

sites and pottery findspots. There are also some good plates illustrating the various features of the pots under discussion, and a period-by-period summary of Staffordshire pottery from AD800-1600.

The second section starts with a list of all the known findspots and/or references to medieval pottery in the county and goes on to give a detailed description of the five principal ware types found. The description of each ware type includes sections on fabric, typology, dating, kiln types, ancillary structures and distribution. The catalogue which concludes the work illustrates examples of each ware at a scale of either 1:3 or 1:4.

This work is very neatly set out and produced with good quality line drawings and photographs. There are, however, some frustrating points about the layout and labelling which results in the reader constantly trying to keep the booklet open in two or three different places. For example, an endnote system has been used for the whole work and this appears on the final two pages. The bibliography, however, to which the endnotes invariably relate, has been placed in the middle of the work. There are similar problems with the illustrations. The production sites and findspots are shown on page 2, while the key relating to them is on pages 24-28; and nowhere does there seem to be an explanation of the different sized dots on the map. Likewise, figure 2 shows the county's rivers which are named in the text but not on the map. In this case some light relief is provided by the fact that the Flora of Staffordshire is cited in support of the assertion that the rivers in the south-west of the county flow south to join the Severn (page 5, endnote 9).

With regard to the text, the first part of this study is divided into ten sections. Unfortunately these have been omitted from the contents page where the first twenty-one pages are simply lumped together as 'main text'. In attempting to cover so much ground in the main text there are inevitably some weak spots where points are generalised or thinly presented. There is also a slight tension in places, between the text being descriptive of what has been done or prescriptive of what could be done. But these are minor points when compared with the usefulness of a single work, which not only draws together all the evidence for medieval pottery production in a county, but also provides a description and illustrated catalogue of the principal wares. The structured layout for each of the main wares in the second part is easy to follow and will provide a useful benchmark for future studies.

All too often excavation report follows excavation report with little opportunity to draw together the evidence for a town or region as a whole. The typological, chronological and distributional evidence provided in this work provides an excellent synthesis for Staffordshire which should be repeated for each of the other counties of Britain. Two of the stated aims of this work were to 'combine analysis of the pottery with an examination of the potential of documentary sources' and to create 'a framework within which finds analysts can operate'. In both of these aims it has succeeded. This is a most welcome publication which will make an invaluable reference work for years to come.

David Higgins

Sarah Jennings, *Medieval Pottery in the Yorkshire Museum*. 1992, The Yorkshire Museum. 56pp., 45 figs. and pls., 24 line drawings. ISBN 0 905807 04 9. Price £5.95 pb.

Sarah Jennings's attractively produced book is both a catalogue of the extensive collections of medieval pottery in the Yorkshire Museum, and an introduction to the medieval pottery sequence of York and the surrounding region. The book comprises three main parts. The first is a general introduction to medieval pottery. This section is aimed at the non-specialist, and explains clearly the information which may be derived from the analysis of medieval pottery. There are sections on *Pots in medieval households*, *Changes through time*, *Manufacturing, potters and production centres*, *Technology*, *Clays, fabrics, wares, traditions and names*, *Shapes and forms* and *Distribution*. A map of the region shows the various production centres and provenances of the pots in the collections, and a diagram illustrates the chronological lifespans of the main pottery types covered in the book, from the 11th to the 16th century.

The second section is a chronological account of the various types of pottery in the collections, describing source, appearance, form and function. Complete vessels in almost every fabric are illustrated both by colour and black-and-white photographs. The majority of wares are products of industries in the Yorkshire region, and there is also a section on the continental imports in the collections — Low Countries Redwares and Rhenish stonewares.

The third section of the book is a catalogue of the collections in the museum, preceded by a brief summary of the history of the collections over the last 150 years. The catalogue lists over 200 pots, most of which are jugs. It is arranged by ware, with a brief fabric description of each type, and a short description of each vessel, most of which are illustrated.

The high quality, not to mention quantity, of illustrations throughout this book contribute to its appeal. Almost every page is illustrated with either colour or black-and-white photographs, line drawings of vessels or details, or scenes from manuscript illuminations showing pots in use. That the text might have benefitted from more extensive editing and proof-reading is a minor point which detracts little from the content. The fact that this large museum collection of medieval pottery has been published is to be welcomed. The book will not only be of value to those with an interest in the archaeology of the region, and to those who teach it, but will also enable pottery researchers working in other areas of the country to gain a good impression of the Yorkshire sequence.

Beverley Nenck

