

pipes, is barely mentioned. There appear to be few well dated and closed excavated groups and no consideration of the problems of dealing with the myriad pipe fragments which turn up on most urban excavations, or the uses to which pipe evidence may be put. Much vital information appears to be either obscurely published or held by private individuals. In spite of this both volumes are a must for any serious post-medieval post-excavator.

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### REVIEW

#### Corpus van Middeleeuws aardewerk uit gesloten vondstcomplexen in Nederland en Vlaanderen

eds. D.P. Hallewas, T.J. Hoekstra, H.L. Janssen, K.Vlierman (Netherlands) and F. Verhaeghe (Flanders); (Loose A4).

Although the first publication of this new Corpus was issued in 1985 it seems to have received little notice in Britain. The present note is intended to summarise what has been achieved so far and to assess its importance for readers outside the Low Countries.

The object of the Corpus, summarised in a general introduction and instructions circulated with the first three groups in 1985, is to provide a systematic, standardised method of publishing closed, well dated, pottery assemblages from the Netherlands and Flanders. These would preferably consist of completely restorable vessels, although important sherd groups would also be considered. Previously unpublished material would be given priority. The term 'medieval' is not taken too literally and pottery groups dating from the 8th to the 18th centuries would be accepted.

Each group involves a summary introduction presenting information about dating, context, the general nature of the ceramic and other finds and bibliography. Each vessel then occupies two A4 pro-forma pages: the first is a tabulation of standardised information about the pot, the second is a conventional drawing. The instructions are clear and detailed. The form has four main sections. The first provides brief details of site, context number, location and accession number, dating and bibliography. The second covers technology in the following order: method of production (on the wheel, moulded etc.); size, density and type of inclusions; porosity, hardness and any peculiarities of the body itself; surface treatment, including type of glaze, slip and decorating technique; type of kiln atmosphere; colour of body; any other technical details such as cracks, drops of glaze etc. The third section allows the researcher to list any significant evidence which post-dates the actual production of the pot, such as wear-marks, sooting, secondary burning or chemical reactions in the soil, while the fourth allows an attribution of production centre, date and use to be offered. The second page of each

entry is reserved for a conventional drawing of the pot. The instructions given for this are very detailed in order to achieve standardisation and comparability. They include the numbering system, type of scale, thickness of line etc., to be used and explain how incomplete pots, individual parts of pots such as handles and feet, cross-sections etc. are to be drawn. A system for shading painted pottery is laid down, otherwise no stippling or line shading is to be used.

This system has now been used to publish four groups:-

C.M.A. 01 and 02.

Aardewerk uit de inventaris van twee laat Middeleeuwse vrachtschepen in Oostelijk Flevoland K. Vlierman, 1985, 21 pages.

C.M.A. 03.

Aardewerk uit een 15e-eeuwse beerput van het Johanniterklooster op het Vredenburg te Utrecht F.M.E. Snieder & J.E. Dilz, 1985, 80 pages.

C.M.A. 04.

Ceramiek uit een laat 13e-eeuwse vulling van een immuniteitssloot van de Sint Paulusabdij te Utrecht M. Smit & J.E. Dilz, 1987, 74 pages.

In addition C.M.A. has also recently produced its first publication in what is described as 'Series B':-

Ceramiek uit een laat 18de-eeuwse afvalkuil op het voormalig Zuiderkerkhof te Groningen H. van Gangelen, G. Kortekaas & A. Carmiggelt, 1987, 46 pages.

This rubbish pit group does not fit into the criteria considered essential for inclusion in Series A, that is, the group is not certainly dated by external evidence. The connection between the pit and the adjacent barracks, for which there is good documentary evidence, is not absolutely established. Nevertheless, groups of this type, with considerable intrinsic interest, which might never otherwise be published, have persuaded the editors to publish a Series B. The basic documentation is the same as that required for Series A, but the text introducing the group is more detailed and the drawings are presented without the pro-forma page describing each vessel separately.

This attempt to bring pottery reporting up to an acceptable standard and to provide a means of publishing the most significant groups with one system is an admirable one and has already achieved much. Despite the Guidelines and DOE/HBMC directives pottery published in Britain is still very variably recorded, indifferently documented and idiosyncratically represented. We continue to accept a reporting system which does not allow true comparisons to be made between material from different sites except by the expensive method of carrying one piece to be examined in the presence of the other. The first four groups published by C.M.A. show the way forward towards a more objective, reliable and repeatable recording system and in addition present some very important material. Two shipwreck assemblages, one (N 5 O.F1.), of the first half of the 14th century, and the other (K 73/74 O.F1.) of the second half of the 15th, give an insight into the richness of this type of source for Dutch archaeology. A large, rich cess pit group from the Cloisters of St

John's Hospital at Vredenburg Castle, Utrecht, which is sealed by 1529, and a ditch fill from St Paul's Abbey in Utrecht which pre-dates 1281, but is not earlier than 1275, complete the material published so far. These provide the beginning of a more secure structure for the dating of both imported and locally made pottery in the Low Countries. The St Paul's Abbey group, for example, has small quantities of Paffrath, Andenne and Pingsdorf wares, also some highly decorated (Flemish?) ware and ?locally produced red and grey earthenwares. Most important is a large group of 24 proto-stoneware jars, possibly from a Limburg production centre, and a pair of near-stoneware Siegburg beakers, confirming that these were already getting into the area by the fourth quarter of the 13th century. The wreck groups and the later cess pit assemblage from the Vredenburg allow the study of Siegburg forms to be put on a more secure footing.

These first C.M.A. publications succeed in their main objectives. A variety of authors have produced standardised and directly comparable texts dealing with a wide range of pottery. The illustrations and notes throughout are admirably presented and lucid. The loose-leaf format facilitates easy comparison and will allow corrections and additions to be made with no disturbance. A great deal of paper is involved - with single-sided printing and each pot taking up two pages, this is inevitable. The Vredenburg group, for example, consists of 35 illustrated pots and takes up 80 pages (i.e. 160 sides). Using an old fashioned reduction of one quarter, the whole of this might have been published in 5 or 6 pages (10 or 12 sides). The C.M.A. system is, however, cheaply reproduced and much is gained when every pot is dealt with in exactly the same way. The reader knows exactly what to expect and can make his or her own comparisons with ease. The more conventionally published 18th century rubbish pit group from Groningen is much more efficient on paper consumption, with no pro-formas in use and more than one pot to a page of drawings, but the loss of clarity and awkwardness in looking for information about a particular vessel adds weight to the method of the Series A reports. This set of publications is most welcome and might, with profit, be emulated elsewhere.

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