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COOKING, DINING AND DRINKING
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Of all the sensory experiences, the practices of cooking, dining and drinking must be amongst the most developed and intense, stimulating smell, taste, sight and even touch through comestibles and the objects used to facilitate their consumption. Studies of medieval diet have concentrated traditionally on historical texts such as the accounts of gentry households (e.g. Woolgar 1993) or ingredients and cooking recipes (e.g. Black 2012; Klemetilla 2012). Likewise, the consumption of food has been reconstructed using conduct books, amply illustrated by cooking and dining scenes from manuscripts, and cherry-picked artefacts from art historical collections (e.g. Hammond 1993). This has created a skewed view of medieval cooking and dining, only rectified more recently by cultural historians such as Sponsler (2001), who has shown how little contemporary sources reflected *actual* practice, and by the combined insights of historians and archaeologists.

Important contributions include Dyer (1983), one of the first studies to look across the social divide, emphasising the considerable expenditure made on foodstuffs by the elite in contrast to a reliance on grains (in the form of bread and pottages), legumes and beer for nutrition, as well as 'white meats' or dairy products by the peasantry. More recently, Woolgar (2006; 2010) has examined the sensory role of food while the full potential of archaeological data has become clearer.

Advances in excavation recovery techniques have produced more evidence for fish and, together with isotopic studies of medieval populations, this has underlined the importance of marine protein in medieval diet by the 13th century (e.g. Barrett et al. 2004; Müldner and Richards 2005). Residue analysis too has provided new insights (e.g. Evans and Elbeih 1984; Evershed et al. 2002, 664) as has comparative analysis. Disparities in bone assemblages from urban and rural contexts, for example, reveal a growing demand for veal in cities and towns and increasingly standardised butchery practices such as the dressing of wild birds (Albarella and Thomas 2002; Albarella 2004). Evidently, patterns of taste could change through time too, as Sykes (2014) has shown in her evaluation of the swan whose rising consumption by the secular elite she ascribes to the appropriation of the image of the swan as a chivalric symbol. As Sykes (2007) has also shown for venison, the social context for excavated faunal evidence is essential for its interpretation, and the same is true for archaeobotanical studies [ED: INSERT XREF TO CH]. It is not only faunal assemblages that can contribute to a more developed understanding of medieval taste, other environmental sources do provide insights into the sensory experience of diet in the Middle Ages. From the 12th century

onwards, more widespread archaeological evidence for the use of fennel, caraway and parsley seeds (Livarda and van der Veen 2008, 207) suggests the preparation of thin acidic sauces and more heavily spiced foods among the elite, although black mustard was also found on low status rural sites, demonstrating that even the peasantry had developed a taste for strong flavoured foods.

COOKING

During the Middle Ages the kitchen was one of the most diverse spaces in the home; in the castle or monastery these could be complex and highly specialised areas consisting of several individual rooms or preparation areas, whilst in the peasant longhouse they were simply an open hearth which also warmed the building. Indeed, many of the poorest may have had not access to cooking facilities at all. Those living in the poorest of urban conditions, such as the garrets of town houses or street front tenements, are very unlikely to have had ready access to kitchens or hearths (Schofield 2003). At times even the more affluent might not have had access to their own facilities, if they were travelling, for example. In larger urban centres precooked 'fast food' was readily available for purchase on the street, with a range to suit all tastes and budgets. In London, by the 13th century, waffles, meat or eel pasties, egg or cheese tarts and light pastries are all recorded for sale (Carlin 1998, 29).

The ceramic 'cooking pot' is routinely recovered from archaeological excavations. This was an open mouthed vessel usually with a flat or slightly convex base, produced in a wide range of local fabrics and found on high and low status sites alike. Superficially, their ubiquity seems to indicate common cooking practices but these pots served a multitude of functions, from the preparation and mixing of foodstuffs to the longer-term storage of solids, and even outside the kitchen. An early attempt to differentiate their uses was made by Moorhouse (1986, 108–111) who suggested that wear patterns might be significant. The presence or absence of sooting indicated whether a jar had been used for cooking or storage, if the pot had been placed directly in the fire or suspended over it, and even what the source of the fuel might have been. Jervis (2014a, 89-95) notes that sooting markedly decreases on cooking pots and jars after the Norman Conquest. This, he argues, resulted from a change in cooking method that saw the introduction, and widespread acceptance, of the continental practice of suspending the pot over the fire, rather than placing it directly in the embers, which in turn reflected a developing taste for the slower cooking of meats. In many households, however, cooking pots would have fulfilled multiple roles during their lifetime, especially in rural households with less resources (e.g. Brown 1997, 86).

