

description of the Anglian wares Mainman demonstrates once again her aptitude for identifying fabrics and undertaking comparative research. The section on foreign imports discusses, in a clear and comprehensive manner, the origins and distribution of many of the types now recognised at Ipswich, London, Hamwic, Quentovic and beyond. The discussion presented here usefully summarises old and more recent work and adds to the debate with research prompted by the Fishergate material. Mainman discusses thin-section and neutron activation analysis on a range of black and grey wares from York, Ipswich and Quentovic and enters the debate on their origins with a vigour that reflects her broad knowledge of other English and Continental sources. The buff wares and Mayen ware have also been characterised using thin-sectioning, demonstrating a thoroughness that lends considerable weight to her discussion. The discussion section itself is also concise and thoughtful and adeptly places the Fishergate finds in context with other Anglian/Middle Saxon/Merovingian trading sites.

The remainder of the catalogue deals with the pottery of the Scandinavian, medieval and post-medieval periods with a brevity excused by the fact that these wares have already been characterised in previous York fascicules. The following section, *Interpretation of the Pottery*, relates the ceramics to the structural evidence from Fishergate. The Anglian phases are represented by pits and buildings, and the pottery is related mainly to their chronology. This evidence is used to demonstrate the development of ceramics in Anglian York, with an indication that imported wares occur less frequently in the later phases. This is of interest when one sees that the same observation was also made for Hamwic (Timby 1988, 111). The discussion of the later medieval pottery and structures is similarly comprehensive. In the 11th century a church was built on the site, and a Gilbertine priory established there in the late 12th century. Much of the pottery was recovered from deposits related to construction, while some was recovered from the grave fills, and very little can be related to the use of the buildings. Nevertheless, a full discussion and quantification is presented. Material from construction deposits in urban locations is often neglected in favour of the more productive pit groups and this work will provide a valuable comparison with similar groups in other towns. The post-Dissolution material is also of some interest and includes some fine Cistercian wares.

The final section, *General Discussion and Conclusions*, summarises the value of the entire assemblage. The Anglian material is obviously considered to be of greatest significance. The discussion brings in evidence from elsewhere in the city, as the nature and development of the settlement, together with its role as a trading centre are confidently considered. The material from the Gilbertine priory is also realistically summarised in a section which admirably winds up a thoroughly professional piece of work.

It is clear that the principal significance of this report lies in the presentation of the Anglian pottery, but it should be noted that the treatment of the later medieval material has not suffered as a result. This fascicule is a site-specific pottery report and it is good to see that the author has not forgotten that. Nevertheless, it is those early finds which will be of most interest to non-local readers, of which there should be many, and so there are some broader points to consider.

This material fills a gap in our understanding of pre-Viking England and considerably enhances our knowledge of the pottery of that period. Mainman's work on the imported wares seems to emphasise the need for an updating of the commonly accepted classification. The Fishergate group is not large enough to warrant a comprehensive re-

working of a subject which currently lacks discipline and cohesion. In England, Hodges' classification, based on his work in Southampton (Hodges 1981) represents, for all its failings, an attempt to characterise imported wares of the middle Saxon period. Timby refined his work further, re-examining his original assemblage and introducing new finds (Timby 1988). Unfortunately she had no access to comparative European material, and her classification is essentially internal. Mainman cheerily, and somewhat confusingly, quotes from both bodies of work and bases her discussion of attributions on her own research on the Continent. Her analysis of the black and grey burnished wares refers to examples from York, Ipswich, Hamwic, London, Douai, St. Denis, Quentovic, Ghent, Lampernisse, Oudenburg, Bruges and Antwerp. It is good to see such a thorough discussion resulting from such a relatively small body of material, but this surely emphasises the need for the publication of a more complete review of Merovingian ceramics in England. It was expected that this would be delivered with the analysis of the imported wares from Ipswich and this may yet prove to be the case. However, with discoveries of imported pottery now being made at an increasing number of sites in England, most notably London and York, the need for a consistent system of classification is pressing. Furthermore, research in the source areas is also revealing a wealth of new information. The Fishergate publication serves to emphasise the gaps in our knowledge, showing how much there is still to be achieved and understood. Hodges' classification is shaky, and it is likely that Timby's fabric series will soon need to be re-worked. There is a danger that the analysis of the Ipswich material will be out of date before it is published. Previous students of this period, Coutts, Hodges and Timby, have sadly all moved on. With Fishergate, Ailsa Mainman has now made an important contribution to the study of Anglian pottery. Her continuing involvement will surely benefit the subject even further.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Clive Orton, Paul Tyers and Alan Vince, *Pottery in Archaeology*. Cambridge University Press, 1993. 270 pp., 66 figs. ISBN 0 521 25715 8 hardback (£40.00) ISBN 0 521 44597 3 paperback (£19.95).

