David R.M. Gaimster

THE BALTIC CERAMIC MARKET c.1200-1600: AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE HANSE[1]

Abstract

This paper extracts a series of key issues arising out of a survey of the Hanseatic ceramic market in the Baltic between c.1200-1600. Distributions and frequencies of individual wares across the region are seen to be less likely the result of purely commercial activities but rather the product of diverse cultural, ethnic, genealogical and social dynamics which link urban communities and families around the Baltic littoral and beyond. Ceramics, as gabled brick architecture or carved wooden altarpieces, were used as an active medium of affiliation and cultural identity by Hanseatic mercantile communities in the region. The introduction, adoption and local replication of western European ceramic products reflect the migration and embrace of Hanseatic urban lifestyles, particularly in the spheres of dining practice, heating tradition and interior decoration. Case-studies on German stoneware, lead-glazed red earthenware vessels and stove-tiles as well as luxury products such as decorated stoneware and painted maiolica provide indices of the complex *horizontal* and *vertical* networks which articulated Hanseatic society in Baltic. The diverse distributions of western European ceramic imports and the evidence for the migration of redware and stove-tile production into the region reflect the extent to which the medieval Baltic towns were not only ports of trade but also major centres of consumption and manufacture. The dynamic picture emerging through a new cycle of urban excavation in the region is beginning to challenge the previously asymmetrical histories of the Hanseatic town provided by traditional documentary sources.

Keywords: Baltic, Hanse, trade, urban archaeology, consumption, social networks, acculturation, identity and resistance, ceramics: lead-glazed redware, German stoneware, stove-tiles, maiolica.

David R.M. Gaimster, Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, GB.
E-mail: dgaimster@british-museum.ac.uk

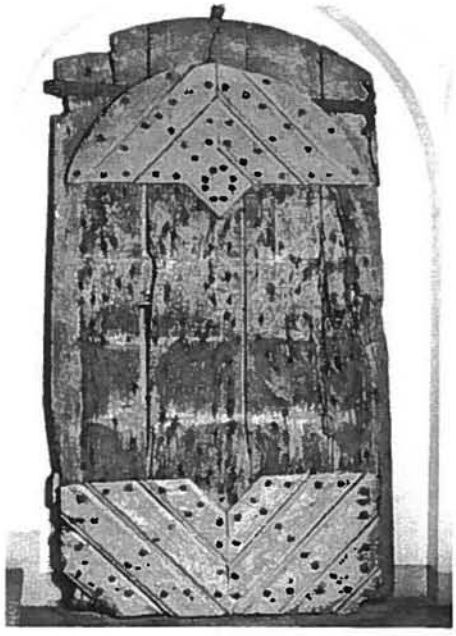
INTRODUCTION

The Hanse formed the principal agent of trade and exchange in northern Europe and the Baltic during the medieval to early modern period. The origin of this confederation of German cities can be traced back to the foundation of Lübeck in 1158. In the wake of conquest by the Teutonic Order, German merchants rapidly colonised the lands to the east during the course of the following century and founded such towns as Rostock, Stralsund, Danzig and Riga. Hanseatic trade reached its zenith during the 14th to 15th centuries with the foundation of permanent trading posts or *Kontore* at Novgorod in the east, Bergen in the north, and at London and Bruges in the west. Together they formed a dynamic economic and cultural network which stretched the length and breadth of Europe and beyond.

Lübeck provided the principal engine for the North Sea-Baltic trade network. Russian and Livonian forest goods such as pelts, wax, pitch, tar and ashes, Prussian timber and amber and, increasingly grain from Mecklenburg and Pomerania - some of it already converted into flour, malt and beer - all passed through Lübeck on the main trading route which stretched between the two *Kontore* of Novgorod and Bruges. From the west, by sea via Hamburg came cloth and engraved

Fig. 1. Oak door, Skanör parish church, Falsterbo-Skanör, Scania, at the mouth of the Baltic. The outer surface is carved with the marks of Hanseatic merchants visiting the peninsula, the site of the international herring fairs during the late Middle Ages. The door dates to the 14th century, the merchants marks from the 14th to early 16th centuries. Courtesy of Lund University Historical Museum (inv. 21065b).

