A Scallop-Shell Ampulla from Caistor
and Comparable Pilgrim Souvenirs

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The small leaden flask or ampulla depicted in Fig. XXI a and b was found during building operations at Caistor in 1966. The body of the ampulla is decorated on the front with a scallop-shell and on the back with a chevron surrounded by two concentric circles. Angular handles are set at each side of the neck. The mouth, which originally would have been sealed by pinching and bending the lips together, appears to have been cut open with a sharp tool.

The ampulla was designed to contain a drop of the holy water that was dispensed at many medieval shrines and holy wells. It would have been worn either on the hat or around the neck as the mark of an accomplished pilgrimage, identifying its owner as one to whom certain courtesies and privileges were due. It would also have provided its owner with easily recognisable proof, when such was needed by his employer or his sponsor and, at times of political unrest, by the government, that he had fulfilled his intentions and not misused his absence. More important still, the pilgrim now owned a miniature flask of miracle-working liquid. This he would continue to keep as a talisman and, if the need for a remedy arose, would use the contents as a draught or lotion for his own good or for the welfare of those about him. Miracle books contain many instances of the successful use of water from pilgrims' ampullae for curing the sick, for reviving the dead and for bringing about a variety of other astonishing feats.

Ampullae were known to pilgrims throughout the medieval Christian world. Their use in England appears to have started in the last quarter of the twelfth century. From the early fourteenth century, however, they were far outnumbered by pilgrim badges, which offered better scope for eye-catching ornament and could be sold at shrines where health-giving water was not available. Both kinds of pilgrim souvenirs were normally cast in moulds of stone. But whereas badges were often sold by local shopkeepers or by certain craftsmen acting under licence from the church, ampullae seem to have been distributed at the shrine or well concerned or at the shop officially connected with it. It was the hope of establishing the place where Caistor's pilgrim obtained his ampulla that broadened this inquiry into an examination of other ampullae that might conceivably be related to it.
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The majority of the ampullae found in this country are of about the same size and shape as the one from Caistor. They are flask-shaped in outline and are equipped with two handles. Their decoration is generally very simple and the scallop-shell is one of two motifs that occur again and again. Ampullae bearing the scallop-shell fall into two categories. In the first, to which the Caistor specimen belongs, the shell-ornament is very similar to the escallip. Its boldly, radiating ribs produce a strongly corrugated surface. It is notched round the edges and has well-defined shoulders and angular handles resembling (perhaps fortuitously) the ears of the escallip (XXI a, e). On the reverse side of these ampullae are simple heraldic or quasi-heraldic emblems, on shields, as a rule. They include the chevron, the bend, the arms of Mortimer and what may be merchants' marks (XXI d, e, g, h).

In the second group the shell comes nearer to resembling the common edible cockle. The ribs are separated by fine grooves, the edges are smooth, the handles are normally less angular and there are no pronounced shoulders (XXI i, j). In addition, a horizontal band often appears at the junction of the neck and body of the flask. Ampullae of this second type have been encountered more frequently and their reverse sides offer a greater variety of motifs. These include the cross on a shield, crowns, crescent, (XXI m, n, s), and a shield bearing the chevron and in base a rondel. Most of them, however, have a single letter - the letter I, a crowned letter S and the letter R surmounted by an object resembling the lily in a vase as depicted in scenes of the Annunciation (XXI E, f). Several others are marked with the letter W usually with a crown above it (XXI o - r). The scallop-shell appears on both faces of an ampulla found at Ewerby, Lincs.

The scallop was the special emblem of St. James the Great, whose shrine at Compostella was famous throughout Christendom. Devotion to this saint was everywhere delineated in terms of the scallop-shell. St. James's priory at Northampton had its floor-tiles decorated with shells and pilgrim-staves; an inhabitant of Woolpit, Suffolk, made a stool 'coloord and garnyschyd wt scaleppa and other syngys of Seynt Jamys' before setting out for Compostella; a London hosier wore a girdle of scallops and arranged for the vicarious performance of a pilgrimage to the shrine. How the shell came to be used as the emblem of St. James was the subject of much fanciful speculation in the later Middle Ages. But whatever the explanation, there can be little doubt that the shell was the first pilgrim sign to have been developed as a money-making enterprise by a shrine in the west and it rapidly became and remained the most universally recognised of all pilgrim souvenirs.

