

Yorkshire will typically include fragments from dozens of Hillam type ware jars and cooking pots, frequently bearing very similar traces of sooting and certainly in large part in use sequentially rather than simultaneously. Moorhouse has suggested (1987, 167) that the difficulty of cleaning porous and permeable cooking vessels meant that they would have been discarded even if unbroken after a short time, implying that they were even more transient objects than we would consider them today. The medium to long-term replication of form, not to mention fabric as represented by phenomenological variables including texture and colour, would seem to argue for the existence of structures and structural properties (Giddens 1984, 185–6, 377) most probably in a recursive relationship with that of agency. It would be of interest to learn how such structural issues can be accommodated within the relational framework as set out by Jervis. These criticisms are not intended to be fundamental but rather to underline the importance of a book that seeks to highlight the central role of theory in medieval pottery studies. It is to be hoped that it will stimulate heated debate and some much-needed controversy, not only within the MPRG but within medieval history and archaeology more generally.

A final point concerns the production of the book. Although handsomely presented with clear photographs

and illustrations, it is marred by irritating typographical errors including spelling mistakes and even missing words. For £45.00 one certainly expects a book to contain its full complement of words!

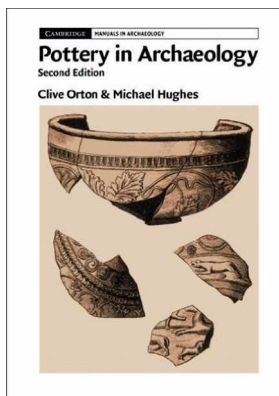
References

- Cumberpatch, C G 2003 'The transformation of tradition; the origins of the post-medieval ceramic tradition in Yorkshire' *Assemblage* <http://www.shef.ac.uk/assem/issue7/cumberpatch.html>.
- Giddens, A 1979 *Central problems in social theory* Macmillan, Basingstoke and London.
- Giddens, A 1984 *The constitution of society* Polity Press, Cambridge and Oxford.
- Moorhouse, S 1987 'The site distribution of pottery as evidence of function: A discussion and some case studies' in Vyner, B and Wrathmell, S (eds) *Studies in medieval and later pottery in Wales*, 161–187. University College Cardiff, Cardiff.
- Silverman, E K. 1991 'Clifford Geertz: Towards a more thick understanding' in Tilley, C (ed) *Reading material culture*, 121–159. Blackwell Oxford and Cambridge (Massachusetts).
- Tilley, C. 1991 *Reading material culture* Blackwell, Oxford and Cambridge (Massachusetts).

Chris Cumberpatch

Clive Orton and Michael Hughes Pottery in archaeology

Second edition . Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology
2013 . Cambridge University Press
340pp, 62 figures, 9 tables
Paperback ISBN 978 1 107401 30 3
Hardback ISBN 978 1 107008 74 8
Price £65 hardback, £25 paperback



It seems relatively straightforward to review a second edition simply by comparing it with its predecessor (published in 1993) and to some extent that applies here. This latest version is bigger and longer (so far so good), with the same front cover (shame) but more importantly, has only one of the three original

authors (previously Clive Orton, Paul Tyers and Alan Vince). The pairing of Orton and Hughes is an enticing one that offers the prospect of more science than before and indeed, in his preface Orton states that scientific advances had made clear the need for a revised edition.

He also explains how the first edition was put together by each of the three authors working on different chapters before melding them together as they realised there was considerable overlap. It is reassuring to learn that much of the original survives, with Hughes contributing a new chapter on pottery fabrics, while there are two new chapters entitled 'Archaeology by Experiment' and 'Craft Specialisation and Standardisation of Production'. This edition therefore stands as an update that incorporates new methods and approaches but it can also be seen as a testament to the skill and credibility of the original authors as well as the enduring importance of pottery studies in archaeology. So maybe there are two questions to be answered here: how successful an update is it and how well does it stand up as a manual for studying pottery in archaeology?