grave slabs from Flanders, carved and painted wooden altarpieces from northern Germany, metalwares from Westphalia, and Spanish, French and Rhenish wines and spices via the Flanders-Mediterranean connection. Swedish iron and copper reached Lübeck along with Norwegian stockfish and Scanian herring. With the Baltic being low in salinity, Lübeck profited from the regional salt trade, distributing rock salt (the 'white gold' used in the preservation of fish and other foodstuffs) from the Lüneburg salt mines. The Hanseatic trading system which had emerged by the late 13th century drew the west, the east and the north of the Continent together by acting as a intermediary for the exchange of goods between two very different patterns of production in the east (raw materials) and the west (finished / semi-finished goods) and by stimulating the wider long-distance market. Besides their geographical position, a new type of ship, the cog - developed around 1200 - enabled the Hanseatic merchants to



maintain economic superiority over the Continent for centuries. It was bigger, deeper and more stable than previous models, and at around 200-300 tons, could carry two to three times the cargo. But perhaps even more influential in the growing economic dominance of the Hanseatic League, more so than geographical advantage or technological superiority, were the social, or rather genealogical, links which developed between trading partners, and towns and families the length and breadth of Europe. By way of illustration, the many hundreds of merchants marks carved into the 14th- century door of Skanör parish church, located on the Falsterbo-Skanör peninsula at the mouth of the Baltic, form a dramatic witness to the seasonal migration of Hanseatic merchants from around Europe to the Scanian herring fairs over two centuries (Fig. 1). The movement of raw and processed material and finished goods inevitably also necessitated the to and fro of people. In addition to traders, wholesalers and retailers, members of the aristocracy, administrators, soldiers, churchmen and crucially craftsmen - altarpiece carvers or potters - were prepared to migrate long distances, the latter with the prospect of exploiting new markets for their products.

Hanseatic urban settlements in northern Europe shared many things in common, not only in their commercial function, but also in their language (Middle Low German being the *lingua franca* of the Baltic and North Sea region) and their cultural and ethnic identity. Recently art historians have begun to talk in defining terms of an identifiable Hanseatic cosmopolitanism which was articulated physically through a shared vocabulary of townscape, public building, church layout (designed as much for business meetings as for the veneration of the Saints), architectural style (*Backsteingotik*), and through common design in the visual arts, particularly in the ecclesiastical sphere. Here carved and painted altarpieces endowed by leading merchant families or guilds, carved bench- and pew-ends, monumental grave slabs and baptismal fonts and doors in cast bronze all allude to the shared religious and social values of the urban bourgeois elite (Binding 1973; Tauch 1973; Schildhauer 1985; Zaske & Zaske 1986; Jaacks 1989).

But what of the private sphere behind the gabled facade of the merchant house ? So little of the Hanse's cultural historiography has been concerned with the routines of everyday life and nature of social dynamics within the medieval trading town. Where this question of domestic comfort in the Hanseatic urban household has been considered, the emphasis has inevitably been restricted to museum survivals of precious and base-metalware, textiles or furniture (Hasse 1979). Surely excavation has the potential to reconfigure this essentially asymmetrical picture, particularly the question of a shared material culture in the home which may be reflected in eating and dining ritual and in styles of interior arrangement and decoration: both physical and mental indices used today by ethnographers and archaeologists to define cultural attitudes and identity among complex societies (Wiegelmann 1996; Stephan 1996). However, despite the obvious wealth of the excavated resource, urban archaeologists working in the Baltic and North Sea regions have traditionally declined to discuss the relevance of their evidence to such culture-historical issues, preferring the safe objectivity of the excavated record and its facts and figures. The two published manuals of German medieval archaeology (Fehring 1991; and Felgenhauer-Schmiedt 1995) do not even refer to the Hanse, an omission which implies that medieval Europe's greatest economic and cultural phenomenon is archaeologically irrelevant or perhaps that archaeologists are ill equipped to consider their evidence within a historical context. My question at the outset of this study of Hanseatic culture in the Baltic concerned the degree to which archaeological finds, particularly ceramics with their short lifespan, ubiquity on the ground and distribution across diverse social contexts, could be cross-examined as *Kulturträger* in their own right alongside gabled brick architecture and ecclesiastical fittings. Indeed, would excavated artefacts illustrate parallel, complementary or even conflicting aspects of social behaviour ? While it is unrealistic to reconstruct the incomings and outgoings of the international trade through sherds of pottery, the identification of imported wares have the potential to provide a physical measure of cultural contacts between regions and of the migration and adoption of alien values and domestic practices. In contrast to the documentary record of Hanseatic trade links in the Baltic, it is through excavation and the resulting material record that we are able to quantify and qualify the degree to which Hanseatic 'lifestyles' penetrated urban communities across the region.

