

The catalogue of finds includes coins, jettons and tokens; clay pipes, probably mostly associated with the palace's destruction; ten pewter vessels and two pewter spoons; spurs, copper alloy objects, a wooden pocket sundial, leather and worked bone and ivory. The lead and iron objects include pieces which are clearly from the structure of the building although other architectural elements like plaster, slate and tile are held over to volume two. There are also reports on the animal bones and mollusca.

The most important reports – at least to readers of this journal – are those on the glass and ceramics. There is a particularly rich assemblage of fine vessel glass, including Venetian and English, and the late Robert Charleston builds what amounts to a history of this genre on to his detailed catalogue. Biddle with Jane Webster, contributes the report on green glass bottles and Biddle himself on wine-bottle seals. These contain much detailed information and there are appendices on all known English dated bottles and bottle seals from c1650 to 1700. This was an important area of research for Biddle since he hoped to refine our understanding of the dating of these to support his hypothesis on the date of occupation of the palace represented by the excavated finds. This is an essential piece of reading for all experts in this field.

The report on the tin-glaze ware, with 146 catalogued items, is contributed by Michael Archer, and a catalogue of 100 stoneware items – Frechen, Cologne and English – by Robin Hildyard. The earthenware is dealt with by Biddle. The assemblage includes imported Martincamp flasks, Beauvais ware, N Italian sgraffito and N Holland slipware. The majority of the material is locally derived including Cheam and Border wares, but also two named from Nonsuch as NONA and NONB which have not yet been identified from other sites. When Biddle was working on this assemblage comparisons with other groups would at best indicate a date range from the middle to the second half of the 17th century. Indeed for much of this material only general parallels could be found, often suggesting a 16th century date. Biddle considered the possibility that much of the Nonsuch pot might be residual, or else old pottery brought out of store for reuse after a period of abandonment. He inclined to the view that the length of time some forms remained in use has been underestimated. That view has since been backed up for Border wares by Jacqueline Pearce's monograph on the subject.

Biddle's careful study of the earthenware highlights an on-going problem for ceramics experts. It is still not possible in many instances to date material to a particular century never mind distinguish whether a group belongs to the 1680s as distinct from the 1660s. Perhaps that is the nature of the material.

Any work of such complexity will have its inconsistencies and errors. No doubt its author will be mortified to realise that on the very first page he states that the

deposit of the greater part of the material described took place in 1665–6, and then a few lines later in the 1670s and 1680s, the latter position being consistently argued through the rest of the book. While it is distracting for the reader to face such a challenge to comprehension at the very beginning the rest of the text reads well and contains much of great interest to anyone with an interest in Post-medieval archaeology and also to the methodology of interpreting excavation assemblages. The ceramics reports are essential reading for all specialists in this field. Biddle should be congratulated for his perseverance and dedication in bringing this volume to fruition.

David H Caldwell

Endnotes

- 1 Colvin, H. M. 1982 (gen. ed.) *The History of the King's Works*, iv, 1485–1660, Pt II. London
- 2 Biddle, M. forthcoming *Nonsuch Palace: the Architecture*. English Heritage Archaeological Report, London.
- 3 Gaimster, David R. M. 1997 *German Stoneware, 1200–1900: Archaeology and Cultural History*. British Museum Press.
- 4 Pearce, Jacqueline. 1992 *Post-Medieval Pottery in London, 1500–1700 Border Wares*. London.
- 5 Biddle, M. 1961 'Nonsuch Palace 1959–60: an interim report', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 58, 1–20.

Andrzej Buko

Archaeologia Polski Wczesnośredniowiecznej

[The Archaeology of Early Medieval Poland]

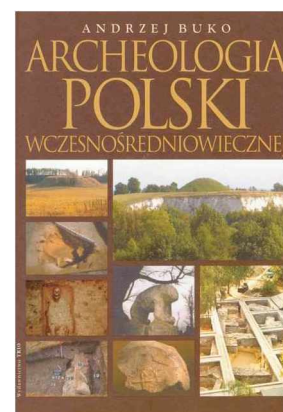
2005 . Warszawa . Trio

446 pages, 41 plates, many figures, bibliography, index, price unknown

ISBN 83 7436 023 2

The subtitle of this book, *Discoveries – hypotheses – interpretations*, gives a clue that it is intended as a 'popular' book for wide readership among people interested in the Early Middle Ages. As such, I am told it is selling well. English-speaking readers will focus on the translated Summary (pp. 407–36) and the plates and figures to which it cross-refers.

