

wares, tea wares, flower containers, storage and apothecary wares, and miscellaneous items. These sections are followed by discussions of a few loaned items, continental pieces, and fakes that relate to the early British wares forming the core of the text. The last large section of the book provides a catalogue of 643 entries focusing first upon painted and then printed tiles at the V&A.

Within the object entries, the author consistently combines a formalized organization of the descriptive material — broken down by form, body, glaze, decoration, provenance, exhibition history, and literature — with a footnoted discussion presented in an approachable style that sets the objects in a larger context. (Research by the respected genealogist and delftware scholar, Frank Britton, is included in several entries and adds a more personal aspect to some of the pieces.) In his discussions, Archer provides numerous important references to related intact objects and excavated material. On occasion it is unclear whether the archaeological fragments are from production or consumer sites and, in some cases, the specific site is not named. Granted, some early archaeological collections were assembled through unscientific methods and some never had or have lost their documentation. The appendices certainly provide assistance in understanding the archaeological material, but perhaps brief remarks might have clarified some entry texts. (Information of this type would be particularly useful to some American readers and other persons who are not knowledgeable about British archaeology.) In some cases, a specific description of the ways in which non-illustrated objects or fragments are 'similar' to the V&A objects under discussion also would have been of use.

End material in the book includes not only a detailed index and bibliography, but also a list giving the concordance of museum and catalogue numbers and five very useful appendices. The last, respectively, cover: shapes of plates and dishes; sources of waste material; a chronological survey of the potteries known to have made delftware; a date chart of delftware factories; and notes on collections and collectors' labels. The chronology and date chart gather together in a coherent manner information that, until now, has been dispersed throughout several publications. Both of these appendices are certain to be of interest to any delftware scholar or serious collector who wishes to get a clear sense of current information on factories and potters. The notes on collections and collectors' labels include, where possible, illustrations of the labels adjacent to remarks on the collectors.

Overall, the reviewer feels strongly that delftware researchers, collectors, and novices cannot afford to be without access to Michael Archer's book. Not only is the text quite informative, but the massive number of illustrations will aid in the identification, dating, and attribution of a broad range of intact objects and archaeological fragments. As a teaching tool, the volume also helps to illustrate the enormity of delftware production in Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries and draws attention to the ware's origins. Clear cross-references to a great number of delftware publications, some well-known and some more obscure, will allow the more dedicated reader to pursue tin-glazed earthenware even further.

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**J. M. Lewis, *The Medieval Tiles of Wales. Census of Medieval Tiles in Britain.*** National Museums and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff, 1999. 274pp., 21 figures., 9 colour plates, 105 pages of design drawings. ISBN 0 7200 0460 8. Price: £29.95 paperback.

John Lewis' book catalogues the known assemblages of floor tiles in Wales, safeguarding for future generations the knowledge he has gained in over twenty years' work in this field, both during his time as Assistant Keeper of Medieval and Later collections in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, and subsequently in retirement. Alongside preparation of the book, John implemented the museum's acquisition policy, which was to build on their existing collection of tiles and create a nationally representative reference collection. Together, the publication and the collection provide a valuable basis for further synthesis of the data and a vital source of information upon which to base decisions regarding the conservation of the many floor tiles which remain reset on site.

This book follows the remit of the Census of Medieval Tiles, set up in 1979 by Elizabeth Eames and subsequently carried forward by Christopher Norton, which was to publish the evidence for ceramic floor tiles in a series of regional studies. It is a successful and welcome addition to the surveys carried out in Ireland (Eames and Fanning 1988) and Scotland (Norton 1994). The introduction includes a brief overview of the constraints of the data and some discussion of the manufacture, distribution and use of the tiles. This is followed by a short but useful section comparing the evidence from Wales with that from the other published regional studies. Several of the points made in these summaries suggest directions for further discussion and research.

The main body of the book comprises the catalogue, the tile design drawings and plates, and the site gazetteer. Further information is provided by the bibliography, an index listing heraldic designs and identifications, and the subject index. One of the main challenges for a reference work of this type is to cater for people approaching the book in a variety of ways, perhaps looking for parallels to a tile design, or for information about material from one site, or for details of a particular tile group. In this volume the system works well, with cross-references fairly easy to make between the sections. The catalogue is divided into two on a regional basis, with separate sections on South Wales and North and Mid Wales. The catalogue entries are then ordered by tile groups (tiles thought to be the products of the same workshop or tilery), arranged chronologically as far as possible. In general, the sequence follows established typologies based on style and decorative technique, but the author notes that some difficulties were encountered in this respect (p. 15). Each group entry gives a short description of the characteristics of the group followed by a list of the relevant design numbers, the sites where those designs were present, accession numbers and publication details. The site gazetteer gives a brief history of each site and details the locations or find spots of tiles where known, followed by a list of the relevant tile groups and design numbers. The 850 or so designs are clearly illustrated in the centre of the book, with plans in the gazetteer showing the layout of the tiles at different sites. Some difficulty is posed by the distribution maps in the catalogue, which are not labelled. Identification of the sites represented by the dots on these maps can be slightly laborious, involving reference to the site location plan on pp. viii–ix, in which the sites are named in a numbered key.

