Cuisine and Urban Identities in Medieval England.

Objects, Foodstuffs and Urban Life in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Hampshire

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Summary

Identity is formed and reproduced through our relationships with human and non-human others. This paper applies this perspective to conduct an archaeological investigation of how identities emerged in urban environments during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries through cuisine. This is achieved through a comparative analysis of food remains and the associated material culture from a range of medieval sites in Hampshire of different size and status. I argue that choices and strategies in preparing, cooking and consuming food were enmeshed within multiple facets of urban identity including gender, status and profession.

Introduction [a]

In simple terms, identity refers to the ways in which we relate to others – be they human or non-human entities (Pitts 2007, 694). It is therefore a relational concept; identities are created and maintained through the formation of relationships with people, places, substances and

things. As a nexus of environmental, social and economic factors, the study of food practices (cuisine) offers a window into these processes. This paper explores the formation of identities through food practices within medieval towns, focussing in particular on the relationships formed between people, foodstuffs and the material culture of cooking and eating.

Medieval towns offer great potential for the study of identities through the study of finds. Large assemblages of artefacts and environmental material have been recovered through programmes of rescue excavations of the last half-century. Whilst initially used to reconstruct the economic roles of towns, for example tracing the trading contacts of large medieval ports (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975; Clarke and Carter 1977), contemporary research is also using these finds to address a broad range of social questions. Whilst the objects themselves remain an intrinsic area of research in regard to production and craft activity, they have been used to explore broader issues of identity within medieval towns (Brown 1997a ; Gutiérrez 2000; Egan 2010), to examine domestic practices (Margeson 1993; 235-6) and identify differences in the material culture of wealthy and poor households (Allan 1984). Similarly, the study of environmental remains has developed from characterization and the study of diet and provisioning strategies to explore issues as diverse as social and chronological differences in meat consumption within towns (Maltby 1979; 86-7) and urban identity (Poole 2008). It is rare however for material culture and environmental remains to be considered together outside of broad syntheses and individual site reports. This integration of different types of evidence in the understanding of the relationship between food practices and the emergence and reproduction of urban identities in the medieval period is the core aim of this paper. A discussion of concepts of identity is followed by a brief overview of food studies

within medieval archaeology. The relationship between food and urban identities is then discussed in relation to a case study from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Hampshire.

Identity and material culture [a]

The focus of identity studies in medieval archaeology has shifted from culture historical perspectives attempting to identify and characterize the archaeological signatures of historically attested groups to exploring the ways in which spaces and material culture were employed, through social practice, in the formation and maintenance of identities (Hadley 2002; Curta 2007, 169). Despite being a core theme in many areas of archaeological research, the term is rarely explicitly defined or adequately theorized (see McClain 2012, 142-3 in relation to medieval archaeology and Pitts (2007) in relation to Roman archaeology). As Pitts (2007, 700) argues without such a definition, studies can become as limited as culture historical approaches, identifying groups not through assemblages of objects, but characterising them through their social practices. The focus must be on the *effects* of these social practices in determining how people related to their surroundings. It is for this reason that this paper began with a definition of the term. In considering the relationship between material culture and identity we must acknowledge that interactions with a given object can lead to the formation of multiple conceptualizations of identity, both within a person or within a population (Pitts 2007, 701). Often, partly no doubt due to the practical limitations of research, we focus upon exploring discrete forms of identity; ethnicity, gender or social status for example, failing to acknowledge the connectivity between these different facets of identity (Halsall 2004, 19; Pitts 2007, 709; Baumgarten 2008, 227). Furthermore identities are not stable or expressed in the same way throughout a person's life (Casella and Fowler. 2004, 2). Ethnicity, for example, may be invoked or hidden by and individual depending

upon the wider circumstances (Bartlett 2001, 51). Archaeology allows us to examine, through

the study of material remains, the intersections between groups and individuals by which

identities were formed and maintained in the human past (Frazer 2000, 3-4), and how these

intersections changed over time and space.

Applications of this approach in medieval contexts have proliferated over the last two

decades. For example, by studying the intersections of Islamic and Christian communities in

medieval Aragon, Gerrard (1999) has combined a range of forms of material evidence to

consider how ethnic and religious differences were articulated and perpetuated. He

demonstrates that ethnic divisions are reflected in settlement organization and the segregation

of fields and cemeteries (Gerrard 1999, 147-8). Furthermore, the reorganization of

settlements under Templar supervision saw the further marginalization of Islamic

communities as power came to be mediated through the manipulation of settlement space

(Gerrard 1999, 148). In this example from the medieval world, ethnic differences were

enhanced through the use of portable material culture, in dress and food consumption, for

example. These interactions were bound up in the adherence of regulation, with distinctions

being enforced through custom (Gerrard 1999, 155). This is perhaps an extreme example of

material culture bolstering strict identity-distinctions in the Middle Ages, but it serves to

illustrate that the maintenance of identities is related to a situational material environment,

consisting of built structures, portable artefacts and texts, in which the ways that people

related to one another are not determined simply by their own intentionality but by the ways

in which they were situated in the world. Ethnicity and social status are well established areas

of research, but pioneering studies into gender (Gilchrist 1994) and resistant identities (Smith

2009), for example, have demonstrated how material culture was instigated, both consciously and subconsciously, in a variety of ways to negotiate identities in the medieval period.