In addition to the question of international trade, the Hanse in the Baltic also provides a historical framework in which to examine the behavioural dynamics which articulated the urban populations in the medieval North. In particular it highlights the social networks which determine patterns of consumption, competition and lifestyle, technological and stylistic diffusion, identity and ideology. These networks may take several forms,

notably *vertical* (as with interactions between socially exclusive individuals or groups in hierarchical societies) or *horizontal* links (as in the case of kinship relations or commercial contacts). Such networks are often used actively in order to implement particular social, economic or cultural strategies (Verhaeghe 1998, 282). Surely these are the pressures with their related 'information flows' that influence behaviour and so frame the archaeological patterning, whether in the spread of house forms or in the composition of domestic refuse. Needless to say, the social networks are implicit in so many urban archaeological reports but rarely examined directly or used as an investigative tool. The project outlined here has offered the opportunity to test the strength of these relationships among Baltic Hanseatic communities through the intrasite and intersite comparison of ceramic assemblages both within and outside the strictly urban sphere.

THE BALTIC CERAMIC MARKET c.1200-1600

The data-collection phase of this project, begun while resident as a research fellow at the Institute of Archaeology, University of Lund, in 1995 and funded by the Swedish Institute, British Academy, Society of Antiquaries of London and the Nordenstedt Foundation of Sweden, coincided with an intensive phase of redevelopment in towns around the Baltic rim, particularly in the former Soviet zone of the eastern and southern Baltic. Rapid redevelopment has resulted in an unprecedented archaeological archive of everyday life in the Hanseatic town and its hinterland. As well as its urban character, it is undeniable that the Baltic was a maritime culture. Each of its major trading settlements look towards the sea for its economic survival and cultural identity. Excavations within harbours and the recording of shipwrecks along the Baltic coast have produced a series of important time capsules which provide a vital chronological control of the terrestrial sequence. Summarizing several seasons of fieldwork in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, the Baltic States, Poland and North Germany, this paper offers some preliminary observations on the character and impetus for the Hanseatic pottery market in the Baltic between the 13th and 16th centuries (Gaimster 1999a, b and c; Gaimster forthc.b and c; Gaimster in prep.). It draws on a number of key ceramic products found in towns, castles and monasteries across the region, notably mass-produced stoneware and and luxury maiolica imports in addition to highly decorated red earthenware and stove-tiles, both imported and manufactured close to the emerging markets.