Compostella was a powerful attraction to English pilgrims and the souvenirs that they brought back were either actual shells, usually drilled with a pair of holes for attachment or replicas in lead, jet or silver. A leaden shell bearing a representation of St. James is illustrated in XXI t. This badge, found in the Thames at London Bridge, is fitted with a pin, but others were provided with stitching-holes or with angular handles like those on the ampulla from Caistor. These shells, like other pilgrim souvenirs, were often cherished long after the completion of the pilgrimage. Cecily, duchess of York, kept a scallop-shell of jet among the sort of jewellery that befitted the mother of two kings, while as late as 1543 Joan Awdy, a widow of London, still owned 'a Seynt Jamys shell and a little cheneye to yr'. Others, following a fairly common practice, presented their shells to a church or to some object of devotion; 'a James schell of silver' was one of the offerings made to the coat of St. Sithe in the bridge chapel at Bridgnorth.

Yet, considering the enormous popularity of Compostella, very few scallop-shell badges have been found in this country. This bears out two observations that can be made about medieval pilgrim souvenirs generally. Documentary evidence on their production and sale makes it clear that only a minute proportion of a vast output has survived, while the distribution of finds demonstrates that, though many travelled enormous distances, the great
majority of souvenirs were taken home to places no more than one or two days' journey from the shrine concerned.

That so many scallop-shell ampullae should have been found in England and very few on the continent at once suggests, therefore, that they originated from a shrine or shrines in England, and not from Compostella. The same kind of argument from negative evidence applies to a different, though possibly related, group of pilgrim souvenirs — little spheres of delicate leaden tracery (XXI a) which, to judge from the only intact example, were designed to act as inexpensive reliquaries for an actual shell. The fragments of shell contained within this specimen, however, are not those of the scallop that the pilgrim could have expected to receive at Compostella. They are portions of the common cockle. Although it might have come from almost any shore in Western Europe, this shell is likely to have been the souvenir of an English shrine since the shell-reliquaries have been found exclusively in England, ten at King's Lynn and ten at London.

It is tempting, therefore, to look for a connection between the scallop-shell ampullae and, say, Reading Abbey, which had St. James as its patron and where his hand, the gift of Henry I, was preserved. Yet an ampulla recently excavated in a riverine deposit in Tooley Street, Southwark (near the foot of Old London Bridge) has the scallop-shell on one side and on the other the scene of Becket's martyrdom. Undoubtedly from Canterbury, this ampulla can be dated from both archaeological and stylistic evidence to the early thirteenth century. It thus belongs to the period when Canterbury water, unrivalled for its supposed healing properties, was being carried away in leaden ampullae as far as Scandinavia and when other English shrines were awakening to the importance of ampullae as a profitable side-line and as a means of advertising themselves. The form of the ampulla (XXI 6) is quite unlike the score of other Canterbury ampullae that survive from the thirteenth century. It also differs from both types of scallop-shell ampullae discussed above and probably anticipates them by at least a century; it is lighter in construction, its handles are set higher and the scallop is topped by a bearded face, perhaps a pilgrim's. But it illustrates conclusively how the shell could be a dominant feature of a pilgrim souvenir totally unconnected with the cult of St. James.

That popular usage had given the scallop-shell a more general significance is shown by persistent and clearly unavailing efforts of the archbishops of Compostella to limit its use to Compostella and to St. James. Just as St. James came to be regarded as the patron saint of pilgrims and was usually depicted in pilgrim's dress, so also his scallop-shell came to be looked upon as the emblem of pilgrimage itself and in illustrations of the later Middle Ages pilgrims, no matter where they had come from, are regularly shown with a scallop-shell to mark their identity. It was natural, therefore, that shrines other than Compostella, most notably Mont-Saint-Michel, should begin to incorporate this ubiquitous sign in the designs of their own pilgrim souvenirs. As it happened, the shell was a form of decoration well-suited to the ampulla-shape that became more or less standardised in England by the fourteenth century and its use possibly needed no further justification than that the shrine of origin was a well-known place of pilgrimage.

