

framework based on the cultural rules of the object of study.

Although the marriage of the general and the theoretical is not entirely happy in *The Present Past*, the book can be recommended for its fairly complete and detailed treatment of the problem of interpretation by analogy. Those readers who wish to explore the substantive implications of a symbolic theory of material culture will unfortunately have to wait, though they have quite a lot to look forward to.

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DAVID PEACOCK, *Pottery in the Roman World: An Ethnoarchaeological Approach*. Longman Archaeological Series, London, 1982. 192pp. £14.94 (Hard) ISBN 0-582-49127-4.

Reviewed by James McVicar

A reviewer can always discuss a new publication by highlighting its general strengths and weaknesses and offering an overall appreciation, but there are some cases where a more detailed comment is in order. Peacock's latest book is such a case. I pass over, then, much that is fine in the volume in favour of a discussion of its stated theme (an ethnoarchaeological approach to ceramics) and method (the use of ethnographic 'models'). Undoubtedly the archaeological evidence presented will be reviewed elsewhere and by those more qualified to do so than myself.

*Pottery in the Roman World* is intended as an introduction to the application of ethnoarchaeology to the study of ceramics in general, and to Roman ceramics in particular. As such, one would expect a detached and balanced approach to the subject; unfortunately, this is not the case. A glance through the bibliography suggests that little account has been taken of

recent criticisms of the perspective which Peacock, amongst others, has adopted, or of the debate over the role of analogy and cross-cultural generalisations in the interpretation of archaeological data. Ethnoarchaeology encompasses a variety of different, often mutually exclusive, approaches to the use of ethnography, and is beset by problems which cannot be dismissed as lightly as Peacock suggests. Furthermore, while it is true that controversies such as the formalist-substantivist debate have involved misunderstanding on both sides, the arguments of substantivist economics cannot be readily ignored or assimilated, and Peacock does not address them by misaimed attacks on Polanyi (p. 81). An adequate discussion of such matters is essential to any serious attempt to use ethnographic data; and while it is not, perhaps, surprising that one should pass over or dismiss out of hand ideas which call one's whole project into doubt, this is less excusable in an introductory text which should not be polemical.

The approach to ethnoarchaeology which Peacock has adopted is not unknown, and a similar perspective underlies van der Leeuw's recent work (see in this issue). It is founded on the idea that by understanding the kinds of archaeological record created by different economic and social systems it is possible to make necessary inferences about the economic and social conditions associated with a particular archaeological dataset. This consequently involves a classificatory and generalising approach to ethnographic data, and Peacock's work illustrates this well. Thus the book sets out by organising pottery production into a series of 'modes' and then by finding a set of ethnographically documented societies which can be classified in these terms and which illustrate the range of diversity which is expected. The procedure

is then to generalise across the examples to establish the kinds of archaeological traces which might distinguish between different 'modes', and to use this information to interpret archaeological evidence for pottery production. Much play is made on the use of 'ethnographic models', and it must be conceded that Peacock illustrates their use given a strict, if banal, definition of 'model'; but I feel that many will be dissatisfied with this usage since a static economic typology is the most minimal of models. The author complains that his model is static for want of data, but it must be pointed out that (ethnographic evidence aside) Peacock has constructed an interpretative scheme which is so aprocessual that it is difficult to see how life might be breathed into it. For example, the apparent allusions to Marx are misleading: 'modes of production' here have no social referent; indeed, the most striking feature of Peacock's model is its insensitivity to the social context within which pottery production takes place. Hence, the extensive list of ethnographic case studies amounts to little more than an international recipe book for potters, concentrating on purely technological and economic aspects of ceramic production.

