

## REVIEW

Howard H. and Morris E. L. (eds.) (1981) Production and Distribution: a ceramic viewpoint. Oxford. B.A.R. International Series 120. Price: £16.

This volume represents the results of a colloquium held at Southampton in October 1980. The papers can be divided into five broad areas according to their content: Ethnographic (nos. 2, 10, 11, 15, 18/19, 23), Theoretical (nos. 14 and 24), Prehistoric (nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9), Roman (nos. 7, 8, 12, and 13) and Medieval (nos. 16, 17, 20, 21, and 22), though there are, of course, overlaps within each. One paper, that by Balfet, (18/19) appears in both English and French.

Despite its commendably rapid publication, this volume represented little that was radically new by the time it appeared. Several of the contributions seem to be summaries of earlier papers and are based on work often already known to those versed in ceramics, whilst others summarize forthcoming publications.

There are five contributions of immediate relevance to medieval ceramicists. Numbers 16 and 17 are papers by M. A. Brisbane and C. J. Arnold. Although approached in slightly different ways, both deal with the identification and character of early Anglo-Saxon markets from a study of the production and distribution of the ceramics of this period. Each stresses the need to move away from the traditional Myres' stylistic approach to Anglo-Saxon pottery and the great potential, as yet unrealized, of fabric analysis in the identification of production and distribution patterns for our understanding of the social and economic aspects of society in the post-Roman period.

Vince's paper (no. 21) shows the type of results which can be achieved despite, as he himself says, 'the uneven state of archaeological research'. A comprehensive and useful summary of the main pottery groups (groups isolated using typological and fabric analysis) found in southern England from the 10th - 13th centuries is given, and their main production centres. He then charts the changes in production and is able to relate these to the changes in the economy of this period.

Streeten (no. 22) gives a balanced view of the relationship between archaeology and history in the decipherment of the activities of medieval pottery industries in Sussex. He continues to describe how work is currently focused on establishing the distribution of given wares by relating sherds to kiln wasters through microscopic textural analysis, before finally giving a tentative model derived from sources from both disciplines relating kiln sites to markets.

The paper by Redman and Myres (no. 20) is in a rather different vein to those just discussed. The authors, working at Qsar-es-Seghir, Morocco, are able to use ethnographic evidence from the area as a guide to formulating questions relevant to the study of pottery at their site. They present something quite unusual in medieval archaeology: an explicit statement of their aims, methodology and results in a way which might profitably be employed by others in the formulation of their own research designs.

We have chosen to mention two further papers which are of general interest in their use of ethnoarchaeology as an aid to interpreting the ceramic record.

The paper by Peacock (no. 11) provides a useful summary of his, now published book Pottery in the Roman World (1982) which offers through ethnoarchaeology a general model for different forms of organization within the Roman pottery industry. A fact clearly stressed, even in this short paper, is the need for immediate ethnoarchaeological work to be undertaken among remaining 'primitive' potters before they and their craft disappear.

One might describe the paper by Hodder (no. 14) as ethnoarchaeological, but of a different tradition to that of Peacock. Here Hodder emphasizes, as usual using examples from Baringo and Azande (Kenya), the culturally unique contexts of pottery production and use. The reader must form his own opinion as to whether we can recognize archaeologically such unique cultural contexts as those described.

In summary it may be said of this book that it reflects the current trend of ceramic studies away from the purely chronological and typological, towards the use of pottery in elucidating the broader social and economic context in which it served. Recent developments such as fabric analysis and ethnoarchaeology have been used to this end and, along with the need for further work in these fields, emerge as clear aims of this book.

However, despite providing a useful source of references and abstracts its price places it beyond the reach of many who might profitably have used it.

P. T. Nicholson and H. L. Patterson  
Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, University of Sheffield