The first two chapters describe the historical development of the subject, and the nature of archaeological sources, and are followed by chapters on questions or



'hot topics'. Chapter 3 ('Where did the Slavs in the Polish lands come from?') discusses the 'Prague' style of pottery in the context of the perceived poverty of Slav material culture, relating it to the mobility of the Slavs in this period. Chapter 8 ('The oldest traces of writing?') discusses three fragments of fired clay, known as the Podedbocie tablets, found in a 9th-century settlement. They are inscribed with signs resembling writing, thought by some to be Turkish runes, and by others to be Greek. In the same context were found ceramic vessels with unique solar and zoomorphic motifs, making Podedbocie an enigmatic site. The most thoroughly 'ceramic' chapter is 14 ('The puzzle of the century: marks on pottery'), which discusses the marks found on the exterior of the bases of some vessels of the 10th to 13th centuries. Most are an impression of a mark cut into the potter's wheel, rather than stamped or incised directly into the clay, and many can be linked to solar themes. They have in the past been interpreted in both economic and magical terms. The author considers them to be a distinguishing feature of Slavic pottery, and favours a magical (protective) interpretation.

So, out of fifteen chapters, two are devoted to ceramic issues and one sets ceramics in a wider social context. I wonder how medieval ceramic would fare if a parallel book were written about Early Medieval Britain?

Clive Orton

Rosa Fiorillo

La tavola dei d'Angiò. Analisi archeologica di una spazzatura reale. Castello di Lagopesole

[The table at the Anjou's Court. Archaeological analysis of a royal garbage. Castle of Lagopesole]

2005. All'Insegna del Giglio. Firenze

This book, as the title itself suggests, analyses the finds from the kitchen waste excavated at the Castle of Lagopesole: the summer residence of the Anjou's court. For those not familiar with the area, the site is in the environs of Potenza, in Basilicata (southern Italy). Charles I of Anjou used to spend several months there each year together with his court, which in some cases numbered up to 200 people. The finds were re-covered from a pit, dug as a cave for constructing the donjon and then filled with waste.

At first sight this work does not look like a 'traditional' catalogue of pottery sherds, providing a

classification and description of ceramic types found during the excavation. In fact, it is not. The author attempts a multidisciplinary approach in reconstructing what used to be eaten at the Anjou's Court. In doing so a reconstruction of how a laid table should have looked like in different circumstances and according to the guests' status is made as well. The author succeeds in sketching the court's habit in consuming and preparing food by using both archaeological and written sources. Records of ordered supplies, records of guest's names and the number of people present at different times, pottery and glass sherds, animal bones and kitchen waste in general are all taken into account. This analysis occupies pages 16–69.

No wonder if, concerning pottery, focus is on function rather than on technological devices. This serves the purpose, but it should be remarked that indicating the colour of the fabric without giving any further details about the nature of the temper and about technical devices, ends up in being unnecessary information. The presentation and interpretation of the data is followed by the catalogue, divided into two parts: one on animal bones, the other on pottery and glass. Concerning the first one, the author provides a well organised and detailed presentation of records. There are clear tables and charts containing all the information about percentages and numbers of minimal individuals belonging to different species; their distribution in each phase is provided as well. For each species details about the quantities of different joints are given as well. The pottery catalogue presents the sherds by functional and technical devices, providing for each class a description of form variations and of decorations, but a systematic study of the association between forms and decoration is missing. A detailed description is provided for a selection of objects identified as the most representative ones for a certain form or class. The glass catalogue is organised in the same way. What shows up is that quantities are not given at all for pottery, while for glass percentages are provided. The catalogue refers to the layer in which the objects were found. The dating range of the layers is based on coins found, each recorded and described in the first part of the volume, but the division in different phases is left to the drawing of the pitch-section. Plates of pottery and glass forms close the volume, some with pictures of the best preserved or highly decorated objects.

As a whole this book is an excellent work, as the author, by using different sources is able not only to reconstruct the habits connected to food consumption, but shows us how it is important to combine the information deriving from them. She drives attention as well on how the quality and quantity of finds should make us reconsidering what is commonly supposed to be a period when the circulation of goods is regarded as 'rare'.

Marta Carosio