The absence of a dynamic model which explores the ways in which pottery production is integrated with other aspects of social life is my main objection to Peacock's thesis -- it is an old, but entirely valid criticism of this approach that it eschews process for superficial correlations, an understanding of the interconnection of factors for their overall configuration. Nevertheless, it might be possible to defer to an opposed point of view were it not for Peacock's lack of consistency. We are informed, quite rightly, that it is wrong to view present-day situations as 'hang-overs' from the

past (p. 12), and that it is necessary to explain them in terms of currently operating factors. Yet, two pages later, we are told that household production amongst the Berbers is a curious relict, a 'simple mode', which has survived owing to the isolation afforded by the Atlas Mountains. It is not mooted at all that this 'simple mode' was actually linked to the structure and dynamics of Berber society and that it was perpetuated actively by 'currently operating factors' rather than by default. Moreover, and touching on the last point, Peacock states categorically that his 'modes' are not to be seen as stages in "... an evolutionary system, for industrial arrangements merely reflect social and economic organisation" (p. 50). However, there is precious little by the way of social organisation discussed in the text, nor is there much consideration of its effect upon industrial arrangements. Moreover, it is more than apparent that Peacock does see increasing complexity as some kind of pre-ordained evolutionary ladder. One gains the distinct impression from these, and similar embarrassing contradictions, that such empty programmatic phrases have been inserted into the manuscript at a late stage and in an attempt to defer to criticisms which have been made of Peacock's project over the last few years. A better impression would have been created if they had not been included at all -- inconsistency is not an advantage in a scholarly or introductory text.

There is a small but good introductory overview of the major statistical techniques which apply to ceramic studies, including accounts of dating techniques, spatial analysis of distributions and some words of warning on dating by association. In general, it is when Peacock is writing on this kind of subject, or on petrological analysis and the importance of such studies to the solution of certain

questions concerning pottery exchange and marketing, that the book is most satisfactory.

Finally, I fear that the book will not endear itself to many female archaeologists. It abounds in rather unfortunate statements and assumptions which are patently sexist. The statement "Because this is a secondary role, we would once again expect it to be a craft practised mainly by women..." (p. 8) is rather graceless (the causative link is unwarranted) and betrays an unfortunate absence of a broad, critical perspective. It characterises well a book which, though potentially a useful summary of our knowledge of Roman ceramics, cannot be welcomed as a significant contribution to an ethnoarchaeological approach to ceramic studies.

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PETER WELLS, Culture Contact and Culture Change: Early Iron Age Central Europe and the Mediterranean World. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980. 167pp. £17.50 (Hard) ISBN 0-521-22808-5.

Reviewed by  
Marie Louise Stig Sørensen

The aim of this book is to examine the cultural changes in late Hallstatt and early La Tène central Europe in terms of their interaction with the Mediterranean, and on this basis to develop and explicate a general methodology for examining contact situations. Through this, the book is intended as a case study in "the analysis of contact between prehistoric societies and of the cultural changes associated with that contact" (p. ix). The book could have been a central contribution to the study of cultural communication in European prehistory, had its stated intentions been fulfilled. In my opinion, however, this has not been the case.

Wells develops a general model for the mechanisms at work in contact situations on the basis of substantivist economic perspectives in social anthropology, and within the framework of systems theory (p. 1ff, 6ff). His main argument is that in order for new elements brought in from outside to be adopted and integrated into a societal system changes have to occur in that system to accommodate the new features. His analysis consists of investigating the evidence of contact in a limited area, after which the systemic adaptations of these influences are described. The societies in question are assumed (based on Frankenstein and Rowlands' earlier discussion) to be chiefdoms, and the function of imports as scarce resources within the local area is seen in terms of monopoly and the development of stratification.

Late Hallstatt Württemberg and early La Tène Saarland were used as the case studies for this analysis. The choice of area was guided by the wealth of material available, and by its suitability for illustrating interaction. The archaeological material from these two areas is presented, and the nature and possible effects of imports are discussed. The more specific aspects of interaction, for example, imitation, 'eagerness to adopt foreign imports', specific selections, etc., are presented in the archaeological description of the material, but are not incorporated into the discussion and interpretation of the contact situation. Simplistic conclusions are drawn from the association of different remains: the increase of weapons in graves, for example, is interpreted as reflecting increased importance of warfare (p. 471). This is a general characteristic of the book, which results in an unsuccessful marriage of theory and material analysis, as well as an incompatibility between its stated aims and intentions, and the con-