at Grenzhausen,1854, licenced 1862); Reinhold Hanke (founded in Höhr, 1868[92]); and Merkelbach & Wick (founded at Grenzhausen,1872[93]). These big factories, and their lesser competitors, capitalized upon a series of technical advances, the earliest of which had been mechanical clay-cutting machinery, installed in 1848 at Höhr. In 1865 the first steam-driven machinery in the region

[89] Dante Gabriel's brother William stated that, 'With the European [ceramics] he never concerned himself'. Rossetti 1895, I, 263-4. See also Waugh 1928, 118; Pedrick 1904, 24, 43. We can safely presume, then, that Rossetti was either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the exploitation involved in contemporary 'Nanking' production, and his selection of these exceptional Westerwald vessel forms, left behind at Kelmscott, was a concession to Morris' own taste – or perhaps to Morris' wife?
[90] Bryson and Troxall, 1976, 71-76
[91] Dry-Von Zezschwitz, 1989
[92] For an account of Hanke's career see Dry-von Zezschwitz 1989, 290-2
[93] For an account of Merkelbach & Wick see Dry-von Zezschwitz 1989, 294-8

is recorded, again in Höhr. At Baumbach in 1879 we hear of the first mechanical press for blow-moulding ceramic vessels, and in 1883 what sounds like a new 'Hoffman' kiln was installed at Höhr-Grenzhausen, connected to the new Koblenz to Siegen railway line.[94] By 1894 it was estimated that there were approximately 270 ceramic 'factories' in Westerwald, employing 2000 workers.

Following the foundation of the school of ceramics in Höhr in 1879, the Westerwald's new factories developed different potting techniques from their vernacular predecessors and contemporaries.[95] Some factory producers, such as Reinhold Hanke (1839-86), consciously attempted to industrialise older craft techniques, such as the use of appliqués. But the most significant innovations were aimed at producing 'standardised' vessels using pre-formed moulds.[96] Initially, clay was pressed into wooden moulds by hand, but eventually a slurry of clay was 'blown' into a plaster-of-Paris mould, allowing the entire production process to be mechanised.

From the 1860s, Westerwald factories became associated, particularly, with ornamental pots in the *historizmus* style, often copies - or variants - of pots produced in the Rhineland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[97] Such vessels had little practical use, but were greatly favoured as souvenirs by tourists.[98] In their reproduction of baroque forms in the second half of the nineteenth century, of course, the new Westerwald factories were participating in a much wider cultural movement for the recreation and development of earlier design-forms, such as the Gothic, that eventually embraced the entire world in contact with Europe and America. Prosperous factories coexisted with the local vernacular tradition in which we are particularly interested, then, which was still producing pitchers, flasks, *birnkrugen*, pancheons and crocks throughout the nineteenth century, and evidently maintaining the hand-made, craft traditions of the earlier Westerwald pottery industry.[99] A stoneware kiln was photographed still in use at the Hammer atelier in Höhr-Grenzausen at the

[94] For these technical advances see: Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 44-5; see also J Lowenstein, *A Westerwald History*, http:www.steincollectors.org/library/articles/W-Wald.html
[95] Dry-von Zezschwitz 1989, 298
[96] There is an extant photograph of workers using hand-moulding equipment in 1880 at S.P. Gerz and Co. (Dry-von Zezschwitz, 1989, 288, plate 9), and a second showing more advanced moulding equipment from the Otto Blum factory in 1908 (Dry-Von Zezschwitz 1981, 11)
[97] e.g. Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1986; Gandelheid 1991. Schmidberger, E & Weinberger C (eds.), 1989
[98] Reinhold Hanke was particularly influential in the advancement of the *historizmus* style, especially following his work for the seminal re-decoration scheme at Schloss Elz in 1867 (Gaimster 1997, 325; Dry-von Zezschwitz 1989, 290-2).
[99] Catalogues reproduced by Sabine Zühlcke (2008) suggest that some vernacular ateliers continued production until 1939.

