

There follows a discussion of the mechanisms of distribution, the use of middlemen or direct marketing, the road and river networks and the demands of the consumer. Dating forms the final section of each discussion, taking into consideration stratigraphic evidence, associated coin dates, historical evidence and independent scientific dating, such as archaeomagnetic dates, where these exist. A general discussion follows each chronological group, drawing together all the traditions in that group. Lacunae, both geographical and in the record, are pinpointed and recommendations are made for further research.

The aims and objectives stated at the outset are admirably achieved. This work has resulted in a computerised gazetteer accessible to all researchers, but which, as Mellor says, should be regularly updated to retain its use as a tool for aiding the management of archaeological strategies in the area, as well as placing future fieldwork in its context.

In her concluding comments, she begs for pottery research to be better integrated into studies of contemporary culture, as well as archaeology, history and topography; and for an improvement in the quality of retrieval, and a clear methodological framework to assess the pottery. In her pointers to further ceramic research she says that much has been done with fabric analysis in recent years, but little interest has been shown in technology, function, vessel shape and capacity. However, the tiny 'key-hole' excavations which characterise much archaeological work in the present developer-led climate, and the lack of continuity in ceramic research, make this a difficult goal at which to aim.

The volume is amply illustrated, with simple and clear illustrations, even though the minimal shading does give some drawings an unfinished look. They do, however, reproduce crisply, and it would be hard to mistake any of the vessels when searching for parallels. Each page of pot drawings is packed with information, with all the variants in decorative motif and handle shape illustrated. The maps which accompany the discussions on distribution and sources are equally informative.

It is always good to see colour plates of aesthetically pleasing pots, and the ones in this book are no exception. The bright blue background may seem a bit garish at first glance, but it certainly brings out the colours of the pots. There are also macro- and micro-photographs of pottery sections, something one rarely sees in publications, but invaluable when having to compare samples without seeing the actual sherds.

Appendices are copious and useful, especially the lists of type sites, site codes, methods of quantification and correlations of codes, should anyone wish to continue the research where Mellor left off. Of particular interest to all would-be researchers is the list of parishes associated with the ceramic industry and those parishes where no medieval ceramic finds are known. Specialist appendices include Sarah Newns' report on the evidence for medieval potters from the lay subsidy rolls; the results of neutron activation analysis on sherds of late Saxon shelly ware, and a discussion of the petrology by Alan Vince.

Rarely is any publication devoid of all editorial or typographical errors, although this volume is better than most. Figure 37 appears to have something missing, perhaps a histogram; a column of reduced pottery drawings sits to one side of the page with the adjacent $\frac{2}{3}$ of the page blank. Minor mishaps in the figures include handle sections not blacked in (Fig. 76, No. 3) or missing (Fig. 39, Nos. 1 and 3). Reference number 403 is missing from the text on page 149. There are some strange, unsupported statements, for example, on page 105, 'by the 13th century if not earlier, cooking was no longer over an open hearth, but often carried out on or in an oven.' The medieval peasant usually had no

access to an oven except the village bakery which belonged to the lord (Bennett 1969, 135). There are also many recipes which require the pot to be placed on the fire:

A cup fulle large take thou schalle,
Set hit on fyre, styr hit, I telle.
(Morris 1862, 51)

Ovens, or rather stoves, were only found in the few households of highest status at this date, such as the kitchens surviving at Skipton Castle. This is, however, nit-picking in what is otherwise an excellent piece of work.

It is every pottery researcher's dream to compile just such a synthesis. It may be the culmination of many years' work in Oxfordshire, but there is still much to do, as Mellor herself points out. This work should be the foundation of all other pottery research in the region and stand as an example to others of what may be achieved. In the present climate, however, there are few resources for such a study in other regions. It is interesting to note that the funding for this work came from a number of different grant-awarding bodies, none of which was English Heritage. Few pottery researchers remain long enough in one region to acquire such a depth of knowledge and familiarity with the ceramics of that region. The days are numbered for such research even before it has started. This reviewer fears that, with certain exceptions, such as the London series of major traditions in the capital, Mellor's volume may be the last of its kind.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Morris, R. 1862, *Liber Cure Cocorum*, copied and edited from the Sloane Ms, 1986, Berlin.

Anna Slowikowski

Medieval and later pottery by Mark Redknap and Jeffrey G. Perry. 61pp, 35 figs. (649 pots illustrated) in **Margaret Rylatt and Michael A. Stokes** *The Excavations at Broadgate East, Coventry 1974-5*, Coventry Museums Monograph no. 5, 130 pp. 1996 ISBN 1-85316-004-0. Price: £6.00.

This is a thorough and well-researched report, written by two specialists who know the medieval pottery of the area extremely well. It forms half of this low-priced monograph, and the catalogue and figures account for 48 of the pottery report's 61 pages. (For a review of the whole work, see Hunt 1995).

The pottery is described by fabric, using letter and number coding, but common ware names are given when possible. Within each fabric group, a comments section includes form and decoration types, and parallels and dating from other sites within Coventry and from the wider region. The catalogue, with its extensive range of illustrated vessels, gives a good idea of the wares described.