The longevity of pottery studies is the theme of the first chapter, 'History of Pottery Studies', which

begins: 'Pottery tends to arouse strong emotions in archaeologists: they either love it or hate it', before embarking on a rapid examination of the history of the discipline. This has received only a slight update and, despite pointers to subsequent chapters, one can't help but wonder how detailed a history this really is, given that the latest bibliographic reference is dated 2000. The sequence presented moves from the 'Art historical phase', through the 'Typological' to the 'Contextual' but an increasing number of ceramicists working in all periods have surely moved the subject on from there, with people recording pottery with a variety of aims in mind. This is illustrated in Chapter 2, 'The Potential of Pottery as Archaeological Evidence', which is developed further from the first edition by introducing the concept of three levels of evidence: 'foundational data', 'integrated data' and 'interpretation', around which the original has been re-ordered and partially re-written. Even so, the foundational data remain rooted in these three basic questions: when was a pot made; where and how; what was it made for? Again, we have surely moved on from there to consider such questions as: who made it, for whom was it made, how was it used (which is not the same as what it was made for) and even, what did it mean? These enquiries may not fit into the category of foundational evidence but pottery is now being recorded in ways that seek to answer them and that needs to be represented here. This may be to nit-pick however, because this is after all a manual, not a guide to interpretational concepts and once the authors move onto Section II, 'Practicalities: A Guide to Pottery Processing and Recording', we could not be in safer hands. Chapter 3, 'Integration with Research Designs' may sound old-fashioned (surely project briefs and schemes of investigation are the common frames of reference now) but it still describes a process that practitioners would do well to follow but often neglect and it remains all too true that 'the archaeologist in charge of a project may have little practical experience of pottery work and a limited series of objectives'. This book should be compulsory reading for such people. It cannot be stated firmly enough that thorough project planning is essential for the successful completion of all areas of archaeological practice, including finds analysis, reporting and archiving and it is good to see a coherent case for that made here.

With Chapter 4, 'Life in the Pot Shed', the guidance becomes more practical still, covering themes such as setting up, equipment, retrieval procedures, cleaning, processing, sorting and cataloguing. These hardly vary from the first edition and there is no need for them to do so, although some would hardly recognise the possibility of laying out 'as much of the collection as possible, preferably in stratigraphic order', excellent advice though that may be. The section on computers seems to creak a little, despite a slight update and the suggested use of record cards to catalogue a form series looks very quaint as databases now handle images with ease. In Chapters 5, 'Fabric Analysis' and 6,

'Classification of Form and Decoration', the manual really hits its stride and there is no questioning the quality or currency of the guidance on offer, even though there is little that is different from the first edition. Some aspects of pottery characterisation fundamentally will not change, nor should they, and this is one of the many strong parts of this work, especially when supplemented by later chapters. Chapter 7, 'Illustration', includes essential guidance but could be more up to date, as many reports now use computer-generated colour to supplement the accepted line drawing style, while photographs are also more common. This surely stems from the lower reproduction costs of digital and on-line publishing and the merits of these techniques could be acknowledged here. The chapter on archives, meanwhile (Chapter 8, 'Pottery Archives') looks even more outmoded, as discussions have moved on and national standards and guidance have been published. It is possibly misguided, now, to view pottery as something to treat differently from the other finds within a project and 'archaeological archives' have a much higher profile than they did in 1993; it would not have taken much to address this. All the same, a considered discussion of specific issues is very welcome. It is also good to see a sensible assessment of publication priorities that recognises the need for specialists to continue to publish for their own audiences (three cheers for *Medieval Ceramics*) as well as mention of general standards for reporting.

Section III, 'Themes in Ceramic Studies' contains two new chapters, with a third considerably enhanced. Chapter 10, 'Making Pottery' is almost completely unchanged and still deals thoroughly and lucidly with every aspect of the subject, including raw materials, forming techniques and firing. Chapter 11, 'Archaeology by Experiment' is new however, and according to Orton's preface 'should have been in the first edition'. This looks at the questions 'how was a certain pot made?' and 'how was a certain effect or finish achieved?' but over less than three and a half pages that present the Highgate Wood experiments of the late 1960s and early 1970s as a case study. How one might address questions about production is therefore not considered in exhaustive detail but then whole books have been written about this subject, so perhaps it is enough just to touch on it here; especially when the chapter concludes with the indisputable, golden nugget of an aside that 'as so often in archaeology, we are talking about plausibility rather than certainty'. Chapter 12, 'Craft Specialisation and Standardisation of Production', is also new and is an admirable summary of an emerging field of study and thought, with sections on structural evidence, technology, standardisation and diversity, scale of production and implications for theory. The chapter on 'Pottery Fabrics' that follows has substantively extended sections on archeometric techniques and as one would expect, provides an excellent summary of methods, applications and