Highly decorated red earthenware

The development of towns along the Baltic littoral during the course of the 13th century stimulated a demand for high quality ceramic tableware suited to the needs of urban living and social competition. Initially imports of highly decorated lead-glazed redwares from the North Sea coast of Flanders and The Netherlands satisfied the demand at the expense of imports from England or western France, the Bruges kilns of c.1200-1350 probably being the epicentre of the industry (Verhaeghe 1989). But the discovery of a series of Low Countries-type redware production centres along the Öresund spanning the Danish islands of Funen and Zealand and the coastline of western Scania, at Lübeck and at Parkentin, outside Doberan on the Mecklenburg coast, producing typologically and technologically indistinguishable wares suggests the movement of western European workshops into the southern Baltic region (Barton 1968; Madsen 1983; Baart 1994; Schäfer 1994; Gaimster 1998; 1999a; in prep). Imported and regionally produced redwares appearing in denrochronologically secure contexts of the second and third quarters of the 13th-century in ports stretching from Rostock to Novgorod (Schäfer 1997a and 1997b; Guidakov 1997; Gaimster forthc.b), suggest parallel production and the emergence of interregional competition for the regional urban tableware market during this period. Quantitatively their impact can be seen, for instance, at Kolobrzeg (Kolberg) in Pomerania where highly decorated redwares account for an average 8% of all ceramics found in 13th to mid-14th- century contexts (Rebkowski 1995, 131). Chemical analysis using the Neutron Activation technique (NAA) by the British Museum Department of Scientific Research of samples from production and consumer-sites has been able to separate the diverse sources of redware found across the region, making a clear trace-elemental distinction between the Low Counties imports and local production (Hughes in prep.). The manufacture of lead-glazed polychrome redware jugs based on Low Counties prototypes provides the first instance of potters moving their location in order to better exploit new markets. The raw materials for low-fired redware production being fairly ubiquitous in this case, it was possible to move the technology and working practices nearer to the point of consumption where the end product was already familiar.

German stoneware

In terms of numbers, however, the mid to late-13th century Baltic ceramic sequence is dominated by the growing competition provided by the early stoneware bodies developed in the Rhineland. Although more utilitarian in appearance, the early 'proto'-stonewares were by technologically superior to the lower fired earthenwares. 'Proto'-stoneware jugs and beakers were fired to between 1000-1100°C and had a porosity value of around 5% (Gaimster 1997, Chapter 2.2). Their robustness enabled traders to transport them in bulk over long distances. By the final quarter of the 13th century these products were widespread and had penetrated the Sound and even as far as the furthest reaches of the northern Baltic as the finds of Siegburg proto-stoneware jugs on the Lapuri island shipwreck in the southern Finnish archipelago illustrate (Gaimster 1999c).

The rapid development of the fully fused stoneware body fired to between 1200 and 1400°C (with a porosity value of 0.4%) in the Rhineland and Lower Saxony at the beginning of the 14th century coincides and appears to be a direct consequence of the growth of urban populations in northern Europe (Gaimster 1997, Chapter 2.2). Besides the technological achievement of the body which, impervious, stainless and odour free, revolutionized so many domestic activities from washing up to preserving food, the increasingly varied repertoire of forms over the 14th to 15th centuries reflects the multiple drinking, decanting, transport, storage and sanitary needs of town dwellers across the Continent north of the Alps. Intensive workshop production, stimulated directly by growing demand on the urban markets of northern Europe, resulted in a relatively low cost to the consumer and the ability to reach a wide spectrum of the population (Gaimster 1997, Chapter 3.3). By 1350 highly decorated redwares had all but disappeared from the Baltic market due to the pressure from German stoneware (Gaimster 1999a, b). Stoneware captured a niche in the popular tableware market of northern Europe, enabling the aspiring middle classes to imitate aristocratic drinking and dining practices in a less expensive medium, substituting precious and base metalware and drinking glasses with a fine-bodied ceramic which imitated their role (Gaimster 1997, Chapter 4.4). Perhaps then, in view of its wide penetration of the international pottery market, German stoneware may be regarded as a type-fossil of mercantile or 'Hanseatic' urban culture, a unique class of *Kulturträger* which linked consumers irrespective of means from London to Novgorod and beyond (Gaimster 1993; 1997, Chapter 3.3; 1998; 1999b; for Novgorod see Rybina 1978, pls. 10 & 11).

