

uses this as the basis for an interesting exploration of cultural affinity. This is not entirely convincing, as illustrated by the almost complete absence of Italian pots from the 15th century West Hall, occupied almost throughout that century by Italians. However, as he concludes, surely the prime consideration for the inhabitants of Southampton would be whether the pottery they used fulfilled its function efficiently, in which case there would be no reason why Italians should choose to use Italian pots in preference to local wares. Instead, Brown concludes that what can be seen in Southampton are ‘cultures of pottery use’, which changed through time. Anglo-Norman pottery may have defined ethnicity, but was also the vehicle for change. Pottery in the high medieval period more clearly reflects trade patterns, while in the late medieval period pottery reflects scales of consumption and the importance of display.

Brown rightly emphasises that however comprehensive this volume appears, it is, nevertheless, only an interim statement, a ‘stepping-stone to improved analysis and theories’. There is, of course, much more that could be done, and he highlights a few areas of potential future research. The type series itself represents a considerable resource, but could be enhanced by providing a regional context through matching fabrics with other locally identified wares. This is, indeed, something which is notably absent from this volume; Brown cites evidence from various local and regional sites, but resources have not allowed a detailed programme of comparative work. The Isle of Wight, for example, has produced a useful (and recently published) comparative assemblage from Carisbrooke Castle which it might prove profitable to re-examine in the light of this volume. More work could be done on relating vessel form to fabric, and indeed on the subject of vessel form and function generally, which is treated relatively briefly in Chapter 6. Nevertheless, this is an admirable first step, and one that is unlikely to be surpassed for some time. Buy it now!

Lorraine Mephram

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**Ivor Noël Hume, *If These Pots Could Talk: Collecting 2,000 Years of British Household Pottery***

Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England for the Chipstone Foundation, 2001. 472 pp, 648 illus. (544 colour). ISBN 158465 161 X. Price: \$75.00 Hardcover

In the summer of 1949, Ivor Noël Hume began his archaeological career at the Guildhall Museum as a volunteer on post-war London construction sites under the tutelage of the keeper, Adrian Oswald. Later that year, Noël was hired by the museum, and soon, unexpectedly, found himself charged with the monumental task of salvaging London’s buried history. In early 1950, he acquired his first volunteer helper, Audrey Baines, a gifted graduate of Bristol University, and

former student of famed archaeologist Sir Mortimer Wheeler. That fortuitous event led to their marriage later in the year, and to the beginning of their forty years of collecting ‘British’ ceramics together.

Spanning a period of 2,000 years, the objects in the Audrey and Ivor Noël Hume Collection are diverse and their manufacture is international. Each item in the assemblage relates to their forty years of archaeological work or historical research together, and each tells a story. After Audrey’s untimely death in 1993, officials from the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin offered to house the collection and use it for teaching purposes, if Noël would write a book ‘sharing the knowledge that binds it.’ The result — *If These Pots Could Talk: Collecting 2,000 Years of British Household Pottery*—is a Herculean production, remarkable for its impressive content, and immensely interesting because of Noël’s legendary prose.

In Chapter one, ‘Khnum Ptah, and the Clay of Life,’ Noël notes that, from his earliest days at the Guildhall, he was already ‘was beginning to look past the pot to the people who had made, owned, used and broken it...’ Fortunately, Audrey shared his inquisitive nature, and the perfect partnership resulted. Their first discovery, the 20ft deep buried ruins of Roman London—and the Romano-British pots within—prompted the Noël Humes to find out more about the who, what, when, why and where of them. Their search led them to the Roman kiln sites in the Upchurch Marshes in Kent, the major source of ceramics in the region at that time. As he describes their first humorous foray into the marshes, we find ourselves carefully stepping to avoid the foot-sucking quagmire. Amazingly, their first expedition linked not only to their quest for information about Romano-British ceramic vessels, but also to English brown stoneware, which became a later area of collecting.

And so it goes, throughout the book— Noël describes the vast and diverse ceramic collections he and Audrey owned, and their reasons why. He explains the complex, multi-layered associations of the assemblage to the worlds of their makers and their owners. He shares with us the principles that guided their professional work and their collecting habits from the ‘*Eureka!* of finding’ to the more important joy of ‘*finding out.*’ Through his absorbing narrative prose, the collection speaks to us as well.

Included among the chapters are detailed discussions of Romano-British pottery, medieval and post medieval British coarse earthenware, Southwark delftware, Rhenish brown stoneware, Westerwald blue and grey stoneware, English brown stoneware, 18th-century English delftware and French faience, white saltglazed stoneware, creamware, pearlware, and English porcelain of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From chamberpots and hunt jugs to commemorative souvenirs and heraldic porcelains, the subjects of the thematic chapters are wide-ranging and are well thought-out. Also, the volume includes a useful 12-page glossary of terms, a list of measurements and inscriptions of illustrated objects, enlightening footnotes, a bibliography,

and, finally, a well-organized index.