The book is handsomely presented on durable glossy paper throughout. In order to save space the text margins are narrow and in time this may result in the loss of type from the edges of pages. It might also be wished that some stronger distinction in font or spacing had been used to delineate the section on each tile group in the catalogue. However, these economies mean that, although not inexpensive, this essential guide to the floor tiles of Wales is affordable enough to be reasonably accessible. By raising the profile of floor tiles as a valuable source of archaeological and art historical information it is hoped that this volume will help generate concern — and much needed action — regarding the preservation of these artefacts in all areas.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Norton, E. C.** 1994, 'Medieval floor tiles in Scotland' in J. Higgitt (ed.), *Medieval Art and Architecture in the Diocese of St Andrews*, British Archaeol Assoc Conference Trans for 1986, 14, 137–73 and plates XXV–XXVI.

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***Mallorca i el comerç de la ceràmica a la Mediterrània***, Fundació 'la Caixa', Palma, 1998. 297 × 240 mm, 227 pp., 7 plates, 289 figures and 273 colour plates. ISBN 84 7664 613 5. Price: not stated, paperback.

This is the catalogue which accompanied the exhibition 'Mallorca and the pottery trade in the Mediterranean', held in Palma in 1998. During the medieval and early modern period Mallorca enjoyed a strategic position in the Mediterranean. Between the 12th and 14th centuries the island was a centre for the redistribution and exchange of goods between the Islamic world of the north of Africa and the Christian kingdoms of the northern Mediterranean rim. Following Christian advances in the Iberian peninsula and the retreat of the Islamic world, the Mediterranean opened up westwards towards the Atlantic. Trade with the north of Europe flourished through new sea routes and Mallorca became a stopping-off point for these new routes, maintaining its role as a redistribution point for north African products. Throughout the early modern period Mallorca never lost its trading role, adapting to new trends and markets, producing pottery on a modest scale and exporting its own products, chiefly olive oil.

Mallorca's commercial life ensured that a wide range of pottery reached the island, mainly from Mediterranean centres of production. The pottery, from both archaeological excavations and private collections, is presented here in a substantial catalogue of 273 vessels, preceded by five short introductory articles, most of which deal with the historical background of the island.

This all seems sensible enough until we examine the content of these articles in a little more detail. Then we find that the opening article actually discusses the use of pottery in the Classical world. This simply does not fit with the rest of the contents and, more worryingly, serves only

to underline the overwhelming academic weight and financial resources that Classical archaeology still commands in Spain. Surely a paper on the challenges of the documentary and archaeological record for understanding pottery in the Middle Ages would have been more appropriate? There are other oddities too. In spite of the abundant excavations which have been carried out on the island since the 1970s, the fourth chapter, on the archaeological context of the pottery, focuses on just three assemblages; of these, one is a group of large storage jars (*tinajas* in Spanish) found in the fill of a vault in Palma cathedral, and the second is a stray (and rather old) find of 50 bowls from the church in Sineu. The emphasis here is still on the description of decorated vessels; stratigraphic information, fabric descriptions and dating issues are omitted altogether. The last article deals with the types of pottery which were imported to Mallorca, with an exhaustive list which runs from the 11th to the 19th centuries. This list confirms the range of contacts maintained by the island, where vessels from other Spanish workshops, Algeria, Provence, Pisa, Tuscany or Liguria have been found. Inevitably though, the lack of quantification, data on the association of different pottery types, forms present or absent and so on must limit the conclusions which can be drawn. The reader is left with many questions. Was all the pottery really traded? What of personal acquisitions or the assemblages of foreign trading groups? None of these aspects are explored.

The richness and variety of imports contrasts sharply with the local pottery production, which seemed to have stopped with the Christian conquest of the island in the middle of the 13th century and did not revive until the 15th century. As yet, local production is poorly known and it is not explored further here, where only 12th- and 17th-century vessels are included.

This book is beautifully produced and the catalogue illustrates all the vessels in full colour. They are also line-drawn, although the proper size and scale have been sacrificed to the fashionable design of the book. Apart from a few pitfalls (for example, the maintenance of the old distinction between products of Manises and Paterna near Valencia, today out of date and called 'from the Valencian area', or a few problems with the bibliography, such as the missing Borrego and Saranova 1994, or Llinas Riera 1997), readers will recognise many of the better known types of pottery which also reached the British shores, such as the Spanish lustrewares or the typical Italian products, in an impressive range of complete or almost complete examples. They will not, however, find any ready solutions to problems of identification or dating. The pots are not considered in any archaeological context, merely as objects.

The main text is presented in both Spanish and Catalan on alternate pages and there is a full 'English' translation at the back of the book, although figures are not repeated and therefore not translated. The English translation is very welcome, but a word of warning: the text is clearly by a non-specialist, non-English person and its idiosyncracies sometimes make little sense unless you are a fully qualified Spanglish-speaker.

Many similar catalogues and books have been produced in Spain, usually financed with the aid of local banks and government who are committed to promoting cultural events and local identities. The products may look stylish and attractive, but the way in which they address their research differs greatly from British academic and publishing traditions and may leave readers unfulfilled.

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