

thorough review of this mammoth work somewhat tricky, but the illustrations speak for themselves, and the general gist is easy to discern.

This is the second of a two-volume set, the first of which deals with the structural and stratigraphic evidence, while this considers the pottery. What pottery it is too! The kilns at Fosses are located almost 30 kilometres due north of Paris, on a tributary of the River Oise, where there seem to be good supplies of white-firing clay. The nature of that clay is explored in the introduction, as soon as page seven, on which there are tables setting out the chemical composition of various clay samples. Location and methodology are also considered in this opening chapter, and it is refreshing to see photographs of personnel trying to find sherd fits. The caption 'De gigantesques puzzles ...' says it all. The following five chapters discuss the pottery produced at Fosses in chronological order: 'Le haut Moyen Âge', 'Le Moyen Âge classique', 'Le bas Moyen Âge', 'La Renaissance' and 'L'Ancien Régime'. As the title says, a thousand years of pottery-making, that takes us through most of the traditions we are familiar with. Tenth century glazed, red-painted and plain whitewares, developed into a wider variety of forms in the twelfth century, including lamps, mortars and horns. Forms of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries included curfews and dripping pans among the range of jugs, jars and bowls, while the fifteenth century saw the introduction of cups and socket-handled pipkins. As in many other places, the sixteenth century brought changes, with two-handled tripod cooking pots, chafing dishes and fuming pots all making an appearance. The first section in the chapter on the pottery of 'L'Ancien Régime' is entitled 'Stagnation, puis restructuration ...' and this period is characterised by a simplification of products and a narrowing in the range of forms. The overall story may be easily told (although, with apologies, oversimplified here), but the telling of it in this volume is a masterpiece of technique and attention to detail.

For one thing, the illustrations are superb. The line drawings are clearly presented, and there are hundreds of them, depicting vessel forms, the forms of component parts and techniques and motifs of decoration. Figure 161, for example, shows the methods of decorating a pot with red slip, which is actually shown as red and is all the more effective for it. Such an unsparing approach to depicting every detail is terrific, and this is carried into the photographs, which are all excellent. They range from groups of vessels to close-ups of finger-prints in the surface of impressed clay. There are also plates of manuscript illuminations and other artworks where pottery has been represented. I imagine most of us would use this volume as a reference catalogue, and it will certainly be easy to do so. The pottery of each period is summarised in charts that illustrate the evolution of the main forms, a 'panorama synthétique' that acts as a quick look-up guide. Within each period

there is an introductory section discussing the background to pottery-making at the time. The products of specific kilns are then presented in separate sections, sub-divided by vessel type. L'atelier 10.21, for instance, in Chapter Two, contains the following headings in the first section: 'Les données chronologiques', 'Les tendances générales de la production est leur évolution', 'Les pâtes' ('The fabrics') and 'Les décors peints'. The following section on the earliest sequence of production for the kiln considers vessel groups and other elements: 'Les oules', 'Les cruches', 'Les pichets', 'Les formes ouvertes', 'Les formes rares et les décors exceptionnels', 'Col atypique glaçuré' and 'Décors plastiques exceptionnels'. It is very easy to find your way around and to understand what is going on, especially when the illustrations are so well integrated with the text. This is more than a catalogue, however. It goes deeply into the composition of the assemblage, exploring particular idiosyncrasies among the pots, seeking to understand and illustrate specific techniques of manufacture and decoration, and pondering the wider issues that affected pottery-making. The overall aim seems to be to gain a close understanding of not just what the potters of Fosses produced at different times, but also how and why. This is really good archaeology.

The final chapter considers the distribution of the pottery in the Île-de-France and Picardy. This is mainly comprised of an inventory of sites, rather than an extended discussion of quantitative evidence, and that might be the next stage in the huge task of putting the products of Fosses into context. That, perhaps, is not a job that will be completed by Remy Guadagnin. He and his team have obviously worked hard to produce this extensive, thoroughly comprehensive and fabulously well presented book. It will be up to others now to use this to identify the products of Fosses on different sites in the region, and perhaps further afield. There is no doubt this was very well-made pottery, and it may well have been taken considerable distances. I recommend this book not only as a very useful work of reference, but also as a demonstration of how to research and publish a huge kiln assemblage. The team at Fosses, I remember, were fond of Kenneth Branagh's film *Henry V*. This glorious enterprise too, is a fine illustration of leading by example.