The potential of this approach to the relationship between material culture and identity has yet to be fully recognized. Previous studies of urban identity have largely focussed on issues of power and corporate identity. The study of later medieval guilds has proved particularly fruitful. Giles' (2000, 75) examination of guildhalls in York demonstrated guilds to have been microcosms of civic society with guildhalls being used to structure relationships, being the spaces in which activities and ceremonies which contributed to a sense of civic identity were performed, but also playing a role in excluding those who were marginal both in their absence from guilds but also in the broader civic community (ibid., 76-7). Guilds also offered opportunities for individuals from across the social spectrum to come together, leading to the emergence of multivalent identities, with individuals being bound together through relationships such as commissions and credit agreements (Rosser 1997, 8-10). Craft activity more widely built a web of labour connections across the town (and potentially beyond), even in the production of a single object. Indeed in many cases the nature of craft activity meant that in many cases divisions between master craftsmen, apprentices and journeymen were not rigid, but were re-negotiated in relation to specific commissions (Rosser 1997, 14-16). Guilds and the associated craft activities therefore created opportunities for multi-scalar and multi-faceted identities, allowing individuals to become part of communities of craftsmen and to develop relationships of dependence, subordination and status which were mirrored in broader urban society.

Settlement space can be considered an arena in which power relations were contested and identities were forged. Urban spaces were constantly being renegotiated, as groups within towns fought to claim them (Boone 2002, 622). As Lilley (2009, 147) demonstrates in his analysis of Anglo-Norman town plans, the control of space was a key way in which power relations were negotiated as important locations or zones in towns were claimed, modified and enrolled in alternative social practices. Towns then were not static, physical entities, but negotiated spaces. It was the repeated claiming and defining of identities through a range of social practices that made people urban (Attreed 2002, 573). Urban concepts of identity can be argued to be contingent on one's interpretation of urban space, which in turn relates to one's legal status and external connections (Attreed 2002, 591). Towns and experiences of urban life clearly varied and gave rise to multiple conceptualizations of what it was to be an urban person and what a town was.

Material culture too plays a role in the negotiation of urban identities. Gaimster (2007), for example, explores the role of pottery in the negotiation of identities in the Hanseatic towns from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. Here, the use of identical material culture, particularly the spread of stoneware and ceramic stove tiles, became 'a signature of Hanseatic cultural codes and lifestyle practices amongst dispersed and heterogeneous communities, notably in the spheres of dining and domestic comfort' (Gaimster 2007, 418). The Hanseatic identity can be considered as situational, emerging from a particular set of relationships with its roots in economic expansion, but related also to domesticity and long-standing traditions of material culture. It has been suggested that, in the case of Novgorod, situated on the edge of the Hanseatic network, wood use became a means of resisting the influences brought by foreign traders to the town (Gaimster 2007, 418). Whether we choose to explore urban

identity through material culture, historical sources or spatial analysis what becomes clear is that urban life consisted of specific social practices, some of which were adapted from rural life and others which were uniquely urban. Towns were nodal points for the coming together of economic, religious and cultural factors. The study of medieval urban identity therefore does not just allow us to identify defined groups within urban communities, but to explore multiple experiences of urban life and the impacts of these experiences on past peoples' perceptions of themselves in relation to the world around them.

The role of material culture and space in relation to identity poses something of an interpretive problem however. Identities are commonly framed in terms of construction or expression. This implies that people have a premeditated identity, which they then use space or material culture to express. Objects and spaces may be manipulated in the pursuit of a noble identity, for example (see de Clerq et al. 2007). However, the ways in which we relate to our surroundings is not always determined by us. Things and people act upon us in unexpected ways, with unintended consequences in terms of identity. If identities form situationally and relationally, neither they, nor the intentionality required for their expression, are inherent within us. We can consider that this intentionality emerges relationally, being the product of particular circumstances, meaning that at certain times we feel the urge to express or construct identities. The agency for identity formation can be seen not as located within human intentionality, but as distributed between people and their material surroundings (see Knappett and Malafouris 2008; Robb 2010 for further discussions of 'material' agency), as identities emerge through the formation of associations between people and things. Furthermore, if achieved relationally, the process of identity formation (which finds equivalence in Latour's (2005, 27) 'processes of group formation') must also be maintained,

through the continued reproduction of the relationships between people and the material world which underlie them. By conceptualising identity in this way we can move from exploring a conscious formation of urban identity to exploring, through the examination of the relationships which form between people and their surroundings, the emergence of varying experiences and identities in relation to medieval town life. The result will be to engage with the full plurality of urban experience through the consideration of practice-based identities, which will further add to the picture of urban diversity provided by the study of textual evidence, as well as allow us to better understand the processes behind the formation of both the implicit and explicit identities deducible for the study of texts alone.

Cuisine and identity [a]

The link between food and various facets of identity is well attested through sociological and anthropological study. Access to, and responsibilities surrounding, food can relate to one's gender or social status (Goody 1982, 71; Counihan 1998, 2) and food is directly related to the economic and social systems through which identities are negotiated (Goody 1982, 213). The ingestion of food can be conceptualized as a direct 'eating into' a set of communal values and tastes (Lupton 1996, 25) and the emotions triggered by experiences of food are defined through personal experiences of food which are in turn the product of particular personal experiences within specific social contexts (Lupton 1996, 30; Sutton 2001, 74). The study of food practices offers a direct window into the processes through which elements of identity emerged, indeed this relationships has already been fruitfully explored, particularly through historical studies such as Effros' study (2002) into religious feasting in Merovingian Europe and archaeological studies such as Vroom's (2000) examination of pottery and eating

practices in Byzantine and Ottoman Greece. There is therefore good reason to see the wealth of material evidence relating to food consumption in medieval towns as a valuable source in identity studies. Before entering into a case study, it is worth briefly providing an overview of food in the medieval period.