The book is enhanced by over 600 colour photographs, most of which were taken by British-born Gavin Ashworth. His colours are stunningly accurate, and his attention to detail is exceptional. Ashworth raises the standard for ceramic photography in this handsomely illustrated volume.

Subsidized by the Chipstone Foundation, the value of this book far exceeds its price. The only shortcoming is its hefty size. Although beautifully printed and bound with two ribbon bookmarks, it is somewhat difficult to manage because of its weight. But happily, though it is hard to pick up, this highly engaging volume is even harder to put down! It belongs on the bookshelves or bedside tables of curators, archaeologists, collectors, ceramic historians, and material culture specialists alike.

Merry A. Outlaw

“New Discoveries” editor *Ceramics in America*

**J Rosen, *La Faïence en France du XIVe au XIX siècle.***

***Histoire et Technique*** Editions Errance, 1995.

215 pp, numerous plates, some in colour.

ISBN 2877721078. Price: 195Fr

As stated on the back cover of this attractive volume, faïence is an important testimony to changing technology, fashions, ideas, trade and exchange. Many French studies of the subject have, in the past, concentrated on one aspect of the subject to the detriment of others. In this case, however, the author is a doctor of art history and archaeology, who has excavated at the production centres of Dijon, Nevers and Meillonas. This well-presented volume thus rises admirably to the challenge of blending these interests with technical information and social context as evidenced by documentary sources. Here it might be appropriate to explain that in France there is no distinction between different forms of tin-glazed ware, all of which are referred to as faïence. This bulk of the pottery illustrated in this volume, does, however, correspond with the understanding of the term faïence in England and the Netherlands, being tin-glazed on both surfaces (Hurst *et al.*, 1986, 120). The 18th-century *faïence fine*, however, has nothing to do with the use of a tin glaze, but emulates cream ware.

The volume is divided into two parts, each with a brief introduction, although the organisation is at first a little unclear (English readers may be somewhat confused by the fact that the index is at the end of the book). There is no glossary, no index or list of plates (indeed both these and the different chapters are unnumbered), nor is there an English or German summary, all of which would have been useful. For this reason this review outlines the content more fully than is perhaps usual. The bibliography, however, is extensive and the photographs are on the whole clear and

attractive. A minor complaint is that the pottery plates lack scales and where these are included they lack numbers.

Part 1 (pages 11-72) is concerned with matters technical. It commences with a summary of previous publications, both contemporary technical treatises from the 14th to the 19th century, and art-historical studies of the 19th and 20th centuries. Of these, the most important contribution is clearly that of Alexandre Brongniart (1770-1847), a multi-faceted scientist, not only professor of mineralogy at the National History Museum but also director of the Sèvres pottery from 1800-1847. Brongniart can be considered the founding father of modern ceramic studies in France, and his work is frequently quoted in the following sections. These commence with explanations of the characteristics of different clays and their preparation, production techniques (throwing and the use of moulds), biscuit ware, techniques of decoration (including painting and glazing), kilns, firing and wasters. Among the titbits of information we are told that it was common practice to store and transport the prepared clay in biscuit ware wasters, as these would allow the humidity to evaporate. If the clay has rested for less than three months following its preparation, the potter can expect a 75% failure rate, especially when making flatwares. The different stages of firing and the required temperatures are clearly explained (usually *c.* 800° for the biscuit ware and *c.* 940-980° for the glazed ware), as are the terms ‘*grand feu*’ and ‘*petit feu*’, or ‘*au réverbère*’. The former involves applying the tin glaze to the biscuit ware, and decorating it with up to five colours (blue, purple, green, yellow and red) derived from metallic oxides. As the physical and chemical properties of the paints are compatible with those of the tin glaze or enamel, the decoration is completed in the second firing. Decoration by ‘*petit feu*’ involves painting the decoration onto a plain white glaze that has already been fired, and refiring to a lower temperature in a special muffle kiln; this technique allows a wider range of colours to be used. It is stated that this section is not intended to be comprehensive, but it is certainly adequate and, most importantly, clear and easy for the non-specialist to follow. Most interesting to the archaeologist will be the discussions of kilns, firing and wasters as these include details of excavations and finds, some of which were, in 1995, unpublished. Examples of the different wares (*e.g.* biscuit ware, ‘*grand feu*’ and ‘*petit feu*’) and paint effects such as *camieu* (painting in different tones of the same colour, usually monochrome) are presented in twelve colour plates. Twelve further plates, also in colour, show different styles of decoration (*e.g.* *compendiario*, Chinese style, stencilled designs). In both cases the images are arranged chronologically. Other illustrations show, *inter alia*, moulds, paint pots, test pieces, excavated kilns and kiln furniture, and examples of faults in firing and decoration.

Part 2 outlines the history of faïence production in France, in a series of chronological sections, although there is a certain amount of chronological overlap between them. The first section summarises the origins of the tradition in