In the case of two ampullae found at Ipswich, the scallop-shell (type I) on one side is paired with a conventional flower on the other, while another shell (type II) is paired with a quatrefoil. This flower or leaf motif is, in turn, the feature common to another series of ampullae which must now be considered. The flower is either compass-drawn, with or without further elaboration (XXII a - c) or is drawn as a quatrefoil, often with additional leaves or petals in the interstices (XXII d - f) and sometimes developed into a barbed rosette. Many designs that accompany the flower are identical with motifs depicted on the backs of scallop-shell ampullae. For example, there are crowns (XXII e, f), the crowned letter W, the crowned S (XXII c, d), and crescents, one of them, from Saltfleet, Linns, clasping a flower and another a chevron on a shield (XXII g, h). Though different heraldic devices occur, such as the arms of Clare (XXII i), the chevron appears yet again and in this case surmounts a letter W (XXII l).
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Occasionally motifs used in conjunction with the shell or flower (or with both) are coupled
with one another. An ampulla from Bury St. Edmunds has the crown on one side and on
the other a shield of arms (XXII a) very similar to that used on a scallop-shell ampulla from
Conwil Cayo. On another from London the crown is combined with a letter W within two
concentric circles. Another ampulla, late fifteenth-century and costrel-shaped, has the
chevron, four other ordinaries and a sixth shield charged with the letter W (XXII m, n).

In short, almost all the frequently recurring themes in the decoration of these ampullae
- the scallop-shell, the flower, the chevron, the letter W, the crown and the crescent - are in
particular instances linked with one another. Since almost by definition travel souvenirs of
any age might be expected to commemorate their places of origin in some distinctive way,
it would seem reasonable to suppose that all these ampullae, with their apparent interconnec-
tions, originated from a single source. The difficulty about this is that some devices appear
to be mutually exclusive. If, for example, we take the four different letters depicted on the
ampullae as the initials of particular saints (and the use of saints' initials was common both
for pilgrim badges and in other contexts), then it would be next to impossible to account for
the veneration in one spot of four saints, any of whose names could be applied to the same
healing water.

Beyond this, there is the difficulty that all the motifs, being essentially the product of folk
art, are enigmatically simple. If, as we must assume, the motifs were significant in the popu-
lar imagery and shorthand of the time, and were not purely decorative, selected at random
from the mould-maker’s knowledge of elementary patterns, then they are far too cryptic to
convey an unequivocal meaning to us now. Ampullae with the letter R could be attributed
to many saints - St. Rumbald, for instance, whose shrine at Buckingham and whose well at
Brackley, Northants, were attractions well-known to pilgrims; but it is doubtful if any attribu-
tion could also satisfactorily account for the association of the Annunciation lily-pot with the
letter R unless it is assumed that the letter stood for a place, such as Reepham (Norfolk),
that possessed a famous image of the Virgin. The combination of the letter S and a crown
is seemingly more straightforward, the choice being limited perhaps to a saint of royal birth
like St. Sexburga.

Most of the heraldic shields are bafflingly vague. The few arms that can be linked with
a particular family, such as the Mortimers, are possibly to be explained as special commissions;
household and privy purse accounts show that royal and noble pilgrims sometimes had pilgrim
souvenirs made to order for themselves and their followers. Many of the other devices, like
the chevron of the Caistor ampulla, may have no heraldic significance, for medieval crafts-
men often used heraldic motifs solely as decoration, though colour and painted charges may
originally have given meaning to them. Two instances have been mentioned, however, in
which the chevron was used in conjunction with the letter W, and as no fewer than ten ampullae
bear this letter, it is perhaps to them that we should pin our hopes of ascertaining a likely
provenance.

