

328 pages, 67 colour and b&w figures; 2 maps  
ISBN 9781781791998; ISBN eBook 9781781793855

Each of these parts offers valuable insights with Part I (one hundred and thirty eight pages) providing a mine of information not generally collected within one volume. Thus within Part I are lumped together eleven chapters (1–11) which include ancient and modern data sources from Cyprus and the Levant; the deposits, traditional mining, preparation and manufacturing techniques for Cypriot clays; the preparation, processing, preservation and transporting of foods and, for good measure, a nine page discourse on the cleaning of clay pots. One could argue that chapter 9 (»Making Breads, Roasting Grains, and Cooking Other Food«) and chapter 10 (»Foods Processed, Preserved, Distilled, or Transported in Ceramics«) could have been assigned a separate part, but this is a minor quibble and, in my opinion, would go against the author's desire to stress the essential unity between cookwares and the food itself. For any archaeologist who is involved with ceramics (as I am) there is much in Part I which is of real importance, none more so than chapter 7 (»Traditional Firing Techniques for Ceramics«) which emphasises the underlying difficulties in identifying ancient pottery workshops (particularly those for coarse wares) due to their frequent small scale and location in household courtyards, the often temporary nature of the firing structures, and the overall low rate of misfires or wasters (most of which are then utilised in other processes anyhow).

Interspersed throughout the book, particularly within Part I, are photographs (some dating back to the 1930s) that cover virtually the complete manufacturing process from the transport of clay from its sources through to the utilization of the pot itself in the cooking process.

Most of these images were taken in Cyprus including many from the author's years of field work with Cypriot potters; a small selection (four in all) were gleaned from the archives of Joan du Plat Taylor, one of the leading figures in pre-World War II Cypriot archaeology, and provide a fascinating and nostalgic insight into the era of the scattered small village-based industry whose products were then displayed outside the workshops themselves or transported to nearby villages or towns on donkeys, carts or overloaded rickety buses (fig. 6. 9). Not surprisingly, cafés and restaurants seem to have been the locations of choice for sale of these pots.

Part II is a much shorter section (twenty six pages) and looks at different aspects of the ancient clay cookware containers themselves including the rationale for their shape, clay bodies, and manufacturing techniques. As we also observe in Parts I and III, the text never strays far from a consideration of the foods and liquids being processed, cooked, or preserved within these containers and of the archaeological implications which flow from these processes.

Part III (one hundred and one pages) is essentially a survey of cookware throughout the ages from Neolithic to modern times. Any survey of ancient cookware throughout the ages in the Levant and Cyprus is bound to be relatively superficial in some areas (as this survey is) but, rather than emphasising the more subtle changes in form or fabric for their own sake, London is much more focussed on the ethno-archaeological questions of why and how these changes have come about and herein lies its value. This is clear from the concluding chapter (Chapter 22: »Implications of Ethnoarchaeological Studies for Ancient Cookware«) in which she anticipates those FAQs (frequently asked questions) often raised by archaeologists concerning both the characteristics of the pots themselves and those concerning »the industry in general«. In one or two paragraphs she deals with diverse queries such as (to name but a few): Why do pots have round bottoms? How did people cope with porous pot walls? Was cookware too mundane to be traded? How long does cookware last?

As London reminds us in the title, and emphasises throughout the book (e.g. Part I, Chapter 4) her work is a study of ancient cookware from the ethno-archaeological perspective. Not that she is unacquainted with the more scientific aspects of pottery studies, however, as is demonstrated by her lengthy chapter in *Hesban* 11<sup>1</sup>. To do justice also in this book to the ever-widening field of ceramic analytical technology would result in an unwieldy tome of truly heroic proportions. Therefore this reviewer would suggest that one satisfactory compromise would be to refer both to London's work and that of M. Spataro and A. Villing (eds.) with the latter (not included in London's bibliography) offering sound contributions on materials analysis as well as socio-economic practices and other aspects of kitchen ceramics not (or only lightly) touched on by London<sup>2</sup>. Noteworthy here is the very fine and exhaustive preface by the editors (»Investigating ceramics, cuisine and culture – past, present and future«) that should be required reading for any scholar entering the field of ancient cookware.

Written in an anecdotal style that, while resulting in a certain amount of repetition, further serves to emphasise London's close involvement with her subject and relatively – but not completely – free from typographical errors (e.g. pages 22, 50, 51), this well-produced book will certainly prove a valuable and lasting resource for all those mentioned in the first paragraph of this review.

1 G. London, Ceramic Technology at Hisban, in: J. A. Sauer – L. G. Herr (eds.), *Ceramic Finds. Typological and Technological Studies of the Pottery Remains from Tell Hesban and Vicinity, Hesban 11* (Berrien Springs, MI 2012) 595–763.

2 M. Spataro – A. Villing (eds.), *Ceramics, Cuisine and Culture. The Archaeology and Science of Kitchen Pottery in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Oxford 2015).