Cross-examination of ceramic profiles generated by town, castle, monastery and harbour excavation across the Baltic zone revels a graphic picture of the intense rivalry for sales between regional German producers between the early 14th and 16th centuries (Gaimster 1999a). Although numerically dominant from the beginning of production, Siegburg, the principal Rhenish producer situated on the Sieg, a tributary of the Rhine, faced increasing competition from stonewares made in the Weser-Leine delta of Lower Saxony in Northern Germany, and from the beginning of the 15th century from wares made in the Siegburg style in Waldenburg on the Mulde, a tributary of the Elbe in Saxony. The Rhenish and Lower Saxon wares would have been transported around the Danish peninsula and through the Sound into the Baltic, whereas the Waldenburg products may have been able to exploit the Elbe and nearby Oder rivers, direct into the Baltic. The 31,500+ vessels and sherds excavated in 1933/4 from the harbour of the royal Swedish fortress town and castle at Kalmar on the South-east coast of Sweden, provides a quantitative reference for the southern Baltic pottery market between the 13th and mid-17th centuries after which the city was relocated (Fig. 2). Out of the 885 German stoneware vessels of 14th to 15th-century date, 68% could be ascribed to Siegburg, 21% to Lower Saxony, 9% to Waldenburg, 2% to Langerwehe and Raeren and 1% to other stoneware sources (Elfwendahl & Gaimster 1995). The overwhelming numbers of complete or near-intact vessels found on the Kalmar harbour front probably represent losses associated with wharfside loading operations. In southern Sweden the distribution of Continental imports is limited to urban sites or castles. The concentrations in Kalmar may be explained by the relatively high numbers of alien names recorded as resident in the city. During the late 14th century, for instance, one third of out of a total of 2000 family names listed as resident in the city were German in origin (Selling 1982, 45-48).

Pending confirmation from chemical analysis, Saxony is the likely source for a series of high-quality stoneware goblets and jugs of 15th-century date found across the study zone. These elaborate wares with their applied plastic ornament and intricate geometric rouletting are found in small quantities but enjoy an extensive distribution on merchant houses and elite residences alike (Gaimster 1999a, fig.5). The twelve vessels excavated from a context of c.1460-80 at the royal palace of Buda, Budapest, and a vessel from a destruction horizon of 1492 in Olomouc (Ölmutz), Bohemia, pro-

Fig. 2. Medieval ceramics including highly decorated redwares from the Low Countries and the southern Baltic, stoneware from western Germany and local greywares excavated from Kalmar harbour, South East Sweden, 1933/ 4. Courtesy of Kalmar läns museum.

vide a circulation span for the group (Gaimster 1997, 282-284). In contrast to the intensity of the trade in the more utilitarian undecorated stoneware during the 15th century, the so-called *Falke Gruppe* stoneware, with its widespread but numerically sparse and socially restricted distribution across the Baltic region, may perhaps only best understood in the light of *vertical* – as well as *horizontal* - social networks (see above; Verhaeghe 1998). The relatively high number of castles and monasteries represented in the archaeological distribution reflect the social premium attached to these products. The low frequency of medieval Iberian lustreware and Renaissance maiolica from central Italy and the South Netherlands provides a mirror image of the *Falke Gruppe* stoneware distribution in the region.(Gaimster 1999a, fig.6; Falk and Gaimster in prep.). Individual finds of these luxury Mediterranean-style ceramics on castle sites emphasise the exclusive nature of these wares among Baltic elite of the medieval to early modern period; equally urban finds reflect the competitive nature of the mercantile communities at this time (Gaimster forthc.b). However, in contrast the widespread dense distribution of imported maiolica into southern Britain during the early 16th century(Gaimster and Nenk 1997, 175-176; Hurst 1999), the Baltic pattern may also reflect an element of resistance among German mercantile communities to unfamiliar southern and western European dining and drinking habits represented by this revolutionary new medium (Gaimster 1999d).

In addition to the overall quantitative measure, individual finds often form an invaluable qualitative test of the extent to which German stoneware was valued by expatriate consumers in the region. Excavations just before the Second World War in St James's Street, Tartu (Dorpat), Estonia, produced a standard Siegburg