The W is usually crowned and, like the large crown depicted on many other ampullae,
suggests that they are to be connected with a saint of royal blood. This would rule out St.
Winifred, for example, whose healing waters at Holywell in Flintshire and whose shrine at
Shrewsbury attracted great crowds of pilgrims, but would include such candidates as King
Stephen’s nephew, St. William, whose tomb, exuding a miracle-working oil, became an
important object of pilgrimage at York, and St. Werburga, daughter of a Mercian king and
venerated chiefly at Chester, where her shrine lay. An even stronger claim might be made
for St. Withurga, whose well still exists at East Dereham, Norfolk, and whose shrine was at
Ely, alongside those of her royal sisters, Sexburga and Etheldreda. As the catalogue below
discloses, four out of every five of the ampullae inscribed with the letter W, and indeed of all
the ampullae considered in this article, were found in, or within easy reach of, East Anglia.
The distribution suggests very strongly that they originated from an important place of pilgrimage in that region - a place, like Ely, that took pains to exploit the pilgrim trade.

We must therefore also take account of Walsingham, which by the fourteenth century was manifestly the most important East Anglian shrine. It was also the only shrine in England known to have produced pilgrim souvenirs on a scale comparable with the immense output at Canterbury. Walsingham badges commemorated three of the priory's chief attractions - the renowned miracle-working statue of Our Lady, a representation of the Annunciation and the small chapel that contained both, the so-called Holy House erected shortly before the priory was founded and supposedly planned as a replica of the house of Nazareth where Our Lady was greeted by the archangel Gabriel. Like its prototype at Nazareth the Holy House at Walsingham was associated with a well, known at the beginning of the fifteenth century as 'the well of the Blessed Mary' and noted for the curative quality of its water. There were in fact two wells and Erasmus observed that their water was held to be 'sacred to the holy Virgin' and was 'efficacious in curing pains of the head and stomach ... They affirm that the spring suddenly burst from the earth at the command of the most holy Virgin'. It is difficult to believe that a shrine so alive to the importance of the pilgrim trade would have missed the opportunity of providing pilgrims with ampullae containing this beneficial water.

Though the use of an initial letter to indicate a place-name would be inconsistent with general medieval practice, it seems possible that the W on the ampullae may have stood for Walsingham. Only four of the surviving badges from Walsingham bear an inscription, but they all make do with the single word Walsingham. They do not refer to the particular scene or object of devotion depicted on the badge and in this respect differ from most continental pilgrim badges connected with the Virgin Mary: badges from Rocamadour, to take but one example, bear the inscription SIGILJVM BEATE MARIE DE ROCAMADOR(XXII b). Other English shrines where a cult of Our Lady was the centre of attraction appear to have followed Walsingham's example by marking their badges simply with the place of origin, sometimes even with an abbreviation of it. An example from King's Lynn, commemorating the popular image of Our Lady of Doncaster, is inscribed Donaciate (XXII a); another from Brook's Wharf, London, probably commemorating an image of local repute at Poulton, near Dover, is captioned with the letters p u l followed by a representation of a cask or tun (XXII c).

If we can accept that the letter W is likely to mean Walsingham, then the crown that sometimes surmounts it may be taken as the emblem of Our Lady, the queen of heaven and undoubtedly, to quote a sixteenth century poet, 'the Queene of Walsingham'. There are many instances of this particular symbolic use of the crown in late medieval art. In common with a great many other images of Our Lady, the statue at Walsingham wore a golden crown, the gift of Henry III, and is depicted wearing her crown on Walsingham badges (XXII t). The letters s and d that flank the crowned W in one instance (XXII c), are perhaps, therefore, an allusion to the sancta domus, the Holy House of Walsingham, which was itself venerated and preserved intact within a larger and more splendid chapel of Our Lady.

In conclusion, a word should be said about another type of ampulla on which is delineated a crescent clasping the round body of a long-necked flask (XXII q). A similar flask is depicted above a crown on the ampulla bearing the floral motif and the letter m (for maria) in XXII f. The flask is possibly an allusion to one of Walsingham's many attractions - the phial of the Holy Milk of the Blessed Mary kept on the high altar. The relic is referred to as early as 1300 and was later discussed by Erasmus. The broad arrow depicted on the other sides of all these ampullae (XXII p) supports an attribution to Walsingham since arrows of this sort were used exclusively at Walsingham as part of certain badges.