start of the twentieth century.[100] Similar kilns were also still operating at the 'satellite' centres, for example at Herforst until 1914.[101] Stacked outside the Hammer kiln are ranks of apparently undecorated crocks, flasks, and undecorated vessels of 'pitcher series' form.[102]

If anything, the wine trade went through a period of even greater expansion during the second half of the nineteenth century, thanks in part to Queen Victoria's visit to the Hochheim vineyards in 1850, yet the new mechanised factories do not appear to have produced vessels for wine-drinking. Perhaps the vernacular ateliers continued to supply such vessels as they always had? The industrialisation of Germany's glass industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, however, would ensure that cheap bottles were soon available to replace the barrels in which Rhenish wine had traditionally been supplied,[103] and with the replacement of barrels by bottles, the need for wine-jugs was greatly reduced. Rather than competition from mass manufacture, then, it may have been this dramatic change in drinking culture, from barrel to bottle, which was in the major factor in the decline of Westerwalds's vernacular pottery industry.

Conclusion: William Morris, Morris & Co. and *grès de Flandres* at Kelsmcott

Stoneware production in the Westerwald and its satellite areas during Morris's lifetime, then, exemplifies the transition from small-scale, independent craft-production to mechanised, mass-production. It was also a period when both co-existed, producing quite different products for different markets. Morris's interest in *grès de Flandres*, as represented by the Kelmscott collection, was evidently exclusively in the hand-made vernacular wares then in current production in the Rhineland. Items that were popular amongst English collectors, such as the already antique monogram jugs, the contemporary *birnkrugen* and the industrially-produced *historizmus* wares are noticeably absent. It seems likely that Morris will have observed the economic shift from craft-making to mass-production in the potteries of the Westerwald during his travels there in the 1860s, and he will also have discerned its effect in the character of its stonewares. Twenty years later he commented on this transition from

[100] Gaimster 1997, 44, fig 2.17-18. Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 22. See Also the discussions of the same kiln design in Freckmann 1983, 14-15 & 36-43 and in Kerkhov-Hader 1980, 65-72, 321-5
[101] Kerkhoff-Hader 1983, 15-16 and figure. A similar kiln is seen being fired at Niersbach, also on the Moselle, in a painting of 1861 (Kerkhoff-Hader 1983, 18)
[102] Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 23. See also ethnographic studies of a folk tradition of pottery in the Eifel region that continued until the Second World War – Kerkhoff-Hader 1980; 1988; 1992; 1996
[103] For the rise of the mass-produced glass-bottle in Germany see Keramik-Museum Westerwald 1990, 103.

skilled artisan craft to a mechanised process:

> '...the old lead or salt glazed earthenware; the latter known as Grès de Cologne [sic], still exists as a rough manufacture in the border lands of France and Germany, though I should think it is not destined to live much longer otherwise than as a galvanised modern antique.'[104]

The 'galvanised modern antiques' to which he alludes were presumably the factory-produced wares in *historizmus* style. These had been popularised in Britain by designers like Charles Eastlake in his *Hints on Household Taste* (1868) which offered a popular readership encouragement to discriminate in the quality of designs and material. He singled out *grès de Flandres*, though hardly in a manner Morris would have endorsed, extolling the virtues of reproduction, moulded wares:

> 'In their manufacture of stone ware the Belgians have set us a good example by their reproduction of old *Grès de Flandres* moulded from good old models … . It is one of the most satisfactory instances which I know of improved taste in industrial art, and might with advantage be imitated in this country where we possess great executive skill with but little conceptional taste…'[105]

In a footnote Eastlake adds that manufacturers like Doulton & Co. should copy 'the beautiful specimens of *Gres-de-Flandres* which may be procured at a trifling cost from some of our curiosity dealers'. Eastlake appears unaware that, alongside the industrial manufacture of reproduction stoneware, a living tradition of artisan stoneware manufacture continued on the Rhine, making the wares that Morris admired and used in his contemporary home.