Despite these complications, there are some broader trends that can be detected through the analysis of ceramic assemblages (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 102–134). It is often observed that with the Conquest there was a dramatic increase in the use of ceramics on domestic sites, even in those areas that were largely aceramic just a few decades earlier (e.g. Bryant 2004a, 118). During the late 11th and 12th centuries cooking pots and jars comprise the majority of ceramic assemblages, around 85% in the case of Southampton (Brown 2005, 88). However, by the later 13th century more specialised cooking wares, such as dripping pans, became more common, whilst the

14th and 15th centuries saw the gradual introduction of newer forms such as the tripod pipkin, bung hole cistern and the shallow pancheon (Brown 2005, 91, 94; Jervis 2008, 83). These changes in ceramic profiles reflect not just a growing access to different material forms but a developing taste for gravies, sauces and more complex flavours.

Archaeologists have tended to view these developments in terms of status differentiation and competitive emulation. For example, Jervis (2008, 83) has suggested that the continental form of the tripod pipkin, whilst manufactured locally in England, was more readily adopted by richer mercantile communities in Southampton than by other groups, who continued to favour traditional cooking pots or jars. However, such developments might have been as much driven by the desire to enhance sensory experience as to display social status. Whilst some late medieval elite sites, for example Bull Hall in Winchester, seem to be characterised by assemblages that include a much greater variety of food preparation vessels like mortars, Brown (1997, 92–93) has observed that these differences are not simply a result of variations in social status, rather they reflect a difference in dining habits between urban and rural environments. They may also reflect, of course, easy access to readily available wares and this requires testing with a larger selection of assemblages.

One significant problem for archaeologists attempting to reconstruct culinary practice is that the vast majority of ceramic assemblages are found in secondary contexts. There are exceptions to this: at Kirkstall Abbey, Yorkshire, spatial analysis of the ceramics revealed that the distribution of dripping pans was found grouped close to the meat kitchen and the service quarters of the infirmary, both areas where the cooking of meat might be expected (Moorhouse 1993, 10). At Worcester a group of ceramics was recovered from a kitchen belonging to an urban household destroyed by fire in 1200–1250 (Bryant 2004b, 332–333). In addition to five complete jugs, six cooking pots or jars were recovered (Figure 1.1), each of a slightly different graduated size. This suggested that they each might have been intended for the storage or cooking of a different foodstuff. Finally, excavation of a fire-damaged late 13th-century peasant longhouse at Dinna Clerks on Dartmoor (Beresford 1979, 135–137; 147–150) revealed five cooking pots sealed by the collapse of the wattle-and-daub chimney hood and a sixth jar close by buried up to its rim, perhaps functioning as a temporary mixing or storage vessel. Next to the fire there was also a single glazed jug and the remains of two wooden bowls. The smell of cooking here must have combined with the taste of the food and the warmth of the fire.

During the later Middle Ages there was a gradual replacement of ceramic cooking pots with metal vessels (e.g. Bryant 2004a, 118) and by the late 14th century the *olla enea,* or copper-alloy cooking pot, was appearing in the inventories of households of every status, including cottagers. In 1368 the kitchen of the rector of St Martin Pomeroy, London, was listed as possessing 6 brass pots, 4 cauldrons, 3 brand irons, 2 griddles, 1 iron frying pan, 2 iron slices, a flesh hook, a skimmer, as well as other assorted ladles, pails and other equipment (Thomas 1929, 91–92). Five years later, the kitchen inventory of Thomas Mockyng, a city fishmonger, included many of the above items as well as 2 mortars, 5 tubs, a fine sieve, 5 spits, 2 tripods and a firepan. The accumulated

ironwork weighed 220 lb and was valued at 1/7s 6d, whilst the brass weighed 318 lb and was worth 2/7s 6d (Thomas 1929, 155–156).

Archaeologically, metal cooking pots like these are rarely encountered, but frequent finds of folded rivets and patches used in their repair attest to their presence (Egan 1998, 176–177). Evidence for copper-alloy cooking pot production in the form of mould fragments has also been found at a number of sites, most notably at Salisbury, on a site identified in the will of John Baber, a brazier, who died in 1404 (Webster and Cherry 1973, 185). The popularity of metal is usually attributed to the growing wealth of the peasantry, on the basis that a bronze cooking pot could cost as much as two weeks wages of a carpenter (Dyer 1982, 39) and the investment was worthwhile given its extended lifespan. However, the notion that ceramics were a cheaper form of material culture only used by those who could afford little else has to be challenged (e.g. Jervis 2014a, 66; 2014b, 4–5), and it is clear that elites who had the resources to do otherwise were still choosing pottery for their cooking up until the 14th century. Cost was important, but so was the style of cuisine; developing culinary tastes, and the slower cooking of meats in more highly flavoured sauces stimulated the introduction of new forms of metalware.