Overview: food and medieval archaeology [b]

This paper is primarily concerned with the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a period not well served by historical sources relating to food consumption in an urban context. Household accounts of the period typically relate to rural manors (Dyer 1983, 193), whilst religious texts and hospital records can only inform us about particular sections of society (Weiss Adamson 2004, xviii). Manorial records demonstrate that diet was closely related to an individual's level of wealth and social position; noble households had access to a wide range of foodstuffs but peasants had a largely plant-based diet, acquiring protein through the consumption of a range of dairy products not commonly consumed in wealthier households (Dyer 1983, 207-8). Towns were provisioned from rural estates, with some urban production, such as horticulture in gardens and the cultivation of urban fields (Dyer 1994, 129), demonstrated archaeologically by finds of agricultural equipment in towns (Egan 2005, 199-201). Whereas in rural communities food processing was largely a household activity, in towns a degree of specialization is evident from historical and archaeological evidence, with butchery seemingly being a specialist urban skill (Sykes 2006, 69) and cook-shops selling prepared foods, particularly to the poorer townsfolk, who did not have had the facilities or time to prepare meals for themselves (Carlin 1998).

Archaeological evidence has provided detail of the exact nature of diet (e.g. Albarella 2005), whilst isotopic analysis is starting to inform the study of social and regional trends in consumption patterns (e.g. Müldner and Richards 2005). In general terms, urban populations ate more meat and marine fish than rural populations (Albarella 2005, 144; Sykes 2006, 64; Serjeantson and Woolgar 2006, 128), although isotopic analysis is beginning to suggest that freshwater fish formed a greater part of diets than previously thought (Müldener and Richards 2005, 45). Urban consumers typically had access to a wider range of meats (Sykes 2006, 64) and sheep / goat accounted for higher proportions of rural diets (Sykes 2006, 61; Serjeantson 2009, 169). There is a general perception that urban consumers consumed younger animals than rural consumers, however the evidence for this has been challenged by some research (Albarella 2005, 137) and it is likely that the differences are subtle, based upon numerous factors such as wealth (Thomas 2006, 145) and local agricultural regimes. Some regionality is also apparent, relating to local agricultural and fishing regimes (Maltby 1979, 90; Dyer 1983, 207; Serjeantson and Woolgar 2006, 115). Both urban and rural communities had access to a range of plant based foodstuffs (see Moffet 2006), with wealthier households in both town and country having access to a variety of exotic including imported wine, fruits and spices (Dyer 1983, 194; Livarda 2011, 160-1).

The study of food related material culture has also provided insights into differences in food practices. Ceramic forms have been used to infer the development of practices such as roasting (Brown 2002, 317) but detailed use-wear analysis of pottery (defined as the study of sooting patterns, abrasion indicators resulting from processes such as stirring and attrition patterns resulting from chemical processes such as fermentation), which can provide direct evidence of cooking practices, has not been widely undertaken (Moorhouse 1986; although

see Moorhouse's (1983) study of sooting on pottery from Sandal Castle (West Yorkshire), which identifies temporal trends in the use of pottery for cooking). Brown's (1997b) comparison of pottery from three sites in Hampshire and Wiltshire demonstrated that urban households used a wider range of vessel forms, with bowls accounting for a higher proportion of the rural assemblages and that jugs were made predominantly for the urban market, a pattern also reflected in studies of Oxfordshire and north eastern England (Brown 1997b, 92-3; Mellor 2005, 159; Hayfield 1988). Despite this general pattern, jugs clearly had a role to play in rural households. Spatial analysis of jug finds at West Cotton (Northamptonshire) led Blinkhorn (1999, 38-9) to suggest that different types of jug had distinctive functions as transport or serving vessels, however the broader applicability of Blinkhorn's findings remains to be ascertained. Bowls were used for a range of food-related functions, including as measures and in dairying (Moorhouse 1978, 8; Blinkhorn 1999, 44) and can be related to the greater emphasis on food production at rural sites. Jars, used primarily as cooking pots and storage containers, are a major component of both urban and rural assemblages, but urban consumers used a wider range of forms, including pipkins and dripping pans, associated with the roasting of meat (Brown 1997b 93; 2002, 137), indicating differences in cooking practices between urban and rural sites. In terms of non-ceramic food-related material culture there is not a fundamental difference between items excavated from urban and rural sites, with differences emerging more along lines of a sites function and status (Egan 2005, 206). Although rarely surviving archaeologically, most meals were probably eaten from trenchers or wooden vessels in both urban and rural contexts (Wood 2005).

Contrasts can be drawn between the diets of poorer urban and rural populations, with urban consumers seemingly having better access to meat. Urban / rural differentiation can also be

identified in food processing, demonstrated, for example, through the higher quantity of ceramic bowls recovered from rural contexts. Some blurring between urban and rural lifestyles is also apparent however, through the cultivation of urban gardens, for example. Food practices, as well as diet, varied between households of varying status. For example in lower status peasant and urban households cooking was a domestic household activity (Hanawalt 1986, 40), whilst in wealthier urban and rural homes cooking was undertaken by professional cooks (Weiss Adamson 2004, 57). Diet and food practices therefore differentiated urban and rural communities to varying degrees. We can consider however that these differences do not simply reflect urban and rural identities. Rather, food practices played a role in the emergence and maintenance of identities relating to urban and rural life, as well as to wealth, status and occupation.

