

**Review of Burrison, John A. 2017. Global Clay: Themes in World Ceramic Traditions. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.**

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sion of the technologies and market forces that allowed this rich vein of literature to be produced. Who was making them? Who was buying them? In what quantities? How were these used in formal and informal education? This material and economic history of the artifacts presented in the catalogue would have offered additional context to the accessibly written political and military narratives that dominate the introductory sections of each chapter. The most interesting piece in the collection is excerpts from the British publication, *An Alphabet from the Trenches*, which is the only piece in the author's collection that appears to have been well-used by a child (350). Its previous owner drew a crude Union Jack over the dedication to the British Expeditionary Force. Below, drawn with a purple pencil, is a battle scene from his or her imagination: field guns shooting down a German Zeppelin as a British biplane flies to intercept. This, along with faithful colouring of the British Tommy's uniform and a garish, clashing colouring job on the "Hun, with

his HYMN and his HATE," does as much as any of the written captions in the volume to show how profoundly the war shaped childhood. More discussion along these lines would be welcomed, but its inclusion in the collection was a remarkable and important addition alongside the various publications in mint condition.

The author argues that the production of these children's publications resulted in an increased chance of war developing (11). Neither the evidence presented or the historical record supports this assertion. However, this collection does show how tightly aligned children's publications, games, and toys were with contemporary and historical anxieties that helped shape the foreign and military policies of the great powers that collided in the apocalypse of the Great War. Readers may wonder how many of the boys who were targeted by these publications were lured into service, and how many survived. Notwithstanding the many beautiful illustrations in this work, *Playing Soldier* is a sobering, perhaps cautionary volume.

## DIANE CHISHOLM

Review of

Burrison, John A. 2017. *Global Clay: Themes in World Ceramic Traditions*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Pp. 338, 228 colour illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9780253031884 (hardcover), \$30.00 US.

John Burrison's latest offering, *Global Clay: Themes in World Ceramic Traditions* is a highly personal, idiosyncratic, and engaging journey through the history of pottery. It is not a chronological survey of pottery through the ages but rather the author's own exploration of the story of clay and how people—common folk—have shaped it for use in ordinary life (Burrison's specialty is folklore and indeed he provides an introductory primer on international folk pottery). This is not a discussion of fine china, though the breadth of the author's knowledge is such that there are allusions to the production of these more refined wares. For example, a

photograph of a Spode plate in the Blue Willow pattern is included because it fits one of the book's themes, but this volume is not about Meissen, Lalique, or Wedgwood. This work is about the world's ceramic traditions and their significance in people's lives, for most of our homes contain pieces made of clay. They meld beauty with practicality and their inherent fragility is an intrinsic part of their nature and value. The actual means of their production and cost are important and recurring ideas running through *Global Clay* because manufacturing and economics have a demonstrable impact on the lives of all people.

The title of a book on ceramics written by Amos Klausner contains the striking phrase, “the complexity of simplicity,”<sup>1</sup> that would equally apply to the subject matter of *Global Clay*. Burrison’s book frames and identifies how raw materials, tools, and design all merge to create something that is both useful and aesthetically pleasing from constituent parts that may appear quite simple. The author discusses earthenware, fritware, stoneware, and porcelain, and his ruminations are accompanied by wonderful photographs, often full-page size, so details are not lost. The colour values and clarity of the pictures are also remarkable. Photographs are accompanied by informative and insightful texts indicating the location or owner of the piece, its age, and other details. Burrison includes a historical outline of pottery-making as well as a fascinating detour into the commercial possibilities that emerged with the introduction of the potter’s wheel and the resultant potential for increased production. Burrison speculates on division of ceramics production by gender and how the wheel might have helped to move work traditionally done by women—coiled pottery methods blended seamlessly with domestic duties at home—into the realm of men.

Every chapter focuses on a particular subject, beginning with early methods of shaping clay and moving outward to discuss various kilns and pottery factories, pottery markets, and pottery museums. Burrison examines cross cultural “imitation” and the influence of the Far and Middle East on pottery worldwide, from Spain to France to 16th century Dutch pottery. Along the way there are fascinating shards of information. Tin-glazing was introduced to the West by Muslim potters who reinvigorated a forgotten process used for Mesopotamian brick and tiles (1000-600 BCE). In Spain it became Hispano-Moresque ware; in Italy, maiolica; in France it became faience; and in the Netherlands it became delftware, eventually spreading to Great Britain in the 17th century. Burrison also examines borrowings from China, and indeed later in the book we see an unforgettable two-page spread of the famous bigger-than-life-size warrior statues at Pit No. 1 of the Emperor Qinshihuang Mausoleum Site Museum.