Although rare, finds of kitchen equipment are known and the most complete assemblage comes from a house on Pottergate, Norwich. Destroyed by fire in 1507, much of the household collapsed into the cellar, which was subsequently backfilled (Margeson 1993, 86–89, 94–95). Amongst the kitchen equipment were a complete copper-alloy tripod skillet (Figure 1.2), a thin beaten copper bowl and the iron handle from a hanging bowl. Associated iron items from the fireplace were also recovered: cauldron hooks, a complete adjustable height suspension ratchet, portions of a rotary spit and a fire pan for moving coals. There was also an iron ladle and flesh hook (Figure 1.3) and a copper-alloy skimmer. Similar finds are also known from London's waterfront sites, and although they cannot be related to individual households, their close dating allows wider trends to be observed. For instance, the growing popularity of copper-alloy tripod skillets and cauldrons can be detected; of the 19 different examples recovered, none predate the mid-13th century and the majority, 12 in total, came from the period 1350–1450 (Egan 1998, 161–166). Similarly, iron flesh hooks for removing chunks of stewed meat from the pot were more prevalent during the late 13th and 14th centuries, but were largely replaced by flat pierced copper-alloy skimmers by the 15th century (Figure 1.4). This was probably as a result of meat being prepared to a more sophisticated recipe prior to cooking, with the flesh now being removed from the bone, rather than larger cuts being cooked whole.

DINING

Material culture directly associated with eating, as opposed to preparation, is surprisingly rare either side of the Norman Conquest. Prior to the mid-13th century, even amongst larger assemblages of ceramics, food vessels are virtually absent; in a survey of 12th-mid 13th-century ceramics from Southampton less than one percent were bowls, the remainder being jars/cooking pots and jugs (Brown 2005, 88–89). The assumption is that organic materials, and wood in particular, were used by all levels of

society, although in some circumstances meals could have been consumed directly from the cooking jar. Ceramic tablewares from Spain were available from the end of the 13th century but had a more restricted social distribution (Gutiérrez 2012, 47–48).

Finds of wooden bowls are not uncommon on sites where there are waterlogged conditions, and yet few can be said to date to the late 11th or 12th centuries. Turned bowls appear in increasing numbers from the early 13th century onwards, especially in urban centres, with ash and alder being the most popular woods (Keys 1998a, 196). The apparent absence of wooden vessels prior to this date is probably due to excavation biases. In London, a number of group deposits of wooden bowls have been found, among them 18 from an early 14th-century pit at the hospital of St Mary Spital (Thomas et al. 1997, 59–60). Along with other late medieval assemblages from Leicester Austin Friars (Clay 1981, 139) and Coppergate, York (Morris 2000, 2403–2404), among others, these finds fall into two broad styles: a shallow hemispherical bowl, occasionally with a broad flange, and the flat dish or plate (Figure 2.1–2). Given the simplicity of their form they are hard to date more precisely and it seems likely that both styles were used throughout the period.

Wooden bowls and plates are utilitarian and visually plain, but this perhaps was the intention. As an 'open' form, the bowl emphasised its contents, and the natural colouring of the wood detracted little from the food inside. Sometimes they were incised or branded on the base with initials or a personalised mark. Two bowls from Milk Street, London, were marked with a 'S' (Keys 1998a, 197), three from a pit on High Street, Southampton, were marked with a capital 'A' (Figure 2.3), and three others from a pit at Cuckoo Lane, Southampton, part of an assemblage possibly associated with the household of the prosperous merchant Richard of Southwick, were marked with a crosshatch design (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975, 220, 230). This personalisation of everyday objects suggests, first, that the bowls were portable items that might be taken outside of the home or sometimes used in environments, such as alehouses, where ownership needed to be confirmed. Second, wooden vessels were valued and establishing ownership was important. This is also suggested by the number of wooden bowls with elaborate repairs, such as one from 1–6 Milk Street, London, which had been sewn back together after breakage, even though it would probably never have been able to hold liquid foods again (Keys 1998a, 203–204).