There is then a likelihood that Walsingham had been the destination of those pilgrims who brought home ampullae bearing the letter W, used either on its own or underneath a crown or a chevron on a shield. The same applies, therefore, to some of the ampullae
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decorated with the flower or the scallop-shell. If it had any specific local significance, the
shell may give point to Erasmus's references to Our Lady of Walsingham as 'the sea-side
Virgin'21 which have sometimes been cited as samples of carelessness in his description of the
place; yet Walsingham, at that time over five miles inland, was nearer to the coast than Com-
postella, which had long gathered its shells from the shores of Galicia and had associated St.
James with legends of the sea.

But if one were to continue from this point and attribute to Walsingham some of the other
apparently interconnected motifs, such as the crown or the chevron of the Caistor specimen,
some anomalies would still need to be resolved. Thus, following the lines of the preceding
argument, should we not conclude that the crowned letter S (XXI a, XXII d), for example,
was likely to be connected with the popular pilgrimage to Our Lady of Sudbury and that a
single workshop was perhaps supplying ampullae to several East Anglian shrines, of which
Walsingham was incomparably the most important? In face of such uncertainties, to press
the claims of Walsingham or any other shrine beyond the bounds of hypothesis would be to
run the risk of finding a mare’s nest.

Concerning the practice of pilgrimage the Lollards of the fifteenth century took the view
that 'it is vein waast and idil foft to trotte to Wasingham rather than to ech other place in which
an ymage of Marie is'.22 Perhaps it would be wisest to heed this warning in connection with
the subject of this article and conclude with a catalogue of ampullae ornamented with scallop-
shells or flowers. Further discussion and future discoveries might then help to establish with
more reasonable certainty the place or places of origin of these intriguing objects and the
particular cult that gave rise to their use.

FIG. XXI. THE SCALLOP-SHELL MOTIF

Type I

a & c The scallop-shell has well-defined grooves and engrafted edges; the flask has angular shoulders
and handles. With one exception, from Burghchere, Berks. (Newbury Museum 1933.101), all are
decorated on the reverse. A specimen from Fountains Abbey has the scallop-shell on both sides. On
another, from Ipswich (Ipswich Museum 939-23), is a compass-drawn flower, like XXII a, but smaller.
Other designs are as follows:

b The chevron within two concentric circles. Caistor, Lincs. (Lincoln Museum).
d The chevron on a shield within two concentric circles. Moels, Cheshire (Chester Museum).
The chevron on a shield appears on other types noted below as well as on two others from Moels, which
are decorated on their other sides with an arcade of five cusped arches with crocketed pinnacles.
e The bend on a shield within two concentric circles. Thames at Cannon Street Station (Guildhall
Museum 8815).
f A shield in the centre of which a rondel intersects the ends of three lobes. Fountains Abbey
( Abbey Museum).
g A shield in a circle bearing the arms of Mortimer. The handles are set higher than usual.
Southbury (Salisbury Museum).
h A shield bearing a merchant’s mark or an arrangement of sacred emblems, the shield set within
a circle and against a chequered background. Queenhithe, London (Guildhall Museum 8188). A
similar device occurs on a specimen from Moels (Chester Museum), which corresponds in every other
detail with the Salisbury ampulla above.

Type II

i & j Lines suggest the grooves of the shell, the edges of which are smooth. The flask is not
shouldered and usually has rounded handles; a horizontal band is often drawn between the handles.
Except for examples found at King’s Lynn (King’s Lynn Museum 66) and Dunwich (Southwold Museum),
additional decoration appears on the reverse. A specimen from Ewerby, Lincs., has another scallop-
shell (British Museum 91, 4-18,24). Another from Ipswich (Ipswich Museum 939-23) has a quatrefoil,
comparable with XXII d, but smaller. Other designs consist of:

k The letter S, reversed, beneath a crown. Ipswich (Ipswich Museum 939-23). A similar
ampulla from Birkley’s Meadow, Leicester, has the letter H in a circle (Leicester Museum 87.1951).
l The letter R within a circle and beneath the Annunciation lily-pot. Found (1948) in a grave at
Thetford with the skeleton of a man who had suffered from acute osteo-arthritis of the hip-joint (Norwich
Museum 12.950). Others come from Dunwich (British Museum, see Archaeol. Journ., xv (1858), 156;