Food practices in medieval Hampshire [a]

Hampshire provides a suitable case study for exploring the relationship between cuisine and urban identity for two key reasons. Firstly, a range of sites have been excavated from the large towns of Southampton and Winchester, to small towns such as Romsey and Christchurch (formerly Hampshire, now Dorset) and rural sites, such as those at Popham and Hatch Warren (summarized in Table 1; Illus. 1). All of these towns have a very different character. Southampton was a large urban centre: a royal port with a cosmopolitan and highly stratified population. In contrast, Christchurch was a much smaller port, principally involved in coastal, rather than cross-Channel, trade and fishing. Romsey, to the north of Southampton, developed from an Anglo-Saxon monastic site into a medieval small town. Property in the core was largely under the ownership of the Abbey, but settlement on the periphery has also

been excavated. Secondly, both ceramic and zooarchaeological assemblages have been analysed from these sites using similar quantitative methodologies, meaning that comparisons can be readily drawn between them. These urban assemblages can be placed in context through comparison with those from rural sites at Popham (a shrunken medieval village), King's Somborne and Hatch Warren (a higher status rural site).

A further advantage is that the density of excavations within Southampton offers an opportunity to compare food practices in different areas of the town (Table 2; Illus. 1). These excavations have largely focussed on the western part of the town, the waterfront or merchant's quarter (referred to as excavations in Westgate Street (Bull Hall) and The French Quarter) and the castle (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975; Oxley 1986; Brown 2002; Brown and Hardy 2011). Further excavations, particularly those at York Buildings, have examined the evidence from the eastern side of the town, considered to be the artisan's quarter (see Jervis 2009). As part of the author's doctoral work (Jervis 2011a), a programme of ceramic usewear analysis was undertaken, in which sooting patterns were analysed, meaning that it is possible to examine differences in cooking practices in different areas of the town (see Skibo 1992 for details of methodology). We can therefore identify variation in diet between sites of different type, before reconstructing processing, cooking and consumption practices in these settlements.

Variation in diet [b]

Cattle and sheep / goat account for the majority of the identified animal bones across the region (Table 3), with cattle providing the bulk of the meat. Differences in the quantity of

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sheep / goat may relate more to settlement location than size; Alton, Hatch Warren and King's Somborne are all located on prime grazing land and have the highest proportions of sheep / goat, whilst Christchurch, located on the fringes of the New Forest and the coastal plain has a lower quantity.

Faunal assemblages from the urban sites indicate that young cattle were consumed, suggesting that animals were bred for urban consumption, rather than for secondary products. This is not only the case in the large towns of Southampton (Bourdillon 1980, 189) and Winchester (Serjeantson 2009, 171) but also the smaller urban centres of Romsey (Bourdillon 1993) and Christchurch (Coy 1983, 93). This contrasts with the rural assemblages (Coy 1995), as well as the urban assemblage from Alton (Hamilton-Dyer 2007), where cattle were generally more mature, indicating that they were exploited for secondary products or as draft animals, prior to consumption. Greater contrasts emerge in the consumption of sheep / goat. Sheep were an important economic resource due to the booming wool trade, however in both Southampton and Winchester some immature animals were consumed. For example at sites in Winchester between 10-20% of the sheep present fit into the earliest two age divisions based on tooth eruption (Bourdillon 1980, 189; Serjeantson and Smith 2009, 127). This contrasts with the picture in the smaller towns of Romsey (Bourdillon 1993) and Alton (Hamilton-Dyer 2007), where, as at the rural site of Hatch Warren (Coy 1995), mature sheep / goat were commonplace. Pigs appear to have formed a more important component of rural than urban diets (Illus. 2). Pig assemblages have a broader age profile, suggesting that these were bred for meat in both town (Hamilton-Dyer 2007, Bates 2011) and country (Coy 1995), as is widely acknowledged at the national scale (Albarella 2005, 142).

Although at a general level contrast can be seen between cattle and sheep / goat consumption in smaller and larger towns, analysis of evidence from within Southampton demonstrates the picture to be less polarized. It is only in the merchant's quarter where younger cattle and sheep / goat were consumed in quantity (Bates 2011, 226-7). However, it is important to note that the faunal assemblage from York Buildings has not been subjected to detailed analysis.

Fish were widely consumed in Southampton, but have also been recovered from inland sites including Winchester, where fresh and preserved fish were eaten, based upon analogies with documentary references to the acquisition and sale of the various species present in the assemblage (Serjeantson 2009, 174). Within Southampton, herring were the most commonly consumed type (Nicholson 2011), however inconsistencies in recording across the study area prohibit further analysis. Geese and domestic fowl were widely consumed across Hampshire, however game and swan were exclusively consumed in the wealthier urban tenements in Southampton (see Noddle 1975). More generally, wild animals are rare in both rural and urban assemblages. At the rural site of Hatch Warren a particularly high number of deer and rabbit bones were identified, possibly relating to hunting, an activity demonstrated to have elite connotations in the period (Sykes 2010) and suggesting therefore that the remains here relate to an elite, perhaps manorial, household (Fasham et al, 1995, 150). In urban contexts, it is only in the French Quarter of Southampton, the area known to have been occupied by the mercantile classes who held both the power and wealth in the town, that the remains of wild animals have been noted in any quantity (Bates 2011, 228), suggesting that the relationship between wild animals and status was held in both rural and urban contexts.