If wooden bowls and dishes were undoubtedly the most common form of vessel for the consumption of medieval foodstuffs, metalwares increasingly played an important role. Silver and silver gilt vessels are never encountered archaeologically, but they are well documented in the inventories and wills of the elite as well as frequently being depicted in manuscript illuminations, such as the depiction of the Dukes of York, Gloucester, and Ireland dining with Richard II in the *Chroniques d'Angletere* (BL MS Royal 14 E IV f.265v). Despite this, even the rich would probably only have used them occasionally, and base metal flatwares, and pewter in particular, would have been a more ordinary sight at the table. Although pewter was recyclable, medieval pewterers are recorded as purchasing scrap from would-be customers (Hatcher and Barker 1974, 239–240), it is occasionally found. In London, rims from at least 19 plates or dishes have been recorded primarily from waterfront dump sites and, with one earlier

exception, all date from the mid-14th century onwards (Egan 1998, 184–187). More complete examples of flatware include a small shallow, rimmed bowl from a late 13th-century pit at Southampton (Figure 2.4) marked with a Lombardic letter 'P' on the rim (Michaelis 1975) and two 14th-century date saucers from Leicester Austin Friars, both marked with a 'T' on the rim (Figure 2.5), probably a maker's mark (Homer 1999, 7).

This archaeological evidence corresponds well with the growing organisation of the Company of Pewterers, whose earliest ordinances date to 1348 and specify the range of 'disshes, Saucers, platers, Chargeours' being produced (Hatcher and Barker 1974, 38–39). Hatcher and Barker suggest that pewter was not only becoming increasingly popular during the 14th century, it was also replacing more traditional materials at the table. In 1391, Richard Toky, a prosperous London grocer owned 86 lb of pewter, including 44 pieces of flatware. However, in the subsequent centuries, pewter use was clearly trickling down the social scale; in 1434 Roger Elmesly, a wax chandler's servant, owned a pewter plate, two dishes and two saucers, whilst in 1479 John Rokewood, a London squire, had six dishes, four saucers and three platters (Hatcher and Barker 1974, 55). Even just a few pieces of polished pewter set on the table or displayed on the cupboard would have made a very dramatic visual sight, especially in low level and artificial light sources. It is interesting in this respect that pewter platters and dishes are invariably plain in appearance, despite medieval pewterers being proficient in cast relief moulding, engraving and hammer beating (Hornsby et al. 1989, 15–19). While the pewter may have been intended to impress the diner to some degree, it was the food that made the greatest impression.

Given the range of more saucy foods becoming increasingly popular, from the thin sour gravies favoured by the elite to simple peasant pottages, spoons were sometimes needed. These were fashioned from a wide range of organic materials, including bone, horn and wood, though few survive. Exceptions are the 11th or 12th century examples from Goltho (MacGregor 1987), four 14th-century wooden spoons recovered from Perth (Curteis et al. 2012, 259–262), and seven from several different late medieval sites in York (Morris 2000). Late medieval spoons made from pewter or sometimes copper alloy were used from the 14th century onwards (Homer 1975). Pewter examples usually have a fig-shaped bowl, thin tapering hexagonal stem and a detailed finial end, the most common of which was the acorn knop, such as three 15th-century examples found at Barentin's Manor, Oxfordshire (Figure 2.6) (Goodall 2005, 90). Gilchrist (2012, 125–127), perhaps influenced by the early modern practice in Wales of presenting carved spoons to intended lovers, has suggested that metal spoons might have held 'special value' as symbolic wedding gifts, and points to the almost unique find of a pair of so-called 'marriage knives' from Meols, Cheshire. Their ubiquity and functional nature suggest otherwise but they were certainly intended to catch the diner's attention.

DRINKING

Material culture associated with drinking falls primarily into two broad categories: serving vessels such as jugs and pitchers, and drinking vessels which include goblets, beakers, tankards, and cups. Identifying what was being consumed is rather more

difficult; traditionally it has been argued that water was avoided due to the risk of disease and that beers of differing strengths were consumed instead by the majority of people, as well as wine by those who could afford it (e.g. Hammond 1993, 91). Whether this was entirely the case is questionable, as it implies sufficient knowledge of the mechanism behind water-borne infection, yet an apparent ignorance of the benefits that prolonged boiling would have had.

Ceramic jugs are found during the Anglo-Norman period; in his study of the pottery from Southampton, Brown noted that they made up 15% of the total assemblage from the town. This increased over the course of the next century so that by the middle of the 13th century jugs had been adopted universally in all households, in England at least (Brown 2005, 88–89, 91). At the same time variety increased and, in addition to plain and unglazed forms often of local manufacture, decorative jugs also began to appear. It has been suggested that this reflected different lifestyles as well as functions, plainer 'kitchen jugs' could have functioned in both preparation and serving roles, whilst more decorative ceramics were destined for the tables of the mercantile elite (Jervis 2008, 78–81). However, the rise in the use of jugs for serving liquids might not have been so universal. In his study of ceramic assemblages from different households, Brown (1997, 92–93) noted that prevalent jug use was restricted to urban contexts, and that even a high status rural site such as the manor at Faccombe Netherton (Wiltshire) made relatively little use of them. This, he suggests, reflected differences in practices between the two groups, with the latter spending more time dining formally. Such divisions might in reality be slightly simplistic, or at least regionally determined. Jugs are certainly found in rural low status contexts, and Moorhouse (1986, 103–104) has suggested that two jugs recovered from a 13th-century peasant house at Pennard, Glamorgan, had been conspicuously displayed upon a sideboard or a wall shelf when the building was destroyed by fire.