From the late 1860s, as Morris's personal fortune declined through falling investments, he put more energy into the business.[106] Finally in 1875, he bought-out his original partners and took it over, renaming it Morris & Company. A move to new showrooms on Oxford Street in 1877, signalled a shift in the scale and success of the retail side. Surviving business records are not informative on this kind of detail, but we know something of the pottery that Morris & Co. were selling (above p.xx). Morris & Co. was celebrated for its transformation of contemporary interior design, promoting simplicity of form, rich patterning, hand-crafted

[104] Morris 1882 in Morris (ed) 1914, 245
[105] Eastlake 1868 in Gloag (ed) 1969, 239
[106] Harvey and Press 1991, 70-94

materials, and a new taste in ceramics: 'Blue and white Nankin, Delft or *Grès de Flandres* routed Dresden and Sevres from the cabinet'.[107] Morris's 'merchandising' for the firm reflected these design trends, and we find *grès de Flandres* incorporated in decorative schemes supplied by Morris & Co. for their clients.[108]

It is a curious fact that over three quarters of the stonewares in the Kelmscott Manor collection are damaged (above) and have been repaired historically. Do these repaired vessels represent pottery damaged in transit from the Rhineland, or 'seconds' with firing faults, which could not be sold in the Morris & Co. shop? Were they saved for their decorative value and relegated to the country home at Kelmscott? Or, more mundanely, were these simply much-loved mugs, jugs and bowls that were the casualties of everyday domestic use? Many pieces are chipped but in some cases the breakages were so serious that the vessels could never have been used again functionally, though they have been carefully repaired.[109] At the least, it seems, their careful repair signifies that special value was attached to them.

Kelmscott Manor, indeed, epitomises the classic elements of the Arts-and-Crafts domestic interior and the vision is illustrated in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's painting *Marigolds* (1874, Fig 13).[110] It belongs to the period when Rossetti was living at Kelmscott Manor with Morris's wife, Jane, and takes the Green Room at Kelmscott Manor as its setting, depicting its limestone fireplace on which a *grès de Flandres* vase filled with marsh marigolds is being placed by a young girl. Pleasingly, the 'jar', as Rossetti called it, remains in the collection today, one of a pair of Westerwald vases (KM320.1).[111] The female model for the painting is said to have been a local girl who worked as a house-servant, but – like many Rossetti portraits – has a strong resemblance to Jane Morris. Tantalisingly, however, it is not possible to be certain whether the vase in this picture, which we have discussed above, is the one Jane is said to have been given by Rossetti (above, footnote xx).[112]

[107] Crane 1897, 89-80. A revival of interest in Morris & Co.'s work in the 1960s was marked by the Arts Council exhibition for the centenary anniversary (Morris 1961), quoting Walter Crane's memorial article in *The Scribner*.
[108] Examples of Morris & Co. interiors furnished with *grès de Flandres* identified so far include Wightwick Manor, near Wolverhampton (National Trust), Emery Walker's house, Hammersmith, artist Birket Foster's house (estate auction catalogue). Further research in this area would no doubt be productive.
[109] See, for example, pancheons KM339and KM432, tankard KM434, crock KM438.
[110] Surteees 1971, v2, plate 335
[111] Surtees 1971, 134, No.235 (citing Rossetti's letters).
[112] Maddison and Waterson 2013, 26, 47

Morris and the Lesser Arts: 'a very great industry indeed'

The future of traditional craft practice was a central concern to William Morris, as a craftsperson in his own right, a designer and, from the mid-1870s, as a socialist. His first public lecture on 'The Lesser Arts' in 1877 reflected increasingly radical views on the relationship of art and labour: 'I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few'.[113] Just as Morris and Webb's *Manifesto* for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings argued compellingly for the careful conservation of historic buildings,[114] his lecture on 'The Lesser Arts' can be read as a manifesto for the revival of traditional crafts and trades, including ceramics, which he saw becoming 'trivial, mechanical, unintelligent, incapable of resisting the changes pressed upon them by fashion or dishonesty.'[115]

From 1877, Morris turned to public lecturing and campaigning to share his ideas about art and labour. Having placed his business on a sure footing, he began to reflect more critically than ever on the values and political implications of commercial manufacture and mass-production. He was ill-at-ease with the idea that Morris & Co. served only a middle class wealthy market and began to speak publicly about the political economy of decorative arts.