Fig. 3. Part of the side panel of the Schonenfahrer *altarpiece dedicated to St John, completed by Bernt Notke in 1475. The panel shows John the Baptist anointing Christ with a contemporary Rhenish stoneware funnel-necked beaker. The North German* Schonenfahrer *trading company was involved closely in the seasonal Scanian herring markets which formed an important a transhipment point for the trade in German stoneware to the Baltic. Courtesy of the Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck (inv. I.N. 1927/7/8).*

stoneware beaker of the 15th century inside its original boiled and elaborately tooled leather cover (Gaimster 1999b, fig.3a and b). The embellishment of a nominally cheap and replaceable stoneware vessel with an expensively decorated cover, in this case *cuir boulli* leather, recalls the common English practice of embellishing adding silver or pewter mounts to imported stoneware during the late 15th to early 17th centuries (Gaimster 1997, Chapter 4.4). The symbolic value attached to imported stoneware in the Baltic zone during the late Middle Ages can also be observed in the contemporary iconographic record. A Rhenish stoneware beaker of the Tartu type can be seen in the hand of John the Baptist as he anoints Christ in the painted side-panel of Bernt Notke's *Schonenfahrer* altarpiece of 1475 commissioned by the Lübeck trading company engaged in the Scanian herring trade (Gaimster 1997, fig.4.45) (Fig. 3). The choice of stoneware appears to be deliberate. While lending to the authenticity of the scene, the impervious stain-free and odourless body emphasizes the sanctity of the baptismal act (Gaimster 1997, Chapter 4.5). A further instance of the liturgical use of stoneware in a Hanseatic context may be seen in two mid-15th-century painted panels depicting scenes from the *Golden Legend* on the altar shrine by Hans Borneman originally intended for Heiligental Abbey, Lower Saxony, and now in the Church of St Nicholas, Lüneburg. Siegburg stoneware *Jacobakanne* jugs, contemporary with the date of the altarpiece, are held by St Andrew baptising Maximilla and by Laurence baptising Lucillus.

Redware stove-tiles

The archaeological evidence for the introduction of the smokeless ceramic tile-stove into the Baltic forms a further quantitative and qualitative measure of the adoption of Hanseatic lifestyle by the region's urban communities (Blomqvist 1936; Gaimster 1993; 1998; 1999a and b). As in the case of stoneware, lead-glazed earthenware stoves contributed not only to a technological transformation of the domestic environment but also, with the development from the mid-15th century onwards of coloured glazes and moulded relief, introduced a new visual and iconographic element into the home. Much of the design repertoire was selected to appeal directly to the tastes and sensibilities of the region's urban burgher classes. Scenes from the lives of the Holy Family and the Saints based directly on the carved wooden altar shrines of churches were replaced during the Reformation by the secular iconography of coats-of-arms and portrait busts of the region's rulers and religious leaders. As with relief-decorated stoneware, the ceramic stove provided a visual medium for the introduction of new attitudes and beliefs to penetrate the domestic sphere. Once again long-distance social and cultural networks appear to be at work behind the archaeological distributions in town and country.

Earthenware stove-tiles, in contrast to stoneware, were a fragile product and risky to transport over long distances. Although it is possible to identify rare instances of North or central German whiteware imported into southern Scandinavia, such as the ornate polychrome stove of early 16th-century date found in the centre of Lund, Scania (Wahlöö 1974), it is clear from the number and distribution of production sites and from analysis of the fabrics that most stoves made in the Baltic region were manufactured locally, often with the use of moulds imported from northern and central Germany. However, it is difficult in view of the substantial quantities of production debris, to interpret local manufacture solely in terms of the opportunistic use of

traded moulds. More realistically, and following the model for 13th-century redware, production on this scale may be explained by the movement of specialist craftsmen or even workshops around and across the Baltic rim. The documentary evidence for German tilemakers (*pottomakare*) settling in Lund, Malmö, Kalmar in Sweden and Turku in Finland from the mid-16th century illustrates the extent to which Continental craftsmen were attracted by the prospect of new markets opening up in the North (Gaimster 1999b for summary).