Ceramic jugs were not just plain utilitarian items, as early as the mid-13th century polychrome wares from Saintonge decorated with pseudo-heraldic devices and beasts were imported into England as incidental ballast for the wine trade (Derœux and Dufournier 1991), and by the 15th century locally produced jugs could be embellished with bearded faces and other anthropomorphic elements (Figure 3.1). The imagery on these vessels was clearly intended to not only impress and amuse, but may also have carried messages concerning perceived status and masculinity (Cumberpatch 2006). Complex jugs like these were not common; most were decorated simply, with green and brown glazes, sometimes slips and applied decoration. The use of glaze was more than just a functional addition; it was applied partially and failed to make the jugs impervious to liquid. Indeed, it may be that the application of these glazes was a very deliberate attempt to make the jug more visually appealing to the drinker through the refraction and dispersal of light, especially when viewed in the subdued artificially lit conditions experienced in the medieval house or hall (Devlin et al. 2002).

Glass jugs, though they are not identified in large quantities, begin appearing on high status sites as early as the late 12th century, an example decorated with opaque red marvered trailing was found in a pit at Southampton (Figure 3.2) (Charleston 1975, 216) and, increasingly from the 13th century onwards, imported jugs are found in

coloured glass, such as a blue example from Penhallam Manor, Cornwall, and the bright yellow high lead glass at Battle Abbey, East Sussex (Charleston 1980, 69; 1985, 145). By the 14th century glass jugs were being produced by English glassmakers in the cheaper green potash glass, and they are found on sites of more middling status in towns (e.g. Keys 1998b, 229). Glass was not only impervious to liquids, making it easier to clean and less prone to take on aromas over time, it also permitted the drinker to view its contexts, a highly symbolic property which is explored further below.

Compared with serving vessels, ceramic cups or mugs are almost never found before the 15th century and, if the medieval elite might have sometimes used silver to drink from, the overwhelming majority of vessels must have been made from organic materials that simply do not survive. The Bayeux Tapestry famously depicts diners with drinking horns, and their use probably persisted through the later medieval period. By the 14th century in London guilds of both 'horners' and leather 'botelmakers' are recorded, and these merged during the 15th century (Baker 1921, 21–23). Leather was probably a common material not only for the production of storage vessels, for example costrels, but also for drinking jugs or 'black jacks', such as the very rare example excavated at Watling Street, London (Figure 3.3) (Cherry 1991, 312–313). Wooden 'mazers' or drinking bowls are also recorded in numerous wills and inventories from the 13th century onwards (e.g. St John Hope 1887; Evan-Thomas 1932, 1–3) and it is entirely possible that some wooden bowls could have been used for drinking. However, the only varieties of wooden vessel that has been identified as exclusively for drinking are stave-built. At Perth, two sizes were found: mugs that were 10–11 cm in height and tankards 25–27 cm in height (Curteis et al 2012, 226–229). Staves from similar 'tankards' have also been recovered from London's waterfront sites (Keys 1998a, 214–215) but with a capacity of between five or six pints they must have been intended for communal rather than individual use.

From the late 13th century onwards imported glass drinking vessels are found in relatively small numbers at elite sites, although as the 14th century progressed assemblages are also encountered elsewhere. This adoption of glass was not universal, however; a recent survey across the West Country has shown that glass only occurs as isolated finds and only in a single urban centre, Exeter, prior to the mid-16th century (Willmott 2015, 322). Some of the earliest and most decorative drinking glasses are Italian beakers with brightly coloured enamelling depicting mythical creatures, saints and heraldic devices; the most important group, consisting of eight or more examples were deposited in a cesspit at Foster Lane, London, between 1300 and 1350 (Clark 1983). By the start of the 14th century, stemmed glass goblets were used for drinking, often with a wide bowl and tall thin stem like the fragments of six examples known from in a pit at High Street, Southampton (Figure 3.4) (Charleston 1975, 217–218). One of the appeals of glass like this was its transparency which allowed the liquid inside, particularly wines, to become part of the visual experience of drinking (Willmott 2005a, 41–43). It can be no coincidence that by the 15th century drinking glasses tended not to be heavily decorated (Willmott 2005b), save for small areas of gilding or enamelling, as seen in the illustrated example of a ribbed beaker from Southampton (Figure 3.5) (Willmott 2011, 185, no. 43). Decoration was used to enhance but not obscure the contents on display, serving instead to elevate its sensory and social status.