This volume is one of the Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology which are 'reference handbooks designed for an international audience of professional archaeologists and archaeological scientists in universities, museums, research laboratories, field units, and the public service'. This particular book, the publishers claim, 'will be essential reading for students, field archaeologists and anyone interested in working with pottery'.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part, History and Potential, gives an interesting background to the history of pottery studies and introduces some of the

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themes which are expanded later concerning the archaeological potential of pottery studies. The second part, *Practicalities: a guide to pottery processing and recording*, will be of great value to those entering the field of ceramic research as well as being a useful reference for those already involved; and the final part, *Themes in Ceramic Studies*, covers a wide range of topics including pottery-making, fabrics, form, quantification, chronology, production and distribution, assemblages and sites, and pottery and function. Many of these themes were introduced in the earlier parts, but are considered again in a helpful and well-integrated discussion. The book, especially Part III, is well illustrated with diagrams, line drawings and plates gathered from a wide range of sources. There is an appendix which gives examples of recording systems, diagrams to assist in recording details of inclusions, and help with terminology. Twenty pages of references provide a useful introduction to what is becoming a vast bibliography on the subject.

The authors hope that each part of this volume will, to some extent, stand alone and will have appeal to different audiences: for example, Part II to practical archaeologists, Part III to more general readers etc., but they encourage readers at least to dip into all sections. This I would endorse. The layout of the volume, with its introduction of ideas and their development elsewhere, does allow parts to be read independently, but the whole volume has much to offer. It is a very thorough and complete work, so much so that it may be a little daunting for the novice. The authors, I'm sure, would be the first to say that there is no substitute for first hand experience, preferably with an experienced ceramicist to guide the intern. But this work will be very helpful in placing each stage in context and reminding the lonely figure who is confronted with a pile of sherds what a rich harvest of information can be gleaned from them.

The book is clearly designed with the student in view and it addresses that audience well. It is clearly written with minimal use of jargon (which is always explained), and

statistical analyses are introduced in a non-threatening and comprehensible way. It stresses the need to build on previous work and where possible not to re-define nomenclature, not to re-invent classification systems and, where no previous work has been done, to develop systems which are expandable and flexible enough to accommodate the results of accumulating research.

For a variety of reasons to do with orchestrating a three author volume, the book took twelve years from conception to publication. The acknowledgement section remarks on the irony that the publication comes '... at a time when pottery studies in the United Kingdom are at a low ebb, and many of our former colleagues have either lost their jobs or moved on to other things ...' and this struck me throughout. It could be said that the book is assuming an ideal world both of archaeology and pottery research. The desirability of integrating pottery research in initial research designs cannot be questioned but rarely happens in the rough world of competitive tendering where price is usually the over-riding consideration. The reality is that pottery research is more frequently being carried out by a free-lance specialist who might be geographically distant and who, with the best will in the world, cannot be fully integrated into an on-going project. Which specialist is chosen is again frequently governed by cost rather than merit. Other recommendations of the book, such as making available usable reference collections and keeping them up to date, rely on continuity of staff and funding.

All this is not the fault of the book and current circumstances should not detract from it. Pottery still has all the potential it ever had and we should still strive to maintain the high standards of recording and analysis described. The volume serves as a very useful summary of the discipline for the student, should be of interest to the practitioner and is recommended reading for the field archaeologist.

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