The chapter on the human image encompassing face jugs and other people pots demonstrates, as Burrison says, that it was truly a “global phenomenon” that showed our desire to “humanize clay.” Some of these are grotesque or distorted but the author’s captivation with these pieces is apparent (in his photograph on the dustjacket Burrison is shown smiling broadly while holding two of these pots). Recurring throughout this volume is the notion that these pieces are the result of years of accrued expertise; they serve a purpose, they have a point, and they draw us into this tangible body of human achievement and creation.

My favourite chapter looks at clay representations of animals in all their facets: as food, as sports “objects,” as burden bearers, and as companions to humans. Exquisite photographs show such varied pieces as a ceramic Great Jin dynasty tiger-shaped “pillow” (c. 1200); Upper Paleolithic unfired clay bison found in a French cave in the Midi-Pyrénées; Tang dynasty tomb figures of a horse and camel c.700s; and the iconic blue hippopotamus nicknamed “William” which is the unofficial mascot of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. More ordinary animals like frogs, turtles, dogs, snakes, and birds are not forgotten and their inclusion relates back to the common folk element. Such images especially resonate because of the combination of whimsy, wit, and the sense of the animal “other” they exude.

The chapter on clay and world religions includes ceramic representations of both female and male deities and idols; sacred text in ceramic form (e.g. the eleventh tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh); a ceramic depiction of the struggle between Krishna and the horse demon Keshi; an Italian maiolica bust of Christ; and a contemporary Passover Seder (Ka’arah) plate. Wall tiles from a synagogue in Iran, from the Great Mosque in Mecca, and examples of ceramic implements used for religious practices are also presented, and Burrison alludes to pottery-making itself as being a reverential act in some societies.

The book’s concluding chapter on death and the afterlife features replicas of an earthenware coffin, terra cotta burial urn, sarcophaguses, stoneware grave markers, and other items of memorialization. Throughout the book chapters are introduced by an apposite quotation or poem related to pottery, and for the final chapter the fol-

lowing epitaph from the grave of an earthenware seller is a wonderful summing up:

Beneath this stone lies CATHERINE GRAY,

Changed to a lifeless lump of clay;  
By earth and clay she got her pelf,  
And now she's turned to earth herself.  
Ye weeping friends, let me advise,  
Abate your tears and dry your eyes;  
For what avails a flood of tears?  
Who knows but in a course of years,  
In some tall pitcher or brown pan,  
She in her shop may be again.

Organized according to the themes of international folk pottery, craft identity, cross-cultural imitations, face jugs and people pots, ceramic animals, ceramics and world religions, and representations of death and the afterlife in

ceramics, the volume concludes with the author's thoughts on continuity, change, and revival, and how ceramics connect communities and people around the globe. With even a cursory look through this book the reader is struck by its sheer graphic appeal in the number and vibrancy of its photographs, its extensive and comprehensive presentation of the material, and the author's erudition and obvious love for the subject. While it has a suggested list of publications for further reading, my single small criticism of the book is that there is no glossary. It would be helpful to have included one for quick reference, for example, to differentiate between "maiolica" and "majolica" (both are mentioned).

*Global Clay: Themes in World Ceramic Traditions* has something to offer the practicing ceramicist, the ceramics scholar, and a wider, general readership. It includes an index and notes at the conclusion of each chapter, making it both a useful and enjoyable reference.

#### Note

1. See Amos Klausner. 2014. *Heath Ceramics: The Complexity of Simplicity*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.

## TIM COOK

Review of

Cashin, Joan E., ed. 2018. *War Matters: Material Culture in the Civil War Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Pp. 280, 12 halftones, 3 graphs, 1 table, notes, index. ISBN 9781469643199 (hardcover).

This fine book of collected essays, cleverly titled *War Matters*, and edited by Joan Cashin, a professor of history at the Ohio State University, explores the intersection of material culture, social relationships, and the war experience.

Cashin offers a cohesive introduction that draws out the "idea of the thing." It is a clear and discerning call for scholars to better embrace the role of material culture in the lives of those who lived through or died during the American Civil War. Cashin has brought together a diverse group of scholars, who have employed an inter-

disciplinary approach to "address the complex dialectic between ideas, objects, and behavior" (2). To frame the articles, Cashin provides a broad definition of material culture in the Civil War, which includes things created, carried, used, and cherished by men and women in uniform, those at home, those far from the front, those who suffered as armies moved across their land, newly freed African-Americans, as well as subsequent generations.

While there is not enough room in this review to address all ten contributions to the book, I will instead offer a brief glimpse into the breadth