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A shield bearing the cross. Palefield, Suffolk (Norwich Museum 252.76.94). Another from Vierage Meadow, Conwil Cayo, Carmarthenshire, has a shield bearing a chevron and in base a rondel (cf. XXII). Another found (1967) at Llanfoes, Breconshire, has the cross within a circle (Brecon Museum). A shield of arms, with a fleur-de-lys in the first and fourth quarter, occurs on an ampulla from London (Liverpool Museum MB193).


A simplified version of the above. Ipswich (Ipswich Museum 1942-102).

The letter W on a hatched background and surrounded by two concentric circles. Ipswich (Ipswich Museum 939-23). The same design occurs on an ampulla from London said to have a crown on each side of the neck (Journ. Brit. Arch. Ass., xix (1862), 95).

The letter W, crowned with trefoils, on a hatched background and almost surrounded by a circular border of pellets. Fincham, Norfolk (Dickinson, op. cit. in n.16, pl. 9c).


FIG. XXII THE FLORAL MOTIF

Type I

a-c A compass-drawn flower in a circle. Additional petals are sometimes drawn in the interstices. With one exception from London (Hitchin Museum), all are decorated on the reverse. An example from Ipswich, noted above, has the scallop-shell. The remainder include:

a A circle decorated with wavy lines and pellets. Scarborough (Sheffield Museum J.93.741). Similar decoration occurs on an ampulla from Blandford St. Mary, Somerset, but its other side is plain (British Museum 93.6.1.318).

b A shield, in a circle, charged with a mallet-shaped device. Site of Northampton Castle (Northampton Museum). Another from the same mould was found (1966) at Brufield-on-the-Green, Northampton. An ampulla from London has a crowned heart set on a shield within two concentric circles (Liverpool Museum MB192). A similar device appears on one side of an ampulla found at Maltby, Linos., but its other side is decorated with a much larger crowned heart, without the shield (in private ownership).

c The letter W, crowned and flanked by the letters s and d. Found between Byfield and Hinton, Northants. (Warwick Museum).

d-f A six-petalled flower within a crescent and circle. From a coastal sand-dune at Saltfleet, Linos. (Southampe Museum 110.54).

Type II

d-f A conventional flower or quatrefoil, sometimes with leaves in the interstices and sometimes developed into a barbed rosette. A horizontal band is usually drawn between the handles. Examples from London (Society of Antiquaries and British Museum 56, 7-t, 2098), from the river Itchen at the City Bridge, Winchester (Winchester Museum) and from Rotterdam (Museum Boymans 394) are plain on the reverse. Another in the Ipswich Museum has the scallop-shell (939-23). Other forms of decoration include:

d The letter S beneath a crown. Found (1967) on the site of Whitehall Manor, Billericay, Essex. Archaeological evidence suggested a 15th century date but was too meagre to be conclusive.

e A large crown surmounted by two small quatrefoils (Ipswich Museum 1935-65-938 and 939-23). A similar crown, occurring on an ampulla from London, is complemented by a letter R on its other side (Liverpool Museum 3.114.604).

f A large crown surmounted by a phial with a spherical body (cf. XXII). The quatrefoil on the obverse is surmounted by the letter m (for Maria). Found (1965) beneath the cliffs at Marske-on-Sea, Yorks. The ampulla was hermetically sealed and held a liquid judged by perfumiers to contain aromatic herbs. An ampulla with a similar crown and flower was sold at Sotheby’s on 14 May, 1971.

A large crown with three tall fleurons ending in trefoils, on a hatched background. Icklingham, Suffolk (Ashmolean Museum 1927.6490). The flower on the obverse has lance-shaped petals and resembles leaden brooches found mainly at King’s Lynn.