Pottery was not a popular media for drinking vessels until the late 14th century. The relatively plain styles and rough fabrics of local coarsewares might have not been conducive to the drinking experience, especially when compared to polished wood, smooth metalwares and glass (Cumberpatch 1997). After that date, imports of Rhenish stoneware drinking jugs became increasingly common, especially in urban contexts (Gaimster 1997), and drinking jugs started appearing in local glazed fabrics, such as London-type ware (Figure 3.6) (Pearce and Vince 1988, 72; Pearce 1992, 23–29; Matthews and Green 1969). The increasing use of glazes and the high firing of more refined fabrics improved the experience of drinking and helped prevent the absorption of liquids while the increasing use of decoration made them more visually appealing so that by the 15th century ceramic drinking vessels were ubiquitous (Cumberpatch 2006).

The second half of the 14th century also saw an increasing number of metalwares, and pewter hollow wares in particular, associated with drinking. Company ordnances refer to the production of 'pottes', 'pottes square', and 'other thinges' (Hatcher and Barker 1974, 39) and, although by no means as common as flatware, 'square pottes' appear in wills with increasing frequency during the 14th and 15th centuries. The form these took is apparent from the relatively small number that have survived; they are in fact octagonal in shape, made from individual sheets soldered together, and take the form of a lidded tankard 20–30 cm tall (van Wijk 2014). Archaeologically, near-complete 14th-century examples have been found at Abbots Leigh, a property owned by St Augustine's Bristol (Homer 1999, 11) and near Tonbridge Castle, Kent (Figure 3.7) (Hornsby et al. 1989, 52), whilst more fragmentary elements of lids and thumb rests have been found on several London sites (Egan 1998, 189–191). Pewter like this offered some obvious benefits. It was visually appealing when highly polished, easy to clean, odourless and, perhaps most crucially, robust and difficult to break; any dents could easily be hammered out. That only handled drinking pots used for drinking beer are found, but not stemmed vessels for wine, is of little surprise: not only did the pewter alloy produce a bitter taste when it came into contact with wine, it also obscured the expensive contents.

CONCLUSION

Food preparation, eating and drinking became increasingly complex and engaging activities during the Middle Ages, and the properties of food and material culture were actively exploited to stimulate the senses of sight, smell, taste and even touch. The 14th century appears to have been a particularly crucial period in these developments, as has been observed by Riddy (2008, 17) who has characterised this as the century when it is possible to detect 'a material signature of domesticity'; its early decades saw the emergence of more sophisticated culinary practices, and the appearance of table glass and pewter dishes on the tables of the elite. By the end of the century these objects, alongside new ceramic tablewares, were increasingly within reach of more middling urban groups and yeoman farmers, and by the 15th century even the poorest were flavouring their foods, cooking in copper-alloy pots and boasted a range of eating and drinking vessels at their disposal. All of this made consumption a more engaging and complex sensory experience for every member of society.

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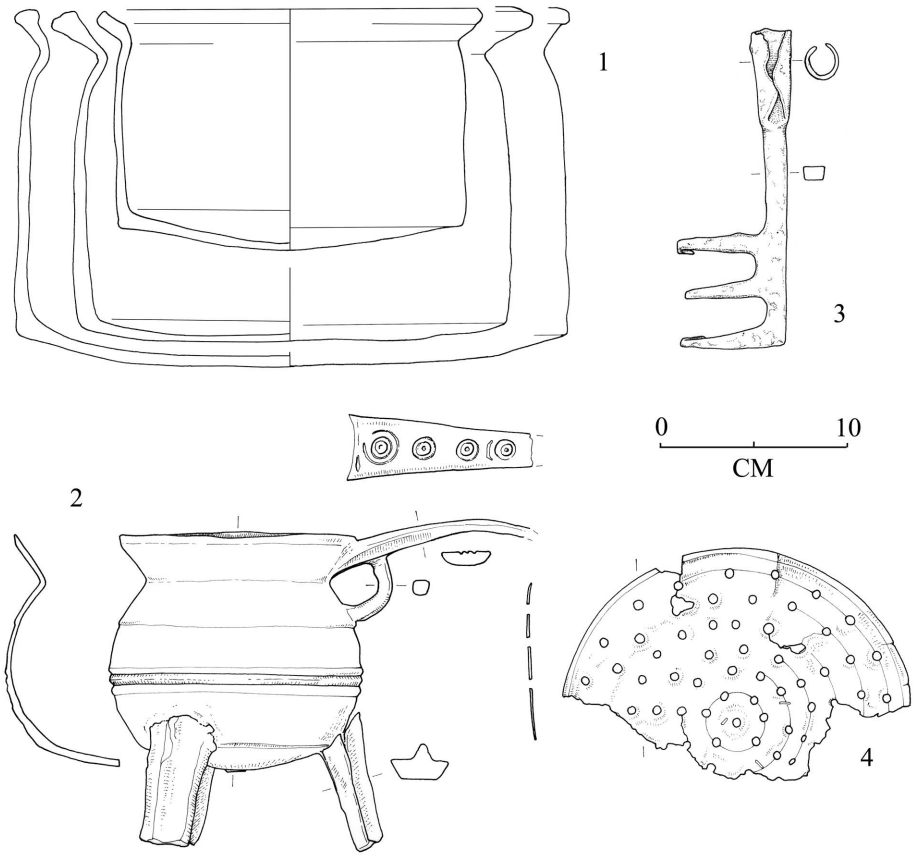