The recovery of botanical remains is highly variable; however general trends can be borne out between rural and urban sites. Rural assemblages (Hatch Warren and King's Somborne) contained a range of cereals, with evidence for the exploitation of wild berries (Carruthers 1995; Robinson 2004). Urban assemblages (Southampton, Winchester and Christchurch) indicate the additional consumption of berries and pulses (either wild or grown in gardens) as well as imported foodstuffs, including grapes and walnuts (Green 1983; 2009, 25-6; Smith 2011). Within Southampton, contrast can be drawn between assemblages from wealthier sites (Westgate Street, French Quarter, , Castle), where exotic foodstuffs including figs, grapes and rice were consumed and York Buildings, from where a more modest range of local foodstuffs were recovered (Biddle nd; Smith 2011).

In summary, urban and rural communities appear to have consumed similar foodstuffs, however contrasts can be drawn in relation to the age of animals and the availability of wild animals and exotic plant foods. Although at a general level the assemblage from Southampton is characterized by the presence of younger animals and a wider range of foodstuffs, when the distribution of these within the town is considered it becomes apparent that the diet of the poorer members of Southampton's population was not dissimilar to that of small town dwellers. It was only the wealthier occupants of the waterfront and castle who enjoyed these rarer foodstuffs.

Processing and cooking [b]

Generally specialist butchers were a primarily urban phenomenon (Albarella 2005, 138). Evidence for the jointing and specialist treatment of meat appears limited to Southampton

(Noddle 1975, 332) as a wider range of body parts characterize rural and small town assemblages (Bourdillon 1980, 188). Within Winchester further evidence of specialist skills relating to food processing comes in the form of a wooden butter churn (Keene 1990), suggesting the undertaking of specialist processing tasks within urban households. Specialization within larger households is also implied by the construction of kitchen blocks, separating cooking from the spaces in which domestic, household activity took place (e.g. Brown and Hardy 2011, 276).

Few large assemblages of medieval small finds associated with cooking have been excavated in the region. The exceptions are Winchester and Southampton, which produced a range of metal artefacts, including spoons, strainers, flesh hooks, sieves and skimmers (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975; Biddle 1990). In addition stone mortars are known from excavations across these towns (ibid.).

In contrast, large pottery assemblages have been recovered from the sites under consideration. Jars and jugs are the most common ceramic forms at all settlements (Table 4). Jars typically account for between half and two-thirds of the identified vessels. Assemblages were generally too fragmented to calculate vessel volume, but Blinkhorn (1999, 42) has shown there to be some correlation between rim diameter and vessel capacity, with wider mouthed vessels typically being larger. In urban and rural assemblages the majority of jar rim diameters measure between 180-220 mm (Illus. 3) and are of similar form, indicating that vessels were not specifically produced for rural or urban consumption and that cooking practices are likely to have been similar in town and country. The presence of sooting on jars from Southampton (Jervis 2011a) and Popham (Hawkes 1986, 115) and in both cases the

general absence of sooting from larger vessels indicates that these were containers. Within Southampton however differences can be noted in cooking practices. Although similar Southampton Coarseware jars were used across Southampton (Jervis 2009, 75), of which a third were cooking vessels, analysis of sooting patterns indicated variation in cooking practices (summarized in Illus. 4).

At York Buildings, jars commonly exhibit indicators consistent with being placed on a trivet or support above a fire. In contrast, a wider range of sooting indicators can be observed amongst the assemblage Bull Hall, an important tenement in the merchant's quarter (Platt 1973, 267), with some vessels having been suspended over the hearth, whilst others were placed in the embers. The absence of thick carbonized deposits on the interior of vessels may indicate the use of splints to keep meat from the edge of pots (Moorhouse 1978, 6), or the regular stirring of the contents. Other vessels associated with cooking, such as dripping pans and pipkins, used in the roasting of meat and preparation of sauces, were only identified in urban contexts. Within Southampton these were only identified in the merchant's quarter (table 5). At York Buildings and other similar sites, the quantity of cooking vessels is smaller than around the waterfront (14-29 % rather than 33-60 %). Whilst this difference may in part be due to the need for a greater number of vessels to cook more complex dishes, it can also be considered that poorer households required smaller numbers of cooking vessels due to household size and because these households, with limited time and space available for cooking, are more likely to have purchased prepared foods from cook-shops (see Carlin 1998).

The major difference between urban and rural assemblages is the ratio of jugs to bowls. In Southampton, bowls account for 2% of vessels, whereas in rural assemblages this rises as high as 14% at King's Somborne (Table 4). In contrast, in the small town assemblages bowls account for no more than 8% of vessels. The wide size range of bowls suggests a variety of functions, for example as measures and in dairying, and the presence of bowls in small town assemblages suggests some processing of foodstuffs (typically 'rural' activities) in small towns.

Although similar cooking vessels were used in town and country, close analysis of cooking vessel assemblages from Southampton has demonstrated that a wider range of cooking techniques were practiced in wealthier (probably mercantile) households, indicating the presence of specialist cooks. There appears little difference between the cooking vessel assemblages from rural sites such as Popham, small towns and York Buildings. A difference between rural and urban communities is the presence of food processing specialists. Butchers were present in Southampton (Platt 1973, 45), however, faunal remains from rural and small town sites indicate that specialist butchers were not active in all settlements. Experiences of cooking appear differentiated along the lines of wealth and status rather than a rural / urban dichotomy being present. Such a dichotomy can however be argued to occur to some degree in regard to other processing activities.