Founding the 'Firm' had been much more than just a response to a gap in the market, it was an astute business decision at a key moment in changing taste. Following the Great Exhibition of 1851, and with increasing availability of goods produced by mechanised industry for an expanding middle class market, there was a growing interest in decorative arts in the home. In the same period, social critics like John Ruskin highlighted the increasing divide created by industrialisation and mass manufacture, the growing separation between design, creativity and the work of the craftsperson. Ruskin wrote of this most influentially in *The Stones of Venice* (1853) in his chapter 'On the Nature of Gothic Architecture: and herein the true functions of the workman in art'. [116] Reading Ruskin was a formative experience for Morris who spoke of its profound influence on his thinking as a young man: 'it seemed to point out a new road on which the world should travel'.[117]

[113] Morris 1878 in Morris (ed) 1913, 26, a lecture given to the Trades' Guild of Learning 1877. From 1883, Morris became a member of the Social Democratic Federation, the first official socialist party in England.
[114] Morris and Webb 1877
[115] Morris 1978 op cit, 4
[116] Ruskin 1853 in Cook and Wedderburn (eds) X, 180-269
[117] Quoted in MacCarthy 1994, 69

By 1859, in *The Two Paths*, *Lectures on Art, and Its Application to Decoration and Manufacture*, Ruskin turned from architecture to champion the decorative arts, urging his readers to 'get rid, then, at once of any idea of decorative art being a degraded or separate kind of art':

> 'Its nature and essence is simply its being fitted for a definite place; and, in that place, forming part of a great and harmonious whole, in companionship with other art.'[118]

His influence on Morris is clear but, typically, Morris went further to embed Ruskin's principles in his own work.[119] In 'The Lesser Arts', Morris speaks of the crafts as 'that great body of art by means of which men have at all times more or less striven to beautify the familiar matters of everyday life … the sweeteners of human labour ... they make our toil happy, and our rest fruitful.'[120]

In these lectures Morris introduces the idea that decorative skill, even in utilitarian objects, was central to the experience of both maker and consumer:

> 'To give people pleasure in the things they must perforce *use*, that is the one great office of decoration; to give people pleasure in the things they must perforce *make*, that is the other use of it.'[121]

As his public speaking developed a more radical tone, Morris promoted the decorative arts as a barometer of social well-being:

> 'not only is it possible to make the matters needful to our daily life works of art, but there is something wrong in the civilisation that does not do this.'[122]

Morris's criteria for the making of 'daily life works of art' are straightforward. They must show the obvious traces of the maker's hand 'guided directly by his brain, without more interposition of machines than is absolutely necessary to the nature of the work done'. They should evolve from the intrinsic nature of the material being used: a 'love of nature in all its forms must be the ruling spirit of such works of art'; and, finally, he suggests, the mind that guides the hand must be healthy and hopeful and 'only so much affected by the art of past

[118] Ruskin 1859 in Cook and Wedderburn (eds) XVI, 320
[119] Harvey and Press 1991, 150-151
[120] Morris 1878 op cit, 8
[121] Op cit, 5
[122] Morris 1882 in Morris (ed) 1914, 239, a lecture given in Birmingham in support of the SPAB

times as an art which is alive, growing and looking forward to the future'.[123] He goes on to write of pottery making as 'perhaps (setting aside house building) the most important of the lesser arts' setting out five principles for good pottery making, which art potteries like Harold Rathbone's Della Robbia works in Birkenhead were soon to adopt.[124]

Morris would have found all the qualities he wrote of in 'The Lesser Arts' - of creativity in the material form, the marks of manual making, and naturalistic decoration - in the *grès de Flandres* he evidently enjoyed in his home. From his lectures, we can also understand that he would admire the living tradition represented by these stonewares; a hallmark, he recognised, of creative ceramic art. The lively patterning and surface decoration, entwined vines, flowers, birds and beasts, all speak to the art and designs that he created himself. Thus, the ensemble of stonewares at Kelmscott reflects both the wares the 'Firm' retailed and also Morris's personal commitment to simplicity, practicality and naturalistic decoration.