The pottery was used to date the site, and phasing was based on a comparison of quantified fabric groups from individual features (very few stratigraphic relationships were recorded between layers). The ceramic dating was based on the standard presence/absence of certain wares (the dates coming from assumed introduction dates), and relative

proportions of pottery fabrics within features. This is summarised, along with stratigraphic and small finds phasing, in Table 6 (pp. 103–5). The site chronology and notes on the phasing of archaeological features, which are relevant to Table 6, are on pp. 94–5. The discussion (c. 4 pages, 2 figures) summarises local distribution of wares, and the local Coventry pottery production areas.

I would agree with John Hunt that this is an important piece of work. ‘The significance of this report would have been all the more if it had appeared in print ten or twelve years earlier’ (Hunt 1995, 21). This is very true. The pottery report was written in 1983, revised in 1989, and finally published in 1996. During its long gestation, this whole monograph allegedly sat with the sponsor for about eight years (op cit, 21). A pottery specialist is given a job to do, paid for it, and subsequently asked to revise and update a work they may not have seen for some years, often with little or no further funding. This is not the most satisfactory way to produce a piece of work - but it happens too frequently — and is outside the specialist’s control. Much recent work on medieval pottery in the Midlands, for example, West Midlands work by Ford, Hodder and Nailor (see Ford 1995 for full references), could not be considered in the report because its revision was carried out seven years before eventual publication.

Hunt comments that ‘more consideration might have been expected of the economic and social significance of the pottery and the pottery industry’ (op cit, 21). This may be true, but such work requires careful and time-consuming examination of the archaeological and documentary evidence, which is probably not included in the pottery researcher’s brief — or fee. There is, in fact, a good and detailed summary by Dr. N. Alcock at the beginning of the monograph of the documentary evidence for the tenements that occupied the site from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. In the medieval period, these tenements belonged to cooks, shoemakers and fishmongers. This interesting work has not been integrated into the rest of the report, a consequence of the way that such a report is put together.

These comments should not detract from the significance of this pottery report. Its clear description of procedure, the profusely illustrated catalogue, and discussion of the assemblages are to be welcomed, and it will undoubtedly be used as a reference work for years to come.

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Deborah A. Ford

John C. Austin, *British Delft at Williamsburg*. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, in association with Jonathan Horne Publications, 1994. 299 pp., 1,176 black & white illustrations, 42 colour plates. ISBN 0-87935-126-8 (C.W.), ISBN 0-9512140-6-3 (Jonathan Horne). Price £65.00.

This volume consists of an introductory overview of delft

production in Britain, with special reference to Delftfield in Glasgow and its relation to the Colonies, an essay on the archaeological context of delft from Williamsburg (by Robert Hunter), and a catalogue of 727 pieces from the Colonial Williamsburg collections, which have been acquired by the Foundation over the last sixty years.

The catalogue takes up the bulk of the volume. The objectives of the Colonial Williamsburg collections, we are told on the flyleaf, are twofold, ‘to put together a well-rounded collection of fine-quality pieces representing the forms and decorations produced throughout the period of manufacture; and to acquire objects identical to, similar to, or representative of the items owned or believed to be owned by the residents of Williamsburg and its environs in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries.’ The illustrated pieces from the collection have been organised according to broad functional categories, such as alcoholic beverage utensils, dinner table wares, and apothecary equipment.

The catalogue is preceded by 40 colour plates. They are of outstanding quality, the colour reproduction being quite true to life, and lacking any intrusive glare, although the final plate of stacks of overlapping tiles obscuring each other is somewhat curious, and some of the coloured backgrounds are a bit lurid. Nevertheless the photographers are to be heartily congratulated. These 40 plates are preceded by two group shots, one of reconstructed excavated vessels, and another of an 18th-century dinner service complete with food (but is it historically accurate food?). The black and white plates in the main catalogue are of a similar quality and are supplemented by useful panoramic photographs of vessels. The first two plates are of ‘Malling’ jugs, which are very unlikely ever to have been seen in Williamsburg — perhaps this is why these vessels are reproduced in sepia. Likewise, a number of the earlier 17th-century vessels would not have been seen in Williamsburg, except possibly as heirlooms.

In the catalogue, Austin has published vessels from the Williamsburg collections with excavated sherds at the bottom of the page as parallels. However, the sherds do not always seem to relate to the catalogue entries; for example, on page 116 there are three photographs of excavated sherds from covers, possibly for sugar dishes, which are coupled with photographs of milk jugs from the collections (Nos. 123–125). Despite this and other similar anomalies, the excavated sherds are generally put into context when illustrated adjacent to the intact pieces, and their publication together is a policy to be admired, although it is unfortunate that there is not the room for details of the archaeological context from which they were excavated. It is also a pity that the plates of the archaeological finds are the size of postage stamps.

To his credit John Austin uses ‘probably’ and ‘possibly’ in his attributions when there is an element of doubt. Some of these attributions may yet be refined with the benefit of recent archaeological work on some of the London kiln sites which are awaiting publication, although he does mention a small fragment of a Pallsy-type *fecundity* dish excavated at Platform Wharf, Rotherhithe (Museum of London site code PW86) in connection with an example in the collections (No. 154). This delft factory operated c. 1638–1663, although the decoration on the Platform Wharf sherd is less well executed than the Williamsburg example, dated 1661, which strongly suggests manufacture at Platform Wharf. Despite this, Austin concludes that the vessel’s manufacture coincided with William Fry’s move to Still Stairs, which took place in 1663. In addition, the posset pot with pronounced raised bosses (No. 11) is paralleled among the biscuit sherds from Platform Wharf.

Lobed dishes (Nos. 161, 162) are attributed in the