This network of demand and the migration of production is most evident in the series of rectangular pre-Reformation niche- and panel-tiles moulded in relief with biblical figures and scenes surrounded by architectural and botanical ornament derived from church altarpiece carving. A workshop assemblage of moulds and wasters was found in the centre of Lübeck in 1939 (Hasse 1969, cat.339; Strauss 1972, pls.77-79). The format of the moulds, their border ornament and their design repertoire of scenes drawn from the Life of Christ and the lives of the Saints compare closely to the moulds found alongside production waste in the Norrmalm district on the outskirts of medieval Stockholm (Ambrosiani 1910, figs. 55-56; Strauss 1972, pls.102, 104; Gaimster 1999b; and in prep.) Recent excavations in the cellar of a late 15th-century house on the Pläterstrasse in Rostock produced moulds and wasters contemporary with the Lübeck Fischergrube site (Gaimster & Burrows forthc.). Both the Rostock and Lübeck assemblages contained matrix-identical moulds of the *Charity of St Martin* which suggests that the workshops were themselves linked. A further find of matrix-identical mould among pottery waste in the centre of Greifswald (Heiko Schäfer pers.comm) suggests the development of satellite workshops along the coast of Mecklenburg, their advantageous location facilitating export to southern Scandinavia as finds of matrix -identical stove-tiles in Malmö indicate (Gaimster and Burrows forthcoming). The identification of matrix links and possible prototypes for the Rostock Pläterstrasse tile moulds in Hungary, Switzerland and the Upper Rhineland hints at the extent of Hanseatic commercial and cultural networks which were instrumental in the origin of this Baltic craft industry. The design of several of the main Rostock moulds corresponds to tiles which form the ornate tower-stoves of the royal palace of Buda, Budapest, commissioned by the Habsburg Kings Ladislas V and Martinus Corvinus of Hungary between the 1450s and 1480s (Gaimster & Burrows forthc. for discussion). Although an industry with an urban base, in the Baltic sea area, it is significant that castles and monastic sites are responsible for the greatest concentrations of finds of this type. Of these the Danish royal castle of Falsterbo on the southern tip of the Falsterbo-Skanör peninsula, overlooking the Öresund, has generated the largest single consumer assemblage of ornate relief-mouled niche-tiles of pre-Reformation date in the region. Among hundreds of fragments it has been possible to identify around ten or more individual figurative relief panels (Gaimster forthc.c; in prep.).

The strengthening of the German cultural connection with the Baltic is also evident in the series of quadrangular panel-tiles inset with portrait roundels which were produced and traded across the region form the second quarter of the 16th century. Tiles moulded with medallic and woodcut-based representations of the leading protagonists of the Lutheran Reformation have a wide archaeological distribution, the secular personality cults suiting the new attitudes and values of the Baltic mercantile communities (Blomqvist 1936; Gaimster 1999b). The production of portrait medallion tiles of Johann Friedrich, Elector of Saxony, and the Landgrave Philip I of Hesse and their respective consorts, Sybille of Cleves and Christine of Saxony, coincide with the lifespan of the Schmalkaldic League of Protestant princes (c.1530-47). Moulds of portrait tiles with Johann Friedrich and Sybille found among wasters on the Marlesgrube, Lübeck (Metzger 1900, pl.I), are matrix-identical to tiles found as far north as Stockholm and Turku (Bergh 1953; and Kirsi Majantie pers. comm.). Here in the capital of the Swedish province of Finland the recovery of the tiles belonging to the same portrait series in both castle and town presents an opportunity to examine the social emulation process in microcosm.

HANSEATIC LIFESTYLES: BETWEEN ARTEFACT AND TEXT ?

German stoneware and stove-tiles fulfilled dual utilitarian and social roles among the medieval to early modern mercantile communities in the Baltic Sea region. Beyond relics of complex distance trading mechanisms, their archaeological distributions provide a measure of the penetration and promotion of Hanseatic cultural codes and practices, notably in the sphere of dining culture and interior decoration. The success of these commodities hints at something more than long-distance commercial transactions and the transfer of technical expertise. Rather, the patterns of consumption