Figure 1

1) Ceramic cooking jars from Deansway, Worcester; 2) Copper-alloy skillet from Pottergate, Norwich; 3) Flesh hook from Pottergate, Norwich; 3) Skimmer from London

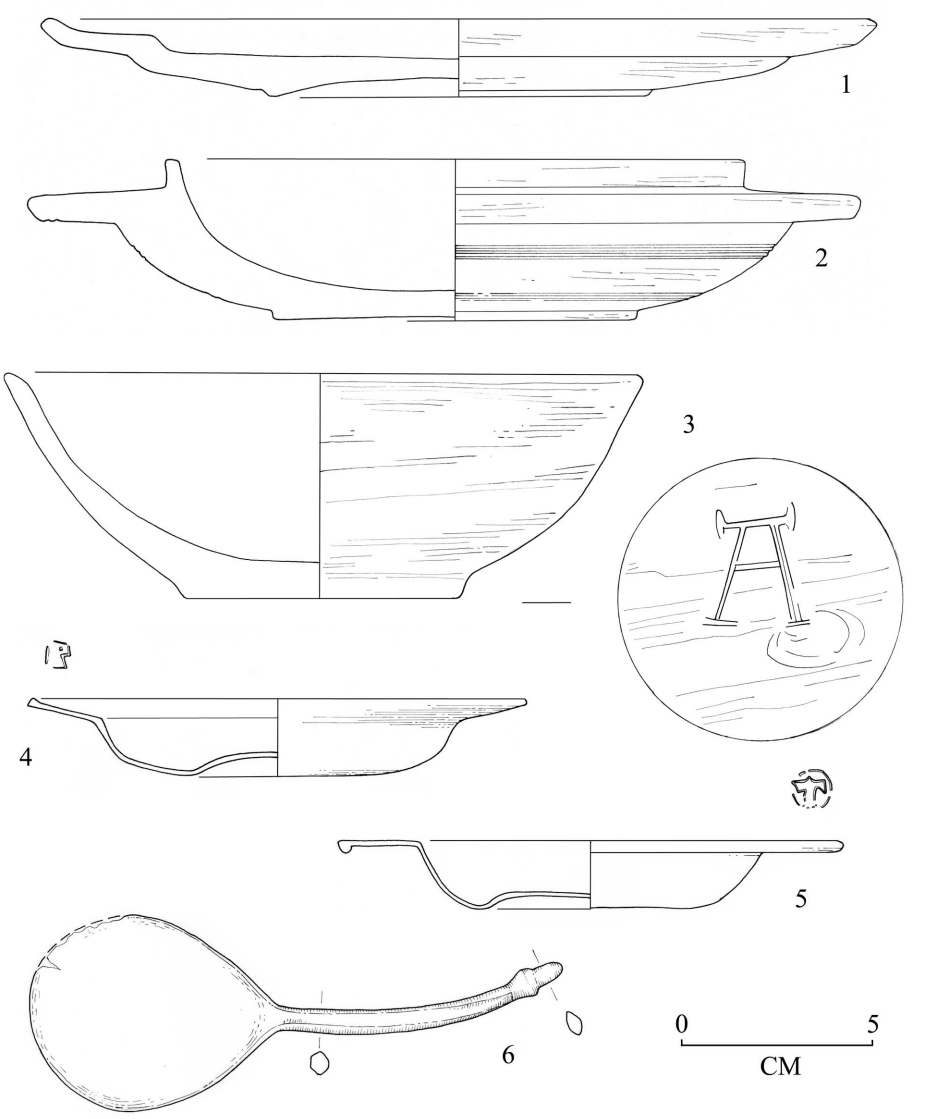

Figure 2

1–2) Wooden dishes from St Mary Spital, London; 3) Wooden Bowl from High Street Southampton; 4) Pewter saucer from Southampton; 5) Pewter saucer from Leicester Austin Friars; 6) Pewter spoon from Barentin's Manor**,** Oxfordshire

