

always clear whether one is dealing with estimated vessel equivalents or sherd counts.

This is not to say that these volumes are not useful and well-finished catalogues of the different assemblages — they are logically structured, internally consistent and relatively easy to use. These publications are to be recommended to both serious scholars and interested amateurs working in the field of European medieval and post-medieval finds, and particularly to those interested in pottery and vessel glass.

Frank Meddens

A. Mars *Keramik aus Gennep. Archäologische Untersuchung einer Töpferwerkstatt des 18. Jahrhunderts.* Janssen Pers, Gennep 1991. 143 pp, 80 assorted plates and illustrations; catalogue with 104 line drawings. ISBN 90-900448-4.

Although somewhat outside the normal chronological scope of the MPRG's interests, and concerned with slipwares which rarely found their way outside the region in which they were produced (Limburg and Brabant, Holland), this publication, available in both Dutch and German, is noteworthy for several reasons.

The site at Gennep, in north Limburg, was excavated by the ROB in 1988; the speedy preparation of such a handsome publication of the pottery, in itself an achievement, must be commended for three further reasons. Firstly, the excavations were intended to elucidate the history of Gennep up to the town fire of 1597. The 18th-century pottery kilns were an unexpected discovery, which fired the local interest to such an extent that they became a major research objective. Secondly, if pottery specialists are an endangered species in England, they are still less common in the Netherlands, where generalism prevails and archaeologists still have the unenviable task of preparing not only their excavation reports amidst many other duties, but their finds reports also. The appointment of an archaeologist/pottery specialist to deal specifically with the Gennep kiln post-excavation and finds analysis has resulted in an impressive turnaround time for this publication. The fact that the post had to be funded by sponsorship, raised in Germany as well as in Holland, shows commendable determination on the part of the site director, Henk Stoeper, and the fund-raising committee. The publication, on a shoe-string budget, of what will undoubtedly become a handbook, testifies equally to the abilities of the author, and to the wisdom of this course of action.

The introduction states that the volume is aimed at three groups of reader: the residents of Gennep, the visitors to the travelling exhibition on the pottery, which will ultimately be installed in the museum at Gennep, and students of 18th-century pottery (including modern potters). Like the pottery it presents, this book is thus designed to have a popular appeal, but it is also an academic work and a model worthy of emulation.

Gennep lies to the west of the river Meuse, upstream from Nijmegen, at the northern end of a pottery-production zone between the Rhine and the Meuse, where numerous kilns have operated since the late 16th century. The products of these kilns mainly comprise 'popular' wares, mostly bowls and dishes, made in a red-firing clay with simple designs in white slip and a clear or green-tinted glaze. Previous research had already demonstrated the importance of Gennep as a potting centre, but the 1988 excavation at the 'Oude Doelen' provided the first proof of this activity. The results of different aspects of the post-excavation study are detailed in different chapters of the book, each headed by a brief summary.

The first two chapters of the book set the geographical and archaeological context and describe the three-roomed potter's dwelling with cellar, the workshop, remains of kilns, and associated waster dumps. Finds dating to before the fire of 1597 and between 1597 and the potting phase are also summarised.

The third chapter introduces the local earthenwares, while the fourth (arguably the most interesting) discusses the composition and dating of two specific assemblages, one from a 16th- or early 17th-century well backfilled in the 18th century, the other dump of wasters representing at least two kiln firings. Had only the latter been excavated, the dating of the site would have been harder to pin down, although on the evidence of later groups from elsewhere in the town an estimated date of *c.* 1750 is arrived at for this group. The discovery of the well is much more helpful, since it includes not only two dated bowls (one of 1724, the other incomplete), which give a useful *tpq* for the context, but domestic rubbish as well as kiln waste, which allows a tighter dating than would otherwise be possible. The clay pipes give a date in the second quarter of 18th century, while the absence of Staffordshire Creamware, Pearlware and salt-glazed stoneware, which are common in later 18th-century groups in Holland, is used to support the suggestion that most of the pottery dates to pre-1750; it is proposed that the final backfilling of the well dates to 1750-1760.

Chapters 5 to 7 deal respectively with raw materials, technology and decorative motifs, and the kiln and firing process. These are liberally illustrated with photographs showing details of the pottery, assorted kiln furniture, the kiln remains at Gennep, together with comparative material such as a surviving late 19th-century kiln and a potter practising today in the vicinity of Gennep. Of interest are slip-trailing horns with quill nibs, and a mould used for the applied Rococo-style decoration of the elaborate 18th-century stove tiles, fragments of which were also found. Sgraffito and other complex decorated wares, however, form a very small part of the assemblage.

Chapter 8 discusses the functional uses of the local pottery. This is again well-illustrated with photographs of different form types, and a colour 'still life' showing reconstructed vessels filled with local produce (including a mug of foaming beer). The forms and decorative motifs were clearly influenced by other potteries in the Lower Rhineland, and have closer affinities with the German stoneware and slipware traditions than with the earlier slipwares of Utrecht or North Holland.

The assemblage is divided into three main categories. The first, domestic vessels (cooking/table wares and other functions), is described in detail; the second and third (wares used in the workshop, and building materials) are not discussed, although they are noted in other chapters. Two types of cooking pot are present (derivatives of the medieval 'grape'), produced in a range of sizes, together with a range of bowls, dishes and plates; the bowl forms are clarified by a series of comparative rim profiles, although these are not given identifying numbers. Two types of jug, both derived from stoneware forms, are present, with a variety of drinking vessels. The latter include handled bowls/beakers, small bowls and saucers; of interest is a possible attempt to copy contemporary Staffordshire Blackwares. A range of storage jars was also produced. Other forms include lidded, two-handled pans with tripod feet and colanders (for the preparation of dairy products), chamber pots, apothecary jars, braziers/fuming pots, lanterns, lids and flower pots with applied lion masks.

This section is complemented by an illustrated catalogue of the different form types, prefaced by a key to the information listed beside each line drawing (usually at 1:4), which includes details of stratigraphic location, dating, glaze, decoration and dimensions. The conventions used for the slip decoration, although quite different from those in the recent publication of the slipwares from Enkhuizen, are equally successful.

From an archaeological viewpoint this publication is deficient

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in that it makes little attempt to present any statistical analyses of the pottery. Details of the specific dimensions of individual vessels are listed in the text as well in the catalogue, while some frustratingly incomplete totals and percentages of different ware types are quoted for the well group described in Chapter 3, yet there is no overall indication as to the relative frequency of the different forms, and basic facts such as the total quantity of pottery recovered (either weight or sherd count) remain a mystery. Similarly, although an effort is made to set the material within the context of the Lower Rhenish slipware tradition, this is more from the folk art perspective than an art historical one.

However, as noted above, the book was not primarily aimed at a specialist, scientific market. While this seems a missed opportunity, the lack of quantification is a criticism which should perhaps be levelled at Dutch finds reports in general, for

the information presented on the Gennep pottery conforms well to the standards set by the publications for Kampen, Nijmegen and Deventer (see review by F. Meddens). Perhaps it is intended to supplement this publication with a more detailed analysis of the Gennep material, as Clevis has done, (see above, p. 55–64) for *Jacobakannen*? The material is surely there.

These points aside, this publication is clear and well-produced and can be enjoyed by specialists and non-specialists alike; the text achieves that delicate balance between simplicity and detail, while the excellent layout and illustrative material amply demonstrates the benefits of collaboration between authors, R.O.B design team and publishers from the inception of the project.

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