identified reflect a brand loyalty element and something of the embedded cultural and possibly ethnic motivations which characterise the Hanseatic mercantile communities on the Baltic rim. In a phrase, the material evidence points to a proto-colonial scenario comparable to early European contact sites in North America and the Caribbean where settlers asserted their affiliations, subculture, class, religion and ethnicity through the active use of material culture (Orser Jr. 1996, 56-66; Deagan 1988; Verhaeghe 1998, 290). This ethnic factor in ceramic consumption - as opposed to purely commercial motivations - is discernible in the biased spatial distribution of imported wares within the Hanseatic mercantile *Kontore* such as London and Novgorod. In both cases, finds of imported German stonewares are concentrated in or close by those areas known to have supported alien merchant populations. In the case of London, the Southwark waterfront parish of St Olaves, where some 350 *Doche* immigrants were recorded as living between 1440 and 1540, has produced some of the most substantial deposits of Rhenish and Low Countries earthenware in the metropolis (Gaimster 1993; Gaimster and Nenk 1997, 172); and in the case of Novgorod, the medieval imports are restricted overwhelmingly to the market side of the river Volkhov and to those sites closest to the Gotlanders' Quarter founded in the late 12th century and to the Court of St Peter, the German Hanseatic enclave established by 1229 (Gaimster forthc. b). Here we can discern very little trace of cultural interchange between host and alien community within the urban ceramic profile. As wood continued to form the key medium for dining and drinking in Novgorod, ceramics - notably reduced greywares - were restricted for use in the kitchen sphere. Only the resident mercantile community appears to have utilized and disposed of highly decorated redware and fully fused stoneware from western Europe and the southern Baltic region. Despite individual greyware copies of Rhenish stoneware bowls and one small waster assemblage of lead-glazed redware of mid-13th-century date from the Duboshin quarter located on the Market side of the river, there seems to have been widespread resistance among the native population to adopting Hanseatic ceramic technology or material lifestyles (ibid.).

The Hanse provides both a vital historical context and an analytical tool with which to investigate the urban archaeological record in northern Europe (Gaimster forthc. a). It is by necessity an interdisciplinary field of study combining documentary, archaeological, architectural, iconographic sources along with - in the case of ceramics - scientific techniques which complement each other and do not merely supplement the gaps in the documentary narrative. Each source sets its own strategies within a common and recursive research agenda (Moreland 1998; Andrén 1998, Chapter 6). The archaeology of the Hanse offers the prospect of investigating some of the key attributes of pre-industrial European society on an inter-site and regional comparative basis. Such a list might include the development of mercantile capitalism, urbanism, social stratification, colonialism, Europeanisation, acculturation and technological and stylistic diffusion, adoption and resistance. In the past historians of the Hanse have concentrated almost totally on the 'real business' of documents recording the incomings and outgoings of Baltic and North Sea ports. Archaeology has yet to make a significant impact on this discourse. Due to the rapid physical redevelopment of town centres on the Baltic littoral, archaeologists now have the chance to set their own agenda for the people, the families and the lifestyle that created this unique environment and the motivation for long-distance trade. It is hoped that Hanse studies will become less of a monologue but a dialogue between disciplines, whereby archaeologists contribute to creating an ideological and cultural framework sorely lacking to date in the text-based discussions of Hanseatic society.

In 1989 the Hamburg Museum for History hosted a major international exhibition on the history of the Hanse. The exhibition and accompanying two volume catalogue entitled *Die Hanse. Lebenswirklichkeit und Mythos* (Hamburg 1989) was organised and written entirely by Hanse historians. Although the show contained thousands of artefacts and works of art, none of them could be described as anything more than museological curiosities or anecdotes designed to help pace otherwise dry discussions of civic foundation, legal status and grain quotas. The exhibition omitted any discussion of how archaeology has tested and transformed our knowledge of the Hanseatic town. Ten years on there remains a nagging fear that if this exhibition were to be restaged today, the artefacts and the buildings would still count for little more than quaint visual interludes in the historical monolith that is the Hanseatic League. More often than not medieval archaeologists are their own worst enemy. But, as many have argued, artefacts are not just statistics but are texts in their own right. In order to decode them it will also be advisable to look closer at the *horizontal* and *vertical* networks operating within Hanseatic society, particularly the cultural and ethnic factors, which determine the ar-

chaeological patterning. Perhaps it is in the tensions between artefact and text, reality and myth, that the true value of an archaeological approach to the Hanse lies?

NOTES

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