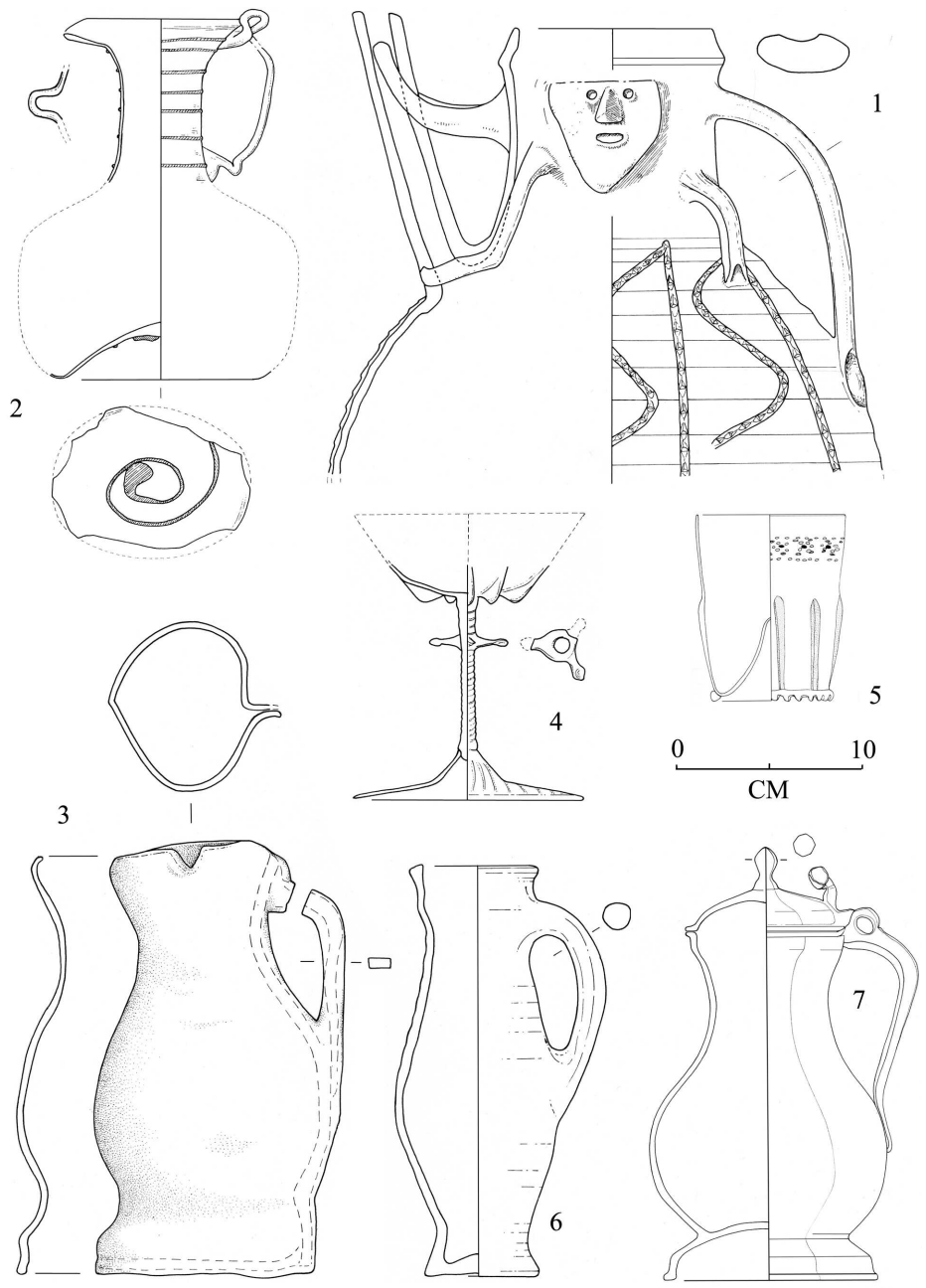

Figure 3

1) Glass jug from Southampton; 2) Ceramic ‘face jug’ from Hallgate, Doncaster; 3) Leather ‘black jack’ from Watling Street, London; 4) Glass goblet from High Street, Southampton; 5) Glass beaker from Southampton; 6) Ceramic drinking jug from Woolwich; 7) Pewter tankard from Tonbridge Castle, Kent