Andreas Heege (editor)

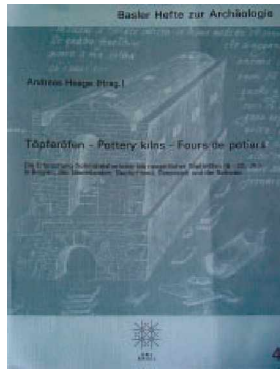
Topferofen – pottery kilns – fours de potiers: die Erforschung fruhmittelalterlicher bis neuzeitlicher Topferofen (6–20 Jh) in Belgien, den Niederlanden, Deutschland, Osterreich und der Schweiz

Basler Hefte zur Archäologie Volume 4

432 pages, 545 illustrations (line and black and white photographs), accompanying CD with images of 1795 pottery kilns, €60

When Andreas Heege emailed me to tell me that there was a new book on the pottery kilns of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland about to be

published that might be of interest to MPRG I just knew that it had to be reviewed! This is an enormous multi-author extravaganza that has involved the work of at least 22 different people and is testament to the importance of the sort of work that is currently being carried out across Europe. Largely written in the authors native tongues the various papers are supported by a fantastic selection of photographs and illustrations and there is an important seven page summary in English by Andreas Heege which comes to some interesting and important conclusions. To top it all off the accompanying CD contains photographs and illustrations of 1795 pottery kilns! To those us ceramic specialists who have a particular interest in technology and manufacturing techniques this book is a godsend and I highly recommend it.



Kevin Leahy

Interrupting the pots: the excavation of Cleatham Anglo-Saxon cemetery

This work is perhaps a perfect example of the difficulties of attempting to carry out important archaeological research in the face of the somewhat grotesque imperatives of the modern 'heritage industry'. It is a report on what is the third-largest Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery ever to have been excavated in England. The site in question was excavated between 1984 and 1989, with the work carried out entirely by volunteers, often working in dreadful conditions. Between them, they rescued 1204 cremation urns and 62 inhumations, with an estimated 260-odd burials lost to the plough by the time of excavation. If not for the intervention of Kevin Leahy and his team, the entire cemetery would by now have probably been ploughed away, and would exist only as smashed pots, scattered bones and metal fragments in the topsoil, with the only possible record of this extremely important site perhaps being a distribution plot of unstratified non-ferrous objects, assuming that the finders had bothered to report them.

As anyone who has worked with early Anglo-Saxon pottery will know, the area of chronology is one with many uncertainties. This site offers, perhaps for the first time in many years, a key to its understanding. Its unusual topography meant that burial had taken place in a very limited area, and thus many urns were inserted into places where others had already been buried, resulting in long stratigraphic sequences, and an unparalleled opportunity to establish a reliable, dated typological series for cremation urns. It is likely to be unique in this,

especially when the attrition rate of buried archaeology in eastern England is taken into account.

Some aspects of the post-excavation phase, such as the conservation of the metal finds, the drawing of the finds, the colour photographs, the cost of publication and the on-line archiving were aided with piecemeal grants from various private and public bodies, but the bulk of the project was again carried out by unpaid volunteers.

The most glaring omission from the volume is a lack of any analysis of the cremated human bone as it proved impossible to raise funds for this crucial part of the project from any major public body. In the author's own words 'As Cleatham is the only phased, large Anglo-Saxon cemetery in England, if not in Europe, the failure of funding bodies to support this, the final aspect of the project, can only be described as scandalous'. I entirely agree. Kevin and his team have brought this site to publication on a shoe-string, for which they must be highly commended but it must now be a priority to all those working on the archaeology of this period to lobby for funding to complete the analysis of a site which appears crucial to our understanding of the archaeology of what is arguably the most important and definitely the least-understood period of post-Roman England.

Kevin Leahy's starting point with the analysis of the pottery is an overview of previous work on such material. He successfully identifies most of the major flaws in J N L Myres' work, particularly the largely subjective nature of most of his classifications of form, and his 'cleaning up' of the decorative schemes utilized by early Anglo-Saxon potters.

The main thrust of Leahy's pottery analysis is the examination of the different aspects of the cremation urns (in terms of form, decoration etc) with respect to the stratigraphy, to allow the definition of a developmental sequence, and it established fairly convincingly that decorative style, in terms of the combination of motifs (incised decoration, bosses and stamping) is the most rewarding area for study.

One small potential worry was the method which Leahy has used to establish stratigraphic associations between the urns; he states that 'problems were encountered in distinguishing archaeological features on the site and it was rarely possible to define the edges of urn pits'. In the case where one urn cut another, then a stratigraphic relationship of earlier and later is obviously established, but the worry is with his 'associated' urns. Basically, if two urns were found close together with their bases at the same level, then they were assumed to have been buried together, and thus contemporary. On a site where identification of archaeological features was extremely difficult, and where the urns were packed in far more densely than is normal, it is surely possible that non-contemporary urns would end up close together. However, once his developmental stylistic sequence was established, it was tested by 'plugging-in' the dates of diagnostic