

E.L. Will Book Review of
Pottery in the Roman World: an Ethnoarchaeological Approach
By D.P.S. Peacock

*xxi, 192 pages, 31 black-and-white plates, 62 text figures, 1 table, 20 plans, 4 maps, bibliography.
Longman, Inc., New York, NY 1982 \$35.00*

This book, the first in Longman's new archaeology series, looks at how Roman pottery was made and distributed and at the reasons for its developmental history. It is not a conventional handbook of pottery shapes, functions, trademarks, origins and dates. The book's purpose is to see Roman pottery objects in terms of the economic and social environments in which they were produced and used.

Suggesting that "current ceramic studies are in some ways comparable with chemistry before Lavoisier," the author seeks to formulate a model to be used for future pottery studies. The model he develops involves an ordering from simple to complex, of the chief methods probably used by the Romans to produce and distribute pottery. He constructs the model on the basis of ethnological study of modern pottery production in the areas once occupied by the Romans, especially Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Tunisia. The same deductive approach already applied by such scholars as Matson and Hampe/Winter on a smaller scale in the eastern Mediterranean is thus enlarged in this book to include a considerable part of the Roman West.

The author, a specialist in the scientific, especially the petrological, analysis of pottery, has visited and worked at many of the locations, ancient and modern, discussed in the book. Using evidence from ethnology, he presents an "ethnoarchaeological" model for Roman pottery production. Starting with the most primitive pottery-making, in households, he progresses to individual workshops, urban and nucleated industries, the massive fine-ware manufacturing system, production on estates, and finally military and municipal/state potteries. Within these categories such topics as the types and amounts of pottery produced, the chief centers of productions, the classes of society to which pottery-owners and workers belonged, and the marketing of wares are treated. The chapter on the huge fine-ware industry is particularly well developed, as might be expected, given the abundant information now in print. The equally large shipping amphora industry is, however, less extensively

discussed. The model is preliminary, but it should provide both specialists and non-specialists with a background against which to see Roman pottery in better focus.

Readers will be interested in the chapter that describes in clear terms just how the Romans made various types of pottery, from raw material to finished product. There are also up-to-date discussions of such technical matters as the dating of Roman pottery and the methods currently used to sample, quantify, and study the distribution of pottery. This stimulating and useful book is also a convincing statement of the importance of pottery as a source of knowledge about Roman economic and social history. *Elizabeth Lyding Will, Department of Classics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA.*

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