Serving and eating [b]

The majority of medieval serving vessels are likely to have been made from wood (Wood 2005) or metal and therefore survive only intermittently. Wooden vessels have been

excavated from a high status tenement at Cuckoo Lane, believed to be associated with the household of Richard of Southwick, a major owner of property in Southampton (Platt 1973, 103; Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975, 228-30), however, the use of these vessels clearly cut across the social spectrum. The archaeological record masks the importance of wooden vessels in medieval society. Historical research has shown for example that in 1431-2 the household of John de Vere in Oxford ordered twenty-five ceramic vessels, but 234 wooden vessels (Wood 2005, 19).

Jugs account for between a quarter and third of vessels from rural and small town assemblages. These are generally locally produced vessels, although continental imports were present amongst the assemblage from Romsey Abbey and also in the small port of Christchurch. Locally produced jugs are modestly decorated, with slip trailing being the most common decorative form. These vessels fulfilled a range of functions, including the transfer and decanting of liquids, as well as non-culinary functions, for example as urinals. In contrast, jugs account for over 40% of the vessels from Southampton, and these include highly decorated wares, such as French imports from the Saintonge and Seine Valley. Analysis (Jervis 2011a, 213-5) of abrasion patterns on these vessels confirms that locally produced jugs as well as Saintonge Whiteware vessels, were used for a range of functions. Small quantities, principally from the merchant's quarter, have sooted bases, suggesting that they may have been used to heat their contents, perhaps in the mulling of wine. Exterior attrition on jugs, including scratching and chipping, attests to regular handling, indicating that these vessels were used to move liquids. Both locally produced and imported Saintonge Whiteware jugs found at sites across Southampton exhibit a range of internal attrition

indicators, including mechanical abrasion (suggestive of stirring). It would seem that, like locally produced jugs, these imported vessels also fulfilled a range of functions.

The most highly decorated imported wares, for example Saintonge Polychrome Ware and Seine Valley Zoomorphic Ware, from Southampton do not exhibit evidence of consistent use (Jervis 2011a, 213), suggesting that these formed a distinctive class of serving vessel, perhaps being displayed alongside glass and metal vessels on cupboards in dining rooms (Weiss Adamson 2004, 158). The ceramic imports were considerably more abundant at the wealthier tenements under consideration (table 5; table 6). Saintonge products are widely distributed, but the highly decorated polychrome wares only occur in quantity in wealthier areas. Within Southampton, glass use is generally restricted to higher status tenements, being recovered from Bull Hall and Cuckoo Lane, but being absent from poorer tenements (see Tyson 2000). When considered together it can be suggested that at least some of the highly decorated ceramic vessels were used to decant liquids into glass drinking vessels.

In contrast, in neither the poorer areas of Southampton, nor in the nearby small towns, did a distinctive class of serving vessel emerge. Indeed, the jug assemblage from York Buildings shares more in common with those from towns such as Romsey and Christchurch, than with the wealthy merchant's quarter of Southampton. Within these assemblages, a smaller range of jugs fulfilled the whole range of functions required of this form, contrasting the clear distinctions in jug use observed by Blinkhorn (1999) at West Cotton (see above). Occasional imported or highly decorated vessels are found in rural locations; for example, French wares were identified at the potentially higher status rural site at Hatch Warren, but the low quantities suggest only occasional demand for these vessels in a limited range of contexts.

Food consumption practices leave little physical trace compared to cooking practices. However, analysis of the distribution of vessels with an apparent serving function is instructive. Within Southampton, ceramic and glass serving vessels are only found in assemblages from wealthier tenements. In the small towns, and in other areas of Southampton, serving was not a spatially segregated activity. Jugs, for example, were used for a range of activities of which serving was but one within lesser households. The majority of serving vessels are likely to have been made from wood, so evidence of food consumption will always be limited to some degree by taphonomic conditions which mask the true nature of material culture assemblages relating to serving and eating.

Tracing relationships and forming identities [a]

Having reconstructed some of the relationships which formed between people, foodstuffs and material culture , we can consider the effect of these food practices upon identity formation.

Life on the edge: small towns and the urban fringe [b]

Relationships formed with animals and the land played distinctive roles in the formation of multiple senses of urban life. Animals are drawn into many simultaneous forms of social and economic relationships with people, for example, a source of income, food and pride (see Law and Mol 2008). Across the study area the picture is more subtle than a rural-urban divide in terms of meat consumption, with animals being variously exploited, and therefore gaining multiple meanings, in the emergence and maintenance of differing social contexts. By acting

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as traction and providing secondary products, animals were enrolled in the maintenance of rural communities and developed a particular place within rural society. Human-animal relationships appear to have transcended the urban / rural divide, leading to the emergence of semi-rural identities amongst those living at the periphery of urban life in small towns. The example of Alton – a weaving centre and centre of the cattle trade – is revealing. Here, the reliance on older sheep and cattle is greater than in other similar towns, perhaps reflecting how these animals developed a particular economic meaning through being exploited in ways comparable to the surrounding countryside. Likewise, in Romsey, the discovery of ceramic bowls likely used in dairying suggests agricultural activity within the urban environment. Through the varying economic relationships with animals, and the effects of these upon diet, the utilization of meat created contrasts between towns, giving each a particular character which was embedded within relationships which transcend the urban-rural divide. It is not only between towns, but within them, that this can be observed. This blurring of urban consumption and rural production can also be observed through the stratigraphic and botanical evidence from York Buildings in Southampton, where it appears that horticulture was practiced to some degree within the town's limits.

