



Reviews

The Study of Later Prehistoric Pottery: General Policies. Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group, Occasional Paper No. 1, 1991, 15 pp.

The Study of Later Prehistoric Pottery: Guidelines for Analysis and Publication. Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group, Occasional Paper No. 2, 1992, 46 pp.

The first two occasional papers from the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG), which was formed in 1988, admirably outline its intentions and governing principles.

The introduction to Occasional Paper No. 1 establishes the Group's objectives as follows: 'To highlight general principles and promote policies to improve the effectiveness of ceramic research'; 'to provide guidelines on methodological approaches to later prehistoric ceramic studies'; 'to establish standards in the reporting of such studies'; 'to promote wider appreciation of the results of later prehistoric ceramic research'. The body of this document addresses the first of these aims under the headings: Academic Issues; Methodological Principles and Issues; Education; Organisation and Funding of Later Prehistoric Ceramic Research; Personnel. Within each of these sections sub-headings are employed to good effect, making the document clear and comprehensible. A final section summarises the main policies arising from the previous pages.

Occasional Paper No. 2 is devoted to the second of the objectives stated in its predecessor. After a lengthy introduction the recommended methodologies appear under five main headings. The first of these, 'Variables', is split into fifteen subsections which deal with every aspect of pottery classification, from fabric, form and decoration, to residues, perforations and re-use. The following sections: 'What to Quantify, What to Choose, What to Write?'; 'Pottery Illustrations for Archive'; 'Publication'; 'Storage of Pottery', are all much more brief. They do, however, demonstrate a depth of understanding of the aspects of ceramic analysis that practitioners want such documents to address. This is reinforced by the ten appendices, which deal with fabric coding, the identification and categorisation of inclusions, firing conditions and report formats; finally there is a bibliography. This is, therefore, an exhaustive methodological survey, and commendably concise with it, which makes it easy to understand and use.

Both documents are intelligently organised and clearly written, and act as an excellent testament to the well-directed dynamism of the PCRG.

Readers of this journal may be wondering why these publications have been brought to their attention, and a discussion of their contents will probably not have made this much more clear. The MPRG has, of course, produced its own Guidelines. It may seem interesting to compare these with the second PCRG offering, but actually it isn't. The latter document is much the better of the two, as one might expect from something produced nearly ten years later.

Besides this, a much more important and interesting point can be made here. Much of the content of both the PCRG papers appears in the existing MPRG guidelines, or would appear now

in an updated version. Methods of ceramic classification, description and quantification are apparently much the same, whatever the date of the assemblage in question, while the discussion of other methods of analysis (PCRG Occasional Paper No. 2) is equally relevant to ceramicists of any period. For cross-context joins, for example, it is recommended that '*the presence of sherds which join from different contexts should be investigated and recorded to assist in understanding depositional processes and chronological relationships*'.

The same may be said of the objectives presented in the PCRG Occasional Paper No. 1. Take as an example the statement that '*ceramic studies can provide evidence about a wide range of issues including: aspects of manufacture and ceramic technology*'. There is obviously common ground here, which ceramicists of all periods should perhaps be discussing together. It is becoming more and more clear that, especially in artefact studies, chronological boundaries, although once a convenient contrivance, now have less relevance in discussions of the development of aims and methodologies. No criticism of the PCRG is intended here. These publications represent significant progress for the Group, and demonstrate the need for a wider ceramic debate that must include prehistorians, Romanists, medievalists and post-medievalists. Each period group should retain its identity, and this will doubtless be reinforced by the continued publication of documents such as those reviewed here. In this instance however, the principal value of these Occasional Papers, apart from illustrating the vitality of the PCRG, is that they show that there is a need to communicate and co-operate. This may not have been the original intention of the PCRG, but it is hoped that they, and the other period groups, will recognise this opportunity, and take it.

Duncan H. Brown

D. C. Mynard and R. J. Zeevat, *Great Linford.* Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series No. 3, 1992. ISBN 0 949003 01 00. 394 pp, 30 plates (6 in colour), 194 figures, 12 overlays.

In 1967, the Milton Keynes Development Corporation began to absorb several villages in Buckinghamshire into the mass of roundabouts and housing estates that is now Milton Keynes. With the rapid development of the new town, the level of archaeological work increased and, from 1974 to 1977, the Milton Keynes Unit carried out excavations at Great Linford. Further work was carried out in the parish church in 1980. This volume brings together the archaeological, historical, architectural and artefactual results from those excavations.

This review will concentrate on the sections on the pottery, but brief comment will also be made on the rest of the report, especially in its relationship to the pottery.

The layout of the volume follows the conventional pattern: documentary research, structures, finds and pottery are allocated to separate chapters. The detailed historical evidence in the first four chapters gives a useful background to the