A shield bearing the chevron, within a crescent ornamented with pellets. Ipswich (Ipswich Museum 939-23).

A shield, within three concentric circles, bearing the chevron and charged with the letter W. Moorfields, London (Guildhall Museum 9918).

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Fig. XXII

m & n A rectangular body, each side decorated with three shields bearing the chevron, the fess, the bend sinister, quarterly, the bend and the letter W. Thames at London (British Museum 50, 20, 8). A very similar ampulla was found (1970) in the remains of a fishing-boat that sank in the Thames in the late 15th century (Guildhall Museum).

A crown on one side and on the other a shield with a chevron and in base a rondel and one bar. Bury St. Edmunds (British Museum 1910, 4, 1).

p & q On one side an arrow and on the other a phial, clasped by a crescent. London (Luton Museum BL/27/122/55), Dunwich (Dunwich Museum), Covehithe Cliff, Suffolk (Ipswich Museum 1920-74-47) and Ipswich (957-37; 1955-63-85A; 959-23 (3)).

Notes


4 Proceedings Soc. Ant., xvi (1896), 168; Wills & Inventories ... Bury St. Edmunds, ed. S. Tymms (Camden Soc., 1850), 53; Cal. of Wills ... Court of Hussey, ed. J. R. Sharpe (1889), ii, 657-8.

5 Pilgrimages to Saint Mary of Walsingham and St. Thomas of Canterbury by Desiderius Erasmus, ed. J. G. Nicholls (1849), 3; and 'The Badge of St. James' by Christopher Holier in The Scallywag, ed. Ian Cox (1957), 59-70.

6 Compostella shells were certainly known by 1106; Liber Sancti Jacobi: Codex Calixtinus (Santiago de Compostela, 1944), 273-4.

7 An example has been found as far north as Vä in Sweden (Stockholm, Statens Historiska Museum no. 23785).


9 This type is sometimes depicted as border decoration in Flemish Books of Hours of c. 1500; e.g., British Museum Add. MSS. 38126, f.92, 35313, f. 215v and 18852, f. 412.

10 Wills from Doctors' Commons ... 1492-1595, ed. J. G. Nicholls and J. Bruce (Camden Soc., 1863), 6; London Consistory Wills, 1492-1547 (London Record Soc., 1927), 97.

11 Hist. MSS Comm., Tenth Report, Appendix Part IV (1885), 424.

12 There exist today, for example, only a handful of badges from the monastery of Einsiedeln, Switzerland, yet 130,000 badges are known to have been sold there during a fortnight in 1466.

13 Guildhall Museum no. 8723. I am indebted to Dr. John Taylor of the British Museum (Natural History) for this identification.

14 The ampulla is reproduced here by kind permission of Mr. Harvey Sheldon, who directed the excavations. The main types of 13th-century ampullae from Canterbury are discussed in my note in Colin Platt, Southampton Excavations, 1953-1969, 2 vols. (Leicester University Press, forthcoming).

15 Antonio López-Peireiro, Historia de la Santa A. M. Iglesia de Compostela, v (Santiago, 1903), 38-9, 98, app. 119 and passim.

16 Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc., xix (1863), 95 and pl. 18, fig. 2.

17 Cp. Capt. G. M. Knocker connects the ampulla with Our Lady of Rocamadour (Country Life, civv (1968), 509) but the ampulla is much more likely to be of English origin.

18 The main types are discussed in Spencer, op. cit. in n. 1. On the shrine see J. C. Dickinson, The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham (Cambridge, 1936).

19 Dickinson, op. cit., 136. The corresponding well at Nazareth, on the other hand, was identified more closely with the Annunciation and the Archangel Gabriel; ibid., 13.

20 Nicholls, op. cit. in n. 3, p. 20.

21 Dickinson, op. cit. in n. 16, pp. 56, 91.

22 Norfolk Archaeology, ix (1886), 19-21.

23 Nicholls, op. cit. in n. 3, pp. 11, 12, 14.

24 The Repressor of over much Blaming of the Clergy by R. Peacock, ed. C. Babington (Rolls s, 19, 1860), i, 194.