Ceramic evidence suggests simple cooking techniques also transcended this divide. Generally speaking, in lower-status urban and rural homes, cooking was a domestic activity, undertaken by women as part of a suite of activities through which masculine and feminine identities were defined, as demonstrated, for example by references to household accidents recorded in coroner's records (Hanawalt 1986, 116; Woolgar 2010, 12). Whereas typically female economic activities (such as baking and brewing) transcended the urban-rural divide, males activities were more varied between town and country, although in both they can largely be

classed as forms of labouring (Hanawalt 1986, 113-116). In both towns and country, men operated as craft specialists, however, the need to focus upon agriculture in the countryside meant that this activity was more intensive in towns, leading to the formation of identities which were fossilized not just through participation in craft practices but also the urban landscape (for example English Street in Southampton, on which the iron working site at York Buildings is located, became known as 'the street of the smiths' (Platt 1973, 52). Those living at the edge of towns were geographically marginalized (Lilley 2009, 147) and their food practices appear to attest the permeable nature of the urban / rural boundary, with experiences on the periphery of towns not being too far removed from those of rural life. The effect of food practices amongst these peripheral communities was to create an experience in which their place in urban society was ambiguous and marginal (see also Attreed 2002, 591). Women engaged with foodstuffs in a distinctive way, fostering a greater ambiguity in their sense of urban identity, in contrast to men who were drawn more closely into urban economic life through a focus upon craft, rather than agricultural, production which created a clear contrast between urban and rural life. Further overlap with rural living may have been created through the occasional tending to gardens, the use of common land and seasonal labouring on town fields, all of which contributed to the emergence of particular and ambiguous (in the sense they were not distinctively and exclusively urban) urban identities amongst those at the geographic and economic periphery of town life.

Enacting specialist identities: butchers and cooks [b]

Evidence of butchery is limited to the larger towns (Southampton and Winchester), indicating this to be a distinctively urban form of specialist identity. A number of factors contributed to

the emergence of specialist butchers in medieval towns; the increasing wealth of urban

populations, the need to divide carcasses for craft resources (hides, horn) as well as meat and

a prevailing increase in specialist craft activities within towns (Seetah 2007, 23-5).

Furthermore, butchery provided the ability to enact meat as a mediator of social hierarchy

through the differential consumption of meat joints, both within and between households.

Within larger urban households, such as that at Bull Hall in Southampton, the ceramic

evidence, as well as the presence of exotic foodstuffs, indicates the presence of specialist

cooks. These did exist within large rural households (Woolgar 2010, 12), but the density of

wealthy households in large towns created conditions in which a distinctive group of

professional cooks could emerge in both urban and rural households. Greater

professionalization appears to have led to a greater quantity of male cooks (Woolgar 2010,

12), meaning that cooking was not an intrinsically female activity (although women likely

continued to work within kitchens in subsidiary roles). Gender roles could be re-defined

relationally as cooking emerged as a professionalized, and therefore regulated, 'craft' activity,

within the context of a regulated guild-based economic network (certainly by the end of our

period, in the fifteenth century, a guild of cooks was present in Winchester, for example;

Keene 1985, 333). The rules governing the treatment of food can also tell us something about

how people perceived these individuals; both in contemporary literature and in the wording

of rules these people appear to have been viewed with distrust (Carrel 2006, 187). This is

also true of rules in the Oak Book of Southampton, a fourteenth century text which outlines,

amongst other things, the need to adhere to specific weights and measures and treat food

waste in a hygienic manner (Studer 1910). Developing craft skill was a key component of

medieval artisan, masculine, identity, a means through which a man could prove himself not

to be a woman and also to demonstrate maturity and independence having gained these skills

through apprenticeship (Karras 2003, 150). Cooking, through the development of specialized

spaces and the use of specialist tools, such as the butter churns and ceramic pipkins, , became

such a 'craft-based' activity, being enacted as a skilled and regulated, masculine craft activity,

enrolled in the formation of a distinctively urban form of masculine identity, albeit one

viewed with suspicion, perhaps in part because of its domestic connotations with women (see

for example Ward (2002, 3) for comment on the distrust of women within medieval society).

This discussion makes emphasises how gendered identities do not exist in isolation, but are

one facet of a broader sense of identity (see also Baumgarten 2008, 214). In the case of

medieval Hampshire, gendered identities were closely connected to the emergence of

specialist, professional, identities which in turn emerge from the particular circumstances of

urban life.

Food and status: urban elites? [b]

Urban society was undoubtedly hierarchical, however clear differences in the demography of

small and large towns can be observed, with an 'urban elite' principally being a feature of

towns such as Southampton and Winchester. In Southampton, this was a mercantile elite,

whose social, political, personal and economic activities underpinning their position within

the social hierarchy (Platt 1973, 92); this was a social status which was not inherent within

individuals, but was earned through the maintenance of relationships with people and things.

Indeed, the service culture which underpinned the hierarchy of medieval society, from the

service of nobles and royalty down to the apprentices and domestic servants of towns, was a

relational one, in which one's social position was maintained through action (Horrox 1994, 62). The need to retain this hierarchy created conditions in which food and material culture were used by people to form particular identities, by displaying wealth, good taste and using food to mediate of social relationships, for example through the giving of gifts (see Woolgar 2011). The nature of these relationships with food enacted animals in a very different way to in those peripheral homes, with a focus of perception being consumption, through which they became enrolled in processes of social distinction.