results. The chapter is not all science, for it begins with guidance on visual examination that goes over colour, hardness etc. in a now familiar and reassuring way. For many, this section was one of the most useful in the first edition and this will probably also be true of the updated version, especially when supported by Appendix 1, which contains roundness and frequency charts alongside other indispensable aids. It must be said that the science may seem tough going, with sections on cluster analysis, discriminant analysis and multivariate statistics but nobody should be put off, because the text could hardly be more straightforward. In any case, this is an important subject that, on its own, justifies this second edition. By contrast, Chapter 14, 'Form' has hardly been changed at all, although there is a short section on the 'automatic capture of shapes', or more simply, laser scanning. There is, however, no mention here of the MPRG 'Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms', which surely could have been included in the section on formal classification systems. Perhaps it is not systematic enough. There is some updating of the following chapter on quantification, especially with one case study but as this subject has, if anything, moved backwards in the field of general archaeological practice in recent years, it probably seemed sensible to stick with the basics, which are very strongly presented. If nothing else, it would be useful to remind those who plan and resource projects that there is 'scope for the detection of patterns which might otherwise have gone unnoticed', although we may still have to convince them that those patterns are worth detecting in the first place. It is less unlikely that those same people will need to be persuaded of the importance of chronology, the subject of Chapter 16, although it is telling that the theme has taken so many pages to appear in this book; surely now this really is not the most important aspect of ceramic studies. It could have been more thoroughly updated, especially when one considers the application of C-14 dating of carbon deposits on pots, and also re-hydroxilation in opening up new possibilities (as well as fuelling new debates). It is interesting to note that the 'Summary' offered in the 1993 edition is unaltered but now headed 'Polemic'. It seems that the necessity for this admirable (and admirably terse) comment on the bias towards dating, at the expense of other research questions such as trade, sources and site formation processes, has become even more acute. Once again, there are reasons for archaeologists who are not pottery

specialists to read this book. This is illustrated in the succeeding chapters, on 'Production and Distribution', 'Pottery and Function' and 'Assemblages and Sites'. The former has been updated somewhat, with a nod to GIS, but the second of the three has received a more thorough overhaul, bringing in references to recent work and providing a useful treatment of a developing field. 'Assemblages and Sites' meanwhile, is a chapter that has hardly changed at all, despite swapping places in the running order with 'Pottery and Function'. It is worth speculating, perhaps, that where chapters have not greatly changed there are opportunities for further research and exploration in areas that have not seen much progress in the last twenty years.

This is reflected in the conclusion, which is headed 'The Future of Pottery Studies'. Here, the authors have deviated significantly from the first edition, although some of the text is the same. As before, three areas of current practice have been highlighted as worthy of further attention but two of those are quite different, including: 'an increased awareness of the techniques and approaches that are available, what they can offer and where they can be found' and 'the need to enthuse and train a new generation of ceramic specialists to continue the work'. As the recent MPRG Research Framework has shown, these are issues of some concern across the discipline and it is telling that, twenty years on from the first edition, this manual is highlighting aspects that have not progressed (or have possibly even reversed). The authors are careful not to examine the reasons for this but there is the unwritten hope that learning will improve practice and a clear, if understated, implication that certain types of people need more learning than others. As a tool for imparting necessary methodological and conceptual lessons, for explaining the importance of applying those methods consistently and with sound reasoning, and for inspiring present and future generations of specialists, this book still has what it takes. As an update it just about succeeds, although there is undoubtedly scope for many more case studies and references from the twenty-first century. In the original version, it was Paul Tyers who was tasked with adding the theoretical or interpretative element and perhaps the two authors could have done with a similar colleague this time. It will be interesting to see what a third edition contains. One thing is certain however; there must be a third edition because as a manual it remains essential. Pottery? Thanks to Orton and Hughes, I know I still love it.

Duncan Brown