Any study of the Kelmscott stoneware collection, will be struck, of course, by common decorative themes on the pots and in Morris's repertoire of patterned textiles and wallpaper designs. The 'S' shaped leaf-form akin to acanthus on the tankard (Fig 5b, KM 337), curling vine-like foliage, tulip 'bud' motifs, and birds amid foliage on the pitcher series, all resonate with motifs widely used by Morris in both woven and printed textiles and wallpapers.[125] What they have in common is that 'love of nature in all its forms' which shaped Morris's own richly patterned designs. In responding to the Westerwald decorative tradition as he did, he was also placing himself within it, as he wrote in 1878:

> 'So strong is the bond between history and decoration, that in the practice of the latter we cannot, if we would, wholly shake off the influence of past times over what we do at present'.

The traditional decorative elements of *grès de Flandres* evidently resonated with Morris, reminding him of admired historic designs, such as those antiques he had collected. His appreciation would have been greatly enhanced by the continuance of this particular vernacular stoneware ~~industry~~tradition , as he encountered it in the 1860s, in small independent workshops. However distantly, these ateliers followed the medieval system of

[123] Op cit, 239-40
[124] Op cit, 246-47; Hyland 2014, 45-47
[125] E.g.Vine and acanthus, Bird, Tulip in Fairclough and Leary 1982, T1, W4;W31; Parry 2013

craft production, albeit on an intensive proto-industrial scale involving, for example, large kiln capacity, high temperature firings, and the evolution of specialisation in the manufacturing process (throwers, mould cutters, kiln builder and stackers etc). They exemplified for Morris, the socialist, an alternative to the factory system and an ideal where the worker took control 'over his material, tools, and time, in fact of his work'.[126] As we would put it today he wished to promote fair trade and ethical production. Ironically, given Morris's idealisation of the medieval guild system for its protection of workers' rights, it was the end of the Kannenbäcker's Guild monopoly in the Westerwald that provided the impetus for proliferation of small independent pottery producers whose work he admired. (above p.).

For Morris then - in conclusion - these pots were the product of a craft which he defined as 'beauty produced by labour both mental and bodily' and, importantly, in conditions that allowed the craftsperson to take pleasure in their work in order to create everyday enjoyment for others.[127] The Kelmscott Manor collection of Westerwald is highly significant for what it speaks to about Morris's politics, and about an historical moment in the transition from craft practice to factory production, as much as for the many other social relations that it illustrates: arts and crafts design, personal taste, creativity and ethical business. Kelmscott uniquely also offers an impressive ensemble of Westerwald stoneware, much of which is contemporary with the house as the Morris family home and closely associated with Morris, his family and circle. The small, traditional ateliers in the Westerwald produced vessels that lack characteristic makers' marks or dates and share a vernacular repertoire of decorative motifs, meaning that dating and provenance is problematic - hence the relative lack of study compared with better-documented earlier, and later, German stoneware. Although the Kelmscott Manor collection includes four 'antique' pieces, the majority of the ensemble can reasonably be dated to the decades from the 1850s to 1880s, with a small number of later pieces that may have been added by May Morris. This is a remarkable, very personal, collection of ceramics. It bears a singular relationship to the life and work of one of the most influential figures in Victorian cultural history and represents a unique lens through which to view Morris's vision for the decorative arts.

[126] Morris 1884, 116
[127] Op cit, 94- 96

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