It must be considered that animals played a distinctive role for rural elites too, with them forming components of rents or fees paid by their tenants. Furthermore, urban and rural elites were not distinctive from one another. Roger Norman, probably the richest burgess in mid-fourteenth-century Southampton, had lands in the nearby rural areas of Millbrook, Shirley and Chilworth, as well as in other counties (Platt 1973, 253), whilst other burgesses had more modest rural holdings. Foodstuffs, and animals in particular, can be shown to have played a mediatory role in status relationships which transcended the urban-rural divide. Rural and urban wealth and status were closely connected, meaning that the same people utilized food in a variety of ways to maintain status both through its consumption and acquisition, although the means in which it was used to achieve this varied between town and country. One area where this overlap between urban and rural elites is most evident is in the consumption of wild animals. Within the study area these were only recovered from wealthier households in Southampton and the higher status rural site at Hatch Warren. Hunting and the consumption of these species was a distinctively high status activity, with strict regulation limiting individuals potential to acquire and consume these animals. Through enacting these rules in both the acquisition and consumption of wild animals the (legitimate) formation of

relationships with these animals re-enforced a particular status identity, in turn enacting them as status entities (Pluskowski 2007, 40-2).

Rules of etiquette and sumptuary laws also governed the consumption of foodstuffs, in town and country (Kowaleski 2006, 244; Woolgar 2011, 11). Serving, on formal occasions at least, furthered the image of wealth and virtue that the consumption of these animals, along with exotic foodstuffs, developed. Serving practices within elite households imitated those of the court which in turn cited religious practice (see Phillips 2005, 147 for a discussion 14th-15th century textual evidence). By receiving food in this way, as well as through making gifts of food, people could build associations with these institutions and thus further an image of virtue, wealth and class (Woolgar 2011, 7). By enacting written and unwritten rules of etiquette food, dining spaces and material culture all became enrolled in processes of identity building and the mediation of social hierarchy. The serving vessels found in Southampton's mercantile households, for example, played a role in mediating social hierarchy within the home, forcing the relationship of deference and servitude between servant and master and provided a medium, through the order of service, by which hierarchy and social order could be explicitly displayed and enforced. Furthermore, the display of animal parts, the presence of animal iconography on material culture (Pluskowksi 2007, 39) and the linkages displayed through the presence of unusual material culture allowed the host to create an atmosphere through which their wealth and social connections could be made apparent. Food was therefore enrolled in processes of identity formation surrounding the maintenance of social hierarchy in power structures which transcended town and country, however distinctly contextual translations of these processes emerged. In Southampton, for example, the emphasis was on the negotiation of trading and familial bonds amongst the mercantile elite, a

process which was both the product of and contributed to the re-making of, society in Southampton. We can consider that individuals of this status set out to use foodstuffs to form a particular identity; however the agency behind this intentionality was spun through the broader associations which developed within and maintained urban life, in which individuals were able to develop and then maintain a position in the urban hierarchy. Clearly food played a role in the emergence and maintenance of elite identities in urban and rural context. However, the nature of these identities, and of the relationships behind them, was contextual, with food creating linked, but distinctive, translations of elite identity in town and country.

Conclusions [a]

By tracking the effects of the relationships formed through food practice we can begin to unlock the complexity of urban identities in relation to the medieval countryside, allowing material culture studies, and particularly a focus on household consumption, to contribute to a debate which has largely been dominated by topographic and historical studies (e.g. Slater 2005; Goddard 2011; see Dyer and Lilley 2012 for a recent review) and considerations of economics rather than lived urban experience (e.g. Astill 1985, 49; Dyer 2003, 99-101). It is clear that although general trends emerge, no clear urban identity emerges within medieval Hampshire. This applies both in comparison with rural areas in comparisons within single towns. Instead, we see food practices mediating varying experiences of urban life, through which urban translations of gendered, status and professional identities emerge. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that animals and material culture were employed in various ways, meaning different things to urban and rural populations and to members of these populations. Those at the periphery appear to have developed particularly ambiguous identities, with

gendered perceptions of the urban/rural divide also potentially emerging. The nature of the urban economy allowed craft specialization, with the butcher playing a facilitating role, providing the raw materials for craft activities and dividing meat so that it could be enrolled in processes of social differentiation within towns. The emergence of, largely male, professional cooks and the development of cooking as a craft activity caused gender roles surrounding cooking to be re-negotiated. The consumption of food, in terms both of diet and serving etiquette, defined urban and rural elites, creating overlaps between urban and rural life, but also creating distinctive urban and rural translations of the perception of animals and foodstuffs, particularly in relation to acquisition. Urban identity did not exist in isolation, but through the study of food practices can be shown to have filtered into other facets of self definition, in relation to gender, age and economic standing, through participation in activities and the formation of relationships with foodstuffs and material culture which were distinctively urban in nature.

The broader implications of this study are threefold. Firstly, through combining environmental and artefactual data it has been possible to extend beyond a focus on diet or a consideration of the occurrence of ceramic types to move towards an understanding of cuisine; the practices of food consumption, through which identities emerged and social relationships were mediated. Clearly publication of the ceramics from Winchester and faunal remains from Southampton would greatly enhance this ongoing and vibrant research theme. Secondly, the study has demonstrated the value of the micro-scale analysis of assemblages, to focus on heterogeneity rather than homogeneity, allowing us to construct multiple narratives of urban life in medieval England. Finally, by considering how these practices led to the emergence of identities, rather than reflecting them, and decentring the agency for identity

formation, it has been possible to explore the multi-faceted nature of identities, and to consider how the same animals or objects could be enacted in the formation of multiple identities. Such approaches allow us to see beyond assemblages as reflections of identity or intentionality, to explore how they were entangled in the processes of their formation.

Acknowledgements [a]

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